

Impact of Performance Appraisal Strategy on Employee Productivity: Evidence from Selected Nigerian Banks

Journal of Management and
Social Sciences
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Abstract

Many organisations experience low productivity despite their acclaimed effective performance appraisal system. In Nigeria, many organisations, especially banks are experiencing low productivity and performance due to ineffective appraisal system. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the impact of performance appraisal strategy on employee performance with specific reference to selected Nigerian banks. Five banks were selected through purposive method. Judgmental sampling technique was also used to select Head of Operation, Accountant, Auditor, and Branch Manager from 5 branches of the selected banks in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. One hundred respondents served as sample size for the study. The data collection instrument for the study was structured questionnaire to elicit information. Simple percentage and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) were adopted for data analysis. Findings show that the overall assessment of performance appraisal in Nigerian banks has a significant impact on employee performance and also reveals that most Nigerian banks make use of the ranking method to assess their staff. Consequently, the study recommends that bank authorities should not appraise the performance of employees based on the deposit target, but on their accomplished duties and responsibilities.

Keywords

Performance, appraisal, employee, ranking, MBO, Nigerian banks

Introduction

Banks perform a pivotal role in capital formation, which is essential for the economic development of a country. They act not only as the custodian of the wealth of the country but also as resources of the country, which is necessary

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for the economic development of a nation (Asamu, 2013). The general role of commercial banks is to provide financial services to the general public and business, ensuring economic and social stability and sustainable growth of the economy. Globally, there is no nation that can experience sustainable development without a sound financial system. In Nigeria, the banking sector has witnessed several cases of collapses due to inadequate supervisory structures, as there were cases of official recklessness amongst managers, and the industry was notorious for financial abuse due to unethical practices, insider abuses, poor quality services and employment of unqualified staff and unhealthy competitions (Asamu, 2013).

In order to checkmate the aforementioned ugly trend, the federal government via regulatory agencies such as Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) launched a modern corporate governance initiative, which is in line with international standard-setting agencies such as the International Organisation of Securities Commission (IOSCO), the World Bank, the OECO and the United Nations to emphasize the need to harmonize and upgrade accounting standards, enhance the accountability of boards/management of corporate organizations, timely and accurate disclosure of performances. In spite of this promising and commendable policy initiative, most of the banks are still vulnerable to distressed, while some explore mergers and acquisitions as coping strategies to survive the hardship in the operational context. This is evidenced by the revocation of the operating license of Skye Bank by Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) coupled with the current merger and acquisition proposal between Access Bank and Diamond Bank. In addition, recently, the CBN report reveals that the nine banks suffer a decline in interest income ranging from 7.8 percent to 29.6 percent of their interest income in the 2018 operating year.

Performance appraisal strategy is one of the Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP) that has been well researched in both developed and developing countries and it has equally been identified as a strong motivator for employees' performance (Sajuyigbe, 2017). Igbojekwe and Ugo-Okoro (2015) have shown that performance appraisal has emerged as a tool for enhancing organisational growth and professional development. Performance appraisal is a continuous process through which performance of employees is identified, measured and improved in the organization. According to Muhammad and Surayya (2013), performance appraisal is considered an important human resource function because performance appraisal results are used for managerial decision making and for variety of other purposes including administrative decisions, employee development and personnel research. Fletcher (2001) also notes that performance appraisal has increasingly become part of a more strategic approach to integrating human resources activities and business policies which can be seen as a generic term covering a variety of activities through which organizations seek to assess employees and develop their competence, enhance performance and distribute rewards. This

process includes various practices like identification of employees' strengths and weaknesses, providing them with regular feedback and offering career development (Aguinis, 2007). Organizations can only win a competitive advantage through people (Sajuyigbe, 2017). Equally, Tsetim, Diaka and Loveday (2018) reiterate that to thrive in this competitive age, banks in Nigeria need to continuously improve quality, attract more customers, and become more cost-conscious. In other words, banks need to better manage their performance appraisal scheme and increase employee commitment and performance (Tsetim, Diaka & Loveday, 2018).

