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EFFECT OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AS AN INSTRUMENT IN IMPROVING WORKERS PERFORMANCE IN ABA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ABIA STATE

EGBUCHULAM MICHAEL UMEZU
Department of Political Science, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Abstract

This study examined the effect of performance appraisal as an instrument in improving workers performance in Aba South Local Government Area of Abia State. The study was carried out based on the need to determine the effect of employee appraisal on employee commitment to duty, employee effectiveness, and employee productivity. In the methodology, survey research design was used and questionnaire served as the instrument of data collection. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentage, and the hypotheses were tested using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The findings revealed that performance appraisal helps to identify training and development need of employee of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State; performance appraisal helps to make decisions regarding promotion, transfer and termination of appointment of staff of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State; performance appraisal serves as an instrument to motivate the employees of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State; and performance appraisal helps to take corrective measures among staff of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State should

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Performance Appraisal, Workers Performance, Training and Development, Promotion, Transfer, Termination of Appointment and Corrective Measures.

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adopt different performance appraisal strategies like peer review, management by objectives, work standard approach and self review method to evaluate the performance level of their subsequent training and development of employees. More so, there should be regular appraisal of employees in Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State to enable them identify the area of deficiencies, weakness, prospects and decisions regarding promotion, transfer and termination of appointment.

Introduction

Human resource is one of the resources in the organization that play an important role in the successful achievement of organizational goals. In the development of human resources, the performance of an employee in the organization is needed to achieve employee performance itself and also for the success of the organization. Improving the performance of these employees is not only beneficial for the organization, but also for the employees themselves. Because with good performance theoretically can achieve a better level of employee career development (Siahaan et al, 2016). Responsible organizations recognize that human resources are their main resource in achieving the desired objectives. The major objective of every organization, whether private or public, is to improve its productivity, and this achievement to a great extent is determined by the abilities and competences of its workforce.

Satisfactory performance of employees does not happen automatically. Consequently, workers must be promoted, motivated, equipped and trained adequately to ensure that their knowledge, skills, commitment and abilities facilitate the attainment of organizational goals and objectives (Karimu & Adeleye, 2014). Employees are the most valuable assets in an organization and as such, the most dynamic in nature. Human resources of an organization should be given much or the desired attention from management. If the stated goals and objectives of an organization is to be achieved as stated or enshrined in the vision and mission statement of the organization, the need for performance appraisal of the human resources is very necessary to achieve the stated objectives. Performance appraisal is the most powerful instrument that organizations have to mobilize the energy of every employee of the organization toward the achievement of strategic goals. Performance appraisals are directed towards employees' behaviors and attitudes to achieve an acceptable outcome.

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Often, performance appraisal is seen merely as a once–a-year drill mandated by the personnel department. However in local government or organization that takes performance appraisal seriously and use the system well, performance appraisal is an on-going process and not merely an annual exercise (Nwana, 2021). Through performance appraisal process, workers learns exactly how well he or she did during the previous twelve months and can then use that information to improve his or her performance in the future. In this case, performance appraisal serves as a purpose by making sure that organizational expectations are clearly communicated. Performance appraisal forces managers/supervisors to confront those whose performances are not meeting the organizational expectations. Performance appraisal provides the mechanism to make sure that those who do better work receive more pay or pay rise. In developing countries such as Nigeria, effective employee Job performance depends to a large extent on the effectiveness of the employees.

Performance appraisal is defined as "a structural formal interview between subordinate & supervisor, that usually takes the form of periodic interview (annually or semi-annually), in which the work preference of the subordinate is examined and discussed, with the view of identifying the weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for improvement and development" (Senyah et al, 2010). Performance appraisal is a formal process which takes place from time to time, whereby employees are evaluated by a supervisor or some type of judge, who determines the performance of an employee through a set of measures, attaches a grade or scores to the evaluation and then normally notifies the employee of his or her result. Basically, the reason for conducting an appraisal is to improve the performance of the workforce (DeNisi et al, 2017). A lot of organizations have adopted performance appraisal as a process that improves organizational performance (Daonis, 2012). Performance appraisal has rampantly become a tool used to strategically to improve organizational effectiveness. Performance appraisal goes hand in hand or correspondently with evaluation, performance review, assessment and personnel appraisal.

In any organization, performance appraisal significance has proved to be indispensable when we address organizational success. Any organizational success depends deeply on how well the employee performance is effectively managed. The performance appraisal is a rare and important form of career development which encompasses a standard review of employee performance in an organization and then furthermore, conveys feedback to the employees (Paul

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et al., 2014). These authors see performance appraisal as a process that happens continuously as regards checking and measuring every employee input and through that, know their strengths and weaknesses. And of course, the results are communicated back to them (feedback). Performance appraisal is one of the fundamental tools that have been adopted in measuring and evaluating the performance of employee in an organization (Laschchnau, 2015). Moreover, Obi (2016) contends that performance appraisal is amongst the most complicated issues in managing human resource. This is because the success of an employee in an organization relies heavily on the nature of appraisal system that is inherent in the organization.

