

Effect of performance appraisal system on staff performance in Ghanaian academic libraries

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ABSTARCT

Performance appraisal is the systematic review of an individual employee's performance on the job which is used to evaluate the effectiveness of his or her work. The present research seeks to evaluate the performance appraisal system at the University of Cape Coast library.

The authors in this study adopted the survey approach to gather data from library staff located in the University of Cape Coast Library. Using the descriptive statistics, it was found out that library staff (76.8%) affirmed the existence of a performance appraisal system in the library. From the participants view, performance appraisal system was necessary to assist in determining the input of staff, bring motivation to workers and ensure effective work by the staff. The majority of the library staff (70.2%) stressed that their immediate boss was responsible for appraising their work output in the UCC library. Based on the major findings of the study, the authors recommended to the management the following: clarity of the rating criteria or qualities, training of appraisers, appraisal interview or discussion and counselling, frequency of appraisals, responsibility for appraising staff, staff motivation, use of computer software and periodic review the appraisal system

Keywords: Performance Appraisal; staff performance; academic libraries; attitude; Ghana

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The ability of any organisation to perform effectively and efficiently depends to a large extent on the optimum utilization of its resources. Amongst all the resources (materials, financial and human) the human resource, is the most important. According to Armstrong (2006) "performance appraisal is the systematic review of an individual employee's performance on the job which is used to evaluate the effectiveness of his or her work. Performance appraisal seeks to evaluate and re-evaluate the performance of employees in order to enable them realise their full potential. For the organisation to maximise the benefits of performance appraisal, it is important that employees know what the organisation requires from them, the results expected from them and how their performance will be measured. For performance to be measured, standards need to be established in a well-structured and defined performance appraisal scheme. An effective and efficient appraisal scheme should help develop the future performance of staff. The appraisal scheme can also form the basis for a review of financial rewards and planned career progression (Mullins, 1996).

Though the purpose and effect of performance appraisal may be largely positive, there is available literature to the effect that performance appraisal could have unintended negative or adverse effects on the appraised staff. According to Monga (1983) the criteria for evaluating performance, particularly the performance of those engaged in research activities, initiatives, appearance, tact or organisational skills of researchers are very difficult to assess. In developing an effective and well-motivated workforce to achieve planned organisational goals most appraisal systems are unable to provide either accurate or fact-based judgement although some of these judgements may not be quantifiable (Monga, 1983).

Over the years, the University libraries have applied the central administration performance appraisal, which is common to the entire University system in Ghana. This practice makes it quite difficult to obtain a meaningful evaluation of employees' performance in the library.

1.2 PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

The librarians for some reason believe that the appraisal system operating at the University of Cape Coast library is just a tool for promotion and salary increment. Library staff therefore becomes aggressive when their appraisal forms are not completed and forwarded to the Human Resource Directorate for processing on time.

In the library situation, not all the rating dimensions of the appraisal procedure for the entire University staff is applicable which include knowledge of work, skill or efficiency, general behaviour, sense of responsibility or

work capacity. However, the University of Cape Coast library has failed to identify this, leading to substantial gap which may explain why it lacks the effectiveness for which it was designed to provide.

1.3 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the performance appraisal system at the University of Cape Coast library. The following were the specific objectives of the study:

1. determine the extent to which performance appraisal system was practised.
2. identify whether the performance appraisal system currently gave an understanding of employee's roles and clarity about functions.
3. determine the attitude of employees towards performance appraisal.
4. determine the effectiveness of the performance appraisal system.

1.4 HYPOTHESES

H1: Effective performance appraisal system in the library increases staff performance.

H2: there is no significant difference on job performance of the library staff after appraisal interview is conducted.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study was expected to help guide management of the University of Cape Coast library in the design of organisational schemes and to create new techniques for performance rating. This study is also expected to alert administrators at the University of Cape Coast Library to weaknesses in the current performance appraisal system and have a clearer understanding of their duties and what is actually expected of them in accordance with the standards set up for them in order to meet strategic organisational goals and objectives. Lastly, it is hoped that this study fills a gap in the literature on performance appraisal system in academic libraries from a Ghanaian perspective, since a search of the literature revealed lack.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Concept of appraisal

In the Dictionary of Human Resource Management (2001), the term appraisal is defined as "the process of evaluating the performance and assessing the development/training needs of an employee" (Heery and Noon, 2001). This definition entails that the staff's performance is measured against certain standards, and that no positive or negative judgment will be involved, but to identify the training needs of the staff and to find out what can be done to improve related skills and knowledge.

Partington and Stainton (2003) present three important purposes of performance appraisal.

- 1) It gives recognition to the commendable aspects of the staff member's performance.
- 2) It alerts the staff member about the degrees of improvement needed in any weaker aspects of his/her performance.
- 3) It prioritizes the aspects of performance in which improvement is needed.

