Exploration on Innovative Path of Performance Appraisal Mode of Application-Oriented Universities

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Abstract. As one of the urgent important subjects that are to be further explored and researched in the field of higher education at present, the research on the performance appraisal mode of the teachers in application-oriented universities is not only of extremely practical significance but also of great challenge. It has always been the research focus and hot issue in the field of the performance appraisal of teachers. By combining Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, this article makes clear the characteristics of the performance appraisal in application-oriented universities. In addition, based on such characteristics, the innovative path of the performance appraisal mode of application-oriented universities is probed so as to make contributions to the research on the performance appraisal mode of the teachers in application-oriented universities and provide an effective basis for the construction of the faculty of application-oriented universities.

Introduction

With the advent of the time of knowledge economy, application-oriented universities have become the cradle of the innovation of knowledge and technology. Their education quality has influence not only on the quality of the cultivation of applied talents, but also on the development level of a region and even the whole country at large. The mode of performance appraisal plays an important role in improving the internal structure of an application-oriented university, upgrading its teaching and research quality and stimulating teachers’ working enthusiasm. For the purpose of substantially boosting the construction of the faculty in application-oriented university and improving the quality of talent cultivation, it is necessary to conduct a systematic research on the innovative path of the mode of performance appraisal of the teachers in application-oriented universities.

Theoretical Basis of Performance Appraisal

Maslow’s Theory

According to Maslow, a psychologist, man has not only needs, but also the needs of differentiation. Therefore, the corresponding Hierarchy of Needs Theory was proposed. By combining the conditions of needs at each stage of man, he classified them into the following five hierarchies:

(1) Basic needs are the most basic demand of people to maintain their survival.
(2) Safety needs are people’s demand for the protection of their own personal safety.
(3) Communication needs are classified into two parts. One part is the sense of belonging. That is to say, people intend to join a certain group and are accepted by the group before becoming the part of the group. The other part is the need for affection. That is to say, everyone hopes to be cared and cherished by others, which prompts them to form a good personal relationship with the people around them. Obviously, communication needs have risen to the level of affection needs from merely survival needs.
(4) Esteem needs: Everyone expects to be esteemed by others by achieving success through his own ability. According to the theory, whether people’s demand for being esteemed is satisfied will,
to much extent, influence their self-identification, the construction of outlook on life and value as well as exertion of their potential.

(5) Self-actualization needs: Through his or her endeavor, an individual inspires the maximum of his or her potential to achieve the objective in his or her mind. This is the need at a higher hierarchy as well as the ultimate aim that human beings strive for.

Herzberg’s Theory

The theory was researched and put forward by Herzberg, a famous psychologist. After his investigation of a large number of middle class crowds, he discovered that employees’ work satisfaction was different from each other. In most cases, external factors always constitute the reason for triggering the dissatisfaction towards work on the part of employees. However, job contents themselves can make employees satisfied. Therefore, Herzberg put forth Motivation-Hygiene Theory [1]. According to the theory, employees’ work impetus comes from the following two aspects: motivation factors and hygiene factors. Of the two kinds of factors, hygiene factors refer to factor conditions beyond work such as working environment and salary while motivation factors refer to internal factors, namely, the sense of achievement and satisfaction brought forth by the work itself, for example, the love and responsibility for work. The former can only ensure that employees do their normal work but it cannot guarantee their working state and efficiency, nor can it upgrade their satisfaction. According to the investigation, those who take up important posts and shoulder big responsibility can usually complete their work, receiving the respect and recognition from others and obtaining greater sense of achievement and satisfaction. This is a good circulatory system which inspires them to work hard to create bigger value. The theory is of important reference to how to effectively motivate college teachers.

