

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: A STUDY OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN DELTA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to look into employee performance and human resources management in Nigerian universities, specifically focusing on a few Delta State institutions. The issue statement was used to create the study's objective, which was to analyze how employee performance and human resource management interacted in the chosen universities. In addition to the theoretical framework offered to explain the facts created in the investigation, a number of literatures were reviewed for the study. In this study, a cross-sectional survey design was used. Out of the 1781 people in the study population, a sample of 178 was taken. The survey participants were chosen by a basic random sampling technique. Four universities were chosen for the study, two of which were public and two of which were private. Information was gathered from the respondents via a questionnaire using a four-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, and disagree. The study employed descriptive methods to display and evaluate the quantitative data, such as frequency distribution tables, mean, and standard deviation. Meanwhile, inferential statistics, such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), were utilized to assess the study's hypotheses. According to the study, one strategy for raising employee performance in the universities under investigation is performance appraisal. According to the report, colleges should create a program for quarterly and annual performance reviews in order to monitor employees' work output. Performance reviews are a valuable tool for praising and promoting employees' work while also making necessary modifications. It is a tool for problem solving that can be used to identify places where individuals' faults or organizational policies have led to deficits.

Keywords: Universities, Delta State, Human Resources, Management, Employee, Performance

INTRODUCTION

Today's firms place a high priority on human resources management. Human resource management, or HRM, is now understood to be a complex process that involves managing individuals who are part of organizations in a methodical, consistent, and comprehensive way. It is quickly emerging as a crucial tool in the organizational environment of the twenty-first century. In contrast, Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the intricate and long-term process of luring, nurturing, compensating, and keeping workers for the good of their employers, communities, and selves. It highlights the part that intellectual and human capital play in acting as catalysts for performance management. HRM provides firms with human resources that have the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavioral tendencies to carry out strategies and meet established goals by utilizing a range of HRM approaches. Enhancing employee performance can be greatly aided by the human resource management (HRM) function (Ullah, 2012). According to Wang, Oliver, and Chen (2020, p. 20), an employee's preparedness for performance "reflects the extent of the cognitive and emotional tendency of individuals to accept and adopt a specific plan to purposefully make positive impact and move forward"

For many years, there has been much research on the effects of HRM practices on worker performance. Employee performance is regarded as one of the elements that affects and plays a

part in the performance of the organization since, even in the presence of other factors, individual employee behavior directly contributes to the success of the organization (Saleh et al., 2020). In the university system, where there are several sectors and individuals from various walks of life, this is crucial. Nigerian colleges have a number of difficulties that have an impact on staff productivity. These issues are especially prevalent at public or government-owned institutions when the government is ultimately responsible for management. Promotion, career growth, and training concerns are prominent indicators that cause employees' performance to stall. Strict laws are implemented to prevent employees from being promoted and to prevent them from having the chance to advance. Promotion and professional advancement are sometimes influenced by cronyism and ethnic connection. Over time, these management techniques have impacted employee satisfaction, which has an impact on their output. Employees enter companies with predetermined aims and ambitions, which could vary from obtaining a wage to meet their fundamental necessities to advancing their careers through the proper channels as specified by the company. Employees eventually feel lost and cut off from the organization's overall purpose and goals when these fantasies do not materialize. This is evident in the way that one approaches their work and interacts with coworkers and subordinates.

