



THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT IN SHAPING EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES – A CASE STUDY OF A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN POLAND

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People are the key success factor in contemporary organizations, in particular organizations whose operations depend on knowledge and creativity, which include universities and other research and scientific institutions. An important stage of the human resources management process is employee assessment, which is an integral function of human resource and a traditional element of the management process. The aims of employee evaluation include shaping professional development based on the strengths and weaknesses of employees, proper definition of the organization's hierarchy and structure, and elimination of differences in pay levels. All this influences the formation of employee attitudes that determine the staff's commitment and the organization's success.

An important factor that determines the employee assessment process is proper selection of techniques appropriate for the unique characteristics of specific organizations. Thus, the aim of this article is to present the employee assessment process in a selected organization and to evaluate its impact on the formation of employee attitudes. This aim is achieved through a literature review and a study conducted in the form of a case study at the Lodz University of Technology - a purposefully selected public university in central Poland. During the study, an analysis of the tool used in the employee assessment process was performed and an interview with one of the university's academic employees on the influence of the solutions used in the process on his attitudes and his commitment to work was conducted.

Keywords: Assessment, Role of assessment, Employee attitudes, Public organization management.

Introduction

People and the capital resulting from their commitment to action are the key success factors in contemporary organizations (Muscalu, Muntea, 2013), in particular organizations whose operations depend on knowledge and creativity, which include universities and other research and scientific institutions. An important stage of the human resource management process performed in such institutions is employee assessment (analysis), regulated by relevant laws, which constitutes an integral function of human resources (McEntire, Dailer, Osburn, Mumford, 2006) and a traditional element of the management process (Todericiu, Serban, 2013). At the same time, it is an important **stage of the human resource management process** in organizations (McMahan, Bell, Virick, 1998), which is performed according to the following sequence: planning of staffing needs, staff recruitment, employee selection, employee induction, professional training and improvement, employee assessment, promotion and assignment of employees to other jobs, dismissal, and outsourcing.

Employee assessment is a process of which the individual phases are divided into specific tasks through the use of formalized, systematic data collection, analysis, and synthesis (McCormick, 1976). Nowadays, many methods and techniques of employee assessment are known and broadly described in literature on human resource management (Levine, Ash, Hall, Sistrunk, 1983).

The basic objective of **an employee assessment** is to determine the relative value of the work performed by an employee in an organization. One of the effects of the process is determination of pay levels and its role grows with increasing dynamics of organizational changes (Hahn, Depboye, 1988). Employee assessment also facilitates the development and maintenance of a pay structure, when comparing the similarities and differences in the contents and values of all the jobs in an organization (Milkovich, Boudreau, 1990). As a result it supports the pay system (Tapomoy, 2006) by ensuring most of all a tendency to increase is fairness (Das, Garcia, Diaz, 2001), influences the shaping of professional development based on the strengths and weaknesses of employees (Woodruffe, 2007), and enables proper determination of the organization's hierarchy and structure, as well as the relations between the employees and elimination of pay level differences (Kandula, 2003).

All these effects have a significant impact on the formation of employee attitudes that determine the staff's commitment and the organization's success (Harter, Schmidt, Keyes 2003). An important factor that determines the assessment process is proper selection of techniques and tools appropriate for the unique characteristics of specific organizations.

Thus, **the aim of this article** is to present the employee assessment process in a selected organization and to evaluate its impact on the formation of employee attitudes. This aim is achieved through a literature review and a study conducted in the form of a case study at the Lodz University of Technology - a purposefully selected public university in central Poland. During the study, a detailed analysis of the tool used in the employee assessment process was performed and an interview with one of the university's academic staff on the influence of the solutions used in the process on his attitudes and his commitment to work was conducted. The conclusions from the study can be used as a benchmark for employee assessment solutions implemented in academic entities and they open new research fields in the area of human resources management and formation of employee commitment.

Characteristics and Basic Techniques of Employee Assessment

Employee assessment is a process used in order to determine the value of work performed by an employee of an organization and to reduce possible subjectivity by replacing opinions and prejudices with objective criteria. Employee assessments are usually conducted during performance of ongoing tasks, when work duties change, or as a part of a routine assessment process conducted by superiors. Human resource management specialists working in human resources departments are partners in this process of the top management at all the stages of the process. Specific methods and techniques of employee assessment allow the achievement of repeatability and may constitute a key element of the entire system. The basis for their implementation is the roles of individual factors assigned for each task, which can be found in the duties, and responsibilities sheets; they allow different jobs to be distinguished (Bogardus, 2009).

