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Introducing Self-Regulated Performance Evaluation Model (SRPEM) for a Comprehensive and Effective Evaluation of Academic Performance

Pengenalan kepada Model Penilaian Prestasi Kendiri (SRPEM) untuk Penilaian Prestasi Ahli Akademik yang Komprehensif dan Efektif

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ABSTRACT

Academics responsibilities have multiplied in recent years as exhibited in yearly Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) outlined by higher educational institutions' performance evaluation system. Performance evaluation at universities is claimed to cause unnecessary stress due to various factors. The criteria and metrics set in the evaluation do not accurately capture the complexities of academic responsibilities, leading to pressure and anxiety as academics try to meet the targets that may not align with their styles and interests. Therefore, this study aims to propose the Self-Regulated Performance Evaluation Model (SRPEM), designed to assess employees' performance fairly without causing undue stress, particularly for academics in HEIs. This qualitative research involved face-to-face semi-structured interviews conducted online via the Google Meet application with 16 academics selected based on purposive sampling from different institutions who are involved directly with the evaluation process, a state Deputy Mufti, a Registrar and Deputy Registrar. The interviews gathered insights on the current performance evaluation systems, suggestions for improvement, and opinions on fair evaluation practices. Based on the collected input, the SRPEM was developed, consisting of three key components: the performance evaluation process, the evaluators, and the measures. Unlike previous studies that heavily rely on quantitative measures, this model takes into account humanistic and spiritual aspects by integrating theories such as self-determination theory. The SRPEM aims to create a comprehensive and effective performance evaluation system that aligns with the needs and values of academics. Although the proposed model may seem idealistic, it was created by modifying the current evaluation system based on input from interviewees and suggestions from theories. As such, it is advisable to do an experimental investigation in future research to confirm its significance.

Keywords: performance evaluation; humanistic management; quantitative and qualitative measures; self-regulated; academics; Malaysia

ABSTRAK

Mutakhir ini, tanggungjawab ahli akademik menjadi semakin kompleks sebagaimana yang diterjemahkan melalui Petunjuk Prestasi Utama (KPI) tahunan yang digariskan oleh sistem penilaian prestasi di institusi pengajian tinggi. Penilaian prestasi di universiti dikatakan menjadi pencetus kepada tekanan yang berlebihan, disebabkan oleh pelbagai faktor. Kriteria dan metrik yang ditetapkan dalam penilaian dikatakan tidak mengukur dengan tepat kompleksiti tanggungjawab ahli akademik, menyebabkan tekanan dan kebimbangan kepada ahli akademik dalam usaha untuk memenuhi sasaran yang mungkin tidak sejajar dengan gaya dan minat mereka secara individu. Justeru, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mencadangkan Model Penilaian Prestasi Kendiri (SRPEM), yang direka untuk menilai prestasi pekerja dengan adil tanpa menyebabkan tekanan yang tidak wajar, terutamanya bagi ahli akademik di institusi pendidikan tinggi (HEIs). Kajian melibatkan temubual bersemuka separa berstruktur yang dijalankan secara dalam talian melalui aplikasi Google Meet dengan 16 ahli akademik yang dipilih secara persampelan bertujuan dari pelbagai institusi pengajian tinggi, yang terlibat secara langsung dalam proses penilaian prestasi, seorang Timbalan Mufti negeri, seorang Pendaftar dan seorang Timbalan pendaftar. Melalui temu ramah yang dijalankan, pandangan mengenai sistem penilaian prestasi semasa, cadangan penambahbaikan, dan pendapat mengenai amalan penilaian yang adil diperolehi. Berdasarkan input yang dikumpul, SRPEM telah dibangunkan, yang terdiri daripada tiga komponen utama, iaitu proses penilaian prestasi, penilai, dan ukuran penilaian. Berbeza dengan kajian sebelum ini yang menggunakan ukuran kuantitatif yang ketara, SRPEM mengambil kira aspek kemanusiaan dan rohaniah dengan mengintegrasikan teori-teori seperti teori penentuan kendiri. SRPEM bertujuan untuk memperkenalkan sistem penilaian prestasi yang komprehensif dan efektif yang sejajar dengan keperluan dan nilai ahli akademik. Meskipun

model yang dicadangkan mungkin kelihatan idealistik, ia dicipta dengan mengubah sistem penilaian semasa berdasarkan input daripada responden wawancara dan cadangan daripada teori-teori. Oleh itu, adalah disyorkan untuk melakukan penyelidikan eksperimen pada masa hadapan untuk mengesahkan kepentingannya.

Kata kunci: penilaian prestasi; pengurusan humanistik; pengukuran kuantitatif dan kualitatif; kawalan kendiri; ahli akademik; Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of higher university rankings has a significant impact on both global and local universities. Rankings like QS World University Rankings and THE World University Rankings strongly influence the priorities of universities aiming for recognition as the best. In Malaysia, additional pressure comes from D-SETARA and MyRA, evaluating research capacity and performance in higher education institutions (HEIs). These systems create undeniable pressure for local universities to meet performance targets, achieve top rankings, and secure increased government budget allocation that may lead to workplace fatigue (see Ramasamy et al., 2023). Consequently, university management is consistently shaped by this desire. Despite Malaysia's relatively high spending on tertiary education, Sharul Effendy & Ruhanita (2016) note that its leading universities perform poorly in global rankings. MyRA emphasizes the need for universities to strengthen strategic planning and align with desired outcomes. Implementing a performance evaluation system becomes crucial in connecting strategies with employee behavior, supporting top management decision-making, and facilitating the university's mission achievement (Eisy Humaira, Zeratul Izzah & Azah Kamilah, 2020; Sharul Effendy & Ruhanita, 2016).

