

EXAMINING THE DIMENSIONS OF ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND ITS INDICATORS IN EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

The idea of Organization Performance Management is being widely accepted and adopted all across the world. It spread rapidly from the private sector to the public sector and also in the education industry, from the developed world to the developing countries. This position paper functions as a ready reckoner by reviewing and consolidating existing literature in the field of Organization Performance Management followed in education institutions. The article focuses on analyzing and critiquing studies of Organization Performance Management conducted in schools. The study of Organization Performance Management its indicators, particularly in education institutions has emerged as a critical area of research. It has been firmly established in literature that education institutions in order to sustain, should manage and develop several aspects which are critically analysed by the stakeholders. Suitable interventions are the need of the hour in order to ensure proper management of institutions.

The contribution of the article is expected to be fourfold, in terms of: (a) presenting a structured and comprehensive review of literature on organization performance management, (b) suggesting professionals in education institutions to understand and appreciate customised tools to develop and track performance of their educational institutions.

Keywords- Performance Management System, Performance indicators , education institutions.

1. Introduction

Performance management (PM) includes activities which make certain that goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner. Performance management can centre its attention on the performance of an organization, a department, employee, or even the processes to make a product or service, as well as many other areas. PM is also known also as a process by which organizations align their systems, resources and employees to strategic objectives and priorities. PM unites the management of organisational performance along with the management of individual performance.

Cornelius and Gooch (1998) commented that effective PM can make a significant contribution towards the attainment of

business objectives while maximizing the contribution of employees.

Organizations under internal and external pressure have to adopt organization performance management system. Reasons, especially satisfying customers (students) encourage /force organizations to develop plans in such a way that they can constantly improve organization performance. Restated, a number of reasons encourage and/or force organizations to manage their affairs in such a way that they can continuously improve organizational performance, including meeting the needs of their customers.

1.1 Reasons for Adopting Organizational Performance Management Systems

The question one may ask is why organizations have to be concerned about the organizational performance management. Parker (2000) suggested that "the kinds of reasons, which may vary from one organization to another include: -

- Identifying success;
- Identifying whether the organization is meeting customer requirements unless organizations measure how do they know that they are providing the services/products that their customers require?
- Helping them understand their processes to confirm what they know or reveal what they do not know;
- Identifying where problems (e. g., bottlenecks and waste) exist and where improvements are necessary,
- Ensuring decisions are based on facts, not on supposition, emotion or intuition; and
- Show if improvements planned actually happen".

This paper encompasses the reasons which have encouraged and/or forced organizations to adopt and practice organizational performance systems, but to familiarize ourselves, as well, with a number of different features of organizational performance. Some of these aspects are as follows: -

- Organizational performance management systems in educational institutions;
- Organizational performance Dimensions;
- Organizational performance indicators;
- Reasons for adopting organizational performance management systems; and

2. Organizational Performance Management systems in Educational Institutions

Schools are uniquely moral organizations (Greenfield, 1995). Schools have a strong moral grounding that may not necessarily be present in corporate. These schools function as loosely coupled systems (Weick, 1976, Orton & Weick, 2000;) as a result of which, their management turn out to be different from corporate organizations. For instance, while consumers as customers may be significant stakeholders in corporate organizations, students in educational organizations as customers, may not have much say in the item for consumption (the teaching). Furthermore, Newman & Wallender (1978) stated, while service to customers in corporate is mainly focused on profits, service in schools is primarily focused on the welfare and service motive .

Gamoran and Dreeben (1986) contradicted and stated that not every school is loosely coupled system. There may be schools that functions like bureaucracies and even within loosely coupled schools, harmonization between various subsystems would exist through various aspects like common socialization, professional norms, flow of resources etc. While Herriott & Firestone (1984) in his study pointed that elementary schools match more to the image of the rational bureaucracy, secondary schools conform to the image of anarchy or loosely coupled systems.

2.1 Focus of Organizational Performance Management Systems

It can be stated that 'Measurement drives behaviour', which means that the choice of performance measures, must encourage people to align their efforts towards the strategic direction of the organization.

Current literature indicates that organizational performance management systems focus on different dimensions of organizational performance. Nanni et al. (1990) stated that traditionally, organizational performance management focuses on monitoring and maintaining organizational control. If one

looks from an internal control perspective, the primary aim of organizational performance management is to check the implementation of an organization's plans and to establish whether they have been achieved (Atkinson et al. , 1997).

Historically, the focus of organizational performance management has been solely on financial measures of organizational performance (Kald and Nilsson, 2000). There is a prevalent recognition that the different aspects of organizational performance are much wider than financial performance measures alone, and that financial performance indicators measure and make observable only limited dimensions of an organization's performance (Kaplan and Norton, 1992, 1993, 1996). Thus, Atkinson et al. (1997) suggested that concentration on only financial measures of organizational performance is inadequate for strategic decision making and for full internal management and control.

