
Critiquing Teacher Performance Management in HEIs: Reviving the Observation Cube

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance in any industry needs to be planned, executed, monitored, reviewed, and revisited - in short, managed - continuously. Each employee is unique and delivered as a package, containing inseparable set of qualities, traits, ambitions and motivations. Teaching is one of the oldest professions known to mankind, yet education sector resorted to performance management much later than several service rendering industries. In its nascent stages, the mechanisms used are still malleable, and what better than to strike when the iron is hot. The current system of teacher performance management is studied to identify its efficacy. The Observation Cube is an apt yet less used device to manage performance of teachers. This tool captures the contributions made by teachers in multiple roles. The study proposes a new system of performance management, based on behaviors observed. The tool brings to light the importance of observation for betterment of present appraisal methods. This paper is original in content and while the observation cube is a powerful tool, it is less used, and even less studied. The study is conducted in Indian Universities, but may find enhanced application in other parts of the world as well.

Key words

Higher Education, Observation cube, Performance management, Performance measurement, Teacher performance management

INTRODUCTION

Performance management is the success mantra in every industry. In corporate houses it has become very commonplace to have a fully functional system of conjoined goal setting, execution to achieve targets laid out, formal and informal feedbacks as an aftermath of seasoned monitoring, reviews in a formal setting, and revisiting the goals to check level of accomplishment to set a prelude for developmental plans to follow. The whole exercise, no doubt, seems quite cumbersome, time consuming and calls for commitment to make it a success. One must remember at all times that, none of the activities listed above, are part of the regular role of any manager/supervisor. They have to be performed over and above normal, time bound, role requirements. Designing an efficient performance management system (PMS) is not just time taking but an expensive affair too. Having invested the time, efforts and money, there is no certainty of triumph unless the entire organization is convinced about its appropriateness. Education industry is one of the earliest to establish itself. The profession is noble, enlightening paths to millions of students who will take charge as responsible citizens of the country. Also unlike other industries, education sector never faces a recession. One must dwell upon whether these were reasons enough for the sector to not embark on a PMS for teachers. Well, the author begs to differ. In fact these are pretty much the same reasons why it must – for sure - adopt a system for efficient performance management of its teachers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling technique: The study is based chiefly on data gathered from three HEIs located in India. The HEIs focusing on undergraduate education have been chosen for this purpose. Though sample size seems to be small, these HEIs are very similar in structure and functioning, and are driven by norms set by a common body/authority (University Grants Commission). Thus, beyond a certain point, the samples tend to get homogeneous as is explained by the concept of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio, P.J. & Powell, W.W.,

1983). The Principals, however, are given the autonomy to decide appropriate measures for internal functioning of their respective HEIs. All employees in these HEIs are appraised using a common appraisal tool.

Data collection: The study predominantly uses primary data collected from teachers and Principals of HEIs as specified above. In each of these HEIs around 4-5 teachers who had a minimum tenure of 5 years in the said HEI were chosen for observation and study. This was done purposefully to ensure that responses were not biased on account of lack of experience or information with recently appointed teachers. Principals were approached for the appraisal data of the teachers so observed. Secondary data has been used only where warranted, essentially for the purpose of making candid references.

Tools used: The teachers were observed over a period of time, on various roles, and where relevant, data was gathered with structured questionnaires containing closed ended questions. The head of these HEIs – Principals, and in their absence, Vice Principals – were interviewed so as to elicit information on how they managed the performance of teachers in their institutions, and what was the trend of appraisal of those teachers who were chosen to be observed.

Research objective: The research was done to understand the dynamics of performance management in the education industry. The students at HEIs are at a crucial threshold of their life. While they are not children at school that may be chided nor adults who are knowledgeable and mature about making a career decision; it is a vulnerable age group that HEIs cater to, whose destiny a teacher can make or break (G. Menon, 2014). This study has at its heart, the following objectives:

-) To critique the role of observation in managing teacher's performance
-) To identify the myths relating to teachers and teaching
-) To study the multifaceted role played by teachers in HEIs
-) To suggest measures for better management of teacher's performance

LITERATURE REVIEW

Though the current study is based on scenarios of performance management practices in Indian Higher Education Institutions, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the mechanisms are similar in developing countries of other continents as well. The topic of performance management as especially measurements and reviews are highly condemned, while some of them seem to question the basic premise used in the performance management.