Partington and Stainton (2003) further suggest that, "staff appraisal provides the means by which enhanced communication between staff and senior colleagues can determine systematic identification of roles, tasks, targets and training plans for individuals, which support departmental and institutional goals." Similarly, in the library setting, Corral (1993) is of the opinion that in helping academic libraries adapt to changing circumstances in the future, there will be the need for different approaches to the management of the services they offer. This opinion could give rise to the need for appraisal, as expressed by McElroy (1989) that if libraries are to flourish and serve their organizations well, there is the need to secure a better understanding of function, and how performance judgment should be made. Appraisal thus, provides the tools that will ultimately engender staff development and training to enhance skills and knowledge as well as service offerings.

Appraisal has been seen as a management function in libraries. Whiston (1995) has mentioned that various approaches to the management functions in academic libraries such as professional development, training, appraisal and performance review become more important. Implicit in this is the view that, management function in libraries should also be concerned with appraisal and performance review. Appraisal may be therefore, be designed to serve the need for enhanced performance. A combination of functions that prove to be the core issues underlying appraisal has been outlined (Sluss, 1986; September, 1988, Verrill, 1993):

- i. To change or modify inappropriate or inferior work behaviour.

- ii. To initiate and routine dialogues between employer and employee concerning perception of quality and quantity of performance.
- iii. To stimulate and further develop both the appraiser and the appraised in terms of their efficient and effective job performance.
- iv. To assess potential of the employee with regard to training and development opportunities.
- v. To determine appropriate compensation levels for the employee.
- vi. To provide documentation of work behaviour in cases where disciplinary action may be warranted.

2.2 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Cronin (1982) states that performance appraisal is “a process of systematically assessing effectiveness against a predetermined norm, standard...” or according to Mackenzie (1990), “a systematic measurement of the extent to which a system has achieved its objectives in a certain period of time”. It is also described as a systematic process of knowing the benefit or profit gained and the quality as reflected in customers’ satisfaction of a system (McKee, 1989).

Performance appraisal and performance evaluation have assumed a synonymous meaning. The process of evaluation of performance can focus on the whole of a system or the components of a system (such as the individual services of a library and information system) as the assessment needed could be at any level of a given library and information system. Performance evaluation can also be a one-time-only activity where “data are collected only until an intelligent appraisal of a situation can be made” or “a continuous activity where data processing eventually becomes an established housekeeping routine” on the basis of which continuous and long-term improvements are effected (Cronin, 1982). Studies have been carried out to evaluate performance appraisals, specifically, in academic libraries.

Alemna (1992) reports results of a survey of junior staff – clerical and service personnel – at the University of Ghana library that collected data on background, experience, salaries, recreational facilities, job satisfaction, attitudes of colleagues and supervisors, committees, staff meetings, discipline, appraisal methods, and communication. The author suggested that productivity ought to be improved in the library.

Similarly, a study by Martey (2002) reports procedures employed in staff appraisal in a Ghanaian university library over a period of 16 years, a total of 650 appraisal forms filled by 25 assessors in the Balme Library, University of Ghana were examined. However, the conclusions drawn indicate that the performance procedures used did not provide the information required for management decision making. In other words, evaluating the appraisal forms, information that was needed for appraisal was lacking. The researchers was of the view that the performance procedures need to be made more effective and efficient.

There seem to be concerns that productivity ought to be improved in the library. Studies have looked at performance measurement and found that higher productivity or realization of organizational goals and objectives can be achieved through motivation of subordinate library staff. However, in some respects, appraisal systems could not provide information for management decision making. According to Giesecke and McNeil (1999), “core competencies are the skills, knowledge and personal attributes that contribute to an individual's success in a particular position”. Various scholars have also identified key issues of performance appraisal. Specifically, the areas of performance appraisal of considerable concern to scholars have been:

