

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DILEMMA AND COUNTERMEASURES IN HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF NAMANGAN PREFECTURE, UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

The public sector, dedicated to producing public goods and delivering services, relies heavily on performance management to enhance efficiency. Management by Objectives (MBO) theory provides crucial guidance for its implementation. This study examines the health department in Namangan Region, Uzbekistan, to analyze challenges in public sector performance management. Key issues identified include: irrational performance targets, incomplete management systems, and weak integration with staff operations. To address these, the paper proposes: establishing strategic performance goals aligned with departmental objectives; improving management frameworks through scientific evaluation systems to ensure transparency and fairness; and strengthening performance assessments tied to employees' actual workloads. These measures aim to elevate overall departmental performance and employee satisfaction.

Key words

health department; performance management; management system

I. Related concepts and theoretical basis

(i) Public sector

The public sector comprises organizations dedicated to producing public goods and delivering services without profit motives. This includes government agencies, public institutions (such as schools, hospitals, and libraries), and certain social organizations. Their core mission involves managing public affairs, safeguarding and advancing public interests, and ensuring societal stability through the exercise of public authority. Public sector operations must comply with legal requirements and undergo rigorous oversight. These entities often operate with non-quantifiable objectives and multifaceted responsibilities, aiming to meet the diverse needs of the general public.

(ii) Performance management

Organizations implement performance management to achieve their objectives through a comprehensive process involving continuous open communication. This system encompasses key components such as performance planning, monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms, all designed to enhance both organizational and individual performance levels. By emphasizing both process and outcome, it employs standardized approaches to motivate employees and align teams toward shared goals, ultimately boosting overall organizational effectiveness. As a vital component of human resource management, performance management plays a crucial role in enhancing organizational competitiveness and employee satisfaction.

(3) Goal management theory

In modern management theory, the Objectives Management Theory (OMT) serves as a vital component. Its core principle involves establishing clear, measurable goals to guide and regulate organizational and individual behaviors toward achieving the organization's overall strategy. This makes OMT particularly crucial in public sector performance management. Public sector managers are required to collaborate with employees to set measurable work objectives that align closely with organizational strategic planning and annual work plans. This ensures personal efforts stay consistent with the organization's vision. OMT emphasizes regular goal progress reviews, utilizing continuous performance communication and feedback to help employees recognize their strengths and weaknesses, enabling timely adjustments to work strategies for successful goal achievement. The theory also prioritizes results-oriented evaluation, assessing employee and organizational performance through goal attainment metrics to inform decisions regarding rewards, promotions, and other personnel matters. When implemented in public sector practices, OMT has proven effective in enhancing work efficiency, strengthening employees' sense of responsibility and belonging, and driving overall organizational development.

II. Performance management dilemma in the health sector of Namangan Region, Uzbekistan

(1) Lack of rationality of performance management objectives

The health department in Namangan Region, Uzbekistan, faces challenges in employee performance management due to poorly designed evaluation targets. A key issue is the failure to account for role-specific differences among staff. For instance, while public health workers primarily handle vaccination campaigns and disease prevention education, medical service personnel focus on clinical treatment. Yet the department applies uniform performance metrics to both groups, requiring identical patient satisfaction targets. This creates a paradox: public health workers

may excel in core responsibilities like vaccination coverage, but their limited patient interaction results in lower satisfaction ratings, ultimately undermining overall performance evaluations.

On the other hand, target setting is divorced from actual work challenges. Certain health department operations are heavily influenced by external factors – take infectious disease incidence rates, which are constrained by seasonal patterns and population mobility. Yet when establishing targets, the CDC staff are required to reduce incidence rates by fixed percentages each quarter without considering practical circumstances. Even when employees implement all preventive measures, achieving targets during peak epidemic seasons remains difficult, leading to immense pressure and resistance toward performance management. Moreover, the absence of a dynamic adjustment mechanism for targets means they can not be revised in real-time according to actual work conditions, significantly undermining the effectiveness of performance management.

(2) The performance management system needs to be improved

The shortcomings in the performance evaluation system of the Namangan Prefecture Health Department in Uzbekistan have hindered the effective advancement and continuous optimization of performance management. According to the Public Value-Based Government Performance Governance (PV-GPG) theory, a sound performance management system should comprehensively cover multiple aspects including performance target setting, evaluation methods, assessment cycles, and result application. However, the current system of the Namangan Prefecture Health Department appears one-sided, focusing solely on performance evaluation and assessment without sufficient detailed measures or practical operability. The lack of integration with public values has prevented performance management from fully realizing its potential to improve service quality and optimize resource allocation, thereby limiting the effectiveness of government performance governance.

For instance, the performance management system in Uzbekistan's Naman District Health Department exhibits notable shortcomings in both evaluation methodology and assessment cycles. The department continues to rely on the outdated "virtue, competence, diligence, performance, and integrity" evaluation framework, lacking scientific and targeted assessment tools. This overly generalized approach fails to accurately measure employees' performance in critical areas such as professional skills and work outcomes. When evaluating healthcare professionals, for example, this model struggles to reflect their actual contributions in specific operational aspects like disease prevention and control, as well as medical treatment services.

The evaluation cycle framework suffers from an ill-advised duration. When cycles are excessively long, employees' performance fluctuations cannot be promptly identified or adjusted. Conversely, overly short cycles—such as quarterly assessments—fail to capture the full scope of work outcomes due to the complex and cyclical nature of sanitation operations. This often results in biased evaluations that inaccurately reflect employees' actual performance and competencies.

