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PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEMS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED HOSPITALITY FIRMS IN ASABA, DELTA STATE

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the relationships between performance appraisal practices and employee performance in selected hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigated performance appraisal feedback, appraisal fairness and performance-based rewards. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted. Five hospitality firms were purposively selected, while stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select respondents. Of the 87 questionnaires administered, 71 were properly completed and analysed, representing an 81.6% response rate. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.855 to 0.910. Descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation were employed for data analysis using SPSS version 26. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between employee performance and appraisal feedback ($r = 0.697$, $p < 0.001$), appraisal fairness ($r = 0.654$, $p < 0.001$) and performance-based rewards ($r = 0.797$, $p < 0.001$). Performance-based rewards exhibited the strongest association with employee performance. The study concluded that effective appraisal practices are positively associated with employee performance in hospitality firms. It recommended regular constructive feedback, transparent appraisal procedures and meaningful performance-linked rewards. The findings contribute context-specific evidence to performance management literature, although the cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation.

Keywords: Performance appraisal feedback; Appraisal fairness; Performance-based rewards; Employee performance; Hospitality firms.

INTRODUCTION
Employee performance is central to the competitiveness and sustainability of hospitality organisations, where service delivery depends substantially on employees' competence, responsiveness, and interactions with customers. Unlike highly automated industries, hospitality operations rely extensively on human involvement in creating service experiences. Consequently, employee effectiveness influences service quality, customer satisfaction, organisational reputation, and operational performance (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Chang et al., 2024; Wiastuti et al., 2023). This dependence on human resources underscores the importance of effective performance management practices in the hospitality industry.

Performance appraisal systems constitute an important component of human resource management, providing structured mechanisms for assessing employee contributions against established performance standards. Beyond periodic evaluations, contemporary appraisal systems incorporate performance monitoring, constructive feedback, employee development, fair assessment procedures, and performance-based rewards. When effectively implemented, these practices can clarify organisational expectations, identify competency gaps, support employee development, and encourage improved work performance (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Lameque et al., 2023). However, their effectiveness depends not merely on their existence but also on how employees perceive and experience the appraisal process (Elabed et al., 2026).

Three dimensions of performance appraisal are particularly relevant to employee performance: appraisal feedback, appraisal fairness, and performance-based rewards. Constructive feedback enables employees to recognise performance deficiencies, understand expectations, and identify opportunities for improvement. Appraisal fairness promotes confidence in evaluation procedures through transparency, consistency, and impartiality, while performance-based rewards provide financial and non-financial recognition for employee contributions. Collectively, these practices may strengthen employee motivation, commitment, and effectiveness, particularly in service-oriented organisations where employee behaviour directly shapes customer experiences (Lameque et al., 2023; Uzochukwu et al., 2024; Alkhyeli & Hazmilah, 2025).

Nevertheless, performance appraisal systems do not invariably produce favourable employee outcomes. Inconsistent evaluation standards, inadequate feedback, managerial bias, favouritism, and perceived inequities in reward allocation can undermine employees' confidence in appraisal decisions. Such weaknesses may contribute to dissatisfaction, reduced motivation, and declining performance (Muhammad et al., 2025a; Elabed et al., 2026). These concerns are particularly relevant to hospitality establishments, where ineffective employee performance can adversely affect service responsiveness, customer satisfaction, and organisational competitiveness.

Empirical findings concerning the relationship between performance appraisal practices and employee outcomes remain mixed. Nnia et al. (2026), examining selected hotels in Enugu State, Nigeria, reported a strong positive relationship between appraisal feedback and employee productivity, while appraisal fairness was significantly associated with customer satisfaction. Similarly, Uzochukwu et al. (2024) found that procedural, distributive, and interactional fairness in performance appraisal positively influenced employee productivity in Nigerian federal regulatory agencies. In contrast, Oniyide and Odeyemi (2024), investigating organisations in Osun State, reported that appraisal-based training and appraisal methods significantly improved employee productivity, whereas appraisal feedback and rewards exhibited positive but statistically insignificant effects. These divergent findings suggest that the relationships between appraisal practices and employee performance may vary across organisational and sectoral contexts.