In HEIs, academics face increased responsibilities reflected in their annual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within the evaluation system. This evaluation process can lead to unnecessary stress due to several factors. The criteria and metrics used may not accurately reflect the complexities of teaching and research, causing pressure and anxiety as lecturers try to meet specific targets that may not align with their styles and interests (Noman, 2021). Additionally, the evaluation process itself may be perceived as subjective or biased, raising concerns about fairness and objectivity (Phin, 2014; Poon, 2004; Selvarajan, Singh, & Solansky, 2018). The administrative burden and the competitive nature of rankings contribute to stress, as lecturers fear inadequate recognition, feel overwhelmed by the workload (Mohd Suhaimi & Nasrudin, 2023), and experience pressure related to promotions or salary increases (Chen et al., 2014; Noman, 2021). Many academics find it challenging to take a break during semester breaks due to pending responsibilities, leaving little time for their personal lives (Noman, 2021). Moreover, reliance on quantitative measures and rankings can foster a culture of competition among lecturers (Kallio & Kallio, 2014), leading to unhealthy comparisons and a fear of falling behind colleagues. Besides, the high stakes attached to performance evaluations, such as promotion, tenure, or salary increases, can intensify the stress experienced by lecturers (Selvarajan, Singh, & Solansky, 2018). These factors collectively contribute to a negative work environment, impacting lecturers' well-being, increasing stress, leading to job burnout, and reducing job satisfaction.

While numerous articles have addressed performance evaluation systems, the focus has primarily been on organizational performance rather than its impact on employee well-being (Tweedie et al., 2019; Franco-Santos et al., 2022). Notably, research on performance evaluation in HEIs, especially concerning academic staff, is limited due to challenges in measuring performance based on their activities and processes (Sharul Effendy & Ruhanita, 2016; see Noor Raudhiah et al., 2021). Previous studies by Franco-Santos and Doherty (2017) have shown mixed effects of

performance management on employee well-being, with some reporting positive effects, others detrimental effects, and some indicating no significant relationship. Therefore, this study aims to propose the Self-Regulated Performance Evaluation Model (SRPEM), designed to assess employees' performance fairly without causing undue stress, particularly for academics in HEIs. The model considers both quantitative and qualitative aspects, fostering the growth and flourishing of employees' knowledge, minds, spirits, and souls. This, indirectly, may enhance productivity and commitment, ultimately positively impacting the quality of graduates produced by HEIs.

This paper starts with the introduction before discussing the relevant literature. Then, the method employed is discussed which is followed by the findings and its discussion. Conclusion, implication and future research conclude the paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM

A performance evaluation system in an organization systematically measures how well an employee is doing their job. This typically involves two systems: (i) the performance measurement system (PMS) and (ii) the performance appraisal system (PAS). The PMS translates the organization's strategy into measurable KPIs, which are then used to assess both employee and organizational performance (Zuriekat, Salameh, & Alrawashdeh, 2011). Each employee needs to meet these KPIs, as they serve as benchmarks for measuring individual performance.

The PMS extensively assists in managing an organization's performance by aligning it with the business strategy, ensuring that employees' behavior supports the organization's objectives and aids in management decisions. Over the past decades, PMS has evolved significantly, incorporating various elements in its KPIs, including both financial and non-financial measures (Franco-Santos, Lucianetti, & Bourne, 2012), such as the Balanced Scorecards (BSC) developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992). Despite its widespread use and advantages, BSC also faces significant limitations in both concept and application, with many organizations implementing the BSC struggling to meet their goals or facing challenges. (Awadallah & Allam, 2015). Even though critics of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) express reservations about its superiority compared to other performance measurement tools, Kumar, Prince, and Baker (2022) discovered that the number of supporters significantly surpasses the opposition.

Once KPIs are established, employees undergo evaluation in the PAS, which measures each employee's performance against the previously set KPIs over a specified period, resulting in a score that determines their reward (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Feedback from this evaluation is provided to help employees improve their performance. This performance evaluation process is vital as it reflects both employee and organizational performance, indirectly influencing employee behavior and motivation. Effectively implemented through a formal systematic process, it becomes a crucial tool for managing employee performance, enhancing human capital quality, and developing capacity through feedback and training (Kim & Holzer, 2016).

In summary, while the PMS offers advantages to organizations, it also faces challenges. including the uneven performance distribution, the ongoing struggle to create reliable and valid methods for judging performance, the limited usefulness of performance feedback for employees, and the limited value of performance evaluations for organizations (Murphy, 2020). Previous research on PAS, like Bayo-Moriones et al. (2020), warns that PAS success depends on three

conditions: the type of measures used, the appraiser, and the regularity of the evaluations. The next section will discuss these issues.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND ITS DRAWBACKS

HEIs play a crucial role in providing tertiary education, rely on academics to impart academic knowledge and essential soft skills to students for the job market and are authorized to offer programs leading to degrees. The quest for university rankings seeks not only recognition but also government resources, especially budget allocations for public universities Consequently, academic leaders in Malaysian universities prioritize achieving goals, KPIs, and standards, often placing teaching, program delivery, and research as secondary concerns (Ghasemy et al., 2018). This emphasis on goal achievement impacts academics, despite their significant contributions to academic and institutional excellence.

