How Should an Effective Performance Appraisal Be:

EFL Teachers' Perspective

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Abstract

This study is set to examine EFL teachers' perceptions, views about what makes an effective performance appraisal system by adopting a quantitative survey design for data collection. A total number of 45 college instructors in the Sultanate of Oman responded to survey on: how is an effective performance appraisal perceived by EFL teachers? How do teachers perceive their participation in developing the appraisal system? And how might the present performance appraisal practices be improved? The result reveals that staff participation in developing performance appraisal system and goals, feedback confidentiality, quality appraiser, quality of place and time of appraisal, appraiser-appraisee relationships, and developmental nature of performance appraisal would help in making effective appraisal and the overall PA effectiveness depends mostly on these factors. The result has a significant implication for improving the process of teacher performance appraisal in Oman and enriches the body knowledge of PA in general. The study puts forwards suggestions and recommendations for improving PA practices and exercises in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Effective Performance appraisal, FL teachers' perceptions, critical errors in performance appraisal, Colleges instructors in the Sultanate of Oman

1. Background of the Study

The key functions of tertiary institutions are teaching, research and serving community. Therefore, it is imperative to have quality of performance in teaching by using effective performance appraisal (PA) which enables the higher educational institutions to serve community and prepare their students for unknown future. However, the teacher appraisal process is problematic and has been criticized as ineffective for improving the instructional quality of teachers (Danielson and McGreal, 200; Frase and Streshly, 1994; Lavely et al., 1992, cited in Kelly, et al. 2008:39). According to Smith (2003) an effective performance appraisal should reward productive employees and assist professional growth and help inexperienced and unproductive employees to develop. A well-prepared appraisal can build employee self-esteem and create positive relationship between staff members and foster a better work environment and increase productivity (2003:17). Therefore, Performance Appraisal (PA) is used, nowadays, in the field of education and non-education to assure quality of performance of the staff. But quality and an effective performance appraisal is "much more a controversial and debating issue" (Turk, 2007:7). "Quality staff performance appraisals, if they are used in a development sense, can be powerful tools to this end, that is, if they are used as a measurement for learning, not an assessment of learning (To 2007:1). The main aim of appraisal process in an educational context is to increase quality assurance and monitor the work of teachers in order to manage the educational process even down to the classroom level (Bartlett, 1998: 482). Moreover, Turk & Roolaht (2007) argued that a performance appraisal has to be relevant, reliable, and justly measureable, while also closely linked with the set objective of the organization and its subdivisions.

Further, an effective performance appraisal system should establish a connection between the organization and personal goals as well as shape and change organization culture towards a result driven climate (Grote 2000 cited in Turk & Roolaht, 2007). Additionally, a well-established and effective "performance appraisal system should help educators to position and reposition themselves in the organizational setting of their university" and it gives

the students staff an opportunity to express their opinions and enables self-analysis (Turk, 2007:1). Moreover, James (1995) pointed out that an effective performance appraisal provides a welcome opportunity for an employee to receive positive feedback on their contribution to the work of their development for the coming year (1995: 19)."Appraisal is effective when it appears as non-contradicting, non-defensive, supportive, educative and yet confidential. Effective appraisal therefore is underpinned by a relationship of respect and has outcomes directly relinked to improved learning and teaching" (Piggott-Irvine, 2003: 4-8). According to Bartlett (1998) an effective appraisal is always perceived differently by both appraiser and appraisee."Teachers may see appraisal as externally imposed threat to their autonomy and relationship amongst colleagues" (ibid: 489).Thus, this study is conducted to examine teachers' diverse views and opinion about PA effectiveness.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The quality of performance in teaching requires tertiary institutions to equip and prepare their teachers with skills that would help students to function effectively in their potential workplace. Because teaching does not include only what is done in classroom, but how it is done. A quality appraisal process should ensure that it provides an effective check of the quality of teachers' performance and increases quality involved in monitoring their work in order to manage the process of teaching by diagnosing their professional needs, and making appraisals more developmental rather than judgmental. This paper explores the various teachers' various opinions about how an effective performance appraisal should be.

