

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL'S INFLUENCE ON ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Dr. Nworgu, Kelechi Godson

Email: nworgugodson10@gmail.com

Department Of Employment Relations and Human Resource Management, Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe University, Ideato Imo State, Nigeria

Abstract

Performance appraisals can be used to reinforce better productivity among academic employees, and encourage them to thrive. The study investigated performance appraisal influence on academic employees' performance and productivity in public universities. The objectives of this study are to examine the influence of performance appraisal system on academic employees' job satisfaction in public universities, and to investigate how performance appraisal system motivate academic employees to increase job performance and productivity in public universities. The adopted the expectancy theory by Vroom (1964). Furthermore, the descriptive research method aided the collection of data from 48 respondents with the use of questionnaire distributed purposefully in two public universities in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The data retrieved were analyzed in percentage, mean and standard deviation scores. The findings reveal that academics in public universities in Nigeria do perceive that performance appraisal system influence academic employees job satisfaction that performance appraisal system outcome propel and motivates academic employees to exert more work efforts that gear up the performance and productivity levels of lecturers' significantly higher. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the management of public universities in Nigeria should explore ways to fairly and responsively ensure that academic employees contribute in decision making processes for the effectiveness of the performance appraisal system in public universities. Universities management should see the performance appraisal system as a motivating Human Resource tool that when effectively done can enhance performance and productivity among academic employees.

Keywords: Performance, Appraisal, Academic, Employees, Productivity, Public, Universities

Introduction

According to Gupta & Parmar (2018), a well-designed performance appraisal system can offer crucial benefits to individuals and institutions alike. This is because employee performance is highly valued in organizations as most institutions are facing challenges in performance management procedures Onyije (2015). Therefore, to resolve these issues, organizations are left with option of conducting periodic performance evaluation exercises to avail the situation. In addition, firms adopt other measures such as training and development, compensation systems and other internal ways to instigate effectiveness among employees. In addition, employee productivity can be generated by the performance evaluation management system in an institution. To achieve better performance among academic employees, universities have to oblige to profound steps to motivate employees in order to realize significant performance, and to use management techniques that can increase productivity. To achieve organizational goals, objectives, and vision, the universities performance appraisal system must be made in a way that academic employees are motivated to perform very well even as they are evaluated in line with the predetermined standards of jobs, and according to a complimentary reward system.

Performance appraisals can be used to reinforce better productivity among academic employees, and encourage training and development. It can offer help to low performing academics, as well as echoes the concern for promotion and higher compensation. In addition, performance appraisal establishes the necessity of improving work productivity (Alase & Akinbo, 2021). Performance appraisal can expose the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of some individuals among the academic

workforce of public universities, and it can make employees to have a rigoristic perception of work, while maximizing every opportunity to utilize intellectual capacity to enhance quality education on behalf of the institution they are engaged. Performance appraisal as a system that provokes awareness to academic staff toward upgrading their performance, and toward achieving strategic or the required objectives of universities management. It can spur academic employees into resiliency and vigor in improving teaching skills as well as lecturing tactics, innovative and explorative researches, and the assessment of students' performance in the university (Werner, Schuler & Jackson, 2012). Furthermore, performance appraisal (PA) is the process of evaluating the contributions of employees to an organization, and it is done within a specific timeframe.

According to Mathis & Jackson (2008), PA is the system that attracts pay increase to employees, due to their job performance. It can be used to enhance motivation as well as good performance whenever it is rightly applied in the workplace. However, an inappropriate application can have negative implications (Fisher et. Al., 2003). Furthermore, PA is the cogent way of ascertaining and assessing the academic employees' performance in universities annually. It can also determine the actual performance and potential performance of academics in relation to prescribed standards and feedbacks. To boost productivity in the workplace, employees need to be evaluated on their current job performance, therefore, conveying feedback to such individuals can create further awareness of how to improve work productivity. It is the PA outcome of a worker on job performed within a period of time can also convey such knowledge to the employee. The PA process is often used by both public and private universities to evaluate academic and non-teaching employees. According to Mathis & Jackson (2008) PA should be conducted on an employee that have been trained and have executed job over a period of time, and such assessment has to conform to series of workplace standards.

