A critical analysis of performance appraisal system for teachers in public sector universities of Pakistan: A case study of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB)

Muhammad Imran Rasheed, Hassan Danial Aslam*, Saira Yousaf and Amna Noor

Department of Management Sciences, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

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Performance appraisal systems are always of imperative concern of any organization/institution while managing its human resources. Although, higher education institutions depends upon both teaching and non teaching staff working in it, yet major responsibility comes upon teachers who are the source of student’s knowledge, learning and development. Therefore, this need of teachers’ performance management compels these institutions to have systematic performance appraisal systems, in order to administer, evaluate and enhance teacher’s performance. The purpose of this study is to explore various aspects of performance appraisal (PA) systems used for teachers in higher educational institutions (HEIs) and to address the question of how appraisal can play its role in improving performance of teachers in higher education of Pakistan. Researchers have undertaken Public Sector University of Pakistan, as a case study in the present research. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research approach has been adopted which consist of a questionnaire in order to get primary data for investigating different aspects of current performance appraisal system and in-depth interviews in order to study thorough perceptions of teachers regarding performance appraisal approaches in their institution. Findings have shown that obsolete evaluation system, exclusion of students’ feedback, untrained evaluators and decreased motivation for the process are the potential hindering factors for performance appraisal systems of the case study university. Researchers have also explored various suggestive solutions, after discussing the potential concerns of teachers regarding said factors. This study will not only contribute in performance management research but can also be an effective study for considering potential issues and challenges while implementing performance appraisal system in universities of developing countries like Pakistan.

Key words: Human resource management (HRM), performance appraisal (PA), performance evaluation, performance planning, higher education commission (HEC), teacher, higher education institutions (HEIs).

INTRODUCTION

Remarkable changes and advancements have been emerged in the higher education set up of Pakistan in the last few years. Higher Education Commission Pakistan (HEC) is carrying out various programs for improving teachers learning and development for the enhanced performance of Universities of Pakistan. Revising compensation packages, training programs, increased facilities, indigenous and foreign scholarships for improving qualification and many others are the part of such schemes initiated by HEC. Similar to every organization, after allocating various resources to teachers’ development and spending billion of rupees on them, HEC demands loyalty, perfection, effort and sincerity from teachers in return.

Undoubtedly, there is an increased pressure on HEIs to enhance the quality of educational system due to this active role of HEC and competitive market environment with increased number of HEIs in the country. Since teacher is the pivot of whole educational system; hence, HEIs are struggling hard for their development through systematic

*Corresponding author. E-mail: h_danial_aslam@live.com.
approaches such as performance appraisal (PA). Measuring performance of employees and taking steps when it does not match the standards is a core exercise of management in any organization. Educational institutions are not exempted from this philosophy of performance evaluation where the performance of teachers should be comprehended systematically as they are nucleus of the labor force of an educational institution.

This is another fact, when teachers perform well, students are high achievers and institutions contribute more towards higher education. The present study is aimed at analyzing performance appraisal (PA) system for teachers in a public sector university and to elaborate the problems associated with this system. This research has elaborated various factors that are influential to the performance appraisal system for teachers for their working effectiveness, in enhancing their performance in order to increase the institutional strength. Islamia University of Bahawalpur has been undertaken as a case study for the present research. It was established in 1925 as a religious institution (Jamia Islamia) and was chartered as a general university in 1975. Today more than 12000 students are studying in its 45 departments. Whereas 500 teachers are teaching in permanent faculty and about 200 in visiting faculty as Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers. The following have been set as objectives of the study:

1. To analyze performance appraisal (PA) system and appraisal procedures for teachers in IUB.
2. To understand the importance of performance planning, performance review discussion (PRD) and continuous dialogue session for teachers’ performance appraisal.
3. To explore the significance of feedback in evaluating teachers’ performance.
4. To elaborate problems which are being faced by teachers regarding performance appraisal in IUB.
5. To suggest the recommendations with their implications.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