Importance of observation

Observation in certain environments are considered important, and resorted to as a means of data collection. Weiner, R & Jacobs, A (2011) through their study identified a sad state of affairs; that observation though a mainstay for teacher evaluations, had reduced to a mere check-mark activity. It was resorted to once a year, and for tenured teachers, classroom observation was made once in few years! Further, high-performing organizations only focused on investing time and attention only on professional employees. A recent study (TELA, 2016) accepted that observation of classroom behavior (OECD, 2009) is utmost essential for assessing the teacher's performance as well as to obtain useful information for the sake of improvement. While the teachers will be regularly observed, they opined that the frequency and type of observation must be based on individual circumstances of the teacher and the institutional needs. The study also suggested the need to conduct surprise inspections, or random checks in classrooms in addition to formal mechanisms for observation. An interesting contribution of this study is the identification of the need to observe teacher's behavior even in responsibilities outside the classroom. Emphasis was also laid on observation of leadership and management roles, and empowered scenarios. Observations had to simultaneously engage ongoing, structured feedback, on individual strengths and improvement areas. Though importance of observation is proved beyond doubt, one of the major challenges it faces as a performance assessment tool, is the lack of dedicated time for observational evaluations, and the lack of resources and attention to development of skills for observation. (OECD, 2009)

However, less known is the scientific way to conduct observation, and the significance of documentation post observation. As such observation as a tool is prone to errors (Grote, D., 2011) The task of observing is tougher than meets the eyes. Some of the few things that can go wrong with observation are

Our brains are conditioned to observe patterns in behavior/information received. This removes objectivity in observation. Similarly, the brain rejects information that do not fit into the pattern of information already stored.(Landy, F. J. & Farr, J. L., 1983)

People are busy grouping and classifying the observation, rather than noting the incident/behavior itself.(National Research Council, 1991)

The human tendency is to remember negative behavior rather than positive ones. (Fiske, T., & Taylor, S. E., 1984)

Superiors judge the behavior from the results obtained, rather than resorting to observation. It is easier to attribute certain results with certain behavior. (Murphy, K. R. & Cleveland, J. N., 1995)

What is also critical about observation, comprehends the real cause of observed behavior. While observation itself gives adequate data for analysis, the correct treatment of wrong behavior is impossible without diagnosing the real problem within. Is an employee behaving in a certain way due to inherent personality traits (which are more difficult to change and time taking) or is the behavior a function of an external stimulus (work/organization related, systemic causes). The approach to the observation, and trailing it back to the root cause can work wonders in how the observation information is used and how performances can be impacted. (Cardy & Dobbins, 1994) Another dilemma in this causal analysis is subjective perception. It is natural human tendency to blame the worker for poor performance. Observers tend to think that the cause of poor performance is the performer, while the performer tends to blame system factors for his performance shortfalls. Such difference in perception concerning cause of performance is termed as the actor/observer bias. (Weiner, 1985). For the same poor performance, the observer blames the worker and the worker blames the system. If this argument continues, and the subjectivity is not eliminated from the process, the organization may conclude on a biased diagnosis that does not improve performance but instead create conflict among and with workers.

It is heartening to note that several countries world over, such as Chile and Canada in the American continent, Denmark and France in the European continent, and Australia and Japan in the Asia-Pacific region have taken to observation, and most particularly, classroom observation, as an important source of evidence and information gathering for teacher evaluations. They agree that observation can help reveal whether a teacher adopts appropriate practices in his actual workplace, the classroom. (Isore, 2009 & UNESCO, 2007). Some colleges which have taken to a wholesome mechanism for teacher evaluation also prescribe a system of classroom, which are flanked by pre-observation and post-observation meetings. While pre-observation meetings encourage open dialogue between principal and teacher to clarify objectives of observation; the post-observation meetings focus on reflection and collaboration with a view to promote growth and performance improvement. (OECD 2009)

Observation as a skill

What is noticed is that some organizations merely communicate the need to observe, for more holistic performance management, but seldom invest any efforts at clarifying what the observation should comprise of or how to undertake it scientifically. Observation is a skill, which must be perfected. This is possible by engaging in the following.(London, M., Mone, E. M., & Scott, J. C., 2004; Roch, S. G. & O'Sullivan, B. J., 2003; Thornton, G. C. & Zorich, S., 1980, Ghoshal & Morgan, 1996)

- a. Identify specific words or deeds that explain ones performance
- b. Follow a multi-channel approach to observation. Watch out for as many details as possible.
- c. Embark on information from several sources
- d. Do not allow past performance of the employee to intervene your thought process in present observation
- e. Do not allow contingencies or abnormal situations affect your observation. If the observation cannot be set in a control group, try to ensure that observation is happening without any particular heed to situational factors.