The structure and functions of schools are in a transitory phase across the globe. From a predominantly academic orientation, schools around the globe are now encouraging students to involve themselves in other activities like social service, sports, etc. Miskel, McDonald and Bloom (1983) defined organizational effectiveness for schools in terms of "quantity and quality of outputs, adaptability and participant attitudes such as employee job satisfaction". The criteria for measuring effectiveness appear to need a wider roof to look beyond educational effectiveness and should take into consideration the ever-changing focus of child education and the preference of the parents.

Among the existing measures of school effectiveness, student achievement, as operationalized by standardized scores in mathematics and reading seems to be the principal measure (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). Hallinger and Heck (1996) after reviewing 40 studies found that majority of the studies used

achievement of the student to measure school performance though some of the studies did use additional measures to evaluate school effectiveness. Uline, Miller and Tschannen-Moran (1998) described the measures of writing, reading and arithmetic as instrumental activities. They discussed additional criterion to measure effectiveness and have named them as expressive activities. These activities encompass teachers' faith in school health and colleagues and principal.

All these factors that are engaged as measures to evaluate school effectiveness are controlled by a multitude of individuals. A teachers' job satisfaction, for example may influence the quality of teaching and thus the student learning. There is every likelihood that these output factors may also influence some input variables. A school's effectiveness might attract reputed teachers, brighter students for admissions and principals for employment. These factors would further add value to the school effectiveness.

2.2 Measurements of Organizational Performance Management Systems

Performance measurement, monitoring, and management systems are planned to allow organizations to appraise the outputs and outcomes of their plans on a regular and ongoing basis, so as to develop program management, effectiveness, and efficiency. Outputs may be defined as the products, services, or activities that a program delivers to its clients.

On the contrary, *Outcomes* are the benefits that clients experience during or after their participation in a program. These include a clear focal point on the establishment of benchmarks of achievement that can guide future targets, a means of monitoring whether corrective action has, in fact and led to program improvement. It is also a way of motivating staff by permitting them to see the progress of their clients in a more visible and objective manner etc.

Although the importance of organizational performance is widely acknowledged, its

measurement is one of the most difficult topics confronting researcher. This complexity may be due to the fact that performance of an organization is a multidimensional construct, the measurement of which differ, depending on a range of factors that comprise it. This may be the reason that Guest (1995) actually stated that there is no general theory about performance measurement as such.

However, restricting the focus of organizational performance management to financial measures seems to have prompted some scholars to come up with a number of organizational performance approaches. Among the most widely referred are the Balanced scorecard, the performance pyramid, integrated performance measurement and performance measurement in service businesses.

From a managerial perspective, Kaplan and Norton's approach: balanced scorecard, has achieved widespread recognition as measuring all aspects, financial and non-financial, of an organization. Using the balanced scorecard, organizations can measure organizational performance over a range of dimensions or perspectives.

These perspectives are:

- The financial perspective: reflects the financial return to the owners (shareholders);
- The business-process perspective: reflects what business (organization) must be good at;
- The customer perspective: reflects how customers view aspects of organizational performance ; and
- The innovation and learning perspective: reflects how business (organization) continues to develop and add value for money.

Fitzgerald et al.'s (1991) approach proposes that performance in service organizations should be measured across six dimensions: -

- Financial (e. g., return on investment);
- Quality of service (e. g., number of student or parents complaints per week/month/year);
- Competitiveness (e. g., number of top ranked students taking admissions per year);
- Flexibility (e. g., number of students transferred to other departments/classes per year);
- Resource utilization (e. g. , include utilization of tools and equipments, buildings, classrooms where these equipments are stored and used in different departments such as Science, Business Studies, Arts, Technical education.) and
- innovation (e. g. , number of innovative changes made during the year).

Fitzgerald et al.'s framework, formulated for the service industry, can be used successfully in the government sector also, where the financial measures alone are not sufficient to give a complete picture of performance (Ghobadian and Ashworth, 1994).

3.Organizational Performance Dimensions

To gain a professional appreciation of organizational performance management, one would need to be known with specific organizational performance dimensions. For example, efficiency, quality and effectiveness.

By analyzing organizational performance effectiveness, organizations can identify the extent to which they achieve pre-established goals. For example, if College Y sets a strategy to enhance an increase in admission in its MBA department by 10 percent, say in one year's time, college management can measure the extent to which they are effective in achieving such a goal by the end of the time period.

Palmer (1993) defined efficiency as the level to which organizations are able to maximise resource make use of. Thus, conducting

organizational performance efficiency analysis helps organizations to determine the extent to which they use available resources.