The need to maintain a system that helps in decision making on critical issues such as promotion, remuneration and training that will contribute to the organizational growth and achieve its objectives (Jose, 2011). Grubb (2007) observed that performance appraisals is a procedure to evaluate or asses how individual personnel are performing and how they can improve their performance and contribute to overall organizational performance which management needs to give desirable attention. Performance appraisal is a management tool which is helpful in motivating and effectively utilizing human resources. Assessment of human potential is difficult. No matter how well designed and appropriate the performance planning and appraisal system, an organization should maintain an effective human resources management (HRM) which is essentially for optimally utilizing creativity and attaining individual as well as organizational goal. The management has to ensure proper integrations of various activities and harmonious functioning directed toward organizational goals. High motivation is essential for ensuring commitment of human resources to the given objective.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The contributions of performance appraisal to both organization and employees cannot be neglected. This is because performance appraisal enables the organization to identify training and development needs, identify the areas of employee strength/weakness, know the best ways to utilize the employees for the achievement of organizational performance. It also enables workers to have clear understanding to their individual contributions to the organization; hence encourages them to perform more effectively. However, it has been observed that performance appraisal in Nigeria public sector (of which Aba South Local Government Area is one) is not effective as it should be. In view of Akpanabia

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(2015) notwithstanding the existence of performance appraisal, the need for training and development of employees has not been done as it ought to be. Here, an effective appraisal system ought to identify the areas of training and development needs, but that has not been achieved. Again, there are instances where the public sector management does not recognize employees who have participated in training programmes to acquire additional skills and knowledge. Such recognition ought to come in form of increase in salary, promotion and other fringe benefits to reward their efforts. Sometimes, where training has occurred, management may not be willing to deploy such staff to other departments where they are relevant.

Also, job expansion are sometimes performed without considering the skills and capabilities of the staff, which may result in low morale and frustration on other employees who desire to undergo further training. According to Obi (2016) Local government in Nigeria in recent times has been accused of high level of inefficiencies, poor leadership, corruption, and low level of staff performance because of neglect of performance appraisal. Here, some staff are promoted on the ground that they have worked for certain number of years, not because they have contributed the productivity of the local government. Staff transfer and termination of appointment sometimes do not follow appraisal result. When the above is the case, employee performance will be nothing to write home about. Okoye (2016) asserts that after performance appraisal process, an organization supposed to regularly motivate employee who performed very effectively. Such motivation is expected to encourage other staff for higher performance.

However, this is not the case, as there is very low level of staff motivation, even for those who performed very good during appraisal period. Most employees are not motivated during appraisal process as they see it as an avenue to probe them and not to assist them. Here, when performance appraisal is not practiced in an organization, it brings about low job performance among the staff. In this case, the low level of employee performance in Nigeria local governments today could be attributed to poor level of performance appraisal. Poor use of performance appraisal outcome has been linked to poor funding in the local government. To conduct effective performance appraisal and implement its outcome requires improve funding, so when that is lacking, it negatively hinders normal appraisal conduct in the organization. On the other way round, performance appraisal supposed to be a source of staff motivation if properly done. Therefore, it is against this background that this study is made to assess the effect of

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performance appraisal as an instrument in improving workers performance in Aba South Local Government Area of Abia State.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This objective of this study focused on the effect of performance appraisal as an instrument in improving workers performance. However, the specific objectives for the study were:

1. To find out if performance appraisal helps to identify training and development need of employees of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State.
2. To determine whether performance appraisal helps to make decisions regarding promotion, transfer and termination of appointment of staff of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State.
3. To ascertain if performance appraisal is an instrument to motivate the employees of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions formed the basis upon which the study was conducted.

1. To what extent does performance appraisal helps to identify training and development need of employees of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State?
2. To what extent does performance appraisal helps to make decisions regarding promotion, transfer and termination of appointment of staff of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State?
3. To what extent does performance appraisal serve as an instrument to motivate the employees of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State?

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The Concept of Performance Appraisal

Before going into the meaning of performance appraisal, it is necessary to understand the full meaning of performance so that its appraisal could be appreciated. There are many views of what performance is. According to Agulanna and Awujo (2011), it can simply be seen as the result achieved or record of a person achievement. However, Kane (2015) says that performance "is something that a person leaves behind and exists apart from the purpose".

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Bernadine et al (2015) argued that "performance should be defined as the outcomes of work because they provide the strongest linkage to the strategic goals of the organization customer satisfaction and economic contribution". Performance could therefore be seen as behavior- the way in which individual, teams and organizations get work done. Based on the foregoing, Akpanabia (2015) sees performance appraisal as evaluating the activities of the human resources engaged in the process of achieving the objectives. Human resource is an intermediary between input and output. Directly, it is concerned with the human being and indirectly with the material and financial resources. Performance appraisal is the step where (or through which) the management finds out how effective it has been at hiring and placing employees.

A performance appraisal is a process of evaluating an employee's performance of a job in terms of its requirements. It is a process of estimating or judging the value, excellence and qualities of an employee. Individually and collectively, it is a part of all other staffing processes viz recruitment, selection, placement and indoctrination. It is a planned way of letting the subordinate knows where he stands and how he is progressing. Performance appraisal is a systematic approach through which the traits of the workers are linked with their contributions. Simply stated, performance appraisal is that activity of management with the help of which the management evaluates and appraises the performance of workers. Job requirements help the management to carry out appraisal effectively. Performance appraisal is a systematic evaluation of the work of an employee in relation to job requirements. This appraisal differs from employee to employee (Idede, 2008). Performance appraisal has been defined by Mathis and Jackson (2015) as "the process of determining how well employees do their job compared to set of standard and communication that information to the employee" one point to be noted in this definition is that the appraisal result should be made known to the employee.

Performance Appraisal Techniques

There are several techniques of performance appraisal, each with some strong points as well as limitations. Notable among these techniques are:

1. **360 degree:** The 360-degree appraisal is the most comprehensive and costly type of appraisals. It offers an alternative method by which organizations can gain more useful performance information about employees, and make them more accountable to their various customers.

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Rather than having a single person play judge, a 360 - degree appraisal acts more like a jury. It includes self - ratings, peer review, and upward assessments; feedback is sought from everyone. It gives people a chance to know how others see them, to see their skills and style, and may improve communications between people (Gichuhi, Abaja & Ochieng, 2020). The people, who actually deal with the employee each day, create a pool of information on which the supervisor may act.