Performance appraisal (PA) can be done in various ways as it can serve the vital needs of the institution (Casalino et. al., 2019). However, PA usually comprise a periodic review of staff's progress, productivity, and inefficiency on the job. This is to judge on the job effectiveness and performance. It is very necessary to appraise employee productivity, performance and cost. This is because management have high value on each workers productivity and performance since it is a critical reflection of effective and efficient performance management. Meanwhile, PA process involves identifying employee capacity, measuring work efforts, as well as controlling performance and productivity of employees in workplaces (Wang et. al., 2021). Hence, productivity indicates the efficient utilization of available resources to the achievement of organizational objectives (Al Kashari & Al Taheri, 2019). Productivity summarizes how well a worker fulfill work roles and responsibilities that are designated to their employment in the workplace (Pamidimukkala & Kermanshachi, 2021). Therefore, while appraising an employee's performance, it is vital to ascertain how the individual's work efforts has contributed to better performance as well as increasing productivity to that organization Kalogiannidis & Papaevangelou (2020).

Bekele, Shigutu & Tensay, (2011) found that employees performance appraisal revealed higher performance, work efficiency, as well as the record of minimal employee turnover. The study by Shrivastava & Rai (2012) performance appraisal practices in the banking sector found that performance appraisal demonstrated improvement in organization's ability and progress. Meanwhile, Bhatia & Jain (2012) found also that the perception of employees on performance appraisal in Telecommunication firms was associated with organizational effectiveness, and that employees were found to be dissatisfied with the procedures as it was not reward oriented. However, Mahajan & Raheja (2013), conducted a study on the relationship between job satisfaction and the fairness of performance appraisal system. It was found that there is a positive and significant relationship between employee job satisfactions and fairness in performance evaluation system. The research by Marawar (2013) on performance assessment system in construction companies found that appraisal system aided the elimination of the employee's poor performance. In addition, Deepa & Kuppusamy (2013) found that the performance assessment applied in oil refinery industries

showed that employee's positive perception towards performance appraisal system improved the capabilities of the employees.

The research conducted by Rao & Rani (2014) on grading errors in performance appraisal process in some banks to determine employee job satisfaction, it was found that certain rating errors significantly influenced the performance appraisal process which obviously affected employee satisfaction on the job. Similarly, Agyare et. al., (2016) also found that performance appraisal affected job satisfaction as well as work commitment of workers in a microfinance company. The study found that employee job satisfaction portrays significant and positive fairness to the performance appraisal or evaluation process which directly connects the appraisal with career progress, job role clarity as well as potential feedback job performance. The study carried by Solmon & Podgursky (2010) found that inaccurate evaluation in performance appraisal demotivated employees making them feel unsatisfied with the entire process.

Mwema & Gachunga (2014) conducted research on the relationship between performance appraisal and employee's productivity on officials of WHO. The study revealed that institutions must appraise their workforce in order to increase employee's productivity. Furthermore, Hangeior, Oravee & Zayum (2017) in a study found that performance appraisal positively affected workers productivity. It was revealed that steady feedback as well as management objectivity in fair handling of the process produced better employees' productivity. Therefore, regarding a study by Omusebe, Kimanichege & Musiega (2013) on determining the systems of appraising or evaluating employees, it was found that productivity of employees showed that there was direct and significant impact of performance appraisal on employee efficiency. Performance appraisals of academic employees are necessitated by universities management enquiries to understand every academic staff ability, capacity, competency, resilience, relative contributions, and worth for the institution. In line with the foregoing, this study intends to fill the existing gap and to investigate the influence of performance appraisal and academic productivity of academic employees in public universities, how academic employees are satisfied with the performance appraisal system of their institution, and how effective performance appraisal system influence their employee productivity in the university.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the influence of performance appraisal system on academic employees' job satisfaction in public universities.
2. To investigate how performance appraisal system motivate academic employees to increase job performance and productivity in public universities.

Research Questions

1. What is the influence of performance appraisal system on academic employees' job satisfaction in public universities?
2. How does performance appraisal system motivate academic employees to increase job performance and productivity in public universities?

Concept of Performance Appraisal

Mondy & Mondy, (2014) opines that performance appraisal is the seamless evaluation of employee's performance in fulfilling assigned tasks at the workplace. It is a practice that assesses workers capabilities, with the intention of improving their skills as well as overall performance in the organization. Performance appraisal (PA) in Human Resource procedures is very essential, and its process is of importance to the success of organizations. According to Fisher et. al., (2003) PA is that critical aspect of the performance management activity that examine workers contribution to achieving the objectives of an institution within a specified time frame. The feedback or outcome of this evaluation is referenced to an employee performance in comparison to the standard set by the institution. Therefore, the PA activity is the basic determinant to know each individual's performance, spur employees toward potential career advancement, as well as overturning deficiencies and

inefficiencies for improved performance. Performance appraisal is mainly viewed as a major responsibility of the human resource management arm of both public and private institutions (Jackson & Schuller, 2012). Moreover, there are enormous implications on employee affecting employee's motivation. This is because employees that faces difficulties in their job, would want to improve on the job before next evaluation period. And they may request for on-the-job training to enable them do the job better in order to gain directly from the next promotion and pay increment (Aguinis, 2009).