- 1) Key performance areas
- 2) Performance standards
- 3) Knowledge
- 4) Skills

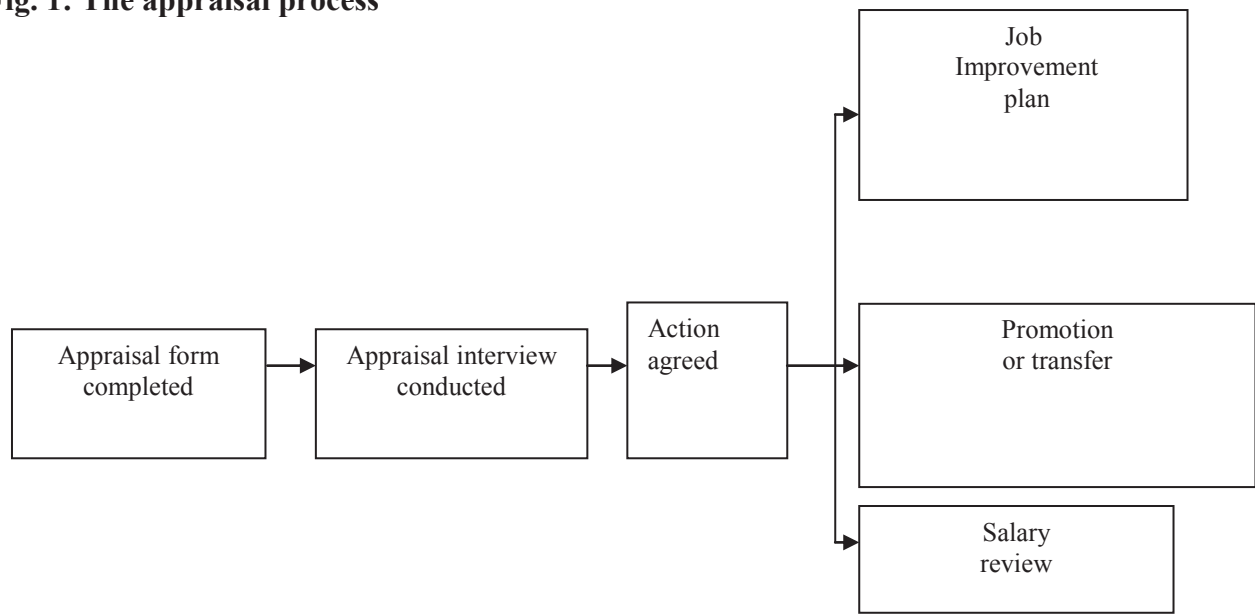
2.3 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL STAGES AND PROCESS

Performance appraisal involves some divergent stages as identified by Ubeku (1984), Cuming (1994), and Lussier (1997). These divergent stages are job description and job specification by the incumbent’s immediate supervisor; setting of objectives by the job incumbent and his or her supervisor; completion of the appraisal form and finally the appraisal interview.

Grobler et al. (2005) are of the view that a variety of appraisal techniques are available to measure employee performance. In creating and implementing an appraisal system, administrators must first establish what the

performance appraisal will be used for, and decide which process to adapt. These decisions are just as important as how the appraisal is conducted or the actual content of the appraisal. From the literature, performance appraisal system is invariably a process. It is systemic and has a criterion that must be measured and communicated to those being evaluated.

Fig. 1: The appraisal process



Source: Cole (2007)

The appraisal process in terms of assessing individual performance against targets set by the organisation as depicted in Figure 1 explains that any systematic approach to performance appraisal will commence with the completion of an appropriate appraisal form. The preparatory stage is followed by an interview during that stage the manager discusses progress with the member of staff. The result of the interview may be some form of agreed action, either by the employee alone, or jointly with his/her manager. The action generally materialises in the shape of a job improvement plan, a promotion or transfer to another job or a salary increase (Cole, 2007).

2.4 BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

Parent organizations require proof that the activities of their library and information systems and the organizational expenses incurred are worth the investment in that they contribute towards achieving organizational objectives. In justifying their worth library and information systems are required to prove that they are “performing a useful, relevant and a valuable function without which the institution would be the poorer” (Abbot, 1990; Martey, 2000). Thus, library and information systems have to prove that they are useful for the organization and for the purpose for which they are established. In this aspect specifically, the way for library and information systems to make their contributions and worth known to concerned bodies is by using some measure of library performance (Pritchard, 1996).

Library and information systems also need to justify the money that their parent institutions are expending on them is well used just like any of the rest of the organizational units (Baba and Broady, 1998; McKee, 1989). Particularly as a result of economic constraints leading to fierce competition for institutional budgets, more tangible and appreciable evidence is required on a continuing basis from the library and information systems in order to convince management of the importance of continuing to devote resources to them (Abbot, 1994). The old ways of talking that suggest that library and information systems are “good in themselves” no longer work, and the language and the logic of their argument should be meaningful and appreciable in the current environment in which the library and information systems exist.

Martey (2000), for instance, posits that in the face of the fierce competition from other information providers and the need for the library to justify its worth, librarians more than ever, should operate as entrepreneurs. Library and information systems can best prove that “the benefits derived are worth the expenditure” and that no resources have been wasted through data obtained from performance evaluation exercises. This evidence has proved to be one of the main weapons that departments have when it comes to fighting for organizational budgets or to attracting funding bodies at large.

Apart from justifying their existence and the cost that is expended on them, library and information systems need to take a look at themselves on a continuing basis to find out whether each activity undertaken by them is relevant and being implemented in the best possible way. Library and information systems’ managers, like any responsible managers, need to monitor their progress to determine if they are on the right track in implementing their various undertakings. These include determining the relevance and meaningfulness of each activity, the cost effectiveness of each activity, the system’s efficiency in executing tasks, what is needed to realize the desired goal, and the professionalism of their work. To determine what is needed and that each activity or service being undertaken is appropriate and worth continuing, an assessment or evaluation can provide reliable and complete information.

