Article

Academic Leaders' Perspectives on Job Performance Management at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University

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Abstract

Due to the rapid developments in the field of higher education and increased competitiveness, there is a need to assess and evaluate the performance of the personnel including the academic staff like faculty, teaching assistants and research staff. This research identifies the challenges faced by academic leaders in managing the job performance of faculty members at Prince Sattam Abdulaziz University (PSAU) in three stages of performance management system (planning - reviewing - evaluation) and the degree of differences in the challenges in the variables of academic leaders' gender, academic rank and job title. The study adopted a descriptive survey method and a questionnaire tool on a study sample of 67 department heads and Deans in various faculties at PSAU, Saudi Arabia. The results showed that the most significant challenges in managing job performance are in the evaluation stage, followed by the review stage and finally the planning stage. There were no statistically significant differences among the responses of the study sample due to the variable of gender and academic rank, while there were statistically significant differences among the respondents according to job title. This research also recommends to link job performance with incentives and rewards to boost employees' motivation, to evaluate faculty members' performance in additional tasks of quality and development, scientific research, and community service.

Keywords

Academic leaders, Performance Charter, Higher Education, Performance Appraisal

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Higher education is known to be playing the role of boosting a knowledge-driven global economy (Henard, 2009). Such a knowledge is the result of attainment of institutional goals and performance of its academic staff (Alkhasawneh, 2018). Like any other organization where employee performance boosts its growth and development (Paracha et al., 2012), higher education institutions (HEIs) too depend upon the professional skills of its academic faculty and quality teaching (M. Khan et al., 2017), and students' achievements (Jyothi et al., 2014). Although the performance of academic staff is shaped by academic culture, incentives and values, much also depends upon the level of support, communication and collaboration provided by dynamic academic leaders (Wahab et al., 2016) who take the responsibility of performance evaluation of the academic staff and giving it the desired shape to meet the institutional objectives.

Evaluating the performance of faculty requires to understand how well he/she carries out his/her functions or how effectively he/she achieves learning objectives by utilizing the available resources. In addition, performance evaluation of faculty also requires to understand how much they have assurance in each other's competence and integrity; whether conflict happens among faculty, and to what extent they try to manage such conflicts and attain common organizational objectives and goals (Siddique et al., 2011). The academic leaders in a higher education institution comprise Deans, Vice Deans and Department Chairs whose leadership style determines the kind of performance demonstrated by the academic staff. For instance, if the academic leadership believes in empowerment and is able to observe interpersonal links with their subordinates, it will certainly enhance their job performance (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Paracha et al., 2012).

Measuring and evaluating job performance is one of the fundamentals of systems development and quality. Individual performance is directly reflected at the organizational level. Higher education institutions use job evaluation for development of the human element, enrichment of their knowledge and directing them to effectively contribute to society (Aslam, 2011; Guruprasad et al., 2016; Ibn Zara'a, 2016). Howaid (2013) indicated that a faculty member is evaluated based on teaching, community service, scientific research, human relations and personal and professional aspects as laid down in their performance charter. Performance charter is a form of information, goals, competencies and relative weight signed by the employee and his manager at the beginning of the performance role and the same is agreed upon for evaluation (Brown et al., 2019). Such evaluation has a major role in improving the level of education at each university and thus raising the overall quality of higher education through the development of education programs and pedagogy. Therefore, the quality of faculty members is a key element of educational quality and the main driver of goals and plans.

A few pragmatic studies have also acclaimed that in education institutions where empowerment flows from top to bottom, academic leadership makes a great impact on employees' job performance (Al-Husseini et al., 2021; Al-Malki & Juan, 2018; Indrasari, 2017; Torlak & Kuzey, 2019) and attitudes towards their job (Jamaludin et al., 2011; Saleem, 2015); professional quality (Amin et al., 2013; Bushra et al., 2011; Javed et al., 2014; S. Khan et al., 2014; Shah et al., 2017); and research productivity and digital education (Antonopoulou et al., 2020; Feldman & Paulsen, 1999; Jamali et al., 2022). A notable critic, Thrash (2009), asserted that academic leaders like heads of departments, chairpersons, and faculty deans should possess different types of leadership skills because they produce such assets (students) that are critical to building a society and a prosperous future on which depends the economic growth of the country. A similar view was expressed by Gappa et al. (2007), who believed that performance of faculty determines the citizenship education.