According to Kaur & Kiran (2020), Performance appraisal offers clue on the usefulness and importance of providing information that can be utilized to evaluate employee's expertise, skill, efficiency, knowledge, ability, capacity, productivity, as well as optimal performance in the organization. However, there are key features that points to the importance of effective performance appraisal in any institution. The first is that employees receive encouragement to perform further. The second is that employees have the opportunity to leverage better performance for promotion and salary increment. The third is that employees have the privilege to discuss their area of weakness and success with a superior as well as their individual concerns. The fourth is that employees have the opportunity to interact with a supervisor often to examine job roles and effectiveness in performing them. The fifth feature explains that each employee is allowed to identify the skills he or she lacks and to take steps of acquiring or improving on them. The sixth is that employees are held accountable on the job being performed and employees can prepare for evaluation in advance. The last feature is that performance appraisal provides more opportunity for managers to communicate organizational objectives as well as the approaches employees can participate in its achievement.

For Lambert & Hogan (2009), Performance appraisal is described as a system that unites employees performance evaluation with objectives and standards. This review inform supervisor to take decision on whether to train or re-train employees for them to acquire more knowledge to improve job performance as to become productive in the institution since the success of any organization lies on how efficient and effective the workforce are achieving its objectives and goals in relation to employee's performance. Therefore, to achieve institutional goals, employee performance is a catalyst. This is to explain further that an institution's performance might have a correlation with employees' job performance. Hence, to enhance employee job performance and productivity, employee performance appraisal seems to be the tool for human resource (Gichuhi et al., 2014).

The postulation of Pichler (2012), affirmed that most institutions adopt performance appraisal process for two reasons, these are for exploitation of employees, as well as the effective use of human resources to compete with other forces. However, it is vital to know that the human resources is the vital resources for institutions to attain success as well as explore their competitive advantage. More so, it is of a necessity for the human resource to contribute to overall productivity of organizations through comprehensive evaluation of its workforce. Therefore, through performance appraisal processes in organizations, the human resource can boost employee's performance. Furthermore, performance appraisal involves rating employee's performance. It also entails discovering employee's merits in the process of evaluation within the organization, in terms of promotions, job placement, and remunerations. In addition, for a successful performance appraisal in an organization, the workforce must have clarity on the purpose as well as fairness through the process of decision making by management. Furthermore, the methods, techniques, and tools for conducting performance appraisal should be guided by the organization's goals and vision. Therefore, institutions adopting formal or informal ways to carry out performance appraisal or evaluation must be fair, and the purpose should be for enhancing, advancing, and improving employee performance effectively and efficiently.

Performance Appraisal and Employees Job Satisfaction

Employees job satisfaction can be impacted by performance appraisal process. Both organizational norms such as workplace climate, ethical standards, fairness, as well as team spirit are factors that

can affect employees job satisfaction in any organization (Zamani et. al., 2021). Job satisfaction is a critical issue in formal organizations. When employees feel satisfied with institutions and work activities, they may likely perform better. Therefore, job satisfaction can be evaluated by analyzing variables like performance appraisal procedures, salary, description and nature of job, management decision making, co-worker and work relationships. Job satisfaction concerns employees' perception of their job, as well as the performance management methods used in appraising employees' performance. In consideration of the foregoing, job satisfaction implies that employees perceive that their organization believes in their capability and capacity, as well as in recognizing their achievements and fairly evaluating their performance (Kaur & Kiran (2020).

According to Kaur & Kiran (2020), employees feel satisfied when the workplace and work conditions are viewed to be appropriate, as well as when organization evaluates individuals' performance without biases, on regular basis, and in a transparent way. In addition, job satisfaction also concerns positive emotional perception and feeling resulting from a fair performance appraisal of individual's job experience at workplace. In addition, Luthans (2006) posted that the main factors influencing job satisfaction include salary, training and development opportunities, promotion, team work, and work-life balance. According to Robbins & Timothy (2008), certain factors make employees feel satisfied with their job. The factors include equitable rewards, fairness, support and teamwork, working conditions, team spirit, and personality value. Mathis & Jackson (2006) argued that job satisfaction is a positive feeling of doing job in cooperation with co-workers at the workplace.