Finally, quality, on the other hand, is defined as the extent to which organizations meet or exceed customer expectations (Deming, 1986). Schools, for example, can also investigate different aspects of quality. They can examine the extent to which they are rendering quality teaching or investigate the extent to which the level of quality of teaching they provide meets student's need.

Whatever the aspects or dimensions of organizational performance (effectiveness, efficiency and quality) to be assessed are, the importance of measuring them lies in their implications not only for education management personnel, for instance, but also for other parties such as students and agencies in charge of issuing and monitoring regulatory requirements. Thus, it is essential that education institutions, adopt an adequate and clear performance measurement approach.

Rendering effective and efficient organizational performance, organizational performance indicators need to be adopted and practiced. This is because such indicators reflect specific points on the continuum of organizational performance measure.

Wisner and Fawcett (1991) proposed two reasons for adopting performance management systems: to compare one's own competitive position with that of one's competitors and to check on the accomplishment of one's own objectives. Cochrane (1993) recommends that performance indicators need to be reported to assess "value for money" and generate notions of accountability in a hierarchical model of managerial control.

Wisner and Fawcett (1991) points out that both policymakers and executives accept organizational performance indicators to discover the extent to which they are efficient

and quality oriented, to justify the requirement for additional resources, to demonstrate that their existence adds value, and to improve the relevance of their function to the organization.

To carry out efficient, quality and effective organizational performance management systems, organizations including education institution, need to fulfil certain fundamentals. The following section, therefore, tackles these requirements.

4. Organizational Performance Indicators

Organizational performance indicators reflect specific points on the continuum of organizational performance measure. Thus, such indicators are disseminated to a number of end users (e. g. , policy makers, teachers, professionals and students). This is because performance indicators, are not only useful to these end users, but they can address important social and economic needs as well.

Organizational performance indicators could be system input-oriented (e. g. , teacher – student ratio, number of toppers from other schools taking admission) , system process-oriented (e. g. , number of annual training hours per employee) or system output-oriented (e. g. , student passout rates).

School B may be called less effective than school A when school A does better in attaining its core objectives. It is the common understanding of school effectiveness that comes out from about three decades of research under this heading.

It is a definition that requires more accuracy, and, moreover, needs more explanation thus, remains debatable.

First of all, the assessment in the general definition should be "fair", which means that attainment of goals measures needs to be adjusted for possibly diverging entrance attributes of the units (in this case the students) on which these measures are taken. In research practice this implies that outcome

measures that mirror goal-attainment are to be corrected for past achievement, proxy's like scholastic aptitude or socio-economic status or both (Scheerens & Bosker, 1995). This is also called as the "value-added" perspective in determining school effectiveness. The truth that the determination of school effectiveness is usually conceptualized as a relative endeavor should also be explicitly underlined. Schools are evaluated among themselves on value-added effectiveness measure rather than being evaluated by applying absolute standards.

Secondly, "goal attainment" in schooling can have different meanings. What goals? Being the obvious question to be replied. Cheng (1996) demonstrates the complexity of this query by referring to various functions of schooling (human/ social functions, technical/economic functions, cultural functions, educational functions and political functions), each of which is expected to stress different categories of educational objectives. A school's goal-attainment can thus be described in terms of differing long-term societal results and in terms of more direct attainment categories at the end of a fixed period of schooling, but also with regard to these more direct achievement categories there are various possibilities and priorities to be set among them: non-cognitive vs. cognitive outcomes and, within the cognitive domain, different varieties of knowledge and skills, varying from basic subject-matter mastery to superior order problem solving skills.

Thirdly, under an organization-theoretical perspective the thought of school effectiveness could be described in even broader words. According to typologies on organizational effectiveness (Cheng, 1996; Cameron & Whetten, 1983; Scheerens, 1992;). The "goal-attainment" model is just one of the several models of organizational effectiveness. The model uses "productivity" of the organization's main process as the focus effectiveness criterion. The other models, like the resource-input model and the organization process model highlight other

criteria, namely acquired resources and student intake and silky internal functioning respectively.

Finally, it should worth noting in school effectiveness *research*, the inquiry does not stop by, for example ranking schools on the basis of their value-added performance, aims to answer the question to which specific features of school organization, such differences could be attributed to. The effectiveness of a school is inherently a causal concept, in which the black box of "a school" is unlocked in order to divulge specific variables that are related to the effect criterion. Slowly, as will be clarified in subsequent sections school effectiveness research has directed to the development of causal models in which these various features are related to each other and the effect condition.