Academics are expected to engage in various scholarly and non-scholarly activities which include fulfilling teaching and supervision duties, conducting research, securing grants, publishing, presenting in conferences, participating in community services, serving on committees, holding administrative posts, and contributing to student and professional development (Sharul Effendy & Ruhanita, 2016). Additionally, academics are now tasked with generating income for their universities (Nur Zainie, 2020; Kallio et al., 2016; Khan, Farooq, & Hussain, 2010). They don't have the flexibility to choose activities as all are part of the KPIs they must meet each year (Che Omar et al., 2014). Failing in one KPI can negatively impact their performance score, affecting promotions or salary increments, with success not necessarily promising rewards.

Regrettably, the current KPIs have been criticized for not capturing the essence and substance of academics' roles (Kallio & Kallio, 2012), focusing too much on quantitative aspects rather than content and quality. The existing performance evaluation system predominantly emphasizes output and outcomes, neglecting the importance of quality, content, and effort invested (Kallio & Kallio, 2014). Consequently, this approach is deemed unfair by HEIs, causing undue stress among academics (Noor Liza et al., 2021a; Kallio & Kallio, 2014) and fostering dysfunctional behaviors. The PMS is also criticized for unfairly assigning tasks to employees (Eisy Humaira, Zeratul Izzah & Azah Kamilah, 2020), leading to some exceeding their limits while others barely meet minimum requirements. The author contends that a PMS should allocate tasks fairly and measure individual performance to contribute collectively to overall performance.

Kalio and Kallio (2014) found out that management-by-result (MBR) is also used as performance evaluation for academics, however, its suitability is questioned because it emphasizes output quantity and external motivation, conflicting with the intrinsic motivation and quality-focused nature of academic work. The dilemma of 'quality vs quantity' undermines academics' intrinsic motivation and academic freedom, as their intangible work isn't adequately captured by quantity-based evaluations (Noor Liza et al., 2021b; Kallio & Kallio, 2014). Academics' dissatisfaction with quantitative performance measurement reflects the challenge of connecting their expertise, lacking tangible rewards, with quantity or monetary incentives (Franco-Santos et al., 2012; Kallio & Kallio, 2014).

In a survey, Kallio and Kallio (2014) found that only 3% of academic respondents prefer quantitative measurement, while 54% prefer a balanced approach of both quantitative and qualitative evaluation. In contrast, 45% prefer qualitative assessment. The study showed that 70% of respondents believe their university prioritizes quantity over quality, and 80% think content has become secondary to quantity. This emphasis on quantity may lead to publications in predatory

journals instead of reputable ones, indicating that when PMS prioritizes quantity, the quality of work, especially in higher education, takes a back seat.

Similarly, PAS is often seen as fault-finding rather than coaching employees to identify weaknesses and providing tools for improvement (Phin, 2014). In a People IQ survey (2005) of 50,000 respondents, only 13% found their PAS helpful in improving performance, while others disagreed. Studies indicate that employees lack confidence in PMS and PAS processes (Grote & Grote, 2002), especially due to fairness issues that reduce job satisfaction and demotivate better performance (Phin, 2014; Poon, 2004).

In summary, studies emphasize the significance of a reasonable workload and the use of appropriate measures or KPIs to enhance performance. Excessive workload, as reflected in numerous KPIs, has negative effects on performance, leading to issues like burnout and depression (Jamali et al., 2021; Noman, 2021). Research by Mohamad Suhaimi & Nasrudin (2023) further supports this, revealing that two-thirds of young academics experience high psychological stress, with almost half having low levels of mental health. Thus, reducing excessive workload and reconsidering how performance is measured may enhance emotional satisfaction and work performance for academics.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION: WHAT DO ACADEMICS NEED~~S~~?

Though measuring employees' performance is the key to controlling employees' behaviour, imbalanced performance evaluation would lead to certain dysfunctional effects, like work stress and job burnt-out, demotivation, dan dissatisfaction (Noor Liza et al., 2021a). Hence, it is crucial for organizations to establish an evaluation system that may encourage employees to work not solely for the sake of being evaluated, but because they feel responsible and believe that their job is a kind of worship (ibadah).

Many authors also criticized the failure to include the humanity or spiritual aspect in the PMS (Noor Liza et al., 2021b; Mohd Ismail & Roziah, 2006) though spirituality is found to affect employees' performance in a few ways (Karakas, 2010). The author posited that spirituality would improve employees' well-being and quality of life by increasing their morale, commitment and productivity and also reducing stress, burnout and workaholism. In the era when work has become the priority in life, employees are reported to spend most of their time at work with 44% of them are reported to be overworked (Galinsky et al., 2005). With the increasing number of KPIs to be achieved, the impoverishment of spirituality has led to many workplace problems associated with hypocrisy, artificiality, and playing to be successful resulting in a steady decline in employee respect, trust, and confidence in management (Karakas, 2010). Hence, a good PM should also embed the spiritual aspects together with the effort exerted rather than the outcomes alone.

Academics could benefit from integrating HM into KPIs and performance evaluation, as proposed by Melé (2016). HM, emerging in the late 20th century, focuses on creating values for both internal and external stakeholders. HM prioritizes employee well-being and ethical management, acknowledging employees as rational, talented, and creative individuals. The author emphasizes the need for a control system that promotes positive attitudes, creativity, and avoids resentment. Under HM, employees are assumed to be self-determined (Ernst et al., 2011), aligning with the self-determination theory. Connecting work to religion and spiritual beliefs provides purpose and fulfills self-transcendence needs, fostering autonomous engagement. Management's role is to integrate elements for goal congruence, and a well-designed performance evaluation is key to realizing this vision.