Moreover, the paper highlights the very different and conflicting perceptions of EFL teachers about performance appraisal in three colleges in the Sultanate of Oman. Because perceptions influence people's judgment and attitudes towards particular phenomena, and it could be expected that the staff of these colleges might hold diverse opinions about the effective performance appraisal in relation to their experiences with performance appraisal in their own institutes. In addition, the study also intends to provide useful insights by demonstrating what an effective performance appraisal is according to EFL teachers in order to improve performance appraisal practices. Because an ineffective performance appraisal creates negative consequences for staff and the organization and the effective one increases staff morale, productivity and job satisfaction (Smith, 2004: 16).

The findings would provide useful guidelines for enhancing and improving the quality of performance appraisal in educational institutions. Further, the findings will contribute to the augmentation and improvement of appraisal process in providing a reliable feedback on teachers' performance. Therefore, the appraisal system has to be viewed as fair and effective by appraises (Greenberg, 1986, cited in Kelly et al., 2008).This study places heavy emphasis on teachers' perceptions about PA effectiveness to clarify a conflict views among their understanding and to answer the questions which are: what an effective appraisal is, how is an effective performance appraisal perceived by EFL teachers? How do teachers perceive their participation in developing the appraisal system? And how might the present performance appraisal practices be improved?

2. Brief Overview on Performance Appraisal (PA)

Performance appraisal is defined as the process of evaluating the performance and assessing the development / training needs of an employee (Dictionary of Human Resources Management, 2001). This definition highlights two aspects. The first entails the judgmental nature of appraisal, that is, the staff's performance is measured against certain standards. The second developmental; that is, no positive or negative judgment will be involved in the appraisal process, but to identify the training needs of the staff and find out what can be done to improve related skills and knowledge. Moreover, Jackson & Schuler (2003), cited in Ahmed (2010) viewed performance appraisal as a method by which the job performance of an employee is evaluated. It is seen as a key contributor to successful human resource management (Erdogan 2002, cited in Ahmed 2010). According to Partington & Stainton (2003) there are three main purposes of performance appraisal: it shows and furnishes aspects of staff member performance, it alerts the staff member to the degrees of improvement needed in any weaker aspect of his/her performance, and it prioritizes the aspects of performance in which improvement is needed. (Asghar 1996:62-63 & Groeschl, 2003:68) added other purposes and functions such as appraising performance for institutional development**,** for self-development which is the most important purpose of appraisal, for increased pay, and for promotion.

They add to say development-oriented staff appraisal provides the means by which enhanced communication between staff and senior colleagues can determine systematic identification of roles, tasks, targets and training plans for individuals, which support developmental and institutional goals**.** Further, an effective staff appraisal can be used as a reinforcement for staff learning and development. An effective staff appraisal encourages two-way communication and improves mutual understanding between the appraiser and appraisee and it

provides an opportunity for appraisees to reflect on their performance, accomplishment and achievements (2003:2). In addition, the best indicator of effectiveness of a developmental appraisal must lead to staff development (James, 1995:191). Further, (Cardno, 2005:303 cited in Murphy, 2012:3) advocated that "to ensure the system or appraisal is effective and successful, a balance between accountability and developmental purposes must be achieved and maintained". "Appraisal also helps to develop and reinforce the line of management control. It does this by developing the managerial skills of the appraiser and enhancing their power over appraisees" (Barlett, 1998:489).

2.1 Critical Errors in Performance Appraisal

The problems in making appraisal schemes work effectively are great enough (Rees & Porter, 2003). These problems are critical in performance appraisal which could influence its effectiveness and invalidate its results and scores. To (2007) asserted that rating scales are found to be a common problem in appraisal forms.These"quantitative categoric forms such as grades, marks, ranks, percentages, levels, are always criticized for being inadequate and ineffective tools. Because the main purpose of appraisal is "to learn, not to measure and being ranked or to rank a colleague are both embarrassing" (2007:2-3). Further some appraisers believed that they have no right to judge their colleagues and may just give 'a higher ranking to the appraisee to keep everybody happy"(ibid). Moreover, in some cases, appraisers may want to keep a good relationship with the appraisee so as to get his / her cooperation in future collaborative activities, as they may fear that the senior management may consider that lack of cooperation is due to appraiser's inability to deal with problem staff (ibid).

