

Effect of Performance Appraisal on Employee Productivity in a Nigerian University

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of appraisal system in Niger Delta University on employee productivity. The ineffective practice of performance appraisal could affect employee productivity. The methodology employed was a survey study design. During the research process, the population of study comprises about 3478 Academic and non-academic staff. The researcher sampled 3% of the total population using stratified random sampling. In course of investigation, instrument used were self developed questionnaire distributed to 104 respondents of which 102 were retrieved. Correlation coefficient was used to test the hypothesis. There was a significant relationship between performance appraisal and employee productivity and that effective appraisal system could boost the morale of workers especially when they are rated adequately. The findings also revealed that performance criteria also affect the relationship between performance appraisal and employee productivity. Performance appraisal

should provide accurate and relevant rating of an employee performance as compared to pre-established criteria. Employees should not be appraised based on their personal trait but on performance variables.

Keywords: Performance, Evaluation, Employee, Productivity

Introduction

Performance appraisal is an essential instrument of personnel management designed to identify an individual employee's current level of job performance, identify employee strengths and weaknesses, enable employee improve their performance, provide a basis for rewarding or penalizing employee in relation to the contribution or lack of adequate contribution to corporate goals, motivate higher performance, identify training and development needs, identify potential performance, provide information for succession planning, validate selection process and training, encourage supervisory understanding of the subordinates (Shehu, 2008).

Performance appraisal provides a rational medium or instrument for measuring individual worker contribution to corporate goals achievement and success. It is a complex management function which demand for extra-maturity, fairness and objectivity in assessing individual worker job performance based on explicit job related criteria.

According to Nurse (2005), appraisal results provides vital information about a workers strength and weaknesses, training needs and reward plans such as advancement, promotion, pay increase, demotion and work or performance improvement plans. Performance appraisals have the equal probability of having a bad impact on the organization as well as employee performance.

It is also known as a formal program in which employees are told the employer's expectations. Performance appraisers are used to support the decisions including promotions, terminations, training and merit pay increases. It is an employer's way of telling employees what is expected of them in their jobs and how well are meeting those expectations.

Performance appraisals usually have a positive and negative impact on employees. Employees who receive a good score on his/her

appraisal are generally motivated to perform well and maintain his/her performance. Positive feedback on appraisal gives employee a feeling of worth and value especially when accompanied by salary increment. If a supervisory gives employee a poor score on his/her appraisal, the employee may feel a loss of motivation in the workplace. This has an impact on the employee performance (Cook and Crossman, 2004).

Performance appraisal is what managers use to review and rate employees underneath them. Company use a variety of performance appraisal types based on their philosophies and what qualities they are interested in employees having most appraisal resembles checklists or rating systems for specific skills and qualities, while this tools help businesses find problem areas in employees and ensure employers are earning their compensation. They also have issues companies should be aware of.

Statement of Problem

Performance appraisal is a veritable tool for employee productivity. The essence of performance appraisal is to checkmate the contribution made by every employee and to know how well they are going on with their task. Appraisal help to identify the skilled and performing employee of an organization to increase their salary and other benefits that can make them satisfied on their job (Leigh, 2012).

There are lots of problems associated with effective performance appraisal which includes untrained supervisors/managers, lack of effective metrics, inconsistent rating of employees, unreliable reward systems. It is on this premises that the study seek to know the effect of performance evaluation system on employee productivity.

Objectives of Study

The general objective of the study was to find out the effect of performance appraisal system on employee productivity. The specific objective of the study was to determine:

- the relationship between performance appraisal and employee productivity;
- the impact of performance criteria in performance evaluation on employee productivity.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between performance appraisals and employee productivity.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between performance appraisal and employee productivity.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between performance appraisals criteria and employee productivity.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between performance appraisals criteria and employee productivity.

What is Performance Appraisal?

Performance appraisal is a formal program in which employees are told the employers expectations for their performance and rater and how well they have met those expectations. Performance appraisals are used to support human resource decisions including promotions, terminations, training and merit pay increases.

It is an employer's way of telling employees what is expected of them in their jobs and how well they are meeting those expectations.

Performance appraisal is the strength of performance management which in turn affects the organizations performance. It helps to identify and overcome the problems faced by the employees on his/her work (Mackey, 2000).

According to Nurse 2005, performance appraisals have the equal probability of having a bad impact on the organization as well as on employee performance. Performance appraisal provides a periodic review and evaluation of an individual's job performance. The forms may only be completed once a year, the job of performance appraisal is continuous, sometimes daily and requires effective communication on both the parts, of the supervisor and the employees.

