

## **Benefits of Implementing a System of Periodic Evaluation of Employees in an Organization – the Results of Empirical Research**

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**Abstract.** If an organization wants to implement a system of periodic evaluation of employees it needs to define its adequate objectives. It is crucial that the objectives formulated for a particular organization are achievable. Only then can one talk about real benefits of implementing such a system. The literature concerning organizational and management theory provides insufficient analysis of this matter. The need to fill this gap with the latest empirical data prompted the authors to conduct pilot research in companies operating in Poland with the use of a survey as a tool. It was built on the basis of the objectives of the evaluation system which were previously classified in a query. The purpose of this article is to describe and analyse the empirical research concerning possible benefits of the implementation of an evaluation system in an organization. 48 out of 100 studied organizations declared the implementation of the system. Student's t-test did not show statistically significant differences between the organizations analyzed for each statement in terms of the evaluation of selected performance parameters of a given organization. In such a situation further research is essential. There are some inclinations that the system does have a curing effect on the organisation. One can risk an interpretation that the greater the knowledge of the employees' potential and their development opportunities, the more accurate and reliable decisions and the more effective the human resources management is. The results showed that the larger the organization, the more often it implements the system.

**Keywords:** Employees, Evaluation, Organisation.

### **1 Introduction**

Verifying human activity in the world happens on a regular basis. Systems of periodic evaluation of employees trigger ambivalent feelings. An employee, according to Pascal's thought [15], is a man full of doubt. Those who are against evaluation per se, see it as an inconsistent set of actions which are taken suddenly. The dilemma of each manager is thus the choice between this kind of evaluation and the implementation of a formal system of periodical evaluation of employees [21]. M. Łojko refers to the call of American scientists for the management and employees to join the sui generis

psychological pact, which would be beneficial for both sides of the deal: mutual respect and a sense of responsibility for the success of their organization [11], the acceptance of judgments premises, belief in the meaning of its practical use and the involvement of the participants that is the sine qua non of the correct course of an employee evaluation process [12]. These issues, focussed on the system of periodic evaluation of employees, are not free from controversy. On the one hand the system has its advocates seeking continuous improvement of the system [4] and, on the other, there are negative voices which state that these evaluation systems should not be used at all (cf. [3, 19]). This very divergence of opinions results in discovering new problems. In this context, the purpose of this article is an attempt to identify the consequences of implementing a system of periodic evaluation of employees in organisations and a hypothesis has been formulated that this system does have a curing effect on the way an organisation functions. Detailed objectives:

- finding an answer to the following question – How widespread is the use of the system of periodic evaluation of employees in all organizations, regardless of their size, and then taking into account their size?
- juxtaposing organizations that have adopted the system with those that have not implemented it, to illustrate the scale of the impact of implementing the system of periodic evaluation of employees on organizational performance indicators.

## **2 Research method**

The research process consisted of the following parts:

- analysing the literature focused on a system of periodic evaluation of employees;
- selecting a research gap by identifying divergent views concerning the issue;
- preparing an in-depth research query on the basis of which the objectives of the evaluation system implementation in an organization were classified;
- analysing the classification which revealed directions of impacts of particular system implementation goals on others;
- capturing the goals tendency to influence other goals, which led to the formulation of the original research hypothesis: the evaluation system does have a curing effect on the way an organisation functions;
- formulating five theses concerning the objectives of the system implementation regarding the functions of an organization (performance parameters of an organization);
- choosing a quantitative method as an adequate one to explain this phenomenon;
- constructing a research tool – a survey – consisting of five statements, evaluated in a five-point Likert scale, and three demographic-background questions;
- conducting pilot research in companies operating in Poland with the use of a survey as a tool;
- conducting a general analysis of empirical research findings on the benefits of implementing evaluation systems in respondents organizations, and verifying the

impact of an organization size on the system use where crosstabs were used with statistic  $\chi^2$ , assuming a critical significance level of 0.05;