To (2007), Prowse & Prowse (2009) and Boachie-Mensah et al. (2012) reported that there are many common rating errors associated with performance appraisal and which have reported widely in the literature. "Leniency" which refers to the tendency of appraisers to give appraisees higher ranks than they deserve. This is called "rating" inflation" which is a serious problem with performance appraisal which makes it difficult to discriminate an average performance from outstanding one (Martin, 1998: 227). "Severity" which is opposite to leniency is also considered as one of the common errors and in which the appraisers give appraisees lower ratings than what they should get. "Central tendency" is to the tendency of the appraisers to choose the middle point in any range of the scale to play safe, but cannot illustrate effectively the staff actual or true performance. Further, "hallo effect" is the tendency to judge the appraissee's performance by only one particular aspect. "Similarity and contrast error" is the process by which the appraiser gives people who are more similar to the appraiser a higher ranking or vice versa. Moreover, "stereotyping" which is to pre-judge a person's performance on the basis of general beliefs about characteristics such as gender, age, race, etc. "Discrepancy among appaisers", every appraiser has their own standards of judgment. Appraiser A, who is being rated as "Good" by appraiser X may in fact outperform appraise B, who is being rated as "Excellent" by appraiser Y (2007:304). In addition, "horn effect" also is considered to be a rating error which means the rater might give poor grade even though the ratee's performance is good. Some appraisers have the tendency to view negatively all behaviours or actions of a subordinate because the superior dislikes a particular behavior or action of the appraisee (Lefkowitz, 2000, cited in Boachie-Mensah et al., 2012).Finally, the "error of strictness" which occurs when appraisers give unfavorable or poor appraisal regardless of the actual performance level of the appraise. In the view of Tziner & Kopeman (2002 cited in Boachie-Mensah 2012) the main reason is that the appraisers may be uncomfortable that successful appriasees may replace them in the future. It is also they want to create the impression that they are hard and strict. All these errors can affect performance appraisal in a negative way and influence its effectiveness. Therefore, for PA to be more effective, all these errors need to be avoided.

2.2 What Makes an Effective and successful Appraisal?

Performance appraisal can be powerful and influential if it is used for reinforcement and disciplinary decisions, such as staff promotion, crossing of efficiency bar and pay raises as well as termination of contract. The key aspects of a successful appraisal are: training of appraisal is a very important issue because carrying out staff appraisal and evaluation each year should not be treated as just a regular routine, and it is certainly not a formality. Byars & Pynes (2004) claimed that in order to overcome errors and problems associated with performance appraisal are to train the appraiser and improve his or her skills such as documentation and counselling skills. Appraisers should be trained to be open minded, honest, positive and skilful in addressing staff member's capabilities and competencies. Appraiser should reasonably be able to report appraisee's strengths and weaknesses and be able to make logical and fair recommendation for assisting and improving appraisee's future performance (To, 2007: 5) and he should be competent, fair, and credible. James (1995:186) added "the capacity of appraisers to create a climate for effective discussion becomes critical for an effective and successful

appraisal". Appraisees would be in difficult position if they mistrust their appraisers; therefore, trust and respect are very important in an effective appraisal. *'Trust issue can limit the effectiveness of PA''* (Levy & Williams, 2004; Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Hedgw & Teachout, 2000, cited in Boachie-Mensah et al, 2012). Sims et al. (1987 cited in Boachie-Mensah, 2012) pointed out that if appraisal lacks trust it may be used by appraisers as a political process for rewarding and punishing appraisees. According to Stronge, (1991); Timperley, (1998), cited in Kelly et al. (2008) suggested that an effective appraisal system should promote collegiality and avoid threating staff. Moreover, the giving of constructive criticism and feedback can be one of the hardest parts which face appraisers in the appraisal process (Rees& Porter, 2003: 282). A further problem can be the fact that a significant number of appraisees are more capable than the people who are appraising them and this may affect the appraisal process and credibility (Rees, Porter, 2003).