Numerous research have been done on how HRM practices affect employees' performance (Khatri, 1999; Swart & Kinnie, 2014; Kinnie & Swart, 2020), but no single study has examined how employees' perceptions of their jobs, career development, training, performance appraisals, and promotions relate to their performance. Furthermore, no previous study has looked into the performance of employees and human resources management in particular Delta State universities. Therefore, by investigating human resource management and employee performance at Nigerian universities—a study of specific universities in Delta State—the study closes a theoretical vacuum in the literature.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine human resources management and employees' performance in Nigerian universities: A study of selected universities in Delta State. The specific objective of the study is to:

1. Ascertain the influence of performance appraisal on employees' performance

Research Question

The following research question was put forward for the study:

1. What influence does performance appraisal have on employees' performance?

Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis was formulated for the study

1. There is no significant difference between performance appraisal on employees' performance

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Human Resource Management

A purposeful, integrated, and cogent approach to the employment, growth, and well-being of individuals working in organizations is known as human resource management. Its solid conceptual foundation is derived from theories of industrial relations, human capital, and behavioral sciences as well as strategic management. Numerous research efforts have contributed to the construction of this foundation (Armstrong, 2010). HRM, or human resource management, encompasses the systems, procedures, and regulations that impact the performance, attitudes, and behavior of employees. HRM is sometimes described by businesses as incorporating "people practices." The organization's business strategy should be supported by a number of key HRM practices, including job analysis and design, human resource planning (estimating the number of workers with specialized knowledge and skills needed), recruiting, selecting, and training staff to ensure they are

prepared for the future and can perform their jobs well. Performance management, compensation, and employee relations are other HRM practices that should be prioritized. When every one of these procedures is properly managed, an organization operates at its peak. Effective HRM tends to increase employee and customer satisfaction, as well as a company's ability to innovate, be more productive, and build a stronger reputation in the community (Neo, 2017).

HRM is in charge of carefully choosing and preparing individuals who possess the abilities needed to successfully implement the strategy. While certain external variables, like the failure of major banks and insurance companies, can be anticipated, others seem to happen out of nowhere (Robbins, 2010). Human resource management, according to Neo (2017), is essential to an organization's success since human capital is important due to a few specific characteristics. An organization can be successful in business strategy if it has a sustainable competitive advantage—that is, if it can outperform rivals in a particular area and maintain that advantage over time. According to the aforementioned definitions, human resource management is the efficient use of employees without jeopardizing their well-being or hindering the constructive development of their potential. This is to make sure that they receive capacity development and welfare in exchange for the usage of human resources.

Overview of Employee Performance

Performance in an organizational context is typically understood to be the degree to which an employee or other organizational member helps the organization achieve its objectives. Performance of the workforce has a significant impact on organizational performance. Therefore, an employee's performance is primarily determined by what they do or do not do. Performance, in the words of Dessler (2003), is the difference between an employee's work and the minimum required. Rivai (2004) describes employee performance as an individual's true behavior in his work performance in accordance with his role in a company, which is very similar to this description. Regarding the two studies mentioned earlier, Byars and Dan-Rue (2008) note that employee performance refers to the degree to which a worker in a particular firm fulfills his or her responsibilities in accordance with the standards set by the business. According to Campbell (2009), performance is any behavior or action that is relevant to achieving the objectives of an organization and can be measured, or scaled. Furthermore, what one is paid to do—or what one ought to be paid to do—is what is meant to be considered job performance. The idea is that in addition to being valid, reliable, and not deficient, the measurement options—whether they be ratings from a supervisor, peer, or self, a simulated work sample, or hard criteria—should also be free of contamination from sources of variation that are outside the individual's control—for example, how different technological advancements affect an individual's performance. Situational enhancers or limitations can taint an individual's performance mean, variance, or both if they are not considered in an appraisal.

The Role of Human Resources Management on Performance

In the realm of human resource management, human resources management is a relatively recent development. Using personnel management as a tool to obtain a competitive edge is a key component of human resource management. Organizations are now aware that effective HR practices and policies can improve performance in a number of areas, including quality, productivity, and financial performance (Sanders, Yang & Li, 2019). Differential measurement, feedback, positive reinforcement, and continuous communication between managers and employees are essential components of performance management, which is a structured process. It relates to measuring outcomes, specifically performance attained in relation to goals that convey expectations. It also has to deal with values and inputs. According to Neo (2017), inputs are the actions, knowledge, and abilities required to achieve the desired outcomes. By outlining these requirements and assessing the extent to which the required performance levels are met by acceptable conduct and the efficient application of knowledge and skills, needs are determined.