- analysing the impact of the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees on organizational performance;
- analysing the results of performance parameters for organizations with and without the system of periodic evaluation of employees with the use of Student's t-test for independent tests;
- analysing the relation between the performance parameters of the surveyed organizations in total using Pearson's correlation;
- analysing the impact of an organization size on organizational performance, in the context of the evaluation system implementation (descriptive statistics for individual statements in organizations employing up to 100 and over 100 employees, the analysis of performance parameters for organizations employing up to 100 and over 100 employees with the use of Student's t-test for independent tests;
- gathering conclusions allowing to accept the proposed research hypothesis;
- performing a thorough analysis of the implementation of the evaluation system in respondents organizations in order to fill the research gap;
- interpreting the limitations of the survey (stemming from an innovative construction of the questionnaire) as a need to continue the process;
- noticing inclinations suggesting that the evaluation system does have a curing effect on the way an organisation functions and seeing it as a prerequisite for deepening the research on the subject matter;

### **3 Implementing systems of periodic evaluation of employees in an organization**

The concept of a periodic evaluation system of employees should be understood as "a system of consciously and logically selected, internally organized techniques, criteria and principles regarding employees evaluation considered appropriate for: objectives, business and job groups, used to meet their objectives" [13]. The above definition shows the purposefulness of the periodic evaluation system in an organization. Objectives of the evaluation must be defined (like all elements of the system) and they must take into account the specificity of a given organization. Therefore, the implementation of the periodic evaluation system involves identifying adequate evaluation objectives and providing information to employees.

The subject literature for the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees includes both long-term ones, that is, enabling the implementation of personnel policy, or shaping attitudes and behaviours [17] as well as current ones, including: determining the grounds for wage differentiation, justification of personnel decisions, obtaining information regarding their needs, providing feedback to an employee about the course and results of his or her work [17]. For T. Rostowski and Ł. Sienkiewicz, the main objective of the system of periodic evaluation of employees is "a sound analysis of their performance, needs and development of employees

potential necessary to make a proper plan and manage human capital in line with its mission and strategy" [17]. This way, the authors combine the current aspect with the long term one.

During these theoretical investigations objectives of the system of periodic evaluation of employees were classified and a dual dualism concept was adopted. The first – horizontal one – implies the coexistence of two recipients of the system, that is, an employee and an organization. However, the second – vertical one – takes into account the separation of these objectives into independent ones, that is, direct ones, and those which constitute their development, so indirect ones. In addition, we discovered a significant tendency – specific objectives have an impact on other objectives. This phenomenon is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Classification of the objectives regarding the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees in an organization

	The objectives of systems of periodic evaluation of employees (employee's perspective)	The objectives of systems of periodic evaluation of employees (organisation's perspective)
<b>Direct</b>	Obtain information about the performance and the strengths and weaknesses of an employee, to provide information to both an employee and the management of a given organization	Identify staff potential of an organization
	Identify opportunities for development of an employee	Identify the developmental potential of the organization's staff
	stimulation and/or boost of employees' motivation	developing a pro-efficient organizational culture, improving communication within an organization
	Increase worker's efficiency and effectiveness	Make good HR policy decisions possible
		Increase the quality and/or effectiveness of organization management, including HR management
<b>Indirect</b>		Increase organizational efficiency and organizational effectiveness as a whole

Table 1 graphically highlights the directions of impacts of individual objectives: From an employee's perspective direct objectives of the system of periodic evaluation of employees affect their exact counterparts from an organization's perspective; direct objectives in both categories affect indirect objectives; indirect objectives from an employee's perspective affect indirect objectives from an organization's perspective.