Further, appraisal mechanism or form can also play an important role in a successful appraisal therefore; it should be tailor-made to suit the particular situation and staff's needs. Martin (1998) argued that "one of the most significant indicators of performance appraisal system effectiveness is the quality of the standards used to appraise the job performance of the employees'. 'The standards should be specific, challenging, realistic, dynamic, understandable, and consistent with organization goals and, when possible, measurable (*1998:225).*To (2007) added that open-ended questions probing for detailed accounts are more useful than rating scale. "A rating scale often gives appraisers the excuse to just check the boxes without giving comments. Open-ended questions avoid the embarrassment caused by rating and invite staff to present their view points in their words" (2007:6). Martin (1998) recommended it is useful to provide appraisees by a designated areas for written comments on the appraisal form which may strengthen the appraisal and make it more effective and successful. Further, the clarity of appraisal criteria is very important for successful appraisal (Kelly et al., 2008). Setting appraisal objectives in advance and in explicit way helps in a successful appraisal because this will help the staff know what the expectations are and then provide a development plan for how to meet these expectations as well as necessary supports. However, there are common complaints about appraisal schemes that have too conflicting objectives which makes it cumbersome (Rees, Porter, 2003: 281). Having more than one appraiser may achieve a more truthful and successful appraisal and bias and judgement can be avoided (ibid: 8). Involving result of student surveys have to be taken into account and which can contribute to successful appraisal of the quality of teaching process. In addition, West & Bollington 1990, cited in Asghar, 1998:48) "staff involvement in developing appraisal system or criteria used to evaluate them and in establishing their individual goals which all lead to more effective and successful appraisal". In this regard, Odhiambo (2005:413- 414) argued that "a good appraisal scheme will be that is developed by the teachers themselves and/ or where the teachers fully participate in its development". Further, Anderson & Barnett (1993) added the more participation of employees in developing appraisal mechanism, the more satisfied they are. The quality of participation is important, in terms of the extent the employee feels able to express their ideas and attitudes in an easy manner. Boachie-Mensah (2012) added "staff participation is essential in the PA process to ant fair and ethical appraisal system" (2012:75). Increased participation in the appraisal process is positively related to appraisees' satisfaction and their acceptance to the appraisal system (Cawley et al., 1998 cited in Kelly et al. 2008:44).

"Teachers who participate in developing the appraisal system are more likely to be aware and accepting of performance expectations, better understand the appraisal process and outcomes, and be more committed to the appraisal system" (Kelly et al., 2008:44).

Further, Piggott-Irvine (2003) advocated that transparency and confidentiality are important to be considered and assured by appraiser and appraisee. Appraiser should maintain absolute …"confidentiality in dealing with information, whether it is from respondents providing feedback, or documentary evidence, or information from the principal. The information should not be tampered or altered" (2003:4-8), clear guidelines, accountability, mutual respect and trust should be maintained. According to Duckett, (1991 cited in Chow et al., 2002:68) relationship between appraiser and appraisee is a central and crucial to successful outcome of appraisal. Therefore, it is important that the appraiser be credible, respected and skilful in appraising staff. "The appraiser must be viewed as competent, capable of evaluating the teachers, and unbiased for evaluation outcomes to be perceived as reliable and useful for providing feedback to improve teacher performance" (Duke and Stiggins, 1986; McNamara, 1995; Natriello, 1990, cited in Kelly et all, 2008:45). Boachie-Mensah (2012:76) suggested that "highly educated and professionally competent appraisees are generally more co-operative and supportive of performance appraisal than those of relatively lower educational and professional competence". In addition, an effective appraisal system should have an independent appeal system which gives appraisees an opportunity to express their opinions and concerns about how performance appraisal system is operating. However, two

problems were reported here: appraisees fear reprisals from supervisors if they report them for unfair treatment and the organization is more likely to support the appraiser than the appraisee in making a final decision (Martin, 1998: 224). If the appraisees do not perceive their appraisal system to be fair, the feedback to be accurate, or resources to be credible, then they are more likely to ignore and not to consider or use the feedback they receive (Facteau et al., 1998 cited in Boachie-Mensah 2012:76).