Van House points out, “improving performance requires information about how good performance is currently, plus feedback on the success of efforts to improve” (Van House et al., 1990). It is in this same way that whether or not things being implemented are being done in the most efficient manner can be determined.

Progress and achievement, or failure, for that matter, need to be learned by evaluating services and products in the context of the expectations and targets set as well as within an acceptable cost. This is also the only means that achievements or failures can be determined and corrections and improvements introduced.

Willemse (1995) confirms that a continuous evaluation contributes to improving services by revealing remedial actions that need to be taken based on the result of the ongoing evaluation. In his report of the experience of the University of South Africa, Willemse discusses in detail how performance evaluation has been useful in improving services and instrumental in winning over the support of the parent institution. As a management tool performance evaluation helps library and information systems managers to have better knowledge of the status of their system, allowing them to be in a better position to make informed decisions and to exercise better control over the destiny of their systems (McClure and Lopata, 1995).

2.5 RATERS OF APPRAISALS

According to some authors (Leavitt & Bahrami, 1988) the evaluation or appraisal of employees can be done by different classes of individuals. Amongst various organisations in existence those responsible for evaluation are the two immediate supervisors of the employee.

Belcourt et al. (1990), writing about international human resource management, discuss important issues such as who should appraise performance; that is, should it be a host country evaluation or home country evaluation for international staff? This is because domestic managers are frequently unable to understand expatriate experiences, value them or accurately measure their contribution to the organisation.

According to George and Jones (1996), the advantage of using varied sources of information in performance appraisal is that each may be familiar with important aspects of a worker’s performance. But because each source has considerable disadvantages if used exclusively, organisations sometimes use multiple raters. In discussing who appraises performance, George and Jones (1996) also indicate that in most organisational settings, supervisors are responsible for performance appraisals because they are generally the most familiar with their subordinates’ behaviour and are responsible for motivating subordinates to perform at acceptable levels.

Anthony, Kacmar and Perrewé (2002) contend with other authors, such as George and Jones (1996) that, having more than one rater can increase the reliability of the performance evaluation. They cite a number of potential sources of performance raters as co-workers, employees, peers, colleagues, customers, subordinates, and supervisors. Milkovich and Boudreau (1991) suggest that for the evaluation to be effective, appraisers should observe the appraisee’s job performance over a period of time and that the appraisers should also be able to translate their observations into useful assessments.

Although Latham and Wexley (1981) state that ratings by peer appraisers are both acceptably reliable and valid and have the advantage that peers have a more comprehensive view of the appraisee's job performance, Williams (1989) believes that peer appraisal can be dysfunctional and disrupt team harmony. This is made evident as Bolander et al. (2001) agree that peers may be unwilling to appraise each other as this can be seen as "grassing" on each other.

Subordinate appraisal or reverse appraisal is used to give management feedback about how their subordinates view them. Subordinates, Bolander et al. (2001) agree, are in a good position to evaluate their managers since they are in frequent contact with their superiors and occupy a unique position from which to observe much performance-related behaviour. However, due to the dimensions related to the managers' specific jobs, subordinates will find it impossible to do a good job at evaluation of their managers. In self-evaluation appraisal, the employee evaluates herself or himself with the techniques used by other evaluations or different ones. The approach is more suitable for developmental purposes (Ivancevich, 1986).

2.6 PROBLEMS/FAILURE OF APPRAISAL PROGRAMMES

In developing countries, the major stumbling blocks for performance evaluation to take place are more severe. Specifically, three problems are discussed below that are common but severely felt in developing countries.

Firstly, there is low level of awareness about the relevance of performance evaluation by library and information system manager or management of the parent organizations, performance evaluation is almost non-existent. In much better conditions it is done as a one-time-only exercise. As a one-time-only exercise, it is done haphazardly, rendering the resulting data almost useless for the purpose (Town 1998). Martey's (2000) study revealed that the performance procedures used in staff appraisal in the Balme Library, University of Ghana, did not provide the information required for management decision making. Appraisal would thus, have failed in this regard and outcomes would cease to be meaningful.

Secondly, the problem of finance has been one of the long-standing problems which library and information systems in developing countries may not hope to overcome in the near future. Although the problem of finance is common to all countries (Cronin 1982; Goodall 1988), it is more severe in developing countries. This makes performance evaluation among the least likely technique to use in these countries.

Thirdly, it is known that library and information systems' managers with appropriate conviction may shy away from conducting performance evaluation because of the resulting "unacceptable increase in the existing work load" on the library and information systems all over the world (Cronin, 1982). But in developing countries since the shortage of staff is acute and more pronounced, the resulting workload on an already over-extended staff makes it the least welcome commitment.