IUB was taken as case, where an exploratory research supported by survey strategy has been conducted to study performance appraisal (PA) system for teachers in higher education and to explore the problems that are associated with this system. Primary data has been collected through questionnaire and In-depth interviews of Chairmen/ HOD, Deans and teachers have been conducted by the researchers. Stratified sampling method has been used in this research. Three strata were selected as Dean, Chairman/HOD and faculty. The sample size determined by researchers was 50, belonging to all three strata explained previously. 50 valid questionnaires were analyzed and the results of the questionnaire have been discussed to identify which type of performance appraisal system currently persists in IUB and what are the problems faced by teachers related to this system and how effectively this system is being used in IUB. In order to increase reliability of current research, in-depth interviews have also been conducted from 10 interviewees belonging to all three strata and were included in discussion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance and performance appraisal

Performance appraisal is a continuous process through which performance of employees is identified, measured and improved in the organization. This process includes various practices like recognition of employees’ achievements, providing them regular feedback and offering career development (Aguinis, 2007; Lnsbury, 1988). Wilson (2005) supported the idea and explored that performance management is neither a technique nor a single step process, it can be considered as a set of process that includes knowledge of employees about what their managers expect of them, their motivation to perform well, mentoring and evaluation of their performance aimed at identifying areas where the improvements are needed.

Need of performance appraisal systems

Longenecker (1999) found that there are many reasons, why an organization needs a formal performance appraisal system; it is needed to take smart decisions regarding salary increases, promotions, demotions, terminations and transfers. Similarly, Valance (1999) advocated another major need that PA system is a tool that can assess and suggest improvements in employee productivity. Cokin (2004) put his opinion that PA system is important for organizations, as it mainly focuses on employees to develop their capabilities. Moreover, it does not only do capacity building but it helps managers in timely predictions and taking actions promptly to uncertain changes.

Various practices in performance management

Annual confidential report (ACR) system was introduced in the 1940s, and is still being used in public sector organizations of many developing countries. Communication gaps, personal biasness, lack of employees’ participation are some of the negative aspects of ACR system which makes it an old and ineffective system, that does not help in employees’ learning and development, (Stafylarakis et al., 2002). The next practice was management by objectives (MBO) which allows the managers to know what is being expected from them (Walters, 1995). However, critics argue that MBO focuses on results and fails to notice the job behavior (Greer, 2001; Stafylarakis and Eldridge, 2002).

Afterwards, performance Appraisal systems were introduced in the 1970s. Newstrom et al. (1993) argued
that the philosophy of performance appraisal systems has been positively changed over the years, previously it was thought that identifying employee behavior his successes and failures is the purpose of performance appraisal systems but now it is believed that PA is used to create learning environment and to motivate the employee to enhance his performance. Armstrong (2006) maintained that creating a culture of high performance where all members are responsible for continuous improvement of business processes and their own skills is the aim of PA system.

360-degree appraisal systems

Milliman et al. (1994) maintained that 360-degree appraisal system is more effective as compared to the previous systems that were one sided and could be biased at times. In 360-degree appraisal system, information is obtained through several sources, it includes the boss, top management, assistants, co-workers, customers, dealers, advisors, and community officials. All these can be classified into internal and external parties. In 360-degree appraisal system, information can be obtained from anyone who interacts with the employee and can tell how that employee behaves with him. Similarly, Antonioni (2002) supported the idea that 360 degree feedback encourages teamwork and smooth down the work relationships between employees and managers.

Importance of trust in performance appraisal systems

Mani (2002) has concluded by his research in East Carolina University that employees perceive appraisal system as a better tool for management decisions when they are satisfied with their supervisor and have trust on him. They do not perceive fairness of the system on the basis of the program’s procedures. Roberts (2003) supported the idea that it is important that employees must have trust on the fairness of performance appraisal system and outcomes of the system would be acceptable for employees, only if they have trust on transparency and fairness of the system, otherwise these outcomes go as useless consequence by which the system becomes ineffective.

Performance planning, a significant component of performance appraisal

Rao (2008) stressed that in performance planning an employee structurally segregates his activities so that he can plan his own development and organizational outcomes. According to him identifying key performance areas and setting quantifiable targets for the improvement of his performance in future is the best technique for an employee to plan his performance. Performance of employees should be increased by performance management system. But unfortunately, performance appraisals become ineffective when management gives focus to evaluation but not to the performance improvement and development of employees. Greer (2001) and Weihrich and Koontz (2005) maintained that when people are involved in goal setting they consider themselves responsible for their results, and achievement of their goals also depends upon the degree of support (resources, processes, systems) employees get from their management.