Finally, time quality is also considered as a significant factor in carrying out a successful appraisal. Appraisers need to give their appraisees the opportunity to comment on their feedback. "This is necessary both in term of natural justice and the need for accurate assessment. The data also needs synthesising before judgements can be made" *(*Rees & Porter, 2003:283). All these issues contribute to an effective appraisal which helps increase productivity and provides opportunities to staff members in building a learning organization and improve their performance. Turk & Roolaht (2007) pointed out that appraisal of academic staff helps to fulfil the target and goals of an institute, gives an overview of the quality of lectures, enables employees to have a better understanding of what is expected of them, rises motivation and disciplines and stimulates training and development. However, it has disadvantages such as , time-consuming administrative task , creates tensions between departments, does not enhance team work, students feedback depends upon subject-interactive courses get higher marks; result of student questionnaire are not trustworthy where there are only a few respondents , unsystematic appraisal might bring more negative than positive results (Turk, 2007:214). An effective performance appraisal acts as a reminder for the teachers of what they expected to do (accountability), identifies the staff areas of strengths and weaknesses and it encourages effective teaching which leads to quality education (Odhiambo, 2005:407). However, Odhiambo (2005) argued that "it is difficult to establish a teacher appraisal system without a widely agreed-on benchmark for "good teaching". Such definition needs to address the requirements for subject matter and pedagogical mastery, the teacher's responsibility for improving student achievements and the larger role of the teacher within the school."(ibid: 413). Moreover, "one of the problem of teachers appraisal is the difficulty in defining good performance because effective teaching is a multi-dimensional task comprising many intangible aspects" (Danielson and McGreal, 2000; Lane, 1990; Stiggins and Bridgeford, 1985, cited in Kelly, 2008:43).Therefore, performance appraisal should be based on the specific tasks the employee accomplished or fails to accomplish during certain period of time   and should be conducted on a schedule where results support the organizational human resource system (Martin, 1998:224).

3. Methods

The study adopted a quantitatively-oriented descriptive survey design for data collection. Three colleges were selected on the basis of their convenience. The majorities of questions were close-ended and used three points-scales. It addresses teachers' views and understanding about performance appraisal effectiveness.

1.1 Instruments

A questionnaire was administered to 45 teachers from three colleges in Oman. The questionnaire was divided into six sections. The questions were derived from a number of sources in the literature which deals with what makes an effective performance appraisal in general. Section 1 undertakes demographic information about teachers. Section 2, explores teachers' perceptions about what makes an effective performance appraisal. Items in 3 measure their perceptions about staff participation in developing performance appraisal. Items in section 4 revolve round teachers' views about student surveys involvement in staff performance appraisal. Items in section five deal with respondents' views about feedback confidentiality in teacher performance appraisal. Finally, Items in section six centered on the importance of appraiser qualities in successful appraisal. All questions were on a three-point likert scale, with the exception of the demographic questions. Teachers were asked how they perceive an effective performance appraisal system according to the statements given.

1.2 Sample & Procedures

This study explores 45 teachers' perceptions and understanding about what makes an effective performance appraisal, and how performance appraisal might be improved. Sample selected randomly from three colleges in the Sultanate of Oman. The colleges were selected on the basis of their convenience to the researcher. The teachers are with multi-cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These are from Britain, India, Philippines, Oman, Sudan, Iraq, and Pakistan. They have been teaching in Oman for a couple of years at the tertiary level.

