Performance Appraisal System in Takoradi Polytechnic

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the current performance appraisal system (PAS) used at Takoradi Polytechnic. Specifically, the study was designed to find out the practice and nature of PAS in the Takoradi Polytechnic and establish the extent of staff awareness and understanding of the PAS. The descriptive survey design was used for the study and it involved survey of employees' views on the issues, situations and processes. The study was conducted in the Takoradi Polytechnic with a sample size of 116 elements made up of both appraisers and appraises. Questionnaires and an interview guide were the instruments used to address the research questions. Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS version 21) was employed to examine the results. The respondents established their consciousness of the performance appraisal system in Takoradi Polytechnic and indicated further that their immediate superiors as appraisers of the performance. The performance appraisal system practiced in Takoradi Polytechnic for all staff is done once a staff serves the probation period of one year then the staff is confirmed or not. The study also revealed that majority of staff have not received training or orientation on how PA is conducted in the Polytechnic, for that matter both appraisers and appraisees required training to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

Keywords: Performance Appraisal System, Appraisers, Appraisees, Takoradi Polytechnic

1. Introduction

Performance appraisal (PA) is the Human Resource Management activity that is used to determine the extent to which an employee is performing the job effectively (Ivancevich, 1998). Other terms for performance appraisal include performance review, personal rating, merit rating, performance evaluation, employee appraisal and employee evaluation. According to Boachie-Mensah (2006), PA is a periodic formal assessment of work achievement as a basis for future actions and decisions. There are informal and formal schemes of performance appraisal. Boachie-Mensah (2006) went on to say that informal performance appraisal is the process of continually feeding back to subordinate's information about how well they are doing their work for the organization. Performance appraisal usually takes place half-yearly or yearly. According to Ivancevich (1998), formal performance appraisal is a system set up by the organization to regularly and systematically appraise employee's performance.

Although PA is broadly regarded as a useful tool and an essential component of today's organizational human resource management development, it can also lead to very negative consequences if not handled with care. There is also the issue of how frequently appraisals should be conducted. Most supervisors also find the feedback interviews distasteful after conducting PA. There are concerns that appraisal systems are treated as an administrative exercise. They are ineffective and do little to improve performance of employees in the future. It is the above state of concern that has provided the drive for the researchers to conduct an analysis of the formal performance appraisal system in Takoradi Polytechnic and to find out about the system in general and the appraisers and appraisees perception of the system.

The general purpose of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of the current Performance Appraisal System operating within the Takoradi Polytechnic. The specific objective of the study is: to identify the performance appraisal system operating in Takoradi Polytechnic; to find out the process of performance appraisal system in Takoradi Polytechnic and to ascertain if the objectives of performance appraisal system are being achieved.

2. Methodology

It was an evaluative research because it measured or evaluated the effectiveness of the performance appraisal conducted by the Takoradi Polytechnic. The performance appraisal was only evaluated by the standard of the objectives stated. The target population for this research consisted of all Takoradi Polytechnic staff. As at November 30, 2010, Takoradi Polytechnic had a staff strength of 937 employees, with different levels of educational background ranging from no educational qualification to university degree and also ranging from senior member through senior staff to junior staff. The researchers adopted the multi stage sampling technique for the study. The census technique and the simple random technique were adopted. Initially, the researchers collected the total staff list of 937. 24 staff out of the total number were Deans and Heads of department who automatically became the appraisers. 913 staff were grouped into Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff as the appraisees.

As stated in the Conditions of Service for Senior Members and Senior Staff of the Polytechnics in Ghana (1999), Senior Member is the term used to cover an employee of the lecturership grade, herein referred to as senior member (academic) and analogous administrative and professional grades, also referred to as senior member (administrative and professional). Senior Staff is the term used to cover teaching staff of Instructorship grade and its equivalent grade in the administrative and professional grades. From Unified Conditions of Service for Unionised Staff of the Polytechnics in Ghana, (2006) Junior Staff is the term used to describe all employees of the Polytechnic below the rank of administrative assistant and analogous grades. The simple random sampling technique was used to sample the total number of appraisees. The researcher worked out 10 percent each of the number under each category. After that the census technique was used to sample the appraisers. The researchers ended at 92 appraisees plus the 24 appraisers making 116 staff of Takoradi Polytechnic being sampled for the study.

