

Empirical Study on the Impact of Performance Appraisal on Employee Performance in Kebbi State Ministry of Health

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Abstract

In virtually every organization, the workforce stands as the most critical asset, far outweighing the importance of physical resources. Gauging employee effectiveness is a cornerstone of human resource management. This practice, termed performance appraisal, entails the periodic review of staff behaviors, accomplishments, and contributions to the organization. Its core purpose is to highlight areas for growth and guide choices about promotions and professional development, ultimately enhancing overall productivity. Undoubtedly, an organization's achievements rest on its employees' output, underscoring the need for consistent and well-executed appraisals to elevate performance, curb dissatisfaction, and prevent dips in work quality. Against this backdrop, this research examined how performance appraisals affect employee output at the Kebbi State Ministry of Health, zeroing in on three dimensions: task execution, adaptability, and contextual efforts. Using a sample of 333 participants, it adopted a quantitative survey approach, analyzing data with multiple regression. Findings revealed that performance appraisal had a statistically significant positive effect on task performance ($\beta = 0.258$, $p = 0.000$, $R^2 = 0.152$), while the effects on adaptive ($\beta = -0.001$, $p = 0.993$) and contextual performance ($\beta = -0.103$, $p = 0.117$) were non-significant. The study is underpinned by equity and expectancy theories, highlighting fairness and motivation in appraisal systems. The findings suggest that while appraisals can enhance task performance, additional strategies such as fostering motivation or workplace spirituality, are needed to improve adaptability and contextual behaviors, given their weak association with appraisals.

Keywords; performance appraisal, task performance, adaptive performance, contextual performance

1. Introduction

A government's ability to function effectively hinges on its human capital, dispersed across ministries, departments, and public bodies. Clearly, an unskilled or underdeveloped workforce yields substandard results throughout public entities (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2017). Maximizing performance ranks among the top priorities for any organization, with employee output serving as a pivotal focus in management studies and

a key indicator of institutional success (Gavrea et al., 2011). Performance appraisal emerges as a vital human resource strategy to boost productivity. This methodical process reviews staff work habits, outcomes, and value to the organization, aiming to spot improvement opportunities, reward excellence, and shape decisions on compensation, advancement, or training (Muriuki, 2021). Its significance in today's organizations is undeniable, aligning individual efforts with broader objectives and fueling efficiency.

Originating in the early 20th century with scientific management's push for workplace optimization, performance appraisal has evolved. Once focused solely on past results, it now emphasizes ongoing development, engagement, and performance upliftment. This shift reflects a deeper appreciation that staff output drives organizational success, and robust performance management can enhance productivity, satisfaction, and growth (Aguinis, 2019). Regular appraisals are crucial to improve work standards, reduce discontent, and avert performance slumps (Shrestha & Chalidabhongse, 2006). Elements like leadership benchmarks, expertise, skills, and dedication influence employee results (Lillian & Sitati, 2011). Studies affirm that well-implemented appraisals can elevate organizational performance.

Yet, in Nigeria, public institutions have often neglected the role of appraisals in boosting staff output (Adele & Ibietan, 2017). The health sector, vital for public welfare, mirrors this trend, showing limited focus on employee performance amid weak human capital development efforts (Paul et al., 2016). This is evident in the large numbers of Nigerians seeking healthcare abroad, signaling poor health workforce performance (Innocent et al., 2014). Though appraisals are widely valued, their true impact on performance sparks debate. Proponents argue that effective systems set clear goals, provide feedback, and foster growth, markedly improving output (Armstrong, 2017). Critics, however, warn that appraisals can falter if seen as unfair, overly critical, or misaligned with job realities (Murphy & Cleveland, 2018).

While literature affirms the importance of appraisals in aligning employee contributions with organizational goals (Muriuki, 2021), the actual implementation in Nigeria remains fraught with challenges such as perceived bias, lack of follow-up, and disconnect from promotion outcomes (Paul et al., 2016). Recent surveys by the Nigerian Institute of Management (2022) show that over 60% of public employees feel performance reviews are irregular or unfairly applied. Understanding its effects on task execution, adaptability, and contextual contributions is thus essential for crafting human resource approaches that benefit both staff and organizations. This study investigates how performance appraisal influences the three dimensions of employee performance (task, adaptive, and contextual) in the Kebbi State Ministry of Health, an institution that plays a crucial role in grassroots healthcare delivery. The study contributes to bridging the local empirical gap on the effectiveness of appraisal mechanisms within Nigeria's public healthcare system.

This study is sets to investigate the effect of performance appraisal on employee task performance, adaptive performance and contextual performance in Kebbi State Ministry of Health specifically. Hence, this study hypothesizes that;

Ho1: Performance Appraisal has no significant positive effect on employee Task Performance in Kebbi State Ministry of Health

Ho2: Performance Appraisal has no significant positive effect on employee Adaptive Performance Kebbi State Ministry of Health

Ho3: Performance Appraisal has no significant positive effect on employee Contextual Performance Kebbi State Ministry of Health

2. Literature Review

2.1 conceptual definitions

Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal refers to the methods and systems organizations use to assess staff effectiveness. This involves measuring output and offering feedback on work quality and scope (Denisi & Pritchard, 2006). Alo (1999) described it as a structured way to review an individual's or entity's success in meeting assigned duties or goals over a set period.