In Asaba, Delta State, hospitality establishments serve government officials, business travellers, tourists, and other visitors, making effective employee performance essential to maintaining service standards and organisational competitiveness. However, weaknesses in appraisal feedback, perceived fairness, and reward administration may undermine employee motivation and service effectiveness. Despite the relevance of these practices, the reviewed empirical evidence has concentrated largely on hospitality establishments outside Asaba or organisations operating in other sectors. Furthermore, the inconsistent findings regarding appraisal feedback and rewards indicate the need for additional empirical investigation rather than assuming that all appraisal practices are uniformly associated with improved employee performance.

Although previous studies provide valuable insights, limited context-specific evidence has been identified concerning the simultaneous relationships of appraisal feedback, appraisal fairness, and performance-based rewards with employee performance in hospitality firms in Asaba. This constitutes an empirical and contextual gap, particularly given the service-intensive nature of hospitality operations and the potential differences in organisational practices across locations and industries. Addressing this gap can extend understanding of how distinct performance appraisal practices relate to employee outcomes within the local hospitality sector.

Accordingly, this study examines the relationship between performance appraisal systems and employee performance in selected hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigates the relationships between performance appraisal feedback, appraisal fairness, performance-based rewards, and employee performance. The study contributes context-specific empirical evidence to the performance management literature and offers practical insights for developing more transparent, developmental, and performance-oriented appraisal practices in hospitality organisations.

To achieve these objectives, the following null hypotheses were formulated:
H_{01}: Performance appraisal feedback has no statistically significant relationship with employee performance in hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State.
H_{02}: Appraisal fairness has no statistically significant relationship with employee performance in hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State.
H_{03}: Performance-based rewards have no statistically significant relationship with employee performance in hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Performance Appraisal Systems

Performance appraisal is a structured process through which organizations assess employees' contributions against established expectations and use the resulting information to guide administrative and developmental decisions. Beyond performance ratings, appraisal systems can inform training, promotion, reward allocation and career development (Aguinis, 2023; Silva et al., 2024). Their value depends, however, on whether employees regard the assessment process as credible and useful. Where ratings are perceived as arbitrary or disconnected from actual work, appraisal may undermine rather than strengthen motivation (Tarigan et al., 2023).
The shift from episodic annual reviews towards ongoing performance conversations has placed greater emphasis on timely feedback, transparent assessment, and developmental support (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017; Yusoff, 2025). These features are particularly relevant to hospitality firms, where service quality is shaped by employees' day-to-day interactions with guests. In this study, performance appraisal systems are examined through three interrelated practices: appraisal feedback, appraisal fairness and performance-based rewards. The distinction allows their relationships with employee performance to be assessed rather than assuming that an appraisal system operates as a single, uniform intervention.

Performance Appraisal Feedback: Performance appraisal feedback refers to information communicated to employees about their performance relative to agreed expectations. Its developmental value lies in helping employees recognise strengths, identify gaps and adjust their work practices (Aguinis, 2023; DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Feedback is therefore most useful when it is specific, timely, credible and accompanied by practical guidance. General praise or criticism without actionable information may have limited value for improving subsequent performance.
In hospitality settings, feedback can address observable service behaviours such as responsiveness to guest requests, accuracy, teamwork, and complaint handling. Regular discussions also allow employees to clarify expectations and raise operational difficulties before they affect service delivery. Mone and London (2022) associate constructive performance conversations with communication and employee development, while Elabed et al. (2026) discuss the importance of perceived feedback quality in appraisal outcomes. Nevertheless, the existence of feedback does not guarantee improvement: its influence may depend on delivery, perceived fairness and employees' opportunities to act on the advice received. This makes feedback quality, rather than the mere frequency of appraisal, central to understanding its relationship with employee performance.