Benefits of employees’ participation in performance appraisal systems

Jordan (1992) have asserted his views about the participation of employees in appraisal systems. Jordan said that through participation, employees are given an opportunity to raise their voice. Biasness reduces and trust on the supervisors develops when performance standards and criteria for evaluation are set with the help of employee in a joint session between employee and supervisor. Decreased employee participation increases appraisal related tension and appraiser- appraisee conflicts.

Continuous feedback enhances quality of performance appraisal systems

Somerrick (1993) emphasized that continuous feedback and performance review discussions must be conducted between supervisor and employee for effective performance administration. Somerrick (1993) further suggested that quality of appraisal system can be enhanced through continuous dialogue sessions, which means that whenever an employee faces a problem, it must be discussed with the supervisor rather waiting for months when performance will be rated and documented. Bascal (1999) presented his view that in PA system, supervisors must clarify what they actually want from their staff. Bascal (1999) has also suggested that employees can talk to their supervisors about how they should be managed and how they can give their best output. They can discuss the support or resources which they need from their supervisors in order to achieve expected outcomes.

DATA INTEGRATION AND ANALYSES

Demographics of the respondents

The survey was conducted in three main campuses of the university: Abbasia, Khawaja Faridand Baghdad ul Jaded Campuses. Profile of the respondents includes professors,
assistant professors and lecturers who are serving at Dean, Chairman/HOD and at various faculty level. The demographics of the respondents shows that teachers belonged to 12 different departments of the university. Their level of experience proves that 14% were newly recruited teachers with an experience of 1 to 2 years, 30% had served between 2 to 5 years, 24% between 5 to 10 years, 20% were 10 to 20 years experienced and experience of 12% respondents was more than 20 years. On the management level, major response came from faculty side that is 88%. Respondents who were serving as chairman or head of the department 8 and 4% were dean of a faculty. 12% were professors, 32% assistant professors and 46% were lecturers.

**Objectives and purpose of performance appraisal in IUB**

Discussing the purpose of PA in IUB, majority of the teachers believe it is conducted for promotion purposes, as results of the survey shows that 74% (Figure 1) of the respondents approved it for promotion purpose. During interview sessions, respondents stressed that the purpose of PA in IUB is not only promotion, rather it is conducted for taking all decisions related to career development of teachers including salary decisions, bonuses, training, transfers, providing financial aids and scholarships etc. Here comes divergence of opinions amongst the faculty and chairmen. Chairmen interviewed, also argued that counseling and training is provided to teachers as a result of poor performance but teachers disagreed with their point of view, as an assistant professor said that

“I have been serving in IUB for the last 20 years, but I never observed that a teacher has been provided training as result of his poor performance”.

This divergence of opinion shows that there is a communication gap between teachers and chairmen of various departments in IUB or it may also be the lack of trust that teachers should have on their chairmen in order to develop a good performance appraisal system, as proved by previous studies (Sarwar et al., 2010; Rasheed et al., 2010) and indicated in literature review.

**Procedure of performance appraisal in IUB**

The response of the questionnaire statement “how often is performance appraisal conducted in University” was apparent that 94% of the respondents notified it is conducted yearly. This shows that teachers in IUB are well informed about the performance appraisal that is conducted in the University for evaluating their performance. The second question asked was about the supervisor who conducts performance appraisal of teachers in IUB; results have shown that 92% of the respondents think that the chairman of their department conducts their performance appraisal. 4% are of the view that this is the Vice Chancellor who actually conducts performance appraisal of teachers in university.

In-depth research of secondary documents of the University shows that performance appraisal performance which is often called Annual Confidential Report (ACR) used for evaluating teacher’s performance in IUB has four parts. The 1st part of this form is to be filled by the teacher concerned and to be submitted to the Chairman of the department who is reporting officer for teachers in IUB, the 2nd part is to be filled by the reporting officer (Chairman) and to be submitted to the 1st countersigning authority who is Dean of the concerned faculty, the 3rd part is to be filled by Dean of the faculty and then it goes to the second countersigning authority who is the Vice Chancellor of the university, who reviews the first three parts and on the basis of which, he finalizes performance appraisal of teachers.

