



Use of Self-Appraisal as a major determinant of internal plan model – the Oman Medical College experiences

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Abstract: *Self-Appraisal of the teaching and the administrative staff can be of greater use to work out the plan details of any institution if it is scientifically and earnestly operated. Being the major stake holders of an educational institute, the teaching staff and the administrative staff play a vital role in creating a quality premise for the delivery of its output. Therefore, their feedback on the input of the college is of great importance for developing the plan attributes. Though the review of the endeavors and facilities can be carried out through separate and exclusive evaluation, the self-appraisal mechanism stands out due to its inherent interactive phenomenon at Oman Medical College. The proposed paper is a narration on the format of the self-appraisal, procedures, the derivation of data from it and mode of implementation based on the data. The self-appraisal is not a ritualistic exercise at OMC. The procedures followed in the self-appraisal mechanism are structured through a well-designed format for providing the data, and interface meeting. The format has three sections, viz. Self-Profile, Activity Profile and Feedback on other inputs. The self-appraisal report is tested through an interface meeting with the leadership. The Quality Office scrutinizes the report and derives data on all the three sections and the findings go back to the planning department for addressing the issues and concerns. They work out the micro plans for further improvement. The data on major aspects are plugged in to the annual plan model as an internal recommendation. Therefore, the self-appraisal constitutes one of the major streams of OMC's thought process for providing quality education. The proposed paper is an attempt to bring out the details of this healthy practice for mutual sharing with other higher educational providers in the country.*

Keywords: *Self-Appraisal, Performance, Plan Models, Interface, Incentive*

INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal is considered to be one of the popular tool used across institutions regardless of the region or the country to assess the contribution of an employee into the system management. In compensation administration, performance appraisal is a measure for determining salary package as well as incentive. It is also used as a motivational tool wherein the expectations of the employer on the performance of the employee is scientifically connected to each other. There appears to be a growing debate about whether the consequences of the performance appraisal may create more problems than it solves, and also about whether its impact are truly productive in the system maintenance of organizations [1]. A prominent group of academicians proposed that we should abolish production standards that specify numerical goals and eliminate all individual performance appraisal in favour of systems that evaluate performance at the unit or

planned level [2]. They stand for total exclusion of this practice on the ground that the standard self-appraisal format specifies numerical goals which need not always be accurate and can be unrealistic.

Regardless of the differences in the approach, there has been a consensus on its practice in view of its possible potential to measure, though not quantitatively, the involvement of the appraisee in the holistic operation [3]. The mainstream discourses on the use and abuse of the performance appraisal system are in favour of the deployment of a structured self-appraisal format and the organizations decides its extent of application in the decision making and growth process. It is difficult to prescribe a mathematical pathway for the self-appraisal system. Technically, the Self-Appraisal format can be of singular objective or multifunctional depending on the priorities of the organization. The most popular form of its format centres around the theory and practice of performance evaluation for the institutional balance sheet [4]. Similarly, the self-appraisal system has also been used to portray the goal setting of the appraisee which is almost synonymic to the conventional performance planning procedures as conceived in Locke's theory of goal setting [5]. Advancing a little further on the theoretical premise of Locke's theory another model attempted to relate the self-appraisal mechanism to the decision making process [6]. However, this provision was restricted to micro level and its procedures were tailored to suit the requirements of standard HR management. Realizing the potential in using the syntax of the self-appraisal different variations were deployed depending on the institutional objectives across industries.

The OMC joins the mainstream school of thought in design, deployment, and analysis of the self-appraisal mechanism although it significantly differs from the rest in the content for its mandatory provision for interactive session with the senior leadership, and pre-determined mapping into the growth models of the organization. These two features are technically complementary and in practice are integrated coherently. The present narrative is an attempt to demonstrate how the process passes through the different stages of evaluation of the appraisee. Secondly, it tries to bring out the process of discerning input from the appraisee report for drawing up the plan models of the institution. Additionally, the paper points out the potential of the interactive sessions with the leadership in resolving the issues that might crop up with more vigour if left unnoticed. The present study is confined to the documentary evidences of the self-appraisal mechanism at OMC for the years 2009-2012. The significance of the timeline lies in the fact that 2009 is the year in which OMC has introduced the new format of the Self-Appraisal assessment. The format has three sections, viz. Self-profile, Activity profile, and Feedback on other input and the format differs significantly for different categories viz. Academic Staff, Administrative Staff, and Support Staff. The Self-profile is a bio sketch and outlined in brief. The activity profile is exhaustive with details of the appraisee's activities on and off the campus including academic extension endeavours. The feedback on other inputs describes the appraisee's evaluation on the facilities, suggestions for improvement, and critical comments on the work environment.