Appraisal Fairness: Appraisal fairness concerns employees' judgments about the equity of performance ratings, the procedures used to reach them and the manner in which appraisal decisions are communicated. These judgments reflect distributive, procedural and interactional dimensions of organisational justice (Colquitt et al., 2021). Employees may accept an unfavourable assessment when standards are transparent, evidence is credible and they have an opportunity to explain their performance. By contrast, favouritism, inconsistent criteria and limited opportunities for review can weaken confidence in the appraisal system (Tarigan et al., 2023).
Fairness matters because appraisal decisions often affect rewards, promotion and access to development opportunities. Perceived injustice may discourage discretionary effort even when

formal evaluation procedures are in place. Maharvi et al. (2023) associate appraisal fairness with positive employee responses, while Uzochukwu et al. (2024) examine its relevance to productivity in Nigerian regulatory organisations. These settings differ from hospitality firms, where supervisors frequently evaluate both measurable outputs and less tangible service behaviours. The resulting scope for subjective judgment makes transparent criteria and respectful appraisal discussions particularly important. Accordingly, appraisal fairness is treated as a distinct dimension rather than an incidental feature of feedback or rewards.

Performance-Based Rewards: Performance-based rewards are financial or non-financial benefits linked to employees' achievement of specified standards. They may include bonuses, salary progression, recognition, promotion and development opportunities (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). Such rewards can reinforce desirable work behaviours when employees understand the performance criteria and regard the outcomes as valuable. However, incentives are unlikely to motivate consistently when the relationship between performance and reward is unclear or when allocations are perceived as unfair.

In hospitality organisations, reward arrangements may recognise service reliability, teamwork, guest satisfaction, and problem-solving, alongside productivity indicators. A broader total-rewards perspective also acknowledges the importance of recognition and development opportunities rather than financial incentives alone (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; WorldatWork, 2023). Elabed et al. (2026) discuss the administrative consequences of appraisal outcomes, including reward decisions. Yet rewards can create tension if employees perceive that individual incentives overlook collaborative service delivery. Their potential contribution to performance therefore depends on transparent assessment standards and alignment with the behaviours the organisation seeks to encourage.

Employee Performance in Hospitality Firms

Employee performance refers to the extent to which individuals fulfil assigned responsibilities and contribute to organisational objectives. In hospitality firms, performance includes both task execution and interpersonal service behaviours because employees directly shape guests' experiences. Relevant indicators include service responsiveness, reliability, productivity, teamwork and the quality of customer interactions (Shen & Park, 2024; Lasisi et al., 2024).

Employee performance is influenced by factors extending beyond appraisal, including leadership, motivation, resources, work conditions, and well-being (Ganesha et al., 2024; Saito et al., 2024). These influences are particularly salient in hospitality, where irregular schedules, emotional demands and service pressures may affect employees' capacity to maintain consistent standards. Appraisal practices can support performance by clarifying expectations, providing improvement guidance, and recognising contributions; nevertheless, their associations should be examined alongside the wider organisational context. The present study focuses specifically on whether feedback, fairness, and performance-based rewards are associated with employee performance in hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State.

Integrated Theoretical Foundation

Three complementary theories explain why appraisal practices may be associated with employee performance. **Expectancy Theory** proposes that motivation depends on employees' beliefs that effort can produce performance, that performance will lead to valued outcomes, and that those outcomes are desirable (Vroom, 1964). This reasoning is especially relevant to performance-based rewards: employees are more likely to respond to incentives when appraisal standards are attainable and the link between performance and recognition is credible.

Goal-Setting Theory explains how specific, challenging, and accepted goals direct attention, effort, and persistence. Feedback allows employees to compare actual progress with expected standards and adjust their strategies (Locke & Latham, 2002). Applied to hospitality firms, the theory

suggests that appraisal feedback can support service performance when employees receive clear objectives and actionable information about their work.

Equity Theory focuses on employees' comparisons between their contributions and the rewards or treatment they receive relative to others (Adams, 1965). It provides a basis for understanding why appraisal fairness matters: even potentially beneficial feedback and incentives may elicit unfavourable responses if employees perceive bias or unequal treatment. Taken together, the theories suggest that effective appraisal requires clarity about expected performance, useful information about progress, a credible connection between achievement and rewards, and procedures employees consider fair. This integrated perspective supports the examination of feedback, fairness and performance-based rewards as related but distinct correlates of employee performance.