Hence, there is no dearth of studies to show the relationship between academic leadership and job performance of the faculty and staff. However, very few researchers have examined the impact of academic leadership in the Saudi Arabia context and examined their perspective towards teachers and faculty. A need is felt much more greatly because higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is currently witnessing a remarkable qualitative change. Various measures are being adopted to raise the level of performance of Saudi universities in order to achieve the Vision 2030 mission of getting at least five Saudi universities ranking among the top 200 universities internationally (M. U. H. Khan, 2016). The new regulation of Article 115 for human resources in civil services regulations pertains to performance management. This new regulation has emphasized on the reorganization of employee performance measurement through standards and specific criteria related to government goals and strategies and linking them to the organizational objectives and financial incentives (Ministry of Civil Service, 2019).

This study, therefore, aimed to identify the challenges academic leaders face in managing job performance at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU). Academic Leaders in this study are understood

as leaders in academia who are assigned short or long-term management positions such as university presidents, vice presidents, college deans and department heads (Rehbock, 2020). The job performance management is understood as the process through which employees' capabilities can be pushed to optimally perform their roles to achieve or exceed the established goals and standards that are directly related to the organization's goals (Collings et al., 2018).

Problem statement and theoretical framework

Due to the rapid developments in the field of higher education and increased competitiveness, there is a need to assess and evaluate the performance of the personnel including the academic staff like faculty, teaching assistants and research staff. The performance assessment of the academic staff is required to ensure not only the success of the educational programs in terms of student learning outcomes but also institutional productivity. Specifically, a performance appraisal or performance management of academic staff comprise evaluating their behavior, pedagogical effectiveness, attitude, and their knowledge and research acumen. The performance management also involves the traditional approach of assessing all elements of the educational system, which includes appropriate usage of available resources, success of operations, achievement of results efficiently and effectively and continuous improvement and development.

Performance management is one important variable that reflects the quality of university education. Academic leaders generally face the challenge of evaluating job performance of the faculty and other staff in higher education to improve quality and outputs and lead the education system to global competitiveness. Academic leaders, as intermediaries in university administration circles, also face the challenge to manage the affairs of departments and colleges, to control and implement the administration's instructions, represent their members in various scientific councils and be responsible for evaluating the performance of direct faculty members (Al-Sarayrah, 2011). The Deans evaluate the performance of department heads in supervisory jobs, and department heads are authorized to evaluate members in non-supervisory department jobs.

To add to this challenging situation in recent years, ratings-based job performance evaluation has been replaced with goal-oriented evaluation. This means that academic staff like faculty are now evaluated based on their Key results areas (KRAs), based on which goals and development plans are set for each individual faculty and staff member. These KRAs are reviewed periodically and, at the end of each academic year, based on goal achievements and individual contribution to development, an evaluation takes place. The evaluation stage takes place after members agree on the plan and set objectives (Krenkel & Vasudevan, 2012). Job performance management is focused on goals, which are the results to be achieved during the academic year, and competencies, which are the methods adopted to achieve goals (Al-Otaibi, 2020). Turk (2016) showed that the performance management system increases the effectiveness of faculty and stimulates their teaching and research. Ter Bogt and Scapens (2012), however, believe that performance management system may inhibit creativity in both teaching and research, increase the authority of employees (managers) in decision making and reduce voice and freedom.

Hence, the job performance management process is based on a three-phase cycle of planning, reviewing and evaluating\. In the planning stage, KRAs are set and goals are agreed upon by each faculty member. In the second stage of reviewing, the academic leaders review the performance of the individual faculty member periodically, to determine his or her pace towards the achievement of the goal. The final phase of evaluation is recorded with the performance review or appraisal, thus ending the cycle. This performance appraisal needs to be approved by the university president and sent to human resources department.

Based on the aforementioned, this study aimed to identify the challenges academic leaders face in managing job performance at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University. These challenges relate to the problems and obstacles faced by Deans and heads of departments in planning, reviewing and evaluating the performance of faculty members. This should be noted that the sampled university of the current study, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz university is a leading university of Saudi Arabia. Presently, it aims to elevate its world ranking for which it has initiated several restructuring programs which also includes improving academic infrastructure, redesigning the degree programs, enhancing the quality and acquiring program accreditation from national and international agencies. Such a massive planning requires a dedicated and committed staff, whose performance needs to be closely observed and evaluated.

Additionally, the study also attempted to understand the degree of differences in these challenges according to the variables of gender, academic rank and job title. These variables are significant in the current context as no discrimination is made on the basis of gender or academic rank during an employee's performance evaluation. Moreover, in an educational institution, academic rank or the title of the faculty determines his or her contribution to the institution.