Objectives of Performance Appraisal

According to Allan (2014), Performance appraisals are essential for effective management and evaluation of staff. Appraisal helps to develop individuals, improve organizational performance and feed into business planning. Formal performance appraisals are generally conducted annually for all staff in the organization. Each staff member is appraisal by their line manager. Directors are appraised by the CEO, who is appraised by the chairman or company owners, depending on the size and structure of the organization. Annual performance appraisals

enable management and monitoring of standards, agreeing expectations and objectives, delegation of responsibilities and tasks. Employee performance appraisals also establish individual training needs and enables organizational training needs analysis and planning.

Employee performance appraisal measures staff performance against set objectives and standards to show how well it was accomplished. Appraisals helps organization to know the input made by every employee and also enables the organization know the next grade level of the worker and the pay associated to it.

Employee appraisal helps in motivating workers. When an employee is graded high and as such promoted, it boosts his morale and as worker he wants to continue putting in his best. Performance appraisals are measures taken in managing the performance of people and organization.

Performance appraisal is a systematic evaluation of an individual with respect to performance on the job. Samantha Gluck (2000) in his book titled “Purpose of performance appraisal system” reveals that companies use performance appraisals for evaluation and developmental purposes. A well designed performance appraisal can start dialogue between supervisors, direct reports and coworkers that may result positive outcomes for the individuals and the business.

Performance Appraisal Process

The process of performance appraisal begins before a worker is being appraised. Employees should know what is expected of them and also know the standard at which they will be judged. The following are the steps of performance appraisal.

Establishment of Standards: This involves out of job analysis and job description. The standards should be clear and achieve the objectives. The goals of the organization should be prioritize. To accomplish the goals, the jobs are to be performed. The level of performance should be established. Performance standards are statements which specify what constitutes good work. Those who are concerned in fixing performance standards should develop the list of specific job tasks than they write statements that specify how the quality of the work will be determined.

Performance Standard and Expectations Should be Communicated: When performance standards of organizations are

established, it should be communicated to those involved. There should be proper communication between the managers and the employee on the job regarding the goals, expectation from employee, performance standard to be achieved, the jobs to be performed and the methods of performing the job.

Performance Measurement: Performance has to be measured with the already set standards. To understand what performance is all about, information about it should be gotten. There are four common sources of information frequently used by managers to measure performance. They are personal observation, statistical reports, oral reports and written reports. The combination of the above increases both the number of input sources and the probability of receiving reliable information. The performance can be measured in quality, quantity, time, cost, difficulties faced, competences, behavior, initiatives.

Comparison: This is the comparison of actual performance with standards. Standards are compared with the prefixed standards. There is need to identify standard performance and actual performance. Slow and fast working persons can be identified through comparison. If comparison is not carried out then the goals and performance cannot be aligned to meet the planning requirement.

Appraisal Feedback: Here, information gotten relating to appraisal are analyzed and discussed with the employee. Employees are to be told about their strength and weaknesses on their job so as to enable them work harder next time.

Correction, Motivation and Development Action: Corrective actions can be taken at the earliest to remove the cause of the problem. Performance may be poor due to workers, machines, working methods, environment etc. Actions are to be taken to motivate the workers, equipment should be provided and workers/employees are also to be trained on their job for better productivity.

The Effect of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal which is seen as a way of providing review and evaluation of an individual job performance has its own negative and positive effect on the employee's productivity in an organization.

This system acts as a motivator to the employee to improve their productivity. When the goals of the employee are clarified, his

performance challenges identified, the effect is to motivate the employee to achieve those goals.

Creating a comprehensive plan for employee development and giving an employee achievements to strive for, will inspire a higher level of efficiency. It is seen as a career development tool for the manager and employee. The manager can help guide the employee on the path to corporate advancement, and the employee gets a clearer understanding of what is expected from her in her daily duties.

The duty of the employee is based on guidance from management. Appraisal is when a manager and employee review the job descriptions and compare the employee's performance with expectations. This gives the employee a feeling of clarity and understanding that will help him better perform his job duties.

According to Rudman (2003), performance appraisal policy is a critical factor in an organization in enhancing the performance of the employee. There is a strong connection between how firms manage their employees and the organizational results they achieve.