Statement of Problem, Objectives and Research Questions

Many organisations experience low productivity despite their acclaimed effective performance appraisal system (Armstrong, 2006). In Nigeria, many organisations, especially banks are experiencing low productivity and performance due to ineffective appraisal system. In line with this observation, Tsetim, Diaka and Loveday (2018) observe that in spite of the efforts and resources devoted to the implementation of various performance appraisal systems in Nigeria, employee productivity has been deteriorating considerably and in recent times, the banking sector in Nigeria has embarked on massive retrenchment. Performance appraisal is viewed and conducted solely in terms of its evaluative aspect thereby overlooking its use for facilitating growth and development in workers through training, coaching, counselling and feedback of appraisal information (Asamu, 2013). The inability of many organisations to install an effective performance appraisal strategy has hindered them from achieving competitive advantage (Obisi, 2011). However, some employees see appraisal results as not being fair to them (Cowandy, 2014).

It is on the strength of these that this study intends to examine the impact of the Performance Appraisal System on employee performance of the selected banks in Nigeria.

The following questions shall guide the study:

- i. How effective is performance appraisal implemented in Nigerian banks?
- ii. What are the performance appraisal strategies being used in Nigerian banks?
- iii. To what extent does performance appraisal strategy impact on employee performance?

However, the following specific objectives were considered:

- i. to determine whether performance appraisal is implemented effectively and efficiently in Nigerian banks.
- ii. to identify the performance appraisal strategies being used in Nigerian banks.

- iii. to examine the impact of performance appraisal strategy on employee performance.

Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis is formulated in null form for this study:

H₀: Performance appraisal strategy has no significant impact on employee performance.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal has come a long way as far back as World War 1. W.D Scott came up with the idea of performance appraisal and was formally established in the mid-1950s with a personality based system widely used (Anso, 2014). In the 1960s, the establishment of management by objective moved the emphasis on goal setting and the assessment of performance-related abilities while in the 1970s appraisal practices became more open to studying and this resulted in increased research into rating scales (Anso, 2014). In the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of performance management came into existence as an approach for measuring and evaluating performance and as organisations evolved and became larger with professional management (Anso, 2014). According to Soltani, Gennard, Van Der Meer and Williams (2004), performance appraisal has moved from just being a tool for measuring performance to a tool for self-development. Gupta and Kumar (2012) see performance appraisal as a process of assessment of individual employee's performance and how it can be improved to contribute to the overall organisation's efficiency. In a similar study, Tsai and Wang (2013) also see performance appraisal as one of the most critical tools for managers to assess the performance of employees. Cheng (2013) elucidates the importance of performance appraisal in human resource management practices. He asserts that performance appraisal brings about the availability of data that influences key decision making processes by the human resources department with respect to actions and outcomes. Performance appraisal, therefore, is a major tool for managing human resource.

Benefits of Performance Appraisal

Malcolm and Jackson (2002) summarise the benefits of performance appraisal to the organisation as an effective basis for the retention of employees, reward decisions, targeted training based on identified needs and future employee promotion decisions. Schraeder and Lindsay (2006) suggest some additional benefits like identifying unproductive work practices, identifying potential problems, which are hindering the growth of the organisation and detecting

talented employees and future leaders of the organisation. Conversely, Farmer and Van Dyne (2010) stress its need for updating personnel records, revisiting job description while Aldakhilallah and Parente (2002) discuss PA benefits in terms of transfers. Behery and Patron (2008) assert that PA helps the organisation to certify promotion and demotion. Jønsson and Jeppesen (2012) relate the benefits of PA to effective commitment on the part of the employees. They opine that employees can influence the growth of the organisation through commitment leveraged by the effective relationship between individuals including supervisor-subordinate relationships.