This provides feedback from both internal and external customers to receive a broader, more accurate perspective on employees. The advantages of the 360 degree are: it provides a more comprehensive view of employee performance, it increases involvement and credibility of the performance appraisal, have a strong impact of behavior and performance, feedback from peers enhances employee self – development. It greatly increases communication and shared goals, and increases accountability of employees to their customers. Some of the disadvantages are: they are time consuming and more administratively complex, extensive giving and receiving feedback which can be intimidating to some employees, very costly and requires training and significant change effort to work effectively.

2. **Essay appraisal method:** In this technique, the assessor writes a brief essay providing an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and potential of the subject. In order to do so objectively, it is necessary that the assessor knows the subject well and should have interacted with them. Since the length and contents of the essay vary between assessors, essay ratings are difficult to compare (Odunayo, Salau, Fadugba, Oyinola & James, 2014). Again, this technique requires considerable time and thinking to write something meaningful for all subordinates. The rater must be very observant in order to 'get enough information to write on each employee. If the manager is a weak writer, his employee may get weak rating.
3. **Graphic rating scale:** A graphic scale assesses a person on the quality of his or her work (such as average, above average, outstanding or unsatisfactory). Assessment here could also be trait centered and cover observable traits, such as reliability, adaptability, communication skills, quantity and quality of work, job knowledge, cooperativeness, dependability, initiative, industriousness, attitude, judgment etc. For managerial positions, typical qualities include analytical ability, judgment,

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leadership, creative ability, initiative, knowledge of work, and emotional ability etc. At the end of the form, there is a section for general remarks and suggestions for future actions (Okoye, 2016). Although graphic scales seem simplistic in construction, they have application in a wide variety of job responsibilities and are more consistent and reliable in comparison with essay appraisal.

The utility of this technique can be enhanced by using it in conjunction with the essay appraisal technique. This technique is very common in many organizations in Nigeria. A graphic rating scale (GRS) presents appraisers with a list of dimensions, which are aspects of performance that determine an employee's effectiveness. Examples of performance dimensions are cooperativeness, adaptability, maturity, and motivation. Each dimension is accompanied by a multi-point (3, 5, or 7) rating scale. The points along the scale are defined by numbers and/or descriptive words or phrases that indicate the level of performance. The midpoint of the scale is usually anchored by such words as "average," "adequate," "satisfactory," or "meets standards" (Kane and Lawler, 2009). Many organizations use graphic rating scales because they are easy to use and cost little to develop. HR professionals can develop such forms quickly, and because the dimensions and anchors are written at a general level, a single form is applicable to all or most jobs within an organization.

Graphic rating scales do present a number of problems. However, such scales may not effectively direct behavior; that is, the rating scale does not clearly indicate what a person must do to achieve a given rating, thus employees are left in the dark as to what is expected of them. For instance, an employee given a rating of 2 on "attitude" may have a difficult time figuring out how to improve (Ikeh, 2022). Graphic rating scales also fail to provide a good mechanism for providing specific, non - threatening feedback. Negative feedback should focus on specific behaviors rather than on the vaguely defined dimensions the GRSs describe. For example, if told that they are not dependable, most employees would become angered and defensive; they would become less angry and defensive if such feedback were given in behavioral terms: "Six customers complained to me last week that you did not return their phone calls (Ugwu, 2020).

4. **Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS):** Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) is a relatively new technique, which combines the

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graphic rating scale and critical incidents method. It consists of predetermined critical areas of job performance or sets of behavioral statements describing important job performance qualities as good or bad (for the qualities like inter-personal relationships, adaptability and reliability, job knowledge etc). These statements are developed from critical incidents. In this method, an employee's actual job behaviour is judged against the desired behaviour by recording and comparing the behaviour with BARS (Holbrook, 2002). Developing and practicing BARS requires expert knowledge. The specific purpose of the Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale is to use behavioral procedures to design an instrument that can identify and measure the critical components that constitute effective performance in an occupation. The instrument has been used to identify performance competencies in such occupations as Nurses, store managers, college professors and for identifying the professional and career development activities needed by teachers. The instrument allows researchers to "capture performance in multidimensional, behavior - specific terms" (Holbrook, 2002).

5. **Field review method:** Since individual assessors differ in their standards, they inadvertently introduce bias on their ratings. To overcome this assessor-related bias, essay and graphic rating techniques can be combined in a systematic review process. In the field review method, a member of the Human Resource Management (HRM) staff may meet a small group of assessors from the supervisory units to discuss each rating, systematically identifying areas of inter-assessor disagreement. It can then be a mechanism to help each assessor to perceive the standards uniformly and thus match the other assessors. Although field review assessment is considered valid and reliable, it is very time consuming.
6. **Forced-choice rating method:** Unlike the field review method, the forced-choice rating method does not involve discussion with supervisors. Although this technique has several variations, the most common method is to force the assessor to choose the best and worst fit statements from a group of statements. These statements are weighted or scored in advance to assess the employee. The scores or weights assigned to the individual statements are not revealed to the assessor so that she or he cannot favour any individual staff. In this way, the assessor bias is largely eliminated and comparable standards of performance evolved for an objective

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assessment. As good as this technique is, it is of little value wherever performance appraisal interviews are conducted.