Performance Appraisal and Motivation

The discourse on performance appraisal cannot be unconnected with motivation. According to Armstrong (2012), motivation refers to the compelling element that energizes, triggers, directs, stirs and sustains employees work behaviour. More still, it is the force that unleashes strength to the worker, as well as paves the way for an effective work behaviour. In addition, it is the factor that influence individuals to act in specific ways at the workplace. Mathis & Jackson (2008) opines that motivation is the desire that propels and directs employees to take active steps in order to attain the goals of an organization. These assertions concern the work-related efforts that arouses individuals to willingly act in ways that makes organizations to achieve standard goals in order to satisfy employees and institutional needs. As the process that energizes workers, work motivation directs work through certain path to reach its attainment. Therefore, motivation at workplace can be influence perceived by the impact of performance appraisal. Other factors that can influence employee's performance and motivation as postulated by Cole (2002) are skills, knowledge, tasks, nature of technology, organizational climate and culture, and management style.

Employee motivation is viewed as the goal of effective performance appraisal system. It provides more accurate, improved, as well as cost-effective way of evaluating work performance. Motivation is really necessary for employees to absorb energy to exert work for organizational goals realization. Therefore, effective performance appraisal methods stand as a critical yardstick for employees' improvement and productivity when it is fairly conducted (Siddiqui & Rida, 2019). An effective performance appraisal and performance management system is the catalyst for an efficient human resource management arm in organizations. Performance appraisal remains a typical and most crucial human resource management activity that places organizations on the successful route (Siddiqui & Rida, 2019). However, carrying out performance appraisal inaccurately could make workers become demotivated due to the grading techniques utilized during the performance evaluation process Zamani et. al., (2021). Furthermore, appraisers and supervisors need to be well-versed and unbiased while assessing or appraising workers' performance, and it is also critical to have first-hand experiential knowledge of performance management techniques in order to encourage employees to exert work at their best. Finally, employee's motivation as well as performance may progress when proper support or assistance is such training and re-training

opportunities is open to them. However, regular and proper supervision of the performance appraisal process can significantly impact employees' motivation.

Performance Appraisal, Job Performance and Productivity

There is the perception that performance appraisal can be linked with job motivation, job performance and productivity. Some scholars have observed the linkage. According to Aslam (2011), the performance appraisal or assessment process can influence some employees negatively and positively in the workplace respectively on the basis of low or high motivation. For employees poorly motivated, it may act as a barrier in the exertion of work. However, for a good record of job performance, those positively motivated in university can record higher work productivity. Werner et. al., (2012) argued that performance assessment practices can trigger issues of workers motivation on ensuring further that their energy, capabilities, skills, and strength are adequately utilized. In addition, job performance and productivity are the most crucial work expectations as well as the vital factors that determines how organizations achieve success or are onto the path of failure.

Performance appraisal is a trending practice in human resource management in a global perspective. It is also a critical template in performance assessment for promotion on the basis of current and future job performance and productivity. Employees can derive inspiration, and display higher work efforts for better job performance. This is when they have the knowledge of the outcomes of previous job performance evaluation and analysis. However, intrinsic awards, benefits, opportunities for training and development, and participation in decision making can generally encourage productivity in the workplace. Furthermore, productivity is in terms with the volume of work done as well as of the quantity and quality of performance and productivity in line organizational objectives, and in the use of its resources (Certo, 2015). Therefore, productivity can be in a wholesome manner, and can result through group effort as well as individually.

The productivity of a worker can ensue as a result of his or her work efforts, capacity, character, energy, diligence as well as hard work. In addition, organizations can have the resources to enhance, improve, influence, and trigger positive job performance and productivity on most employees via effective motivation, conducive working condition, fair wages, regular pay as well as other fringe benefits that can encourage good performance among employees at public universities. Finally, productivity and performance can be determined by the level of workplace evaluative motivation. This is because the work environment practices such performance appraisal can influence employees work abilities that can also greatly influence employees job performance and productivity (Elliott, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

The expectancy theory formulated by Vroom in 1964 was adopted in the study to expatiate further the narratives. The theory explains that employees at the workplace can be well motivated to exert more work by making efforts that are producing institutional goals in other to have high productivity and performance. According to (Vroom, 1964), there is relationship between performance appraisal and employee's productivity. Furthermore, expectancy theory believe that the occurrence of a specific action can accompany certain outcomes. The theory is also of the believe that the level at which an evaluator views the work efforts of employees through performance appraisal process can accurately suggest employee performance.

