



Performance appraisal in the Nigerian context: Challenges and prospects for nation building

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian work sector is saddled with a lot of challenges which cut across the various processes of recruitment, placement and subsequently appraisal. These challenges have led to counter-productivity in the work sector and especially work in the public sector. Performance appraisal has become one of the most trending issues in personnel psychology and other management sciences. Therefore, in this paper, we offer a full exploration of the concept with reference to the Nigerian society. We also explored the criticisms, merits, demerits and problems associated with its practice in Nigeria. It was observed through the review of literature, that in most public organisations, performance appraisal is filled with malpractices. This, therefore, leaves so many questions as to the future of public work sector in Nigeria. The paper sees performance appraisal feedback as one of the ways to make employees aware of their roles and performance. It is posited that employees who know what and how much is expected of them are likely to be more effective than those who are unclear about their roles. The conclusion is that performance appraisal is necessary for the growth of an organisation and consequently, that of any nation; and should be held in esteem and managed properly, devoid of corruption.

Introduction

The continuous process of evaluation and appraisal in systems is what ensures continuity and growth. Therefore, every system as soon as it is established, adopts a method of checkmating and evaluating itself. Because no system remains the same over time (it is either rising or falling), it is important that the processes and persons that constitute the system be evaluated and appraised occasionally. This evaluation and appraisal process are necessary so that persons who no longer contribute to the growth of the system may be replaced with more productive people; and that methods and processes which are no longer useful may be replaced with more current and official ones.

In the world of work also, there is a constant need for continuous evaluation and appraisal of both the system and the personnel comprising the system. Is it working properly? Is every employee putting his or her best? Are there things that can be done to improve the performance of the employee along that of the system? Appraisal goes on all the time whether formally or informally because there is this underlying human tendency to make judgements about co-workers as well as oneself even though it often is arbitrary. The awareness that one's efforts are being evaluated keeps most people working. More so that the results of the evaluation are somewhat related to most managerial decisions such as pay rise, promotion, demotion, sack and so on, invariably keeps employees on their toes. Therefore, performance appraisal spurs the growth of any organisation.

The industrial growth of any society is proportional to the growth of the various industries, organisations, businesses, etc. in it. If it is true that performance appraisal spurs the growth of organisations, business firms and so on then, it is simply logical to say that the effectiveness of performance appraisal is

proportional (probably indirectly, but still proportional) to the growth of any society. In Nigeria, the decadence in the public sector and negligence of work by most staff of the government is obvious to all citizens. A proper system of appraisal would be necessary to reverse the situation. This paper is a review of the concept of performance appraisal and basically a theoretical framework. It posits that a better approach to the appraisal system would to a large extent foster national development. Hence, it tries to identify ways of improving the Nigerian appraisal system.

Mullins (2002) defined a performance appraisal system as the basic yardstick for assessing an individual's performance, highlighting the individual's potential for career advancement, and most importantly, for improving performance. Performance appraisal as defined by Sulaimon, Ogunyomi & Akosile (2001) is a periodic review or evaluation of an employee's past, present and future performance on the job. Muchinsky (2006) sees performance appraisal as the process of assessing performance to make decisions (for example, about pay raises). Oluwatoyin (2000) says it can be used to assess the performance(s) of employees in order to diagnose any deficiency or improvement in line with set performance standards. Fisher, Schoenfeldt and Shaw (2003) describe performance appraisal as that part of the performance management process in which an employee's contribution to the organization during a specific period is assessed.

According to Flipppo (1999) performance appraisal is a systematic, periodic and as far as possible, an impartial rating of employee's excellence in matters pertaining to his present job and potentialities for a better job. It is a review and discussion of an employee's performance of assigned duties and responsibilities and it involves the formal assessment of how well employees

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are performing their jobs compared with a set of standards and subsequently communicating the results of the appraisals to the employees. Appraisal is based on results obtained by the employee in his/her job, and not on the employee's personality characteristics. It measures to a reasonable extent skills and accomplishments with reasonable accuracy and uniformity and helps identify strengths and weaknesses, areas for performance enhancement and to help promote professional growth. The process of performance appraisal has been represented by several names in several places. For instance, outlines performance review, personnel review, employee appraisal, service rating, performance evaluation, and efficiency report are some of the names often associated with performance appraisal (Banjoko, 2002).

