

An Assessment of the Performance Appraisal System of the University for Development Studies

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the current performance appraisal system used at UDS. Specifically, the study was designed to find out the practice and nature of PAS in the UDS and verify the extent of UDS staff awareness and understanding of the PAS.

The descriptive survey design was used for the study and it involves survey of employees' views on the issues, situations and processes. The study was conducted in the UDS with a sample size of 340 elements made up of both appraisers and appraisees. Questionnaires and an interview guide were the instruments used to address the research questions. The SPSS Predictive Analytical Software (PASW) Version 16 was employed to examine the results. Cross tabulation, frequency and percentages were applied.

The result of the study indicated that respondents are aware that their performance is evaluated, had a clear idea of what specific behaviour, traits or results that are expected of them and that appraisees are not involved in the setting of performance targets in the university.

With regards to the extent of UDS staff awareness and understanding of the PAS, the findings were that majority of the staff have not received training or orientation on how PA is conducted in the university and the level of understanding of the appraisers were higher than that of appraisees.

Keywords: Performance Appraisal System, Appraisers, Appraisees, University, Ghana

1. Introduction

Generally, human resource is the most important asset in every organisation without which the other resources cannot function (Bartol & Martin, 1998). The success of an organisation largely depends on how human resource is developed, managed and maintained in the organisation. Most organisations employ the use of performance appraisal (PA) to assess and evaluate its human resource (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). PA is very important for every kind of organisation. According to Murphy and Cleveland, it is a justification of an individual employee. Ahmed (1999) also posited that PA is a structured formal interaction between a subordinate and supervisor, where the work performance of the subordinate is to be taken into consideration, with a view to identifying weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for improvement and skills development.

Employees are seen as the primary resource of any organisation since the survival of an organisation depends largely on its employees or human resource (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000). The development and assessment of employees therefore, become the overriding concern of organisations, including universities (Boland & Fowler, 2000). Due to the paramount importance of the people who are in the universities, it is essential to understand how well these personnel are performing in their roles and if they are fulfilling the responsibilities for which they were hired (Boxall & Purcell, 2003).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Performance appraisal is an important human resource management tool which provides information to many critical human resource decisions such as compensations and benefits (Boxall & Purcell, 2003), training and development needs (Naming, 2005), layoffs, staffing, pay raises, drug testing, and discipline (Cropanzano & Stein, 2009). Naming asserts that performance appraisal has been studied quite extensively over the last few decades, yet scholars continue to argue about the validity and merits of these systems.

In spite of the foregoing importance of performance appraisal, its implementation has caused much challenges and confusion in some large organisations, including the UDS. Many universities in Ghana and other developing countries do little to motivate or prepare managers to conduct effective appraisals (Jawahar, 2007). Only few of these universities conduct rigorous and skills-based training.

Rynes et al. (2005) attest that each employee under the appraisal system is supposed to be assessed at least once a year and feedback given on how the employee is performing in practice. However, appraiser-appraisee conflict and misunderstanding may emanate due to what measurement criteria was used for assessing the performance of employees, thereby creating a source of discontent for the manager and the employee being appraised (Schraeder et al., 2007).

In most cases employee related appraisal problems occur due to the manner in which some of the

measurement criteria items are constructed and administered (Akinyele, 2010). Most researchers are of the view that PA issues have been exhaustively studied in the developed countries though only few of such studies have assessed the PAS in developing countries, including Ghana. Ohemeng (2011) observed that it is still not clear, in the Ghanaian context, how the assessment of PAS and PA process affects employee satisfaction and productivity. Thus this literature gap on PA in Ghana, particularly in public universities, informed this study to undertake an assessment of the formal PAS in the UDS, focusing on both senior staff and junior staff of the university.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study was to assess the current PAS used at the UDS. The specific objectives were to:

1. Examine the nature and practice of the performance appraisal system in the University for Development Studies.
2. Determine the extent of University for Development Studies staff awareness and understanding of the performance appraisal system.

1.4 Research questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study in assessing the performance appraisal system. These are:

1. What is the nature and practice of the performance appraisal system in the University for Development Studies?
2. What is the extent of University for Development Studies' staff awareness and understanding of the performance appraisal system?

1.5 Scope of the study

The study should have ideally assumed a national dimension and also cover all workers. However, it would be delimited to the senior staff and junior staff of the UDS across the Central Administration, Tamale, Nyankpala, Navrongo and Wa campuses respectively. The study was further delimited to the assessment of the staff PA, the usefulness of the PAS used in UDS and the implications of the findings of the PAS for UDS.

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of the study would be useful to a number of groups and organisations. In the first place, the findings of the study will be useful to the management of UDS as it will expose the management to the views of employees regarding the PAS in the university. It will also help management to take proactive measures to make them aware of the relevance of the need for the appraisal and to improve the appraisal system in the university. The employees will also benefit as the study will expose the problems that make the implementation of the PAS difficult and once these problems are addressed, it will help create a working environment which will be conducive for them (both appraisers and appraisees) in the performance of their duties.

The University and other public universities in Ghana also stand to benefit from the findings of the study as the study will help identify and improve the implementation of the PAS to make it more employee friendly and this will subsequently motivate employees to work harder for higher productivity and the University will in turn, make more profit.

2. Literature Review

The review focused on a few very pertinent and appropriate concepts that serve as the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. Some related empirical studies were also reviewed in order to understand the current concept under study much better. Specific topics that were reviewed include the concept of PA, organisational justice theory, organisational behaviour theories, goal setting theory and control theories. Other topics covered by the review were the PA process, methods of PA, purposes of PASs, recruitment and induction, training and development, motivation and satisfaction, employee evaluation, approaches for assessing PA, benefits of PA, legal issues in PA and challenges of PA.

2.1 The concept of performance appraisal

Bartol and Martin (1998) noted that "PA is the process of defining expectations for employee performance; measuring, evaluating and recording employee performance relative to those expectations; and providing feedback to the employee" (p.331). They are of the view that a major purpose of PA is to influence, in a positive way, employee performance and development. They added that, the process is used for a variety of other organisational purposes, such as determining merit pay increases; planning future performance goals; determining training and development needs; and assessing the promotional potential of employees. Ahmed

(1999) supported this view by asserting that PA is the process of evaluating how well employees perform their jobs when compared to a set of standards, and then communicating that information to those employees. Ahmed's definition of PA is more appropriate for the current study and it is far-reaching.

