

Performance Evaluation (Appraisal) System for Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri

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Abstract

Staff academic performance and appraisal is a regulated review of assessment of staff in an academic institution. It creates a platform for Heads of Departments, Deans and the Academic Board (AB) under the Chairmanship of the Rector to evaluate staff performance to determine the strengths and weaknesses of staff and at the same time offer feedback through grading of the performances of the staff affected. Since it is the staff that is being appraised, it is important that those with the responsibility of appraising staff to tender constructive feedback to their staff by giving them very clear directions on areas of improvement in the future. The motivation for this research work was due to the fact that staff appraisal is done through a manual system and during staff appraisal, staff of Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri experiences delays in the submission of appraisal form, errors in the information provided in the form, late submission of forms due to non-provision of deadlines or poor communication of deadlines for submission, loss of appraisal forms after it has been picked up by staff, grading difficulties by the HODs and Deans and inabilities of staff on study leave abroad to gain access to the form. The aim of this research work therefore is to design and implement an automated system that will solve the problems of the manual system of staff appraisal in the institution. The methodology which will be employed to achieve this aim will be the spiral model of software engineering methodology called structured system analysis and design methodology (SSADM) because of the sequential step by step approach involved in the development process. The result will be the achievement of the design of a user-friendly automated software solution which will solve the problems of the manual system of staff appraisal.

Keywords: Appraisal, automation, efficiency, communication, deadline, evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

A performance appraisal is the periodic assessment of an employee's job performance as measured by the competency expectations set out by the organization. The performance assessment often includes both the core competencies required by the organization and also the competencies specific to the employee's job. The appraiser, often a supervisor or manager, will provide the employee with constructive, actionable feedback based on the assessment. This in turn provides the employee with the direction needed to improve and develop in their job. Based on the feedback, a performance appraisal is also an opportunity for the organization to recognize employee achievements and future potential.

The purpose of a performance appraisal

The purpose of a performance appraisal is two-fold: It helps the organization to determine the value and productivity that employees contribute, and it also helps employees to develop in their own roles.

Benefit for organization

Employee assessments can make a difference in the performance of an organization. They provide insight into how employees are contributing and enable organizations to:

1. Identify where management can improve working conditions in order to increase productivity and work quality.
2. Address behavioral issues before they impact departmental productivity.
3. Encourage employees to contribute more by recognizing their talents and skills
4. Support employees in skill and career development
5. Improve strategic decision-making in situations that require layoffs, succession planning, or filling open roles internally
6. Benefit for employee

Performance appraisals are meant to provide a positive outcome for employees. The insights gained from assessing and discussing an employee's performance can help:

1. Recognize and acknowledge the achievements and contributions made by an employee.
2. Recognize the opportunity for promotion or bonus.
3. Identify and support the need for additional training or education to continue career development.
4. Determine the specific areas where skills can be improved.
5. Motivate an employee and help them feel involved and invested in their career development.
6. Open discussion to an employee's long-term goals.

How to organize a performance appraisal process

Conducting a performance review with an employee requires skill and training on the part of the appraiser. The negative perception that is often associated with the performance appraisal is due in part to a feeling of being criticized during the process.

A performance appraisal is meant to be the complete opposite. Often, the culprit is in the way the appraisal is conducted via the use of language.

The way the sender of a message uses language determines how the other person interprets the message once received. This can include tone of voice, choice of words, or even body language. Because a performance appraisal is meant to provide constructive feedback, it is crucial that appropriate language and behavior are used in the process.

Human Resources (HR) are the support system for managers and supervisors to be trained in tactfully handling the appraisal process.

The performance appraisal process

The assessment process is usually facilitated by Human Resources, who assist managers and supervisors in conducting the individual appraisals within their departments.

1. An assessment method should be established.
2. Required competencies and job expectations need to be drafted for each employee.
3. Individual appraisals on employee performance are conducted.
4. A one-on-one interview is scheduled between the manager and employee to discuss the review.
5. Future goals should be discussed between employee and manager.
6. A signed-off version of the performance review is archived.

Appraisal information is utilized by human resources for appropriate organizational purposes, such as reporting, promotions, bonuses or succession planning.

