

# Impact of Appraisal Process and Effective Measurement of Employees' Performances among Ekiti State Civil Servants

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**Abstract:** This study examined the appraisal processes and the effective measurement of employees' performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The population for the study is made up of the entire 8,827 civil servants in the ministries, departments and agencies of Ekiti State, Nigeria. Kumaran model (1976) was used to draw a sample size of 383 respondents. Structured questionnaire was administered on the respondents. Out of the 383 copies of questionnaire sent out, 305 were returned. Data collected were analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. Testing for hypothesis 1, the value of correlation coefficient;  $r$  was 0.793 indicating a strong, significant and positive relationship between performance appraisal process and measurement of employees' performance at 0.05 level of significance. The r-Square value for the model showed that 62.8 percent ( $R^2=0.628$ ) of the variance in the measurement of employees' performances can be predicted from the independent variable (appraisal process). The Durbin-Watson statistics stood at 1.760 which confirmed the absence of serial autocorrelation in the due to large sample. The  $t$  and  $p$ -values showed that appraisal process had significant effect on the measurement of employees' performances ( $t=22.640$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The  $t$  and  $p$ -values showed that the variable (performance appraisal process) significantly predicts the dependent variable-employees' performance ( $F=512.568$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

**Keywords:** Performance Appraisal, Employees' Performance, Employee Measurement.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Performance Appraisal is one of the most important and yet one of the most difficult tasks that manager's face. It is very difficult to evaluate a person's performance and even more difficult to convey that judgment to him or her. Performance appraisal and objective assessment of subordinate officers have remained a troublesome cleft in Nigeria public sector. This work is an attempt to reconcile and resolve the troublesome cleft: first, through proper academic clarification of both concepts for better understanding and appreciation by the users and scholars, secondly, through explication of some other related relevant concepts such as performance, performance standards and performance evaluation and finally, through identification of problems associated with objective assessment of subordinate officers and suggestions for making performance appraisal a tool to management. According to Obisi (1996), in today's competitive economy characterized by risk-taking, organizations, must survive and the key to such survival is revitalized human resources. Neither billions of naira nor the-state-of-the-art technology and machines can do the miracle if human resource is neglected and forgotten. Employees who have what it takes, he continued: that is skills, talents, capabilities, experience, qualification, and genuine work culture, which are problem solvers, are not readily available. However, a lot of studies have been carried out on performance appraisal and most of these studies have conflicting results, which can be attributed to difference in culture, environmental factors and social stratification. Studies like Sundra (2003) which concluded that the success or failure of any performance appraisal is attributed to a three sets of criteria; Aharon Tziner et. al (2005). According to the findings of the study, attitudes and beliefs accounts for substantial variance in rater's likelihood of giving high or low ratings, willingness to discriminate good from poor performers, and willingness to discriminate among various aspects of job performance when completing actual performance ratings; Skarlicki and Folger (1997) suggest that the appraisal process can become a source of extreme dissatisfaction when employees believe the system is biased, political or irrelevant. The researchers found that frequency of evaluation, identification of goals to eliminate weaknesses, and supervisory knowledge of a subordinate's level of performance and job duties were significantly related to perceptions of fairness and accuracy of performance appraisal. Furthermore, despite the ever-increasing amount of research on performance

appraisal, including its characteristics, processes, employee satisfaction with the system and process, attitudes and perceptions of employees toward various aspects of performance appraisal systems, there has been a noticeable lack of empirical studies on performance appraisal process and effective measurement of employees' performance (Pooyan & Eberhardt 1989). Most of these studies have been conducted in developed countries while relatively few have concentrated on developing countries (Mamman & Sulaiman, 1996). Given the inadequacy of literature performance appraisal objectivity and employees' attitudes to work in the public sector in developing countries, in general, and Nigeria in particular, the present study attempts to fill this gap in the literature.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Meaning and Definition of Performance Appraisal:**