Table 1: Distribution of sample

Attributes	Appraisees raw figure	10% sampled
Senior Members	271	27
Senior Staff	325	33
Junior staff	317	32
Deans and HOD	24	All Deans and HOD's (24)
Total	**913**	**116**

The data collection instruments used was questionnaires and interview guide. There were a few open-ended questions meant to elicit more information from respondents. The open-ended questions were meant to allow the respondents the free will to express themselves on certain pertinent issues relating to the study. Some of the questionnaire items were based on a five – point – Likert type scale anchored from 'very good' to 'very bad'. Discrete quantitative values from 1 to 5 were assigned to the responses, with 1 being 'very bad' and 5 being 'very good' 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 obtained from the Human Resource Unit of the Polytechnic. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The collected data was entered into the statistical analysis software called the Statistical Package for Service Solutions (SPSS) version 21. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data collected. The analysis made use of frequency counts falling into various categories, and these were converted into percentages made up of frequency distribution tables.

3 Results and Discussions
3.1 Practice of performance appraisal
Table 2: Respondents Views on the Practice of PA in Takoradi Polytechnic

Response	Appraisers		Appraisees		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
No	1	4.2	18	19.6	19	16.4
Yes	22	91.7	64	69.6	86	74.1
Don't know	1	4.2	10	10.9	11	9.5
Total	24	100	92	100	116	100.0

The study found out that behaviour appraisal is practiced in Takoradi Polytechnic. Table 2 depicts that 74.1% of respondents agreed that PA is practiced in the Takoradi Polytechnic. 16.4% of appraisers and appraisees responded that performance appraisal was not practiced in Takoradi Polytechnic. This confirms that performance appraisal is really practiced in Takoradi Polytechnic. Though, few of the respondents were not aware of the practice of appraisal in Takoradi Polytechnic.

3.2 Officers responsible for performance appraisal
Table 3 indicates that majority of respondents were appraised by the immediate heads. This shows that staff were supervised by their immediate heads as it has proved by different writers. The Deans were also responsible for appraising both the heads of department and other staff working directly in the various school offices.

Table 3: Officers responsible for appraisal

Response	Appraisers		Appraisees		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Dean	12	50.0	14	15.2	26	22.4
HOD	1	4.2	49	53.3	50	43.1
Head, HR	4	16.7	11	12.0	15	13.0
Registrar	3	12.5	4	4.3	7	6.0
Students	4	16.7	14	15.2	18	15.5
Total	24	100	92	100	116	100.0

The study pointed out that the lecturers and instructors are assessed by the students every semester which is also a form of appraisal practiced in Takoradi Polytechnic and feedback is given to the concerned staff. The Head of Human Resource indicated that people who are responsible for performance appraisal are Rector, Vice Rector, Registrar, Head of Human Resource, Finance Officer, Deans, Heads of Department and Students.

3.3 Mode of appraisal

From Table 4, 50% of appraisees said that standard questionnaires were used to assess them. The appraisees commented that, the appraisers sometimes use interview and observation as a mode of appraisal in assessing them. The observation was that half of the respondents were appraised by using standard questionnaires (see Table 4). The Head of Human Resource said that the office use standard questionnaires, interview and observation to appraise the staff in Takoradi Polytechnic.

Table 4: Appraises views on mode of appraisal

Response	Appraisees	
	Frequency	Percentage
Standard questionnaire	46	50.0
Interview	16	17.4
Observation	24	26.1
Others	6	5.5
Total	92	100.0

This indicates that, all that have been used to appraise staff but the questionnaire is the most frequently used one. It was observed that students also used standard questionnaires given by the Academic Quality Assurance Control Unit in the Takoradi Polytechnic to appraise their lecturers and instructors. The Head of Human Resource said that the office use standard questionnaires, interview and observation to appraise the staff in Takoradi Polytechnic.

3.4 Perception of appraisees on performance appraisal

From Table 5, 52.2% of the appraisees were not allowed to comment on the performance appraisal before they are forwarded to Human Resource Office for further consideration by the polytechnic. However, 37% of the appraisees said they were allowed to comment on their performance appraisal. The appraisees added that they only filled a portion of the form before the head of the section would complete the form for onward submission to the Head of Human Resource.