The strategy for performance management applies to the entire company, not just the managers.

Thus, managers are in charge of more than just putting in the necessary work. Supervisors ought to be self-assured enough to delegate power and responsibility across the company. To report on reaching the desired performance, managers must, in a way, work together and think of themselves as part of their own people (Marques, 2017). Together, managers and their teams decide what has to be done and how it should be done, sharing accountability for the outcomes. Processes for performance management are an element of the organization-wide sweep. In order to commit to reaching the performance, managers and other staff members of the company should collaborate (Hewett, Shantz, Mundy & Alfes, 2018).

The goal of a performance management strategy should be to create an adaptable and ongoing process that involves managers and every member of the organization working together as a single unit. This ought to ascertain the optimal manner in which they can collaborate to attain the necessary outcomes (Neo, 2017). This enables the planning of current performance improvements as well as future performance.

The Influence of Performance Appraisal on Employees' Performance

The practice of performance appraisal is widely used worldwide. It is said to play a crucial part in managing employees (Salvarajan & Cloninger, 2012). Organizations of all sizes have embraced performance appraisals as a means of measuring and assessing employee performance. Formal employee appraisal methods are being used more often by the public and private sectors. Over the past few decades, there has been a surge in study on performance appraisal. Several academics have found and noted that a key component of an organization's ability to manage its workforce effectively is a well-executed performance review. Business and industry have also continued to adopt performance appraisal systems; according to recent polls, 74% to 89% of organizations have a formal performance review system in place (Cleveland, Murphy and Williams, 2010). The use of performance appraisals in program evaluation, human resource choices, and feedback has grown in popularity (Cleveland et al., 2010). For performance appraisal to be effective, a number of auxiliary aspects must be considered. They are perceived as intermediary variables that serve as substitutes and sources of change. Employees' capacity to develop new skills, be encouraged to do so, or do both is influenced by these variables. Employee acceptance of the feedback and the results of the performance level modification is the first step in the process. Whether the worker is accomplishing the set objectives, although there might be a sign of progress. Nonetheless, the majority of those objectives ought to represent the organization's top level or corporate objectives. Repeatedly carrying out this action minimizes the discrepancy between the expected and actual performance (Mooney, 2010).

Employee engagement and assurance are crucial components of the performance appraisal process, which also determines the outcomes for the firm. The performance gap (if any) is identified by the evaluation system. When performance falls short of the organization's standards, there is an issue known as the "gap." The employee can learn about the caliber of their work performance through the feedback system (NCN report HR Department, 2010). Although performance reviews can increase the benefits for the company, it doesn't seem like they are happening very often (Mooney, 2010).

The majority of businesses often include performance reviews, but they are unable to reap the benefits of this since expectations and actual experiences in the current system diverge significantly. Performance appraisals are conducted using a variety of methodologies, which can be classified as traditional or non-traditional. The classic method of assessment, commonly referred to as the "Free Form Method," consists solely of an employer or supervisor monitoring and summarizing an employee's performance. Non-traditional forms of appraisal have been popular in practices during the past few years (Coens & Jenkins, 2011). Performance reviews aim to meet employees' goals for learning and growth as well as administrative requirements (Kondrasuk, 2012). For example, Chiponda (2014) studied the impact of performance reviews on worker motivation in

a non-governmental organization located in a Nairobi slum. The study found that, by identifying performance appraisal issues and offering solutions, job performance has improved and employee motivation is positively impacted by performance appraisals. Njeru (2013) studied the impact of performance reviews on public sector employees' work performance at Kirinyaga Central District. According to studies, most federal servants set and meet goals, and a small percentage also receive performance reviews. A research on the impact of performance reviews on civil officials at the Directorate of Tourism was conducted by Kamiti (2014). The results of the study showed that performance reviews have a significant role in motivating employees.