Synthesis and Research Direction

The reviewed literature indicates that performance appraisal systems can support employee development and organisational decision-making, but their contribution is unlikely to depend on a single practice. Feedback may clarify how performance can improve; fairness can strengthen the legitimacy of evaluation decisions; and performance-based rewards may reinforce desired behaviours. Their importance may differ in hospitality firms, where service outcomes depend on both individual effort and cooperation among employees.

The studies cited above address these practices across varied organisational settings, but the material reviewed does not establish their comparative relationships with employee performance in hospitality firms in Asaba. The present study therefore examines performance appraisal feedback, appraisal fairness, and performance-based rewards as separate explanatory variables associated with employee performance. The proposed relationships are grounded in the integrated theoretical framework, while the empirical analysis must determine their direction, magnitude and statistical significance.

Performance Appraisal Feedback and Employee Performance

Performance appraisal feedback provides employees with information about their achievements, performance deficiencies and areas requiring improvement. Its contribution to employee performance depends on whether the information is sufficiently clear, timely, and constructive to support behavioural adjustment. DeNisi and Murphy (2017) highlighted the developmental significance of performance appraisal, while Aguinis (2023) emphasised the importance of continuous feedback in performance management. However, the value of these practices must ultimately be established through employees' performance outcomes rather than assumed from their administrative functions.

Empirical evidence from Nigerian hospitality organisations provides support for the relevance of appraisal feedback. Nnia et al. (2026) investigated performance appraisal systems among 136 employees of five hotels in Enugu State, Nigeria. Using questionnaire data and Pearson correlation analysis, the study reported a strong positive relationship between appraisal feedback and employee productivity. It also found significant relationships involving appraisal fairness, customer satisfaction, goal-setting, and service quality. Although these findings establish the relevance of appraisal practices in Nigerian hotels, the study examined a different geographical setting and did not jointly assess feedback, fairness, and performance-based rewards as predictors of employee performance.

Similarly, Ayoun et al. (2022) examined performance appraisal fairness, satisfaction, and psychological contracts among 230 hotel employees in the United States. Their structural equation modelling results showed that dimensions of organisational justice were differently associated with satisfaction with appraisal feedback, appraisal systems and employees' psychological attachment to their organisations. However, their principal outcomes concerned appraisal satisfaction and psychological contracts rather than employee performance directly.

These findings suggest that feedback can support employee development, but its relationship with performance may depend on the nature of the appraisal system and organisational context. In hospitality firms, where employees frequently respond to customer demands and service-quality expectations, constructive feedback may be particularly relevant to task accomplishment and service responsiveness. Accordingly, the present study examines whether performance appraisal feedback is significantly associated with employee performance among hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State.
H_{01}: Performance appraisal feedback has no statistically significant relationship with employee performance among hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State.

Appraisal Fairness and Employee Performance
Appraisal fairness concerns employees' perceptions of the objectivity, transparency and consistency of performance evaluation procedures and outcomes. Fair appraisal practices may strengthen employees' confidence in management and their willingness to respond positively to performance expectations. However, fairness encompasses different dimensions, including distributive, procedural and interactional justice, which may not influence employee outcomes uniformly.
Ayoun et al. (2022) investigated these relationships among 230 hotel employees in the United States. Their findings indicated that different forms of organisational justice were associated differently with appraisal satisfaction and psychological contracts. Although the study provides hospitality-specific evidence concerning the significance of fairness, it did not directly establish how appraisal fairness relates to employee task performance.
Within Nigeria, Ozigi and Onyeukwu (2022) examined appraisal fairness and employee performance among 165 employees of the Nigerian Television Authority in Abuja. Using a quantitative survey and inferential statistical analysis, the researchers found positive relationships between distributive fairness and productivity, procedural fairness and employee competence, and interactional fairness and effectiveness. Their findings support the relevance of appraisal fairness to employee performance, although the institutional context differs substantially from hospitality operations.
More recently, Nnia et al. (2026) reported a significant relationship between appraisal fairness and customer satisfaction in selected hotels in Enugu State. This finding extends the relevance of fairness to hospitality-related outcomes but does not directly establish its relationship with employee performance when feedback and rewards are considered simultaneously.
Taken together, these studies suggest that appraisal fairness is relevant to employee attitudes and organisational outcomes, although differences in settings and outcome measures limit direct comparison. The present study therefore investigates whether perceived appraisal fairness is significantly associated with employee performance among hospitality employees in Asaba.
H_{02}: Appraisal fairness has no statistically significant relationship with employee performance among hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State.