4. Analysis of Results & Discussion

From the results in Table 1, it can easily be observed that approximately (69%) of the respondents 'agreed' that performance appraisal should be developmental to stimulate further training rather than managerial control, whereas (11%) of the respondents responded by 'not sure' and only (18%) of them 'disagreed'.

Table1. Respondents' perceptions about performance appraisal effectiveness

No	Statements	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
		F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
1	A quality and effective appraisal should be an assessment for learning which could stimulate further training and professional development rather than managerial control.	31	69	5	11	8	18
2	An effective performance appraisal should be done for quality assurance purposes only.	9	20	4	9	32	71
3	Appraisal should be put more on motivation, satisfaction, development, and improvement rather than individual performance only.	34	76	3	7	8	18
4	An appraisal–based bonus makes an effective appraisal and it could improve teachers' performance.	36	80	5	11	2	4
5	An effective performance appraisal should have independent appeal system which gives the appraisee an opportunity to express their opinions & concerns about how PA system is operating.	33	73	11	24	1	2
6	A successful performance appraisal is free from rating errors.	29	64	12	27	3	7
7	Place and time quality are important for an effective and successful performance appraisal.	37	82	3	7	4	9

The analysis of item (2) revealed mixed responses as it showed that (20 %) 'agreed' that PA should be done for quality assurance purposes only, (9%) 'not sure', and (71 %)'disagreed' as to be done for quality assurance business only. As for questions 3, the vast majority of responses indicated that (76%) believed that PA should be motivational and investigative for staff's satisfaction rather than individual performance only, (7%) of the respondents reported by 'not sure' and, (18%) 'disagreed'. It is evident from the results that PA should be developmental rather judgmental and should work as a means for investigating appraisees' training needs and their satisfaction.Concerning item (4), whether performance appraisal-based bonuses could be used to improve teachers' performance and make PA more effective and successful or not, (80%) 'agreed', (11%) 'not sure', and (4%) 'disagreed' with the statement. As for item (5), the results show the majority of the respondents (73%) 'agreed' that an independent appeal system should be developed which gives the appraisee an opportunity to express their attitudes, concerns and opinions about how the appraisal system is operating within their institutions. (24%) 'not sure' and (2%) 'disagreed' with the statement. It could be argued that having an appeal system along with the PA would help in making effective performance appraisal. As for item 6, was designed to explore the respondents' views about whether they believe or not that an effective performance appraisal should be free from rating errors such as leniency, strictness, central tendency, etc. (64%) believed that an effective performance appraisal should be free from all rating errors, (27%) of the respondents 'not sure', and only (7%) 'disagreed'. This finding is consistent with Boachie-Mensah et al findings which revealed that performance appraisal system could be affected by rating errors and subjectivity which can both hinder its effectiveness. Regarding item (7), the questionnaire revealed that (82%) of the respondents 'agreed' that place and time quality are important for an effective appraisal, while (7%) were 'not sure', and only (9%) 'disgreed' with the statement. These finding accords the quality time in PA addressed in (Piggot-Irvine, 2003).

Table 2. Respondents' views about staff involvement in developing PA

No	Statements	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
		F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
8	Staff involvement and participation in developing performance appraisal system, criteria and goals makes an effective appraisal.	34	67	10	22	1	2
9	The quality of staff participation in developing performance appraisal criteria is important for successful appraisal.	29	64	13	29	1	2
10	Appraisal form or criteria should be tailor-made and clear to suit the teaching situation and its staff's needs.	26	58	14	31	3	7

Items (8, 9 & 10) were designed to examine the degree of the importance of staff involvement and participation in developing PA system, criteria and goals in making effective appraisal. The analysis of item (8) revealed that (67%) of the respondents 'agreed', (22%) were 'not sure', and only 2% 'disagreed'. This is consistent with Murphy's findings (2012) that participation in the development of performance appraisal criteria is supported by staff and they consider it as important for an effective performance appraisal system.