Moreover, there are concerns about lack of evaluation tools or evaluation methodologies. Although the profession acknowledges that it lacks widely accepted and applicable tools and methods for performance evaluation (Pritchard, 1996; Winkworth, 1993), there is a continuing effort and marked achievement in developing and employing tools, methods and frameworks for evaluation of performance of library and information systems in the developed world. Most academic libraries adopt the centralized appraisal form issued by their institutions or universities.

As Prentice (2005) describes, 'The centrally devised rating form provides a general assessment but does not address differences in activities or applications from unit to unit.' The nature of job of library staff members would be, in fact, different from other academic and administrative units.

2.7 MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES (MBO)

Management by objectives is one of two results-oriented performance appraisals. As Goel et al. (2002) note, this technique attempts to evaluate the attainment of targets in the context of overall objectives to ascertain the merit of personnel. Anthony et al. (1999) also point out that MBO and Work Planning are both results-oriented and similar, the difference in the two, however, is the periodic feedback and review of the work planning method. Bolander et al, (2001) note that rather than looking at the traits of employees or the behaviours they exhibit on the job, many organisations evaluate employee accomplishments, that is, the results they achieve through their

work. Advocates of results appraisals argue that they are more objective and empowering for employees. Looking at results such as sales figures, production output, and the like involves less subjectivity and therefore may be less open to bias. Furthermore, results appraisals often give employees responsibility for their outcomes, while giving them discretion over the methods they use to accomplish them which is empowerment in action.

Appraisals may, however, be contaminated by external factors that employees cannot influence. It may inadvertently encourage employees to “look good” on a short-term basis, while ignoring the long-term ramifications. Thus, to be realistic, both the results and the methods or processes used to achieve them should be considered.

The MBO approach is linked to means-end chains and goal setting. Where an MBO system is used, subordinates work with their supervisor to establish specific task-related objectives that fall within their domains and serve as means to help accomplish the supervisor’s higher-level objectives

2.8 STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEMS

According to Goodall (1988), three approaches emerge as the dominant bases for evaluation or appraisal: the use of stated objectives, standards and user opinion.

2.8.1 Use of Stated Objectives

To use “stated objectives” to assess the performance of library and information systems, the system needs clearly stated objectives. The overwhelming majority of library and information systems in developing countries have no clearly stated objectives or else the occasionally available objectives lack the quality needed to determine an evaluation of the performance of the library and information systems.

2.8.2 Use of standards

Having standards for is necessary simply because as Lancaster clearly indicates, “to be valuable they [standards] must be directly related to the resources and objectives of the institution (Lancaster, 1997). Standards either set by consensus or by taking average achievements in comparable systems, need to be unique to library and information systems, as standards have to be based on what is possible in each specific environment (Kasar, 1982).

2.8.3 User Opinions

Line (1990) points out that user’s perceptions of the quality of library services are affected by circumstances, opportunities and expectations. McKee (1989) also stresses that satisfaction levels indeed are determined by preconceptions and expectations which confirm the role of the factors affecting expressed satisfaction (view, opinion, etc.) of users about a given library and information system.

2.8.4 Frequency of appraisals

There is no consensus on how often formal performance appraisals should be undertaken in an organisation. Cascio (1992), Byars and Rue (1994) and Anthony et al. (1999) intimate that organisations conduct formal appraisals once or twice a year. Cascio (1992), however, laments the infrequency of formal appraisals and urges that it be augmented with informal appraisal sessions. Byars and Rue (1994) in a similar view, advocate that informal performance appraisals should be conducted two or three times annually in addition to formal appraisal.

On the other hand, Boice and Kleiner indicate that employee reviews should be performed on a frequent and ongoing basis. The actual time period may vary in different organisations and with different aims but a typical frequency would be bi-monthly or quarterly. They suggest that by conducting reviews frequently two situations are eliminated – selective memory by the supervisor or the employee; and surprises at an annual review are eliminated.

If there is a good relationship between supervisor and employee, informal reviews of an employee’s performance may be undertaken almost continually. Poor performance should not go unchallenged just because the quarterly review is not due for two months. Frequent reviews also allow for clarification and revision of objectives. This leads to better informed employees who are better equipped to perform their job satisfactorily.