To succeed, managers must recognize that individuals are driven by freedom and embedded values, and mere instructions may not yield the desired results (Ernst et al., 2011; Melé, 2016). Motivation and clear explanations are crucial for achieving goals. Successful management involves motivating employees to contribute autonomously, promoting goal congruence. If conflicts arise, organizational goals should prevail (Cuguero´-Escofet & Rosanas, 2016). In an ethical and integral HM environment, employees are free to leave if their goals clash with the organization's. However, well-treated employees are likely to stay.

APPLICABLE THEORIES

Developing a self-regulating PMS that empowers employees involves understanding motivation mechanisms in various performance evaluation types. Relevant theories provide insights for shaping an effective PMS framework (Franco-Santos, Lucianeti & Bourne, 2012). Agency theory underscores minimizing costs related to agency problems by implementing a control system that motivates, appraises, and rewards employees. This requires selecting appropriate measures and key performance indicators (Franco-Santos, Lucianeti & Bourne, 2012). Expectancy theory emphasizes employees' belief in their ability to successfully complete tasks for valuable rewards. Goal-setting theory highlights the importance of well-defined, challenging yet attainable goals for fostering motivation, satisfaction, engagement, and productivity in the workplace (Franco-Santos, Lucianeti & Bourne, 2012).

Drawing insights from self-determination theory is crucial for understanding employees' motivation. Fostering a work environment that supports autonomous regulation leads to positive outcomes for individuals and organizations (Gagne & Deci, 2005). This approach results in happier, more energetic employees with lower distress and burnout levels, contributing to overall employee well-being. Organizations benefit from a dedicated and engaged workforce, showcasing increased persistence, concentration, and effort. Conversely, a controlled regulation approach leads to stressed and less productive employees, job dissatisfaction, and a higher likelihood of leaving the organization (Manganelli et al., 2018). By incorporating these theories, organizations can create a new framework for their performance evaluation system, establishing a self-regulating PMS that aligns employees' motivation with organizational goals, ultimately fostering success and productivity (Franco-Santos, Lucianeti & Bourne, 2012).

It is believed that a comprehensive and effective evaluation of academic performance can be formed by incorporating a variety of motivational theories above under Self-Regulated Performance Evaluation Model (SPREM). Agency theory facilitates the alignment of academic staff's interests with institutional objectives by minimizing agency costs and establishing transparent evaluation criteria and rewards. Expectancy theory guarantees that employees comprehend the connection between their endeavors and valuable incentives, thereby enhancing their motivation. The significance of establishing distinct, challenging, yet attainable objectives to promote productivity and satisfaction is underscored by goal-setting theory. Self-determination theory (SDT) underscores the importance of cultivating a supportive environment that promotes autonomy, competency, and relatedness, resulting in a more engaged, less stressed, and happier workforce. SRPEM aligns individual motivations with organizational objectives by prioritizing well-being and averting rigid, punitive measures, thereby improving academic performance and institutional success.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the research objective of developing the Self-Regulated Performance Evaluation Model (SRPEM) that considers both quantitative and qualitative aspects that may boost academics' intrinsic motivation, the study was conducted in a few stages and this paper is the final part of the whole bigger project.

In the early stage, related literatures were reviewed to obtain various opinions and findings on employees' well-being at the workplace. Then, a survey on performance evaluation at HEI was conducted to obtain quantitative as well as qualitative data on variables related to performance evaluation and the level of wellbeing of the academics. This includes thematic analysis of responses from an open-ended question in the survey instrument: 'Think about your Key Performance Index set by your institution and annual performance appraisal. How do they affect your work life?' which was also used to show the existence of low wellbeing at the workplace.

Finally, to demonstrate the existence of low employee wellbeing and gather insights on a fair performance evaluation, face-to-face interviews using the Google Meet (GM) application with staff, mostly academics, from different institutions is carried out. This step was crucial, as it offers real-time information and provides insights into the psychological wellbeing, emotions, hopes, and expectations of the interviewees. Content analysis of responses revealed low workplace wellbeing among academicians. These insights were utilized to develop a performance evaluation model, incorporating humanistic and spiritual aspects beyond quantitative measures.

The academicians at HEI were chosen for this survey because they face challenges in a demanding environment, including heavy teaching loads, unsatisfactory rewards, high student numbers, budget constraints, insufficient research funds, low salaries, and long working hours. Academicians, can also experience workplace dissatisfaction, leading to low job commitment (Zainudin, Junaidah Hanim & Nazmi, 2010; de Jonge & Peeters, 2019). This dissatisfaction can result in burnout, a costly and distressing phenomenon that affects individual academics, the faculty, and stakeholders like students and potential employers.

Sixteen academic staff (48% male) from eight institutions (UiTM, Politeknik, UNISZA, UM, UNIKL, USIM, UTEM, IPG), a Deputy Mufti of Johor state government, along with a Registrar and a Deputy Registrar from two institutions were interviewed, based on purposive sampling. Most participants were 45 years or older, with experience as lecturers and later as department heads, and were directly involved in the evaluation process. Each interview lasted approximately 50 minutes to one hour, and the entire process spanned two weeks. The interview questions aimed to gather opinions on the current performance evaluation system at their institutions, suggestions for improvement, and views on fair performance evaluation. With the interviewees' agreement, sessions were recorded, and consent letters were signed. The responses were transcribed, and content analysis was conducted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Responses from face-to-face interviews using GM application were analysed to extract the different themes expressed during the interview sessions. Three main themes that emerged from the various responses to various questions posed. These themes and their descriptions are described as follows:

PERFORMANCE MEASURES SHOULD HAVE BOTH QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE PORTIONS

All participants unanimously agreed that the PMS should incorporate both quantitative and qualitative measures, with varying suggested proportions. Following goal-setting theory, which emphasizes well-defined and challenging yet sustainable goals for motivating academics, proposed the percentage proportions ranged from 80:20%, 70:30%, 75:25%, to 60:40%. The consensus from all participants was that the qualitative proportion should not exceed the quantitative one to prevent potential bias in evaluations.