One of the most important factors in determining an organization's success and competitive advantage is monitoring and developing employee performance (Ployhart, 2016). Additionally, based on the appraisal data and the intended behaviors and attitudes, selection and training procedures may change. However, professional staff members' productivity will be subpar if they lack the will to complete their assignments (Sani, 2012). Numerous earlier research papers examined the impact of conducting performance reviews on results at the individual and organizational levels. For instance, Murphy and Margulies (2014) asserted in their research that performance reviews could be advantageous for a number of purposes, including staff training and compensation. Furthermore, it is well recognized that the performance system's goal becomes a significant problem. Still, a lot of businesses don't think that performance reviews may do a lot of things, like giving feedback, developing training and skills, and granting access to information and expertise (Kor & Sundaramurthy, 2019).

Chiponda (2014) carried out a case study at a non-governmental organization in a Nairobi slum that examined the impact of performance reviews on worker motivation. The study found that, by identifying performance appraisal issues and offering solutions, job performance has improved and employee motivation is positively impacted by performance appraisals. In the Kirinyaga Central District, Njeru (2013) carried out a descriptive research study on the impact of performance appraisals on job performance in the public sector. According to the survey, most federal servants set and achieve goals, and a small percentage also receive performance reviews. A descriptive research on the impact of performance reviews on civil officials at the Directorate of Tourism was conducted by Kamiti (2014). The study found that one significant aspect influencing employees' performance is their performance appraisal. Employee incentive to work efficiently will increase in government offices with more transparent and objective performance review processes.

It is not known of any research that has examined how performance reviews affect employees' work in the chosen postsecondary schools. Inadequate performance evaluation systems have been linked to this subpar performance. By comprehensively analyzing the impact of performance appraisal on employee performance and concentrating on certain tertiary institutions in Delta State, the current study aimed to close the gap in the literature.

Theoretical Framework

The social exchange theory developed by Blau (1964) was the theory used for this investigation. A social exchange relationship, according to Blau (1964, p. 93), is characterized by vague obligations, "favors that create diffuse future obligations, not precisely defined ones, and the nature of the return cannot be bargained about but must be left to the discretion of the one who makes it." This means that it is unclear what the parties exchange. According to Erd and Eisenberger (2008), the resources that are transferred can be impersonal, like career advancement, or socio-emotional, like loyalty, respect, and caring. But only the latter kinds of resources are more likely "to engender feelings of personal obligations, gratitude, and trust" (Blau, 1964, p. 94). The reciprocity norm is the foundation of a social exchange relationship (Gouldner, 1960). One person providing a benefit to another is the first step in every exchange. Feelings of mutual responsibility are established between the parties if the recipient reciprocates and a sequence of advantageous exchanges follows (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). The idea of reciprocity in its broadest sense includes the sense of

duty to return favors. Employees' sense of obligation was described by Eisenberger et al. (2001, p. 42) as "[a] prescriptive belief regarding whether one should care about the well-being of the organization and should help the organization reach its goals." Eder and Eisenberger (2008) suggest that stronger reciprocation—or exchange—occurs in social connections when both parties are prepared to contribute resources that are beneficial to the other. Employers seek commitment and devotion, while employees cherish favorable treatment (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). Whichever of the two starts things off first? Organizations as initiators are mostly discussed in research. It is believed that the organization's positive activities toward its employees help to build high-quality exchange connections (Eisenberger, et al., 2001). This reciprocation sequence is supported by empirical data. Above all, these conversations have been utilized to elucidate the favorable outcomes that follow when workers react to perceived organizational support.