In the majority of educational effectiveness studies, attainment in basic school subjects, writing and reading in the native language and mathematics, is employed as effect-criterion. It should also be noted that the most of the educational effectiveness research is carried out at the primary and lower secondary school level. In this context, a discussion on the significance of education of this limiting choice of effect criteria in educational effectiveness research will be left out (Cheng, 1996, Scheerens, 1992;). The achievement in basic school subjects is adequately important to shape out how such results are best achieved.

As mentioned earlier, researchers often lack consensus on what comprises school effectiveness. It has been debated in the input-output perspective (Cheng, 1996); in the viewpoint of schools in which students grow further than might be expected from consideration of its intake (Sammons and Mortimore, 1995); improvement in student achievement and on a more broader stand that should not spotlight on simple academic achievement (Sammons et al., 1996). Reynolds et. al. (1996) are of the viewpoint that effectiveness is dependent on people and

the available resources. Hence the challenge in defining school effectiveness is reliant on people who are forced to decide from competing values. (Stoll and Fink, 1996). Inspectorate of Schools in Scotland views that effectiveness should be evaluated by the product, and that the final product of schooling is the 'value added': what pupils have achieved from their years in school.

There is a row that a school is effective if school processes effect in observable (not always quantifiable) positive results among its students constantly over a period of time (Reynolds, 1985;), which implies that the effectiveness of a school is depending more on its 'processes' and measured by its 'outcomes' rather than on its 'intake'. The 'Intake', plays only a marginal task in school effectiveness (HMI, 1977). This is in sharp contrast with the argument that differential result of school plays an important role in school effectiveness (Teddlie and Reynolds, 2000, p. 15).

Researcher Mortimore's view was that an effective school put in an extra value to its students' results as compared to other schools serving similar intakes (Sammons and Mortimore, 1995). The concept of the 'value added' by the school effected in a need to explicitly centre on student outcomes in all methodologies involving school effectiveness investigation. This then directed to methodological issues such as consistency and stability in effectiveness. Hoy and Miskel (2001) debated that a school is deemed as effective only if the outcome of its performance meets or exceeds its goals. Important here is the view that an effective school is one that endorses high levels of student accomplishment for all students in the school (Murphy, 1990). There is no surprise, therefore that academic emphasis and regular monitoring of student academic progress has been sighted as important correlates of an effective school (Al Waner, 2005). A school is effective if it can achieve or exceed its academic goals. A slightly different view is that schools are effective if their students

achieve at a higher than average level as compared to an average school (Cuttance, 1985, p. 13).

School effectiveness is the capability of a school to achieve or exceed its goals. These set goals should be reflective of students' academic ability. There is also a need to take value added scores into consideration of prior accomplishment of pupils on entry to school (Teddlie and Reynolds, 2000, p. 72; Sammons et al, 1996a ,). An effective school hence is debated as a school that can accomplish or exceed its prior set goals. In Australia, they define effective schools as those that successfully advance the learning and personal development of all of their students (ACT, 2005). This is a stark contrast from the USA and UK perspective of an effective school being reviewed merely by academic performance.

The above mentioned studies gave various perspectives of what comprises school effectiveness or what an effective school is, the varied views lead to the understanding that '..... while all reviews assume that effective schools can be distinguished from ineffective ones, there is no agreement yet on just what comprises an effective school. ' (Reid, Hopkins and Holly, 1987, p. 22)

Schreerens (2000) attaches that 'School effectiveness is a not an easy concept to define and once defined is of a nature difficult to reason'. Hence the idea of school effectiveness has several approaches and as Firestone (1991, p. 2) noted that 'Defining the effectiveness of a particular school always requires choices among competing values'. Hence, he adds that 'the criteria of effectiveness will be a subject of political debate'.

Hall (1972) recognized the following stakeholders in schools– teachers, principals, students, school board members, superintendent of the school and parents, administrative staff, which has been further refined by Gupta and Vohra as they clubbed

school board members, superintendent of the school and administrative staff and named them Administrators.

5. Conclusion

A number of conditions have to be met in order to carry out efficient, effective and quality organizational performance systems. Organizational performance indicators need to be in line with the organization's strategy. Thus, the initial point is to determine which strategy the educational institution wants to measure. For example, College X may adopt a strategy dedicated to improving the University examination pass out rate¹ whereas college Y may target increasing the average percentage marks obtained in the University examination.

It is important to create an active feedback loop in the institution which will help to professionals to track the performance. Once the system is clearly developed, it is essential that firm's top management, in particular, are totally committed and dedicated to the strategy.

The Performance indicators need to be easily calculable from fairly readily available data. Systematic mechanisms should be adopted to make these essential features or requirements of organizational performance management systems part of organizational culture.

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¹ Pass out Rate = Number of students passing the University examination x 100/No. of students appearing the University Examination

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