Indisputably, Vice Chancellor is the final competent authority to conduct performance appraisal of teachers in universities but chairman is the immediate supervisor in this case. A good indication in IUB is that performance appraisal forms have continuously been reviewed and improved by the university management that is, the reason why IUB performance evaluation Performa is considered to be an effective evaluation form by the current research respondents. The same response can be observed in the current research as 82% of the respondents agreed that it is categorized according to teachers’ designation that is, a different form for professor, assistant professor and lecturer. Performance appraisal system in IUB is an ACR (annual confidential report) system which is an obsolete performance appraisal technique. 71% of the respondents showed their extreme reservations about the current performance appraisal mechanism. Teachers stressed that ACR is a confidential report which is not shared with the person whom evaluation is being exercised. Also, teachers remain unaware about their high rated and low rated traits in the report.

Review of the literature shows that researchers have explored many modern types of performance appraisal as management by objectives (MBO), performance appraisal with continuous feedback and 360 degree feedback systems. However, the research has shown that IUB is still relying on ACR system, where evaluation of the employee is kept confidential from him; hence hindering the improvement in his future performance. Results have shown that university needs to have a descriptive system rather than an evaluative one where each teacher should be made aware of his evaluation, in order to give him constructive feedback for further improvement.

**Participation of teachers in performance planning**

Results have shown that 72% (Figure 2) of the respondents
disagreed with the statement, “Are the teachers allowed to participate in setting the standards for measuring performance?” and clearly mentioned that they are not allowed to participate in performance planning process, whereas 20% (Figure 3) among senior ranked teachers think that sometimes they are involved in the procedure. Same was the response on the question that “does the Chairman meet with each teacher for planning of the teacher’s performance? As 70% notified, they are not encouraged to meet the Chairman for performance development plan. Teachers blamed the current ACR system for decreased performance planning among chairman and faculty members. They pointed out that the present evaluation system does not allow teachers to get involved in performance decision making, goal setting and evaluation methods.

Today, when leading organizations are moving towards open/comprehensive systems of performance appraisal consisting of setting mutual objectives, performance development plan and managing performance throughout the year, this is an alarming situation in public universities of Pakistan that university administration is still embedded
with archaic appraisal method.

### Importance of feedback of students in performance appraisal for teachers

Literature has shown that 360-degree feedback appraisal system has become one of the prominent performance appraisal techniques of managing employees' performance. Various researches (Aslam and Sarwar, 2010; Tornow, 1998; Bernardin, 1986; Lepsinger, 1997) have proved that this technique cannot only give comprehensive performance review but will also indulge transparency in the system. However, the situation of the university used as the case study is somewhat different where 62% (Figure 4) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, “the opinion of colleagues and students are considered for appraising performance.” During in-depth interview sessions, it was found that recently, IUB has started taking opinion of students about the performance of teachers; although this feedback is not included as an evaluating tool in teachers’ evaluation. Respondents stressed that in order to have a transparent evaluation system, evaluation should be taken from all stakeholders. They demanded that teaching should be the primary evaluation measure on which their evaluation should be taken under consideration. Study shows that there is immense need of transparent and open appraisal system where feedback from all associated sources should be included while compiling teacher’s annual performance report. University need to develop a systematic performance appraisal system where feedback is taken according to the 360 degree feedback mechanism which emphasizes on getting feedback from all sources, that is from the concerned teachers, colleagues, students, administrative staff and Chairmen. This feedback need to be shared continuously with teachers in order to enhance their weak areas, particularly the opinions of students about which teachers are more concerned. Finally, if 360 degree feedback would be used as a management tool for decision making for teachers’ promotion and training purposes, it would be undoubtedly more helpful in performance improvement and development of teachers, as well as of the university.

### Factors that contribute to the performance of teachers in IUB

Job description always plays an imperative role while evaluating performance of employees in any organization, as it provides the basis for evaluating performance. Job tasks mentioned in job description proves to be evaluating standards on which performance is evaluated keeping in view how efficiently and effectively an employee has achieved the tasks which are mentioned in job description. However, in IUB survey has shown somewhat different situation as 78% respondents are of the view that they are unaware of the factors which are considered by the evaluator while measuring their performance. On the other hand, content analysis of interviews with chairmen of different departments show that job description and teachers’ attainment of previous goals and objectives are considered while making any judgment about the teachers. However, they agreed that the institution is lacking comprehensive job description which allows them to evaluate teacher’s performance on both subjective and
objective measures. Same concern was pointed out by the teachers who emphasized that the university needs to develop a detailed evaluation system with clear objectives and evaluating standards for teachers. Lack of lucid and coherent objectives or goals not only put stress on employees but also demotivate them for further progress in their profession (Rashid et al., 2010).