Social exchange theory sheds light on the workings of the "black box" that connects HRM to worker performance. In order to establish hypotheses regarding the relationships between HR practices and employee attitudes, behavior, and performance, it describes how social interactions in organizations and work performance are constructed on the social exchange that involves the norm of reciprocity. Employees reciprocate the HRM treatment they receive from the company in their demeanor, conduct, and output. The social interaction constructs have the potential to serve as mediators, moderators, or antecedents in the relationship that exists between the outcomes of subsequent employees and HR procedures. This could include voluntary actions taken "beyond contract," employee dedication, retention intentions, and motivation. As a result, when opportunities for career advancement, training, and performance reviews are available, employees demonstrate their excellent performance and dedication to the organization's objectives, which yields favorable results. According to this hypothesis, HRM practices send out a signal to workers, who then respond in kind by exhibiting the same attitudes and behaviors in their work and/or results.

Research Method

The cross-sectional research design was chosen for this investigation. Data on the phenomenon of interest to the researcher was gathered using a cross-sectional research design from a population of respondents, including employees of Delta State colleges. The 1781 employees that make up the study's population are those that work in Delta State universities. The study's sample size was determined by taking 10% of the total population, which includes both teaching and non-teaching staff. 178 responders made up the sample size as a result. The researcher used the probability sampling technique's stratified random sampling method as the sample strategy. A questionnaire that was self-designed was the tool utilized to gather data from the respondents. The test-retest reliability technique was used to assess the instrument's dependability. This is done in order to measure the instrument's uniformity in conducting the survey. By giving the questionnaire to a sample of 25 people who shared similar characteristics with the population being studied, the test-retest reliability was ascertained (i.e., Dennis Osadebey University, Asaba). The level of reliability of the device for data collection was found to be 0.89 by reliability coefficient analysis. The mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the study's questions, and the 0.05 level of significance Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to evaluate the study's hypothesis.

RESULTS**Analysis of Socio-demographic Data****Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic of the Respondents**

Options		Frequency	Percentage
Age	25-35 years	56	31.5
	36-45 years	75	42.1
	46 years and above	47	26.4
	Total	178	100
Sex	Male	102	57.3
	Female	76	42.7
	Total	178	100
Marital status	Single	81	45.5
	Married	97	54.5
	Total	178	100
Staff designated position	Teaching	56	31.5
	Non-teaching	122	68.5
	Total	178	100
Religion	Christianity	122	68.5
	Islam	15	8.4
	African Traditional Religion	41	23.0
	Total	178	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The socio-demographic details of those who took part in the survey are shown in Table 4. The respondents' age distribution revealed that 31.5% of them are between the ages of 25 and 35, 42.1% are between the ages of 36 and 45, and 26.4% are over the age of 46. According to the respondents' sex distribution, 42.7% of respondents are women and 57.3% of respondents are men. The respondents' marital status showed that 54.5% of them were married and 45.5% of them were unmarried. The respondents' indicated positions as staff members showed that 68.5% of them were non-teaching staff and 31.5% of them are academic (teaching) staff. The respondents' religious composition revealed that the majority, 68.5%, are Christians, 8.4% are Muslims, and 23% practice traditional African religions.

Analysis of Research Question

Research Question: What influence does performance appraisal have on employees' performance?

Table 4.2: The influence of performance appraisal on employees' performance

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Performance appraisal helps to evaluate employees performance	178	2.51	.91	Positive
2	Performance appraisal make employees develop positive attitude to work	178	2.59	.88	Positive
3	Performance appraisal helps to tackle areas where employees fail to improve performance	178	2.74	.83	Positive
4	Performance appraisal make employees unfriendly and passive to work	178	2.83	.87	Positive
5	Performance appraisal make employees' slow in task delivery	178	2.60	.77	Positive
6	Performance appraisal creates a poor disposition to work	178	2.79	.73	Positive