Effective performance appraisal systems usually are made up of two basic systems operating in conjunction: an evaluation system and a feedback system. The main aim of the evaluation system is to identify the performance gap (if any). This gap is the shortfall that occurs when performance does not meet the standard set by the organization as acceptable. The main aim of the feedback system is to inform the employee about the quality of his or her performance. However, the flow of information should not be one way. The appraisers also should receive feedback from the employee about job problems, difficulties, challenges and so on. The feedback system is therefore set to enhance the flow of post-appraisal information between appraiser and appraisee.

Criticisms of performance appraisal.

Several authorities in organisational behaviour and other management sciences have expressed disapproval and doubts about the validity and reliability of the performance appraisal process. Derven (1990) opined that the process is inherent with flaws that it may be impossible to perfect it. On the other side, there are many strong advocates of performance appraisal. Lawrie (1990), for instance views it as being the most crucial aspect of organizational life. Notwithstanding the disparities however, these extremes all endorse the use of performance appraisal, but the bone of contention lies on how and when to apply it. There are those, for instance, who believe that performance appraisal has many important uses for employee developments, but strictly do not agree to any attempt at linking the process to reward outcomes such as pay rises and promotions. This group believes that the linkage to reward outcomes reduces or eliminates the developmental value of appraisals. They opine that rather than an opportunity for constructive review and encouragement, the reward-linked process is perceived as judgmental, punitive and harrowing. But if the process was so perceived by most employees especially in the Nigerian public sector, the laxity with which they approach their jobs would be reduced. It is rather perceived as something that must be done to fulfil all righteousness. Even when it is taken seriously, it is done only to the advantage of the appraisers.

On the other hand, there is a strong rival argument which claims that performance appraisal must unequivocally be linked to reward outcomes. The advocates of this approach say that organizations must have a process by which rewards (which are not an unlimited resource) should be openly and fairly distributed to those most deserving based on merit, effort and results. Also, that there is a critical need for remunerative justice in organizations and therefore, performance appraisal, whatever its practical flaws, is the only process available to help achieve fair, decent and consistent reward outcomes. Also, in a country like Nigeria, with public sector employees seen as callous, performance appraisal could be a very strong source of checkmating absenteeism and other vices experienced in the public sector.

Several claims have also been made that appraisees

themselves are inclined to believing that appraisal results should be linked directly to reward outcomes and are suspicious and disappointed when told this is not the case. Thus, instead of feeling relieved, the persons being appraised then begin to suspect they are not being told the whole truth, or that the appraisal process is fake and waste of time. Research by Bannister and Balkin (1990) has reported that appraisees seem to have greater acceptance of the appraisal process, and feel more satisfied with it, when the process is directly linked to rewards. Such findings are a serious challenge to those who feel that appraisal results and reward outcomes must be strictly isolated from each other. There is yet another group who argue that the evaluation of employees for reward purposes, and frank communication with them about their performance, are part of the basic responsibilities of management. In many organizations in Nigeria, this inconsistency in the appraisal process is heightened by the practice of having separate wage and salary reviews, in which merit, raises and bonuses are decided arbitrarily, and often secretly, by supervisors and managers.

Reasons for performance appraisal

Performance appraisals can help organizations in several ways. First, they can enhance the quality of organizational decisions ranging from pay raises to promotions and discharges. Second, performance appraisals can enhance the quality of individual decisions, ranging from career choices to the development of future strengths. Third, performance appraisals can affect employees' views of and attachment to their organization. Finally, formal performance appraisals provide a rational, legally defensible basis for personnel decisions. Some organisations tend to overlook performance appraisal and believe in the philosophy that if you trust your employees, they would do well (and even better) for fear of breaking your trust. Unfortunately, recent research has proven otherwise. For example, Ugwu (2011) in his research proved that organisational trust does not significantly predict workaholic behaviour among employees (i.e. desire to work exceedingly well). Further reasons for appraisal of employee performance can be summarised thus:

- to identify the current level of individual job performance
- to identify employee strengths and weakness
- to motivate individuals
- to identify training and developmental needs
- to enable employees to improve their performance
- to enhance personnel research
- to establish and uphold accountability.

Who does the Appraisal?

Performance appraisal can be conducted through several ways or channels. These include;

Immediate supervisor/supervisory ratings: This is simply the evaluation of subordinates by their supervisors. This is very common in most appraisal systems because it is relatively easy and makes sense. It is believed that the supervisor is in the best position to observe and evaluate his subordinates.

Subordinated ratings: This is exactly the reverse of the above. Here, subordinates rate their supervisors. London and Wohler (1991) are of the view that more firms today let subordinates anonymously evaluate their supervisors' performance. Subordinated ratings are very important when used for developmental rather than evaluative purposes. By this, what is meant is that the lapses identified by the subordinates should be able to help in the development of the supervisor more than they do in simply evaluating him/her (Atakpa, Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012).