As for item 9, the result reveals that fact that not only the participation of the staff in developing the PA is important, but also the quality of participation is crucial for effective appraisal. A considerable number of staff (58%) 'greed' the quality of participation is important, while (14%) of the respondents were 'not sure', and only (2%) 'disgreed'. This is supported by *"Teachers who participate in developing the appraisal system are more likely to be aware and accepting of performance expectations, better understand the appraisal process and outcomes, and be more committed to the appraisal system"* (Kelly et al., 2008, 44). As for item 10, whether the PA form or criteria to be tailor-made and clear or ready-made, (58%) believed that it should be tailor-made, (31%) were not sure, and (7%) 'disagreed' with the statement.

Table 3. Respondents' views about the importance of student surveys in staff PA

No	Statements	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
		F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
11	An effective appraisal has to take into consideration the results of students' surveys.	6	13	1	2	38	84
12	An effective performance appraisal provides a platform for students to voice out their concerns and complaints about their teachers and teaching issues.	24	53	9	20	10	22
13	Students should be educated on quality learning and teaching before engaging them in staff performance appraisal.	39	87	0	0	6	13

Items (11, 12 & 13) were developed to examine the respondents' views and perceptions about the significance of student surveys in successful performance appraisal. Concerning item 1, whether student surveys make an effective performance appraisal or not. In item 11, the result shows that (13%) of the respondents believed that student surveys are important in an effective performance appraisal, only (2%) were 'not sure', and the vast majority of the respondents 'disagreed' with the statement they believed that students survey are not important for effective PA. It could be argued that student surveys should not always considered in staff appraisal. With regard to item 12, this item reveals that (53%) of the respondents 'agreed' that an effective PA works as a platform for students to get their voice heard, (20%) were 'not sure', and less significantly (22%) 'disagreed' with the statement.

Moreover, item 13, indicates that (87%) of the respondents believed that in order to make PA more effective and successful, students need to be trained and educated on quality learning and teaching before engaging them in assessing their teachers. On the other hand, no one responded by 'not sure', and (13%) 'disagreed'. It quite evident that student responses should not always consider as valid and reliable unless they receive enough training on how to evaluate their teaching and learning process.

Table 4. Respondents' views about the PA feedback confidentiality

No	Statements	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
		F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
14	Confidentiality and transparency in dealing with feedback or documentary evidence of PA is important for effective appraisal.	40	89	3	7	1	2
15	Performance appraisal feedback should be confidential and should be communicated to the staff in private without involving the departments, institute or faculties.	31	69	4	9	9	20
16	PA feedback should be obtained from different sources and appraisers or panel rather than from one appraiser.	35	78	6	13	2	4

Tables (4) displays the respondents' views about the importance of confidentiality in staff performance appraisal feedback.(89%) of the participants 'agreed' that feedback confidentiality is important in an effective and successful appraisal, (7%) of the respondents were 'not sure', and less significantly (2%) 'disagreed' with the statement. This accords with the argument *"if the appraisees do not perceive their appraisal system to be fair, the feedback to be accurate, or resources to be credible, then they are more likely to ignore and not to consider or use the feedback they receive"* (Facteau et al., 19998 cited in Boachie-Mensah 2012:76).Concerning item (15) the majority (69%) of the respondents believed that feedback should be communicated to them in private and should not be disclosed in public, whereas, (9%) were 'not sure', and (20%) 'disagreed'. It could be argued that if we want the PA to be effective, feedback has to be confidential. Regarding item (15), whether PA feedback to be obtained from one appraisal or different sources and appraisals. In response to this statement, (78%) of the respondents 'agreed' with the statement, while, (13%) were 'not sure', and only (4%) 'disagreed'. It is clear evident from the respondents' responses that confidential and multi-sources feedback is highly important for effective feedback.

