

IMPLICATIONS OF MEASUREMENT-BASED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ON WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN ENTERPRISES

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ABSTRACT: *Writers have explored in some detail some of the researches which indicates that differing human resource activities will impact on the bottom-line performance of the firm, and that intangible assets are critical to a firm's value. This focus is growing in importance. In addition, there is a recognition that traditional accountancy measures are inadequate, as they are unable to reflect the value of people to the organization. Measures are needed which can demonstrate how people are an asset which adds value to the business rather than just a cost. This together, with the anticipation of the need to report popular measures in a company's annual report, have reported a context where the measurement of human resource performance has become increasingly important. However, there remains resistance by the human resource function to measurement. This literature review study delved into analysis of the implications of measurement-based performance management on workforce and organizational performance.*

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The study observed that measurement-based performance management proves that human element can be measured with accuracy and objectivity. The study also recommend that performance management should be used to set standards/ parameters/benchmarks for performance of employees.

KeyWords: Measurement, Performance, Management, Workforce, Employees Organization.

INTRODUCTION

Research has a very clear focus on measuring or assessing a range of best practices in terms of workforce, organization and management such as self-managing teams, high training speed, reduced status differentials and relating these to impact on productivity and profitability (Crabb, 2003). This is a very specific approach to proving that human resource practices affect bottom-line performance. Measurement has a comprehensive meaning in the context of performance management. Measurement is defined as a set of tools employed to establish the efficacy, utility and contribution of performance management in the enhancement of organizational and employees performance and also a vehicle that set standards of performance (Mayo, 2001). Measurement-based performance management proves that human element can be measured with accuracy and objectivity. There is a great myth surrounding human resource management that its contribution to business and effectiveness cannot be measured. This misplaced belief is squarely responsible for the sliding significance of human resource management in organizations. This is a single influential factor that is responsible for causing human resource managers to receive second grade in organizations.

Argument of managers according to Gratton (2003) who say human resource effectiveness cannot be measured is that (1) it is unethical to subject human capital and emotions to numerical assessment, (2) management of human resource/performance is something very complex, intricate, intangible, (3) there are too many variables that affect performance of performance management, (4) measurement of performance creates more problems than it solves and attracts more criticisms than it brings credibility, (5) accuracy can never be attained in performance management because of the role environment plays, and (6) business related indicators cannot be adapted for measurement of human resource performance, so on and so forth. This argument is not without its logic, but at best such argument can be used as an excuse for not doing or inability to apply measurement technique to performance management. As long as this gap between line managers and human resource/performance managers exists, performance management can never become an integral part of the organization. This gap says Torrington (1998) can be seen in the language these two sets of managers use; line manager's talk in the language of market capitalization such as profits, sales, turnover, customers, costs, and performance/human resource managers talk in the language of feelings, emotions, and employee job satisfaction.

Unless an activity is measurable, it is not manageable. No meaning can ever be achieved with any activity that is not manageable (Ulrich, 1997). Human management, especially performance management cannot be left to be managed under its own philosophy. It is fundamental for any function that includes performance management that

it must be subordinate to the organizational vision, mission and objectives. Performance management must be run as an inseparable part of organizational operations. Adaptation of measurement philosophy is imperative not only for effectiveness of performance management as a strategy, but also for its survival. Unless, a function proves beyond doubt the kind of contribution it makes to the business, no budgetary support and appreciation to such function can be expected (Pickard, 2002). An objective and scientific measurement-based performance management enhances the performance of employees and organizations. Measurement strategy has the capability to bring tangibility to other performance strategies (Okere, 2013). It is also an equally powerful fact that developing measures and applying them and analyzing them is an immensely complex task. This complexity scared many managers in the past to do away with measurement albeit they wish for it.