The current study would be a useful contribution to the Performance management and appraisal of the university staff in the education sector as only a limited research has been reported in this domain (Lohman, 2021; Padhaya et al., 2021). Furthermore, Performance management programs in universities are indicators of good planning and job satisfaction (Padhaya et al., 2021; Sułkowski et al., 2020), criteria to judge change in employee behavior (Boyd, 2004), result-oriented evaluation of organizational objectives (Fletcher, 2001), and most importantly, an examination of the intrapersonal characteristics of academic staff like knowledge, skills, capabilities, and pedagogical/ research aptitude (Taylor & Baines, 2012).

Literature Review

Paposa and Kumar (2015) conducted a study investigating the effect of a performance management system (PMS) on faculty job satisfaction in technical education institutions in Nagpur, India. A tool for job satisfaction was designed with reference to the 'Job Description Index' developed by Smith (1969), and combined with a 25-item research tool designed for PMS. As a result, a 30-item research tool was created for the study, which revealed that there was a positive and significant effect of the PMS on faculty's job satisfaction. Employees with high-quality performance appraisal experiences were more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and listed factors such as performance planning, feedback, counselling and procedural justice as having a positive and significant impact on their job satisfaction.

Turk (2016) aimed to identify options for developing PMS for faculty members based on the example of Estonian universities (faculties of economics) to study the effectiveness of teaching and research. The analysis included a review of the evolution of PMS over time. The methods included three questionnaire-based surveys, interviews with nine academic leaders and focus group interviews. Qualitative methods were used to conduct a content analysis of university documentation, interviews and participatory observations within a case study. The results recommended a detailed performance appraisal to achieve higher results precisely during periods of restructuring and change in universities; however, it may have a negative impact on quality in times of crisis. During the further development stage of the faculties, it would also be necessary to pay more attention to qualitative indicators and to reduce the number of quantitative indicators. A PMS must be applied in conjunction with other management tools (qualitative management and personnel management).

Kiplangat et al. (2016) study aimed to investigate the challenges faced by university administration in managing performance and job satisfaction in Kenyan universities. In this study, 605 participants of an invited 2,773 members of university management and lecturers in accredited public and private universities in Kenya with their main branches, were surveyed. Parallel convergent mixed design methods with census, and the random sampling methodology to select respondents were used. Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis guides were the main data collection tools. Insufficient funds were proven to be the greatest challenge for university management.

In another study aimed at identifying ways to improve job performance, Rasmi et al. (2019) found four categories of improvement: improving performance through employee development such as planning, professional development, employee training, guidance and feedback on performance and rewards; financial rewards, profit sharing, recognition of achievements and the organizational environment; improving performance through job description modification, job enlightenment, job enrichment, work flexibility and promotion and improving performance through the participation of employees in the organization, including setting goals, delegation of powers and social and professional integration at work.

Qishaw (2020)'s study aimed to assess the job performance of a university professor in the field of teaching, scientific research and community service according to the professor's own quality assurance standards and to reveal the significance of differences in the level of performance according to the variables of gender,

academic level and employer. The descriptive approach was adopted, and a study sample of 185 faculty members at the University of Setif in academic year 2019/2020 was identified to receive a 45-item questionnaire divided into three components of teaching, scientific research and community service. Faculty job performance in the fields of teaching, scientific research and community service received a medium quality assurance standard rating. The study also revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the job performance level of university professors in the field of teaching, scientific research and community service due to the variables of gender or employer, while there were statistically significant differences due to the academic level variable in the field of scientific research in favor of the higher education professor category.

Al-Mutlaq (2021) aimed to identify the PMS and its philosophy to provide a critical analytical vision of the most important strength and benefits and to review the most important challenges facing its applications. The study focused on the applications of the job PMS in the public sector by summarizing the most important international experiences and analyzing these applications from a critical perspective to determine the requirements for the success of the PMS investment in public sector organizations. The study adopted the deductive theoretical approach and showed that there were several challenges facing the implementation of the job performance management approach.