From the definitions above, a number of issues emerged, that PA involves comparison of any employee's performance with a performance standard and the performance standards describe what the employee is expected to do in terms of behaviours and results. PA must be systematically done, and it must be related to the individual's performance on the job. It must also provide information on the job and to help the employee develop his/her potential for the benefit of the organisation.

Ahmed's (1999) definition tries to capture four salient activities involved in conducting PA. The first is that, it indicates a formal activity. The second is that, as a systematic assessment, it involves a series of steps to be followed in assessing employee's performance. The third talks about being conducted in relation to establishing standards, which implies that the mode of measurement must have been set in advance and probably, agreed on by both the employee and the assessor of his/her performance (Burchett & De Meuse, 1999). Finally, it involves communicating results to the employee, a portion often neglected by most organisations.

According to Mani (2002), the focus or aim of PAS is on the review of the past, utilising judging methods, ratings and or descriptions established by the organisation. It is both evaluative and developmental in that, it evaluates past performance of employees, identifies their strengths and weaknesses and develops strategies for strengthening the strengths and eliminating the weaknesses (Cook & Crossman, 2004).

The concept of performance, according to Ghorpade (as cited in Akinyele, 2010), is the degree of accomplishment of the task that makes up an employee's job. According to Akinyele, it shows how an employee is seen doing his/her work. For example a worker could make a frantic effort in performing his duties at the work place and end up coming out with little or below average output (Flaniken, 2009). Here, effort could be high and yet performance is low. Performance therefore depends on such factors as efforts, ability, zeal, hard work, motivation, information and feedback (Cropanzano & Stein, 2009).

In sum, performance is considered as the level of contribution made by a worker/staff towards achieving the organisational goals. It is therefore in the interest of every organisation to know how members of staff are performing their duties (Munhurrin Naidoo & Bhiwajee, 2009). This could be done through staff PA and should be effectively managed to facilitate the achievement of organisational objectives.

PA is generally a systematic way of reviewing and assessing the performance of an employee during a given period of time and planning for his/her future (Akinyele, 2010). Generally, it seeks to reveal the employee's strengths and weaknesses for appropriate remedy like training, promotion, salary decision, transfer, layoffs, motivation, re-assignment, counselling as well as placement to be implemented (Ohemeng, 2011). Staff PAS has therefore become an important management technique to help organisations to achieve their set targets, goals and objectives.

Organisational justice theory

According to Greenberg (1986), the term organisational justice implies that fairness is being considered in the organisation. It is an individual perception of fairness within the organisation. It is reasonable to consider that employees of the organisation may develop positive attitudes and behaviours when they are treated fairly. Ultimately, the perception of justice of employees affects their work performance (Martin & Bartol, 1998).

The literature suggests that there are three types of organisational justice that could be applied to PA, namely: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. The fairness of rating establishes distributive justice perceptions in PA when ratees compare their efforts with the PA rating that they received in an organisation (Endogan, 2002).

Organisational behaviour theories

Central to the debate on employee performance in an organisation stands the issue of how to influence and alter behaviour of the individual. A number of variables have been identified as determinants of performance of the individual such as personal background, ability and education, to name a few, but one way of conceptualisation is to view these variables as a function of three factors namely the capacity to perform, opportunity to perform and the willingness to perform (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1993).

Goal setting theory

Locke (1968) postulates that an individual's conscious goals and intentions are the primary determinates of her/his behaviour, that a person will "keep going" until goal completion has been reached – a characteristic of intentional behaviour. He views a goal as the object of an activity and went on to describe the attributes of the mental process of goal setting. These attributes are goal specificity, goal difficulty, goal intensity and goal commitment.

According to De Waal (2002), the main steps in applying goal setting in a managerial context are to diagnose the people, organisation and technology on readiness for goal-setting, prepare employees for goal-setting via increased personal interaction, communication, training and action planning for goal-setting.

One area of debate is the level of subordinate involvement in goal setting (Fletcher, 2001). Some research recorded an increase in job performance with higher levels of employee participation in goal setting (Encina, 2001) while others' attempts failed to establish relationships between employee participation in goal-setting and subsequent performance (Horvath & Andrews, 2007). In general, the theory provides academic foundation for the setting of clear and specific goals as opposed to vague goals such as "do your best".

Control theories

According to Otley (2003), control is the power to influence people's behaviour or the course of events, the restriction of an activity, tendency or phenomenon. Management control was founded mainly in the world of accounting, based on works by authors such as Anthony (1965), who proposed a framework for analysis of planning and control systems consisting of factors like strategic planning system, management control system and operational control system.

2.2 Performance Appraisal Process

The PA process constitutes the way and manner in which the performance of an employee is evaluated. Normally, it compares quality, quantity, cost and time (Otley, 2003). It is the procedure that an organisation has outlined to be followed or used by managers or superiors to ascertain the level of performance of their employees. According to Cole (2004), any systematic approach to PA should commence with the completion of an appropriate appraisal form.

Armstrong (2006) proposed an inter-related six steps of PA process which is depicted diagrammatically in Figure 1. The first step in Armstrong's PA process is the setting up of the standards which are used as the base to compare the actual performance of the employees. Once set, it is the responsibility of the management to communicate the standards to all the employees of the organisation. The third step, which is the most difficult part of the PA process, is measuring the actual performance of the employees (Encina, 2001). It involves the work done by the employees during the specified period of time. The actual performance is compared with the desired or the standard performance. The comparison tells the deviations in the performance of the employees from the standards set (Hays & Kearney, 2001). According to Milliman, Nason, Zhu & De Cieri (2002), the result of the appraisal is communicated and discussed with the employees on one-to-one basis. The last step of the process is to take decisions which can either be to improve the performance of the employees, take the required corrective actions, or the related human resource decisions like rewards, promotions, demotions, transfers among others. To be successful, PASs need to fit into existing management systems (Appelbaum et al., 2011).