- f. Do not get judgmental of the performance during the observation. This injects bias.
- g. Continual observation may be dysfunctional. Workers may feel that they are not trusted.

Observation of teacher's performance by higher-ups is a skill which must be appropriately practiced and nailed to perfection. While observation trainings are taking a front-seat for many institutions, some have gone an extra mile in introducing 360 degree appraisals. OECD (2009) debate that in addition to superior observation; the system must enable developmental peer observations as well, since the latter has a power to scale up teaching quality.

Observation as a prelude to documentation

The revelations brought forth by observation must be taken with a pinch of salt. Employees may not always be at ease during job performance; more so when they are aware that they are being observed. Thus it is appropriate that observations be recorded at multiple junctures during a particular period (Landy, F. J. & Farr, J. L., 1983).

The best way to handle this is to maintain notes/documentation for each employee (DeNisi, A. S. & Peters, L. H., 1996; Woehr, D. J. & Feldman, J., 1993); in a manner that is convenient to the observer. It may be an excel file on the PC, or a filing system, or a word document. It must jot down important observations over a time series, and must be referred to at the time of attempting to evaluate the employee's performance. As such it is important to keep the observation and related documentation behavior based, rather than evaluation based. The latter skews documentation in a positive or negative way, also subtly processing information of one's past performances, and they tend to be much less detailed. Specifics of the behavior are missed out, in the frenzy to be evaluative, and the purpose of observation as a tool for data collection is lost. While classifications of observations into good or bad performance may not undergo a change due to style of documentation, the evaluative observation tends to bypass opportunities for employees to understand behavior that needs correction and those which may be crucial for stakeholders.

TEACHERS' ROLES IN HEIs

Teachers of the yesteryears had a sole role of imparting education to their pupil. A profession noble in itself, enabling millions of students each year to attain invaluable knowledge and preparing them to face the real world challenges. Today, situations have quite changed. Teaching students is one of the several roles that a teacher is required to play (G. Menon, 2013). And each of these roles must be adequately evaluated for appraisals (Meyer, H.H., Kay, E., and French, J.R.P. Jr., 1965)

- a. **Teacher:** The teacher of a HEI is required to shed light on concepts and theories so as to move the students from the 'unknown' zone to the 'known' zone. The HEIs are the first of such occasions where students find themselves in a heterogeneous group, i.e., a class consisting of students from different backgrounds, different boards of schooling, a different branch of education (science, arts, commerce). In order to bring the students on a common knowledge level, teachers must ensure that basics of the course are imparted in a clear comprehensible manner, while taking care not to breed monotony among others who are already aware of concepts.
- b. **Facilitator:** In the later stages of higher education, students gain maturity, get serious and learn the art of self study, of course with some help. Concepts are ingrained in them, while they are encouraged to think on their own for new, out-of-the -box ideas and solutions. What they look forward from their teacher at this phase is only direction. A teacher is the person they trust will facilitate them by showing the torch on the right path.
- c. **Evaluator:** A teacher must be an impartial evaluator too. While teaching with all zest and ensuring that learning has taken place, one is also expected to judge the students and evaluate them on various assessments. Teachers must be creative and innovative to design assessments, and then spend several hours tirelessly to evaluate students so that there is no iota of bias in the grades assigned.
- d. **Researcher:** A teacher is required to conduct research in areas of his/her interest as well as in inter-disciplinary research. Such research outcomes must be communicated to the world through presentation at conferences/seminars or publication in renowned refereed international journals. The Journal's indexing and impact factor play a major role in deciding upon the journal that one seeks to publish in.

e. **Mentor:** A student just out of school, in a new learning environment, with new-found friends, and sometimes in a new city need someone who can answer all their queries and help them out in difficulties – personal too. Teachers will need to play the role of parents/guardians to assure them that they will help to identify solutions to their problems. A teacher is the one they confide in and speak to from the bottom of their heart. The teacher patiently listens to and offers her invaluable and expert suggestions.

f. **Guide:** At the later stage of their education, students look forward to guidance from their teachers about decisions to make for the future. They require help for choosing the right courses, the Universities they must focus on for pursuing further study, the organizations and sectors lucrative for employment, etc. A teacher always keeps herself/himself updated on market trends and industry requirements, making him/her the appropriate person to provide such advice to their student.