The objective of employee assessment is to ensure a systematic and consistent approach to defining tasks of relative value inside organizations. It is a process in which tasks are listed in a specific rank order according to the general requirements that must be met by an employee. It constitutes the basis of a thorough and orderly staff classification structure. Also, it does not define the actual pay but usually constitutes a subject of negotiations between the managers and the employees or their representatives in trade unions. The only things that are assessed are work results and work performance methods, as opposed to the person who performs the work. Thus employee assessment constitutes a dynamic tool for evaluation of changes in structures of organizations.

Another important purpose of employee assessment is elimination of differences in pay levels between employees. This can be achieved indirectly by introducing job rankings and classifications and

by comparing the factors that influence the quality of work. Job descriptions can be explained by the value of the funds assigned to them. They are used to elaborate on the employment structure in organizations (Gupta, Chakraborty, 1998). It should be emphasized that each job is defined in the form of task, responsibility, and authorization sheets. They also contain the basic requirements that must be met by employees and the scope of information that employees must have. The fundamental question is how employees store, record, and recovers information on the context of the tasks they perform. Another issue that should be considered is the links between this information and the job titles and work attributes, such as value, level of difficulty, level of complexity, and interdependence with other jobs. The aforementioned sheets often define the basic requirements that must be met by employees at the time of their application for the job, which include: knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics (Hakel, 1986). In the employment process, employees undergo assessment, which allows verification of their knowledge and the extent to which they perform their duties and tasks.

Even though employee assessment is not hard science, its objective is to achieve the highest degree of objectivity. Efforts to ensure equal payment for work of equal value may have a significant impact on the structures of classification resulting from the new wave of employee assessment activities. It plays the key role, in particular in connection with harmonization of decisions pertaining to pay levels. Another objective of employee assessment is to support the pay system so as to ensure its transparency, consistency, and flexibility (Tapomoy, 2006). It is also important (Woodruffe, 2003) to draw career paths for employees, to evaluate possibilities for promotion, and to indicate their strengths and weaknesses so as to facilitate their individual professional development. Moreover, this process is aimed to determine the value of work compared to other jobs in the organization, to determine an employment hierarchy, to develop the organizational structure, and to define appropriate relations between the employees (Kandula, 2003).

The literature describes many techniques that permit verification of employee assessments in a synthetic and thorough manner. The motive for using such techniques is to determine the pay level, to differentiate the pay levels, to determine the structure of classification of jobs in an organization (Armstrong, Baron, 2005). There are four main techniques (Sahl, 1989) that are used for employee assessment of employees of organizations. Their associated procedures, as well as their advantages and disadvantages are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Employee assessment methods.

Name of technique	Procedure	Advantages	Disadvantages
Work ranking	Development of a job description for each job	A simple method An inexpensive method	A rough method A method based on subjective opinions
	Appointment of a committee to select the upper and lower work standards		
	Comparison of jobs with reference to developed standards and preparation of a ranking of such comparisons		
Classification of professions	Determination of measures/standards for each task based on a job description	An easy method The results of this method are easy to understand and convey An inexpensive method	The classification requires many measures and values for assessing the work, such as production, marketing, and human resources
	Development of a scale of value for work standard/criterion		
	Comparison of job offers to standard values		

	Job classification is determined based on the values		Only generalizations can be used to define classes A subjective method
Point system	Development of detailed job descriptions	A fairly objective method	A time-consuming method
	Interviews with employees in order to familiarize them with the assessment system and the point scales	The results of the method are easy to interpret	An expensive method
	Determination of skill comparison points pertaining to the quality and the quantity		
	Assignment of points to each task based on the skill requirement level		
Comparison of coefficients	Comparison of each job to five universal work factors, such as duties, skills, physical effort, mental effort, and work conditions	Step by step to use a formal method of assessment conducted in a systematic manner	A complex method A time-consuming method
	Assigning value to determine the value of work	A method that is easy to translate into financial categories	

Source: (Kandula, 2003)

The most expensive of these techniques is the point technique, which requires not only analysis of the entire organization in order to identify the jobs that exist within it, but also describing each of these jobs. Also, promotion paths between the jobs and the requirements that must be fulfilled as a condition for promotion must be defined. Moreover, employees must become familiar with the assessment system and with the points assigned in the assessment process. However, of key importance is development of a document that introduces the point system and presents its detailed characteristics.

It should be mentioned that regardless of which of the techniques described in Table 1 is selected by top management, there are opportunities for employee assessment based on the level and type of skills, knowledge, responsibility and work conditions of employees, which are necessary to conduct a formal analysis of jobs in an organization. This leads to compilations pertaining to each item and comparison to others in the organization in a systematic manner. Because employee assessments always involve opinions, it is not possible to eliminate all the associated unfairness. Errors (Khan, 2008) can become apparent at the time of sequencing of the factors that were indicated as guidelines for the assessment (Banks, 2003).