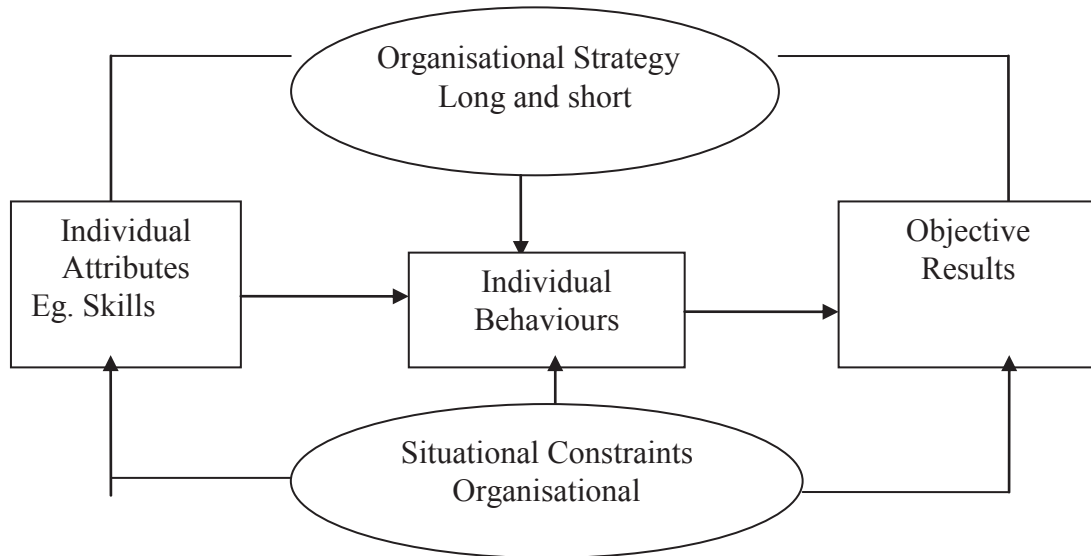
To overcome forgetfulness and thereby enhance the usefulness and credibility of the informal appraisal system, (Milkovich and Boudreau, 1991), and Cascio (1992) advise that the supervisor should keep a diary in which he

or she records all issues arising out of the informal appraisal sessions. In furtherance of this objective they urged it out that appraisals be conducted after employees have accomplished important projects or tasks.

2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopted the performance management model by Gerhardt et al. (2003) to explain performance appraisal of employees of the University of Cape Coast library.

Figure 1: Model of Performance Management



Source: Gerhardt et al. (2003)

In organizations, individual's attributes such as skills and abilities are the raw materials of performance. These raw materials are transformed into objective results through the employees' behaviour. Employees' can exhibit behaviours only if they have the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics. The objective results are the measurable, tangible output of work and they are the consequences of the employees' or the work group's behaviour,

The model of performance explains the need for employees to have certain attributes which will help them to exhibit a set of behaviours to achieve certain results. The set attributes, behaviour and results must be tied with the strategy of the institution. It is also noted that some constraints exist within the work environment that often preclude employees from performance. Performance appraisal could be one of them.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The design of the study was survey. The study was carried out in the University of Cape Coast Library. In all, one hundred and one (101) Senior and Junior staff were selected. All the library staff in all the university constituted the population. Simple random sampling technique was used to select (101) the library staff. The instrument was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was validated by two professional in the library environment and measurement and evaluation. The reliability analysis yielded coefficient of 0.81. The instrument was therefore deemed reliable for the study. The researchers adopted a direct approach in the administration of the instrument to the respondents. By this method, copies of the questionnaire were taken to respondents' and administered personally with the help of 2 research assistants who were duly oriented. The direct approach facilitated instant collection. The data was analyzed using percentage and mean. Responses that attracted mean ratings of 2.50 and above were accepted while those with mean ratings below 2.50 were rejected. Finally, the data was analyzed with the use of computer software known as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.1 Problems Encountered and Limitations

Most members of staff were very tired as results of the hours spent at work. Secondly, some staff were highly disappointed in the way management or authorities handled performance appraisal and said that the research would not be assisted by the appropriate authorities.

Regardless of the challenges encountered, the data collected was specifically a representative of the opinions of the staff. Above all the challenges did not in any way compromise the quality of the data and results of the study.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Performance appraisal system

According to the library staff, 76 (76.8%) of the respondents affirmed that UCC library has a performance appraisal system. On the contrary, 19 (19.2%) of the library staff said there was no performance appraisal system in UCC library. Generally, the responses meant that performance appraisal system was used in UCC library. All the respondents of the study affirmed that appraisal was necessary. It was clearly confirmed from the staff that indeed appraisal of staff was necessary for the University library.

The results again showed that library staff said performance appraisal system was necessary for the following reasons: assisting in determining the input of staff, bringing motivation to workers, for ensuring effective work by the staff and for setting and achieving performance objectives by management. Other respondents also identified these as: For the employer to know the output of the staff, to help identify whether one is performing well or not, for management to assess the performance of their staff and finally to act as a monitoring tool on library staff which instills discipline.

The majority of the library staff 70.2% stressed that their immediate boss was responsible for appraising their work output in the UCC library. The library staff (19.1%) also stated that the University's library appraisal was usually performed by their colleagues in the library. It could be observed that the majority of the respondents were appraised by their immediate boss.

To understand further the frequency of conducting performance appraisal in the UCC library, the study revealed that 91.7% of the library staff confirmed that appraisal is performed normally at the end of the academic year (annually). Six respondents representing (7.1%) indicated that occasionally performance appraisal was performed in the UCC library. This means the UCC library to a large extent, conducted performance appraisal annually.