Mackay (1995) evaluated the UK academic administration system and found that prior to 1980, there existed no formal performance appraisal system and the faculty and other staff worked in a "favorable academic culture", full of trust and academic freedom. In 1980, the UK government decided to introduce a formal "staff-appraisal" system in all public universities (Mackay, 1995; Türk, 2008) with a view to meet the changes and requirements of the economic situation of the UK, and offer a more market-oriented managerial and corporate culture instead of academic freedom. The new system introduced performance management practices (Jackson, 2001) in accordance with the requirements of the higher education sector (Taylor & Baines, 2012). The new system resulted in making the academic staff of the UK universities less discretionary and with more attention to their KRAs and performance indicators. Simmons (2002) reacted to the situation and emphasized on devising a more suitable performance appraisal approach (he called it "contingency approach") which would help universities to achieve their goals and also satisfy the academic staff. Fletcher (2001) also argued that new performance management system imposed is "inappropriate" for universities and knowledge-based institutions, and supported Simmons (2002)'s contingency approach. Hutaibat et al. (2020), however, supported the UK government's decision as the new Performance appraisal system was necessary to meet the higher expectations of parents and students and it is essential to introduce high performance expectations in the work-life of the academic staff.

Method

- *Research design*

A descriptive survey method was employed to carry out this research study. There are two types of commonly used data collection methods viz., cross-sectional and longitudinal. The longitudinal method is suitable for collecting data for a long period by snowball sampling techniques and scrutinizing the source population repeatedly. The cross-sectional method is recommended to collect data in a short period of time through questionnaires, etc (Saunders et al., 2009). Since the current research was planned for a short period, the cross-sectional survey method was employed to collect the data. Creswell (2012), too, indicated that cross-sectional survey method provided a description of the trends of a society by studying a sample of it; clarifying the phenomenon, its size and its association and generalizing its results.

- *Participants*

The population of the study comprised approximately 110 academic leaders who were sent the questionnaire on their email addresses. The questionnaire was accompanied with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. A total of 70 completed questionnaires were received out of which three (03) were found incomplete and discarded. A total of 67 questionnaires representing 61% of the study population were finally analyzed. When delivering questionnaires, it was kept in mind to cover a fair cross-section of the whole academic staff in terms of gender, academic rank, title and the locale.

- *Research instrument and procedure*

The questionnaire was used as a research tool and the validity and reliability of its statements were verified. It was sent electronically via e-mail to the respondents after obtaining permission to use the application. Prior to the data collection, the documents from the university Performance Management system (PMS) website were downloaded to collect the relevant information about the three phases: Planning, Review and Evaluation. One of the senior members of the Personnel Section in the Deanship of Human Resources was interviewed to clarify the information provided on the website. In addition, all the available information and regulations specific to the University PMS and related data were explored from the academic journals, textbooks, and other secondary sources. Based on the information gathered in this manner, a questionnaire was prepared for distribution among the academic staff.

Prior to sending it to the respondents, the questionnaire was shared with three academic experts in this field. The experts suggested a few changes such as changes in the question order, and replacing a few words to improve the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was also pilot tested with six academics, three Deans and three Heads of the Department. Based on the feedback, comments and responses, further modifications were made.

- *Data analysis*

The data retrieved from the respondents' questionnaire was analyzed by dividing the source population into different categories (i.e., gender, academic position and administrative title) and three stages of performance management (i.e., planning, review and evaluation). The data so gathered was presented in numerical tables showing averages of the components included in the questionnaire. These components were arranged in descending order in the light of the values of their averages, percentages, and standard deviations. The questionnaire items of each component were also arranged in descending order according to their average values.

Results

A total of 70 completed questionnaires were received out of 110 distributed. Three (03) responses were discarded as they were incomplete, leaving 67 questionnaires representing 61% of the study population. A fair cross-section of the whole academic staff in terms of gender, academic rank, title and the locale was kept in mind in the selection of the sample and the distribution of the questionnaire. Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample according to the research variables.

Table 1: *Description of the sample according to the research variables (N = 67)*

Variables	Variable categories	N =67	Percentage
Gender	Male	41	61.2%
	Female	26	38.8%
Academic rank	Assistant Professor	51	76.1%
	Associate Professor	16	23.9%
Job Title	Dean	15	22.4%
	Department Head	52	77.6%

The first research question addressed the challenges facing academic leaders in managing job performance at Prince Sattam University. To answer the first question, the total average of the viewpoints of the sample members was calculated by relying on the values of the averages of the components included in the questionnaire. These components were arranged in descending order in the light of the values of their averages. The results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: *Estimates of the challenges faced by academic leaders in managing job performance at PSAU (N = 67)*