g. **Friend:** A teacher is no more a strict disciplinarian. Maintaining that demeanour only distances the teacher from the student. Teachers must befriend and be able to communicate and make obey in a friendly fashion. Students in HEIs experience tremendous peer pressure, and a friend is someone they would welcome to share their grievances/problems and seek remedy. A teacher is ever-ready to do this.

h. **Counselor:** A phase of life when students can get into bad company, take to bad habits, stray away from study there should always be a shoulder to lean on. The teacher exhibits care and concern, and takes timeout to help students identify the right from the wrong. Teachers are genuinely interested in the well being of their pupil and counsel them to not derail from the right track.

i. **Motivator:** The teacher must be a constant source of motivation to students who may easily get distracted or confused with peer pressure. They at times under-perform or miss their classes in order to obtain group acceptance. Teachers must motivate them to find the greater purpose of their lives and their education, and focus on the task at hand.

j. **Adept academic administrator:** A teacher is expected to be possessing excellent organizational skills, and resourceful enough to contribute towards academic administration. He/she must be able to prioritize time and work, in attending meetings, brainstorm on curriculum related matters for updation and enrichment, document the work as and when necessary so as to be retrieved for audit purposes. Teachers have to maintain records for attendance, marks on evaluation, research related evidences, meetings and their minutes, and curriculum related discussions and outcomes.

k. **Charismatic role model:** Teachers are looked upon as role models that students admire, and wish to be like, someday. They must portray habits, traits and behaviors that will be adored and will want students to imitate. Qualities of punctuality, regularity, discipline, care, are learnt from the teachers. Thus their lives, inside and outside the classroom are vital to student development. Long after a student has passed out from college, he/she must remember the charisma of the teacher, the discipline, the care and concern, the words of advice...

MYTHS ABOUT TEACHERS/TEACHING IN HEIs

Teaching is the easiest of professions: Teaching is assumed to be one of the easiest professions to pursue. It is often looked upon as one that has a comfortable job routine, limited work hours, plenty of free time (with no classes to engage), etc. This is what the grass on the other side always looks like. The inside story is that teachers in HEIs also work for around 8 hours a day, sometimes reporting to work at wee hours of the day (6:30 or 7:00 am.... when most offices/organizations haven't woken up as yet!). They may be characterized as a clan working for fixed hours of the day, but less known is the fact that they mostly carry work home.... Yes, be it preparation for the next day's class, question paper setting, assessment of student evaluations, etc. So a teachers work hours actually extend beyond the work premises. As regards free time, the time at college sans lectures is normally washed away in administrative work and other roles.

Teaching is about repeating oneself: It is easy for one to assume that corporate jobs require a lot of innovative approaches and out-of-the-box thinking, while teaching is nothing but lecturing through a monologue. As regards this perspective, one must admit that with every passing batch of students, it only gets more challenging. Education is now not just a knowledge management through monologue. It involves healthy interactions, discussions, debates, case studies, industry visits, guest lectures, and a lot more. It gets

very competitive, students are constantly exposed to new knowledge, and getting repetitive can be Dangerous.

Teaching profession is non-stressful: It is an age old belief that teaching is a very chilled out profession, and everyone's cup of tea. In fact, this is the school of thought which led to female domination in the sector. After managing all the household work, if she could engage constructively in a profession, then teaching was an obvious choice. Convenient timing, less stressful at the job, paid vacations ... a reality probably of the yesteryears. At HEIs, the environment is characterized by students, some knowledge hungry, some strewn between self goals and peer pressure, and others partially lost (homesickness often quoted to be a reason.....). The teacher, must disseminate knowledge to such an assorted bunch of students, and ensure that the knowledge transfer is effective. Today their day is as long as that of any other job, they handle several responsibilities besides teaching (often on short notice), and teachers at some colleges don't get paid vacations too! In fact when students are away, they busy themselves with exam related chores, carrying out research presentation and publication, admission procedures, and mundane administrative documentation.

Teachers must necessarily teach, research optionally: Until about a decade or two ago, teaching was all about teaching, and those with an inclination to research were permitted and encouraged to engage themselves in it. Today, research is quintessential to the teacher's profile, and he is compelled to research in specific and interdisciplinary areas with good quality publications to claim in international journals of repute. In certain colleges, research has almost replaced teaching as a primary responsibility of the teacher, and one is required to have a definite research output to maintain the stature of a teacher. Research is no more optional, and part and parcel of the teaching profile.