Two direct objectives from the perspective of an employee are to be in the possession of reliable descriptions of their or her functioning in an organization. The first description is a diagnosis of their achievements and an updated characteristic of predispositions, which is a source of knowledge for an employee and his superiors. In this table, the objective was placed on the employee's side in section 1) obtain information about the performance and the strengths and weaknesses of an employee, to provide information to both an employee and the management of a given organization Its shape was influenced by the opinions taken from the publication: R. Griffin – "feedback for subordinates" [5]; B. Pawłowska – "accurate measurement of results", "pointing strengths of an employee" [16]; A. Bieńkowska and MW Broła – "obtaining information on performance" [1]; J. Koziński – "determining the value of each individual employee (its advantages and disadvantages)" [9]; T. Listwan – "information on strengths and weaknesses of an employee", "providing information on the quantity and quality of work performed by an employee" [10]; K. Padzik – "finding work results", "gathering materials regarding an employee", "determining the way of functioning and the role" [14]. The second description is a sketch of the perspective of an employee: point 2) defining the potential for improvement and development of an employee. Inspiring issues were found in the work of M. Kostera and S. Kownacki, who, in this matter, discussed "individual career planning, pathways for training and development", "formulating advice for individual participants," "helping an employee determine the right direction of actions" [8] also B. Cherniachowicz and A. Wieczorek-Szymańska set such objectives as "indicating the developmental opportunities of an employee", "determining what kind of knowledge a person should possess", "determining what skills to develop" [2]; (See [1]). In the section of employee's objectives there are two more indirect objectives. In point 3) stimulating and/or boosting motivation of an employee's, inclinations are as follows: "motivating" [21]; "providing basis for rational development of motivational systems" [18]; "establishing sources of employee's motivation" [2]; "motivational influence on an employee", "improving the material motivation system" [9], "proper motivation of employees", "creating a rational remuneration system" [20]; (cf. [10, 14, 16]).

In the last point in employees' section one can find one indirect objective 4) increase worker's efficiency and effectiveness. This point is influenced by the following: "improving the efficiency of work" [6]; "analyzing the achieved effects in the context of the competence of employees", "evaluating employee's performance in terms of quantity and quality" [8]; "estimating the work done by an employee at a given time" [2]; "comparing the results of work", "help in removing defect" [9]; "defining current and achievable performance levels" [20]; (cf. [10, 14, 16, 18]).

The second recipient, according to the concept of horizontal division of the system objectives, is an organization. On its side in Table 1 there is point 1) defining HR

potential of an organization, which at the same time, according to vertical duality, is a direct objective. This point is the résumé of the statement: "diagnosing staffing potential", [6]; "verifying the adequacy of competence profiles" [1]; "evaluating competencies" [18]; "diagnosing personnel staff capacity" [9]; "identifying current and future potential of an employee" [10]; "predicting the use of existing potential to achieve enterprise goals" [20]; (cf. [2, 3, 8, 14]).

Point 2) identify the developmental potential of the organization's staff – similar to the above, it has objectives from an organization perspective (horizontal division) and direct objective (vertical division), and it is built as a synthesis of the following issues: "organizing career planning" [16]; "identifying new ways to support an employee in career development" [3]; "identifying a competence gap", [1]; "using the evaluation system materials to develop general development plans for organization members" [8]; "directing future personal development" [20]; "Gathering information to summarize plans regarding the development of all employees" [14]; [6, 9, 18]).

Table 1 shows indirect objectives in the evaluation system section from an organisation perspective –3) developing a pro-efficient organizational culture, improving communication within an organization This is a summary of the following scientific views: "modelling certain behaviours" [22]; "strengthening the sense of bond with an organization", "establishing a rapport between an employee and an employer" [18] "supporting a promoted organizational culture", "improving communication", "building multi-layered relations that develop all participants in the evaluation process" [6]; "determining the degree of compatibility between employee values and organization values", "providing information about how an employee identifies with an organization" [18]; "shaping employees and making effective, satisfied and loyal people" [14]; "substituting subjective – random opinions with objective criteria for performance evaluation", "caring for the quality of working life of an employee" [20]; (cf. [3, 8, 9, 10]).

In the analysis of point 4) make good HR policy decisions possible was inspired by the following postulates: "predicting a success in a particular position on the basis of past performance" [3]; "building the basis for decisions on promotion, degradation, transferring", "influencing the development of selection criteria" [8]; "selecting the best candidates for managerial vacancy", "influencing decisions about the rotation of an employee" [9]; "Providing information needed to plan and conduct a proper personnel policy" [20]; (see [2, 6, 7, 10, 16, 18]).