Challenges of Performance Appraisal

Iles and Zhang (2013) identify the challenge of cultural differences in performance appraisal in terms of the attitude of extrinsic rewards, group performance, specific formal appraisal methods, and employee involvement. They suggest that it can pose a challenge because employees in a collectivist culture prefer teamwork rather than individual appraisal and are uncomfortable with direct face to face feedback or criticism. In another study, Walters (1995) summarises some of the challenges faced by performance appraisal process in an organisation as top managements inability to determine evaluation criteria in—quantifiable terms, lack of competence and expertise in carrying out appraisal objectively, error in appraisals due to bias like stereotyping and employee resistance due to lack of clarity about the purpose and the process of the appraisal. In the same vein, Bekele et al. (2014) argue that performance appraisal practice has been criticised due to lack of skills and knowledge of the supervisors, the subjectivity, favouritism and bias of the supervisors, lack of continuous documentation and inability to provide on-time feedback. Employees' perception towards the performance appraisal system is adversely affected and they express dissatisfaction about the implementation of performance appraisal practice (DeNisi & Pritchard, 2006). Previous studies also identify five different types of problems in performance appraisal such as an unfair perception of performance appraisal system, the use of inconsistent criteria which may lead to a negative attitude towards the appraisal system, unskilled appraisers who lack communication skills and consequently are not able to conduct effective performance feedback, absence of tools aiming at improving the performance appraisal system and finally the lack of the senior management support (Muhammad & Suraya, 2013; Armstrong, 2006).

Concept of Employee Performance

Performance is a multi-component concept and on the fundamental level one can distinguish the process aspect of performance, that is, behavioural engagements from an expected outcome (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993).

Performance in the form of *task performance* comprises job explicit behaviours which include fundamental job responsibilities assigned as a part of the job description. Task performance requires more cognitive ability and is primarily facilitated through task knowledge (requisite technical knowledge or principles to ensure job performance and having an ability to handle multiple assignments), task skill (application of technical knowledge to accomplish the task successfully without much supervision), and task habits (an innate ability to respond to assigned jobs that either facilitate or impede the performance) (Conway, 1999). Therefore, the primary antecedents of task performance are the ability to do the job and prior experience. In an organisational context, task performance is a contractual understanding between a manager and a subordinate to accomplish an assigned task. Entrusted task performance is broken into two segments: technical-administrative task performance and leadership task performance. The expected job performance comprising of planning, organising, and administering the day-to-day work through one's technical ability, business judgment and so on are called administrative task performance. Rabindra and Lalatendu (2017) identify key constructs on employee performance as indicated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Constructs on Employee Performance

Kennedy, Lassk & Burns (2001)	Work role empowerment, Behavior toward customers, and Teamwork
Borman et al. (2001)	Conscientious initiative and Personal and organizational support
McCook (2002)	The perceived effort, Satisfaction with co-workers, and Opportunity for reward
Parker, Williams & Turner (2006)	Proactive work behavior, Problem-solving, and Idea implementation
Griffin et al. (2007)	Individual task proficiency, Individual task adaptivity, Individual task proactivity, Team member task proficiency, Team member task adaptivity, Team member task proactivity, Organizational task proficiency, Organizational task adaptivity, and Organizational task proactivity
Schepers (2011)	Work performance and Disciplined effort
Audrey & Patrice (2012)	Creativity, Reactivity in the face of difficulties, Interpersonal adaptableness, Training efforts, and Handling work-related stress
Koopmans, Berhnaards, Hildebrandt, Vet & Berk (2014)	Task performance, Contextual performance, and Counterproductive work behavior

Source: Authors' compilation

Empirical Review

There is a plethora of studies on the relationship between appraisal performance and employee performance but their findings are conflicting and inconclusive. For instance, Tsetim, Diaka and Loveday (2018) examine the effects of performance appraisal standard, performance appraisal communication, performance appraisal feedback and corrective action on

organisational commitment in First Bank of Nigeria Plc. The study adopted a survey design and one hundred and fifty-two (152) employees were purposively served with the instrument of data collection. Data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The questionnaire was the main research instrument used in collecting the primary data for the study. Out of the 152 questionnaires distributed, 141 valid questionnaires were retrieved for analysis. The hypotheses were tested using regression at a 5% level of significance. Findings revealed that performance appraisal standard, performance appraisal communication, performance feedback and corrective action all have significant positive effects on organisational efficiency.