METHOD OF STUDY

The topic under discussion focuses more on features associated with institutional practice and therefore it is a demonstration rather than an experiment. The study deploys an analysis of the existing practices followed across the higher education institutions, narrates the salient features of the OMC system of self-appraisal with a thread of link between the procedures in the self-appraisal format and development of the macro and micro plan models at OMC, and discerns the perception of the staff on the modus operandi of self-appraisal. The qualitative narration and appropriate quantifications are used throughout the enquiry in order to bring out visible conclusions. As an epilogue of the study, a structured questionnaire has been used among the faculty and the staff to discern the effectiveness of the self-appraisal in the given scenario of the current topic.

MODE OF APPRAISAL

A fundamental issue in designing any performance appraisal system is determining the source of the necessary information on which to base assessment [7]. However, OMC deploys the same procedure as that of other organizations in the industry for initiation of the appraisal activities. In response to the notification to staff members, which always happens at the end of the academic year, the appraisee submits his self-appraisal report to the immediate supervisor for his comments. The immediate supervisor makes initial evaluation as a personal observation and forwards this to the HR department for further processing. The last and final phase of the evaluation is undertaken at the senior leadership level for which the college deploys an approved committee consisting of all the Deans, the faculty and administrative representatives, and the HR Manager. This evaluation is known as the Interface Meeting with the appraisee which rates the performance of the appraisees on a 5-point scale [8]. The meeting normally consists of 20 minutes and is meant to obtain better understanding of the observations made by the appraisee in the self-appraisal report. As its format is so flexible and informal, the appraisee uses this opportunity to speak out about his specific individual problems to the leadership. Significantly, the interface meeting provides a constitutional outlet to the appraisee to ventilate his issues or concerns to the leadership of the college. The outcome of the evaluation is communicated to the appraisees with descriptive comments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Like all organizations, the appraisal mechanism is a mandatory provision for career advancement at OMC. Every employee regardless of category is bound to undergo the process without exception. The following table shows the number of OMC staff who submitted the self-appraisal report and were assessed at the interface meeting during the years 2009-10, 2010-11 & 2011-12* [9].

Table 1 showing the data on the annual self-appraisal meetings at OMC

Year	No. of employees submitted the appraisal			No. of employees attended the interface meeting		
	Academic Staff	Administrative Staff	Support Staff	Academic Staff	Administrative Staff	Support Staff
2009-10	26	30	14	25	28	12
2010-11	30	29	12	28	26	5
2011-12	40	34	16	36	29	10

* The difference in the numbers in the schedule is due to the staff turnover rate and therefore, a few of them exited the institution without completing the loop of the self-appraisal mechanism.

Normally, the OMC organizes the interface meeting in the afternoon of the working day and spends almost 3 hours with an average of 9 to 12 appraisee per day. The schedule of meetings of the general administration of the college, which takes place in the last quarter of the academic year had a structured planner for the interface meeting. Staff who obtained 3 or higher grade in the self-appraisal outcome is normally eligible for the award of the increment and those who score 4.5 or more receives the incentive. Those who scores less than 3 are considered to be unfit and therefore not eligible for the contract renewal. The following table describes the categories of the staff based on the appraisal during the years 2009-10, 2010-11 & 2011-12.