Forced choice technique is an approach to PA that requires the rater to choose from statements designed to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful performance (Holbrook, 2002). In many forced - choice methods of rating performance, managers will be required to assess which employee is the best, second best, third best and so. However, clever raters can learn how to manipulate and beat the system by giving high rates to average favorite employees. An additional drawback is the difficulty and cost of developing forms. Consequently, the technique is usually limited to middle - and lower - management levels where the jobs are sufficiently similar to make standard or common forms feasible. Finally, forced - choice forms tend to be of little value - and probably have a negative effect when used in performance appraisal interviews.

7. **Critical incident appraisal method:** In this method, a supervisor describes critical incidents, giving details of both positive and negative behavior of the employee. These are then discussed with the employee. The discussion focuses on actual behavior rather than on traits. While this technique is well suited for performance review interviews, t has the drawback that the supervisor has to note down the critical incidents as and when they occur. That may be impractical, and may delay feedback to employees. It makes little sense to wait six months or a year to discuss a misdeed, a mistake or good display of initiative with an employee. The critical incident technique looks like a natural to some people for performance review interviews, because it gives a supervisor actual, factual incidents to discuss with an employee. Supervisors are asked to keep a record, a "little black book," on each employee and to record actual incidents of positive or negative behaviour.

   Instead of arguing over traits and personality, the discussion now deals with actual behaviour and performance, leaving the employee to know what those standards are (Reed et al, 2017). There are, however, several drawbacks to this approach. It requires that supervisors jot down incidents on at daily or, at the very least, a weekly basis. This can become a chore. Furthermore, the critical incident rating technique needs not, but may, cause a supervisor to delay feedback to employees. Furthermore, it is hardly desirable to wait six months or a year to confront an employee with

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a misdeed or mistake. Finally, the supervisor sets the standards by which the employee is judged that may be unfair. To avoid or to deal with the feeling that they are being judged by unfairly high standards, employees in some organizations are being asked to set or help set their own performance goals.

8. **Management by objectives:** MBO according to Drucker (1954) is a management model that aims to improve performance of an organization by clearly defining objectives that are agreed to by both management and employees. According to the theory, having a say in goal setting and action plans should ensure better participation and commitment among employees, as well as alignment of objectives across the organization. Employees are consulted, but management ends up imposing its standards and its objectives. MBO technique is more "democratic," and can be effective; making use of specific work goals or targets provide for knowledge of results. In fact, there appears to be something of a fashion trend in the setting such work standards in white - collar and service areas. Management by objectives (MBO) is a management system designed to achieve organizational effectiveness by steering each employee's behavior toward the organization's mission. MBO is often used in place of traditional performance appraisals. The MBO process includes goal setting, planning, and evaluation. Goal setting starts at the top of the organization with the establishment of the organization's mission statement and strategic goals. The goal - setting process then cascades down through the organizational hierarchy to the level of the individual employee. An individual's goals should represent outcomes that, if achieved, would most contribute to the attainment of the organization's strategic goals. In most instances, individual goals are mutually set by employees and their supervisors, at which time they also set specific performance standards and determine how goal attainment will be measured (Lindsey, 2015). As they plan, employees and supervisors work together to identify potential obstacles to reaching goals and devise strategies to overcome these obstacles. The two parties periodically meet to discuss the employee's progress to date and to identify any changes in goals necessitated by organizational circumstances. In the evaluation phase, the employee's success at meeting goals is evaluated against the agreed on performance standards. The final evaluation, occurring annually in most cases, serves as a measure of the

employee's performance effectiveness (Hannabuss, 1991). This technique has become very useful recently as an appraisal system. It attempts to improve the performance of the organization and the individual employee. At the beginning of the year, the employees are asked to set or help set their own performance goals. As time progresses, the manager monitors his employee towards the realization of the set objectives. All obstacles are removed. At the end of the year, the employee and his manager review jointly the achievement or non-achievement of the set objectives. This avoids the feeling among employees that they are being judged by unfairly high standards. This method is currently widely used, but not always in its true spirit. The main advantage of this technique is that it enables the organization to integrate its objectives with individual objectives. Furthermore, it encourages employee participation and increases job satisfaction by giving the employee a sense of achievement and involvement. The main disadvantage is that even though the employees are consulted, in many cases management ends up by imposing its standards and objectives. Also, in some cases employees may not like 'self-direction or authority.' To avoid such problems, the work standard approach is used.

9. **Work standard approach:** In this technique, management establishes the goals openly and sets targets against realistic output standards. These standards are incorporated into the organizational performance appraisal system. Thus each employee has a clear understanding of their duties and knows well what is expected of them (Holbrook, 2002). Performance appraisal and interview comments are related to these duties. This makes the appraisal process objective and more accurate. However, it is difficult to compare individual ratings because standards for work may differ from job to job and from employee to employee. This limitation can be overcome by some form of ranking using pooled judgment.
10. **Peer review:** Peer review may be designed by three to six workers, to set the goals, benefits, and objectives of the program me, design a criteria - based performance evaluation system and conduct a pilot programme. People should be encouraged to provide feedback on the system itself. Training and support should be available. Peer reviews often have a high level of worker acceptance and involvements tend to be stable, task - relevant, and accurate. By helping peers to understand each other's work,

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and by airing grievances in a non - threatening manner, peer reviews may also help people to get along better. For the organization, this means higher performance. For the worker, this means a better place to work and less frustration. It may also help people to concentrate less on politics and more on building skills (Holbrook, 2002). Peer reviews may work best if all parties know that the reviews will not be used for setting pay, promotion possibilities, or disciplinary actions. However, a peer review system with the power to give promotions, raises, or disciplinary actions, might be workable in some businesses, if the employees think it's a good idea.