The human factor plays an important role in the entire process and, therefore, it is a good idea to use employee assessment as an element that influences the development and maintenance of the pay structure by using comparison of and differentiation between jobs. Information that is necessary for proper performance of the assessment procedure comes from employment structure analyses. Visible here is the impact of the external and internal labor market and the extent of its impact on the evaluation process. Top management must decide how and how frequently the assessment process is to be performed and how to create tools that will enable avoiding errors associated with the selection of the factors that are to guide the assessment process (Mahmood, Gowan, Wang, 1995). Thus, it is a good idea to create a consistent tool that will ensure convenient assessment.

Research Method and Characteristics of the Entity Studied

In order to achieve the objective of the present article, research was conducted in January 2014 in the form of a case study in a purposefully selected public university located in central Poland and established in 1945. The university is located in Lodz and this is where the president's office and all the departments of the university, divided into two campuses, are located. The case study method was used in order to verify and refine the existing theoretical concepts (Sigglekow, 2007) and to define recommendation for further research (Stake, 2005).

Lodz University of Technology (<http://www.p.lodz.pl/en/index.htm>) is the only technical university in the Lodz region. It occupies the 4th position in a list of 23 technical schools according to leading rankings conducted in 2013. A report of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education indicates that it is the 4th most popular university among candidate students. In a contest organized by the Academic Information Center, the Lodz University of Technology was found to be the most creative and innovative university in Poland with regard to creation of future professional prospects. It is the first university in Poland that received the European Commission's "ECTS Label," a prestigious certificate confirming the quality of education. It is the winner of the "Forbes Diamond's 2013" award granted to companies and institutions of the largest yearly growth of equity. The university is a signatory of the Magna Charta Universitatum that focuses on the most fundamental values of the academic tradition and on strengthening the ties between European universities. It is the only Polish member of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU).

The university cooperates with over 450 centers in 40 countries on research programs performed, for example, as a part of the Framework Programmes of the European Community.

The Lodz University of Technology offers 36 majors, with numerous specialties geared to demand in the labor market and the most recent achievement in a given field of education. Currently, the university's nine departments and several inter-departmental units educate over 20,000 students on all levels: the undergraduate level (bachelor of science/arts), the graduate level (master of science/arts), and the postgraduate level (PhD). The university employs over 2,500 employees, both in research and teaching.

In the description of the case of this university, two detailed research methods were used: the interview method and the document study method. The research technique in the first method is a questionnaire interview and the research tool is an interview questionnaire divided into two principal parts. The first part pertained to a general description of the tool used to assess an employee – the Respondent. The role of the second part was to indicate the characteristics and the desirability of an assessment performed based on this tool. The research technique in the second method was analysis of the contents of documents presented by the Respondent. The documents were the formal records used to conduct employee assessment in the organization studied.

The respondent was a carefully selected employee of the Lodz University of Technology. This was a man, in the 35-45 age category, holding the academic degree of Doctor of Economic Sciences in the field of management science. For over 10 years he has been employed by the department that is associated with the field of management. Currently, he works as an assistant professor and is working on his postdoctoral habilitation dissertation. He is a member of the academic staff who teaches students and performs research and development work supported by grants financed from various external sources. At present, he is the manager of one research grant and a participant in another. He teaches courses in management, management of small and medium enterprises (SME), accounting in small businesses, and in establishing and running a business. The Respondent cooperates with persons employed by the same institution and reports directly to the head of the department. On higher management levels are the department dean and the university president.

Employee Assessment Procedure at the Studied University

In the first part of the empirical study, an interview with the employee was conducted. The Respondent's task was to answer questions pertaining to the importance and the procedure of assessment of academic

workers at the university where he is employed. The first stage of this part of the study involved **description of the tenets of the assessment process** conducted at the institution studied. The Respondent described the ministerial guidelines in this area and on the requirement to prepare reports from the projects performed at specific intervals. The basis for the interview with the Respondent was his confirmation that **the assessment process is conducted at fixed intervals, once every 4 years**. The Respondent presented the requirements associated with this process. The process is regulated in the decisions issued by top management, which describe the legal basis and the consequences of the process. Also, a component of such documents is tables that allow the employee assessment process to be performed.