Questionnaire components	Item no.	Average	Standard deviation	Challenges degree	Rank
• The first component: the challenges of the planning stage	7	3.38	1.09	Medium	3
• The second component: challenges of the review stage	7	3.53	1.05	Large	2
• The third component: challenges of the evaluation stage	8	3.60	1.11	Large	1
General average of the questionnaire	22	3.50	1.08	Large	-

Table 2 shows that the overall average of the questionnaire was 3.50 and the standard deviation was 1.08, which are values that confirm the challenges faced by academic leaders in managing job performance at Prince Sattam Abdulaziz University (PSAU). The third component, 'challenges of the evaluation stage', ranked first among the challenges with a general average 3.60 and a standard deviation 1.11, while the second component, 'challenges of the review stage', ranked second with a general average of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 1.05. The first component, 'the challenges of the planning stage', ranked third with a general average of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 1.09. Due to the sensitivity of the evaluation stage compared to the other stages and the many aspects of judging job performance, that stage required more accuracy, transparency and honesty, therefore presenting more challenges.

To display the detailed results related to each component, the repetition, percentages, averages and standard deviations of the responses of the academic leaders to the items of each component were calculated. The items of each component were also arranged in descending order according to their average values. Table 3 depicts descriptive statistics for the academic leaders' point of view on estimating the associated challenges in the *planning* stage in the management of job performance

Table 3: *Results of the first component, challenges of the planning stage (N = 67)*

No.	Items no.	Repetition &Percentage	Responses					Average	Standard deviation	Challenges degree	Rank
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree				
1	Difficulty in setting goals for the member as required by the actual research needs of the party.	C	6	27	13	19	2	3.24	1.06	Medium	7
		%	9.0	40.3	19.4	28.4	3.0				
2	Difficulty in setting goals for the member as required by the actual needs of community service for the party.	C	7	30	13	16	1	3.39	1.01	Medium	4
		%	10.4	44.8	19.4	23.9	1.5				
3	Poor prediction of the competencies that the member needs at the beginning of the course to develop.	C	7	24	19	17	0	3.31	0.97	Large	5
		%	10.4	35.8	28.4	25.4	0.0				
4	Lack of time to meet all the target members at the beginning of the session for agreement.	C	13	24	13	12	5	3.42	1.21	Large	3
		%	19.4	35.8	19.4	17.9	7.5				
5	Emphasis on individuality in task performance rather than team collaborative work.	C	17	16	15	19	0	3.46	1.16	Large	2
		%	25.4	23.8	22.4	28.4	0.0				
6	Inadequate setting of an agreed time during the year to implement the goals.	C	6	28	12	20	1	3.27	1.04	Medium	6
		%	9.0	41.8	17.9	29.9	1.5				
7	Focusing on the final results versus neglecting the means and its quality in setting goals.	C	18	22	9	16	2	3.57	1.21	Large	1
		%	26.9	32.8	13.4	23.9	3.0				
	The general average for the first component: planning stage							3.38	1.09	Medium degree	

Table 3 shows that the general average for the first component, 'the challenges of the planning stage', was 3.38 with a standard deviation of 1.09, which are values that confirm medium challenges associated with the planning stage in the management of job performance. Since the planning stage is an initial stage in the management of job performance, members may set their goals in a way that suits their abilities or the college determines them in a fixed way for all, and the role of academic leaders in it is minimal, which reduces their challenges compared to the following stages.

Item No. 7, 'focusing on the final results versus neglecting the means and its quality in setting goals', ranked most challenging with an average of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 1.21, while Item No. 5, 'Focus on individuality in performance of tasks instead of group cooperative work', ranked second with an average of 3.46 and a standard deviation of 1.16.

Item No. 6, 'Lack of setting an agreed-upon time during the year to implement the goals', ranked sixth with an average of 3.2 and a standard deviation of (1.04), while Item No. 1, 'the difficulty of determining the member's goals as required by the actual research needs of the entity', ranked seventh and last, with an average of 3.24 and a standard deviation of 1.06. Table 4 illustrates descriptive statistics for the academic leaders' point of view on estimating the associated challenges in the *review* stage in the management of job performance.

