

A Reflection on Monitoring and Evaluation Processes in the Context of Job Evaluation Programme: An Analytical View

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Abstract

Looking at the overall monitoring and evaluation processes show that not only a logical relationship exists between the two but, to an extent, there is an organic relationship present as well. In addition, the type and degree of the contribution made to the programme by these processes serve to make it as professional and appropriate as possible. Moreover, these processes enable the programme to assess its ability to ensure that a proportionate degree of fairness and equity is maintained. This in turn supports the right of the employee to question the results obtained and to formally appeal against those considered to be unsatisfactory. The need for the job evaluation process to be open and transparent (as opposed to a hidden system operating behind closed doors) cannot be overstated. For if the results then fail to reflect or represent what had been originally planned then at least these will be there for all to see. Consequently, the employee will be less likely to suspect that this was a clandestine movement with a hidden agenda whereby the workforce were led to believe one thing whilst management had entirely other ideas. In big organizations, both monitoring, evaluation strategies and processes are planned and designed to be interconnected for the intended purposes they serve (though technically each is its own entity). Nonetheless, in practice, both monitoring and evaluation can be seen as a reference against which the programme is seen to be appropriate and responsive to predetermined objectives.

Key Word: Monitoring, Evaluation, Job evaluation programme, Objectives, Implementation, Corrective action, planned maintenance, Professionalism.

1.0 Introduction: Sometimes, things are invisible until they have been put into action

An organisation may meet all the requirements necessary for installing a job evaluation programme. It may then in turn put that programme into action, complete with an effective appeals procedure. Yet, despite this and regardless of the amount, size, degree of attention, care, precision, effort and resources that the organization may have spent in installing the job evaluation programme (right through from vision, to planning, to design, checking and implementation) it will nonetheless discover some shortcomings, defects and/or some unintended consequences.

It follows that the less attention and effort an organization may pay the more obstacles and problems the programme may encounter. In turn, this demonstrates that:

- (a) Perfectionism is totally beyond human reach, and
- (b) That amendment / change is an ongoing process.

The reason is that invariably there is more going on than meets the eye. Some things that were invisible prior to implementation subsequently become visible only after the programme is up and running. These unintended results could be positive, negative or even a mixture of both. Whatever their outcome, intervention by the organization will be necessary in order to utilize the positives and tackle the negatives. It is appropriate (for management) to explore the effect (of those negatives) upon the employees and the cause/s behind them as well as the intended procedures to tackle them. In doing so, we are touching the features of **System Thinking approach**. (Adapted from Rieley, J. B., 2006) Bear in mind, the fact that simply because a formal programme has been installed does not mean that an organization will continue to operate it if it does not succeed in achieving desirable results. Thus, any scheme **should be** properly installed, administered and maintained to justify its continuing existence. However, **a (formal) job evaluation programme is** a carefully designed and implemented instrument that reflects, or emanates from, the organization's vision and mission of the employees' wages.

It is therefore an influential procedure on the issue regarding the organization's strategy of satisfying employees based on their jobs' relative value and on the weights assigned to them accordingly. To this, a job evaluation program is the source of the organization's input for developing an effective salary programme (Quible, 2001). From here a job evaluation programme assumes that jobs which contribute more to the organization's goals should command a higher wage. Similarly, employees will feel treated fairly when their level of pay is ascertained by an acknowledged formal weighting of one job against another which, consequently, reflects their respective relative value.

2.0 A glance at the meaning of the terms Monitoring and Evaluation of the job evaluation programme

Before going further it seems salutary to briefly mention the **meaning and the role of monitoring and evaluation in the context of the job evaluation programme.**

Monitoring may be identified as a method which ensures that continuous checks and assessments are made. It is applied throughout the whole process of installation and implementation of the programme. Its purpose is to control the direction and quality of that programme and to keep the job evaluation scheme up-to-date. It includes some aspects of a routine work of observation, documenting, recording, reporting and initial assessment of an action (or actions) that, if required, need to be taken. In this sense, the monitor is a developer (see Mitchell et al., 1987). Therefore, in order for the monitor to be provided with a full description of the scheme / system applied, s/he first needs to gather the relevant data and information from all aspects of the organisation's internal operations (driven with an adaptation: Heller & Hindle, 1998; Tiernan, S. et al., 1996; Carysforth, C., 1994) A similar exercise is then applied to all related external events and trends. Having collected this data the monitor must then analyse it to determine what correlations exist among the composite factors.