Performance-Based Rewards and Employee Performance
Performance-based rewards involve financial and non-financial incentives linked to employees' achievement of specified performance standards. Such rewards may influence performance by strengthening the perceived connection between employee contributions and valued organisational outcomes. However, their effectiveness depends on the nature of the incentives, the performance criteria employed and employees' perceptions of reward fairness (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023).
Cerasoli et al. (2014) conducted a meta-analysis of 183 studies involving 212,468 participants to examine the relationships among intrinsic motivation, extrinsic incentives and performance. Their findings showed that intrinsic motivation and extrinsic incentives were both relevant to performance, although intrinsic motivation was more strongly associated with performance quality, whereas incentives were more predictive of performance quantity. This distinction suggests that performance-based rewards may produce different outcomes depending on whether organisations prioritise productivity, service quality or broader employee effectiveness.

More directly, Marcel and Mohammad (2026) examined incentive strategies and employee performance among 335 full-time employees of three- and four-star hotels in Northeast Nigeria. Using structural equation modelling, the study reported significant positive relationships between intrinsic and extrinsic incentives and employee performance. Job satisfaction also played a mediating role, while organisational commitment moderated the relationships examined. Although the findings provide recent Nigerian hospitality evidence, the study focused on incentive strategies and their psychological mechanisms rather than the joint contribution of performance-based rewards, appraisal feedback and appraisal fairness.

These findings indicate that incentives can be associated with improved employee performance, but they also demonstrate that reward effectiveness cannot be separated entirely from employees' motivational and organisational experiences. In hospitality firms, rewards linked to service delivery and task accomplishment may encourage desirable work behaviour, whereas poorly aligned incentives may emphasise measurable output at the expense of service quality. The present study therefore examines the relationship between performance-based rewards and employee performance within the broader appraisal system.

H_{03}: Performance-based rewards have no statistically significant relationship with employee performance among hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State.

Synthesis of Empirical Evidence and Research Gap

The reviewed studies provide evidence that performance appraisal practices are relevant to employee and organisational outcomes. Nnia et al. (2026) established relationships between appraisal practices and performance-related outcomes in Nigerian hotels, while Ayoun et al. (2022) demonstrated the importance of appraisal fairness for employee attitudes in the United States. Ozigi and Onyeukwu (2022) linked different dimensions of appraisal fairness to employee performance in a Nigerian public-sector organisation. Meanwhile, Cerasoli et al. (2014) and Marcel and Mohammad (2026) demonstrated the relevance of incentives to performance, including within Nigerian hospitality organisations.

Nevertheless, the findings reveal important distinctions. First, previous studies examined different outcomes, including productivity, service quality, customer satisfaction, appraisal satisfaction, and psychological contracts. These outcomes are related but should not be treated as interchangeable measures of employee performance. Second, the reviewed studies generally emphasised particular appraisal practices or incentive mechanisms rather than assessing performance appraisal feedback, appraisal fairness and performance-based rewards together. Third, although Nigerian hospitality evidence exists, the reviewed studies do not establish the relative associations of these three practices with employee performance among hospitality employees in Asaba, Delta State.