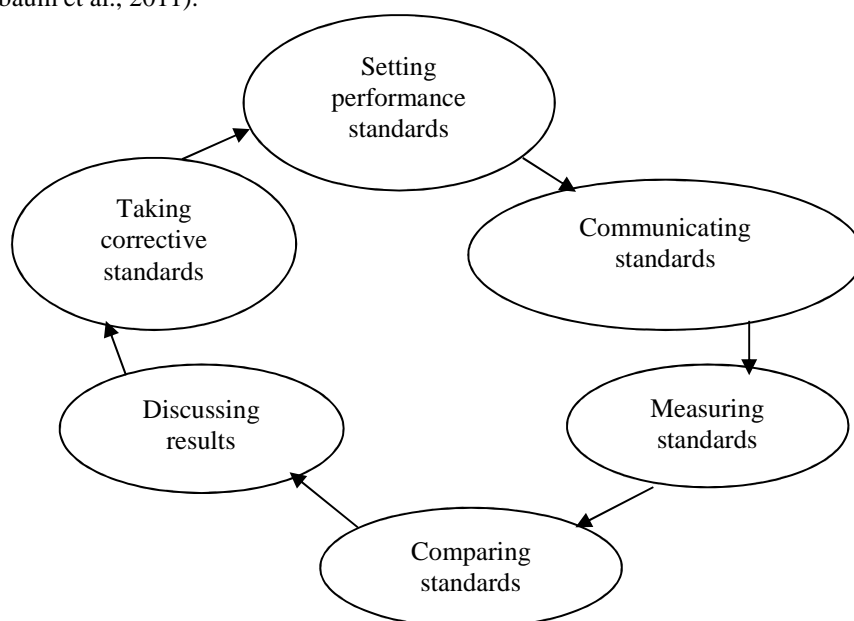


Figure 1: Process of performance appraisal

Source: Armstrong (2006).

2.3 Methods of Performance Appraisal

The success of PA depends, largely, on the method chosen by the organisation since according to Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2000) PA requires performance standards by which performance can be measured.

The old and new approaches to PA use different methods or techniques in assessing the performance of the individual worker. Schultz, Bagraim, Potgieter, Viedge and Werner (2003) stated that, the most commonly used methods of PASs are the rating scales (56%); essay methods (25%) and results oriented or MBO methods (13%).

Alternatively, PASs may be classified according to the main purposes that they serve, namely, comparative purposes and developmental purposes (Tziner, Murphy & Cleveland, 2001). However for the purpose of this study, methods of appraisal may be grouped into traditional and modern methods. Examples of the traditional methods are the essay method and the trait appraisal methods while that of the modern are management by objective, 360-degree feedback, and the behaviourally anchored rating scales (Armstrong, 2001). Those methods that are relevant to the current study are discussed below.

Performance appraisal methods can be broadly classified as measuring traits, behaviours or results. Traits approaches continue to be the more popular systems despite their inherent subjectivity (Carrell et al., 2000). Behavioural approaches provide more action-oriented information to employees and therefore may be the best for development. However, the results-oriented approach is gaining popularity because it focuses on the measurable contributions that employees make to the organisation (Bohlander & Snell, 2004).

Trait approaches to PA are designed to measure the extent to which an employee possesses certain characteristics such as dependability, creativity, initiative and leadership (DeNisi, 2000). These characteristics are viewed as important for the job and the organisation in general. The fact that trait methods are the most popular is due in large part to the ease with which they are developed. However, if not designed carefully on the basis of job analysis, trait appraisals can be notoriously biased and subjective (Carrell et al., 2000).

The second method to look at is the essay or written method. This method allows the appraiser to prepare written statements about employees being appraised. In some cases, the appraiser writes statements or answers to series of questions while in others he/she writes a complete essay on the performance of the appraisees during the assessment period (Carrell et al., 2000).

Management by objectives (MBO) is also referred to as objectives and goal-setting procedures or work planning review (Carrell et al., 2000). The method seeks to measure the performance of the employees by examining the extent to which predetermined objectives are met. The managers and employees jointly set the goals or standards at the beginning of the appraisal period and the employees are usually expected to self-audit and monitor their development (Boland & Fowler, 2000).

The behaviourally anchored rating scale (BARS) is a relatively new technique, which combines the graphic rating scale and critical incidents method (Otley, 2003).

The last method of PA to discuss is the bottom-up performance. It involves subordinates rating the performance of their superiors, in most cases through anonymous questionnaire (DeNisi, 2000). The anonymity helps the

2.4 Purposes of Performance Appraisal Systems

PASs are the cornerstone of human resource management practices and the basis for developing a system's approach to organisational management. It has variety of declared purposes and the different purposes sometimes conflict (DeNisi, 2000). According to Encina, it aims at providing information for reviewing salaries, conditions of service and other rewards, self-evaluation, and the conduct of personnel management research. Rudman's (2003) classification of the purposes of PAs can be seen as those that relate to personnel management needs, those that primarily concern with improving current and future performance and those that focus on developing the individuals concerned. According to Yang and Holzer (2006), a PA programme can serve many purposes that benefit both the organisation and the employee whose performance is being appraised. Some of these purposes are strategic, administrative and developmental (Cervone, Shadel, Smith & Fiori, 2006).

Recruitment and induction

Most employers recognise the fact that their staff are their greatest asset, and the right recruitment and induction processes are vital in ensuring that the new employee becomes effective in the shortest time. The success of an organisation depends on having the right number of staff, with the right skills and abilities (Rasch, 2004). Recruiting people with the right skills and qualities is essential for any organisation if it is to maintain and improve its efficiency (Armstrong, 2006). Not only the personnel manager but also the line manager or supervisor has a part to play in the selection process. It is crucial that both these people have training to enable them to carry out their roles effectively (Yang & Holzer, 2006).

Having selected the best candidate for the job, the next stage is to ensure that the new recruit is successfully integrated into the organisation through a well-planned induction programme (Gray, 2007).