Factors to consider when developing an appraisal system

1. In developing an appraisal system for a small business, an entrepreneur needs to consider the following:
2. Size of staff
3. Employees on an alternative work schedule
4. Goals of company and desired employee behaviors to help achieve goals
5. Measuring performance/work
6. Pay increases and promotions

7. Communication of appraisal system and individual performance
8. Performance planning

Staff performance appraisal is the assessment of the performance of an individual in relation to the objectives, activities, outputs, and targets of a job over a given period of time. In organizational setting, performance appraisal is defined as a structured formal interaction between a subordinate and supervisor, that usually takes the form of a periodic interview (annual or semi-annual), in which the work performance of the subordinate is examined and discussed, with a view to identifying weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for improvement and skills development (McNamara, 1999).

According to Moorhead and Griffen (2004), it is described as the process of evaluating work behaviours by measurements and comparison to previously established standards, recording the results, and communicating them back to the employee. Staff performance appraisal is therefore the assessment of performance of an individual in relation to the objectives, activities, outputs and targets over a given period of time. Staff performance appraisal is a powerful tool for staff management. Staff performance evaluation helps to evaluate how a staff succeeds in his present job and this is important for estimating how well the staff will perform in the future. This helps the management to determine the strengths and weaknesses of staff in order to increase productivity (Okumbe, 1998).

In this information technology era, employee performance can be evaluated using software systems. This will enable information about the performance of employees to be easily evaluated and saved to database for future retrieval. Performance management of employees can be seen as the systematic description of individual job-relevant strengths and weaknesses for the purposes of making a decision about the individual. In another term, performance appraisal is a process of evaluating the behaviour of the employees in the workplace, or can also be referred to as a process of giving feedback on employees' performance. It involves a very complicated process and various factors can influence the process. Therefore, the process of evaluating employee's behaviour should be looked at as a reciprocal process or using a matrix perspective and not as a straightforward process. There are a number of different appraisal approaches/methods commonly used in organizations with methods used have their advantages as well as disadvantages and there are no right and wrong methods or approaches. Consistency and focus on the usage of the approaches or methodology are crucial to ensure they are successful.

PROBLEM STATEMENT / JUSTIFICATION

Yearly, the employees of Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri are given an appraisal form to fill. In most cases except for those nearing their promotion year, the same information is filled in by staff constantly. In some cases, some staff forgets their scores in the previous evaluation. Others often forget their date of first appointment, promotion, and other vital information required by the form which in turn affects their final grading which is not often in their best interest. The problem here is that staff appraisal is done manually and produces results which are not too favourable to staff. These problems may include:

1. Delay in submission of form by staff
2. Difficulty encountered by the HOD in arriving at a grading formula
3. Errors in information submitted by staff
4. Late submission of form after completion by staff
5. Loss of form by staff which in most cases is as a result of misplacement of appraisal document.
6. How to reach out to staff on study leave (abroad) to access the appraisal form.

Having identified these few problems, the aim of designing an automated process for evaluation and appraisal of staff performance is hereby justified because through an automated system, these problems will become fossils of the past and a welcomed achievement for the future of staff appraisal in the Polytechnic.

OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE STUDY

The aim of this project research is to develop staff academic performance and appraisal system for Federal Polytechnic Nekede.

The objectives of this project research therefore are:

1. To design a system that will ease in the searching and retrieval of staff performance information.
2. To design and implement a database system that will maintain the records of staff performance.
3. To design develop a software that will aid in the appraisal of staff.

Theoretical framework

This research work was enshrined in many theories which has been advanced by different scholars some of which include;

Dina and Schodl (2015) who argued that in many organizations, the appraisal systems have been mishandled. They stressed that the worker should not walk blindly into performance appraisal. To get it right, the employer should seriously consider the past counseling sessions and feedback of staff.

Maicibi (2005), stressed that performance appraisal is an important technique that can be used by any management (organization if the organization really wants to achieve its set objectives. Craig et al (1986), stated that staff appraisal has three main objectives which are used to measure staff performance fairly and objectively. These objectives guide staff assessment against job requirements, and is used to increase staff performance by identifying specific development goals of staff so that they may keep pace with the requirements of a fast placed organization.