Cook and Crossman (2004) highlight that employee whose performance is under review often become defensive. Whenever employee performance is rated as less than the best or as less than the level at which employee personally perceives his/her contribution, the manager is viewed as being biased. Disagreement about the contribution and performance ratings can create a conflict ridden situation that festers for months.

According to Mayhew (1985), company use performance appraisals to measure employee job performance and to determine salary and wages increases. Nevertheless, performance appraisal also brings news that causes fret over job security, status, eligibility for promotion and possible bias or unfair ratings. It also shows the strength and weaknesses of employee on their job.

How a Performance could be Effective

There are several management and leadership practices that determine the effectiveness of performance management systems including the leadership by senior management, management ownership and checks or balances who owns and leads the system.

According to the data, line management has a greater ownership than the human resource function in most organizations. It also shows

that this is very much a positive for the effectiveness of the system. Line management ownership correlates highly with performance management effectiveness while human resource ownership does not (Lawler, 1979).

A successful performance management is the ownership and leadership of senior management. When management owns the system instead of HR and when senior leaders support it, performance management systems are much more effective. What gets measured for effectiveness gets done effectively. Training should be undertaken by those who do appraisals as well as those who are appraised. Appraisal discussion seems uncomfortable for individuals to participate in and to conduct, and in the absence of training, they lack an understanding of what is supposed to happen and how the overall systems work.

The appraisal activity should be audited to know how well the performance appraisal activities were carried so that their effectiveness can be determined. Integration with the overall human resources strategy is a critical enabler of not just the performance management processes, but the overall talent management system in an organization.

The basis of a good performance management system is in the planning process. As you launch your business, give serious consideration to the type of performance management system you believe is best suited to your workplace. The performance management system used by your company must be congruent with the company's philosophy, mission and values.

Defining your company philosophy, mission and values start with your business plan and carries out through your company practices. (Sean, 2010).

For your performance management system to be effective, there are steps which are to be taken. They include developing job descriptions and job specifications, identifying performance standards and formulating the types of rewards and recognition you offer for good performance.

Drawbacks of Performance Appraisals

Performance appraisals which are seen to have a negative and positive effect on organizations, there are several drawbacks of performance appraisals because the activity seems to be very stressful.

Performance appraisal system practice in an organization can make an employer and its employee to have a different

perspective/interpretation of the appraisals outcome. When an area of improvement is identified which is to be corrected, it may sometimes lead to your employee feeling that the appraisal was nothing more than a “chewing out” session, causing reduced morale.

Some of the major limitations of performance appraisal include bias of appraisals, ambiguity in standards, insufficient evidence; several qualities remain without appraisal, leniency or strictness tenancy, average rating problems, influence of man’s job and similarity error (Smriti, 2014).

According to Ruth (2012), the training provided by employer is woefully inadequate for preparing supervisors to provide unbiased feedback to employees in a manner that motivates workers to strive for higher performance ratings.

Another drawback of performance appraisal system is that supervisors/raters feel the time it takes to prepare an employee performance appraiser exercise. Interaction between the rater and the rate is usually frightened because of the close proximity within which raters and rate working small business setting.

The Relationship between Performances and Employee Productivity

Performance appraisal is necessary in an organization; this is because it helps in clarifying goals and expectations and also creates an environment for open communication. It brings about positive feedback and advice for improvement.

Performance appraisal brings about high productivity in the sense that it creates a link between employee’s expectations and how the employees work contributes to the larger organization’s success.

Appraisal helps in identifying strength and weaknesses of employee performance. Opportunity is usually created for employees and supervisors to discuss employee goals, supervisor’s goals for the larger organization and ways that the employee and supervisors can work together by further developing skills and strength necessary to reach these goals.

The Effect of Pay (Compensation) on Employee Performance

Reward system is the instrument used to increase employees' performance which seeks to attract and retain suitable employees, encourage good management, minimize tensions and conflicts as it deals with all forms of final returns, tangible services and mechanism for good relationship. It is of a truth that industrial conflict is usually based on the fact that employees feel their benefits are denied and as such compensation is to provide a good platform for equity and fairness. The effect of pay on employee is that their needs at all levels are provided. This develops a company integrity, procedures, policy and practices capable of improving organizational productivity.

With effective pay, better result can be achieved and everyone goes home fulfilled and satisfied. Pay increase morale of your workers and also lead to an increase in productivity as they feel a sense of loyalty to the company because you show loyalty to your workers. Increase in the pay of workers gives an organizational competitive edge over their competitors.