Self-rating: Employees rate themselves by completing a standard form or by submitting a work product as proof of performance. The problem with this style is that most employees rate themselves higher than what really is.

Peer-rating: This is the appraisal of an employee by his or her

peers. The problem with this style is *logrolling*, which occurs when the peers get together and rate each other high.

Rating committees: Committees made up of the supervisor and three or four other persons rate an employee. This method is more valid because of its composite nature.

Group ratings: An independent expert rates the performance of a group or work unit based on some selected interviews or on-the-job visitation.

Methods of appraisal

Appraisal methods are broadly categorised into two: objective and judgmental. Objective methods measuring performance include actual output, volume of sales and number of claims processed. These methods are generally not the best since they are often contaminated by “opportunity bias”. For example, geographical location gives a better opportunity of performance. Someone doing business in Lagos should most probably perform better than one doing the same business in Opi (Enugu state). So, it would be unfair to rate these two individuals’ performance based on the volume of sales and so on. A different kind of objective measure of performance is the special performance test. This assesses the employee under standardised conditions. It thus eliminates opportunity bias to an extent (Palaiologos, Papazekos, & Panayotopoulou, 2011). Objective methods measure ability but not to the extent to which one is motivated to use such ability daily. Thus, the most preferred methods of appraisal are the judgmental methods. These methods involve rating and ranking techniques. Below are some commonly used methods of appraisal in organisations.

Graphic Rating scale method

This is the oldest and most commonly used method of appraisal (Atakpa, Ocheni, & Nwankwo, 2012) and at such it shall be discussed in greater details than the other methods for the purpose of this paper. In Graphic rating scale, the employees are rated based on checklist ranking that can be either numerical or alphabetical (Palaiologos, Papazekos & Panayotopoulou, 2011). Here, the quantity of work, volume of work (under normal conditions), quality of work, neatness, thoroughness and accuracy of work, initiative and several other factors are put into consideration. Rating scales could include elements which range from unsatisfactory to outstanding.

Advantages of rating scales

The greatest advantage of rating scales is that they are structured and standardised. This allows ratings to be easily compared. Each employee is subjected to the same basic appraisal process and rating criteria, with the same range of responses. This encourages equality in treatment for all appraisees and imposes standard measures of performance across all parts of the organization. Rating scale methods are easy to use and understand.

Disadvantages

- **Trait Relevance:** Are the selected rating-scale traits clearly relevant to the jobs of all the appraisees? It is inevitable that with a standardised and fixed system of appraisal, certain traits will have a greater relevance in some jobs than in others. For example, the trait “initiative” might not be very important in a job that is tightly defined and rigidly structured. In such cases, a low appraisal rating for initiative may not mean that an employee lacks initiative. Rather, it may reflect the fact that an employee has few opportunities to use and display that particular trait (Palaiologos, Papazekos, & Panayotopoulou, 2011). The relevance of rating scales is therefore said to be context sensitive. Job and workplace circumstances must be considered.

- **Systemic disadvantage:** Rating scales, and the traits they are made to measure, generally attempt to capture all the relevant

indicators of employee performance. There is an assumption that all the true and best indicators of performance are included, and all false and irrelevant indicators are excluded. This is an assumption very difficult to prove in practice. It is possible that an employee's performance may depend on factors that have not been included in the selected traits. Such employees may end up with ratings that do not truly or fairly reflect their effort or value to the organization. Employees in this class are said to be systemically disadvantaged by the rating scale method.

- **Perceptual errors:** This includes various well-known problems of selective perception (such as the horns and halos effect) as well as problems of perceived meaning. Selective perception is the human tendency to make private and highly subjective assessments of what a person is “really like”, and then seek evidence to support that view and at the same time ignoring or downplaying evidence that might contradict it (Gupta & Kumar, 2012). This is a common and normal psychological phenomenon. All human beings are affected by it. In other words, we see in others what we want to see in them. An example is the supervisor who believes that an employee is inherently good (halo effect) and so ignores evidence that might suggest otherwise. Instead of correcting the slackening employee, the supervisor covers for them and may even offer excuses for their declining performance. On the other hand, a supervisor may have formed the impression that an employee is bad (horns effect) (Gupta, & Kumar, 2012). The supervisor becomes unreasonably harsh in their assessment of the employee, and always ready to criticize and undermine them. The horns and halo effect are rarely seen in its extreme and obvious forms. But in its more subtle manifestations, it can be a significant threat to the effectiveness and credibility of performance appraisal.