Point 5) increase the quality and/or effectiveness of organization management, including HR management, was influenced by the following aspects: "improving organization management", "verification of the efficiency of procedures and personnel management tools" [6]; "improving organizational efficiency", "generating information for day-to-day management", "enabling management decisions" [18]; "preparing necessary steps to improve an institution's management system" [9]; "enabling the effectiveness of human resources management instruments: procedures, selection of candidates for employment, selection, assignment of employees to other posts, all kinds of steps improving work organization and its effects" [10]; (cf. [1, 2, 3, 8, 14, 20]).

Point 6) increase organizational efficiency and organizational effectiveness as a whole has been constructed under the influence of the following issues: "recognizing the dependence present in the company" [16]; "correcting unwanted organizational behaviour" [3]; "improving cooperation" [6]; "facilitating the procedures of planning the process aimed at achieving higher efficiency" [9] (see [7, 14, 18, 20,]).

As far as effectiveness of implementing the employee's periodic assessment system is concerned, it is crucial that the objectives formulated for a particular organization are in fact achievable (and correctly defined). Only then can one talk about real benefits of the system implementation. Indirect objectives listed in Table 1 became a precondition for the design of precise questionnaires.

#### **4 Methodology of empirical research**

The authors conducted pilot research in companies operating in Poland with the use of a survey as a tool. In order to build this instrument the authors used previously classified system implementation objectives for an organization. It was assumed that one survey would be done in one organization, and therefore it was not impossible to verify employee perspectives (in this case a representative group of employees should be examined in each of the surveyed organisations). On the basis of the objectives regarding the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees, five statements were made and they referred to:

- knowledge about the potential and development perspectives of employees,
- the quality of human resources management in an organization,
- effectiveness of staff management,
- communication between management and subordinates,
- the culture human resources management.

The statements were as follows:

Statement 1. (S1): Our organization has full knowledge about the potential of employees and their development opportunities (Objective 1 and 2, organization's perspective).

Statement 2. (S2): Our organization makes good human resource management decisions (Objective 4, organization's perspective).

Statement 3. (S3): Our organization effectively manages human resources potential (Objective 5, organization's perspective).

Statement 4. (S4): In our organization the process of communication between management and subordinates is correct (Objective 3, organization's perspective).

Statement 5. (S5): Our organization is concerned about a high level of management culture (Objective 3, organization's perspective).

The ratio of the respondents to the taxonomically enumerated statements was measured in a five-point Likert scale. In addition, the questionnaire included three questions regarding:

- the size of an organization,
- the ways its employees are evaluated,
- the environment in which the company operates.

The launch of the research was scheduled for 1st March 2016. A randomly selected group of companies from a database of 928 branches was called. The action finished 4th March 2016 when the number of records in the base was 781, and 100 respondents sent a response, which constituted 12.80%.

## **5 Analysis of the results of empirical research – the benefits of implementing a system of periodic evaluation of employees in an organization**

The analysis of the results of empirical research was divided into three stages:

Stage 1. General analysis of the system in the surveyed organizations – The purpose was finding an answer to the following question: how widespread is the use of the system of periodic evaluation of employees in general, so in all studied organizations, regardless of their size, and then taking into account their size.

Stage 2. Analysing the impact of the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees on organizational performance. The main purpose was to juxtapose organizations that have adopted the evaluation system with those that have not implemented it. The discrepancies observed during this comparative process have illustrated the scale of impact of the system implementation on organizational performance indicators.

Stage 3. Analysing the impact of organization size on its performance parameters in the context of the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees. During this stage the analyses were to provide detailed empirical data indicating a measure of the impact of an organization's size on its indicators with the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees.

### **5.1 Stage 1. General analysis of the use of the system of periodic evaluation of employees in surveyed organizations**

This study analyzed the variable of system use. 48 out of 100 studied organizations declared the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees. Due to the non-random selection of the sample, it is not possible to draw conclusions with regard to the use of the system in the population of all organizations operating in Poland. To verify the impact of organization size on the system use, crosstabs were used with statistic  $\chi^2$ , assuming a critical significance level of 0.05. The use of the system of periodic evaluation of employees in organizations of all sizes is presented in Table 2.