Analysis on Characteristics of Performance Appraisal of Application-Oriented Universities

Complexity of Appraisal Objects

Different from other social strata, the faculty members of application-oriented universities are engaged in the work which is rather complicated. On the one hand, the work requires more special professional ability which requires automatically understanding and digesting the knowledge they have learned before adopting scientific teaching methods and imparting the knowledge to college students. This is very different from other kinds of labor and also difficult to record by way of language. Both its depth and scope can change gradually because of the appearance of new technology and knowledge, which requires that teachers never stop learning knowledge. On the other hand, as students’ examples, teachers can influence college students’ world outlook, outlook on life and value through their manners. Therefore, not only their thought and manners but also their scientific research, morality and etiquette must reach exemplary standard. So the quality requirement for teacher groups is still higher. In addition, as the teaching objects of teachers, college student groups also have their particularity and complexity. They are independent in thought and personality. Moreover, they have strong initiative. Their dynamic state of thought and behavior can influence teachers’ teaching efficiency in a direct way, thus causing the otherness in teaching. The combined action from so many complicated factors leads to the increasing complexity of teacher groups as the appraisal objects of application-oriented universities [2]. Besides, teaching activities are not unchangeable. So teachers’ work is relatively complicated, which is mainly embodies in aspects such as working time, space and teaching contents. At the same time, teachers’ profession means stronger requirement for the realization of self-fulfillment and self-value.

Diversification of Indicators for Performance Appraisal

In the performance appraisal of the teachers in application-oriented universities, professional knowledge level, teaching skills and moral quality are important appraisal elements which can be subdivided, becoming the corresponding performance appraisal indicators. Obviously, as for the teachers in application-oriented universities, appraisal indicators are diversified. How to conduct
appraisal and assessment of such indicators with the help of combining quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis is a difficult point. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out performance appraisal by combining the specific conditions of application-oriented universities to realize the standardization of indicator appraisal and assessment [3]. Only in this way can the scientific nature and reasonability of appraisal result be guaranteed.

**Hysteresis of Appraisal Result**

The examination of the work outcomes of the personnel in educational industry is of certain hysteresis. At present, students’ exam results are the important indicator of the appraisal of teachers’ teaching level. Today, the standard of students’ exam results tested by education system is rather singular, which cannot fully embody the physical labor and mental labor of teachers in work. The performance of many students in work does not match their academic performance in college, which explains that performance appraisal cannot fully demonstrate teachers’ teaching level. After students walk into society, much of their excellent performance as well as their established outlook on life and value come from their teachers’ words and deeds during their period of college. All these cannot be timely embodied in the result of performance appraisal, thus reflecting the hysteresis of performance appraisal.

**Innovative path of performance appraisal mode of application-oriented universities**

**Design principle of performance appraisal mode**

For the purpose of substantially upgrading the scientific nature and reliability of the performance appraisal mode of teachers in application-oriented universities, it is imperative to observe the following design principles:

**Individual Appraisal and Collective Appraisal are Combined in an Organic Way.** For the purpose of facilitating university management, a scientific and perfect rights distribution mechanism must be constituted so as to offer the organization enough extensive and independent space, give fully play to its features and individuation and upgrade the comprehensive school-running level of a university. As far as teachers’ appraisal is concerned, priority must be given to individual appraisal. At the same time, consideration must also be given to the outcome of collective appraisal of the organization so as to ensure the impartiality, fairness and reasonability of the result of appraisal.

**Objective Appraisal and Process Appraisal are Combined in an Organic Way.** As a systemic program, the performance appraisal of teachers is not only diversified in measures and manners, but also involves very complicated procedures, which requires not only planning and designing ahead of time, but also strengthening process monitoring and auditing and do well the work of feedback of results. Of the program, planning and design beforehand are mainly combined with appraisal objectives to be consistent with the university’s strategic development and school-running requirements. The construction of a set of scientific and effective appraisal objectives and indicator system has something to do with the good communicating and interactive work with teachers so as to build a perfect system of appraisal management. And the process monitoring and auditing mainly means the choice of the procedure and measures of appraisal to guarantee the fairness, impartiality and openness of appraisal process. Besides, the problems that may arise in appraisal can be timely dealt with and solved in an appropriate way so as to ensure the reliability and standardization of various materials. By the link of result feedback, it means that after the appraisal comes to an end, centering on the result, openness and transparency should be implemented. Furthermore, awards should be given to the teachers who have been rated excellently in the process of appraisal while penalties should be meted to the teachers who have not passed the appraisal. As to the common problems in appraisal, reasons should be timely analyzed, related experience and lessons should be summed up and effective countermeasures should be worked out in order to promote the constant optimization of teachers’ professional development and the organization.
Quantitative Analysis and Qualitative Analysis are Combined in an Organic Way. In terms of the teacher groups with different specialties, the job requirements and responsibilities are made clear. Quantitative analysis of the fulfillment of their professional work is carried out. All kinds of data are collected in a timely way and statistical analysis is conducted. As with those that are difficult to conduct quantitative analysis such as teacher’s ethics, sense of responsibility and teaching quality, treatment is given by adopting scientific qualitative methods. Under no circumstances should attention be paid to quantity instead of quality.