Induction need not be an elaborate exercise, but it must be thought out in advance, carried out in a timely and careful manner, and evaluated to ensure that it meets the needs of the employee (Rebore, 2007).

Training and development

In the field of human resource management, training and development is the field which is concerned with organisational activity aimed at bettering the performance of individuals and groups in organisational settings (Carrell, et al., 2000). It has been known by several names, including human resource development, and learning and development (Harrison, 2005).

Training and development encompasses three main activities that are, training, education and development. Cohn, Khurana and Reeves (2005) noted that training and development ideas are often considered to be synonymous. However, according to practitioners, training, education and development encompass three separate, although interrelated, activities (Armstrong, 2006). Training as an activity is both focused upon, and evaluated against, the job that an individual currently holds. Education also focuses upon the jobs that an individual may potentially hold in the future, and is evaluated against those jobs while development activity focuses upon the activities that the organisation employing the individual, or that the individual is part of, may partake in the future, and is almost impossible to evaluate (Rebore, 2007).

Employee evaluation

Though often understated or even denied, evaluation is a legitimate and major objective of PA (Nillson & Kald, 2002). Nevertheless, the need to evaluate, that is, to judge, is also an ongoing source of tension, since evaluative and developmental priorities appear to frequently clash. Yet at its most basic level, PA is seen as the process of examining and evaluating the performance of an individual (Wilson & Nutley, 2003).

Despite the fact that organisations have a clear right, some would say a duty, to conduct such evaluations of performance, many still recoil from the idea (Piggot-Irvine, 2003). According to Seiden and Sowa (2011), the explicit process of judgement can be dehumanising, demoralising, and a source of anxiety and distress to employees. However, according to Dessler (2011), appraisal cannot serve the needs of evaluation and development at the same time but rather it must be one or the other. Consequently, there is an acceptable middle ground, where the need to evaluate employees objectively, and the need to encourage and develop them, can be balanced (Kondrasuk, 2011).

2.5 Approaches for Assessing Performance Appraisal

According to Keeping and Levy (2000), PA processes are always designed to match the organisation's goals and the type of work that is performed. They believe that one of the most critical factors in effective PA is clearly defining the purpose of the appraisal system. Possibilities may include monetary compensation, career planning, documentation of staffing changes, work load evaluation, counselling and development and training (Piggot-Irvine, 2003).

Generally, five areas can be pointed out as measures of an efficacious PAS (Pettijohn, Parker, Pettijohn & Kent, 2001). According to Pettijohn et al., the first area, determination of pay, explains and communicates pay decisions to management. The second area involves the provision of subordinate with development information and support and fostering mutual task definition and planning of future work goals. The second area further involves documenting and recognising subordinate's performance. The last area to point out is allowing the subordinate to provide feedback about feelings, supervision and definition of work. Other variables that may influence PAS effectiveness include the type of performance standards employed (Nel et al., 2001), the frequency of assessment (Analoui & Fell, 2002), the presence of written administrative procedures and existence of an appeals process (Analoui & Fell, 2002).

2.6 Empirical Studies on Performance Appraisal

Pettijohn et al. (2001) undertook a study to examine the attitudes of nearly 32,000 American federal employees toward PA. A descriptive survey design was used for the study. Both questionnaire and interview guide were used in eliciting data from the respondents. Pettijohn et al. concluded that the employees were dissatisfied with the way PA was conducted and that less than one-fifth felt that the process motivated employees to perform well. They however, claimed that there is no empirical evidence that PA itself is undesirable. This is because from their study almost half (46 percent) liked the concept of the process as it gave them an indication of where they ranked among co-workers.

Simmons (2002) undertook a study to examine the views of experts on PA in universities and colleges. He used the stratified random sampling procedure to select both appraisers and appraisee from 430 elements. Simmons' study found that employees viewed the PA process as beneficial. Managers and professionals also found the process as having overall value, with very few suggesting it should be discarded altogether. However, problems identified from Simmons' study included patchy application, uneven managerial commitment, lack of

continuity between appraisal, the link with performance related pay and teamwork, and the appropriateness of individual performance review for lower-graded staff merit further attention. But there was a general negative perception of the effects of the link between individual performance review and pay.

Mani (2002) also found from her study at the East Carolina University that many employees are motivated by factors that do not relate to the PAS. According to her, many are self-motivated or motivated by the enjoyment of their work, and pay, an extrinsic reward, ranked third among the things that motivated these employees. However, she warned that this self-motivation and enjoyment of work will cease if employees' pay is not adequately increased, as increases in pay was also seen as a symbol of recognition.

Wilson and Nutley (2003) did a study on the assessment of how appraisal systems facilitate women's progress in Scottish universities. They found that there was a general decline in the use of appraisal systems in Scottish universities but women were still being subjected to a disciplinary technology such as PA. Though there was no statistically significant gender difference with regard to purpose of PA, men perceived the PA of the university more positively and higher than female employees. Wilson and Nutley recommended in their study that employees with shorter length of service and at the junior levels do not stay with their organisations for long and any organisation with more of such employees may experience high turnover which is not good for every organisation.

3. Methodology

This study focused on addressing an issue in an area where there has been a relatively little research, and it involves survey of employees' views on the issues, situations and processes, the researcher found it appropriate to use the descriptive survey design. In the view of Ary et al. (2006), descriptive design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect data to assess current practices for improvement; gives a more accurate and meaningful picture of events and seek to explain people's perception and behaviour on the basis of data gathered at any particular time.

The population for the study was appraisers and appraisees made up of senior members, senior staff and junior staff in the Central Administration and the four satellite campuses of the UDS. Records from the human resource section of the university indicated that the staff strength as at February, 2012 is nine hundred and sixty four (964). These were made up of 71 supervisors (appraisers) and 893 subordinates (appraisees) across faculties, schools, departments, sections and units in all the four satellite campuses of the university and the Central Administration. The stratified random sampling was used to select the 360 elements comprised of 60 appraisers and 300 appraisees in the four satellite campuses of the university and the central administration.