Table 2 showing the number of employees with a classification on the basis of the appraisal rating

Year	Who score >4.5 (Incentive)	Who score ≥ 3 (Increment)	Who score <3 (Termination)
2009-10	4	60	1
2010-11	9	48	2
2011-12	12	61	2

POST APPRAISAL EXERCISE AT OMC

i. Generating input for institutional growth models

Although numerous researchers have compared the psychometric qualities of appraisal outcome on the basis of different information sources, very few have examined how information provided by different appraisers can be combined to precisely measure appraisee performance. Notwithstanding the differences in the methodology of the current practices in the self-appraisal system, the OMC human resources management has deployed a variant of standard practices by providing a space to generate the appraisees' perception as well as observation on the growth prospects of the institution. 'The feedback on the input' of the appraisee report and the crux of the interface meeting are the two provisions for generating the appraisees' prescriptions for institutional growth. It is interesting to note that all the appraisees have provided their suggestions in the report and it varies from highly ambitious to reasonably conceived. The following table describes the qualitative categories of the appraisees' suggestions as the feedback on their views on micro and macro management and growth identities.

**Table 3 showing the statistics on the suggestions
of the appraisee on institutional growth indices**

Year	Total number of suggestions		
	Normal and short-term corrections	Long-term proposal	HR related proposal
2009-10	26	14	10
2010-11	28	10	6
2011-12	21	18	8

The above schedule is further categorized into the following heads.

**Table 4 showing the statistics on the suggestions
of the employees for institutional growth**

Year	Categories				
	Academics	Examination	Suggestions for Administrative Improvement	Suggestions for Facilities	Staff Development
2009-10	12	2	11	19	6
2010-11	8	3	16	6	11
2011-12	9	4	6	16	12

The normal and short-term corrections have been absorbed into the annual plan of the succeeding year depending on the merit of the suggestions. The table shown below portrays the numbers of suggestions incorporated in the annual plan model.

Table 5 showing the statistics on the suggestions of the employees for institutional growth

Year	Categories				
	Academics	Examination	Suggestions for Administrative Improvement	Suggestions for Facilities	Staff Development
2009-10	8	2	7	9	4
2010-11	3	3	10	4	5
2011-12	7	4	5	7	6

It is interesting to note that more than 60% of the suggestions of the appraisees have been absorbed into the annual plan pattern. The suggestions for long-term plan projects have been reviewed institutionally while the operational plan of the strategic priorities are drawn up. It is worth noting that the strategic planning exercises at OMC for the year 2013-18 have heavily depended on this category of suggestions of the appraisees. The operational plans for the year 2014-15, 2015-16 & 2016-17 have incorporated more than 40% of their suggestions.

ii. Facilitating resolution on interpersonal relationship among peers and with leadership

The interface meeting has tremendous scope in identifying the HR related issues which are either unnoticed or unreported. The normal format of the self-appraisal ends up with the immediate supervisor/line manager who can be a source of bias in evaluating the performance of the appraisee. As the provision for appeal is significantly unpractised in the industry, the chances for misuse of authority is quite logical. The OMC variance does not adhere to these conventional practices and procedures as it deploys a very significant space for the appraisee to interact with the leadership and without the immediate line manager, although his comments are obtained as a reference to the team of the leadership at the time of the appraisal. The self-appraisal records of the period under reference show many instances of bringing up issues related to the HR in the department as well as inter departments. The feedback of the appraisee on this provision is discussed in the last section of this paper separately. It is worth noting that the appraisee at OMC have rated this provision with a value of 4 and above on a 5-point scale indicating high acceptance. The HR issues discerned through the interface meeting are reviewed by the leadership as a post appraisal exercise and resolutions have been provided on the basis of its merit. Interestingly, the following table portrays a successful resolution on a majority of HR related issues identified through the interface meeting.