**Table 2.** The use of the system of periodic evaluation of employees in organizations of all sizes

Number of employees	the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees	Frequency	Percent
up to 100 people	no	39	54.9
	yes	32	45.1
	total	71	100
over 100 people	no	13	44.8
	yes	16	55.2
	total	29	100

Analysis of  $\chi^2$  test showed statistically significant differences between organizations of different sizes in terms of their frequency of using the system of periodic evaluation of employees ( $\chi^2(5, N = 412) = 110.16; p < 0.001$ ). The larger the organization, the more likely it is to implement the system.

## 5.2 Stage 2. Analysing the impact of the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees on organizational performance.

In this part of the analyses (regarding statements S1-S5) organizations that implemented the periodic assessment system are juxtaposed with those who did not. The basic descriptive statistics for each statement are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics for individual statements in organizations that implemented system and those who did not

Statement	Has the system of periodic evaluation of employees been implemented in the organization?	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error of the mean
S1	yes	48	4.063	0.783	0.113
	no	52	3.789	0.915	0.127
S2	yes	48	3.896	0.805	0.116
	no	52	3.865	0.817	0.113
S3	yes	48	4.000	0.899	0.130
	no	52	3.865	0.841	0.117

S4	yes	48	4.104	1.077	0.155
	no	52	3.962	0.816	0.113
S5	yes	48	4.229	0.857	0.124
	no	52	4.115	0.758	0.105

In order to verify whether the evaluation of selected performance parameters in the organizations, which implemented the system is higher than the evaluation of selected performance parameters in organizations that did not implement it, a Student's t-test for independent tests was adopted, assuming a critical significance level of 0.05. Performance indicators of organizations with the system of periodic evaluation of employees were compared with those without. Student's t-test for the 100 organizations did not show statistically significant differences between the organizations analyzed for each statement in terms of the evaluation of selected performance parameters of a given organization. However, it should be stressed that:

- for every statement (S1-S5) the mean was higher for those organizations that implemented the system;
- the highest difference in means (in organizations with the system and those without) was obtained for S1, the one referring to the direct objective of the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees – that is, having knowledge about the potential of employees and their development opportunities.

The results of Student's t-test analysis are presented in Table 4. In addition, Pearson correlation analysis of performance parameters was performed, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 4.** The analyses results of performance parameters for organizations with and without the system of periodic evaluation of employees

Statement	Results of Student's t-test for independent tests
S1	$t(98) = 1.603; p = 0.112$
S2	$t(98) = 0.852; p = 0.852$
S3	$t(98) = 0.770; p = 0.441$
S4	$t(98) = 0.750; p = 0.455$
S5	$t(98) = 0.705; p = 0.583$

**Table 5.** Relation between the performance parameters of the surveyed organizations in total

		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
S1	Pearson's correlation	1	0.538**	0.344**	0.176	0.253*
	significance (two-sided)		0.000	0.000	0.079	0.011
	N	100	100	100	100	100
S2	Pearson's correlation	0.538*	1	0.666**	0.467**	0.405**
	significance (two-sided)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100
S3	Pearson's correlation	0.344*	0.666**	1	0.261**	0.437**
	significance (two-sided)	0.000	0.000		0.009	0.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100
S4	Pearson's correlation	0.176	0.467**	0.261**	1	0.430**
	significance (two-sided)	0.079	0.000	0.009		0.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100
S5	Pearson's correlation	0.253*	0.405**	0.437**	0.430**	1
	significance (two-sided)	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	100	100	100	100	100

\*\* significant correlation at 0.01 (two-sided)  
\* significant correlation at 0.05 (two-sided)

Pearson's correlation analysis shows that practically in the case of each surveyed organisation there is a strong positive relation between the individual results. This means that generally high scores for one of the analyzed parameters are accompanied by high scores for another parameter. It is difficult to judge the direction of this influence as it requires an in-depth literature analysis. However, one can risk a statement (referring to the direct and indirect objectives of employee periodical evaluation) that the greater the knowledge of the employees' potential and their development opportunities, the better the decisions made with regard to human resource management and the more effective performance in this field. However, there is one exception, namely the relation between the impact of knowledge about the potential of employees and the process of communication in an organization.