The data collection instruments used was questionnaires and interview guide. Some of the questionnaire items were based on a five – point – Likert type scale anchored from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Discrete quantitative values from 1 to 5 were assigned to the responses. The number showing less of the issue while 5 showed more of it. Saunders et al. (2007) posit that the Likert scale is the most widely used method of scaling in the social sciences today. Perhaps this is because they are much easier to construct and because they tend to be more reliable than other scales with the same number of items.

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for the study. The primary data was the one elicited from the respondents directly while the secondary sources of data were those obtain from the university's human resource department. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the research objectives. Cross tabulation was first used to analyse the background information of respondents. With regard to the two research questions, frequencies, percentages and means were employed to analyse them as expected.

4 Results And Discussions

4.1 The Nature and Practice of PA in the UDS

The nature and practice of the PAS in the UDS was described in terms of frequency and percentage distribution of appraisers and appraisees' views on the items. Issues examined include whether PA is practiced in UDS, the need for PA in UDS and the specific behaviour, traits or results that are expected of employees. Other issues analysed were whether appraisers set performance targets for their subordinates to achieve and whether they involve their subordinate in setting performance targets. The results are provided in Tables 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

As contained in Table 1, majority of the appraisers (71.7%) and the appraisees (73.5%) were of the view that PA is practiced in the UDS. On the other hand, few (28.3% for appraisers and 26.5% for appraisees) of the respondents were of the view that PA is not practiced in the UDS. The 28.3 percent of appraisers and 26.5 percent of appraisees who stated that PA is not practiced in the UDS were asked further for the reasons behind their response. They stated that they have never been appraised, though they are employees of the university. Meaning not even all the staff of the university who were supposed to be appraised were captured by the PAS. The information elicited from the Registrar through the interview conducted with him confirmed the finding that

PA is practiced in the UDS. According to the Registrar, not all staff are captured during the process because in most cases some of them are not available due to other duties required of them outside the campus whilst others just refuse to participate fully in the process.

Table 1: Respondents' views on the nature and practice of PA in the UDS

Items	Appraisers				Appraisees			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Is PA practiced in UDS?	38	71.7	15	28.3	211	73.5	76	26.5
Are you aware that your performance is evaluated in the UDS?	37	69.8	16	30.2	258	89.9	29	10.1
Do you feel there is the need for PA in UDS?	50	94.3	3	5.7	287	100	0	0.0
Are you aware that there are different methods for appraising performance?	36	67.9	17	32.1	277	96.5	10	3.5
Do you have a clear idea of what specific behaviour, traits or results are expected of you or your subordinates	35	66.1	18	33.9	200	69.7	87	30.3

Source: Field Data, 2012.

($n_1= 53, n_2= 287$)

Respondents were asked further whether they were aware that their performances are evaluated in the university. Majority (69.8%) of appraisers and 89.9 percent of appraisees stated that they were aware that their performance was evaluated in the UDS whilst 30.2 percent of appraisers and 10.1 percent of appraisees were not aware that their performance was evaluated in the UDS.

Majority (94.3%) of the appraisers and all the appraisees (100%) indicated that there is the need for PA in the UDS. In an attempt to know the reasons behind the respondents' decision on the practice and nature of PA in the UDS, they were asked to explain their stance. In reaction to the questions, 94.3 percent of appraisers and 100 percent of appraisees who responded "Yes" that there is the need for PA in the UDS as shown in Table 9 indicated the reasons behind their responses. Out of the total number of respondents who said yes to the need for PA in the UDS, 3.8 percent of the appraisers and 9.8 percent of the appraisees were of the view that PA is needed in the UDS in order to improve teaching and learning, whilst 26.4 percent of appraisers and 23.7 percent of appraisees stated that PA is needed for the purpose of promotion and motivation of employees.

Majority of the appraisers (52.85%) and appraisees (66.5%) stated that effective human resource development, planning and assessment of performance as the reasons behind the need for PA in the UDS. Quite apart from that, 17 percent of appraisers also added re-orientation and standards/targets setting as one of the reasons why there is the need for PA in UDS.

The findings on the reasons why respondents perceived PA as a very important tool in the university are in line with many findings from other studies. The finding that PA is done in order to be able to promote and motivate employees agrees with the view of Cervone et al. (2006). These findings also confirms Rudman's (2003) and Cropanzano and Stein (2009) findings that PA were done for effective human resource development, planning and assessment.

With regard to respondents' awareness of different methods for appraising performance, 67.9 percent of appraisers and 96.5 percent of appraisees were aware of the different types of methods used in appraising their performance whilst 32.1 percent of appraisers and 3.5 percent of the appraisees were not aware that there are different methods for appraising their performance. The finding that PA is practice in UDS and that the university needs it, is congruent with those of Naming (2005) and Longnecker and Fink (2007). Both of Naming and Longnecker and Fink postulated that every organisation must assess its employees in one way or the other, and that the need for PA is a necessity.

This finding further confirmed the submission made by the Registrar that in appraising staff performance, appraisers sometimes assess how staff performs their job. It involves the actual actions and behaviours that workers exhibit on the job. In some instances, subordinates are assessed on personal characteristics that are relevant to their respective job performance or appraised in terms of the actual outcomes of their work. Based on the submission of the Registrar, it is clear that PA is practiced in the UDS. With regards to the statement whether respondents had a clear idea of what specific behaviour, traits or results were expected of them, 66.1 percent of appraisers and 69.7 percent of appraisees had a clear idea of what specific behaviour, traits or results that are expected of them or their subordinates.

The study elicited more data on appraisers view on PAS in the UDS. Appraisers were to indicate

further in their questionnaire whether they set performance targets for their subordinates to achieve. They were to also indicate whether they involve their subordinates in setting performance targets. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Respondents view on PAS in the UDS

Statements	Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%
Appraisers				
Do you set performance targets for your subordinates to achieve?	29	54.7	24	45.3
Do you involve your subordinates in setting the performance targets expected of them?	34	64.2	19	35.8
Do you make known to your subordinates their performance outcomes?	41	77.4	12	22.6
Appraisees				
Does your supervisor involve you in setting the performance standards expected of you?	151	52.6	136	47.4
Is your performance made known to you regularly?	153	53.3	134	46.7

Source: Field Data, 2012.