Cole (2002) identified that there are two categories of appraisal namely the formal and informal appraisal. According to him, informal appraisal is the continuous assessment of individual worker's performance by his superior or manager in the normal course of work. He says this kind of assessment is of an adhoc nature and is as much determined by intuitive feelings rather than factual evidence of results. He adds that, it is a natural byproduct of the day-to-day relationship between the managers and subordinates.

Maicibi also argued that informal appraisal is a system in which subordinates go into informal discussions with their superiors. The aim of which is to assess the habits and qualities of the subordinates. He says that through this method, the management can collect a lot of information that is useful for purposes of promotion, advancements, transfers, termination or layoffs or training and development of staff (Maicibi, 2005).

Formal appraisal on the other hand is a system set up by the organization to regularly and systematically evaluate employee's performance. Cole (2002) says this type of appraisal involves assessment of an employee's performance in some systematic and planned way. It serves to determine how well an employee is working and decides on ways to improve performance. This calls for intermediate feedback in order to be effective. Armstrong (2014) emphasizes that the importance of giving timely feedback to an employee is to develop and maintain a motivated workforce.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Efforts will be made at this stage to present, analyze and interpret the data collected during the field survey. This presentation will be based on the responses from the completed questionnaires. The result of this exercise will be summarized in tabular forms for easy references and analysis. It will also show answers to questions relating to the research questions for this research study. The researcher employed simple percentage in the analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed in tabular form with simple percentage for easy understanding. A total of 100(one hundred) questionnaires were distributed and 100 questionnaires were returned.

Question 1

Gender distribution of the respondents

Table 1. Gender distribution of the respondents

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	50	50	50
	Female	50	50	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0

From the above table it shows that 50% of the respondents were male while 50% of the respondents were female.

Question 2

The positions held by respondents

Table 2. The positions held by respondents

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Heads of department	30	30.0	30.0	30.0
Chief lecturers	25	25	25.0	55.0
Principal lecturers	20	20	20.0	75.0
Senior lecturers	25	25	25.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The above tables shown that 30 respondents which represent 30% of the respondents are heads of department, 25 respondents which represents 25 % are Chief lecturers 20 respondents which represents 20% of the respondents are Principal lecturers, while 25 respondents which represents 25% of the respondents Senior lecturers.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Table 3. Computerized system does not aid in the evaluation of employee performance

Response	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Agreed	38	25	13
strongly agreed	33	25	8
Disagreed	18	25	-7
strongly disagreed	11	25	-14
Total	100		

Test Statistics

Table 4. Computerized system do not aid in the evaluation of employee performance

Chi-Square	14.376 ^a
Deg. Of freedom	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 33.3.

Decision rule

The researcher therefore rejects the null hypothesis that computerized system do not aid in the evaluation of employee performance as the calculated value of 14.376 is greater than the critical value of 7.82
Therefore, the alternate hypothesis is accepted that computerized system do aid in the evaluation of employee performance.

Test of hypothesis two

Test Statistics

Table 5. Database system do not maintain records of employee performance

Chi-Square	22.940 ^a
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 44.3

Decision rule

The researcher therefore rejects the null hypothesis that database system does not maintain records of employee performance as the calculated value of 28.211 is greater than the critical value of 5.99.
Therefore, the alternate hypothesis is accepted that state that database system does maintain records of employee performance.

CONCLUSION

The outcome of this research work is to ascertain if the overall objectives of this research were achieved. The stated objectives were:

1. To design a system that will ease in the searching and retrieval of staff performance information.
2. To design and implement a database system that will maintain the records of staff performance.
3. To design and develop a software solution that will aid in the appraisal of staff.

It is therefore noteworthy that all these objectives were achieved which further justifies the relevance of this research work to the study area.

Advantages of the research work

1. A software solution for accessing staff information was created for efficient searching and retrieval of staff information.
2. The software solution provided an easy process for evaluating staff performance.
3. The software solution also created an electronic database for storage of all staff details including staff qualifications and appraisal records.

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