The Lodz University of Technology uses a university-wide method to assess academic staff. In the Respondent's opinion, the assessment process **consists of two stages**. The first stage is **self-assessment** performed by each academic employee based on factual data gathered since the previous assessment. After the assessment sheet has been filled out, the employee must print it out and submit it to his or her **direct superior**. The superior conducts the second stage of assessment. He or she presents the results of the process each time during an interview with the employee. In the case of low grades (2 or 3), the superior must provide a justification and enter it into the appropriate field on the assessment sheet. The process ends when both parties have signed the documents and submitted them to the human resources department.

In the Respondent's opinion, use of a standardized document in the employee assessment process is justified, allows uniform results to be obtained, and facilitates comparisons between employees hired in identical jobs in different units within the university. The Respondent indicated that the assessment **increases his commitment** to academic work thanks to his focus on the most important (strategic) actions aimed to support the development of his department, university, and his academic career. The broad and flexible scope of the assessment is also conducive to reporting and implementing new ideas and creative and innovative actions, which is particularly important in knowledge-based organizations, such as the Lodz University of Technology.

Another part of the study was **analysis of the contents of documents** that govern the tenets of the assessment process and of the academic employee assessment sheet. Each area described in such documents is provided with examples of professional activities of the Respondent and his comments. During the study, the Respondent presented an official document that constituted the **assessment questionnaire** for employees who have been employed at the institution for over 5 years. The questionnaire consists of two parts: a formal letter that presents and describes the abbreviations, acronyms, and names used in the assessment and an electronic document in the Microsoft Excel format in an editable form.

The aforementioned electronic document is divided into 5 sheets. The first contains information on the points used in the assessment process; the second identifies the assessment period, both in years and months (the part of the survey with the employee's data must be filled out and the scope of the job in a given place of employment and the period of assessment in months must be entered). The next sheet is of key importance to the process and is entitled "Employee Assessment Survey;" it is divided into three areas, namely education of students, research and development work, development of scientific or artistic works; raising one's professional qualifications; and participation in organizational work at the University.

The role of the person who fills out the survey is to provide information pertaining to the statements in the survey and to assign points to each mandatory element. The fourth sheet of the MSExcel document is the final assessment obtained calculated based on the results of the survey using a special algorithm, which is described in the fifth and final sheet of the document.

Each employee is required to submit the filled out first part of the survey in a timely manner. Table 2 shows the areas of employee assessment.

Each area has a number of components that must be considered in the assessment of the employee's professional activities. Each component is described and assigned points.

Table 2. Areas of employee assessment at the studied university.

Assessment area	Identification of individual achievements	Year(s)	Number of points
I. Education of students (DD)			
II. Performance of research and development projects, development of scientific or artistic work, improvement of one’s professional qualifications (NB)			
III. Participation in organizational work at the University (ORG)			

Source: prepared by the author based on document analysis

The area of education of students comprises **performance of teaching duties**, which constitute an important part of the university’s activities. In the Respondent’s opinion, this activity is currently highly developed and is evolving with changes in acts of law, such as statutes, regulations, and pronouncements. Moreover, teaching constitutes one of the elements that bind the university together. By teaching, expanding education profiles, and adjusting programs of studies to the changing external environment, to include the labor market, universities reduce the impact of low birth rates on all the university's activities. An employee assessment includes such components as publication of handbooks or manuals for students, including in the form of website materials, or preparation of course materials. An important task is supervision of students preparing their theses at the bachelor’s, engineer’s, or master’s level. An example of a survey, filled out by the Respondent and pertaining to the area of teaching, is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Activities in the area of teaching of students.

Description of achievements	Year	Number of points
Publication of a handbook or manual (first or successive issue provided that a successive issue contains significant modifications or supplementary material), also in the form of website material – max. 1.0 point - publication of a handbook:	2012	1
Preparation of course materials on the Internet - max. 1.0 point - for all courses conducted by the assessed employee	2011	1
Preparation of multimedia course materials – does not apply to use of audio and video materials – max. 0.2 point - for all courses conducted by the assessed employee	2011	0.2
Supervision doctoral students (0.1 point) - max. 0.5 points - 2 doctoral students	2012	0.2
Management of and supervision of preparation of theses: master’s degree (0.2 points), engineer’s degree or licentiate degree 0.1 point) - max. 0.5 points - 1 master’s degree thesis and 5 licentiate’s degree theses	2011	0.5
Special achievements of the assessed employee’s students – max. 0.3 point -	2013	0.3
Student award for academic teacher – 0.5 point - Award in the vote for the Best Teacher of the Academic Year 2012/2013 at the Organization and Management Department of the TUL	2013	0.5
Award of the President for teaching achievements – 0.5 point - Group award of the 1 st degree of the President of the Lodz University of Technology for teaching achievements	2013	0.5
(...) A number of other achievements of the Respondent	(...)	(...)
Total D points awarded to the Respondent		7.2

Source: prepared by the author.