At this point, there will be a need for some relevant procedures to be devised to help facilitate the monitoring process. Monitoring can prevent these procedures of becoming obsolete and inefficient by checking that they are being functioned properly (see Torrington & Hall, 1991). In so doing the monitor will also be in a position to capture a virtual vision or picture of the overall climate programme performed and whether any potential problems can be anticipated. Good monitoring shall make the programme better managed by increasing the chance or the opportunity of delivering high quality results / outcomes on time. Monitoring is important for the success of the job evaluation programme. Whenever the monitor finds, for instance, that a case of pay difference exists, s/he has to make sure that the relative values (results) have been measured and determined properly to avoid pay inequities. Otherwise the job evaluation exercise will only help to create further inequities instead of eliminating them.

At this point, there will be a juncture with the evaluation process. **The evaluation** may be identified by analysis of the results and outcomes obtained from exercising the job evaluation programme in order to evaluate / judge the worth of the programme. In so doing, the evaluator **may use monitoring data** or data collected **to assess the effectiveness** of the job evaluation programme (goal achievement process) **and the cost efficiency** (implementation process). Thus, at this point, the evaluator task involves **identifying the strengths and weaknesses** of the performed job evaluation programme **and the lesson(s)** that can be learnt as a consequence. Evaluation may occur at the end of the process but, alternatively, much can be learned from using an ongoing process of review [adapted from: Katherine Duffy, in Hantrais & Mangen (eds.), 1996; Thompson, N., 2003; Mintzberg, H., 2009; Mead, R., 2005]. In broad terms, when the evaluation process has covered all aspects and stages of the job evaluation programme and considered the assessment results obtained; then the evaluation process can include suggestions and decisions for changes to be done. In this case, the **evaluation process can be seen as being formative**, for it influences current and new practices, procedures and polices for more quality standards and better performance. This would make the evaluation even more concerned and adherent with the programme's effectiveness.

In this way, **monitoring** can be seen as an indicator for the level and quality of the applied job evaluation programme. **Evaluation** is the study and quantifiable measurement of the outcomes against inputs of the programme (system) implemented. **Its purpose** is to provide evidence based data that will:-

1. Demonstrate that the current system is working to its optimum
And/Or
2. Give clear indicators for improvement that can be incorporated into the design of any subsequent programme or system that may be introduced.

3.0 The importance of reviewing job evaluation periodically

However, it must always be kept in mind that job evaluation is a continuous process requiring **constant review** to keep pace with variations that occur from time to time in most jobs. Through developing suitable procedures, job evaluation can additionally **provide a means** of keeping the basic rate structure up-to-date, as jobs alter in scope and content, and as new jobs arise. Otherwise, if no remedial action is taken when changes in job content occur, the programme will not only deteriorate and become useless, but also in all probability will become harmful. Usually, a job evaluation programme cannot be designed and installed and then left to function automatically. Periodic review is essential. A periodic (regular interval) review of the system may secure a level or kind of flexibility and responsiveness of the system for new changes such as inflation, where an increase equivalent to the annual inflation rate, can be added to the wage and salary, and in line with changes in proportion to the cost of living, **without** affecting or amending the **whole / complete** system (**through an external wage consistency process**). Similarly, Pritchard and Murlis (1992) suggest having a planned maintenance programme for periodical maintenance to check and audit the full set of evaluations in order to make sure that they still represent sensible relativities and that the change which have been done are consistent.

Though it is **not** required by law, the Equal Opportunities Commission Code of Practice on Equal Pay (for May 1997) suggests that organizations should regularly review their pay systems to ensure that they are (in the words of Foot & Hoock, p.279) “*not unwittingly guilty of perpetuating sex bias*”.

3.1 Forms of maintaining the programme of job evaluation

Generally, however, there are three forms of practices to maintaining the scheme of job evaluation:-

- (1) The day-to-day maintenance.
- (2) The annual review.
- (3) The periodic audit.

In any of these aspects or forms, the management gets a feedback. This feedback leads to a corrective action at either or both of the following levels: -

- (1) A corrective action at the programme formulation and design level.
- (2) A corrective action at the implementation (procedural) level.