- **Perceived meaning:** Problems of perceived meaning occur when appraisers do not share the same opinion about the meaning of the selected traits and the language used on the rating scales. For example, to one appraiser, an employee may demonstrate the trait of initiative by reporting work problems to a supervisor. To another appraiser, this might suggest an excessive dependence on supervisory assistance and thus a lack of initiative. As well, the language and terms used to construct a scale such as "Performance exceeds expectations" or "Below average skill" may mean different things to different appraisers.

- **Rating errors:** The problem here is not so much errors in perception as to errors in appraiser judgement and motive. Unlike perceptual errors, these errors may be (at times) deliberate. The most common rating error is central tendency. Busy appraisers, or those wary of confrontations and repercussions, may be tempted to mark out too many passive, in-between, middle-of-the-road ratings (e.g., “satisfactory” or “adequate”), regardless of the actual performance of a subordinate. Thus, the spread of ratings tends to clump excessively around the middle of the scale. This problem is worsened in organizations where the appraisal process does not enjoy strong management support, or where the appraisers do not feel confident with the task of appraisal (Atakpa, Ocheni, & Nwankwo, 2012).

Most of the disadvantages discussed under the graphic rating scale are such that are common to most methods of appraisal.

Behaviourally anchored rating scales (BARS)

The BARS offer a high degree of structure for appraisals. Each employee trait or characteristic is rated on a bipolar scale that usually has several points ranging from “poor” to “excellent” (or some similar arrangement). The traits assessed on these scales include employee attributes such as cooperation, communications ability, initiative, punctuality and technical (work skills) competence. Behaviourally anchored scales often take a different form where such words as “Excellent”, “Good”,

“Average”, and “poor” are replaced with short descriptions of actual job behaviour, e.g. under “Relations with Colleagues”, instead of “Poor”, the anchor may be “fights with colleagues often”, or instead of “Excellent” the behaviour anchor may be “inspires team spirit” (Atakpa, Ocheni, & Nwankwo, 2012). The nature and scope of the traits selected for inclusion is limited only by the imagination of the scale's designer, or by the organization's need to know. The one major provision in selecting traits is that they should be in some way relevant to the appraisee's job. A recent variation on the BARS is the behavioural observation scale (BOS). The BOS uses behavioural anchors but also addresses the frequencies with which that behaviour is been observed.

Advantages: It offers a high degree of structure. The method is very useful and exact.

Disadvantages: The scale is very difficult to develop (Brown, Hyatt, & Benson, 2010).

Essay Method

In the essay method, the appraiser prepares a written statement about the employee being appraised. The statement usually concentrates on describing specific strengths and weaknesses in job performance. It also suggests courses of action to remedy the identified problem areas (Pichler, 2012; Brown, Hyatt, & Benson, 2010). The statement may be written and edited by the appraiser alone, or it may be composed in collaboration with the appraisee.

Advantages: The essay method is far less structured and confining than the rating scale method. It permits the appraiser to examine almost any relevant issue or attribute of performance. This contrasts sharply with methods where the appraisal criteria are rigidly defined. Appraisers may place whatever degree of emphasis on issues or attributes that they feel appropriate (Pichler, 2012). Thus, the process is open-ended and very flexible. The appraiser is not locked into an appraisal system that limits expression or assumes that employee traits can be neatly dissected and scaled.

Disadvantages: Brown, Hyatt, and Benson (2010) outlined some disadvantages of the essay methods which they said are time-consuming and difficult to administer. Appraisers often find the essay technique more demanding than methods such as rating scales.

- The techniques greatest advantage, freedom of expression, is also its greatest handicap. The varying writing skills of appraisers can upset and distort the whole process.

- The process is subjective, and, in consequence, it is difficult to compare the results of individuals or to draw any broad conclusions about organizational needs.

Management by Objectives (MBO)

This method rates employee performance based on employee achievement of goals set by mutual agreement of employee and manager (Pichler, 2012). The appraisal is based on whether the employee has met his or her objectives. The use of management by objectives was first widely advocated in the 1950s by the noted management theorist Peter Drucker. MBO (management by objectives) methods of performance appraisal are results oriented. That is, they seek to measure employee performance by examining the extent to which predetermined work objectives have been met. Usually the objectives are established jointly by the supervisor and subordinate. An example of an objective for a sales manager might be: Increase the gross monthly sales volume to ₦350,000 by 30 June. Once an objective is agreed, the employee is usually expected to self-audit; that is, to identify the skills needed to achieve the

objective. Typically, they do not rely on others to locate and specify their strengths and weaknesses. They are expected to monitor their own development and progress.