Another aspect considered is the teaching load assigned to the academic teacher according to his job, governed by the statutory regulations and the university's internal documents. The Lodz University of Technology exempts academic teachers from part of the regular teaching load based on documentation and requests of employees and the opinions of their superiors. The final decision concerning such exemptions is made by the president. Also, in the area of teaching, activities associated with supervision of internships, classes, and fields of studies are promoted. In the Respondent's opinion, each of the components pertaining to teaching described in the survey is important in the process of self-assessment. The total number of points awarded in this area is taken into account to determine the following value:

$$Dp = D * \frac{4}{W_e * n}$$

Where: W_e - the average yearly teaching load in the assessment period;

$$W_e = \frac{E_1 n_1 + \dots + E_i n_i + \dots + E_k n_k}{n_1 + \dots + n_i + \dots + n_k}$$

E_i – the teaching load in the i th period, n_i – the length of the i th period; $n = n_1 + \dots + n_i + \dots + n_k$ – the assessment period.

The grades awarded as a result of the assessment of the teaching area in accordance with the following scale:

DD assessment grade scale:			
$Dp < 4$	$4 \leq Dp < 5.5$	$5.5 \leq Dp < 7$	$Dp \geq 7$
3	4	5	6

For example, the respondent's total grade was 9.60 which, according to the above scale, indicate that his grade in this area was 6.

The second area that is considered in the employee's self-assessment is **his or her activity related to research development projects**, development of scientific work, and improvement of his qualifications. Of key importance here is the academic degrees and titles achieved in the period of assessment. The largest number of points, equal to 30, is awarded for the academic title of a professor. It should be emphasized that, based on the information obtained from the Respondent, professional promotion corresponds to prestige in the academia and demonstrates an employee's potential.

Moreover, this part of the survey contains information on research projects being performed or completed in the assessment years, to include the university's own projects, contracted projects, development projects, targeted projects, and international contracts in which the assessed employee was involved. Depending on the value of the project and the share of the person performing self-assessment, his or her position in the project (manager, coordinator, or participant), a different number of points is awarded. For example, in the case of a targeted project with the applicant's share below PLN 200,000, the maximum number of points that can be awarded is 10 (the points must be awarded only once in the entire period of the project and the number of points is divided among all the members of the team, whereby the share of any given person may not exceed 50% of all the points).

In this area, also the awards granted by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Science and Higher Education, the Foundation for Polish Science, the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and the Minister of Culture and Art are considered. For each of such awards, the person filling out the survey may receive up to 20 points. On the other hand, the award granted by the Rector of the Lodz University of Technology is worth 5 points and is divided by the number of team members.

The key part of this area of the survey is information on **achievements taking the form of scientific works** prepared by the assessed employee. These include publication in periodicals enumerated in the current list published by the minister of science (affiliation of the school is required; the number of points

is divided by the number of authors of the publications; only academic employees may receive points); a plenary or invited lecture given at an international conference (an international conference is defined as a conference where at least 10% of all participants come from outside of Poland; affiliation of the school is required) – 1.5 points; other lectures given at international conferences (the total number of points for lectures given at conferences in a period of 3 years may not exceed 3; affiliation of the school is required) – 0.5 point; authorship of a monograph or an academic handbook in English (affiliation of the school is required) – 24 points; authorship of a chapter in a monograph or an academic handbook in English (affiliation of the school is required; the total number of points for individual chapters may not exceed the number of points for an entire monograph) – 7 points.

The maximum number of points that an employee can receive for authorship of a monograph or an academic handbook in Polish or another language (except for English) (affiliation of the TUL is required) is equal to 12. Also, the number of citations of affiliated publications according to the Scopus Database or other documented sources (not including self-citations) is considered: 0.5 point can be awarded for each citation. Achievements also include such criteria as awarded domestic patents (the points are divided among all the members of the team, whereby no member can receive more than 50% of the total points) - 25 points; awarded international patent (the points are divided among all the members of the team, whereby no member can get more than 50% of the total points) - 35 points; foreign patent applications (the points are divided among all the members of the team, whereby no member can get more than 50% of the total points) - 15 points; domestic patent applications (the points are divided among all the members of the team, whereby no member can get more than 50% of the total points) - 10 points; copyright to a work that resulted from individual creative work (in particular in the area of architecture, urban planning and development, industrial design, and art; the points are divided among all the members of the team, whereby no member can get more than 50% of the total points) - 10 points; and being the supervisor of a completed doctoral thesis – 5 points.