Measurement in performance management is often understood as synonymous to defining key result areas and performance appraisals and use of 360-degree feed-back system. As opposed to this misconception, measurement-based performance management is much more than all these. Further, measurement is also understood as simply using few statistical tools and use of numbers (Tyler, 2001). This is a limited fact because measurement based performance management uses subjective measures with equal frequency and proficiency to that of numbers. Measurement based-performance management is much more than simply illustrating contribution of performance management practice to the business progress of organization in terms of financial indicators. Measurement-based performance management does not represent:

1. A passion less statistical structure of employees performance.
2. Measurement is not simply financially oriented but multi-dimensional that reckon process, learning and other effectiveness targets and goals.
3. Measurement is not simply a tool that is used to present a positive picture of performance management for gaining appreciation of internal and external organizational forces.
4. Measurement is not unifocal in its approach such as focus on results and evaluation for mere identifying centre of accountability for poor performance.
5. Measurement is not a technique used to discard some activities and people but centers on optimization.

Chief characteristics of measurement-based management as suggested by (Okere, 2013) include:

1. It is comprehensive since it deploys a set of tools.
2. It is used to set standards/parameters/benchmarks for performance management.
3. It is used as a technique to present value addition role of performance management.
4. It is a technique that ensures and brings the factor of tangibility in performance management practice.
5. Measurement brings meaning and manageability in performance management activities.

Measurement-Based Performance Management Strategy, Interventions and Drivers

Strategy of measurement-based performance management is a holistic approach

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that guides organizations in assessing the progress made on several dimensions of organizational effectiveness and this process also suggests the most optimal ways of performance an activity (Antonioni, 1994). Measurement-based performance management is built not on a single principle of measurement such as statistical control and measurement but in a balanced perspective that reckons a wide range of approaches. This strategy consists of two interventions:

Intervention One: Nurturing Measurement-Based Performance Management

The nurturing intervention strategy consists of ten drivers. Each one of them significantly contributes to organizations making progress in adaptation of measurement approach (Becker and Gerhard, 1996). These drivers are:

Driver One: Defining Performance Management Objectives

First driver leads organizations through the setting of organization specific and performance centric measurement strategy objectives. Actions that are to be taken as a part of this driver are vital because quality of performance measurement strategy depends upon how much well and professionally the objectives are set and how clearly they are articulated (Becker and Gerhard, 1996). The few model suggestive steps that provide an idea of how to go about implementing this driver in reality include:

1. Why measurement is required.
2. Articulate core and supplementary objectives.
3. Identify areas of measurement.
4. Identify resource for performance management.

Driver Two: Defining Measurement Methodology

According to Sloman (2002), this driver focuses on methodological issues in measurement and enables organizations to choose the most reliable route for design and implementation of measurement-based performance management. The most commonly used measurement methods are:

1. Qualitative performance measurement methods such as interview methods, critical incident method, repertory grid, and projective techniques.
2. Quantitative performance measurement methods such as questionnaire, surveys, and scaling methods.
3. Specific methodology and measurement tools.
4. Building internal expertise on measurement.

Driver Three: Process Centric Performance Management

Process here means the extent to which work in the organization is done in an effective manner. To what extent factors such as work environment, relationships among employees, communication system, openness, trust, proactiveness are in a healthy shape on account of performance management practices. The driver needs to be associated culture strategy, especially during the phase of culture evaluation and refinement. Indicative measurement methods which can be used for this purpose are:

1. Reaction surveys.
2. Processes audit.

Driver Four: Learning Centric Performance Management

Learning is critical to excellence performance of employees. Learning not only ensures great performance, but also enhances organizational effectiveness. Recent studies and managerial thinking advocate that an organization in order to be competitive must become a learning organization (Guest, 1998). Various performance management strategies directly and indirectly contribute in imbibing and institutionalizing learning culture in an organization. Therefore, it needs to be measured, assessed and understood to what extent this learning environment exists in the organization and also, the relationship between learning and performance (Nolan, 2001). An organization is required to use a combination of measurement methods to create a learning centric performance measurement. Learning environment can be measured at three levels:

1. Individual level
2. Team level.
3. Organizational level.

Driver Five Innovation Centric Performance Management

It is logical that performance management once in its institutionalization stage must give fillip to culture of innovation. One of the core objectives of performance management practice must be to enhance the innovation capability of organization because peak of employees' performance is reflected in finding new ways of doing things and developing new products. It makes absolute business sense to measure the performance of performance management strategies by measuring the innovation capability in the organization. Indicative measures for carrying out innovation centric performance measurement are as follows:

1. Rate of patents.
2. Research and development environment
3. Quality.
4. Assessing innovative behaviour.

Driver Six: Employee Satisfaction Centric Performance Management

Employee is an important stakeholder of an organization. Therefore, performance management must lead to employee satisfaction. An effective performance management system must not only equip employees with all skills and support performance with relevant strategies, but also it must result in employee satisfaction (Johnson 1999). This satisfaction can be on account of a good reward career strategy, culture strategy, leadership, development strategy etc. All performance strategies, interventions and drivers are designed and patterned on the motivational structure of employees. Therefore, it is absolutely logical that such performance management system provides avenues for their satisfaction through adequate fulfillment of motivational needs at various stages. Measuring employee satisfaction can provide the efficacy status of performance management strategies. There are many standard tools available for measuring employee satisfaction. However, they cannot be borrowed and used as it is since the context and dimension used in such instruments would be entirely different. Such existing satisfaction assessment instruments can only provide an idea how to develop your own. Huslid (1995), posits that level of measurement can be both organization as a unit of analysis as well as employee as a unit of analysis. Following can be an indicative list of employee satisfaction

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measures:

1. Employee satisfaction measures.
2. Employee's professional and personal life.
3. Relationship centred measurement.

Driver Seven: Employee Centric Performance Measurement

This is a critical driver in measurement-based performance management. This is also the most popular form of performance measurement employed by organizations. Every organization makes its own efforts to measure performance of each employee and in some cases performance of teams wherever teamwork is in vogue. Setting KRAs (Key result areas) at the beginning of year/half yearly/quarter and appraising them at the end of such stipulated period is a common sight. Performance management is also primarily known as this process of setting key result areas, appraising and rewarding accomplishment of key result areas (Purcell, 1999). Even very conventional and traditional organizations have some form of employee performance measurement in the name of performance appraisal system. This performance appraisal system has taken a new shape as 360 degree feedback on performance with an objective to eliminate the subjectivity factor (Porter, 1995). There are different practices within this appraisal system. For example, a few organizations have quarterly performance appraisal system, whereas others have it yearly and still some others conduct it half yearly. Measurement of performance at employee level is a vexed subject and has been studied from different perspectives.

Antonioni (1994) noted that measuring performance at individual employee level is very critical not only to employees, but also to the organization. From efficiency perspective, performance of every employee is important for organizational effectiveness. This employee level performance measurement is fraught with many challenges because often such measurement is linked to rewards and career growth. Due to this linkage, employee performance measurement is ultra sensitive to both the organization and employees. Objective of employee centric performance measurement is to provide the most reliable instruments through which employee performance is measured. Therefore, every organization must possess some kind of performance measurement system at employee level. This type of measurement is also very organization specific. A few instruments that can have common applicability are:

1. Performance appraisal techniques.
2. Management by objective type performance measurement.
3. Multi-rater performance measurement.
4. 360 degree feedback/performance appraisal system.

The above explained three types of performance measurement have their own advantages and disadvantages. An organization can gain maximum advantage by introducing a particular type of performance measurement instrument suited to employees and organizational context. Same organization can also adopt all three techniques, applying them for different target group of employees.