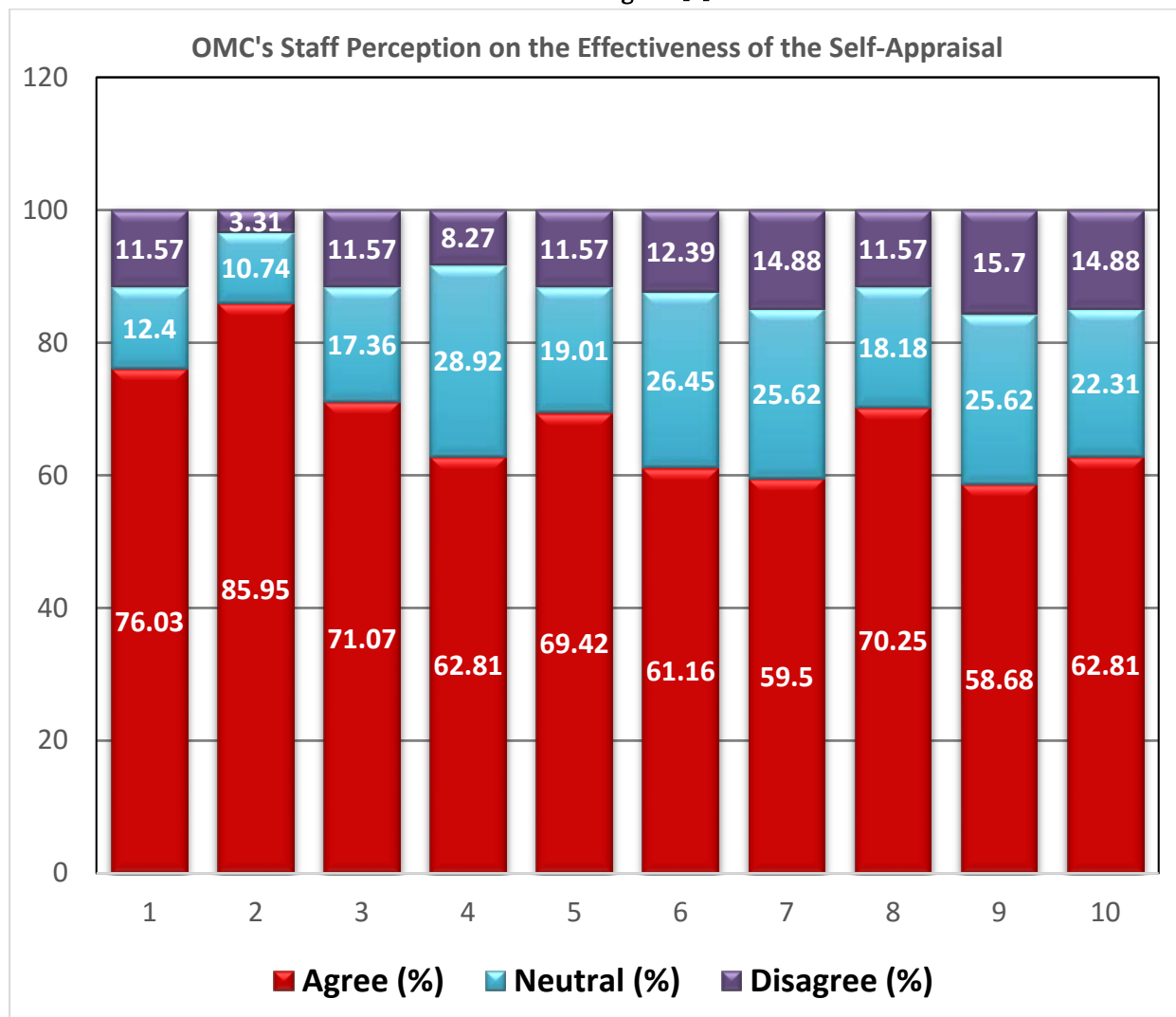
Table 6 showing the figures on the HR related issues identified/ resolved at OMC through self-appraisal procedures

Year	HR related issues identified	HR related issues resolved
2009-10	10	7
2010-11	9	6
2011-12	8	7

STAFF'S PERCEPTION ON SELF-APPRAISAL SYSTEM AT OMC

The present study has its subject sample consisted of OMC's 60 faculty, 110 Administrative & Support Staff [10]. The sample is not randomized as it covers 100% of its employee strength. A structured questionnaire with 10 variables was administered anonymously by the Quality Assurance department as an online survey. The response rate was 71.2%. Among the 10 variables, 3 are direct to the topic of enquiry and therefore its details relate to the basic framework of the hypothesis. It is interesting to note that the majority of the respondents falls within the domain of "agreement" and none has subscribed to "strongly agree" indicating a normal allowance of reservation on all institutional procedures involving them as a "subject". The following figure [1] describes the pattern of the responses of the staff on their perception on the Self-Appraisal system at OMC.