Determination of Appraisal Contents

What on earth will be appraised with regard to performance appraisal? As far as the teachers in an application-oriented university are concerned, the contents of performance appraisal usually involve two parts including teaching and scientific research. The two parts can be further divided into some aspects such as teacher’s ethics, the style of teaching, teaching quality, teaching reform programs, awards in teaching, scientific research programs, articles and works, awards for scientific research and achievement transformation. In the performance appraisal of application-oriented universities, appraisers are required to appraise not only explicit factors but also some fuzzy factors. In terms of this article, the contents of performance appraisal should comprehensively reflect the contribution made by college teachers, which not only include the design of indicators but also need to realize the organic combination of process and result as well as qualitative indicators and quantitative indicators. With regard to the setup of contents, in addition to the necessity to use the performance appraisal indicators in *University Evaluation* for reference, reference should also be given to the relevant requirements in *Performance Appraisal Report of Higher Learning Institutions* promulgated by the Ministry of Education. By combining the characteristics of application-oriented universities and the teachers from them, efforts should be made in two aspects including scientific research and teaching achievements which should be clearly stipulated as the basic contents of the performance appraisal of application-oriented universities [4].

Design of Appraisal Indicator System

While formulating the plan of teachers’ performance appraisal, an application-oriented university should make subdivision and decomposition by combining the orientation of its own before allocating it to individual teachers and communicating with them. The plan of performance appraisal should be formulated by taking into consideration the situation of the posts in the university. At the same time, the university’s specialty advantages, scientific research situation and faculty condition should also be considered so as to guarantee the co-ordination and equity of the distribution between teaching and scientific research. As with the teachers with different specialties, due to the difference in teaching and scientific research tasks, it is necessary to deal with different problems in a discriminative way. That is to say, scientific performance appraisal standards should be made clear. By combining the classification of the teachers’ tasks in an application-oriented university and the design principles of performance indicators, the indicators at the first and second levels and the corresponding weight are specified. In terms of a specific college, adjustment can be made by combining actual situation.
Table 1. Performance Appraisal Indicators of the Teachers in an Application-Oriented University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-level indicators and corresponding weights</th>
<th>Second-level indicators and corresponding weights</th>
<th>Third-level indicators and corresponding weights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weights of teaching-research type,</td>
<td>J1. teacher’s ethics (10%)</td>
<td>J1.1. morality, dedication, imparting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scientific research type and teaching type are</td>
<td>J2. style of teaching (25%)</td>
<td>knowledge and educating students,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%, 40% and 60%, respectively.</td>
<td>J3. teaching quality (20%)</td>
<td>academic integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J4. teaching projects (20%)</td>
<td>J5. various awards (25%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J1.1. morality, dedication, imparting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J2. style of teaching (25%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J3. teaching quality (20%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific research:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weights of teaching-research type,</td>
<td>K1. subject projects (30%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scientific research type and teaching type are</td>
<td>K2. publications (20%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%, 60% and 40%, respectively.</td>
<td>K3. awards for scientific</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>research (20%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K4. achievement transformation (30%)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 1, while the table is in use, the score of each first-level indicator is the sum of the scores of all corresponding second-level indicators. The score of each item in the indicators at various levels = grading * corresponding weight. Judging from this, the formula of the weighted scores of the first-level indicators in teaching is indicated as follows:

\[
J = J1 \times \text{weight} + J2 \times \text{weight} + J3 \times \text{weight} + J4 \times \text{weight} + J5 \times \text{weight}
\]

\[
K = K1 \times \text{weight} + K2 \times \text{weight} + K3 \times \text{weight} + K4 \times \text{weight}
\]

Finally, the formula of the comprehensive scores in teaching and scientific research is shown below:

\[
JK = J \times \text{corresponding weight} + K \times \text{corresponding weight}
\]