11. **Self - review:** Self reviews are based on the idea that employees are most familiar with their work, and that their involvement is essential. Employees rate themselves on a number of criteria, usually with a formal survey form, and suggest improvements. They help to clarify their own goals, and expose areas of weakness so they may be worked on. Mostly, the manager is left out of the process, although an exchange of views between the employee and manager may help their relationship, and boost the employee's own understanding.
12. **Ranking methods:** Some of the important methods of ranking for performance appraisal according to Ugwu (2013), Okoye (2016) and Anya (2011) are discussed below:

a) **Alteration ranking method:** Here the individual with the best performance is chosen as the ideal employee. Other employees are then ranked against this employee in descending order of comparative performance on a scale of best to worst performance. The alteration ranking method usually involves rating by more than one assessor. The ranks assigned by each assessor are then averaged and a relative ranking of each member in the group is determined. While this is a simple method, it is impractical for large groups. In addition, there may be wide variations in ability between ranks for different positions.

b) **Paired comparison:** The paired comparison method systematizes ranking and enables better comparison among individuals to be rated. Every individual in the group is compared with all others in the group. The evaluations received by each person in the group are counted and turned into percentage scores. The scores provide a fair idea as to how each individual in the group is judged by the assessor.

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c) **Person-to-person rating:** In the person-to-person rating scales, the names of the actual individuals known to all the assessors are used as a series of standards. These standards may be defined as lowest, low, middle, high and highest performers. Individual employees in the group are then compared with the individuals used as the standards, and rated for a standard where they match the best. The advantage of this rating scale is that the standards are concrete and are in terms of real individuals. The main disadvantage here is that the standards set by different assessors may not be consistent. Each assessor constructs their own person- to-person scale which makes comparison of different ratings difficult.

d) **Checklist method:** In this method the assessor is furnished with a checklist of pre-scaled descriptions of behavior, which are then used to evaluate the personnel being rated. The scale values of the behavior items are unknown to the assessor, who has to check as many items as she or he believes describe the worker being assessed. A final rating is obtained by averaging the scale values of the items that have been marked.

e) **Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS):** This is a relatively new technique. It consists of sets of behavioral statements describing good or bad performance with respect to important qualities. These qualities may refer to inter-personal relationships, planning and organizing abilities, adaptability and reliability. These statements are developed from critical incidents collected both from the assessor and the subject.

f) **Assessment centres:** This technique is used to predict future performance of employees due to be promoted. The individual whose potential is to be assessed has to work on individual as well as group assignments similar to those they would be required to handle were they promoted. The judgment of observers is pooled and paired comparison or alteration ranking is sometimes used to arrive at a final assessment. The final assessment helps in making an order-of-merit ranking for each employee. It also involves subjective judgment by observers.

Performance Appraisal and its Purpose

The basic purpose of a performance appraisal is to generate accurate and valid information regarding the behavior and performance of members of the organization. The more accurate and valid the information generated by the system, the grater its potential value to the organization. Akinbowale (2013)

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observed that while all organizations share some basic primary goal in their performance appraisal system, a tremendous amount of variety exists in the specific use that organizations make of the information obtained from performance appraisal of employees. The purpose of performance appraisal could be discussed thus:

1. **Individual evaluation and motivation:** According to Akinbowale (2013), the results of performance appraisal frequently serve as the basis for the regular evaluation of the performance of members of the organization. They argued that whether an individual is judged to be competent or incompetent, effective or ineffective, promotable or unpromotable, and so on is the based upon the information generated by the performance or appraisal system. With particular emphasis on employee's motivation, they further attempt to influence the motivation and future performance of their members by tying the administration of various rewards, such as salary increases and promotions to the ratings generated by the appraisal system.
2. **Individual development:** In addition to serving as a basis for the administration of organizational reward and punishments, Mullins (1999) contended that the information generated by an appraisal system can also be employed to facilitate the personal development of organizational members. Sound appraisal system can generate valid information regarding the areas of personal strength and weakness of individual employees. With respect to this, Mullins (1999) affirmed that if such information is fed back to individuals in a clear, unambiguous and non-threatening manner, the information can serve two valuable purposes. First, if the information indicates that the person is performing effectively, the feedback process itself can reinforce and reward the employee by increasing feelings of self-esteem and personal competence. Secondly, if the information identifies an area of weakness, this can serve to stimulate a process of training and development in order to overcome the weakness identified.
3. **Organizational planning:** Besides providing the basis for the evaluation motivation and development of individual organization members, Dechev (2010) noted further that an effective performance appraisal system also generates information that can be of significant value to the organization in planning its future human resources needs and policies. The members of

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an organization are the human capital of that organization. Consequently, a performance appraisal system generates information that permits the organization to assess the state of its human capital and plan its recruiting, staffing and development policies, in an informed, systematic and rational manner.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is all about the level of employee commitment, employee effectiveness and employee dedication to duty. In this direction, the level of employee performance in the organization determines the level of organizational growth, profitability and stability. According Armstrong (2007), high performance is a step towards the achievement of organizational goals and stability. Rajagopd (2010) believed that employee performance is the level of employee commitment in performing their functions in their organization. When there is high level of employee discipline, employee commitment, industrial peace and harmony and employee retention, we say that there is employee high performance. In this direction, when workers are committed towards the achievement of their set goals, there will be high level of performance because the goals will be achieved. Ugwu (2013) believed that employee effectiveness and efficiency are variables which could be used to measure performance. To him, when employees are effective, focused and determined in the achievement of set goals, we say that there is employee performance.