Teachers' performance is measured through student success: Though teacher's contribution is primarily measured through student success, there are two distinct schools of thought in this regard. First states that, student's success is a function of several factors acting jointly and severally, teaching is one of them and not the sole contributor. Thus one cannot account student outcomes to teacher contribution alone. The second school clarifies that if students success is to be measured through teaching effort, then the latter's profile must emphasize teaching and subordinate other roles, which is unfortunately not the scenario right now. Today, a teacher has several facets of performance to the job, and ideally must be evaluated against each of them.

OBSERVATION CUBE

Observation & its importance: It is well acknowledged that in addition to documented reports and facts, observation plays an important role in evaluating one's performance. Inadequate supervision and poor documentation of the observations therein, could not just be perceived as an unfair administration mechanism, but in international scenarios they could be ground enough for employee litigation. In one such case, the Spanish filed a suit against their employers that performance ratings were positively skewed on the Whites, while there was no observation to prove it (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984). The court ruled in their favor, condemning that the performance ratings given to the two groups were unjustifiable and a result of prejudice. Giving observation its due recognition, the observation cube was devised, which brought supervision and documentation to the front seat.

How to observe? Observation is critical to evaluating the overall performance deliverables of any profession/occupation. While it is not necessary to supervise constantly it must be done discreetly and frequently to encompass behaviors portrayed in various capacities and roles. Too much observation comes with its package of negatives too! (Ghoshal & Moran, 1996). The skill is on strategizing to obtain the right amount of observation, so that it neither gives an impression of continuous surveillance, nor does it seem inadequate. In order to be effective observation must be done across employees and across the multitude of tasks that he/she performs. It would be skewed if observation occurs on just one day of the month, or on one of the several roles and responsibilities shouldered. Observation will be attributed qualities of fairness only if it enables close to accurate judgments of performance, and is perceived by employees to be fair. Some useful tips for observation can be derived from obtaining answers to the following: How should tasks and persons be

observed? What deserves to be recorded? How should observation based information be stored? When and how should they be recalled?

Observation Cube – The Model: HEIs manage teacher's performance through a set of tangible outputs they deliver. They always measure the variables involved in teaching and research. A teacher, typically, performs several roles (as listed above); teaching and research being the top two on the list. Less known is the fact that the myriad other roles performed is largely skill based and dependant on behaviors of the individual. Some of these tasks end up being totally unevaluated, while the ratings on others are highly subjective and non-scientific. The answer to more accurate assessments could be the use of Observation Cube.

Observation Cube is a matrix consisting of people (teams), tasks and time. Every cell of the cube is a depiction of task done by a person at a particular time. It would be appropriate to monitor each person in each of the tasks over every time period of performance. This will ensure that judgments of performance will be accurate, since it is based on a population data set. However, observation in this manner may not be the most practical approach. The cube thus tends to use observations of each person on each task on different occasions. Nonetheless, the cube concept offers clarity to the view that observations of each person are needed, on each of the multiple tasks, across several occasions. [Pls. refer Fig. 1]

Application of tool to teachers

Performance evaluation nowadays is more judgmental than developmental. Even higher educational institutions are significantly taking to the agency model as against stewardship (Broadbent and Laughlin, 2009). Given the stakes that it encompasses, observations must be handled seriously. They are however, done very casually, often informally and seldom documented. Most managers mentally register the observations, promising to use the information at the time of appraisals. Sadly though, in most cases it is never recalled, or if recalled, never considered scientific enough to base performance ratings. In order to make judgments on performance, there must be a pattern of observations. Teachers also perform several roles/functions, and it is apt to apply the observation cube to distinctly identify their performance patterns. Usually person related factors would result in a consistent performance observation, across tasks and observation periods. On the other hand, system factors often fluctuates performance observations.

DATA ANALYSIS

It was found that the behaviors and results showed a certain pattern, which critical observation and documentation should have revealed. The data within the cells are numerical summaries on a scale of 1-7, where 1 indicate poor/lacking and 7 indicates exceptional/outstanding. Observations are coded to arrive at these numbers and then input into the cells of the observation cube. The empty cells designate the time periods that were unobserved. For the sake of anonymity, the four colleges visited have been renamed as A, B, C and D. The tasks that were observed included teaching (includes tasks identified in 3a to 3c above), research (identifies with 3d above), student handling (involves performing any of the roles mentioned in 3e to 3i above) and academic administration (refers to 3j above). The coding used for the tasks are T for teaching, R for research, SH for student handling and AD for academic administration. The teachers have been named as W,X,Y and Z. Using this coding, teachers from college A would be WA, XA, YA and ZA; those from college B would be WB, XB, YB and ZB; and so on. The following were the observations and the corresponding values. The teachers who were observed over a two year period, with at least 6 months elapsing between observations (along with evidence to prove their stand) and the HOD/Principal perspective are considered here.

