Issues in staff survey design and implementation

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http://www.nceltr.mq.edu.au
Overview

• About NCELTR
• Survey research methods and tools
• Case Study
**Vision**

- Provide leadership to the English language teaching community
- Promote excellence in English language education through innovative and high quality programs, services, products and research

**Functions**

- Research
- Teacher Development Services
- Language Programs
- Information Services
- IELTS Test Centre
Reasons for NCELTR Staff Survey

Quality management system and ISO Certification

- Quality Management Principles of the ISO, e.g.
  - Customer focus -> loyalty
  - Leadership -> motivation towards organisational goals
  - Involvement of people -> ownership and motivated staff
  - Continual improvement -> raise standards

- Steps for implementation
  - Identification of organisational goals, e.g.
    - Achieve customer satisfaction
  - Identify expectations of stakeholders, e.g.
    - Employees
  - Establish current status through
    - Self assessment
    - Assessment by an external organization
Reasons for Conducting Staff Surveys

• Diagnose workplace problems
• Monitor the effectiveness of management policies
• Assess employee responses to specific programmes or initiatives
• Reassure employees that their views are being taken into account
• Feed into appraising line managers’ performance
• Establish baseline data for benchmarking, both internally and against other organisations

From Managing the psychological contract: Taking the temperature, CIPD 2004
Who should conduct the survey?

• In-house or
• Consultancy
From Survey Construction to Implementation of Results

- Survey design
- Survey administration / distribution
- Data entry and analysis
- Survey results implementations
Survey Design - Overview

• Defining Objectives
• Selection of Areas
• Focused Discussion
• Analysis Plan
• Framing / Wording Questions
• Response Format
• Layout
• Pilot Testing
Survey Design – First Steps

• Define the objective of the survey
  – Select concepts that explain your research aim or outcome measure

• Select Indicators for the concepts
  – A list of variables that measure these concepts
  – Develop own or use ready-made indicators
    • Reliability: the extent to which the results of an indicator or test are consistent over time
    • Validity: The extent to which a measuring device is actually connected adequately to the theoretical mechanism, process or construct it was intended to capture.

• Focus Group Discussions
NCELTR Focus Groups

- 3 Focus groups with a total of 21 volunteers
- Open ended questions
  - What do you need in order to maintain the quality of your work?
  - What stops you from doing a very good job?
  - What is important to NCELTR to be a successful organisation?
  - What do you think about when I mention job satisfaction?
- Survey
- Analysis of focus group outcomes
**Focus Group Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Please rate the importance of and satisfaction with each statement and circle the number on each side of the statements that best reflects your opinion.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all important</td>
<td>Slightly important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Quite important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If some of the statements do not apply to you, please indicate this by putting *n.a.* next to it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Performance appraisals</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Organisational support</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Career development / advancement</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Work load</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Adequacy of resources to perform effectively in job</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NCELTR  Macquarie University
Focus Group Survey Outcomes

- Work load
- Hours of work
- Commitment
- Autonomy
- Adequacy of resources

Means

Importance
Satisfaction
Wording Questions

- Is the language simple?
- Can the question be shortened?
- Is the question double-barrelled?
- Is the question leading?
- Is the question phrased in the negative?
- Does the respondent have the necessary knowledge?
- Do the words have the same meaning for everyone?
- Is the question ambiguous?
- Is there a clear frame of reference?
- Do you need a direct or indirect question?
Analysis Plan

• Methods of analyses
  – Descriptive, analytical, contextual
  – Univariate, bivariate, multivariate method

• Measurement level
  – Nominal (e.g. religious affiliation)
  – ordinal (e.g. agree/disagree scale)
  – interval/ratio (e.g. age)

• Types of variables
  – dependent (outcome) variable
  – predictors (independent) variable
  – control or intervening variables

• Sample frame and size
Response Format

• Open and closed formats
• Types of forced-choice response formats
  – Likert-style rating scale, e.g. disagree-agree
  – Semantic differential format, two extremes of a continuum, e.g. warm - cold
  – Checklists
  – Ranking formats
Survey Layout

- Instructions
  - General & section instructions, brief note at end
- Answering procedures
- Contingency questions
- Order of questions
- Appearance / Use of space
- Setting up of coding
NCELTR Survey

Front cover
- Purpose
- How to complete survey
- Sections
- Confidentiality
- Return date and place
- Contact
- Date

Last page
- Demographics
- Lined space for additional comments
- Thank you
# Section A

This section asks about aspects of your job. Please ANSWER HONESTLY as otherwise results will be distorted.

Please answer each item by circling the number that is closest to your opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>I have the opportunity to find out how well I am doing in my job.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>I have enough flexibility to balance my work and personal commitments.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>In my job I am allowed to do some work at home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Communication seems good within NCELTR.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pilot Testing Surveys

- Flow
- Question skips
- Timing
- Respondent interest and attention
- How many to pre-test?
- Interviewer debriefing
- Code responses
Securing High Response Rates

- Ensure that head of organisation / managers are ‘on side’
- Covering letter
- Publicise the survey in advance
- Incentives to complete
- Ensure anonymity of respondents
- Possibility to express views in own words
- Appearance of survey
- Allow employees time to complete the survey
- Reminder emails / letters
- Take action on results
Survey Distribution

- By post
- Email
- With pay slips
- Online
- By hand at work, e.g. pigeon holes
NCELTR Survey Distribution

Distribution
• Announcement at General Staff Meeting
• By hand or in pigeon holes

Survey Package
• Envelopes addressed to individual employees
• Covering letter from Executive Director
• Survey
NCELTR Survey Collection

Collection

- Specifically designated boxes at various NCELTR locations

Follow-up

- 2 emails to all staff
Data Analysis Preparation

- Set up data base
- List of items and scales used
## Survey Items and Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1, A7, A14</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A36 to A39, A41</td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3 to B5, B9, B11</td>
<td>Individualised consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1 to C9</td>
<td>Organisational support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

• Raw data file
• Reverse code items if necessary
• Test measures for reliability
• Form measures / constructs
• Statistics
  – Univariate, bivariate and multivariate
Implementation

• Establish a task force or working party
• List all actions required
• Classify them into cost (vertical axis) and organisational pain (horizontal axis) associated with the required actions (Worcester Cost-Pain Matrix)
  – Implement without delay those in the low cost/low pain square
  – Those in the other boxes implement if deemed appropriate, if not, communicate why not to employees
Implementation continued…

• Effective implementation requires
  – Commitment by the organisation to
    • take action with respect to survey outcomes
    • repeat the survey within a reasonable time frame (e.g. 2 years)
  – Task force representatives are
    • capable
    • representative of the workforce
    • given time to to study the findings
    • backed by management and
    • have a clear charter
Acknowledgements


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