Driver Eight: Team Centric Performance Measurement

The focus of the driver is the extent and degree of effectiveness of teams and their

performance as results of performance management strategies prevailing in organization. There are many standard measures available to measure effectiveness of teams perse. These need to be adopted with suitable modifications. Both quantitative and qualitative measures can be adopted to identify contribution of performance management strategies for teams effectiveness. The measures are:

1. Survey on teamwork.
2. Team-work performance management strategies audit.
3. Team-work achievement report.

Driver Nine: Results Centric Performance Measurement

This measurement method is popularly used in the business context while evaluating investment versus profits. Every employer and organization would like to know return on the investment made in order to gauge commercial soundness of making such investments (Porter, 1995). Techniques such as human capital accounting, Return On Investment (ROI) of training, value audit analysis of performance management have come into existence to establish return on investment of human resource strategies. A few such techniques are:

1. Human capital accounting techniques.
2. Study of relationship between performance management and organizational performance.
3. Return on investment of performance management.
4. Balanced scorecard approach.

Driver Ten: Customer Satisfaction Centric Performance Measurement

This driver makes an attempt to measure the satisfaction of customers of an organization's products and services. Following two techniques can be used as customer centric performance measurement.

1. Customer satisfaction survey.
2. Customer satisfaction audit. Under this method, customer satisfaction can be studied. Instead of collecting data from customers directly, reports from suppliers and franchise are invited.

Intervention Two: Using Measurement Strategy in Institutionalization of Performance Management

The core objective of second intervention says Becker and Gerhard (1996) of measurement-based performance management strategies is to capitalize on measurement in institutionalizing the practice of performance management. Its supplementary objectives include (1) to bring greater coherence among all methods of performance measurement, and (2) to assist in diagnosis and effectiveness assessment of performance management strategies such as reward, career, leadership, culture, competency and team-based. Measurement based strategy is one that has relevance and direct relationship with all other performance management strategies. Similar to other strategies, here also a set of ten drivers are developed that drive and support an organization to institutionalize performance management as an integral part of organization and as a way of life for employees.

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Driver One: Making Measurement as Centre of Integration.

Measurement-based performance management strategy can be effectively utilized as a Centre as well as source for bringing tighter integration among all performance management strategies. Measurement application is required for all these functions at two levels. First level of measurement needs lies in assessing the effectiveness of existing scenario of performance management in an organization. The Second level of need exists in order to measure effectiveness of the new performance management strategy. This means that all performance management strategies need to work in close collaboration with the measurement-based performance management strategies.

Driver Two: Making Measurement as Centre of Optimization: Individual Focus

The essence and principal objective of all performance management strategies in particular and human resource management in general is optimizing human potential, performance and efforts. In order to attain such an objective, it is imperative that such potential and performance and effort be assessed and measured in an objective, accurate and precise fashion. Measurement according to Okere (2013) provides deeper insights into the workflow, efforts and how particular activity/activities are performed and whether such flow and activities are performed in the most efficient manner or not. Such insights present opportunities, for optimization of efforts. This optimization contributes to highly constructive performances and utilization of organizational resources.

Driver Three: Making Measurement as Centre of Optimization: Organizational Focus

Having optimized the potential, performance and efforts of individual employees with the assistance of driver two as above, the next sequential step is consolidating such individual efforts to produce organization level optimization. Therefore, objective of this driver is to remove wastage and ensure that every effort put in the organization is a value added one (Okere, 2013).

Driver Four: Making Measurement as Centre of Reward Strategy

Effective management of the reward-based performance management strategy is squarely contingent upon effective utilization of management principles. Measurement-based performance management as observed by Nolan (2001) offers support to reward strategy at multiple levels that include (i) determining reward structure, especially monetary reward, (ii) determining the right reward for right position, performance and persons, and (iii) assessing the motivational power of reward. All these assessments and determination can be possible only when measurement is made part of reward strategy, especially at operational stage.

Driver Five: Making Measurement as Centre of Competency Strategy

Measurement and competency strategies play mutually complimentary roles. Much of the effectiveness for competency-based performance management comes from application of right management tools. Unless measurement is perfect, no competency modeling mapping at any level can be executed.