Before defining performance appraisal, one has to know what Performance management is. Therefore, according to Armstrong (2009), performance management is a systematic process for improving organizational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams. It is a means of getting better results by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and competency requirements. Performance management is concerned with: aligning individual objectives to organizational objectives and encouraging individuals to uphold corporate core values; enabling expectations to be defined and agreed in terms of role responsibilities and accountabilities (expected to do), skills (expected to have) and behaviors (expected to be); providing opportunities for individuals to identify their own goals and develop their skills and competencies (Armstrong, 2009). Most organizations throughout the world regardless of whether they are large or small, public or private, service or manufacturing, use performance appraisal, with varying degrees of success, as a tool to achieve a variety of human resource management objectives. Organizations use different tools and have a number of goals for performance appraisals, often resulting in some confusion as to the true purpose of performance appraisal systems.

### **2.2 Performance Appraisal in Nigerian Civil Service:**

The Nigerian civil service comprises of all Nigerian government employees other than the military, most employees are career civil servants, progressing through the ranks on the basis of qualifications and seniority. Section 227 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) defines the Civil Service as the "Service of the Federation in a civil capacity, as staff of the office of the president, the Vice President, a ministry or department of the Government of the Federation assigned with the responsibility for any business of the Government of the Federation" (FRN, 1999). In essence, the civil service was set up to carry out Government business and to render loyal service to any administration without prejudice and insulated established for the implementation. This depicts that Nigerians look up to the civil service in terms of formulating development strategies, policies and programs in such a way that will stimulate social and economic change.

The Nigerian civil service has five basic functions, namely policy (1) implementation; provision of inputs for policy formulation, investigative and regulations, ensuring continuity of public administration and informative function (office of Head Service of the Federation, 2009). The Nigerian Institute of Personnel Management defined performance appraisal as a method of stock taking that presents an opportunity to review individual performance quarterly, half-yearly or in most cases annually. Gilbert (2010) asserts that before 1979, Confidential Reporting System was used in the Civil Service where appraisal was done in secret and appraisals were not informed about the result or outcome of the evaluation. However, following the Udoji report of 1974, the open reporting system and management by objectives (MBO) techniques were introduced as part of the recommendation for the reform of the civil service system. This brought about major change in evaluation system whereby employees read and agree to whatever has been written on him and also has the right to challenge the rating by his superior officer. The panel also recommended continuous job evaluation and grading, unfortunately all the recommendations regarding performance evaluation criteria were partially or haphazardly implemented.

The civil service adopted the Annual Performance Evaluation Report System (APER) based on the Udoji report of 1979. The APER system is an annual evaluation procedure whereby employee's work ethics, skills and capabilities are assessed for the suitability of promotion and training (Mustapha, 2008). However, it is merely in theory rather than practice because most promotions especially to managerial cadre, trainings and job placement are based on political affiliation, nepotism, tribalism, or favoritism. This practice leads to poor performance and ineffectiveness within the civil service. As confirmed by Echu, (2010) that job appointment and promotions may not necessarily be based on competency and

qualification. Furthermore, the public Service Review commission main report (2004) asserts that “That present Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER) system is unreliable as a mean of assessment of an officer’s performance”. The report further stated that the system is cumbersome and complicated; lacks objectivity and the measures are not always quantifiable.

### **2.3 Performance Evaluation Process in the Civil Service:**

In addition, Mustapha, (2008) affirms that some of the challenges facing the effective implementation of the APER system includes but not limited inefficient feedback mechanisms, poor objectivity, lack of training and knowledge on the role of the appraisal structure, and fear of reprisals in case of adverse reports. This was further confirm by Gibert, (2006) when he identified the factors responsible for the ineffective appraisal system including lack of proper understanding; lack of objectivity and courage by the supervisors; desire to give close friends and relations more advantage over others; and ignorance of mission of the organization.