The study stated that the appraisees wanted the appraisal forms after being completed by the head of their respective section and comment on it before it is sent to Human Resource Office. The study realized that 68.5% of appraisees did not receive any feedback on their performance appraisal results in the form of discussions on what they have done well and where they fell short. Only 31.5% of the appraisees reported to have received feedbacks concerning their appraisal (see Table 5). Also 55.4% of the appraisees indicated that formal performance appraisal interview is an important part of the appraisal system and needs to be continued since that would help staff to put up a good performance on their jobs. About 52% of the appraisees responded that their appraisers were not conducting informal appraisal in addition to the formal appraisals.

From Table 6, 83.4% of appraisers responded 'yes', meaning they agreed that the performance of the appraisees should be made known to them regularly so that the subordinates would get to know where they are going in their work life.

Table 5: Perception of Appraisees on performance appraisal[a]

Statement/Item	Yes		No		Don't know	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Appraisees comment on performance appraisal before forwarded	34	37.0	48	52.2	10	10.9
Receipt of feedback on performance appraisal conducted	29	31.5	63	68.5	0	0
Importance of formal interview in appraisal system	51	55.4	41	44.6	0	0
Informal appraisal by appraisers	44	47.8	48	52.2	0	0

Also appraisers are able to identify who needs training or refresher training. The study recognized that 41.7% of appraisers as at the time of the study had not received any training on how to appraise subordinates' performance. This indicates that the appraisers use their own way of assessment which can also lead to the appraisers being biased. The appraisers stressed that they really need training on how to appraise staff especially when they are appointed as heads for the first time. In finding out who needed the refresher training, 100% of the appraisers indicated that they like to be given refresher training on performance appraisal and even training on other things.

Table 6: Perception of Appraisees on performance appraisal[b]

Statement/Item	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Receipt of feedback on regular basis by subordinates	20	83.4	4	16.7
Receipt of training on performance appraisal	14	58.3	10	41.7
Refresher training	24	100	0	0
Understanding of performance appraisal purpose	17	70.8	7	29.2

This shows that training is really necessary for the appraisers to be abreast with the modern trend of appraising subordinates better. In response to why attached to the question, most of the appraisers agreed that it would help them to assess their subordinates in the best way.

3.5 Frequency of performance appraisal conducted

It was realized that appraisers saw it to be their responsibilities to complete the forms as the Human Resource Office brings them to the various heads in the various schools and sections. At times too, the Human Resource Office reminds the heads to appraise their staff when necessary. From table 8, 54.2% of the appraisers stated that they discuss their staff's performance with them, not too often, but as deemed necessary. The study found out that this form of discussion took place between the appraisers and appraisees on how the staffs were executing their task for the Takoradi Polytechnic to achieve its goals. This indicates that the appraisers had discussions with their appraisees when they deemed it necessary.

The study revealed that 45.8% of the appraisers never conducted formal performance interview. It was observed that conducting the interview was not mandatory so it was done when the appraiser thoughts it necessary. 50% of the appraisers confirmed that, they sometimes communicate the performance of their subordinates to them after appraisal. This shows that feedback provided to appraisees have not been on regularly basis.

Table 7: Frequency of appraisal

Response	How regular appraisers discuss Performance		Conduct of formal performance Interview		Communication of performance to subordinates	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Always	3	12.5	3	12.5	3	12.5
Sometimes	13	54.2	9	37.5	12	50.0
Rarely	2	8.3	1	4.2	4	16.7
Never	6	25.0	11	45.8	5	20.8
Total	24	100	24	100	24	100.0

The study revealed that 45.8% of the appraisers never conducted formal performance interview. It was observed that conducting the interview was not mandatory so it was done when the appraiser thoughts it necessary. 50% of the appraisers confirmed that, they sometimes communicate the performance of their subordinates to them after appraisal. This shows that feedback provided to appraisees have not been on regularly basis (see Table 7).