The crucial test of a job evaluation programme is to be evaluated or examined against acceptability, feasibility, soundness and reliability. This is to say that nothing of its results has to be consistent with (or rather conformable to) its predetermined objectives in order to assess how far the programme has achieved the desired goals and whether the programme deserves all the effort, money and time spent. That **also** means that a job evaluation programme must pay back in the form of justifiable returns. If it does not achieve this, it should be examined for its shortcomings, pitfalls and drawbacks so that these problems may be rectified.

4.0 Job evaluation programme does not necessarily keep abreast with management's desires, at certain point

With the monitoring and evaluation processes uncertainties, ambiguities and diversions will come to the surface (as a result of the implementation operation) where before they were invisible things. At this point, both monitor and evaluator have to adopt a corrective approach regarding their respective attitudes and any decisions they need to make. One result of implementing a job evaluation programme is that wage rate or job-pricing decisions will no longer be necessary to keep abreast with the whims and tendencies of management.

That is because a successful application of job evaluation is one that would provide a procedure or a mechanism for dealing with wage grievances or complaints and settling wages disputes. Bear in mind that low morale, suspicion, and wage grievances can largely be dealt with by installing supervisors to encourage a new attitude of trust among employees. Ideally, for the supervisors to do this there should be a systematic briefing through oral communications or, in the case of big organizations, circular letters to be issued so as to keep employees informed. This may also refer that grievances and complaints (problem areas) are representing or reflecting the gap between the expectations (of the parties concerned) from the programme before implementation; and the perceptions of the same parties concerned of an actual situation(s) during and after the implementation of the programme [Area of problems = Incompatibility / inconsistency between the expectations (hopes/assumptions) and the actual situation in which the programme exists and goes through, which in turn refers to the gap between theory and practice/ formality and reality in term of words (objectives) and actions (actual achievements)].

At this point all parties concerned should start working together towards finding a suitable and fair solution or settlement. Monitor and evaluator (specifically the monitor) are required to show their readiness to bridge the gap that caused the problems or the grievances and to do their level best to make the programme more responsive to uncertainties or contingencies. However, the inability to achieve the programme's objectives (**provided that the programme** has the right premises such as soundness of design, mechanism and administration) may indicate that a certain amount of ineffectiveness permeates or exists within the organization's committee and the department in charge within the organization. It would then be a case of under-utilization of the job evaluation programme by the organization concerned. It is the task of the monitor to identify and follow these ill-founded cases with the reasons behind, so that the evaluator can judge them in order to take the required actions. These things show that the introduction of job evaluation "*means careful spadework in order that those whose jobs are affected feel reassured*" and that job evaluation should never be exercised or put into action without prior approval [Torrington, (ed), 1974: 225].

All in all, the planner, designer, monitor, evaluator, management and employees should always recall that uncertainty is inherent in any programme or plan; and therefore that the possibility of unexpected things may occur, i.e. contingencies can appear at any stage of the intended programme, which in turn can affect the expectations and the goals of the programme. All parties should meet the required level of responsibility.

5.0 Effective evaluation procedures for the job evaluation programme

In order to erect productive and capable evaluation procedures for the job evaluation programme the following should be in place:-

Firstly, the programme's aims and objectives should be adequately precise and achievable. They should fall in line with the organization's strategy.

Secondly, the programme should be executed sufficiently so that, throughout all its phases, it will be directed to serve its predetermined objectives.

Thirdly, the individual evaluator should, in advance, specify the tools, procedures and criteria that are going to be used in performing the task of evaluating the programme.

Fourthly, the evaluator(s) should be well trained, equipped with relevant experience and sufficiently skilled to carry out these tasks.

Fifthly, the task of the evaluation should be extended to include the results obtained from implementing the programme. This may include the appeal procedures.

Sixthly, in this way, the evaluation process is necessary for knowing where the job evaluation programme stands in order to identify the good (successful) or bad (failure) aspects. To this end, the evaluator can therefore be in a better position to judge whether the programme is proving effective and successful.

Seventhly, the evaluator, be he or she, should be a person of good integrity and whose ethics are beyond reproach. These qualities should be inherent and apply both at her/his personal and professional levels. This will enable her/him to be guided by propriety in the conduct of their business. This will help to eliminate her/him employing potentially destructive tactical ploys or playing politics and avoid, as far as is possible, egotistic practice. Instead, the organization can reasonably expect the evaluator to make a clear commitment to neutralism / objectivity and anti-gender discrimination. The evaluation task needs to be impartial and rigorous. It must present factual information that is complete and fair in its findings (evaluation) of shortcomings / weaknesses and strengths. Only then can well-founded decisions or actions be taken. In this way the evaluation process will clearly contribute to both learning and accountability.