Determining Performance Appraisal Criteria

According to Shehu (2008), in his book titled manpower planning and administration, an effective appraisal system specify what to measure in the appraisal form such as quality and quantity of output, services and requisite job behavior, talents and attitudes. Different job should have different performance measurement criteria. Care must be taken not to use one system of criteria for measuring performance of different professions and skill like in the civil service where APER form is used as a standard criteria to measure all jobs in the service whether applicable or not, assessment just have to be made.

For a performance appraisal system to be effective there must be an organized training for the raters. They should be aware of the skills necessary for evaluating employee performance. The training should be on goal setting, coaching employees, providing feedback.

Research Methodology and Design

Research design is seen to be the planning of any scientific research from the first to the last step. It is a specification of the most adequate operations to be performed in order to test a specific hypothesis under a given condition (Williams, 2006).

Research Design

The design used is the survey design and is based on solving an existing problem by the use of questionnaire. The design of this study was exploratory. This was to give room for flexibility in enhancing the data for the conduct of the study.

Target Population

The population is the aggregate or the totality of the units in the universe of study. The population of the study involves the Academic and Non-academic staff of Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State. The total population is about 3478 which includes Academic strength of 985 and Non-academic strength of 2493. The target population in this research is 3% of the total population in each stratum, using stratified random sampling which gave us the total of 104 respondents. The academic staff was 30 while the non-academic was 75.

Data Collection Method

The data collection method was a survey design. Questionnaires were administered to 104 respondents of Niger Delta University and 102 questionnaires were returned. A covering letter was used to inform the respondents of the purpose of the research.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using Pearson Correlation in testing the hypothesis using GraphPad Instat® software version 3.10.

Findings and Discussion

Table no. 1. Data Analysis of Performance appraisal

QUESTIONS	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	TOTAL	%
Performance appraisal has a great impact on employee productivity.	62	61	38	37	1	1	1	1	102	100
Performance appraisal has equal probability of having a bad impact on the institution as well as employee performance.	12	12	28	27	40	39	22	22	102	100
Performance appraisals are used to measure employee job performance and to	45	44	37	36	14	14	6	6	102	100

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determine salary and wages increment.										
Performance appraisals bring news that causes fret over job security, status, eligibility for promotion and bias of unfair rating.	22	22	48	47	23	23	9	9	102	100

From table no.1 above, 62 (61%) respondents strongly agreed that performance appraisal has a great impact on employee productivity, 38 (37%) agreed to it, 1 (1%) disagreed and 1(1%) strongly disagreed that performance appraisal has a great impact on employee productivity.

Based on the second question which states that performance appraisal has equal probability of having a bad impact on the institution as well as on employee performance, 12 (12%) strongly agreed, 28 (27%) respondent agreed, 40 (39%) disagreed while 22 (22%) strongly disagreed that performance appraisal has equal probability of having a bad impact on the institution as well as on employee performance.

The third question states that performance appraisals are used to measure employee job performance and to determine salary and wages increment, 45 (44%) of the respondent strongly agreed to it, 37 (36%) also agreed to it, 14 (14%) of respondent disagreed to it while 6 (6%) strongly disagreed to the fact that performance appraisal is used to measure employee job performance and to determine salary and wages increment.

Based on the fourth question which states that performance appraisal bring news that causes fret over job security, status, eligibility for promotion and bias of unfair rating, 22 (22%) respondent strongly agreed to it, 48 (47%) of the respondent agreed to it, 23 (23%) disagreed while 9 (9%) strongly disagreed to the fact that performance appraisal bring news that causes fret over job security, status, eligibility for promotion and bias of unfair rating.

HYPOTHESIS 1

There is no significant relationship between performance appraisal and employee productivity.

Table no. 2. Relationship between Performance Appraisals and Productivity

Questions	Positive	Negative	Total	Correlation coefficient (r)	Coefficient of determination (r squared)	Two tailed P value
Q1	462	3	465	-0.9994	0.9988	0.0006
Q2	172	102	274			
Q3	373	34	407			
Q4	302	55	357			

Source: Extracted from table 1. Data was analyzed using Pearson Correlation in testing the hypothesis using GraphPad InStat® software version 3.10

From the analysis, the result shows that the P value is 0.0006 which is considered extremely significant, which indicates that there is a relationship between performance appraisal and employee productivity. Therefore we accept the alternate hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. This outcome is supported by Bhatti and Qureshi (2007) who observed that there is a positive relationship of job satisfaction with employee productivity. Mackey and Johnson (2000) also reveal that Performance Evaluation results are normally used to identify the strength and weaknesses of employees.