Sajuyigbe (2017) examines the impact of the performance appraisal system on employee's performance in the Telecommunication sector. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select 260 respondents from employees of MTN Nigeria. The result established that the performance appraisal system has a significant impact on employee's performance. Zafrullah and Irfanullah (2017) carried out a study focusing on the association between performance evaluation and employees' performance and motivation as a moderator. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) employees of banks were surveyed. Regression analysis indicated that all the research variables are significantly and positively associated with each other. Mollel, Mulongo and Razia (2017) investigated the influence of performance appraisal management practices on employee productivity in Muheza District in Tanzania. A sample of 339 employees participated in the study through a questionnaire and interview. The findings of this study highlight that performance appraisal tools such as recognition and feedback are vital to employee's performance and indeed influence employee productivity in the organisation. The empirical review demonstrates how different scholars examine the effect of performance appraisal on employee productivity and organisational commitment in particular.

Agyare, Yuhui, Mensah, Aidoo and Ansah (2016) investigated the impact of performance appraisal on the job satisfaction and commitment of employees. The study used a descriptive research design. Stratified random sampling was used to sample 200 respondents from Microfinance organisations in Ghana. The study used questionnaires as its data collection instrument. The study revealed that employees' job satisfaction is positively related to and impacted by fairness in the appraisal system, linking appraisals with promotion, clarity of roles and feedback about their performance. Nabi, Syduzzaman and Munir (2016) conducted research which sought to examine, investigate and analyse the impact of human resource management practices on performance appraisal, job satisfaction, absenteeism and turnover, training and motivation, teamwork, and employee participation. Results from regression analysis showed that the outcomes of human resource management practices positively and significantly correlated with performance appraisal. Girma, Lodesso and Sorsa (2016) explored the effect of performance appraisal process

on employee performance in Hawassa university administrative staff. A descriptive research design was employed. The findings revealed that there are positive and significant relationships between independent and dependent variables. That is, establishing performance standards, communicating established standards, measuring actual performance and comparison with standards, discussing the appraisal and giving feedback and indicating corrective action with employee performance. Wanjala and Kimutai (2015) explored the influence of performance appraisal on employee performance in commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A total of 178 research subjects were drawn from the target population using the stratified and the simple random sampling technique. The findings show that there is a significant relationship between performance appraisal and a worker's performance. Maimona (2011) and Ojokuku (2013) also affirmed that performance appraisal has a significant impact on employee's motivation and performance.

However, Akinyele (2010) investigated the performance appraisal systems in private Universities in Nigeria. His findings revealed that the performance appraisal system has not impacted positively on employee's motivation and performance. Greenberg (2003) and McShane and Von Glinow (2000) also noted that a formal performance appraisal programme sometimes yields disappointing results. The primary reasons include lack of top management information and support.

Methodology

Survey research design and snowball technique were used because the survey is relatively easy to administer and can be developed in less time.

Five banks (Zenith Bank, First Bank Plc, UBA, Access Bank and Guaranty Trust Bank) were selected through the purposive method. Judgmental sampling technique was also used to select Head of Operation, Accountant, Auditor, and Branch Manager from five (5) branches of the selected banks in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. One hundred respondents served as sample size for the study. The choice of these banks is premised on the fact that they are five banks ranked by the Central Bank of Nigeria to hold over 60% of their total assets and also they are first set of banks to meet the required minimum shareholders fund of N25billion (CBN, 2015).

Structured questionnaire were used to elucidate information from the list of respondents. Face and content validity of the questionnaire was assumed through comments from experts in measurement and evaluation, while their constructive criticisms, advice, and suggestions were considered to ensure the validity of the instrument. Simple percentage and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) were adopted for data analysis.

Mathematical Model

Employee Performance = f (Performance Appraisal)

$$\text{Employee Performance} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{appraisal}_i + e_i$$

Where;

β_0 = intercept

β_1 = regression coefficient

e_i = stochastic error term

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

Table 2: Rating of the Overall Assessment of Performance Appraisal

Variable	Respondents	Percentage of Responses
Outstanding	8	8%
Very Good	15	15%
Good	42	42%
Satisfactory	25	25%
Poor	10	10%
Total	100	100