College A [Please refer Table 1]

The performance of W,X, Y and Z were observed longitudinally and the above observation cubes drawn up from them, can be interpreted as follows:

- J Ms. WA is excellent at her teaching skills while she is moderately good at research. Student handling and academic administration are areas which she prefers to stay away from.

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-) Mr. XA, who has served almost the same tenure in the college does exceptionally well in teaching, can handle students moderately well while research output is poor.
 -) Mr. YA has the longest service in the college. He is intrinsically motivated for research and puts forth huge figures for publications each year. He is organized and good with academic administration. He is however an average teacher, who is not popularly liked by students.
 -) Mr. ZA currently has a relatively shorter period of service compared to the above three of his colleagues. He possesses outstanding soft skills, with student handling being his forte. He is also a good teacher. However his research output can be classified as more or less poor. Academic administration is an area he likes to be associated with.

The appraisal trend for these four teachers was such that the highest ratings and performance linked pay was awarded to Ms. YA since the measurable aspects of appraisal are only teaching and research. The next in line was WA, followed by XA and last in line was Mr. ZA.

College B [Please refer Table 2]

-) Mr. WB is popular among students for his teaching skills and student handling. However, he experiences pressure when asked to research.
-) Ms. XB is an average teacher with average skills at academic administration. She finds herself very comfortable in the company of students and is someone the students can confide in.
-) Mr. YB is a senior teacher, who loves to teach and only teach. He teaches a variety of subjects, though the pedagogy is not very innovative. He finds himself in stress when asked handle a student activity. He likes to research but is not very good with the technicalities of research paper writing.
-) Ms. ZB is an extraordinary researcher, who is very passionate about research. She is an average teacher with little skills in academic administration.

The trend of appraisal in College B showcased some interesting results. The highest performance linked incentive went to Ms. ZB, the next was Mr. YB, followed by Mr. WB and then Ms. XB

College C [Please refer Table 3]

-) Ms. WC is a strong researcher, with plenty of research publications in reputed journals, to his credit. She shows precision in her documentation and is extremely well organized. She is an average teacher.
-) Mr. XC is an average teacher and researcher. However he is liked by students and he spends endless hours engaging in student affairs and their welfare.
-) Ms. YC is a diligent teacher with astute skills for academic administration. She feels pressurized when dealing with groups of students or engaging in research.
-) Mr. ZC is very resourceful with plenty of innovative ideas for curriculum enrichment. He is an excellent teacher and average researcher.

College C showed an appraisal trend which awarded pay for performance in the following order; Highest to Ms. WC, Followed by ZC, XC and finally YC.

College D [Please refer Table 4]

-) Mr. WD is a teacher who is popular among his students for his teaching skills. He also enjoys working and helping students with personal mentoring and extracurricular activity. Nonetheless, he is not an active researcher and does not have a personal inclination to do research.
-) Mr. XD has a good number of publications, though several of them are not in reputed journals. He is an average teacher who does not enjoy academic administration.
-) Ms. YD is most resourceful teacher in the department, and a meticulous academic administrator. She is an average teacher, and only engages in research through co-authoring.
-) Mr. ZD is a much liked teacher for his care and concern for students. He enjoys counseling and mentoring the students. He possesses excellent teaching skills and is found to be not very keen on translating all his

learnings into publications. He prefers to present his research on a platform of like-minded people and obtain constructive criticism to improve upon his research.

The performance ratings of teachers in college D indicated good-to-poor performances in the following order: XD, YD, ZD and then WD.