(3) The performance management is not well integrated with the work of employees

There is a significant problem in the current performance management system of the health department of Namangan Prefecture in Uzbekistan, that is, the poor integration of performance management and employees' work, which not only affects the effectiveness of performance management, but also restricts the enthusiasm of employees and the improvement of the overall efficiency of the organization.

Within the framework of goal management theory, the Namangan Prefecture Health Department in Uzbekistan faces a critical challenge: the disconnect between performance management objectives and employees' actual work. When setting performance targets, the department fails to adequately consider staff responsibilities and job duties, resulting in overly broad or unrealistic goals. This disconnect makes it difficult for employees to effectively align their daily efforts with organizational performance targets, thereby weakening their motivation and goal orientation. Such misalignment not only leaves employees unclear about how their work contributes to the organization's overall objectives, but also creates a mismatch between performance evaluation results and actual job performance, ultimately undermining the effectiveness of goal management.

III. Performance management strategies of the health sector in Namangan Region, Uzbekistan

(1) Formulate reasonable performance management objectives

To enhance operational efficiency and unlock staff potential, the Namangan Prefecture Health Department in Uzbekistan must establish well-calibrated performance management objectives. Given its multifaceted responsibilities—including safeguarding public health security and improving medical service quality—the department's goals should be closely aligned with its unique operational environment and service demands. Facing challenges such as uneven resource allocation, heavy disease control workloads, and rapid medical technology updates, the department needs to balance strategic positioning with employee growth and engagement when setting performance targets. This approach enables staff to focus on core public health missions, boost service quality and efficiency,

while charting career development paths. Considering these special circumstances, the Namangan Health Department requires strategic measures to ensure effective performance management goals that drive steady improvement in overall departmental performance.

The Namangan Prefecture Health Department must first clearly integrate performance management objectives with departmental strategies. This means setting performance targets that fully consider both long-term development plans and short-term tasks, ensuring goals are both challenging and achievable. Clear objectives help employees understand how their work contributes to the department's overall strategy, thereby enhancing their sense of mission and responsibility.

(2) Improve the construction of performance management system

The performance management system in Uzbekistan's Namangan Region Health Department exhibits a fragmented structure with low employee satisfaction. Only a minority of staff report satisfaction, with 11% rating it as "very satisfied" and 19% as "somewhat satisfied." Most employees maintain neutral or dissatisfied attitudes, primarily citing unclear reward and disciplinary measures, insufficient training and career development opportunities (72% of staff highlighted this concern), as well as delayed feedback mechanisms and poor communication channels. To enhance performance management effectiveness and employee satisfaction, the Health Department must prioritize improvements in these critical areas.

The Namangan Prefecture Health Department must first establish a scientific performance evaluation system that includes clear criteria, methods, and cycles. The evaluation standards should be specific, quantifiable, and closely aligned with departmental objectives. The methods should be diverse, combining quantitative and qualitative assessments. The evaluation cycles should be reasonably set—neither too frequent nor too long. This approach will enable comprehensive and objective evaluation of both staff performance and departmental outcomes.

Secondly, the comprehensive quality management theory plays a vital role in improving employee performance evaluations within the Nakhchivan Regional Health Department. To enhance management effectiveness, it is crucial to strengthen the transparency and fairness of performance management systems. By publicly disclosing evaluation criteria, processes, and results, employees can gain clear understanding and acceptance of the system, thereby fostering trust and a sense of belonging. Additionally, establishing an effective grievance mechanism is essential, providing employees with a platform to voice objections and protect their rights, which further ensures the fairness of performance management practices.

(3) Strengthen the combination of performance appraisal and employees' actual work

When addressing performance management challenges, the health department in Namangan Region, Uzbekistan, should prioritize aligning performance evaluations with employees' actual work. Current evaluations are often treated as separate from daily operations, creating a disconnect between assessment outcomes and real job performance. To break this cycle, the department must reform its evaluation system to ensure metrics directly reflect employees' daily tasks and results. Specifically, it should conduct thorough analyses of job responsibilities and core tasks, breaking them down into concrete, measurable indicators. These should include not only traditional metrics like workload and efficiency, but also value-added aspects such as service quality and patient satisfaction. By establishing clear, work-related goals, employees will better understand their objectives, and performance evaluations will become more realistic, effectively eliminating the disconnect between performance and recognition.

In Uzbekistan's Namangan Region, enhancing communication and guidance during employee performance evaluations is a crucial component. According to the government's Total Quality Management theory, effective communication is the cornerstone of quality performance management. Therefore, managers should proactively establish regular communication mechanisms with employees to thoroughly discuss work progress, challenges encountered, and solutions. This approach not only enables managers to promptly understand employees' actual performance and needs, but also encourages staff to reflect on and improve their work. Such two-way communication makes the performance evaluation process more transparent and fair, while stimulating employees' enthusiasm and creativity.

Conclusion. In conclusion, this study examines public sector performance management practices within the Namangan Region Health Department of Uzbekistan. Building upon foundational theories of public administration, performance management, and management by objectives, the research identifies systemic challenges including ill-defined targets, incomplete institutional frameworks, and weak alignment with operational workflows. These issues have resulted in heightened staff stress, diminished work motivation, and compromised departmental effectiveness. To address these challenges, the study proposes three key strategies: establishing evidence-based objectives, refining institutional mechanisms, and strengthening workplace integration. Implementing these measures is expected to enhance performance management standards, unlock employee potential, boost operational efficiency, strengthen public health

safeguards, improve medical service quality, and ultimately drive sustainable development within the department.

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