**5.3 Stage 3. Analysing the impact of organization size on its performance parameters in the context of the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees.**

In this part of the analysis, similar calculations were made as in Step 2, separately, however, for organizations employing up to 100 people as well as above that number. The results are shown in Tables 6-9.

**Table 6.** Descriptive statistics for individual statements in organizations employing up to 100 people

Statements	Has the system of periodic evaluation of employees been implemented in the organization?	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error of the mean
S1	yes	32	4.094	0.734	0.130
	no	39	3.821	0.914	0.146
S2	yes	32	3.938	0.840	0.149
	no	39	3.795	0.894	0.143
S3	yes	32	4.094	0.893	0.158
	no	39	3.795	0.923	0.148
S4	yes	32	4.063	1.076	0.190
	no	39	3.974	0.873	0.140
S5	yes	32	4.250	0.842	0.149
	no	39	4.103	0.718	0.115

**Table 7.** The analyses results of performance parameters for organizations employing up to 100 people

Statement	Results of Student's t-test for independent tests
S1	$t(69) = 1.367; p = 0.176$
S2	$t(69) = 0.687; p = 0.494$
S3	$t(69) = 1.378; p = 0.173$
S4	$t(69) = 0.381; p = 0.704$
S5	$t(69) = 0.796; p = 0.429$

**Table 8.** Descriptive statistics for individual statements in surveyed organizations employing over 100 people

Statement	Has the system of periodic evaluation of employees been implemented in the organization?	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error of the mean
S1	yes	16	4.000	0.894	0.224
	no	13	3.692	0.947	0.263
S2	yes	16	3.813	0.750	0.188
	no	13	4.077	0.494	0.137
S3	yes	16	3.813	0.911	0.228
	no	13	4.077	0.494	0.137
S4	yes	16	4.188	1.109	0.277
	no	13	3.923	0.641	0.178
S5	yes	16	4.188	0.911	0.228
	no	13	4.154	0.899	0.249

**Table 9.** The analyses results of performance parameters for organizations employing over 100 people

Statement	Results of Student's t-test for independent tests
S1	$t(27) = 0.897; p = 0.377$
S2	$t(27) = -1.092; p = 0.285$
S3	$t(27) = -0.939; p = 0.356$
S4	$t(27) = 0.761; p = 0.453$
S5	$t(27) = 0.100; p = 0.921$

In both groups there were no statistically significant differences between the organizations that implemented the system of periodic evaluation of employees and those that did not. At the same time, in the group of organizations employing up to 100 people, there was a higher mean for performance parameters for all statements

when an organization implemented the periodic evaluation system. In the case of organizations employing more than 100 people, this impact is not clear, which may be due to the fact that the sample is too small in this group of organizations.

## 6 Conclusion

48 out of 100 studied organizations declared the implementation of the system of periodic evaluation of employees. Student's t-test did not show statistically significant differences between the organizations analyzed for each statement in terms of the evaluation of selected performance parameters of a given organization. This forces us to continue research, especially for (S1), (S2), (S3), (S4) and (S5), showing a higher mean in organizations that implemented the system of periodic evaluation of employees. As a result, there are some inclinations that the system does have a curing effect on the way an organisation functions. One can risk an interpretation, in the context of direct and indirect objectives of periodic evaluation of employees, that the greater the knowledge of the employees' potential and their development opportunities, the more accurate and reliable decisions are made and the more effective the human resources management process is (however, it does not refer to the correlation of the impact of knowledge about the potential of employees with the communication process in an organization). The analysis of the results showed the impact of the size of an organization on the use of the system of periodic evaluation of employees: the larger the organization, the more often it implements the system of periodic evaluation of employees. The argument supporting the hypothesis was provided by empirical data from research regarding organizations employing up to 100 people, since in this group the mean for the performance parameters was reported higher for all statements if the organization implemented the system of periodic evaluation of employees. However, this was not observed in the case of a group formed by organizations with a minimum of one hundred people. This may be due to too small test sample as it was a pilot research.

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