Such effectiveness means that no matter the cost, the employees are focused on the achievement of the organizational objectives notwithstanding their limiting factors. In organizational context, performance usually is explained as the length to which a member of an organization puts in his efforts towards the achievement of the objectives of that organization. According to Luthans, Stajkovic, Pfeffer and Asamu (2013) employees are the basic source of competitive advantage in organizations that are service-oriented. Additionally, the approach of commitment performance sees employees rather as assets and resources, with a value for their voice. Actually it performs a very good role in the performance of an organization. It is seen as basically as the performance or otherwise of an employee. Gungor (2011) identifies the performance of employees to basically include: output quantity, output quality, promptness of output, diligence to work, cooperativeness, in his part, Boachie-Mensah (2011) shows that improved organizational performance can as well depend on improved employee

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performance. High employee's performances lead an organization and have greater opportunities for employees then those who have low performance (Vans cotter, 2000).

Liao, Lu, Huang and Chiang (2012) viewed employee performance as an index for improvements, recompenses, retributions, reviews and remuneration changes. It also gratifies the desires for employees to realize themselves. Ahmad and Khurram (2011) are of the opinion that employee performance embodies the belief of the personnel in relation to their conduct and aids in the direction of the achievement of the organization's goals. Khan, Razi, Ali and Asghar (2011) viewed employee's job performance as work performed in relation to both quality and quantity as anticipated by an employee. Ahmad and Shahzad (2011) are of the opinion that performance of an employee expresses the entire conviction of an employee in regards to the actions and input to the attainment of the organizations goals and mission. They further argued that practices of compensation, evaluation of performance and practices concerning promotion of and employee are the benchmark for performance of a worker.

Dimensions of Employee Performance

The researcher used efficiency, effectiveness, and speed as the dimensions of employee performance.

a) **Efficiency/effectiveness:** Efficiency can be defined as the comparison of what is actually produced or performed with what can be achieved with the same consumption of resources (money, time, labor, etc.). It is an important factor in determination of productivity (Ubah et al, 2021). The quantity of work would be the indicator of efficiency in this research. Effectiveness can be defined as the degree to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved. In contrast to efficiency, effectiveness is determined without reference to costs and, whereas efficiency means "doing the thing right," effectiveness means "doing the right thing". The quality of work is used as the indicator of effectiveness.
b) **Quantity/quality of work:** Quantity is the amount that you can measure or count (Okoye, 2016). Therefore, the quantity of work is the amount of work produced or the volume of work completed by an employee in an organization. It recognizes the hard-working employees in an organization. More so, the quality of work refers to the produced work in terms of

standards, errors, waste and rework and it recognizes employees who produce quality work, work which meets standards and work with few errors or mistakes.

c) **Speed/time of work:** Speed is a measure of how fast something is moving. The average speed of an object in a certain time is the distance the object travelled divided by the time. Speed is also the distance covered by an object per unit time. The researcher used timelines of work as the indicator of speed (Doanis, 2012). Timelines of work refers to the timely delivery of work in terms of schedules, meeting deadlines, etc. and it recognizes employees who produce work on-time and meet deadlines.

d) **Employee productivity:** Employee productivity is deemed to improve after monitoring, assessment and review is done by either those in the top management and or supervisors. But it has been noted that peer review does a better job of improving the performance of an employee, due to the fact that peers at the work place can push you to do much better without the need of the power from top managers. Productivity is about the effective and efficient use of all resources. Resources include time, people, knowledge, information, finance, equipment space, energy, materials. Productivity is the ratio of output to input. It is a measure of how efficiently and effectively a business or an economy uses inputs such as labor and capital to produce outputs such as goods and services. An increase in productivity means that more goods and services are produced with the same amount of labor and capital. It is not about cutting costs but "doing things right" and "doing the right things" to achieve maximum efficiency and value.

e) **Employee discipline:** Anyaoha (2010) defined discipline as the positive approach to the creation of an attitude and organizational climate, where the employees conform to the set of rules and regulation of the organization". This is achieved by applying reward and penalties. Here, rewards should be given to the employee with outstanding disciplinary performance. By this method, organizations do not lay emphasis only on misconduct of employee. Knight and Ukpere (2014), defines discipline as a pattern of behavior which can be traced back from a particular training.

This behaviour is portrayed by a person in order to demonstrate his personal traits. Dumisan (2002) define discipline as a system of rules and mechanism for ensuring

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that disciplinary codes are followed. This implies that every organization has its rules and regulation "dos and don'ts". Observance of these sets of rules in itself is discipline. But in the view of Ajumogobia (2007) discipline in the work place does not mean strict and technical observance of rules and regulations for the survival of the organizational system. Rather, it implies a situation where workers are expected to cooperate and behave in a normal and orderly way, as any reasonable person would expect an employee to do. This has become imperative since the goal of every organization or establishment is to enhance workers' satisfaction that would lead to higher productivity and profitability.

Torrington and Chapman (1979) observed that in regard to organizational behavior discipline implies keeping order and control among a group of workers by using methods that build morale, esprit de corps and obedience which is one of the most basic demands in organizational structures. If these standards of behavior are to be effective, members of the organization have to accept and adhere to them, so as to enhance organizational growth (Ubah, Onyebueke & Omodu, 2019). In all, an employee is disciplined when he adheres to the ethical standards, values, norm and obedient in his organization, and does the things that will enhance the progress, growth and high performance of the organization.

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Some studies have been done related areas of this subject matter. Some of them are reviewed in this empirical work thus:

Nwokocha (2020) focused on effects of performance appraisal on human resources management in Nigeria using Imo State ministry of Works (2008 – 2017) as the focal point. In this direction, the researcher formulated three research objectives, three questions and three research hypotheses for the study. Maslow hierarchy of needs theory, Herzberg's two factors theory and McClelland's need theory were used. The researcher employed descriptive survey research design and questionnaire served as the instrument of data collection. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentage and the hypotheses were tested using chi-square. The findings revealed that performance appraisal have positive impact on staff equipment, training/development and employee salary in the ministry. Based on the findings, it was recommended that there should be regular salary increase, employee training and development and corrupt free recruitment process as human resources management strategy so as to enhance high productivity.