In order to illustrate the above information, Table 4 presents examples of the Respondent’s achievements with information on their year and the number of points that he awarded for those achievements in the self-assessment procedure.

Table 4. Performance of research and development projects, development of scientific or artistic work, and improvement of one’s professional qualifications.

Definition of achievements	Year	Number of points
Own research project (the points must be awarded only once in the entire period of the project and the number of points is divided among all the members of the team, whereby the share of any given person may not exceed 50% of the total points) – 30 points - own research project	2013	30
Supervisor’s project (the points must be awarded only once in the entire period of the project and the number of points is divided among all the members of the team, whereby the share of any given person may not exceed 50% of the total points) - 20 points, supervisor’s project, 3 team members	2013	6.5
International award (the total number of points is divided by the number of team members) - 40 points - Award for an article (“Outstanding Paper Award”)	2011	40
President’s award (the total number of points is divided by the number of team members) - 5 points - Award of the President, 2 nd degree, for academic work	2013	5
Edition of a monograph or an academic handbook (affiliation of the TUL is required) – 5 points -	2011	5
Number of citations of affiliated publications according to the Scopus Database or other documented sources (not including self-citations) – 0.5 point for each citation – according to the Publish or Perish database – 44 citations	2013	22
Publication in a periodical enumerated in the current list published by the minister competent in the area of science (affiliation of the school is required; the number of points is divided by the number of authors of the publication; only academic workers may receive points) -	2012	4

Authorship of a chapter in a monograph or an academic handbook in Polish or another language (except for English) (affiliation of the school is required; the total number of points for individual chapters may not exceed the number of points for an entire monograph) – 3 points -	2012	3
Plenary or invited lecture given at an international conference (an international conference is defined as a conference where at least 10% of all participants come from outside of Poland; affiliation of the TUL is required) – 1.5 points -	2013	1.5
Plenary or invited lecture given in a domestic conference (affiliation of the school is required) – 1 point - a lecture	2012	1
(...) A number of other achievements of the Respondent	(...)	(...)
Total N points awarded to the Respondent		295

Source: prepared by the author.

The total number of points awarded in this area is taken into account to determine the following value:

$$N_p = N \frac{4}{W_e * n}$$

Where: W_e - the average yearly teaching load in the assessment period;

$$W_e = \frac{E_1 n_1 + \dots + E_i n_i + \dots + E_k n_k}{n_1 + \dots + n_i + \dots + n_k}$$

E_i - the teaching load in the i th period, n_i – the length of the i th period; $n = n_1 + \dots + n_i + \dots + n_k$ – the assessment period.

The N_p grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale:

$N_p < 20$	$20 \leq N_p < 37$	$37 \leq N_p < 72$	$72 \leq N_p < 144$	$N_p \geq 144$
2	3	4	5	6

It should be mentioned that the N_p value obtained by the Respondent is three times higher; consequently his grade according to the scale is 6, which means that he is necessary for achievement of the organization's objectives, such as development of academic staff and publication of the results of their work. These objectives are defined both in ministerial pronouncements and in internal documents of the Lodz University of Technology, namely the strategy, mission, and vision of the University and its operational units.

The third and final area of the Respondent's self-assessment is his **organizational activities**. As in the case of the areas discussed above, here, too, the author of the survey prepared a list of factors that serve as examples in the employee's self-assessment. Each activity is awarded a specific number of points.

Thus, if the Respondent holds the position of a rector or vice- rector, he receives the maximum number of 7 points. The assessed person can also receive points for performing management functions in departments and lower-level units. For participation in the work of the university senate, the respondent can get a maximum of 0.5 point. Due to the great interest of academic staff in improvement of the legal framework that regulates the functioning of universities and in implementation of new guidelines in this area, many of them are members of various advisory and ministerial bodies and members of national groups. The assessed persons are required to give the names of such bodies. Moreover, assessed persons can get points for holding the position of editor in scientific publishing houses (foreign and domestic) – 0.4 point per institution up to the total of 1 points, as well as the position of a manager in charge of publication of scientific periodicals and membership in editorial offices of periodicals and publication series – 0.6 points for each publishing house, up to a total of 1.5 points.

For membership in the governing bodies of domestic scientific associations, the respondent may receive 0.2 point for each association, up to the total of 0.5 points, and for membership in governing bodies of international scientific associations – 1 point, up to the total of 2 points. The self-assessment also covers performance of tasks assigned by the university president or the dean for the duration of a term (e.g. the function of a representative) and the maximum number of points for such work is 1.5 points, while for tasks assigned by the president, dean, or head of an organizational unit the assessed person can receive 1 point.