3.6 Rating the uses of performance appraisal

This section was intended to rate the various uses of performance appraisal. The rating was scaled from 1-5, 1 being the very bad rating, with 2 (bad), 3 (neither bad nor good) and 4 (good) in between and 5 the very good rating. For annual salary adjustment, the appraisers were indifferent whether performance appraisal was used to

determine it. Promotion interestingly yielded a high result since most respondents were of the view that performance appraisal was being used for the purpose of promotion (see Tables 11 and 12). It was seen that majority of the respondents rated the uses of performance appraisal results as neither bad nor good. This indicates that some of the respondents agreed to the fact that performance appraisal results could be used for adjusting annual salary as the rest of the respondents too were not in favour of the statement.

Table 11: Rating the use of performance appraisal results by appraisers

	Very bad	Bad	Not bad or Good	Good	Very good	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Annual salary adjustment	4.2	4.2	50.0	41.6	0.0	100
Promotion	0.0	0.0	4.2	79.1	16.7	100
Retraining / Retraining	0.0	8.3	20.8	45.8	25.0	100
Transfer	0.0	12.5	45.8	20.8	20.8	100
Manpower planning	0.0	0.0	29.2	45.8	25.0	100
Dismissal	4.2	12.5	37.5	37.5	8.3	100
Reward for hardwork	0.0	4.2	16.7	33.3	45.8	100

Considering Tables 11 and 12, it was realized that 50% of both the appraisers and appraisees rated the use of performance appraisal results for promotion as 'good' which really signifies that they were in support of the use of PA results for promotion. In rating the use of performance appraisal result in both training/retraining and manpower planning, majority of respondents rated the use as 'good', which stresses that performance appraisal result can be used in training/retraining and manpower planning. The study found that in rating the use of performance appraisal results for transfer and dismissal, majority of the respondents as rated the use "neither bad nor good". This indicates that respondents were not in support of the fact that PA result should be used in transferring or dismissing staff.

It was discovered that, both appraisers and appraisees rated the use of PA results in reward for hard work as 'good'. This indicated that the respondents were in favour of the use of performance appraisal results being used as a means for rewarding hard work. From the discussions above, it was realized that in rating the use of performance appraisal results, most of the uses were rated 'neither bad nor good'. On the other hand, the PA results were rated as 'good' in the area of promotion.

For the study to bring out additional information on the performance appraisal system in Takoradi Polytechnic, the respondents were asked to provide other remarks on the system. A number of pertinent information was gathered on practice, frequency, perception and uses of performance appraisal results.

For the practice of performance appraisal system, respondents commented that subordinates should be involved in the process of implementing performance appraisal system. The appraisers said that PA forms should be self-explanatory enough for them to understand and give realistic assessment on the appraisees to avoid the likelihood of being biased.

Table 12: Rating the use of performance appraisal results by appraisees

Statement/Item	Very bad	Bad	Not bad or Good	Good	Very good	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Annual salary adjustment	16.3	8.7	31.5	37.0	6.5	100
Promotion	6.5	6.5	25.0	42.4	19.6	100
Retraining/ Retraining	7.6	7.6	31.5	41.3	12.0	100
Transfer	13.0	14.1	45.7	23.9	3.3	100
Manpower planning	7.6	14.1	33.7	32.6	12.0	100
Dismissal	19.6	13.0	40.2	20.7	6.5	100
Reward for hardwork	8.7	8.7	18.5	40.2	23.9	100

Despite the fact that the appraisal system is practice, a lot of respondents need basic knowledge of it and the system must be well explicated to all staff concerned. Respondents indicated that regular training should be given to all staff on the performance appraisal system. With frequency and perception of the performance appraisal system, the respondents suggested that assessment should be done regularly instead of attaching the appraisal forms to the confirmation forms after probation period. With regards to the use of performance appraisal results, the respondents said that staff should be promoted, trained/retrained, rewarded, transferred or dismissed based on performance appraisal results. Finally, there was the need to provided staff with the appropriate feedback and while the system is regularized.