Materials and Method

The study focused on quantitative and descriptive research design for the collection of data, and for analyzing data on the influence of performance appraisal on employee's performance at the workplace. The data collected were from primary and secondary sources. Questionnaires were administered to 48 lecturers from two public universities which comprises university of Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru university of education in Rivers State. The questionnaires were also retrieved,

analyzed, presented, on tables, and discussed. However, during the collection of primary data, the research had the limitation of time, cost and retrieval of completed questionnaires were faced with the challenge of reaching the respondents. However, the researcher was able to control the challenges. In addition, the research applied four Likert format of strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree and disagree respectively.

Results and Discussion

Tables 1. Performance appraisal system influences academic employees’ job satisfaction in public universities.

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strongly agree	18	37.5		
Agree	12	25	15	3
Strongly disagree	08	16.7		
Disagree	10	20.8	9	1
Total	48	100		

Source: (Nworgu, 2025)

Table 1 shows that 18 (37.5%) and 12 (25%) respondents strongly agree and agree respectively that performance appraisal systems influence academic employees job satisfaction in public universities. But, 8 (16.7%) and 10 (20.8%) respondents strongly disagree and disagree respectively that performance appraisal influence academic employees job satisfaction. The mean score of the frequencies of respondents that agree is 15, while the standard deviation is 3. On the other hand, the mean and standard deviation scores for respondents that strongly agree and disagree are 9 and 1 respectively. The study has revealed that performance appraisal is linked to job satisfaction of employees in public universities. The effective handling of the performance management process leads to the satisfaction of employees with the job they do and the manner which they are being assessed respectively at the workplace.

Table 2 performance appraisal system motivates academic employees to increase job performance and productivity in public universities.

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strongly agree	22	45.8		
Agree	16	33.3	19	4.24
Strongly disagree	4	8.3		
Disagree	6	12.5	5	1.41
Total	48	100		

Source: (Nworgu, 2025)

Table 2 reveals that 22 (45.8%) and 16 (33.3%) strongly agree and agree respectively that performance appraisal system motivates academic employees to increase job performance and productivity in public universities. Whereas, 4 (8.3%) and 6 (12.5%) strongly disagree and disagree respectively to the stated opinion. This shows that more respondents agree to the stated opinion, therefore, the study stands to agree that performance appraisal system motivates academic employees to increase performance and productivity in public universities. Meanwhile, the mean and standard deviation scores of respondents that agree are 19 and 4.24 respectively. But the mean and standard deviation scores of respondents who disagree to the stated opinion are 5 and 1.41 respectively. The responses shows that a greater number of respondents agree that performance appraisal system is a means that motivates academic employees to higher performance and efficiency in productivity in public universities.

Conclusion

Public universities are an aspect tertiary education that is very reliable in terms effective education delivery. Mostly, it relies technological, effective manpower of academics that are of quality performance as well as on economic development. Therefore, for regular educational enhancement

of public universities academics, their performance, in terms output and productivity is perceived as being a priority to each public university management and in overall the government. In line with this objective, the use of performance appraisal is proven to be a critical factor in Human Resource activities that possess key elements for employee motivation as well as performance and productivity. The findings of this work shows that academics in public universities in Nigeria do perceive that performance appraisal system influence academic employees job satisfaction. The reason is that it gives employees the opportunity to properly closely participate in all aspects of the academics' assessment process with the understanding that when such reviews and evaluations are done fairly, they stand the chance of being elevated. Further, the findings further reveal that performance appraisal system outcome propel and motivates academic employees to exert more work efforts that gear up the performance and productivity levels of lecturers' significantly higher.

Recommendations

1. The management of public universities in Nigeria should explore ways to fairly and responsively ensure that academic employees contribute in decision making processes for the effectiveness of the performance appraisal process during periods of employee's assessment.
2. Universities management should see the performance appraisal system as a motivating HR tool that when effectively used can enhance performance and productivity, and the performance appraisal process should be designed to the point where it can promptly reward individual performance, and improve employee motivation for performance and productivity when properly and effectively utilized.
3. There is need for public university management to review the current performance appraisal system for which is used to evaluate the university academics. It is therefore, so paramount to leverage veritable HR tools to move university education to the right path for national improvement and development.

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