Also, as a part of their organizational activities, academic workers provide support to student academic activities, groups, or associations. This form of activity results in promotion among students of learning and exchange of knowledge with active scientists.

During the interview, as a part of his description of the formal assessment document (assessment form), the Respondent also discussed his involvement in the organizational aspects of the university’s operations. Examples of his activities in this area are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Participation in organizational work at the University.

Definition of activities	Year(s)	Number of points
Work in permanent department and university committees – 0.5 points for each committee, max. 1 point - member of the tender committee	2011-2013	0.5
Editor in scientific publishing houses (foreign and domestic – 0.4 points for each publishing house, max. 1 point - subject-specific editor of a periodical	2011-2012	0.4
Management of the publication of scientific periodicals, membership in editorial offices of periodicals and publishing series – 0.6 point for each publishing house, max. 1.5 points - editor in chief of a periodical	2013	0.6
Supervision of student scientific activities – 1 point - Advisor of a Scientific Club	2011-2013	1
Work assigned by the president or the dean for a term (e.g. functions of representatives) – 1.5 points - Dean’s representative for student internships	2011-2013	1.5
Leadership of scientific committees or work in organization committees of scientific events, anniversary events, and occasional events – 1.5 point - Member of the organization committee of the 6 th Poland-Wide Scientific Conference	2013	1.5
(...) A number of other achievements of the Respondent	(...)	(...)
Total ORG points awarded to the Respondent		10.2

Source: prepared by the author.

In the area of organizational activities, grades are awarded according to the following scale:

ORG<0.825	0.825≤ORG<1.5	1.5≤ORG<4.15	4.15≤ORG<7.5	ORG≥7.5
2	3	4	5	6

As the above table shows, also in the organizational area the Respondent is a very valuable employee. His grade (6) demonstrates his usefulness at the Lodz University of Technology. It also demonstrates his involvement in other activities than academic work. As the dean’s representative and the counselor of a student organization, he is a well-known and respected person at the university. Moreover, his high grade demonstrates that in his professional work he can manage activities in all of the areas

described above. The Respondent is an exemplary employee in the area of science, teaching, and organizational activities.

At the final stage of preparation of the self-assessment questionnaire, it must be printed, signed, and submitted to the direct superior with the complete information; if the assessed person intends to provide information supplementary to that entered in the survey, he or she must also submit appropriate enclosures. In the Respondent's opinion, after the documents are submitted, an assessment and summary interview is often conducted with the aim of discussing the employee's suitability for work. A low final grade (2 or 3) awarded to an employee by his or her superior must be substantiated in writing.

The assessment questionnaire, with the superior's signature and grade, is sent to the department in charge of personnel information records. Each time after all the sheets have been collected from the persons assessed in a given period at the Lodz University of Technology, the department prepares a report for top management with information regarding the final grades of employees working in different organizational units of the university.

Impact of the Employee Assessment on the Commitment of the Assessed Employees

At the end of the study, the Respondent was asked to systematize the assessment areas described above according to their importance. This was used as a basis for determination of the impact of the solutions on his attitude and commitment to work.

The Respondent believes that **the most important is the scientific area of activities**. In his opinion, the process of assessment of academic staff in the organization studied is performed properly and systematically. This way, specific legal requirements concerning the assessment of academic teachers are fulfilled. Top management used appropriate departments to exercise supervision and control of both preparation of the sheet and the timeliness of the responses.

The Respondent stated that the clear consequence of the assessment process is discipline among employees. Moreover, they gather information on the effects of their work so as to be able to fill out the sheets quickly and clearly. This approach ensures timeliness of the assessment process. The uniform survey provides the ability to compare different academic workers, even in different fields of science. A large number of high grades may, in the opinion of the Respondent, demonstrate the potential of entities in the public finance sector, the justification of their establishment, and the directions of their activities.

The Respondent was asked to present a hierarchy of the areas of employee assessment. In his opinion, of key importance is the issue of performance of tasks and activity in areas related to scientific research and development projects. This attitude conforms to the current tendency where academic workers perform grant projects that enable, on the one hand, popularization of fields of science and, on the other hand, implementation of innovative solutions. Therefore, academic staff members form consortia, for example with businesses, and want to continuously analyze the effects of projects that could be implemented in industry. In the Respondent's opinion, such behavior is desirable on the scale of the entire university as it contributes to cooperation between science and business and shows how the university can meet the challenges posed by the market.