Furthermore, subjective appraisals may arise due to the annual evaluation of employees because the superiors may have forgotten certain aspects of the performance which failed to be recorded. This is confirmed by Dodgarawa, (2011) when he states that one of the main problems of performance rating is periodic appraisal which is often influence by recent significant behavior rather than collective past effective and ineffective behaviors. Moreover, Mustapha, (2010) suggests that appraisal should be conducted continuously by direct superiors for maximum measurement of outputs rather than just inputs. This issue of favouritism was noted by Gibert either due to personal relationships, or tribalism thereby making the system lose its credibility.

## **3. EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Greenberg (1986) studied 217 private sector middle managers and asked them on an open-ended questionnaire what single factor made a recent performance evaluation fair or unfair. Factor analysis of the results indicated that soliciting employee input, two-way performance interview communication, and the ability to challenge or rebut the performance ratings account for a significant proportion of the variance in perceived efficacy of the performance appraisal system.

In a study of 367 Washington state government employees, Lovrich, Shaffer, Hopkins and Yale (1980), found that both ratees (58 percent) and raters (71 percent) believed that participative performance appraisal was a fairer way of conducting appraisals than non-participative methods. They also found that, if given a choice, raters and ratees would choose participative performance appraisal over a non-participative type of system.

Scholtes (1999) observes that despite the various uses of performance appraisal such as its uses as a valuable and essential tool in organization improvement, it provides a comprehensive overview of the practices and key components in performance appraisal processes such as feedback, learning, and teamwork in the performance appraisal process, most people still lack confidence in the whole process. He based his argument on the survey conducted in 1996 by the Society for human resource management that found out that over 90% of performance appraisal has been unsuccessful which is due largely to the feedback received from the process and he equally pointed out that this problem cannot be fixed. For more than fifty years, performance appraisal has been firmly outlined as a personnel management activity aimed at measuring employees performance. (Grote, 1996).

According to Rasch (2004) the process of performance appraisal is designed to address problem behaviours and there is an underling assumption that all employees in an organization must undergo this appraisal to address the problem.

Ahmed (1999) investigated the measure of effectiveness that a state agency uses to assess its performance appraisal function. Some of the criteria for assessment as suggested by the respondents included impact on employee motivation, employee satisfaction with the system, employee's perception regarding fairness and objectivity, and the degree to which it provides adequate and valuable feedback.

Gabris and Ihrke (2000) reported that leadership credibility of immediate supervisors is significantly associated with whether employees perceive performance appraisal systems as procedurally fair and instrumentally just and appropriate. Their study of county government professionals explored this issue as well as related issues of job burnout, job satisfaction, manager innovation and cooperation between organizational units. Boswell and Boudreau (2000) found a significant positive relation between employee attitudes and procedurally just performance appraisals and underscored the importance employees place on fairness.

**3.1 Methods:**

According to Singh (2006), research design is essentially a statement of the object of the inquiry and the strategies for collecting the evidences, analyzing the evidences and reporting the findings.” The purpose of this research is to know “performance appraisal objectivity and employees’ attitudes to work in Ekiti State civil service”. Therefore, quantitative research method will be used to approach the study subjects. Probability – proportional - size sampling approach will be used to distribute the questionnaires to the respondents. Considering the subjectivity of performance appraisal, a 5 point scale Likert – scale research instrument ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) will be adopted. By implication, required data shall be gathered from questionnaires administered on the respondents

**3.1.1 Population of the Study:**

The actual research was conducted on Ekiti State Civil Servants. Ekiti State Civil Service has about seventy five (75) Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) (Returns submitted to Office of Establishment Ekiti State) which comprises of 8,827.

**3.1.2 Sampling Size and Sampling Techniques:**

*Sampling Size:*

The population of the study is 8827 civil servants. Selecting sample from this population, statistical formula formulated by Taro Yamane (1967), was used.

The formula is stated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = anticipated samples

N = population size

e = acceptable error term (0.5)

The sample size is calculated thus:

$$n = \frac{8827}{1 + 8827(.05)^2}$$

$$n = 383$$

From the above calculation, the sample size of the study was 383 respondents.