Table 4: *Results of the second component, challenges of the review stage (N = 67)*

No.	Item no.	Repetition &Percentage	Response					Average	Standard deviation	Challenges degree	Rank
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree				
1	The lack of importance of the feedback stage compared to other stages.	C	19	21	16	10	1	3.70	1.09	Large	2
		%	28.4	31.3	23.9	14.6	1.5				
2	The difficulty of changing some goals and the relative weights of the member when they falter.	C	20	26	11	10	0	3.84	1.02	Large	1
		%	29.9	38.8	16.4	14.9	0.0				
3	Limited recognition of the member's needs in achieving goals.	C	10	28	15	14	0	3.51	0.99	Large	4
		%	14.9	41.8	22.4	20.9	0.0				
4	Lack of sufficient time to review the performance of the member.	C	16	29	9	14	2	3.64	1.15	Large	3
		%	23.9	43.3	9.0	20.9	3.0				
5	Lack of guidance for the member in achieving the goals if their performance faltered.	C	15	14	19	19	0	3.37	1.13	Medium	6
		%	22.4	20.8	28.4	28.4	0.0				
6	The scarcity of behavior reviews to improve the level of competency required for assessment.	C	8	31	10	18	0	3.43	1.02	Large	5
		%	11.9	46.3	14.9	26.9	0.0				
7	Bypassing the application of this stage because it is not useful between the previous stage and the next.	C	8	19	22	18	0	3.25	0.99	Medium	7
		%	11.9	28.4	32.8	26.9	0.0				
	The general average for the first component: planning stage							3.53	1.05	Large degree	

Table 4 shows that the general average of the second component, 'challenges of the review stage', was 3.53 with a standard deviation of 1.05, which are values that confirm that the challenges associated with the review stage in the management of job performance are prevalent. The average values for this dimension ranged from 3.84 to 3.25 due to the fact that the review stage was in the middle and it may be difficult for leaders to track members' implementation of their goals at that stage. Some leaders also felt embarrassed to ask about it because they felt that they were being monitored.

Item No. 3, 'the difficulty of changing some of the goals and the relative weights of the member when they falter', ranked first with an average of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 1.02, followed by Item No. 1, 'the lack of importance of the feedback stage compared to the other stages', which came in second place with an average of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 1.09.

Item No. 5, 'the lack of guidance of the member in achieving the goals if their performance faltered', came in sixth place with an average of 3.37 and a standard deviation of 1.13, while Item No. 7, 'the difficulty of exceeding the application of this stage, as it is not useful between the previous stage and the next', was ranked last with an average of 3.25 and a standard deviation of 0.99. Table 5 exhibits descriptive statistics of the academic leaders' viewpoint on estimating the challenges associated with the *evaluation* phase in the administration of job performance (*N* = 67).

Table 5: *Results of the third component, challenges of the evaluation stage (N = 67)*

No.	Items no.	Repetition &Percentage	Response					Average	Standard deviation	Challenges degree	Rank
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree				
1	The presence of non-specific and loose items in the measurement of competencies.	C	11	29	13	12	2	3.52	1.06	Large	5
		%	16.4	43.3	19.4	17.9	3.0				
2	The poor suitability of some competency clauses in the charter to the reality of job performance.	C	14	32	14	4	0	3.84	0.83	Large	2
		%	20.9	47.8	25.4	6.0	0.0				
3	Weak association of evaluation scores with incentives and annual bonuses.	C	23	24	14	6	0	3.96	0.96	Large	1
		%	34.3	35.8	20.9	9.0	0.0				
4	The imposition of senior management not to give members the full degree.	C	26	8	10	19	4	3.49	1.41	Large	6
		%	38.8	11.9	14.9	28.4	6.0				
5	Rarity of members' satisfaction with the grades due.	C	12	19	20	13	3	3.36	`1.12	Medium	7
		%	17.9	28.4	29.9	19.4	4.5				
6	Some members are given more than what they deserve to avoid personal problems.	C	17	15	10	21	4	3.30	1.31	Medium	8
		%	25.4	22.4	14.9	31.3	6.0				
7	Obstruct the continuity of the completion of the course for some members as transfer or scholarship.	C	19	26	10	11	1	3.76	1.09	Large	3
		%	28.4	38.8	14.9	16.4	1.5				
8	Weakness of members receiving recommendations to improve performance based on the result.	C	14	27	10	15	1	3.57	1.10	Large	4
		%	20.9	40.3	14.9	22.4	1.5				
	The general average for the first component: planning stage							3.60	1.11	Large degree	

Table 5 shows that the general average of the third component, 'challenges of the evaluation stage', was 3.60 with a standard deviation of 1.11, which are values that confirm a high degree of challenges associated with the evaluation stage in the management of job performance. The average values for this dimension ranged from 3.96 to 3.30 due to the complexity, sensitivity and finality of the evaluation stage compared to the first stages.