Some respondents gave their views on whether the appraisal assesses the performance of the staff of the UCC library. This majority of the library staff did not agree that the appraisal system practiced in the library actually assesses the performance of staff.

The researchers considered it very imperative to get an idea as to why the library staff wishes to have their performance in the library appraised. It was revealed that appraisal on the job was important because of the following: encourages library staff to perform well continually, allows superiors to know the performance of staff, helps improve the performance of the library staff, leads to an effective supervisory role in the library. Other respondents stressed that assessment of the performance of job was necessary since it motivates and encourages work done; allows the department to clearly clarify job description for the worker; to allow one see how others see their performance; to know the quality and success of one's work output; to know whether one is are doing the right thing and to know whether individual performance is being appreciated.

In Table 4.6, respondents were also asked about the Counseling after appraisal. The majority, that is 86 (86.9%), affirmed that they never did the appraisers organise a counselling section after appraisal performance. Here, a higher proportion of the respondents identified that issue of counselling by the appraisers after conducting appraisals did not exist in UCC library.

4.2 Attitude of staff towards performance appraisal system

The researchers identified knowledge of work, work capacity, skills or efficiency, initiative, general behaviour and sense of responsibility as the major assessment criteria or qualities used by the sectional heads or appraisers of UCC library. Only, 12 (12.1%) stressed that the mentioned qualities by the researchers were not all that

important in the assessment of the performance of the UCC library staff. This implies that knowledge of work, work capacity, skills or efficiency, initiative, general behaviour and sense of responsibility as mentioned by the researchers were the major assessment criteria used by the sectional heads.

A follow up question on why the assessment qualities influence the library staff positively were given by the respondents. The library staff 86 (86.9%) said, the assessment serves as a basis for determining salary increment; it challenges the library staff to give off their best to achieve high output; enhances the performance of the staff; helps the library staff to increase work output and it gives a fair idea of what is expected of the staff. Other respondents 10 (13.1%) identified the following: the library staff tend to conduct themselves; better it serves as a criterion for incentives and an opportunity to assess staff performance.

4.3 Effectiveness of performance appraisal systems

In response to rating in order of importance, 52 (52.5%), 24 (24.2%), 7 (7.1%) and 16 (16.2%) ranked 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively for salary increase. Other respondents also ranked promotion as the reasons for conducting performance appraisal: Least important -11 (11.1%), important - 43 (43.4%), more important - 27 (27.3%) and much important - 15 (15.2%) respectively. For training and development needs, respondents ranked 14 (14.1%) for Least important, 27 (27.3%) for important, 28 (28.3%) for more important and 30 (30.3%) for much important.

The researchers enquired from the library staff of UCC about what happens after conducting appraisals. The responses of the library staff were these; have a fair view of attitude to work; if a recommendation by the appraiser is approved increment may be given at the end of the year; the appraiser forwards the assessment to the Human Resource Division (HRD) for salary increase and immediate boss occasionally counsels. A few (10.3%) of the respondents also indicated that nothing happens after appraisal by the sectional head.

The researchers further asked respondents to identify how appraisal interview can enhance the job performance of the library staff. Fifty eight (58.6%) of the respondents indicated “Yes, considerable improvement” and 20 (20.2%) identified “Yes, slight improvement” for the issue of appraisal interview enhancing the job performance of the library staff while 21 (21.2%) did not respond to the question. This revealed that there is certainly an improvement when appraisal interview is conducted by the appraiser.

The study also showed that 80 (80.8%) respondents indicated that, training or orientation on performance appraisal system was not conducted for the library staff. Accordingly to 14 (14.1%) respondents, workshops were organized for the staff members and only one respondent representing 1% stated that Orientation was given from superior officers as the kind of training on the performance appraisal system.

Examining table 4.12 carefully, it can be seen that respondents gave different durations for the training or orientations in UCC. In the view of the library staff: 2 (13.3%) stated one month, 3 (20.0%) said one week and lastly 10 (66.7%) stated two weeks. Here, a higher proportion of the respondents who stated training identified two weeks as the extent for the training in UCC library on performance appraisal system.

Out of the 99 respondents, 31 (31.3%) indicated that, apart from the formal appraisal conducted by the sectional head, the appraiser informally discusses work performance with the library staff of UCC. Again, 54 (54.5%) respondents said the sectional head does not discuss performance informally. It follows that the majority of the respondents had confirmed that in UCC, the appraisers do not discuss work performance with the library staff after appraisal.

It was identified that, out of the 99 respondents, 35 (35.4%) indicated “Yes” for benefits of discussion of performance by the sectional head in UCC. Again, 32 (32.3%) respondents said “No” for benefits of discussion of performance by the sectional head in UCC.

The library staff of UCC did give some suggestions on how the current performance appraisal system in UCC can be improved. These are summarized as follows:

- There should be orientation for the library staff on the whole structure and criteria for the appraisal system in UCC.