Driver Six: Making Measurement as Centre of Career Strategy

Leveraging measurement strategy especially the measurement application is also

important for effectiveness of career management and also in order to attain the institutionalization of performance management. Career planning involves measuring the required competencies such as aptitude and attitude profiles of employees that is, their job profiles in organizations. Perfect matching and a rationalistic career planning are possible only when right measurement is done. Therefore, measurement has a definite role to play and substantial assistance to offer to the career-based performance management strategy.

Driver Seven: Making Measurement as Centre of Team Strategy

Continuous measurement contributes for effectiveness of team functioning. Unless teamwork is tightly structured, the same can remain as a passing fad. Sometimes teamwork introduced in organization without defining a clear constitution, may create more performance-related problem than it serves. Team norms, targets, performance valuation, and refinement, all call for application of measurement principles. Measurement also helps in collecting and managing huge data related to team functioning.

Driver Eight: Measurement as Centre of Leadership Strategy

Leadership assessment, leadership training and development, leadership performance, leadership competency identification, leadership effectiveness in managing people, so on and so forth requires understanding of right parameters, dimensions and results. Grooming leadership, as too many organizations tend to believe, is not a game of just naming a few individuals in whimsical fashion. Leadership identification, tracking and grooming involves hard core interventions based on undisputed and reliable data. Such data can be obtained and meaningfully analyzed only when right measurement techniques are used. Many leadership efforts end up without producing results of any worth due to organization's failure to make such efforts on measurable basis. Lank and Windle (2003) said that, it is essential that organizations use measurement as a principal driver in institutionalizing leadership development strategy. Measurement makes leadership development intervention, more effective and also accurate. Unless leadership development is based on a sound footing, it is difficult to attain institutionalization of performance management (Okere, 2013).

Driver Nine: Measurement as Centre of Culture Strategy

In this kind of scenario, measurement is a strategy that enables organizations to see, feel, experience, analyze, manage and obtain stupendous results from the culture strategy. Measurement strategy facilitates identification of operating culture, culture dimensions, mapping desirable culture and launching it in organizations as a part of culture strategy.

Driver Ten: Measurement for Human Capital Balance Sheet.

In precise, organizations would be definitely eager to assess whether the cost incurred on account of performance management practice has any financial results to offer or not. It makes absolute business sense that an organization must continuously assess to understand the value it has created on account of performance management (Senge, 1990).

Implications of Measurement-Based Performance Management on Workforce and Organizational Performance

Measurement concepts/models/techniques offer some valuable lesson that have implications for developing measurement-based performance management. According to

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Okere (2013), and Sonsino (2002) these include:

Balanced Measurement

Measurement frameworks like “Balanced Scorecard and SMART, especially emphasize the need to adopt a balanced approach in choosing the dimensions and metrics in a balanced way.

Approaches of Measurement Design

All the concepts and works suggest a similar approach for design of measurement system. They suggest two criteria: firstly, to identify the critical factors affecting performance and secondly, translating these critical factors into measures for assessing the performance.

Measurement must be aligned with Strategy

These concepts also highlight the importance and need to align the measurement system with the overall strategy and objectives of the organization. This implies that the measurement system should not be a stand-alone or an isolated activity; rather it must draw its meaning from the overall organizational goal.

Measurement as Means for Growth

Measurement exercise should have dual objectives. It should enable an organization to have a clear picture of its status. Secondly, it must enable an organization to redefine its strategy if required based on the measurement results and consequently, facilitate growth.

Balancing of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Measurement works also suggest that an ideal measurement system should consider both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. Combination of both can yield deep insight into organizational functioning. This also facilitates obtaining an exact picture as both these methods are complementary to each other.

Metrics Must be Simple and Easy to Follow

There is a widespread agreement among measurement researchers that the metrics used in measurement must be clear, simple and easy to follow. They insist that any complexity in metrics can cause loss of the robust picture of reality.