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The mean score analysis of the impact of performance appraisals on employees' performance is displayed in Table 4.2. The analysis's findings demonstrate that respondents had consensus on every issue. In particular, respondents believed that performance reviews are a useful tool for assessing workers' work. The calculated mean score of 2.51, which is higher than the 2.50 criterion mean score, is what gets this rank. The information in Table 4.5 also showed that employees' favorable attitudes toward their jobs are influenced by performance reviews. Based on the computed mean score of 2.59, which is higher than the 2.50 criterion mean score, this is concluded. Furthermore, the table's mean score of 2.74, which is higher than the 2.50 criterion mean score, demonstrated that performance appraisals assist in addressing areas in which workers are unable to raise their level of performance. Additionally, the table's data showed that employees become apathetic and passive at work as a result of performance reviews. Based on the computed mean score of 2.83, which is higher than the 2.50 criterion mean score, this is concluded. The table indicates that the participants concurred that employees who receive performance reviews tend to complete tasks more slowly. The calculated mean score of 2.60, which is higher than the 2.50 criterion mean score, is used to determine this rank. Last but not least, the mean score of 2.79 for the final item in the table indicates that receiving a low performance rating leads to a bad attitude at work.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀: There is no significant difference among universities employees on the effect of performance appraisal on performance

Table 4.3: Analysis of variance result for hypothesis 4

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
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Between Groups	.751	3	.250	.23	.000	Significant
Within Groups	212.930	174	.591			
Total	213.681	177				

The analysis of variance on differences among university employees on the impact of performance appraisal on performance is displayed in table 4.3. Table 4.11 yields a determined F-ratio value of .23 and a probability value of .000. This indicates that there are notable variations among university staff regarding how performance reviews affect their work.

Discussion of Results

The hypothesis's outcome indicates that there are notable differences among university staff members regarding how performance reviews affect their ability to do their jobs. This result is consistent with findings from literature-cited works. For example, Chaponda (2014) found that performance reviews are crucial for motivating employees and have improved work performance since they highlight issues with performance reviews and offer solutions for raising motivation and productivity levels. According to Kamiti's (2014) research, performance evaluation is a significant component in employee motivation. According to Awori's (2013) research, state-run businesses use performance reviews to enhance employee productivity. In his investigation of the effects of performance reviews on Moi University, Muhindi (2010) discovered that these reviews had minimal bearing on employees' work output. According to Magutu's (2009) research on the efficacy of performance assessment systems in Kenya, using Kabarak University as a case study, performance appraisal systems are the only measurable means by which an organization may determine the performance level of its varied workforce. The findings have generated debate, despite the fact that there is a wealth of empirical research on performance appraisal. While some research (Muhindi, 2010; Njeru, 2013) have shown a negative association, others (Chaponda, 2014; Magutu, 2009; Awori, 2013; Kamiti, 2014) have shown a positive relationship between performance appraisal and employee performance.

According to Ployhart (2016), performance reviews contribute to the utility value that employees' interests, skills, and knowledge have. Because of this, employees perform better for the company. Murphy and Margulies (2014) stated in their study that performance reviews maybe advantageous in a number of ways, including providing compensation and aiding in employee training. According to Chaponda's (2014) research, performance appraisals have a significant impact on employee motivation and have been shown to enhance job performance in non-governmental organizations situated in Nairobi's slum areas. According to Kamiti's (2014) research, performance evaluation is a significant component that influences how well employees perform.

CONCLUSION

The study found that one strategy to raise employee performance in the universities under investigation is performance appraisal. In actuality, performance reviews function as a tool for tracking employees' advancement as well as a strategy for incentivizing them to work hard by offering incentives like bonuses, allowances, and promotions to those who perform well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been determined that performance reviews are a trustworthy method for employees to identify their areas of strength and weakness. In order to monitor employee performance, universities should create a performance appraisal schedule that is implemented both quarterly and annually. Performance reviews are a valuable tool for praising and promoting employees' work while also making necessary modifications. It is a tool for problem solving that can be used to identify places where individuals' faults or organizational policies have led to deficits. It should therefore be

created and applied to enhance staff performance in the chosen universities.

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