- Fairness on the part of sectional heads is necessary for better assessment.
- Library staff must be made aware of their performance after the appraisal is conducted.
- Effective communication between superiors and subordinates must be effective
- Assessment must be performed by the subordinate's immediate superior.
- Performance appraisal must be performed by sectional heads and not the Deputy librarian.
- Personal counseling between the appraisers and appraisees after the appraisal.

4.4 Discussion of findings

4.4.1 Knowledge of performance appraisal system

According to Pierce and Gardner (2004) performance is the process of evaluating how effectively members of an organisation are fulfilling their responsibilities and contributing to organisational goals. The results of the research revealed that how effective performance appraisals are conducted and how the employees perceive it, can influence to an extent the work performance of the library staff. Therefore, it was necessary for the performance appraisal in the library to be conducted against clear, specific and meaningful criteria and the importance to which the library staff regarded it.

In the view of Nishchae (2011) this misalignment results in appraisals simply becoming a ritual of fault-finding, political bickering and pay negotiations, rather than a dialogue based on mutual trust and respect which can foster performance excellence. Therefore, it is suggested that management should address critical organizational activities such as: Goal-setting, behavioral change, flexible rating scale and appraisal frequency. This can be done by clarifying the purpose of the performance appraisal. The assertion that most organizations do not measure the actual performance of the staff was supported. Organisations should demonstrate a commitment to their employees by continuously revamping and improving their performance management systems.

4.4.2 Attitude towards performance appraisal

Similarly, Dadzie (2003) conducted a research which also revealed that 33.3% of the respondents indicated that performance appraisal was useless. According to the respondents, performance appraisal was an annual ritual and a waste of time because most of the heads of the departments were not honest with the appraisal ratings. It is imperative to identify how effective performance appraisals and employees perception of the system can be a source of motivation. To affirm clear criteria, Opoku (2009) revealed in his research that the majority of the respondents (71.9%) were of the opinion that the library personnel performance was assessed against clear, specific, valid and meaningful criteria.

More importantly, the staff attitude towards appraisal was also identified as an indicator for measuring performance in the library. Attitude, according to Rao and Narayana (1992) is an internal state of a person that is focused on objects, events, people and which can exist in the person's psychological world. Attitude to work is important because directly it affects work behaviour of the library staff. The behaviour of the various staff with whom the user comes into contact has an impression on the user's level of satisfaction.

4.4.3 Effectiveness of performance appraisal system

In Dadzie (2003), the respondents in the Balme library of University of Ghana, Legon stated that an appraisal system rather serves as a means of feedback and communication between the appraiser or sectional head and library staff regarding their performance. However, other staff members of the University of Ghana Balme library stated that sectional heads perform appraisal to block the careers of the subordinates.

More so, Dzandu (2007) indicated that effectiveness places emphasis on doing the "right things". Therefore, the appraisal criteria or qualities such as knowledge of work, work capacity, skills or efficiency, initiative, general behaviour and sense of responsibility used for the performance appraisal must be clear to all library staff of UCC. The UCC library could enhance the effectiveness of the appraisal system by performing appraisal interviews for the library staff. This would indicate to the staff the short falls in their performance and how best these can be remedied. The staff should have no doubt and reservations about the appraisal system conducted in the UCC library.

4.4.4 Challenges of performance appraisal

Facts emerging from 1981 survey of Dhaka University library show that it has not been well administered and properly organized (Rob, 1981). The existing problems identified by the researchers in the library of Dhaka University are:

- Poor organization that the university library is not organized properly;
- The staff complement is not satisfactory;
- The staff consists of both non-professional and untrained staff;
- The present staff is not able to present internet and telecommunication services;
- The present budget is inadequate;
- Lack of relevant equipment and furniture as a result of lack of funds.

5.3 Conclusion

In recent years, the focus of performance appraisals has shifted away from mere evaluation and the strict appraisal of performance, towards a more forward-looking approach that centres upon improving performance and developing the appraisee by means of a well-prepared, honest and open discussion. Management theorists have downgraded traditional versions of performance appraisal as backward, simplistic, and even counterproductive. As a substitute for the boss's annual evaluation of his or her subordinates, these theorists have advocated more "modern" systems for management development—a system such as management by objectives (MBO), assessment centres, and career counselling. It is recommended that attention must be given to the performance appraisal system in the academic libraries. This can be done through clarity of the rating criteria or qualities, training of appraisers, appraisal interview or discussion and Counselling, frequency of appraisals, responsibility for appraising staff, motivation, use of computer software and review the appraisal system periodically.

In conclusion, performance appraisal systems would have a positive impact on the employees when the right mechanisms are put in place. These may include appraisal discussion, appraisal interview, clarity of the appraisal system, training programmes for appraisers and additional evaluation raters. The UCC library staff will enjoy benefits like training and development programmes, maintaining relationship between staff and appraiser and many more.

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