4.0 Conclusion
The respondents confirmed that the performance appraisal system was practiced at Takoradi Polytechnic and staff were assessed by the immediate heads normally known as immediate supervisors. Some of the respondents

lacked understanding of the performance appraisal system because of lack of training and it was suggested training and retraining will possibly help. Appraisees also suggested that feedback should be given to them to really know exactly what they are doing. The respondents expressed that the performance appraisal results should be used for promotion, training/retraining, manpower planning and reward for hard work. Finally, respondents suggested that apart from the regular appraisal for teaching staff there should be a regular appraisal for non-teaching staff as well to ensure that staffs are assessed regularly. The employees of the Takoradi Polytechnic were categorized into three as senior members, senior staff and junior staff. A total of ninety-two (92) staff were selected randomly as appraisees, and twenty-four (24) heads of department and deans automatically became appraisers to form the sample of one hundred and sixteen (116) staff.

The study found that performance appraisal is conducted for all staff in Takoradi Polytechnic.
The appraisals are initially conducted when a staff is being confirmed after a staff has served the probation period. Each staff is basically supposed to be appraised by the head (i.e. immediate superior) through the use of standard questionnaires. This process take place when the Head of Human Resource Office sent a confirmation form with appraisal form attached to it to the Dean or Head of Department concerned to complete the forms in the form of appraising the staff concern and forward the forms to the Human Resource Officer for further recommendations and approval.

For the teaching staff they have appraisal done every semester by the students as being the appraisers. The students appraise their lecturers with questionnaires distributed by the Quality Assurance Office. Both appraisers and appraisees indicated that they did not understand the performance appraisal system being practiced in Takoradi Polytechnic. This was due to the lack of training as observed in the study. Some of the appraisees complained of not receiving performance feedback, especially in the form of discussions with appraisers. This in turn prevents them from knowing exactly what the outcome of the performance appraisal exercise was. Both appraisers and appraisees did not see the use of performance appraisal results in the areas of annual salary adjustment, promotion, training/retraining, transfer, dismissal and reward for hardworking.

The objective of conducting the performance appraisal system in Takoradi Polytechnic was met. This is because it was serving it purpose of appraising staff to be able to confirm those who have served the probation period. Also the performance appraisal was used in assessing the teaching staff every semester. In addition, the personnel office is able to take decisions based on the results of performance appraisal received from the various heads of department and deans. All the same, it was admitted that the system should be practiced regularly among the non-teaching staff as the teaching staff which confirms the responses obtained from both the appraisers and appraisees. It is worth noting that the performance appraisal conducted helps the staff to be up and doing in the executing of their daily task.

Appraisers and appraisees on the use of performance appraisal results were similar by both of them rating the uses as neither bad nor good. This implies that respondents were not sure of the uses of the appraisal results because the appraisers and appraisees do not know exactly what the results are used for. The respondents established their consciousness of the PA system in Takoradi Polytechnic. The respondents indicated that immediate superiors were recognized as appraisers of the performance. The performance appraisal system practiced in Takoradi Polytechnic for all staff is done once a staff serves the probation period of one year then the staff is confirmed or unconfirmed.

Even though training for the appraisers was about 58% on how to appraise subordinates, appraisers requested to be retrained to equip them with the modern trends of appraising staff in order to improve performance. According to the respondents, those who were not trained, have to be given training for them to understand performance appraisal system and how to appraise staff properly. It was realized that the performance appraisal system practiced in Takoradi Polytechnic mainly is to confirm staff who have successfully served their one-year probation term.

5.0 Recommendations

Management should ensure performance appraisal for non-teaching staff is conducted annually like the appraisal for the teaching staff which is done every semester for all staff employed by the Polytechnic.

Performance appraisal results should be used in areas like annual salary adjustment, promotion, training/retraining, transfer, manpower planning, dismissal and reward for hardwork. With this, the appraisers and appraises, especially the latter, would work as expected, which will ensure the institution achieves the objectives of conducting the PAS as well as achieve the vision of the polytechnic as a whole.

When the completed PA form is sent to the Human Resource, a written result known as the feedback should be given out to the staff (appraises) for them to know how they are performing in order to make the process of PA in Takoradi Polytechnic complete. This would create the necessary awareness in terms of the staff's strengths and weaknesses so that any need training or retraining could be tackled as soon as possible.

Appraisers should be allowed to go through some training especially when they are appointed into the office for the first time on how to conduct appraisal since this could contribute greatly and appraisees should ask

for information concerning their performance.

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