Eighthly, there **must** be a genuine willingness to tackle any instance of wrong-doing or mal-practice, including critically reviewing policies and procedures that cause the programme to be less effective and/or problematic. Otherwise, there would be no point of holding monitoring and evaluation processes. Hence, the whole process of monitoring and evaluation will only be meaningful and effective if, on discovering defects, management is prepared to make any changes or corrections necessary. To this end both the monitor and the evaluator (adapted from Armstrong, 1998) should have the support of the line management in performing their tasks and to respond to their recommended corrective actions of which they should have the authority to do so.

6.0 When the job evaluation programme may end up with discontinuity

The vexed question here is what happens when the programme continues to suffer from some serious defects and shortcomings despite the best efforts of the organization's management team (or ad hoc committee) to make it work? The defects, of course, could occur anywhere within the process. They could occur at any, some or all of the design, policy, technical expertise, implementation and/or work environment levels.

For instance, **when** the overall position of the programme has reached (say) a point at which the **organization management and the programme's ad hoc committee** (again, despite their best efforts but having nonetheless failed) then they must **decide to adopt a continuity plan** (rather than give up the ghost and introduce a **discontinuity plan**).

The continuity plan, as a form of contingency approach, **strictly in the context of the job evaluation programme**, is to put the programme back on track in order to overcome the existing defects and obstacles. This plan may have a coordinative relationship with the maintenance and monitoring unit in addition to the direct relationship with the job evaluation committee and management. If, after this, the programme still cannot be saved (a rare occurrence but not unheard of occurrence), the organization management may need to hold extensive meetings with all parties concerned, and in the presence of external expert(s), before deciding to discontinue / cease the programme so that, at the very least, it may learn some lessons for any future programme(s). Quite simply, the continuity/contingency plan does not necessarily mean (nor imply or refer) a move towards the programme's objectives **even if things go wrong**. Instead it works on the principle that however bad things turn out, there are always some positives to be gained. A continuity/contingency plan may set its goals lower than those originally intended. Nonetheless it will seek to maximise those positives that may be gained.

7.0 Summary

Main and direct advantages of the job evaluation programme's monitoring and evaluation operations can be seen as an effective instrument for:

- (1) Provide constant supervision and feedback on the extent to which the job evaluation programme is achieving its intended objectives.
- (2) Identify potential variations/ diversions / breaches and problems as early stage of the programme implementation and suggest possible solutions.
- (3) Monitoring the efficiency of the overall components of the programme throughout all its stages of implementation.
- (4) Provide an overall evaluation of the programme implemented and the extent to which the programme attained the required goals.
- (5) Provide a guideline for the next / future programme where both monitoring and evaluation can be seen **as: (a) a salutary and necessary instrument for** putting diversions right and **for** the design and implementation of the future programme, **and (b) a reference for** the extent to which the programme was appropriate and responsive to the predetermined objectives. (**Adapted from:** Bamberger, M. & Hewitt, E. (1986) - Source: World Bank Organization, technical paper, number 53).

Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation processes need **not be** of a high cost (i.e. neither should operate outside the cost-benefits analysis principle). However, this should **not** be a reason to try and implement these processes on the cheap. In practice the complexity and extent or depth of analysis required of monitoring and evaluation operations means that they need to be commensurate with the demands of the programme and its intended objectives. Therefore, if these processes are to be effective a proportionate balance must be struck between the requirements of the programme and degree of time, money, resources and commitment necessary to satisfy those requirements. All in all, the overall process of both monitoring and evaluation of the job evaluation programme is more important as to whether pay fairness and employees satisfaction have been achieved than as to whether the programme was well designed and well performed.

From here, strictly in this context, one can safely say that there are, amongst others, two main indicators or signs for the programme effectiveness and success, which are: (a) employee satisfaction of the programme, and (b) contextual factors where the programme was implemented – e.g. the organization's work conditions and environment.

Finally, **in a way**, the programme's processes and techniques of reviewing, monitoring and evaluation can form the core for the programme's management audit operations as an integrated part of the programme's strategy; in which case all these processes and techniques are interconnected.

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