The suggested maximum for qualitative measures was 40%, deemed suitable to avoid excessive and cumbersome documentation for both evaluators and staff. Qualitative measures should encompass factors such as effort invested in producing outcomes like journal paper submissions and research proposals. Additionally, integrity, accountability, and student evaluations of direct instructions and supervision should be considered. Respondents also suggested including relationships with peers as part of qualitative measures.

LEADERSHIP IN AN ORGANIZATION

All respondents agreed that leaders play a very important role in creating a work culture of '*mardhatillah'* (the God's pleasure). Islamic or universal values practiced by a leader will be embedded in the work culture among employees. Leaders need to be fair, considerate, and objective when evaluating their staff.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS

The Performance Review process was suggested to consist of three phases, setting of KPIs, monitoring, and evaluation. Setting of KPIs are predetermined achievements but should be allowed some flexibility in the level of achievement. Monitoring is a mid-review by discussing with staff and providing feedback. The evaluation process awards marks, followed by a discussion to reach an agreement on those marks.

Findings from this interview are used as a foundation to develop a performance evaluation model named as Self-Regulated Performance Evaluation Model (SRPEM) which is discussed in the next section.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF-REGULATED PERFORMANCE EVALUATION MODEL (SRPEM)

The ultimate goal of this research aims to propose the SRPEM, designed to assess employees' performance fairly without causing undue stress, particularly for academics in HEIs. The model, named SRPEM, integrates both quantitative and qualitative aspects within a framework of humanistic management. This approach aims to foster academics' self-regulation, making them more accountable vertically (towards God) and horizontally (towards other managers and stakeholders). SRPEM emphasizes humanistic aspects currently lacking in conventional performance evaluation systems. It focuses on enhancing academics' self-esteem, nurturing their creativity, and acknowledging their intrinsic motivation. This intrinsic motivation, rooted in the joy and satisfaction derived from their work, aligns with the self-determination theory. While

academics are primarily intrinsically motivated, it's vital to avoid excessive tasks to preserve the value of intrinsic rewards. Flexibility and breaks are recommended to replenish energy and maintain motivation (Noman, 2021). The SRPEM model is depicted in Figure 1.

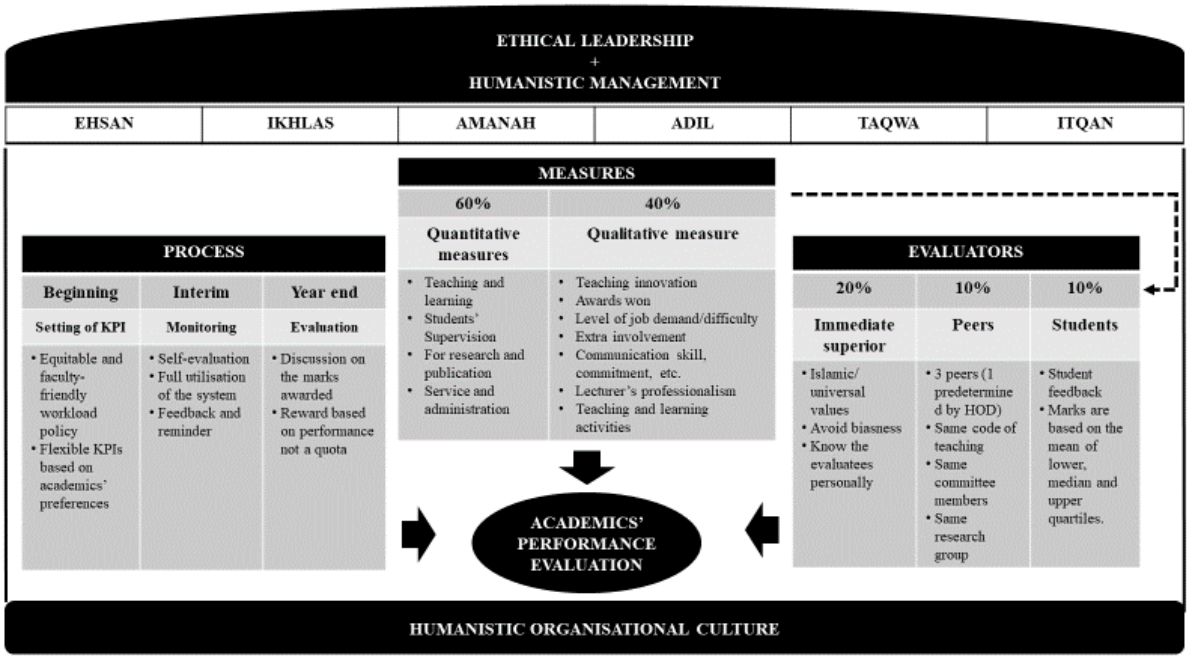

FIGURE 1.The Self-Regulated Performance Evaluation Model

The process to establish an SRPEM begins with fostering a supportive work environment that encourages autonomous regulation, aligning with the principles of the self-determination theory. Leadership within the organization should embody the values of the tawhidiq paradigm, including *Ehsan* (awareness of God), *Ikhlas* (sincerity), *Amanah* (honesty), *Adil* (justice), *Taqwa* (forbearance, fear, and abstinence), and *Itqan* (self-improvement awareness). These values ensure equal consideration of both material and spiritual aspects in the organizational culture (refer to Noor Liza et al., 2021b for detailed insights). Implementing Maqasid al-Syari'ah in the workplace is crucial to embeding humanity and shaping the workplace culture. Performance evaluation should encompass both effort and outcomes, and be assessed based on controllable factors, excluding uncontrollable elements in KPIs to ensure fairness and justice (Cuguero´-Escofet & Rosanas, 2016).