The second most important area is education of students. The Respondent noted that currently universities strive to have academic teachers who have professional experience in addition to theoretical one. They can gain such experience during internships and trips abroad. They share their knowledge with undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students based on their own course materials. Thus, they comply with the requirements defined in the area of employee assessment associated with elaboration and provision of such materials.

Moreover, academic employees more and more often prepare documents pertaining to new courses and submit them to their superiors for evaluation. An important requirement here is the edition of manuals and handbooks in the field of interest of the academic employee. In the Respondent's opinion, the university where he is employed has introduced a number of books authored or co-authored by its employees. Such materials supplement and expand the knowledge of students. In the aforementioned

assessment questionnaire, the assessed employees are given a number of elements associated with this activity. Their role is to refine the phrases used and to supplement them with details on publications: whether they are the sole author, dates of publication, and type of publication.

It should be mentioned that, in the opinion of the Respondent, education of students goes beyond teaching classes and includes remedial classes, tests, and examinations, and entering grades into the electronic teaching evaluation system. The Respondent believes that the use of IT tools in this area leads to a significant improvement of work quality. The commitment of employees increases and results in introduction of multimedia presentations that visually illustrate the theoretical issues discussed during the lectures.

The least important, in the Respondent's opinion, was the third area of assessment: the organizational activity. The Respondent believes that membership in collective bodies and holding certain positions, to include the position of the dean, the vice dean, the dean's representative, the university's president, the vice president, and the president's representative are additional activities. This requires a great degree of dedication and attention but translates into prestige and recognition of all employees of the university. Elections for those bodies are organized by the Electoral College and the elected persons perform their roles for four-year terms.

At present, the Respondent is the dean's representative for internships. His experience in this position indicates that he has to be able to reconcile his teaching and research duties with administrative ones. As the representative, he works with students but his duties also require verification of data submitted in reports from internships and making entries after a given case has been considered with a positive outcome. What makes his work much easier is an electronic database with information on the internships completed by students. The system enables control of document flow and of data entered into the teaching IT system in which each student has an individual profile.

Organizational activities of the Respondent include being an advisor for student organizations. For over seven years, he has been the advisor to a science club. He makes every effort to perform his duties in this area with proper care. His objective is to stimulate interest in science in members of the club and to demonstrate to them ways to acquire knowledge and to perform their own work in the form of articles and presentations associated with the field of science promoted by his organization. For this purpose, the Respondent encourages students to organize such events as conferences, training courses, and seminars where they can not only gain new experience and knowledge, but also share their opinions with professionals in specific fields.

In the Respondent's opinion, promoting activity in the young generation will enable the university to hire fully formed academic workers who are committed to a particular field of science. As the Respondent has noted, there are examples of such approach across all of Lodz University of Technology. After they graduate and gain professional experience, and often after they earn their doctoral degree, former students often return to their departments as academic teachers. In his opinion, the area of organizational activity, despite its lowest current importance, may enable in the future to improve the awareness of the employees who are not active in this area.

Conclusion

Literature in the field of human resources management describes **employee assessment as a stage in the human resources management process**. It is a part of this process and its results often determine the utility of employees and their self-assessment. The outcome of employee assessment is the dependence of any bonuses paid to employees on the results of their work and the grades they receive in the assessment process. A tool used quite often is a universal questionnaire that enables comparison of the grades obtained by employees from different fields of science. Of key importance, however, is to **establish a relationship between the form of the questionnaire and the length of employment**. At the university where the Respondent is employed, a different questionnaire is used to assess persons with less than 5 years of employment in their current positions and to assess persons with more than 5 years of

employment. The purpose of assessment is to perform periodic monitoring of the results of work and to motivate employees to improve their qualifications and to conduct scientific and teaching activities in different areas, from international scientific bodies, to student science associations, from research grants and European patents to preparation and publication of papers in trade-specific periodicals. The assessment procedure developed at the university facilitates implementation of this process. The implementation and timeliness of this process is monitored by administrative departments that are responsible for human resources management.

The results of this research performed in the form of a case study describe the organization and the implementation of employee assessments performed at the Lodz University of Technology. They also describe the characteristics of the tool used in the process, namely the assessment questionnaire. In the Respondent's opinion, employee assessment is a necessary element of their work and makes it possible to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their activity. Documentation of academic achievements and their division into the areas of teaching and education, scientific work, and organizational activities make it possible to properly characterize employees. The uniform questionnaire makes it possible to compare persons working in the same jobs in different units of the Lodz University of Technology. In the Respondent's opinion, the results of the assessment process also demonstrate the impact of this process on the employees' attitudes and contribute to their commitment to work. The conclusions of the study can be used as a benchmark for employee assessment solutions in academic organizations.

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