The research gap, therefore, concerns the limited integrated and context-specific evidence on the relationships between appraisal feedback, appraisal fairness, performance-based rewards, and employee performance. Addressing this gap, the present study examines the three appraisal dimensions within a common analytical framework. This approach permits an assessment of their individual relationships with employee performance while accounting for their simultaneous inclusion in the model, thereby extending existing evidence to hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised employees working in the five selected hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State. The target population included employees occupying managerial, supervisory, and operational positions who were either directly involved in or affected by the performance appraisal practices implemented within their respective organisations. The selected hospitality establishments were Orchid Hotels, Hampton Towers and Spa, Best Western Plus Elomaz Hotel, Nelrose Hotel, and Definite Destiny Hotel. These firms were considered relevant to the study because of their structured operational arrangements

and the importance of employee performance evaluation to the effective delivery of hospitality services.

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in selecting the respondents for the study. The first stage involved the purposive selection of hospitality firms considered to have established organisational structures and performance appraisal practices that were relevant to the objectives of the study. At the second stage, employees within the selected establishments were categorised into strata according to their job positions. The principal categories consisted of managerial, supervisory, and operational employees. The use of stratification ensured that the various employee groups relevant to the study were adequately represented in the sample. The final stage involved the use of simple random sampling to select respondents from the identified employee categories. This procedure provided eligible employees with a relatively equal opportunity of being selected and helped to minimise the possibility of selecting participants based on personal preference or researcher bias. In total, 87 employees were selected, and questionnaires were administered to them.

The study made use of both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data were collected directly from employees of the selected hospitality firms through a structured questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This procedure was used to determine the extent to which the items measuring each construct demonstrated internal consistency. The results of the reliability analysis are presented in Table 3.1. The results show that each construct produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above the minimum acceptable value of 0.70 recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). The coefficients ranged from 0.855 to 0.910, indicating a high degree of internal consistency among the measurement items. On the basis of these results, the research instrument was considered sufficiently reliable for the collection and analysis of the study data.

Table 1. Internal Consistency of Study Constructs

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Performance Appraisal Feedback	0.857
Appraisal Fairness	0.883
Performance-Based Rewards	0.855
Employee Performance	0.910

Source: Authors' analysis of field survey data (2026).

The validity of the research instrument was established through face and content validity. The observations and recommendations provided during the review were carefully considered, and appropriate amendments were made to the wording, organisation, and presentation of selected items. This process helped to improve the clarity of the instrument and ensured that the questionnaire adequately represented the concepts and variables being investigated.

A total of 87 copies of the questionnaire were administered, of which 71 properly completed copies were retrieved. This represents an 81.6% response rate. The returned questionnaires were carefully examined for completeness, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis using SPSS version 26. The systematic procedure adopted for data collection helped to minimise incomplete responses and ensured that the information obtained was suitable for analysing the study variables and testing the formulated hypotheses.

The data collected from the respondents were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. Descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were employed to summarise the demographic characteristics of the respondents and describe their responses to the questionnaire items.

The hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC). This statistical technique was employed to determine the direction and strength of the

relationships between employee performance and the respective dimensions of the performance appraisal system investigated in the study.

All hypotheses were evaluated at the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected when the calculated p-value was less than 0.05. Conversely, where the p-value was greater than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

The combination of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques enabled the researcher to present the data systematically and determine whether significant relationships existed between the dimensions of performance appraisal systems and employee performance in the selected hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State.

Ethical standards were observed throughout the research process. Before the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher obtained the necessary permission from the management of the selected hospitality firms. The respondents were informed about the purpose and academic nature of the study and were made aware that participation was entirely voluntary.

Respondents were also informed that they had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study without any adverse consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the processes of data collection, processing, analysis, and reporting. No respondent was required to provide personal information that could directly disclose his or her identity.

The information obtained from the respondents was used solely for academic purposes. The researcher avoided applying pressure or offering undue inducements to secure participation. Furthermore, materials obtained from textbooks, journal articles, and other scholarly sources were appropriately acknowledged in accordance with accepted academic standards to uphold research integrity and prevent plagiarism.