**Formulation of Appraisal System**

As far as the performance appraisal mode of application-oriented universities is concerned, for the purpose of ensuring its smooth implementation, a perfect institutional guarantee is needed to coordinate it. Concretely speaking, a perfect hierarchical appraisal system must be constructed. In other words, during appraisal, it is required that under the unitary guidance of the responsible person of the appraisal group, a three-hierarchy appraisal mechanism is constructed in a gradual way. 1) The appraisal group is responsible for the comprehensive performance appraisal of teachers. Besides, both the general and hierarchal objectives are drawn up. What’s more, the appraisal result should be issued by specifying the list of the teachers who are awarded or penalized. 2) The corresponding hierarchal appraisal groups are subsequently set up in various schools or departments that carry out the special appraisal of the teachers of respective schools or departments or specialties with regard to teaching performance and scientific research performance. At the same time, the appraisal requirements and their corresponding objectives of each and every professional teacher are specified. 3) Teachers’ self-appraisal is carried out. Each school or department should take the teachers of each specialty as appraisal objects and carry out appraisal work by combining the guidance of related administrative departments. It is teachers who appraise their own teaching and scientific research in this term. The formulation of the performance appraisal system on the part of application-oriented universities has a direct bearing on whether teachers’ performance appraisal can be conducted in a scientific and standard way, whether the evaluation result can be fair and impartial and whether full play can be given to the evaluation effect. Therefore, the university
should work out unitary and perfect regulations. By combining the requirements of Measures for Implementing Performance Appraisal of Higher Education, the university should direct the appraisal program and system so as to upgrade the effect of appraisal work [5].

Implementation of Appraisal Program

Teachers’ performance appraisal is directed to be carried out smoothly by combining the constructed performance appraisal indicator system of application-oriented universities and setting up the corresponding appraisal groups. Concretely speaking, it mainly includes the following aspects. 1) Set up the corresponding appraisal groups. The appraisal group is in charge of directing the formulation and implementation of teachers’ performance appraisal objectives and regulations, which can be determined by using the excellent experience of the performance appraisal in application-oriented universities at home and abroad for reference and combining the concrete situation of the teachers in the university concerned. 2) Strengthen division of labor and coordination. Under the guidance of appraisal groups, every division and every school or department are called on to do propaganda and coordination work beforehand so as to facilitate the neat progression of the appraisal. Before the appraisal, the appraisers should be organized to receive related trainings such as the mode of appraisal, the methods of appraisal, the measures of appraisal and points for attention. 3) Set up an expert panel that takes charge of monitoring and controlling the process of performance appraisal. The expert panel is composed of appraisal experts and the senior management from the university or educational institutions and educational departments. The expert group should have 7 or 8 members. In addition, groups of backbone teachers and student cadres should also be set up to ensure the fairness and impartiality of the appraisal. 4) The announcement and feedback of the appraisal result. The performance appraisal is carried out by different appraisal groups before obtaining their own appraisal results. Statistics and analysis of the appraisal results are made by combining the appraisal group, the expert group, the backbone teacher group and the student group so as to eliminate the influential indicators that may exist. Then, the final appraisal result is formed by taking into consideration the scores given by various groups, namely, the final score of appraisal= (the appraisal score given by the appraisal group + that given by the expert group + that given by the backbone teacher group+ that given by the student group)/4 [6]. The scores are announced so that the common problems in teaching staff can be determined. By analyzing reasons, summing up the experience and combining the appraisal result of each teacher, rewards and punishments are meted out fairly to give full play to the stimulating effect of appraisal.

Conclusion and Suggestions

As far as application-oriented universities are concerned, the innovation of teachers’ performance appraisal mode is the critical measure for boosting the sustainable development of teachers and application-oriented universities. It should be mentioned that performance appraisal is not the ultimate objective but the objective for facilitating the accordance between teachers’ individual development and the development of the university as a collective. The purpose of performance appraisal is to enhance the working enthusiasm of teachers as individuals and the whole teaching staff and facilitate individual growth and self-fulfillment. At the same time, performance appraisal promotes the gradual increase of the input-output efficiency of a university. In performance appraisal, attention should be paid to process appraisal to ensure the dynamism and long-term effect of appraisal. The appraisal should give full play to its binding effect and incentive effect on teachers. The appraisal should put people first by attaching importance to teachers’ professional development and the realization of their individual values. Only in this way can give the rein to the prospective effect of performance appraisal.
References