To align with the goal-setting theory, it's crucial to establish a humanistic management system featuring an equitable and faculty-friendly workload policy. This policy prioritizes assigning academics' tasks aligned with their strengths and preferences, promoting flexibility for individual choices. Whether an academic inclines towards teaching or research, the workload should reflect their interests, with higher marks allotted to corresponding tasks. This approach acknowledges and values each academic's unique strengths, fostering self-esteem and, ultimately, self-actualization. By encouraging academics to focus on their strengths and preferences, their contributions are appraised and rewarded accordingly. This humanistic approach prevents excessive workloads, especially with unexpected tasks, ensuring fair evaluation and recognition for all contributions (Noman, 2021).

SRPEM consists of three parts: a) The performance evaluation process; b) The Measures; and c) The Evaluators. Each part plays an important role and must form an integral part of the whole system to ensure its effective implementation. Referring to Figure 1, each part is elaborated in the following sections.

THE PROCESS OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The performance evaluation process ideally involves three phases. *The first phase* includes setting targets for the year, aligning them with the institution's KPIs, which are periodically reviewed by supervisors. Monitoring can be time-consuming if supervisors must discuss obstacles to target achievement with each subordinate. To streamline, it is suggested to grant continuous access to a performance evaluation system for lecturers throughout the year. This allows them to gradually review and update their achievements, reducing the burden on supervisors. Moreover, this approach ensures year-round utilization of the system, departing from the current practice of limited access only at the end of the year.

The second phase involves the evaluation period, during which lecturers compile and submit all necessary information, and supervisors commence the evaluation process. It is crucial to present evidence of efforts made to achieve targets. Efficient monitoring in the first phase aids supervisors during this evaluation, as regular discussions between civil servants and supervisors can reduce the need for formal performance evaluations (Suciu, Mortan, & Lazar, 2013). *The third phase* follows the evaluation, where lecturers receive assigned marks, and the process of recognizing and rewarding high-performing lecturers takes place. For those who did not perform well, it serves as a time for reflection and improvement planning for the upcoming year.

In interviews, many respondents expressed disappointment at not having the opportunity to discuss their marks with supervisors, and some were not even informed of their scores. Head of departments admitted being too busy to strictly adhere to procedures, sometimes omitting steps to meet deadlines. This highlights the heavy workload on academics, particularly heads of departments, making it challenging to complete all tasks with meticulous attention to detail.

THE EVALUATORS

The evaluators consist of two entities, i) an electronic computer system developed specifically to evaluate performance quantitatively. Total marks allotted to the system is 60%, and ii) officers in charge, peers or colleagues, and students to measure performance qualitatively. Total marks allotted are 40%. With these two entities, not only measures based on outcome (quantitative) are being assessed but also subjective or qualitative measures such as effort, communication, integrity, and leadership are being assessed as well.

The Immediate Superior is allotted 20% of the total mark. To be an evaluator, the officer must acquire certain qualities such as just, responsible, and accountable to enable a fair appraisal of performance. As human beings, these three qualities are not naturally inherent personality but must be acquired through seeking knowledge, training, and faith in God. Evaluators who believe that they are accountable for whatever they do will try their best to make a fair performance of their subordinates.

10% of the total marks is allotted to peer evaluation. Four categories of peers are seen to be suitable in appraising their colleagues, who i) teach the same subject, ii) are in the same committee, iii) belong to the same faculty, and iv) are in the same research group. For each lecturer, three

peer evaluators are recommended, where two peers are voluntary, and the third peer is determined by the immediate superior.

An additional 10% of the total marks is designated for students' evaluation. All students who have been taught or supervised by the lecturer can participate in assessing their performance. Acknowledging students as recipients of knowledge, their input is considered valuable in evaluating lecturers. While many institutions already have student evaluation systems for lecturers, challenges arise in handling outliers extreme marks that may not accurately reflect a lecturer's performance due to students' varied attitudes.

THE MEASURES EMPLOYED

Literature evinced that current performance measurements are too quantitative oriented that they left out the qualitative aspects, resulting in quality of work remains secondary as the main objective is still focusing on quantity (Kallio & Kallio, 2014) as discussed in the previous section. This has become quite a serious problem that may lead to many detrimental effects. In support of this contention, the sample interviewees in this study disclosed that their universities allocate such a small mark ranging from 0% to 20% for the qualitative aspects. Generally, they agreed that the portion of the mark is too small and should be increased.

Previous research also proves that performance evaluation influences an individual's performance via two ways, cognitive and motivational mechanisms (Sharul Effendy & Ruhanita, 2016). Not only that, the organizations need to integrate both sets of humanistic and spiritual values into workplaces to enable employees' knowledge, as well as their hearts, minds, spirits and souls to grow and flourish. Therefore, due to this gap, the performance evaluation of academics needs to be closely studied, where more consideration should be given to qualitative measures that are more content and quality-driven (Sharul Effendy & Ruhanita, 2016; Kallio & Kallio, 2014).