RESULTS

Of 87 questionnaires administered, 71 were properly completed and analysed (81.6% usable response rate). The results below retain the descriptive and inferential values reported in the source manuscript.

Table 2. Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval

Questionnaire Status	Number	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires distributed	87	100.0
Questionnaires returned	71	81.6
Questionnaires not returned	16	18.4
Total	87	100.0

Source: Authors' analysis of field survey data (2026).

Table 3. Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	(%)	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Female	27	38.0	38.0	38.0
Male	44	62.0	62.0	100.0
Total	71	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors' analysis of field survey data (2026).

Table 4. Respondents by Age

Age Bracket	Frequency	(%)	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
18–28 years	17	23.9	23.9	23.9
28–38 years	27	38.0	38.0	62.0
38–48 years	17	23.9	23.9	85.9
48 years and above	10	14.1	14.1	100.0

Total	71	100.0	100.0

Source: Authors' analysis of field survey data (2026).

Descriptive Statistics

Table 5. Appraisal Feedback Items

Performance Appraisal Feedback Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I receive performance appraisal feedback regularly.	71	4.08	1.112
The feedback I receive clearly identifies my strengths and weaknesses.	71	4.14	1.143
Performance appraisal feedback helps me improve my job performance.	71	4.06	1.144
My supervisor provides constructive feedback after every appraisal exercise.	71	4.13	1.126
The appraisal feedback motivates me to improve my work performance.	71	4.08	1.117
Valid N (listwise)	71		

Source: Authors' analysis of field survey data (2026).

Table 6. Appraisal Fairness Items

Appraisal Fairness Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Performance appraisal in my organisation is conducted fairly.	71	4.12	1.141
Employees are assessed using objective performance standards.	71	4.07	1.144
My supervisor evaluates my performance without bias.	71	4.12	1.141
All employees are treated equally during performance appraisal.	71	4.51	1.121
The performance appraisal process is transparent.	71	4.11	1.124
Valid N (listwise)	71		

Source: Authors' analysis of field survey data (2026).

Table 7. Performance-Based Rewards Items

Performance-Based Rewards Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Outstanding job performance is rewarded in my organisation.	71	4.22	1.047
Promotions are based on employees' performance appraisal results.	71	4.19	1.142
Performance-based rewards motivate me to perform better.	71	4.16	1.147
Employees who perform well receive appropriate recognition.	71	4.21	1.143
Bonuses and incentives are linked to performance appraisal outcomes.	71	4.12	1.143
Valid N (listwise)	71		

Source: Authors' analysis of field survey data (2026).

Table 8. Employee Performance Items

Employee Performance Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I consistently achieve my work targets.	71	4.29	1.049
I complete my assigned tasks within the required time.	71	4.17	1.171
I provide quality service to customers.	71	4.14	1.145
I perform my duties efficiently with minimal supervision.	71	4.11	1.123
I willingly put extra effort into achieving organisational goals.	71	4.14	1.142
Valid N (listwise)	71		

Source: Authors' analysis of field survey data (2026).

Table 9. Bivariate Associations with Employee Performance

Appraisal dimension	Pearson r	P	N	Decision
Appraisal feedback	.697	< .001	71	Reject H01
Appraisal fairness	.654	< .001	71	Reject H02
Performance-based rewards	.797	< .001	71	Reject H03

Two-tailed Pearson correlations; outcome = employee performance. Source: Authors' analysis of field survey data (2026).

Table 9 presents the correlation between performance-based rewards and employee performance. The analysis generated a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.797$, indicating a strong positive relationship between the two variables.

The significance value of 0.000, appropriately reported as $p < 0.001$, is below the 0.05 threshold. The relationship is therefore statistically significant, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. Among the three independent variables examined, performance-based rewards produced the highest correlation coefficient with employee performance. The result suggests that employees who perceive a stronger relationship between their work performance and the rewards they receive tend to report higher levels of performance. This finding highlights the potential importance of appropriately structured recognition, incentives, bonuses, and other performance-related rewards in supporting employee performance.