(n₁= 53, n₂= 287)

Majority (54.7%) of the appraisers, as shown in Table 10, stated that they set performance targets for their subordinates to achieve whilst 45.3 percent responded otherwise. More information were elicited further whether appraisers involved their subordinates in setting the performance targets expected of them. Majority (64.2%) of the appraisers indicated that they involved their subordinates in setting the performance targets expected of them whilst 35.8 percent said they do not involve their subordinates in setting performance targets.

Those appraisers (35.8%) who indicated that they do not involve their subordinates in setting performance targets were to indicate further the reasons for not involving their subordinates. Majority (89.5%) of them stated that in UDS the forms used are predetermined forms prepared by the Human Resource Department of the university which does not create room for the involvement of subordinates as far as those targets are concerned.

Majority (77.4%) of the appraisers indicated that they make known to their subordinates their performance outcomes. These findings corroborate the Registrar's statement that, in UDS appraisees are not involved in setting performance targets, though their performance outcomes are made known to them by their superiors. These findings clearly indicated that PA is practiced in UDS and that both appraisers and appraisees are involved in its process.

In response to the questions in Table 10, 52.6 percent of the appraisees indicated that their supervisors involve them in setting the performance standards expected of them whilst 47.4 percent indicated otherwise. This finding is congruent with the earlier finding in Table 10 that appraisers involve their subordinates in setting the performance targets expected of them. However, the submission made by the Registrar indicated that in most cases superiors do not involve their subordinates in setting performance targets since these targets are predetermined by the human resource department.

With regard to the issue whether appraisees performance were made known to them regularly, 53.3 percent of the appraisees indicated that their performances were made known to them regularly. This finding confirmed that of appraisers on the level at which appraisees performance are made known to them regularly. This finding clearly indicates that PA is practiced in UDS and that both appraisers and appraisees are involved in its process. This further disconfirmed the Registrar's statement that in the UDS appraisees are not involved in the setting of performance targets even though their performances are made known to them regularly.

To further get more understanding on the nature and practice of performance appraisal system in UDC, the study elicited data on those who evaluate staff the UDS. It was a close – ended item with six options to choose from. The result is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of those who evaluate staff in the UDS

Those who evaluate staff	Appraisers		Appraisees		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate head/ supervisor	44	83.1	259	90.2	303	89.1
Consultant	5	9.4	16	5.6	21	6.2
Human resource management unit	4	7.5	12	4.2	16	4.7
Total	53	100	287	100	340	100

Source: Field Data, 2012.

In response to the issue, majority (89.1%) of the respondents indicated that they were appraised or evaluated by their immediate head/supervisor as shown in Table 11. Out of this, 83.1 percent of the appraisers and 90.2 percent of the appraisees indicated that in UDS employees are evaluated by their immediate head/supervisor. On the other hand, 6.2 percent and 4.7 percent of the respondents indicated that their performance was evaluated by a consultant and the Human Resource Department respectively. The Registrar confirmed this finding that in UDS staff are assessed, evaluated or appraised by their immediate boss, head or supervisor.

The finding that appraisees are evaluated or appraised by their immediate heads/supervisors is similar to the submission made by Youngcourt et al. (2007). According to Youngcourt et al., performance appraisal is designed centrally, usually as a personnel function and requires that line managers or immediate heads of staff appraise the performance of their staff on yearly, bi-monthly or quarterly bases. They further stated that, for effective assessment of employees in any organisation, the appraisers must be the immediate boss or supervisors of the employees or appraisees.

4.2 The Extent of UDS Staff Awareness and Understanding of the PAS

The purpose for this objective was to determine the extent of UDS staff awareness and understanding of the PAS. To achieve this objective, cross tabulation of respondents was employed to analyse respondents' views on their level of understanding and awareness of the PAS in the UDS. The result is shown as follows:

Table 4: Respondents' participation in PA training or orientation

Appraisers responses	Have you ever received any training/orientation on the PAS in UDS?					
	Appraisers		Appraisees		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	5	9.4	39	13.6	44	12.9
No	48	90.6	248	86.4	296	87.1
Total	53	100	287	100	340	100

Source: Field Data, 2012.

Table 4 contain findings on respondents' participation in PA training or orientation. The table shows that 9.4 percent of appraisers and 13.6 percent of appraisees indicated that they have ever received training or orientation on the PAS in UDS. However, majority of the appraisers (90.6%) and appraisees (86.4%) indicated that they have never received any training/orientation on the PAS in UDS. The results depicts that majority (87.1%) of the employees in the UDS have not received training or orientation on how PA is conducted in the university. This finding is incongruent with that of Cohn et al. (2005) who found that every organisation need to train and orient its employees in order to boost their understanding and awareness in the PAS.

Respondents were further asked whether they will want to be given refresher training/orientation on PA. The responses of the staff are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5: Respondents' interest in participating PA training or orientation

Appraisers responses	Do you want to be given refresher training/orientation on PA?					
	Appraisers		Appraisees		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	42	79.2	180	62.7	222	65.3
No	11	20.8	107	37.3	118	34.7
Total	53	100	287	100	340	100

Source: Field Data, 2012.

The results on respondents interest in participating PA training or orientation in the UDS show that majority of the appraisers (79.2%) and appraisees (62.7%) indicated that they want to be given refresher training or orientation on PA while 20.8 percent of appraisers and 37.3 percent of appraisees indicated that they do not want to be given refresher training or orientation on PA. Thus, majority of the employees who have never received any training or orientation on the PAS in UDS affirmed that they will want to be given refresher training or orientation on PAS of the university. The results are consistent with the submissions of Armstrong (2006). According to Armstrong (2006), PA assists in identifying areas where employees need refresher training and also ensure the continued growth and development of employees. It focuses on future performance, helps to identify training and developmental needs, helps in the development of succession plans in career planning and finally provides an opportunity for both the superior and subordinate to discover any performance obstacle.