When asked about the appropriate portion, the interviewees suggested a few proportions of marks to be allocated for both quantitative and qualitative parts. A ratio of 60:40% was chosen as the most appropriate portion since it accounts for both quantitative and qualitative measures while giving sufficient emphasis on the qualitative measures as well as allowing adequate space for the different evaluators to evaluate the academics. The criteria to be measured are discussed in the following sections.

QUANTITATIVELY (60%): WHAT SHOULD BE MEASURED?

As academics are to be responsible for a few stipulated roles, like teaching and learning, postgraduate supervision, research and innovation, publication and writing, academic recognition, community services and nation-building, consultancy and industrial linkages, and administrative roles/contributions to universities (Che Omar et al., 2014), then outputs for each role has got to be fairly measured. However, it is important to note that not only completed output has to be measured, but the effort in producing the output has to be given equivalent recognition. Recognizing the effort along with output would make academics believe that their work is recognized and reduce dysfunctional behaviour (Noor Liza et al., 2021b), like free riding or cheating on the measures. This is absolutely true when many of the outputs of academic work actually do not fall within their control. For this purpose, academics' tasks are classified into a few categories as follows:

TEACHING AND LEARNING CATEGORY

A few quantifiable measures based on effort and output need to be considered under this category. These may include the 'Number of students' as it represents the level of workload; the 'Number of subjects taught' as more subjects would suggest more tasks and responsibility; or the 'Number of teaching hours' as higher marks should be allocated for long teaching hours as compared to the shorter hours. However, caution should be exercised when using these three measures as they are normally not within the academics' control. They are assigned with a certain number of students, certain subjects taught and also the number of teaching hours for each semester and they do not have an opportunity to choose. Hence a fair floor mark should be given if they are assigned a small number of students, subject taught or teaching hours.

STUDENT SUPERVISION CATEGORY

Students' supervision is another task that academics need to play. Students may come from various levels, like post-graduate or undergraduate students. As such, it is only fair when the lecturers are evaluated based on these measures, for example, 'Number of post-graduate students', 'Number of degree/diploma/professional project students' or 'Number of students under industrial training'. Different categories would require different levels of knowledge and expertise and also different time allocation that denotes recognition of the academics.

However, it is important to take note that not all universities or higher institutions offer post-grad programs, or not all programs require their undergraduates to prepare a thesis, dissertation or final-year project. In such a case, not all academics would play a role in the student's supervision category and as such, deprives them of any marks allocated under this category. Therefore, it would be fairer when the mark allocated for this category is shifted to other categories. For example, the KPI for service and administration may be increased for those without student supervision and the mark allocated is to be transferred to the fulfillment of this extra KPI.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION CATEGORY

As research and publication form an imperative role for academics, its quantitative measures should include the effort, not just the output. Doing research might take a few years to complete and cannot be completed in just one year. Similarly, publication in reputable journals might also take a few years. Therefore, it is not fair to only measure the completed output, like the 'Number of papers published' or the 'Number of researches completed'. Examples of fairer measures might include 'Numbers of research proposals submitted' as submission of a research proposal certainly requires a substantial amount of time and effort, especially those submitted to obtain a huge amount of grant, either locally or internationally, albeit no guarantee is given if it would be successful. Measures like 'Amount of research grants obtained'; 'Number of journal articles published'; and 'Number of conference proceedings' are already three very commonly accepted measures being practiced.

However, 'Numbers of articles submitted' might be a new indicator to measure effort as publication in a highly reputable journal might take time. This would help to reduce publications in predatory journals which can be done in a relatively very short time. Therefore, the quality or content of a publication becomes an important consideration and has been put at an appropriate

place it deserves. 'Number of Google Scholar, Scopus or WOS citations or indexes' may be included in the performance evaluation as it denotes an academic's recognition of his/her expertise.

Other measures may include 'Number of conference presentations; 'Number of consultation projects (that do not generate income)' or 'Amount of income generated (from the consultation project that generates income)'; 'Number of expertise exercises' which is the involvement of academics that require the use of their expertise must be given proper values, 'Number of participations in innovation competitions' which may include different scores for the different 'categories of awards' (either gold, silver or bronze) won and the 'number of awards'. When participation in such a competition is self-funded, extra credit should be given; 'Numbers of entrepreneurial projects' with the 'Net profit ratio' might be a better performance measure that considers the amount of investment, efficiency, and effort.

SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION CATEGORY

This category would account for any services rendered to the university, which do not include the core duties of an academic such as serving in certain committees and holding certain posts. Most interviewees agreed that they spent most of their time on activities falling under this category. A total of 90% of them expressed their dissatisfaction over the fact that due to these activities, they were left with so little time on other activities under other categories that would earn them higher marks. 70% agreed that these activities are not really related to the scholarly work, hence do not contribute to their scholarship.

This is supported in a finding by Noor Liza et al. (2021a) where lecturers have expressed concern about the extreme amount of job they are to shoulder, like 18 hours of teaching per week, participating in more than 4/5 committees at the same time, conducting research, writing academic articles, involve in students activities, etc. making them mentally and physically exhausted leading to health problems, stressful and burnout. Many have planned for an early retirement due to the excessive workload.