Statement No. 3, 'Weak association of evaluation scores with incentives and annual bonuses', came in the first place, with an average of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 0.96, while item No. 2: 'The poor suitability of some competency clauses in the charter to the reality of job performance' came in second place with an average of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.83.

Item No. 5, 'the scarcity of members' satisfaction with the deserved grades', ranked seventh with an average of 3.36 and a standard deviation of 1.12, while item No. 6, 'some members were given scores more than the one who deserves to avoid personal problems,' ranked eighth and last with an average of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 1.31.

The second question of the study asked whether there were statistically significant differences among the sample members' point of view about estimating the challenges facing leaders in managing job performance at PSAU. These differences were attributed to the variables of gender, academic rank, and job title. To answer the second question, an independent sample t-test was used to identify the significance of the differences among the viewpoints of the sample members of the academic leaders.

Results of the differences according to the 'gender' variable

Table 6 presents t-test results indicating differences among academic leaders' point of view on estimating challenges in managing job performance according to the 'gender' variable ($N = 67$).

Table 6: *Results of t-test according to gender variable*

Questionnaire components	Gender	N=67	Average	Standard deviation	Freedom degree	C value	Statistical significance
The first component: the challenges of the planning stage	Male	41	23.12	6.21	65	0.353	Non- statically significant
	Female	26	24.50	5.29			
The second component: challenges of the review stage	Male	41	23.98	6.17	65	0.201	Non- statically significant
	Female	26	25.96	6.06			
The third component: challenges of the evaluation stage	Male	41	28.29	5.82	65	0.378	Non- statically significant
	Female	26	29.58	5.68			
The overall degree of the questionnaire	Male	41	75.39	16.42	65	0.236	Non -statically significant
	Female	26	80.04	13.94			

Table 6 shows that there are no statistically significant differences among the academic leaders' point of view (as an overall score or as sub-components) based on the variable of 'gender'.

Results of the differences according to the variable of 'academic rank'

Table 7 presents t-test indicating differences among the academic leaders' point of view on estimating the challenges in managing job performance according to the 'academic rank' variable ($N = 67$).

Table 7: *Results of t-test according to academic rank variable*

Questionnaire components	Academic position	N =67	Average	Standard deviation	Freedom degree	C value	P value	Statistical significance
The first component: the challenges of the planning stage	Assistant Prof.	51	23.06	5.89	65	1.503	0.138	Non- statically significant
	Associate Prof.	16	25.56	5.56				
The second component: challenges of the review stage	Assistant Prof.	51	24.49	6.61	65	0.605	0.547	Non- statically significant
	Associate Prof.	16	25.56	4.50				
The third component: challenges of the evaluation stage	Assistant Prof.	51	28.43	6.21	65	0.912	0.365	Non- statically significant
	Associate Prof.	16	29.94	3.92				
The overall degree of the questionnaire	Assistant Prof.	51	75.98	16.56	65	1.142	0.258	Non- statically significant
	Associate Prof.	16	81.06	11.41				

Table 7 shows no statistically significant differences among the academic leaders' point of view about estimating the challenges they face in managing job performance (as an overall score or as a sub-component) depending on the variable of 'academic rank'.

Results of the differences according to the rank variable of 'Job Title'

Table 8 presents t-test indicating differences among the academic leaders' point of view on estimating the challenges they face in the management of job performance according to the 'job title' variable ($N = 67$)

Table 8: *Results of t-test according to Job title variable*

Questionnaire components	Academic position	N =67	Average	Standard deviation	Freedom degree	C value	P value	Statistical significance
The first components: the challenges of the planning stage	Dean	15	27.07	3.41	65	2.670	0.010	Significant on 0.05
	Dep. Head	52	22.67	6.08				
The second components: challenges of the review stage	Dean	15	27.60	4.86	65	2.089	0.041	Significant on 0.05
	Dep. Head	52	23.92	6.28				
The third components: challenges of the evaluation stage	Dean	15	33.40	3.11	65	3.876	0.00	Significant on 0.05
	Dep. Head	52	27.46	5.67				
The overall degree of the questionnaire	Dean	15	88.07	10.65	65	3.292	0.002	Significant on 0.05
	Dep. Head	52	74.06	15.41				

Table 8 shows statistically significant differences at the significance level 0.05 among the academic leaders' point of view about estimating the challenges they face in managing job performance (as a total score and as a sub-component) according to the variable of 'academic rank' and 'job title'. The differences favored the deans, and this may be attributed to the increased responsibility of the Deans in managing the job performance of faculty members, as they evaluate those who are in supervisory positions as heads of departments, who may be far from them in different departments.