Advantages: The MBO approach overcomes some of the problems that arise as a result of if the employee traits needed for job success can be reliably identified and measured. Instead of assuming traits, the MBO method concentrates on actual outcomes. Employees are judged according to real outcomes, and not on their potential for success, or on someone's subjective opinion of their abilities.

According to Pichler (2012) the MBO method recognizes the fact that it is difficult to neatly dissect all the complex and varied elements that go to make up employee performance. One of the strengths of the MBO method is the clarity of purpose that flows from a set of well-articulated objectives. But this can be a source of weakness also. It has become very apparent that the modern organization must be flexible to survive. Objectives, by their very nature, tend to impose a certain form of rigidity.

Disadvantages: MBO methods of performance appraisal can give employees a satisfying sense of autonomy and achievement. But on the downside, they can lead to unrealistic expectations about what can and cannot be reasonably accomplished. According to Thurston and McNall (2010) supervisors and subordinates must have very good “reality checking” skills to use MBO appraisal methods. They will need these skills during the initial stage of objective setting, and for the purposes of self-auditing and self-monitoring. Unfortunately, research studies have shown repeatedly that human beings tend to lack the skills needed to do their own “reality checking”. Nor are these skills easily conveyed by training.

Critical incident method

This method is involved in the identifying and description of specific incidents where employees did something well or wrongly (Thurston & McNall, 2010). The appraisal is based on logs that are put in the evaluation form. The manager maintains the logs on each employee where he periodically records critical incidents of the employee's behaviour. This method is relatively a good method. Nevertheless, the observed disadvantages include: Negative incidents are more noticeable than positive incidents. It leads to close supervision which is often not enjoyed by the employee.

There are several other appraisal methods which have not been discussed in this work for lack of space. Some of these are: Weighted checklist method, paired comparison analysis, performance ranking method, 360-degree performance appraisal, and forced ranking (forced distribution).

Appraisal Forms

The use of appraisal forms is very common in the Nigerian civil service. Appraisal forms can be devised through various ways but must nonetheless take into cognisance the focus of the appraisal, the performance criteria selected, and the rating used. When the focus of the appraisal is the job, the appraiser is likely to look out for the employee's success in achieving objectives rather than his/her personal attitudes (Pichler, 2012). When the focus is on the person, the appraisal is expected to give detailed account of the employee's qualities and attributes. The focus of the appraisal determines the nature of the criteria selected and the ratings or measures to be used (Brown, Hyatt, & Benson, 2010). Several organisations adopt and draft different formats of the appraisal form.

Performance Feedback and the Appraisal Interview

As opined by Bouskila-Yam and Kluger, (2011), last step observed in most appraisal systems is giving feedback

to subordinates about their performance. The employee being evaluated is given feedback privately by his or her boss. Many managers are uncomfortable with this practice although it is very essential and useful.

The appraisal interview involves the supervisor and subordinate reviewing the appraisal and making plans to remedy deficiencies and reinforce strengths (Brown, Hyatt, & Benson, 2010). It usually takes any of the three forms annotated below.

Performance satisfactory employee is promotable make development plans.

Performance satisfactory employee not promotable maintain performance.

Performance unsatisfactory employee is correctable plan correction.

Performance unsatisfactory employee not correctable plan dismissal.

Essential techniques of performance appraisal

Certain techniques in performance appraisal have been thoroughly investigated, and some have been found to yield better results than others. Below are some of the techniques that could be employed.

Encourage Discussion: Research studies show that employees are likely to feel more satisfied with their appraisal result if they have the chance to talk freely and discuss their performance. It is also more likely that such employees will be better able to meet future performance goals (Thurston, & McNall, 2010). Employees are also more likely to feel that the appraisal process is fair if they are given a chance to talk about their performance. This is especially so when they are permitted to challenge and appeal against the evaluations (Greenberg, 1991).