Table 6: Respondents' level of understanding of the PAS in the UDS

To what level do you understand the current appraisal scheme in UDS?	Appraisers		Appraisees	
	No.	%	No.	%
Fully understand	14	26.4	88	30.7
Understand	11	20.8	48	16.7
Partially understand	22	41.5	-	-
Do not understand	6	11.3	151	52.6
Total	53	100	287	100

Source: Field Data, 2012.

Another issue examined was the level at which respondents understand the current appraisal scheme in UDS. The results are presented in Table 6. As shown in the table, majority (88.7%) of the appraisers had some level of understanding of the current appraisal scheme in UDS while only 11.3 percent responded otherwise. With regard to appraisees, 47.4 percent indicated that they had some level of understanding of the current appraisal scheme in the UDS while 52.6 percent of the appraisees indicated that they do not understand the current appraisal scheme in the UDS. This indicates that appraisers' level of understanding the PAS in the UDS is higher than that of appraisees.

The finding is consistent with the comments of Ohemeng (2011). The blend and predominance of various types of cultures at a particular institution can impact management practices which can then affect whether or not PA is used, the purposes for which it is used, and its success at the institution (Ohemeng, 2011). Therefore, according to Ohemeng, it is important for employees of an organisation to be aware and understand the purpose and use to which the PA of the organisation is put into.

The table further depicts that 26.4 percent of the appraisers and 30.7 percent of the appraisees fully understand the current appraisal scheme in the university whilst 20.8 percent of appraisers and 16.7 percent of appraisers indicated that they understand the current appraisal scheme in the university. With regard to respondents level of understanding of the PAS in UDS, Table 6 indicates that majority (52.6%) of the appraisees who were supposed to be assessed did not understand the system. This situation is inconsistent with the point raised by Harrison (2005) that constant training and orientation of employees in any organisation is vital since it ensures staff awareness and understanding of the organisation's PAS for effective implementation and assessment.

The study further used cross tabulation to find out whether there is a link between staff level of understanding and their level of education. The results are presented in Table 7. As presented in the table, more (43.2%) of the staff who understands the current appraisal scheme in UDS level of education was up to the post-graduate level, followed by those with bachelor's degree or equivalent (35.5%). With regards to staff who do not understand the current appraisal scheme in UDS, majority (72.6%) were having bachelor's degree or equivalent, followed by those with diploma/teacher cert. 'A' (24.8%). Only 2.6 percent of the staff who do not understand the current appraisal scheme in UDS were at the post-graduate level.

Table 7: Distribution of staff level of education by their understanding of the PAS in the UDS

Level of education	To what level do you understand the current appraisal scheme in UDS?				Total	
	Do not understand		Understand		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Secondary	0	0.0	29	15.8	29	8.5
Diploma/Teacher Cert 'A'	39	24.8	10	5.5	49	14.4
Bachelor's degree or Equivalent	114	72.6	65	35.5	179	52.7
Post-Graduate	4	2.6	79	43.2	83	24.4
Total	157	100	183	100	340	100

Source: Field Data, 2012.

The results in Table 7 depict that there were more (43.2%) staff with post-graduate level who understand the current appraisal scheme in UDS than those who do not understand it (2.6%). Meaning, the higher the level of a staff credential or level of education the higher the level of his/her understanding of the current appraisal scheme in UDS.

In order to obtain more information on the level of staff awareness and understanding of the PAS, information was elicited on appraisees' level of involvement in setting performance targets, and how appraisers involved their subordinates in setting performance targets. Table 7 shows respondents' level of involvement in setting performance targets. From the table, 29.6 percent of the appraisees indicated that they were fully involved, 10.5 percent indicated that they were involved while 10.1 percent indicated that they were somehow involved. This means that majority (50.2%) of appraisees were to some extent involved in the setting of

performance targets. However, 49.8 percent indicated that they were not involved in setting performance targets in the university. This means that almost half of the appraisees did not take part in setting performance targets at the university.

Table 8: Staff level of involvement in setting performance targets

Level of staff involvement	Appraisers		Appraisees		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Fully involved	13	24.5	85	29.6	98	28.8
Involved	10	18.9	30	10.5	40	11.8
Somehow involved	10	18.9	29	10.1	39	11.5
Not involved	20	37.7	143	49.8	163	47.9
Total	53	100	287	100	340	100

Source: Field Data, 2012.

With regards to appraisers' response on the issue, Table 8 shows that 62.3 percent of appraisers to some extent involved their subordinates in setting performance targets while 37.7 percent do not involve their subordinates. The finding supports the view of Akinyele (2010) that the major factor that contributes to an effective PAS is the employees' involvement in appraising. Also, an effective PAS should be multi-rating, that is, there should be input from all the supervisions on the employees' performance. Again, most employees were aware of their performance and the PAS that was used to appraise them. Akinyele posited further that PAS should be seen as the only tangible metric way by which organisation can know the level of performance of its diverse employees, therefore it is incumbent on every superior to involve their subordinates in setting performance targets of the organisation.

Table 9: How appraisees are involved in setting performance targets

Involvement of subordinates in setting performance targets	Appraisers	
	No.	%
I sit with them to set the targets	29	54.6
I ask them to set their own targets and submit	14	26.4
I set it and read it out to them	4	7.6
They present proposal and we meet to agree/disagree with it	2	3.8
Others	4	7.6
Total	53	100

Source: Field Data, 2012.

Table 9 presents how appraisers involved their subordinates in setting performance targets. The table shows that 54.6 percent of the appraisers indicated that they sit with their subordinates and together they set the required targets whilst 26.4 percent asked their subordinates to set their own targets and submit to them. Some (7.6%) of the appraisers who indicated that they set performance targets and read it out to their subordinates, is an indication that some of the appraisees were not involved in the setting of performance targets. Few of the appraisers (3.8%) also indicated that their subordinates present proposal and together they meet to agree/disagree with the proposal.

The finding is in line with the submission of many researchers. According to Fletcher (2001), one area of debate with regards to PA of employees is the level of subordinate involvement in goal setting. Fletcher posited that the involvement of subordinates by their supervisors in the setting of performance targets is crucial for effective PA in every organisation. However, it is clear from the review so far that some research recorded an increase in job performance with higher levels of employee participation in goal setting (Encina, 2001) while others' attempts failed to establish relationships between employee participation in goal-setting and subsequent performance (Horvath & Andrews, 2007).