Figure [1]



Sl. No.	Variables
1	Submit the Self-Appraisal report to the Administration in time.
2	Know that the Self-Appraisal system at OMC is a mandatory requirement
3	Get adequate opportunity to express my identity before the college governance
4	Feel that the immediate supervisors' assessment is scrupulously scrutinized by the senior leadership
5	Think that the Self-Appraisal format at OMC is adequately structured
6	Think that our suggestions for improvement are considered while the college makes decision on planning
7	Feel that many of our suggestions have been absorbed into the plan process at OMC
8	Feel that there is a clear opportunity for them to speak about our grievances in the campus
9	Think that the college leadership will be able to offer resolutions on our reported grievances at the self-appraisal meeting
10	Think that the Self-Appraisal system at OMC is the most effective forum for the staff to contribute to its growth process

- i. The analysis agrees with the preposition that most of the staff at OMC thinks that the Self-Appraisal system at OMC is the most effective among the available format for the staff to contribute to its growth process. Interestingly, the Self-Appraisal records at OMC show that most of them have responded with details on their suggestions for the growth of the college. It testifies to the observations of the present study. 24 staff members left the space in the self-appraisal format unattended which somehow qualitatively relates to the “neutral band” (20%) of the sample space.
- ii. The analysis supports the preposition that most of the suggestions of the staff for improvement are considered while the college makes decision on planning. The respondents on this variable fall in the category either of “agree” or “disagree” though a few of them are indifferent. The present study reviewed the Self-Appraisal report, and evaluation forms to correlate with the general observation in the survey findings. 82% of the appraisee has some suggestions to their credit although many of them are wild imaginations. The following table categorizes the suggestions based on the timeframe and domains.

**Table 7 showing the number of suggestions on
micro and macro management expressed through the Self-Appraisal**

Categories	Number of Suggestions made in the Self-Appraisal					
	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
	Short-term	Long-term	Short-term	Long-term	Short-term	Long-term
Administrative corrections for facility enhancement	10	5	11	3	5	6
Capital Project	2	6	5	4	6	7
Policy Shift	10	3	4	3	7	5

Table 8 showing the number of suggestions incorporated in the plan models

Categories	Number of Suggestions implemented in the plan models of the succeeding years					
	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
	Short-term	Long-term	Short-term	Long-term	Short-term	Long-term
Administrative corrections for facility enhancement	4	2	3	1	5	4
Capital Project	2	2	2	1	4	3
Policy Shift	3	2	1	2	2	3

Tables 7 & 8 validate the findings in the survey that most of the suggestions of the staff for improvement are considered while the college makes decision on planning. It supports the preposition that many of their suggestions have been absorbed into the plan process at OMC also. Although Table 8 describes significant differences in the numbers between the proposed and the implemented, it is clear that the proposals obtained through the Self-Appraisal have adequate space in the growth pattern of OMC.

- iii. The survey indicates that most of the staff have looked upon the procedures in the Self-Appraisal mechanism at OMC as a legitimate corridor for ventilation of HR related issues. 58.68% of respondents feel that the college leadership will be able to offer resolutions on their reported grievances at the Self-Appraisal meeting. Similarly, 70.25% of the respondents have recorded that there is a clear opportunity for them to surface their grievances at the meeting. The results on the variables (8 & 9) underline the value attached to the procedure and it correlates with other findings in the survey.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis substantiates OMC's organizational position that the Self-Appraisal mechanism can be conceived to be an effective pathway to generate input for the institutional planning and render the planning process more participatory.

The institution can absorb the suggestions at two timeframes, short-term and long-term. The Annual plan, the Operational plan short-term, and the Strategic plan can absorb employee's input.

OMC's staff have recorded responses of significant levels to substantiate the main postulations in the institutional framework on Self-Appraisal.

It is like fish on the fish monger's slab and the institution, being the point for preparation, can decide where to swim and what to fish and the Self-Appraisal mechanism buys the same analogy.

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