Performance appraisal feedback and employee performance: There is a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between performance appraisal feedback and employee performance in hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State ($r = 0.697$, $p < 0.001$). The first null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Appraisal fairness and employee performance: Appraisal fairness has a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship with employee performance in hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State ($r = 0.654$, $p < 0.001$). Accordingly, the second null hypothesis was rejected.

Performance-based rewards and employee performance: Performance-based rewards have a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship with employee performance in hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State ($r = 0.797$, $p < 0.001$). The third null hypothesis was consequently rejected.

The findings demonstrate that all three dimensions of the performance appraisal system investigated performance appraisal feedback, appraisal fairness, and performance-based rewards have statistically significant positive relationships with employee performance. Of the three variables, performance-based rewards recorded the strongest observed relationship.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed significant positive relationships between all three performance appraisal dimensions and employee performance in selected hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State.

Performance Appraisal Feedback and Employee Performance
Performance appraisal feedback exhibited a significant positive relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.697$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that constructive and timely feedback is associated with improved employee performance. This finding aligns with Aguinis (2023) and DeNisi and Murphy (2017), who emphasised the developmental role of performance feedback. It also corroborates the empirical findings of Shen and Park (2024), Li et al. (2024), and Ezeani and Oladele (2023), which associated effective feedback with improved productivity, engagement, and service performance.

Appraisal Fairness and Employee Performance
Appraisal fairness demonstrated a significant positive relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.654$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that transparent and objective evaluations are associated with better employee performance. This finding supports Greenberg's (2011) organisational justice perspective and is consistent with Kim and Holzer (2016), Zhang et al. (2024), Nawaz et al. (2023), and Akinwale and George (2022), who linked perceived appraisal fairness with favourable employee and organisational outcomes.

Performance-Based Rewards and Employee Performance
Performance-based rewards recorded the strongest positive relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.797$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that employees who perceive rewards as appropriately linked to their contributions tend to report higher performance. This finding is consistent with Armstrong and Taylor (2023) and Judge et al. (2010), as well as the empirical studies of Chiang and Jang (2022), Ganesha et al. (2024), and Ojeleye and Okoro (2023), which associated reward practices with improved employee productivity, motivation and service outcomes.
Performance-based rewards exhibited the strongest bivariate association with employee performance, followed by appraisal feedback and appraisal fairness. These findings highlight the relevance of integrating meaningful rewards, constructive feedback and equitable appraisal procedures in hospitality management. However, given the cross-sectional and correlational design, the observed relationships should not be interpreted as causal effects or independent predictive contributions.

CONCLUSION
The study established significant positive relationships between performance appraisal feedback, appraisal fairness, performance-based rewards and employee performance in hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State. Performance-based rewards exhibited the strongest relationship, followed by appraisal feedback and fairness. These findings underscore the importance of integrating constructive feedback, transparent appraisal procedures and performance-linked rewards to support employee performance. However, given the cross-sectional design, the findings indicate associations rather than causal relationships.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the findings, hospitality firms should provide regular, constructive performance feedback, adopt transparent and consistently applied appraisal criteria, and link employee performance to meaningful financial and non-financial rewards. Management should also train supervisors in objective performance assessment, encourage employee participation in appraisal discussions, and periodically review appraisal policies to improve their effectiveness.

Contributions and Limitations
The study contributes to performance management literature by providing empirical evidence of significant positive relationships between performance appraisal practices and employee performance in hospitality firms in Asaba, Delta State. Performance-based rewards exhibited the

strongest correlation (r = 0.797), followed by appraisal feedback (r = 0.697) and appraisal fairness (r = 0.654). These findings highlight the relevance of equitable appraisal procedures, constructive feedback and performance-linked rewards to hospitality management.
However, the cross-sectional design, purposive selection of five hotels, small sample size (n = 71) and reliance on self-reported data limit causal interpretation and generalisability. Furthermore, bivariate correlation analysis did not account for potential confounding factors or within-hotel clustering. Future studies should employ larger, more representative samples, objective performance measures and multivariable analytical techniques.

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