The study further elicited information from appraisers who did not involve their subordinates in setting performance targets. The appraisers were asked to give reasons for not involving their subordinates in the setting of performance targets. Some (37.7%) of the appraisers were of the view that setting of performance targets in the UDS was the sole duty of the superiors or supervisors and those supervisors do not involve subordinates. Majority (58.5%) of the appraisers who did not involve their subordinates in setting performance targets indicated that the set targets were already stated in the prepared format used by the university. However, 3.8 percent of the appraisers did not respond to the issue.

This finding corroborates the submission of the Registrar that in the UDS there is a predetermined PA form designed by the human resource department, therefore there is no need for appraisers to involve their

subordinates since the set targets are predetermined. The Registrar also acknowledged that some room is created for superiors to appraise their subordinates differently, without using the predetermined PA form. According to the Registrar, some of the subordinates nature of work and work schedule makes it difficult to use the predetermined form, therefore superiors with such staff uses other means approved by the human resource department to assess their subordinates.

With regard to the university's policies/plans, the Registrar's comments confirmed the findings made so far. According to the Registrar, the design and implementation of the PAS in the UDS once executed requires the rater or appraiser to justify his/her own comments and recommendations. Cases of promotion, upgrading and appointment confirmations are addressed only based on PAS, and in some cases the requirement of written supports from heads of department and superiors. The processing of interviews of any sort have been tied to the completion of a PA form with total commitment by managers, supervisors and heads of department and compulsory mentoring of employees has been established to enforce PAS.

5 Summary, Conclusions And Recommendations

5.1 Summary

The key findings for examination of the nature and practice of appraisal in the UDS with particular reference to appraisers and appraisees' views were that:

1. The Registrar of the university, majority of the appraisers (71.7%) and the appraisees (73.5%) were of the view that PA is practiced in the UDS and that both appraisers and appraisees are aware that their performance is evaluated in the UDS.
2. Majority (94.3%) of the appraisers and all the appraisees (100%) indicated that there is the need for PA in the UDS for effective human resource development, planning and assessment of performance.
3. More than half of the appraisers (66.1%) and appraisees (69.7%) had a clear idea of what specific behaviour, traits or results that are expected of them or their subordinates.
4. Appraisers and the Registrar indicated that appraisees are not involved in the setting of performance targets in the university and that these targets are pre-determined by the human resource department.
5. In the UDS, appraisees were assessed, appraised or evaluated by their immediate heads/supervisors and that their performances are made known to them regularly.

With regards to the extent of UDS staff awareness and understanding of the PAS, the main findings were:

1. Majority (87.1%) of the staff in the UDS have not received training or orientation on how PA is conducted in the university.
2. Most of the staff both appraisers and appraisees indicated that they will like to be given refresher training or orientation on PA.
3. More than half (52.6%) of the appraisees do not understand the current PAS in the UDS but majority (88.7%) of the appraisers had some level of understanding of it. That is, the number of appraisers' who understand the PAS in the UDS was higher than that of appraisees.
4. Most of the respondents with higher credential level of understanding of the current appraisal scheme in the UDS were higher than those with lower credentials.
5. More than half (50.2%) of the appraisees were to some extent involved in the setting of performance targets while majority (62.3%) of the appraisers to some extent involved their subordinates in setting performance targets in the university.
6. Most of the appraisers sit with their subordinates to set the targets.

5.2 Conclusions

The nature of the PA system at the UDS is an annual activity which is normally initiated by departmental heads or other heads of the unit. Depending on the timeframe or work schedule of a particular unit, the time for evaluating employees vary in the university even though, all units and departments submit PA results to the human resource unit at the end of the academic year. PA is practiced in the UDS and that both appraisers and appraisees are aware that their performance is evaluated in the UDS. This is done to ensure effective human resource development, planning and assessment of performance. The staff have clear idea of what specific behaviour, traits or results expected of them, even though appraisees are not involved in the setting of performance targets in the university since the targets are pre-determined by the human resource department.

Staff level of awareness and understanding of the PAS in the university is poor or limited. Most of the staff have not received training or orientation on how PA is conducted in the university even though they will like to be given refresher training or orientation on PA. Appraisers' level of understanding of the PAS in the UDS was higher than that of appraisees. Most of the respondents with higher credential level of understanding of the current appraisal scheme in the UDS were higher than those with lower credentials. With regards to staff involvement in the setting of performance targets, most appraisers to some extent involved their subordinates in

it.

Recommendations

Based on the key findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended to the Registrar that he should request management to ensure that:

1. Both appraisers and appraisees will be given refresher training or orientation on PA, how to set targets and how to assess or appraise performance to avoid rater problems to the successful implementation of the system.
2. There is an organised periodic refresher course to help both appraisers and appraisees maintain the necessary skills and understanding in PA.
3. The system of immediate supervisors appraising performance should be maintained since they usually have the most intimate knowledge of the tasks that the subordinates have been carrying out and how well they have been doing it with given resources.
4. Room is created for appraisees to assess appraisers on an agreed rating.

It is also recommended to appraisers that they should ensure that:

1. Appraisees will maintain positive attitude towards the organisation's PAS and management as well.
2. Their subordinates will organise themselves as expected during performance appraisal process.
3. PA will be the bases for identifying the training needs of staff.
4. The outcome of PA will be communicated to appraisees and will be done on time.

Suggestions for further research

The following related areas can be researched to add up to the knowledge of what this study has produced. First, there is a need to carry out a comparative evaluation of an assessment of the PAS in all the public universities in Ghana to have a general view of staff on PAS of public universities in the country. Secondly, a research should be done to evaluate the impact of PAS of UDS using interview guide, questionnaire and observation guide in order to have a more in-depth on the concept. This will help human resource managers of the university to understand the concept of PAS more. Lastly, a study should be done to establish integration of PAS with other subsystems like the financial management system in public universities. Such a study will help public universities learn and understand the integration of all the systems meant to run their activities in their respective universities.

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