**Performances review discussions are significant**

Providing sufficient constructive feedback to the employees at various stages is always imperative for professional growth of an employee. Performances review discussions are significant in this regard for development and enhancement of professional development of the employees. This is another area that lacks performance management system in public sector universities of Pakistan, as 58% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, “My university/department conducts frequent performance appraisal review and feedback session”. Similarly, 70% of the interview respondents expressed that the Chairman does not discuss their assessment in terms of strong and poor performance areas. This communication gap between department head and teachers initiates demotivation among teachers for achieving enhanced performance levels.

Same is the case for performance development of teachers in IUB that is training, coaching, and skill enhancement workshop practices. Survey shows that 80% respondents disagreed with the statement that “My University arranges coaching and training sessions for teachers’ professional development when required”. Armstrong (2009) emphasized in his research that performance management is not only about performance evaluation of an employee but it also encompasses performance development or professional growth of an employee; however, research findings have shown that IUB is not undertaking both dimensions (performance evaluation and development) of performance management. Interview analysis has shown that performance appraisals in IUB are restricted to evaluation of performance not development of performance. The hindering factors of performance development as stressed by teachers in interviews are lack of communication, untrained evaluators, decreased willingness for the process and secretive performance reports of teachers. Literature stresses the philosophy of open appraisals, where supervisors play an important role in improving performance of their employees by conducting joint sessions for mutual goal setting, evaluation standards and constructive feedback. During the performance period, whenever supervisors observe an employee is not performing according to the planned objectives, he must call him and inform him how to overcome the areas where he lacks, rather than waiting for months for the performance period to end. The same practice is called managing performance throughout the year by Armstrong (2009).

He pointed out that performance has to be rectified right at the time when it is observed below the marked standard. He further explores that the philosophy behind performance management is to give continuous performance development by providing constructive feedback throughout the performance year. Research has shown that continuous performance is lacking practice in the case study university. Teachers need to identify the factors which facilitated him in performing well and which

![Figure 4. Impact of PA on job performance.](image-url)
prevented him, to do better. Afterwards these factors need to be discussed with department head in transparent and trust oriented environment, so that lacking areas could be explored and development opportunities could be unearthed for skill development. This contentious approach of enhancing performance by constructive feedback would play an imperative role in enhancing teaching performance.

**Impact of performance appraisal on teachers’ performance**

The last section of the questionnaire explored the willingness of the respondents (teachers), for their performance appraisal, in order to have effective performance development. Results have shown that teachers agreed that the performance appraisal systems can affect their performance in a positive manner, if conducted fairly, transparently and systematically. Analysis explored that 62% of the respondents agreed while 14% strongly agreed with the statement that “performance appraisal has an impact on effective job performance". Similarly, 50% of the respondents agreed (with 10% strongly agreeing) with the statement that “performance appraisal program can increase the professional development of teachers” and 52% agreed with the statement that “performance appraisal program can help in clarifying job duties and responsibilities of teachers”?

Research results have clearly shown that teachers in IUB have strong desires for transparent and systematic performance appraisal. As stressed by Cokins (2004), performance appraisal can only result in better outcomes when employees have trust on the system and will get involved in mutual goal setting in a translucent way. Interview analysis has explored that teachers in IUB have a strong belief that a performance appraisal system can be helpful to them in increasing their performance and professional development, if conducted in a systematic way by the university management. These findings about the impact of performance appraisal on teachers’ performance are in accordance with the findings of a research conducted in East Carolina University by Mani (2002).

**FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY**

On the basis of the survey, the following are the findings of researchers from the current research:

1. It has been found that performance appraisal for a teacher in various departments of IUB is conducted mainly for administrative purpose. The objective of this exercise here is to take administrative decisions only as salary increases and promotions etc.