Measurement Must have Clear Framework

Unlike some of the activities, measurement needs to be pursued in a highly systematic and evolutionary manner. Any activity must start and end with a clear linkage with related activity. No deviation should be committed in the midway of measurement progress. Consistency and reliability are important features. Measurement must be first developed on paper, to be tested and established before the same is adopted.

Human Performance Can be Measured

All the above mentioned performance management techniques though focusing at enterprise level, agree that human element can be measured and include performance of human resource and contribution of human resource function as important dimensions of measurement. Framework like human capital accounting conclusively proves that human capital can be measured and its impact on the bottom line of an organization can be gauged

with accuracy.

Importance of Measurement in Performance Management

Measurement is vital for establishing not only efficacy of performance management as an art and science of organizational management, but also as a comprehensive strategy that brings credibility. Measurement guides people and organization through the most effective ways in bringing best out of them. There is a widespread awareness and realization that individually perceived judgements and evaluation can cause organizational ineffectiveness (Caulkin 2001). Today's organizations realized the need to optimize resources, especially human resource and their performance with high precision. In a competitive environment where everything can be imitated and replicated, the distinction of non-imitable act can be created only through enhancing human performance. For this, exact understanding is a prerequisite. This prerequisite can be fulfilled only through the adaptation of measurement principles. Measurement has a special place in the overall framework and practice of performance management. Therefore, Okere (2013) concluded that the importance of measurement can be seen in the following aspects:

1. Measurement provides path of performance.
2. Measurement provides milestone.
3. Measurement provides avenues for learning.
4. Measurement makes management effective.
5. Measurement identifies accountability.
6. Measurement identifies criticality.
7. Measurement provides structure to the work.
8. Measurement helps in optimization.
9. Measurement provides for objectivity, precision and accuracy.
10. Measurement enhances quality.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper focuses on the implications of measurement-based performance management. Contents and discussion put forward clearly illustrates how human element can be measured with accuracy, precision and objectivity. Style adapted in the discussion is common sensical in order to dispel the myth of measurement meaning as more of numbers and less of insights. Therefore, measurement-based performance management is seen as a set of tools employed to establish efficacy, utility and contribution of performance management in the enhancement of organizational and employee performance, and also a vehicle that set standards of performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are put forward for improved measurement-based performance management in Nigerian organizations.

1. Human element should be measured with accuracy and objectivity.
2. Performance management should be used to set standards/parameters/benchmarks for performance of employees.
3. Measurement should facilitate in drawing road map of performance.
4. Measurement should be an instrument for identifying path of performance.
5. Measurement should contribute for effective management style.

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6. Measurement should be used as an approach in identifying centre of accountability.
7. Measurement should be used for structuring organizational and employees performance.
8. Measurement should cause optimization of employees effort.
9. Measurement should enable objectivity in performance management.
10. Measurement should enhance quality in all works of organizational life.
11. Measurement should help in collecting and managing huge data related to team functioning.
12. All performance management strategies should work in close collaboration with the measurement-based performance management strategy.
13. Effective management of reward-based performance management strategy should squarely be contingent upon effective utilization of measurement principles.
14. Measurement and competency strategies should play mutually complementary roles. Much of the effectiveness for competency-based performance management should come from application of right measurement tools.
15. Career planning should involve measuring the required competencies such as aptitude and attitude profiles of employees.
16. Organizations need to focus on capitalizing measurement strategy in order to sharpen leadership development to all the overall objectives of performance management institutionalization.
17. It is highly desirable that measurement strategy be made the epicenter of human capital assessment.
18. Measurement should make the organizational culture strategy tangible, structured and manageable.
19. Organizations should use a combination of measurement methods to create a learning centric performance measurement.
20. It will make absolute business sense to measure the performance of performance management strategies by measuring the innovation capability in the organization.
21. An effective performance management system should result in employee satisfaction. Therefore, measuring employee satisfaction can provide the efficacy status of performance management strategies.
22. Organizations should study the relationship between performance management and organizational performance.

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