Table no. 3. Impact of Performance Criteria in Relation to Performance Evaluation and Employee Productivity

QUESTIONS	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	TOTAL	%
Performance criteria enhances effective assessment on employee performance	36	35	60	59	3	3	3	3	102	100
Supervisors/HOD's should undergo training so as to be conversant with the appraisal criteria	42	41	45	44	4	4	11	11	102	100

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For performance appraiser systems to be effective, the focus of appraisers should be on performance variables instead of personal trait.	44	43	46	45	1	1	11	11	102	100
Supervisors will sometimes rate employees more favorably than that of their true performance in order to please the employees and avoid conflict	49	48	35	34	11	11	7	7	102	100

From table no. 3 we conclude that 36 (35%) strongly agreed to the fact that performance criteria enhances effective assessment on employee performance. 60 (59%) agreed to that fact, 3 (3%) respondent disagreed, while 3 (3%) strongly disagreed that performance criteria enhances effective assessment on employee performance.

Based on the sixth question, 42 (41%) strongly agreed that supervisors/HOD's should undergo training so as to be conversant with the appraisal criteria, 45 (44%) respondent agreed, 4 (4%) respondent disagreed, while 11 (11%) strongly disagreed to that fact.

Based on the seventh question which states that for performance appraisal systems to be effective, the focus of appraisers should be on performance variables instead of personal trait, 44 (43%) strongly agreed to it, 46 (45%) respondents also agreed, 1 (1%) respondent disagreed to it, while 11 (11%) strongly disagreed that for performance appraisal to be effective, the focus of appraisers should be on performance variables instead of personal trait.

Based on the eighth question which states that supervisors will sometimes rate employees more favorably than that of their true performance in order to please the employees and avoid conflict. 49 (48%) strongly agreed to it, 35 (34%) respondent agreed to it, 11 (11%) respondent disagreed while 7 (7%) respondent strongly disagreed to that fact.

HYPOTHESIS 2

H₁: There is a significant relationship existing between performance appraisal criteria and employee productivity.

Table no. 4. Relationship between Performance Appraisal Criteria and Productivity

QUESTION	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	TOTAL	Correlation coefficient (r)	Coefficient of determination (r squared)	Two tailed P value
Q5	420	9	429	-0.9622	0.9259	0.0378
Q6	390	26	416			
Q7	404	23	427			
Q8	385	29	414			

Source: Extracted from table no. 3

From the analysis made, the result shows that the P value is 0.0378, which is less than 0.05 and is considered significant, which indicate that there is a significant relationship between performance appraisal criteria and employee productivity. Therefore we accept the alternate hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. This outcome is supported by Lawrence (2014) which reveals that severity error occurs when individuals are given ratings that are lower than actual performance warrants. Severe ratings may be assigned out of a dislike for an individual, perhaps due to personal bias.

Conclusion

Performance appraisal has helped greatly in the assessment of employees which can stand as a guide to the path of advancement. It is an important tool in an organization which helps in identification of the areas of strength and weakness. Organizations are expected to embrace performance appraisal exercise because it can help in indicating areas of training needs, performance improvement and succession planning and as a motivator.

Performance appraisal is a yardstick for employment decisions which helps organizations in determining promotions, terminations and transfer of employees, determining wages and salary administration.

A performance appraisal criterion which is seen as an evaluative statement indicates what is to be assessed and the required level of performance. It is very important that when assessing an employee, ensure the evidence provided by the employee is sufficient

enough to show competence in all of the performance criteria. Supervisors should undergo training based on this.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from the findings, it would be necessary to recommend what will help to solve the problems associated with the challenges faced in performance appraisal. The following are our recommendations:

- Performance appraisal, which is an annual exercise, should be properly carried out because it has a great impact on employee productivity/performance. It is what managers use to review and rate employees. It helps to identify and overcome the problems faced by the employees on his/her work. Employees should also know what is expected of them while carrying out their duties and this can be achieved if the employers let the employees know their various assignments. The employees should be informed about the importance of appraisals.

- The organization should provide a conducive working environment for the employees. That will go a long way to increase productivity.

- Performance appraisal should provide accurate and relevant ratings of an employee performance as compared to pre-established criteria. The supervisors who are to rate the employee during the appraisal exercise should go on training. The set criteria should be used. Workers should not be appraised based on their personal trait, but the performance variables should be considered.

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