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Nwana (2021) examined the relationship between performance appraisal and wage increase on employees' productivity using Imo State Ministry of Education as the focal point. Survey research design was used and questionnaire was used to collect data. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and chi-square. It was discovered that there is significant impact of performance appraisal on wage increase on employee productivity. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the state government should minimize their unnecessary spending and therefore implement the minimum wage. Also, there is need for the implementation of true federalism in Nigeria, so that state governments will pay minimum wage according to their earnings, environment and available resources. Ikeh (2022) further investigated the effect of performance appraisal on manpower planning and development in Imo State civil service: a study of ministry of works in Owerri. In line with the above, four research objectives, four research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Survey research design was used and questionnaire served as the instrument of data collection. The population of the study is made up of the entire 300 staff in Imo State Ministry of Works from where 180 were sampled. Though out of 180 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 170 copies were returned in usable form. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentage and chi-square. The findings revealed that performance appraisal has significant impact on recruitment of staff in the ministry, manpower planning has significant effect on employee retention and job turnover in the ministry. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that public organization should embrace manpower planning if employee productivity must be ensured. More so, manpower planning in the public organizations must be matched with the organizations' strategic planning to enable for enhanced employee productivity.

Olushegu (2022) conducted a study to examine the effect of performance appraisal on corporate planning and corporate performance using Zenith Bank. Survey research design was used and questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentage and chi-square. The findings revealed that performance appraisal enhances corporate planning and has significant effect on corporate efficiency. Based on the findings, it was recommended that organizations should engage on strategic planning to improve efficiency; managers should embark on training to know how to formulate strategies for the organization; and organizations like the banking industry should always strategically plan so as to

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enhance human resources management in their system. This should be done by way of effective forecasting in the organization.

Ugwu (2020) wrote on performance appraisal and employee discipline in Nigeria public sector. The researcher used the Lagos State Ministry of Works as the focal point. The study used survey, questionnaire and data was analyzed using regression statistics. It was discovered that constant workers appraisal enhance discipline and contribute to employee commitment.

Chukwu (2016) wrote on impact of human appraisal in reducing in-disciplinary behaviour among workers. The researcher employed expos facto research design and data were collected through secondary sources, and analyzed using regression statistics. It was discovered that regular appraisal put workers to action by enabling them to understand their area of strength and weakness.

GAP IN LITERATURE

Many studies have been done on performance appraisal, employee performance, and related areas. However, the exact subject matter has not been covered. The gaps are:

1. **Gap on the subject matter:** Most of the past studies covered performance appraisal with other dependent variable, and did not use employee performance. Others cover employee performance with other independent variables, without using performance appraisal. Still some others focused on only performance without other variables etc.
2. **Gap on the geographical scope:** The research also identified gap in the area of study or geographical differences. On that, most of the studies did not cover Aba in particular, and south east in general, as most of the past studies were not done within the South East Nigeria. Some of the studies were even done outside Nigeria environment, and did not use Nigerian organizations. The studies that covered Nigeria focused more on other parts of Nigeria, like South-South, South-West and Northern parts of the country.
3. **Gap on the variables in the objectives:** There also exists certain gap on the indices of performance appraisal, employee performance. The indices used in this work include training/development, motivation, promotion, transfer and termination. The above variables were not used by past researches.

Based on the above mentioned empirical review, there is no doubt that a lot of workers have been done on performance appraisal and employee performance. The researcher has endeavoured to identify gaps in the existing literature.

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Human Capital Theory

According to Njoku (2017), the human capital theory was developed by A.W. Lewis in 1930s in his book Economic Development with limited supply of labour. Similarly human capital theory was popularized by Gary Becker and Jacob Minear in 1960. According to the theorists, human capital refers to the stock of knowledge, habits, social and personality attributes, including creativity, embodied in the ability to perform a task so as to produce economic value. The theory has experienced a progressive improvement over the years. Within this development period, more emphasis has been made on employee training, which is the focal point of the theory. Human capital can be viewed as every action channeled towards the improvement of the performance or efficiency of an employee. Hence, education is an integral element of human capital investment.

Thus, the advantage of human capital theory is that the theory focuses on human factor in an organization or the workforce of the organization as an asset and not liability. Assets as a factor of production or fixed assets of the organization whose current value can be improved for future value through training, human capital development and capacity building in order to increase productivity of goods and services delivery. With regards to the human capital theory, employees who are well learned or skilful are more beneficial to organizations in order to implement and adopt modern technological facilities, thus reinforcing returns on training and education. This implies that expenses incurred on medical care, education, training, and general wellbeing of employees are also investment in capital. Empirical studies offer proof to support the collective impact of education and training. The advocates of human capital theory identifies education or training as a profitable investment in human resources. Human capital investment is considered to be also useful or even more worthwhile than other factors of production (Adelakun, 2011).

The human capital theory is suitable in explaining the influence of training and development needs on employee productivity in Aba South Local Government Area. This is because t he human capital concept is connected with the individual employee capacity to contribute to the productivity of the organization as a function of constant exposure to training. Here**,** human capital theory brings to limelight the need for investment in organizational employees (human capital). In this case, there is need for Aba South Local Government Area of Abia State to pay great attention in developing their employees through training, skill development

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and motivation. Organizations (like Aba South Local Government Area of Abia State) must place maximum premium on human capital or employee development if they must achieve high level of productivity. This theory was used because performance appraisal is all about evaluating the activities of the human resources engaged in the process of achieving the objectives of an organization. For that, the human capital theory is suitable for the study since it focus on human capital empowerment, employment of appropriate manpower, training of workforce, education and staff motivation. The theory focused on how to effectively utilize the manpower for the achievement of the organizational goals in Aba South Local Government Area of Abia.