Table 5. Respondents' views about the importance of appraiser qualities in staff PA

No	Statements	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
17	Appriaser-appraisee relationship is a central and crucial for successful appraisal	21	48	8	18	16	36
18	An effective appraisal depends on the competence and skills of the appraiser.	28	62	10	22	5	11
19	Appraisal panel should always be trained to make a successful, fair and effective appraisal.	34	76	11	24	0	0
20	Having more than one appraiser achieves a more truthful and successful appraisal.	25	56	13	29	6	13

This table (5) depicts the respondents' views about the importance of the quality appraiser in an effective appraisal. As for (item 17), which explores whether the appraiser-appraisee relationships are important in an effective performance appraisal or not.(48%) of the respondents 'agreed', and (18%) were 'not sure', and (36%) disagreed with the statement. As for item (18), this question is designed to examine the teachers' views about the significance of appraiser competence and skills in making effective appraisal. (62%) of the respondents believed that appraiser competence and professional skills are important in successful appraisal, (10%)'not sure' that appraiser skills are important, and (11%) 'disagreed' with the statement. It could be argued that appraiser skills are the key factor for effective appraisal. Concerning item (19), whether training the appraisal would make an effective appraisal or not. (76%) of the teachers believed that appraiser training is highly important in successful appraisal. In addition, item (20) is developed to examine the respondents' views about the importance of more than appraiser in the appraisal process. The results showed (56%) of the teachers believed that having more than appraiser would lead to effective appraisal, while (29%) 'were not sure', and (13%) of the respondents 'disagreed' with the statement and they believed that having more than one appraisal is not necessary in making effective performance appraisal. It could be argued that having more than one appraiser in the PA process, training of the appraiser and establishing good relationships between the appraiser and the appraisee would result in successful and effective performance appraisal.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

This study is set out to examine and explore teachers'' perceptions, views and understanding about what makes an effective performance appraisal. To serve its purpose, the study utilized the responses of 45 teachers from three colleges in the Sultanate of Oman. A questionnaire was used to collect the respondents' views, perceptions and understanding. The analysis of the questionnaire showed interesting results with regard to the issue under investigation. The findings were supportive to the literature which called for more effective teacher performance appraisal. The results showed that an effective performance appraisal should be developmental rather than judgmental. Further, quality appraiser, appraiser-appraisee relationships, appraiser, training, feedback confidentiality, staff participation in developing appraisal system and having appeal system for appraisees are all important and significant in making effective teacher performance appraisal. Based on the findings, the study puts forward the following recommendations which might help in making teacher performance appraisal more effective and successful.

EFL teachers need to be involved in developing the performance appraisal goals, system and criteria, because "teachers who participate in developing the appraisal system are more likely to be aware and accepting of performance expectations, better understand the appraisal process and outcomes, and be more committed to the appraisal system" (Kelly et al., 2008:44). *"The appraiser must be viewed as* competent, capable of evaluating the teachers, and unbiased for evaluation outcomes to be perceived as reliable and useful for providing feedback to improve teacher performance" (Duke and Stiggins, 1986; McNamara, 1995; Natriello, 1990, cited in Kelly et all, 2008:45). Boachie-Mensah (2012:76). Moreover, quality appraiser is very important in making an effective appraisal because "highly educated and professionally competent appraisees are generally more co-operative and supportive of performance appraisal than those of relatively lower educational and professional competence*"* (Duke and Stiggins, 1986; McNamara, 1995; Natriello, 1990, cited in Kelly et all, 2008:45). In addition, appraisers and students should be trained on what makes quality learning and teaching before involving them in the performance appraisal process. PA feedback should be made confidential and should be communicated to staff in private in order to avoid any unnecessary problem. Finally, quality time and place should be considered when conducting appraisal so as to give appraisee an ample time to demonstrate his / her achievements and accomplishments.

The key limitation of this study is the sample size. The survey of 45 participants may not yield solid results. The reason for restricting the scope of the study related to the time factor. The research was also limited to a study of three colleges. While including more colleges and respondents would have added more depth to the study. Further, the use of questionnaire rather than adopting more than one tool such as interview may benefit the study. The future result in PA appraisal effectiveness should devote more attention to the sample size and the tools of inquiry because this study is only small scale research which investigates the issue from descriptive survey design perspective only.

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