Constructive Intention: It is very important that employees recognize that negative appraisal feedback is provided with a constructive intention, i.e., to help them overcome present difficulties and to improve their future performance. Employees will be less anxious about criticism, and more likely to find it useful, when they believe that the appraiser's intentions are helpful and constructive. In contrast, other studies such as Baron (1988) have reported that "destructive criticism", which is vague, ill-informed, and unfair or harshly presented, will lead to problems such as anger, resentment, tension and workplace conflict, as well as increased resistance to improvement, denial of problems, and poorer performance. A research by Onyishi, Ugwu and Anike (2011) has shown that abusive supervision significantly predicts counterproductive work behaviour. This implies that the more employees experience abusive supervision, the more they engage in counterproductive work behaviour to reciprocate such abuse. (Onyishi, Ugwu & Anike, 2011).

Set Performance Goals: It has been shown in numerous studies (e.g Bouskila-Yam, & Kluger, 2011) that goal setting is an important element in employee motivation. Goals can stimulate employee effort, focus attention, increase persistence, and encourage employees to find new and better ways to work. The use of goals as a stimulus to human motivation is one of the best supported theories in management. It is also quite clear that goals which are specific, difficult and accepted by employees will lead to higher levels of performance than easy, vague goals (such as do your best) or no goals at all.

Appraiser Credibility: It is important that the appraiser (usually the employee's supervisor) be well-informed and credible. Appraisers should feel comfortable with the techniques of appraisal and should be knowledgeable about the employee's job and performance (Bouskila-Yam, & Kluger, 2011).

When these conditions exist, employees are more likely to view the appraisal process as accurate and fair. They also express a greater acceptance of the appraisal feedback and a greater willingness to change.

Performance appraisal in the Nigerian work sector: Challenges and Solutions.

The Nigerian work sector especially the public sector is often seen as no man's business and nobody is ready to stake his head for issues that he feels could be overlooked. Some appraisers and head of departments write untrue results because of some of the reasons outlined by Adebayo (2000).

A reporting officer who himself has been guilty of conduct unbecoming of an official in his position, and who knows that a certain subordinate official is aware of the conduct becomes afraid to write an adverse report on the subordinate, lest he should turn around and expose him. The reporting officer's fear is that the subordinate may apply against the report and bring to light the reporting officer's own misdemeanour. Some reporting officers are afraid of the social consequences that may ensue if they write adverse reports on their subordinates who have strong social connections by birth, tribe or marriage.

Allied to this is the problem with some female officers who were forever ready to counter that the cause for the adverse report on them was because they refused amorous advances made to them by their reporting officers. Reporting officers who did not wish to get involved in such sordid arguments ensured peace by reporting favourably on a female officer who should have earned a bad report. (Adebayo, 2000)

It is also true that some reporting officers write favourable reports because of anticipated favours that might ensue from subordinates.

Also, Atakpa, Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) outlined some problems which they opined to be associated with the inefficiency of performance appraisal in Nigeria. These amongst several others include;

- Poor knowledge of the role of performance appraisal as a tool of management by many Nigerian workers and supervisors.
- Cultural values: There is a strong cultural value, which confers respect to the elderly and makes the younger appraiser incapable practically of telling his elderly subordinate what he thinks about him and his performance.
- Poor objectivity by supervising officers.
- Poor knowledge of subordinate staff and their jobs on the part of many supervising officers.
- Poor feedback to employees.

The Nigerian government has tried to battle some of the problems facing performance appraisals, but their efforts have yielded little or no efforts at all. For example, the confidential reporting system of appraisal was changed to the Annual performance Evaluation Report (APER) where a supervisor sits with the subordinate and shows him/her the evaluation report written. But this has not really changed anything; more pragmatic steps should be taken. The paper submits the following as suggested solutions.

- There should be transparency in the recruitment process and selection of employees.

- Expert appraisers who have no relationship with the appraisees should be brought to do the appraisal. In contrast to this however, Atakpa, Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) feel that only immediate and direct supervisors should assess subordinates.

- Two or more of the appraisal methods should be combined often.

- A renewal of the minds of the people is necessary. People

should be made to think straight. This can be done either through religious, philosophical or psychological means.

- The government should create awareness of the dangers of involving in appraisal malpractice and enact laws to handle same.
- Effective and strict disciplinary measures should be meted out to offenders.
- There should be frequent seminars and workshops on the nature, purpose and process of performance appraisal.

Conclusion

Economic development is a sine qua non to good governance and invariably to national development. Economic development of a nation is dependent on the successes of the varying business firms within the nation, both privately and publicly owned firms. Having established in the paper that for effective maximisation of profit in an industry, there needs to be a well-functioning system of appraisal, the paper further submits that the government and all those involved in the work sector should take more pragmatic steps at enhancing the system of performance appraisal in the country. At such, one *little fox* that should destroy the *vine* (the nation) would be properly taken care of.

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