Making it worse, marks allocated for this category turn out to be the lowest proportion compared to other categories (agreed by 95% of the interviewees). Hence, generally, all interviewees firmly proposed that the number of committees should be limited and that task distribution should be evenly assigned to ensure all academics would have equal responsibilities. This is in line with Eisy Humaira, Zeratul Izzah and Azah Kamilah (2020) who posited that PMS should be able to allocate tasks to each staff fairly and measure individual performance, as it can contribute to collective achievements and overall performance. The authors proposed aligning the university's actual strength with active staff to prevent overburdening academics, ensuring they do not exceed their limits and risk not achieving the target. Consequently, academics would experience less stress, allowing them more time to focus on activities that add value to their scholarly work.

Some measures that can be employed under this category might include 'Numbers of administrative posts' which deserves higher marks should be awarded as it entails a lot of responsibilities and effort; 'Number of academic appointments', like acting as the Lecturer-in-charge, or the academic advisor; 'Number of committees served' which should be limited over a period of time and are only assigned to those involved with scholarly work; 'Number of involvements in student development activities' where marks should vary based on the degree of participation.

QUALITATIVELY (40%): WHAT SHOULD BE MEASURED?

Criteria that cannot be quantified in numbers should fall under this category. This 40% should be allocated to the different evaluators explained above as follows:

THE IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR

As the immediate superior is the one who knows all academics under him/her responsibility, then they deserve the highest mark of 20%, allowing sufficient room for the evaluation based on the qualitative aspects reflected for the year under review. However, a clear, detailed, and comprehensive rubric must be made available for the immediate superior to use, otherwise the evaluation might be contaminated with ambiguity and biases. A few interviewees reported that such a rubric is still not available at their universities which make the evaluation becomes questionable.

Qualitative measures that could be evaluated by the immediate superior might include, for example: 'Teaching innovation' as an encouragement to make learning to become more engaging, fun, and meaningful as well as promoting motivation, creativity and collaboration (Moreno-Guerrero et al., 2020). 'Winning of award/academic accolades' deserves some credit as it recognizes an outstanding achievement; 'Level of job demand/difficulty' as not all faculty members get the same task distribution and the immediate superior is in perfect knowledge of this fact, hence may assign the appropriate mark for each academic; 'Extra involvement in the Service and Administration category' will be a good measure to award extra mark to those academics shouldering excessive work who have exceeded the maximum mark as suggested by the interviewees; 'Professional membership' as it would encourage academics to keep upgrading themselves; and the 'Personality/values adopted' deserves some marks since it would influence the quality of work produced. However, a clear and detailed rubric should be provided to the immediate superior to avoid any bias and favoritism. These values might include integrity, excellence, synergy, discipline, trustworthiness, commitment, hard work, responsibility, etc.

THE PEERS OR COLLEAGUES

Most of the tasks that are done cannot be accomplished by working alone. Even in teaching and learning, an academic would work in a team consisting of those teaching the same subject. In organizing an event, tasks are to be done by a committee made up of a team. Therefore, peer evaluation would form a very fair evaluation as only those working together can assess its team members. The 10% mark would be an appropriate portion for this part which would mainly be themed on teamwork. Some characteristics that might be evaluated by peers may cover communication skills, commitment to tasks, ability to meet deadlines, and willingness to help.

THE STUDENTS

Students are the main customers and the product of the university. Universities are considered good if they can produce well-balanced students, equipped with academic excellence and soft skills. Students are also in the most frequent contact with academics. They know how well the lecturers teach, how knowledgeable are the lecturers, how effective the lecturers in delivering the knowledge and how accommodating they are. Therefore, it is only fair if they are to be given a

share in evaluating the performance of a lecturer. The portion of 10% marks is seen as appropriate considering the role of students in an academic's work.

Criteria that should be evaluated might include, for example: 'Lecturer's professionalism' which should evaluate the readiness of a lecturer to teach and to provide guidance, to match his/her content delivery to students' level, their knowledge in the subject matter, level of approachability or any other related criteria; 'Teaching and learning activities' that might include the level the lecturer makes learning engaging or creating a conducive atmosphere to learning, or encouraging students to participate in the classroom, and responding to students' queries, etc.

CONCLUSION

The university performance evaluation process can cause stress for lecturers due to factors like unrealistic expectations, subjective evaluations, administrative burden, competition, and high stakes. It's crucial for universities to create a fair, balanced, and supportive evaluation system that prioritizes lecturers' well-being and professional development. A good evaluation system should include both quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative measures, like metrics and targets, provide objective data for comparisons, showing tangible achievements. Qualitative measures capture nuanced aspects like creativity and collaboration, recognizing personal growth and broader impacts that are hard to quantify. Combining both gives a holistic view of performance.

The theoretical implication of the research is that the SRPEM model is proposed to assess employees' performance fairly and without causing undue stress, especially for academics in higher education institutions (HEIs). SRPEM integrates quantitative and qualitative measures within a humanistic management framework, aiming to foster self-regulation and accountability both vertically (towards God) and horizontally (towards management and stakeholders). This model addresses the humanistic aspects that are currently missing in conventional performance evaluation systems.

Yet, this research has limitations that restrict its generalizability. It focused solely on the higher education industry, making its applicability to other industries uncertain. Future studies could attempt to replicate these findings in different sectors. While the proposed model may appear idealistic, it was developed by adapting the existing evaluation system with input from interviewees and guidance from theories. An experimental study is recommended to validate its relevance. However, the model is not yet sufficient to establish a fully functional system that wholly supports the growth of academics' knowledge, minds, spirits, and souls.

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