**3.1.3 Method of Data Collection:**

Primary data was used in this research work. The data was gathered with the use of structured questionnaire which was administered among the staff of 15 selected MDAs. The main reason for this is to generate direct data from Ekiti State Civil Servants with a view of ascertaining the effect of performance appraisal objectivity on their work attitude.

**3.1.4 Method of Data Analyses:**

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistical technique such as frequency distributions, percentages correction and simple regression analysis. Regression analysis was used to test all the hypotheses

**4. RESULTS**

Does appraisal process actually measures employees’ performance in Ekiti State civil service?

**Table 1.1: Measurement of employees’ actual performance through appraisal process**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	MEAN
1	The performance appraisal instrument has accurate and clear standards and measures.	85 27.9%	189 62.0%	18 5.9%	9 3.0%	4 1.3%	4.12
2	The performance appraisal instrument has clear and valid measures of job related activities.	89 29.2%	178 58.4%	14 4.6%	20 6.6%	4 1.3%	4.08

3	The performance appraisal instrument accurately measures what I do on my job.	85 27.9%	164 53.8%	24 7.9%	27 8.9%	5 1.6%	3.97
4	The performance appraisal process results in better communication between me and my supervisor.	100 32.8%	159 52.1%	18 5.9%	23 7.5%	5 1.6%	4.07
5	The performance appraisal is well designed and leads to better performance and work quality.	93 30.5%	160 52.5%	25 8.2%	21 6.9%	6 2.0%	4.03
6	I would be willing to participate in developing a new performance appraisal system.	94 30.8%	132 43.3%	40 13.1%	36 11.8%	3 1.0%	3.91
7	Participation of employees in the development of performance standards leads to a better performance appraisal instrument.	116 38.0%	152 49.8%	22 7.2%	12 3.9%	3 1.0%	4.20
8	I feel comfortable with the scales used to evaluate performance.	67 22.0%	160 52.5%	41 13.4%	30 9.8%	7 2.3%	3.82
9	I feel that scales allow an accurate assessment of different dimensions of performance.	63 20.7%	154 50.5%	52 17.0%	24 7.9%	12 3.9%	3.76
10	The existing form is too complex.	45 14.8%	82 26.9%	61 20.0%	86 28.2%	31 10.2%	3.08
11	The performance appraisal process results in a clear and unbiased appraisal.	60 19.7%	143 46.9%	59 19.3%	31 10.2%	12 3.9%	3.68

Table 1.1 revealed that 85 respondents representing 27.9% of the total sample strongly agreed that the performance appraisal instrument has accurate and clear standards and measures, 189(62%) agreed, 19(5.9%) undecided, 4(1.3%) disagreed while 4(1.3%) strongly disagreed.

89(29.2%) strongly agreed that the performance appraisal instrument has clear and valid measures of job related activities, 178(58.4%) agreed, 14(4.6%) undecided, 20(6.6%) disagreed and 4(1.3%) strongly disagreed. 85(27.9%) respondents strongly agreed that the performance appraisal instrument accurately measures their job performance, 164(53.8%) agreed, 24(7.9%) undecided, 27(8.9%) disagreed while 5(1.6%) strongly disagreed.

On whether the performance appraisal process results in better communication between subordinate and supervisor, 100(32.8%) respondents strongly agreed, 159(52.1%) agreed, 18(5.9%) undecided, 23(7.5%) disagreed while 5(1.6%) strongly disagreed.

93(30.5%) strongly agreed that performance appraisal is well designed and leads to better performance and work quality, 160(52.5%) agreed, 25(8.2%) undecided, 21(6.9%) disagreed while 6(2%) strongly disagreed.

On whether they would be willing to participate in developing a new performance appraisal system, 94(30.8%) strongly agreed, 132(43.3%) agreed, 40(13.1%) undecided, 36(11.8%) disagreed while 3(1%) strongly disagreed.