In a nutshell, the above series of Observation Cubes can be summarized in an Appraisal Tabulation [Please refer Table 5]

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Four colleges and some teachers in all these colleges have been observed for their behavior over a longitude of time. It reveals to us a pattern of performance observations which is based on the rationale of the attribution theory. The attribution theory describes and understands how people arrive at judgments about the cause. (Kelly, 1973)The above analysis and tabulation of the same, brings to the forefront some revelations:

- a. All the colleges value research above all other skills. All teachers with the rating of 1 are those who accorded priority to research.
- b. Similarly, teachers who did not undertake research were consistently ranked at number 4
- c. Research is valuable only if published. Teachers with significant research, but who failed to get them published did not command a high rank
- d. Research is highly scored when there are less people contributing to a publication.
- e. Research is more about quantity and less about quality. Teachers who manage to publish several papers score well, irrespective of quality of research.
- f. Research must essentially culminate in publication, in order to be appraised well. Papers presented on public platforms do not command as much attention.
- g. Teaching is the primary responsibility of the teacher, but being an excellent teacher won't fetch you the best scores on the appraisal template.
- h. Student handling is the role that one must not engage in. It is time-consuming, but does not fetch much score on performance appraisal.
- i. A combination of research and teaching, coupled with research having a higher preference than teaching is the pathway to score better.
- j. Academic administration is a role superior to student handling. 3 out of 4 colleges accorded a better rating to teachers engaged in AD as compared to SH.
- k. Behaviors matter minimally, unless they really convert into tangible output, measurable in concrete terms.
- l. Soft skills and managerial abilities, on the performance measurement front, take a back seat. They are seldom appreciated.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Some of the findings of the study are eye-openers and pave way to several improvements that may be brought about in the performance management of HEIs. While the current appraisals are not totally flawed, it can be looked upon as one with tremendous scope for betterment. Following are some observations and suggestions in this regard:

- a. Research is important, but quality must always be critical over quantity.
- b. A teacher's primary task is to teach, and this must be never tampered with. Down-scoring of teaching skill and upliftment of research demoralizes teachers.
- c. Priority given to research over teaching, will force teachers to compromise teaching for research.
- d. Specialization is the key. Teachers good at teaching must be motivated to continue doing so. Good researchers, likewise. The problem is when teachers are expected to be a "Jack of all trades"
- e. At HEIs, especially undergraduate colleges, teachers are dealing with young adults. Students just emerging out of their teens need more counseling, mentoring, guidance (student handling); and this is a requisite skill. Unfortunately, teachers with this skill are never given their due.

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- f. Equally important is curriculum development and enrichment, and colleges must try to protect the interests and retain teachers who are resourceful in this area. Sadly, this is another area that is looked down upon.
 - g. Primitive tangible measures of performance must be complemented with intangible traits and behaviors too.
 - h. Observation can reveal eye-opening contributions/lacunae in teachers. These may be critical to the overall performance of a teacher in various roles.
 - i. Mere adoption of observation techniques, to make it look holistic, is inadequate. One must design it meticulously and execute with dedication.
 - j. Observation is indispensable in the teaching profession. It is the intangibles which matter more than tangibles, beyond a point.
 - k. Observation must always be succeeded with documentation, more specifically incident documentation rather than evaluation documentation.
 - l. While the observation documentation may be used for annual/periodic appraisal support, it is a technique that must be facilitated with adequate autonomy to give prompt and on-going feedback on performance.
 - m. Observation techniques must be used subtly. The explicit use may make the employee conscious, and this may impact actual performance.
 - n. Physical observation must be undertaken by the rater/superior himself/herself. Delegation of observation and documentation is never recommended.
 - o. Observation calls for dedicated time and attention at the grass-root level. It must not be used if these basic resources cannot be afforded.
 - p. Observation must be done and documented for all performances that may be envisaged in the teacher's role. It implies the use of observation for in and out-of- classroom performances.
 - q. Observation by the superior is valuable and crucial. Peer observations, though with a developmental objective, must be taken with a pinch of salt. Several countries may not be prepared and open enough for evaluations based on peer observations.
 - r. Observation, if resorted to as an assessment tool, must have pre-defined metrics of conduction. The details of how many observations, how frequently, for what duration, by whom, and how to execute, must be meticulously planned out and conveyed to all stakeholders in the process. The observer and the observed must be convinced about the process in order to destine true success of this tool.
 - s. Observation may be more important for intangible traits and quality aspects. However, given the myriad roles performed by a teacher, observation of behaviors engaged in, leading to measurable matrices also matter, and not just outcomes of such measurements.
 - t. Observation is not a stand-alone tool for assessing performance. It must always be coupled with other quantitative evaluation tools, for reliability, validity and ease in administrative decision making.

