

Critical Methodology Analysis: ‘360’ degree feedback: its role in employee development

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ABSTRACT: *Employees are part of human resources & organizations’ are required to pay attention to the employee’s growth and individual development through various educational initiatives such as professional development programs. Individual employee development benefits the individual and organisation itself. Since employees should be recognised as an asset; feedback becomes an important tool of collecting information. The diverse the process of getting feedback using different instruments, tools and devices likely to determine the amount of feedback required.*

Keywords—*feedback, qualitative, human, training, development*

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Margaret & Patrick (2009) research journal should contain abstract, introduction, materials & methods, results and discussion. The job of methodology critique analysis is to review research methods of the cited article. I have selected a management article “360 degree feedback: its role in employee development” to perform critical analysis.

II. SUMMARY

Garavan, Morley and Flynn (1997) focus on ‘360’ degree feedback in organizations. Early on in the article, the authors were able to establish what the contents of this article are about. The article is actually about the functions of feedback within the organization, with a special emphasis placed on its use for employee career development; the benefits of such feedback to the organization and the individuals involved; the mechanisms used to obtain feedback; and, finally, the pitfalls of ‘360’ degree feedback and its implementation. This report will discuss the critical review of the review conducted by Garavan, Morley and Flynn (1997). I will discuss the critical analysis of research in terms of its strong points and limitations.

III. CRITIQUE

First, I would like to point out numbers of features the study before carry out a detailed critical review. The authors provided a detailed account of the nature, the concept and the dynamics of ‘360’ degree feedback. The researchers also offered a detailed account of what constitutes ‘360’ degree feedback. The study presented a comprehensive discussion of the organizational and individual perspectives specifically the latter and their role in the ‘360’ degree feedback process. The discussions presented are likewise in-depth particularly in terms of its benefits to the employees specifically employee development. Coupled with the feedback process, ‘360’ degree feedback can expand self-awareness, verify self-concept and increase one’s sensitivity of impact on others as well as strengthen relationships, enhance group productivity.

Initially, it would be easy to reckon that the study is a qualitative in nature. Qualitative studies aimed at complete detailed description (Creswell, 2003). It is apparent that the study is quantitative in nature, but what makes it difficult is its qualitative foundation. Qualitative elements that do not have standard measures such as behavior, attitudes, opinions, and beliefs are present in the study. While the study did not use elaborative methods, it involves involving interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter which is ‘360’ degree feedback process. Feedback help in removing misunderstanding or wrong perceptions. It keeps relationships healthy and growing, thus enhancing work behaviour.

A qualitative study presented in a spontaneous format, however, there is no abstract offered by researchers. Note, however, that this does not result in the lack of clarity when it comes to the definition of the subject. The concept of ‘360’-degree communication basically shows that there are several sources from which employees are given information to and vice versa. Considering this, the ‘360’-degree communication reflects that there are several potential sources of noise within the workplace. ‘360’-degree communication, therefore, is

a complex process that links the causes and effects of communication and perhaps the decision making processes gap (Fleenor, Taylor and Chappelow, 2008).

Further, the authors do not offer how literatures are chosen for the review of the study. One can consider that literatures included in the discussion are unsystematically chosen. The consistency in the discussion of the role of '360' degree feedback in developing employees is one of the study's strong points.

Conceptual definitions are offered that get too swamped by new ideas as the discussion progresses. It is clear, however, that the determinant of interest is '360' degree feedback and why it should be treated as critical in every organizational setting. This makes it easier for researchers to establish relations between the determinant of interest and the outcomes of the study.

Anyhow, the researchers concluded the discussion strongly, noting that '360' degree feedback is best used in a developmental context. The authors drew the conclusions from the relevance of '360' degree feedback as taken from broad to specific perspective, that is, from the organizational to employee perspectives. The conclusion presented by the researcher with reference to the presented evidence is justified. The concept of validity concerns the degree to which a measurement or study reaches a correct conclusion (Padgett, 2008). Because there is no specific aim or objectives stipulated, it would be therefore difficult is these conclusions responded to the objectives of research, however.