116(38%) strongly agreed that participation of employees in the development of performance standards leads to a better performance appraisal instrument, 152(49.8%) agreed, 22(7.2%) undecided, 12(3.9%) disagreed while 3(1%) strongly disagreed.

On whether the employees are comfortable with the scales used to evaluate performance, 67(22%) strongly agreed, 160(52.5%) agreed, 41(13.4%) undecided, 30(9.8%) disagreed while 7(2.3%) strongly disagreed.

63(20.7%) strongly agreed that scales allow an accurate assessment of different dimensions of performance, 154(50.5%) agreed 24(7.9%) disagreed, 12(3.9%) strongly disagreed while 61(20%) were indifferent.

45(14.8%) strongly agreed that the existing form is too complex, 82(26.9%) agreed, 61(20%) undecided, 86(28.2%) disagreed while 31(10.2%) strongly disagreed.

The result further revealed that 60(19.7%) strongly agreed that the performance appraisal process results in a clear and unbiased appraisal, 143(46.9%) agreed, 59(19.3%) undecided, 31(10.2%) disagreed while 12(3.9%) strongly disagreed.

Using a cut mean score 3.00 for the rating scale, all the items indicated mean scores above the cutoff mean. This implies that appraisal process measures employees' performance in Ekiti State civil service.

#### Testing of Research Hypotheses:

This section deals with the testing of research hypotheses in the study using Ordinary Least Square (OLS) method of Regression. All the research hypotheses were tested at 0.05level of significance.

**Hypothesis 1**

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** Appraisal process has no significant effect on the measurement of employees’ performances.

**HI<sub>1</sub>:** Appraisal process has a significant effect on the measurement of employees’ performances.

**Table 1.2(a): Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.793 <sup>a</sup>	.628	.627	5.252	1.760

a. Predictors: (Constant), Performance Appraisal process

b. Dependent Variable: Employees' performances

The overall predictability of the model is shown in Table 1.2(a), it can be seen that the r-Square value for the model showed that 62.8 percent ( $R^2=0.628$ ) of the variance in the measurement of employees’ performances can be predicted from the independent variable (appraisal process). The remaining 37.2% unexplained variance in employees’ performance was largely due other variables outside the regression model which are otherwise included in the stochastic error term. The value of correlation coefficient; r was 0.793 indicating a strong, significant and positive relationship between performance appraisal process and measurement of employees’ performance at 0.05 level of significance. The Durbin-Watson statistics stood at 1.760 which confirmed the absence of serial autocorrelation in the due to large sample.

**Table 1.2(b): ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14137.687	1	14137.687	512.568	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	8357.375	303	27.582		
	Total	22495.062	304			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Performance Appraisal process

b. Dependent Variable: Employees' performances

Table 1.2(b) above presents the ANOVA report on the general significance of the model. As p is less than 0.05, the model is significant. Thus, the variable (performance appraisal process) significantly predicts the dependent variable-employees’ performance ( $F=512.568$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). It indicates that the model and the data are well fit in explaining employees’ performances. Therefore, to increase overall employees’ performance, it is reasonable to focus on the improvement of the performance appraisal process.

**Table 1.2(c): Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16.258	2.443		6.654	.000
	Performance Appraisal process	1.285	.057	.793	22.640	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employees' performances

From Table 1.2(c) above, the t and p-values showed that appraisal process had significant effect on the measurement of employees’ performances ( $t=22.640$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected while the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was accepted. This implies that appraisal process will have significant effect on the measurement of employees’ actual performances.

**5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

From the findings of the study, it can be reasonably inferred that to increase overall employees’ performance, it is reasonable to focus on the improvement of the performance appraisal process.

Furthermore, to enhance overall objectivity of appraisal, there is need to focus on the improvement of the performance appraisal process. The study recommends that there is need to focus on the improvement of the performance appraisal process to increase overall employees’ performance measurement. There is need for government to focus more on the improvement of objectivity of the appraisal process in other to enhance overall employees’ positive attitude to work.

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