Source: Field Survey 2019

In order to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of performance appraisal, respondents were asked to indicate the rating of the overall assessment of performance appraisal. Table 2 depicts that majority of the respondents agreed that the overall assessment of performance appraisal in their various banks is good with 42(42%). The 25(25%) indicates satisfactory, 15(15%) of the respondents indicated very good, and 10(10%) indicated poor. This implies that Nigerian banks should seek to enhance their employees' motivation in terms of job security, pay satisfaction, confirmation of contract staff, and career development so that they become satisfied with the performance appraisal system. In line with this observation, Boswell and Boudreau (2002) argue that performance appraisal system could only be satisfactory if organisations motivate their employees in promotion of job security, promotion pay satisfaction, detailed and valuable feedback, and career progression. Bekele *et al.* (2014) also find that people experience outstanding performance appraisal when organisations create trust on the mind of employee about performance appraisal, establishing organisational plans for the career and development of employee and providing an opportunity to the employee to suggest improvement in the ways things are done. In another study, Muhammad and Suraya (2013) aver that performance appraisal system is not only an important tool of human resource management to develop their employees, but is also used by different companies to reward their employees in form of bonuses, promotion, and pay raise.

Table 3: Performance Appraisal Methods Used in Nigerian Banks

Variable	Respondents	Percentage
Ranking method	70	70
Management by objective	30	30
Essay method	-	-
Critical incident method	-	-
Other	-	-

Source: Field Survey 2019

From table 3, it can be deduced that the majority of respondents in the study area were assessed by using management by objective and ranking method respectively. The data gathered from the field revealed that 70(70%) were assessed by ranking method while 30(30%) were assessed by management by objective. This implies that most of Nigerian banks make use of the ranking method to assess their staff. This method of performance appraisal has been heavily criticised. With this type of performance appraisal, managers pitch similar employees against one another using person-to-person comparisons. Hence, when employees know they are pitched against one another, they may engage in risky or unethical behaviour to beat out the competition. For example, employees may refuse to collaborate, share ideas, or help their colleagues. They might cheat, sabotage co-workers, hoard resources or steal another's ideas and pass them off as their own. This may be the reason why the sector is witnessing several cases of official recklessness amongst managers, financial abuse due to unethical practices, insider abuses, poor quality services and unhealthy competitions.

Table 4: Impact of performance appraisal strategy on Employee Performance in Nigerian banks

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
1	.766 ^a	.587	.583	.38321	2.956	
Model	Sum of Squares		Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.449	1	20.449	139.254	.000 ^b
	Residual	14.391	98	.147		
	Total	34.840	99			
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.314	.269		4.879	.000
	Performance Appraisal	.715	.061	.766	11.801	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Table 4 shows that strategic outsourcing ($F = 139.254$; $\beta = 0.766$; $t = 11.801$; $P < 0.005$) has positive and significant effect on employee performance. Results also indicate that performance appraisal strategy has 58.73% decisive effect on employee performance. This implies that the performance appraisal strategy is a strong predictor of employee performance. The import of this result is that the implementation of an effective performance appraisal strategy in Nigerian banks may enhance employee performance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Many organisations experience low productivity despite their acclaimed effective performance appraisal system. In Nigeria, many organisations especially banks are experiencing low productivity and performance due to ineffective appraisal system. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the impact of performance appraisal strategy on employee performance with specific reference to selected Nigerian banks. Five banks were selected through the purposive method. Judgmental sampling technique was also used to select Head of Operation, Accountant, Auditor and Branch Manager from five (5) branches each of the selected banks in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria, totalling 100 respondents as a sample size for the study. The data collection instruments for the study were structured questionnaires. Simple percentage and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) were adopted for data analysis.

The study establishes that an overall assessment of performance appraisal in Nigerian banks is average. This implies that management of Nigerian banks should seek to enhance its employee’s motivation in terms of job security, pay satisfaction, confirmation of contract staff, and career development so that they

become satisfied toward the performance appraisal system. The study also confirms that most of Nigerian banks make use of the ranking method to assess their staff. The study, therefore, concludes that the performance appraisal strategy has a positive and significant impact on employee performance.

Against the background of the foregoing, the study recommends as follows:

- i. That the bank authority should not appraise the performance of employees based on deposit target but on their accomplished duties and responsibilities.
- ii. That the bank authority should arrange extensive training and motivational session for the employees in order to explain the significance of the evaluation program so that employees may get information about the ways of successfully participating in the evaluation program.
- iii. That the bank authority should develop a uniform performance appraisal strategy and should form a performance evaluation committee by the Head of the branch and Head of the respective department of the branch to conduct the evaluation program with more authentically.

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