This theory is utilized in this study to uncover the effect of training on employees' productivity in Aba South Local Government Area. Therefore investing in employee training will yield many benefits such as:

1) Human capital is usually measured by the ability to perform a task which results in economic value.
2) Investment in an individual or on a workforce makes their talent or skill more marketable and increase their value and performance will include education, job training and other development techniques.
3) The acquired knowledge through training and education will generate an increase in salaries and wages.
4) It enables workers to adapt to technological changes.

On a final note, the advantage of the present and future value of investing in the training of employees would eventually yield higher productivity. To ensure that training programmes are well coordinated and strategically linked to improving employee performance and organizational productivity, as it relates to the agency objectives, planning is considered critical. It is recommended that organizations take into consideration the viewpoints of human-capital professionals in planning and development of training programmes. This should include a needs assessment of the skills and competencies required to fill the existing performance gaps that will ultimately meet the organizational goals. All gaps should be addressed through manpower training strategies that are available to the management.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The local government and their population distribution (for staff and political executive) are stated in the table below:

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Table 1: Population of staff in Aba South Local Government Area of Abia State.

S/N	Number of Political Executive	Number of Career Staff (Civil Servants)	Total
1	20	255	275

Source: Local Government Service Commission, Abia State 2023.

The sample size is 163. The researcher used the Taro Yamane method to practically determine the sample size. The use of questionnaire was employed to gather necessary and relevant data from the respondents. The data collected in this study was analyzed using simple percentage

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

It should be noted that out of 163 questionnaires distributed, only 120 were properly filled and returned.

Item 1: Performance appraisal serves as the tool for effective employees and organizational productivity in Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State.

Table 1: Responses on if performance appraisal serves as the tool for effective employees and organizational productivity in Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State.

Options	No of Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	43	35.8
Agree	35	29.2
Disagree	32	26.7
Strongly Disagree	7	5.8
Undecided	3	2.5
Total	**120**	**100**

Source: Field Survey (2024).

Table 1 indicates that 35.8% of the respondents strongly agreed, whereas 29.2% of the respondents agreed. Also, 26.7% of the respondents disagreed while 5.8% of the respondents strong disagreed. However, 2.5% of the respondents were undecided.

Item 2: Effective performance appraisal adds positive values and encourages organizational decisions regarding promotion of staff of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State.

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Table 2: Responses on if effective performance appraisal adds positive values and encourages organizational decisions regarding promotion of staff of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State.

Options	No of Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	44	36.7
Agree	36	30
Disagree	34	28.3
Strongly Disagree	4	3.3
Undecided	2	1.7
Total	**120**	**100**

Source: Field Survey (2024).

Table 2 shows that 36.7% of the respondents strongly agreed, whereas 30% of the respondents agreed but 28.3% of the respondents disagreed while 3.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed. However, 1.7% of the respondents were undecided.

Item 3: Performance appraisal serves as an instrument staff motivation in Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State.

Table 3: Responses on if performance appraisal serves as an instrument staff motivation in Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State.

Options	No of Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	45	37.5
Agree	36	30
Disagree	34	28.3
Strongly Disagree	3	2.5
Undecided	2	1.7
Total	**120**	**100**

Source: Field Survey (2024).

Table 3 above shows that 37.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, whereas 30% of the respondents agreed but 28.3% of the respondents disagreed while 2.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed. 1.7% of the respondents were undecided.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In line with the result in our research question one, this study showed that performance appraisal helps to identify training and development need of

employee of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State. According to Chukwu (2016), performance appraisal makes organization to identify training needs for employee. For Ikeh (2022), peer review appraisal contributes in discovering areas of workers training/development enhances commitment and dedication.

Based on the research question two, this study discovered that performance appraisal helps to make decisions regarding promotion, transfer and termination of appointment of staff of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State. This in this case, Akpanabia (2015), stated that workers who perform below expectation will be transferred and those who performed excellently (based on performance appraisal result) can be promoted. Molokwu (2013) also emphasizes the need to use appraisal for termination of appointment or dismissal of poor performing workers.

In line with the research question three, this study discovered that performance appraisal serves as an instrument to motivate the employees of Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State. In view of Lindsey (2015), there is need for public sector organizations to effectively motivate their employees through effective performance appraisal. For Nkwocha (2017), when employees are appraised, it serves as motivation to them because it enables them to understand their areas of strength and weakness; hence encouraging more productivity.

CONCLUSION

It's a fact that performance appraisal is one of the basic tools employed to achieve employee productivity in organizations. This is true because effective utilization of performance appraisal (in Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State) will make the workers to understand their weakness, strength, and therefore put efforts to improve productivity. Based on the findings, we therefore conclude in this study that the achievement of employee high productivity and discipline – dependent on the level of performance appraisal in Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State. Hence, effective performance appraisal will lead to employees identifying their area of weakness and prospect and therefore understand the need for improvement; and at that, increasing their performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State should adopt different performance appraisal strategies like peer review, management by objectives, work standard approach and self review method to evaluate

the performance level of their subsequent training and development of employees.

2. There should be regular appraisal of employees in Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State to enable them identify the area of deficiencies, weakness, prospects and decisions regarding promotion, transfer and termination of appointment.
3. There is need for regular appraisal of employees in Aba South Local Government Area, Abia State so as to serve as motivation for improve productivity and overall performance.

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