2. IUB is using an ACR technique for performance evaluation of its teachers which is not helpful in increasing or developing teachers’ performance in the University. Teachers are not satisfied with this method of performance appraisal. They want a systematic and comprehensive system aimed on the philosophy of 360-degree feedback systems where students’ feedback should be particularly considered while evaluating teachers’ performance.

3. Researchers have found that teachers in many departments of IUB are not encouraged to participate in planning their performance. No meetings are conducted between the Chairmen and teachers in different educational departments of IUB for this purpose. Targets and goals for the performance period are not formally communicated to the teachers neither mutually decided. Moreover teachers are not well informed about the factors that are considered by their heads to evaluate their performance. Researchers feel that most of the time, Chairmen of several departments in IUB take subjective judgments to appraise their teachers’ performance.

4. Another major finding of the survey is that every time performance review discussion does not happen between the head and the teacher. Teachers are not communicated about their successes and failures in past performance. Although situation is relatively better in some departments like management sciences, but majority of the Chairmen are unaware of the philosophy of modern appraisal system.

5. Teachers are much more concerned about the appraisal system used for evaluating their performance in university. They think, their achievements must be recognized properly and they should be provided training and counseling, as a result of poor performance but for that all, they also want university to achieve their trust on the system. They believe that their performance can be enhanced if and only if they would have trust on performance appraisal system. Moreover, teachers in IUB believe that performance appraisal system may have a large impact on their performance.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of the findings, researchers recommend that the following measures must be taken by the university management in order to improve the current performance appraisal system for teachers in IUB.

1. Performance appraisal should not only be conducted to take promotional decisions for teachers, rather it should focus on improvements in teachers’ performance and to develop teachers’ professional career.

2. 360-degree feedback system should be the base of appraisal system in IUB. Feedback should be taken from colleagues of the teacher, administrative staff, and his supervisor like chairman or HOD and from his students.
Feedback of students should be used in taking decisions regarding teachers’ performance. This feedback should be gradually taken and provided systematically to the teachers.

3. Performance planning should be conducted before the performance period, where teachers should be allowed to set the goals and objectives for them. Teachers must be encouraged to identify their strengths and weaknesses; so that they can determine their key performance arrears (KPA’s) and set goals for future performance. Chairman/HOD should conduct meetings with each teacher for discussion on the planning of teacher’s performance, where each teacher presents his/her performance development plan. In addition, continuous dialogue sessions should also be conducted between teachers and Chairmen. If during the performance period, the chairman feels that a teacher is not working up to the standards, he should communicate him immediately rather than waiting for the end of the year.

4. PA system in IUB should be future oriented, it should be a descriptive system rather than an evaluative one. There should be maximum objectivity in the system rather than a system based on subjective judgments of the head. It should not be conducted only to rate the performance of teachers in the past period; somewhat it should focus on the question of how the performance of teachers can be enhanced in future. How the teacher can overcome his weak performance areas.

5. Chairmen/HODs of various departments in IUB should be provided training from HR specialists to conduct appraisals of their teachers systematically and according to the philosophy of modern appraisal systems. They should be trained enough for the counseling of teachers. After the performance is appraised, meetings on performance review discussion should be conducted between the Chairmen and their teachers. Where in successes and failures of teachers should be discussed in learning environment. Chairmen should notify teachers, how they can cope up with the factors that prevented them from doing better in the past period.

6. Chairmen should recognize achievements and accomplishments of teachers properly, which is a highly unaddressed strategy of enhancing teachers’ motivation. He can do this by offering different rewards to them. These rewards can be monetary incentives, excellence awards, teacher of the year and public praise etc. When the head properly recognizes achievements and accomplishments of their faculty members in their departments, there is no doubt that will get more motivation to perform in an effectual manner.

**Conclusion**

The primary goal of the study was to analyze the current performance appraisal system for teachers in IUB. Findings of the study suggest several ways that Chairmen of educational departments and the university management should have to adapt in order to enhance the quality of this system and its impact on teachers’ performance. Recognition, feedback, participation in performance planning and performance review meetings can be the factors of enhanced performance and should always be considered, while developing a good performance appraisal system for teachers in HEIs. Findings have shown that the role of supervisor (the Chairman) is important in evaluating employees (teachers), developing their capabilities and getting good results from them. Therefore, Chairmen should also be trained enough for conducting performance appraisal of teachers according to the philosophy of modern appraisal systems.

**REFERENCES**