Discussion

This study made evident that performance measurement of faculty and other teaching staff in universities played the role of a key management mechanism to improve the performance of the academic staff in terms of their intrapersonal characteristics. Specifically, the test results values confirmed that academic leaders at Prince Sattam Abdulaziz University (PSAU) faced challenges in managing job performance of the academic staff. Right at the outset, as an answer to the first question about the challenges faced by the academic leaders, the statistical values confirmed the presence of medium level challenges associated with the planning stage in the performance management of academic staff. Since the planning stage is an initial stage in the management of job performance, faculty may set their goals in a way that suits their abilities or the college determines them in a fixed way for all. The results also revealed that the role of academic leaders at the planning stage was minimal, which reduces their challenges in the next two stages.

The second question asked whether there were statistically significant differences among the sample members' point of view about estimating the challenges facing leaders in managing job performance at PSAU. This question was attributed to three variables of gender, academic rank, and job title. An independent sample t-test was used to identify the significance of the differences among the viewpoints of the sample members of the academic leaders regarding this question. The results of the t-tests indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among the academic leaders' point of view as an overall score as well as sub-components level on all three variables of gender, academic rank, and job title.

This could also be seen in the sensitivity scores of the evaluation stage compared to the other stages, which is also an indication of the evaluation of many aspects of job performance, suggesting that this stage requires more accuracy, transparency and honesty. It is consistent with the study of Al-Mutlaq (2021) in considering the 'evaluation' the most challenging stage in the implementation of the job performance management approach.

According to the data analyzed, it has been proved that PMS system at PSAU functions as a well-designed management tool which shapes up the quality of teaching and research, with the aim to build a

trained and qualified academic staff. The findings are also the evidence of the application of innovative performance appraisal methods and approaches. This is consistent with Hutaibat et al. (2020) who voted for innovation and advanced measures adopted in the Performance appraisal system of the UK universities. However, it contradicts with Fletcher (2001) who disliked the idea of innovating the performance management system and also with Simmons (2002) who argued that a contingency approach should be adopted to establish a suitable performance appraisal.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the study indicated that there were challenges in managing job performance from the point of view of academic leaders at PSAU, the most significant of which were challenges in the evaluation stage, followed by challenges in the review stage, then in the planning stage. The results of the study also showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the sample members' points of view due to the variables of gender and academic rank. There were, however, statistically significant differences among the sample members' points of view according to the job title variable. The study puts forward a number of recommendations including: linking job performance with incentives, bonuses, annual bonuses and rewards so that members become more motivated to achieve; activating the role of the review phase in tracking the member's performance and guiding to correct the faltering performance; paying attention to achieving the objectives and their quality and kind to not be limited to quantity and implementation only; and evaluating faculty members in additional tasks of development, quality, excellence in performance, participation in committees and administrative tasks and not only in their duties as members such as scientific research, community service and teaching.

This study focused on a national university in Saudi Arabia; hence, it was assumed that this university would prove to be a good example of representing the performance management practices employed by academic leaders within the Saudi environment. Therefore, the findings of this study should be applicable to any other university in the Saudi region. Moreover, this study is also expected to fill the existing gaps of the literature particularly relating to the performance appraisal of the academic staff.

The study derives its theoretical importance from the emergence of PSAU's academic leaders' concern regarding the challenges of managing the job performance of faculty members. The study will contribute a theoretical framework that roots the subject in research and enriches the library of performance review literature in the Arabic library. Practically, this study derives its practical importance from its ability to find a scientific reference in determining the challenges faced by academic leaders in managing faculty job performance and inviting researchers to conduct more studies on this subject. Practitioners, scholars, and consultants can use the outcomes and future recommendations of this study to extend their understanding and also for conducting further research and development.

The study had a few limitations. First, this study used the questionnaire tool to collect data on job performance management challenges; while the questionnaire is an effective tool, future research can combine questionnaires and in-depth interviews to provide a broader knowledge of this topic. Second, this study was limited to focusing on academic leaders at PSAU. This study may be applied by researchers in any other university, and comparisons can be made among different universities on the issue of job performance management challenges aimed to identify the challenges facing the management of the job performance of faculty members at PSAU from the point of view of academic leaders and the degree of differences in those challenges according to the study variables of academic job and rank.

Acknowledgements

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

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