In regarding to context again, researchers only emphasized employee development, but the failed to mention what type of organization such that manufacturing, merchandising, service, will actually get benefit through this '360' degree feedback process.

The '360' degree feedback process will best fit the flat or the hybrid type of organizational structure. According to Garavan, Morley and Flynn (1997), '360' degree feedback process is a complex process of collecting feedback from individuals such that employees and managers of an Organization. But researchers failed to mention the structure of the organization that will be best fit their feedback process.

There is no apparent operational definition of the inclusion criteria, the research tendered relevant issues descriptions related to '360' degree feedback process. It is intuitive to think that it would be difficult to determine the consistency of the time frame where the literatures are chosen. It would be plausible for both researches to combine the features of formal analysis such as social, political, economic, philosophical, religious and aesthetic conditions in place at the time and place when the text was created (Behrendt, 2008).

There is no concrete measure of outcomes used by the authors but all literatures included in the analysis focuses on '360' degree feedback and the intricacies involved in using this as taken from the perspective of the employees themselves. It is difficult to solidly identify the measure used because as already noted the research is purely qualitative. Published articles from journal papers including both online and journal papers sourced in the library as well as different books relating to the subject and magazines and newspaper articles are collected for the aim of the review (Thomas, 2003).

There is no particular data collection method specified but because it involves literatures one can assume that the researcher made use of document analysis. Examples of a form of data could be documents, and these are basic for qualitative researches. As such, there was no obvious systematic bias in both information and selection. This is because there are no errors that had been introduced during data collection such as inconsistency in details that had been collected. Errors on data collection cannot be corrected later on (Holloway, 1997).

Further, the authors do not offer management impact assessment. Of concern is the authors should consider the benefits of integrating '360' degree feedback on employee training and development. This information identified could have impacted the effects but it is not apparent on the discussion. Qualitative studies make sense of the collected text. In qualitative data analysis, the researcher moves deeper and deeper into understanding the data, involving continual reflection through asking analytic questions and writing notes throughout the study (Taylor, 2005). The authors were also able to establish the need for a systematic process on which information could be shared. In order to leverage information's, the '360'-degree communication systems must be improved.

The findings are presented clearly in such a way that it enables a reader to judge them for him/herself. The findings are objectively presented. The implications of the findings that are separate from the systematic merits of the study create incentive to reach the conclusion hence the authors of the study did not left readers in an ambiguous state. Literatures reviewed are worthy and the analysis is adequately performed. Organizations, then, must realize that communication through the '360'-degree system could not facilitate an effective way to distribute information that can facilitate the effective decision making process when it comes to employee development. To make the '360'-degree communication effective, it must have a business purpose at its root (Fleenor et al. 2008).

Another concern is that the authors should have offered a separate recommendation discussion. Qualitative studies conclude by discussing the relevant themes as they emerge from the study. For instance, employee development can be measured by a '360'-degree appraisal for the purpose of highlighting the

strengths and development areas of these people. Likewise, '360'-degree feedback and staff surveying are comprehensive in that responses are gathered from multiple perspectives and provide inputs for both outcomes and behaviour. An interpretation of the meaning of the data collected and analyzed will be apparent. This could be the meaning that is derived from comparing the findings with the literature, confirm past information or diverge from them or ask a new question to explore in the future.

IV. CONCLUSION

'360' degree feedback process critically assess the employees and manager's skills, competencies, knowledge and experience through feedback it receives. So, '360' degree feedback process is an effective overall performance evaluation solution to measure the efficiency of person. Researchers of this journal failed to disclose how literatures are chosen. They only focused on employee, manager and Organization too much, but failed to research specific issues or objectives such as not mentioning about the type of organization that will get benefit from this process. They also failed to focus on the type of organizational structure that will best fit the feedback process. Overall, they missed the operational definition of the inclusion criteria, failed to disclose data collection method and also forget to offer management impact assessment. Lastly, researchers failed to put the separate recommendation of their discussions.

Methodological Critique done on the following Management Journal:

Thomas N. Garavan, Michael Morley, Mary Flynn, (1997) "360 degree feedback: its role in employee development", *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 16 Iss: 2, pp.134 - 147

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