Thus, teachers are an integral part of any HEI and their job profiles must entail teaching and student handling as primary tasks, followed by research and academic administration. When priorities swap places, the outcome may not always be the best one. While research is required, and must be emphasized, it must not be compelled. Forced research seldom adds to the existing body of knowledge. It adds stress to a teacher not interested in research, and this may affect the teaching role as well. Considering four important tasks identified and used in the observation cube above, a teacher possessing any one expertise deserves to be scored well on the same, and this should reflect in the overall performance score with equal weightage. If tasks and responsibilities are created in the teaching profile, then all of the tasks must be respected with no reservation of inferior or superior. The current performance appraisal template scores a teacher on what is measurable, research output and teaching workload. While this introduces a lot of ease and simplicity to appraisals, a teacher's profile is much more complex with several tasks purely intangible, non-measurable and behavior based (Funder, 1987). An observation cube, used longitudinally over prolonged periods will reveal such tasks and the teacher's contribution therein. This will ensure that due credit is given for all roles performed.

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List of figures and tables:

Figure 1 – Observation Cube

Table 1: Observation Cubes for College A

Table 2: Observation Cubes for College B

Table 3: Observation Cubes for College C

Table 4: Observation Cubes for College C

Table 5: The Appraisal Tabulation

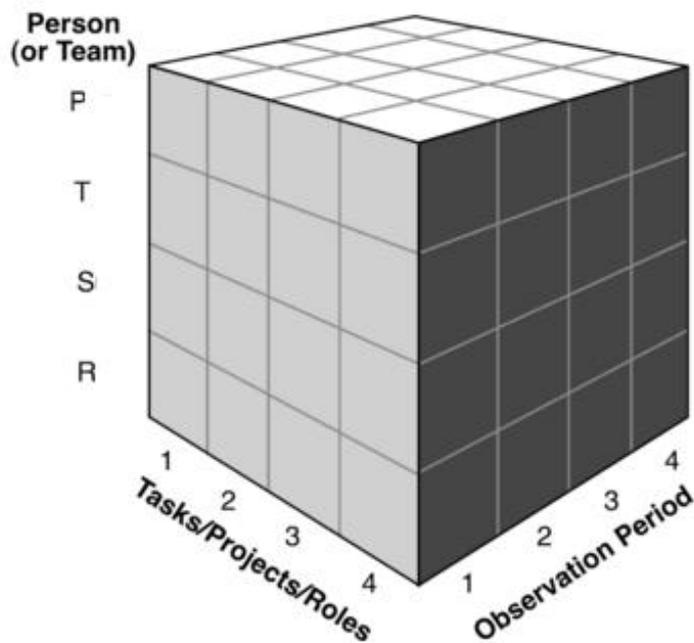


Figure 1 : Sample observation Cube

Table 1: Observation cube of College A

	T	R	SH	AD
W	6	5		
X	7		5	
Y		7		6
Z	6	2		

Observation Period 1

	T	R	SH	AD
W	7		2	
X		2		
Y	3			6
Z	5		7	

Observation Period 2

	T	R	SH	AD
W		4		1
X	6		4	
Y		7		
Z		2	6	

Observation Period 3

Table 2: Observation cube of College B

	T	R	SH	AD
W	7	1		
X			6	4
Y	6	2		
Z		7		

Observation Period 1

	T	R	SH	AD
W		2	6	
X	4		7	
Y	6			
Z		6		2

Observation Period 2

	T	R	SH	AD
W	6		5	
X	4			3
Y		2	2	
Z	4			

Observation Period 3

Table 3: Observation cube of College C

	T	R	SH	AD
W		7		
X	4		6	
Y			2	7
Z	6			

Observation Period 1

	T	R	SH	AD
W	4			6
X		4		
Y	6		1	
Z	7			6

Observation Period 2

	T	R	SH	AD
W		6		
X	4		7	
Y	6	2		
Z		4		7

Observation Period 3

Table 4: Observation cube of College D

	T	R	SH	AD
W	7		6	
X		6		
Y	4			7
Z	6	6		

Observation Period 1

	T	R	SH	AD
W		2		
X	4			2
Y		4		
Z		5	6	

Observation Period 2

	T	R	SH	AD
W	6		7	
X		7		
Y				6
Z	7		6	

Observation Period 3

Table 5: Appraisal Tabulation

Teacher	College A		College B		College C		College D	
	Expertise	Rating	Expertise	Rating	Expertise	Rating	Expertise	Rating
W	T, R	2	T, SH	3	R, AD, T	1	T, SH	4
X	T, SH	3	SH, T, AD	4	SH, T, R	3	R, T	1
Y	R, AD, T	1	T, R	2	T, AD	4	AD, T, R	2
Z	SH, T	4	R, T	1	AD, T, R	2	T, SH, R	3