Over time, the scope and purpose of appraisals have broadened. Pre-1960, they served mainly administrative needs like salary adjustments, promotions, or placements. Since then, they've grown into tools for guidance and growth, supported by new frameworks that highlight their expanded role (David & James, 1993). However, performance appraisal is often criticized for bias, inconsistency, and lack of follow-through (Murphy & Cleveland, 2018). In Nigeria, performance appraisal practices vary widely across sectors, often relying on outdated models or irregular implementation (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2017). Thus, appraisals help identify and nurture individual performance, encouraging top performers to sustain excellence while pushing others to improve (Scott, 2001).

Coens and Jenkins (2000) view appraisals as a formal process where, over a defined timeframe, a rater evaluates an employee's actions or traits, with results recorded by the organization. Nzuve (2007) sees it as a way to measure work output over time, while Dessler (2005) defines it as setting standards, comparing actual performance to them, and providing feedback to address gaps or reinforce strengths. Meyer and Kirsten (2005) argue that managing staff performance is a key organizational task, reflecting how human capital is handled. Giles et al. (1997) add that effective appraisals require a framework ensuring optimal operation, a view echoed by others who link integrated performance strategies to improved staff commitment and attitudes (Caldwell et al., 1990; Kinicki et

al., 1992; Ostroff, 1992). DeNisi and Pritchard (2006) describe it as a process to assess performance at various levels to meet corporate goals.

Atiomo (2000) highlights appraisals as systems to gauge current performance, identify growth areas, and maximize human resource potential, stressing the need for clear role awareness. Igbojekwe and Ugo-Okoro (2015) see it as a systematic way to review past and present output while spotting future potential. Byers and Rue (2000) frame it as communicating job performance to staff and planning improvements. Contemporary appraisal systems increasingly involve multi-source feedback (e.g., 360-degree feedback), continuous performance tracking, and integration with digital HR systems (Riego & Lapuz, 2020). Yet, their application in the public sector, particularly at the state level, remains minimal.

Employee Performance

Sindelar (2016) defines employee performance as how efficiently and effectively staff handles workplace duties and responsibilities. It reflects their contribution to organizational goals. Performance is multifaceted, and this study focuses on three key measures drawn from prior research:

- i. Task performance
- ii. Adaptive performance
- iii. Contextual performance.

i. Task Performance

Task performance covers job-specific actions tied to core responsibilities in a role's description. Cesário (2017) views it as employees' skill in performing tasks that bolster the organization's technical foundation. It centers on quality and efficiency, often resisting innovation. Conway (1999) notes it demands cognitive skills, supported by task knowledge (technical know-how), task skills (applying that knowledge independently), and task habits (natural responses aiding or hindering performance).

Borman and Brush (1993) and Tripathy (2014) identify job ability and prior experience as key drivers of task performance. In organizations, it's a mutual agreement between managers and staff to complete assigned duties. This splits into two areas: technical-administrative performance (daily planning and execution using technical and business skills) and leadership performance (setting goals, maintaining standards, and motivating teams through support and critique). Borman and Motowidlo (1997) describe it as how effectively staff carries out tasks, aligning with organizational vision and benefiting both the entity and individual.

ii. Adaptive Performance

Adaptive performance is an employee's capacity to adjust and respond to shifting job demands in dynamic settings (Hesketh & Neal, 1999). Research shows that after

mastering tasks, staff adapt their behaviors to meet varied role needs (Huang et al., 2014; Pulakos et al., 2000). Effective adaptability requires handling unpredictable work changes well (Baard et al., 2014), driven by technological shifts, role changes, or organizational restructuring, necessitating new learning and flexibility (Griffin et al., 2010; Hollenbeck et al., 1996). Staff must also tweak interpersonal interactions to collaborate effectively. Griffin et al. (2007) argue that while job proficiency aids task performance, adaptability and initiative are key in uncertain environments.

iii. Contextual Performance

Contextual performance involves non-task actions that improve the workplace environment (Austin & Villanova, 1992; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). Known as organizational citizenship behavior, it includes voluntary efforts benefiting the organization indirectly (Bateman & Organ, 1983). Shamsudin and Velmurugan (2023) define it as actions sustaining the psychological and social fabric supporting technical tasks. It encompasses behaviors aiding organizational goals, though not explicitly required.

Brief and Motowidlo (1986) defined it as a behavior that is;

- (i) Accomplished by a member of an organization.
- (ii) Directed towards an individual, group, or organization with whom the member interacts while carrying out his or her organizational role, and finally such behavior is performed with the intention of encouraging the betterment of individual, group, or organization towards which it is directed.

2.2 Performance Appraisal and Employee Performance

Numerous studies have explored how appraisals affect employee output across various contexts. Mwema and Gachunga (2014) examined appraisal effects on productivity at the World Health Organization's Kenya offices, using descriptive and regression analyses. They found regular appraisals, tied to targets and efficiency, boosted productivity, aiding training identification and decision-making. Geoffrey (2015) studied appraisal impacts on bank staff in Kenya's Trans-Nzoia County, finding a significant link via descriptive and Chi-Square analyses. Tekalegn et al. (2016) surveyed Hawassa University staff, noting strong ties between appraisal processes (standards, feedback, etc.) and performance.

Eliphas et al. (2017) found recognition and feedback, but not training, strongly influenced productivity. Riego and Lapuz (2020) reported a modest positive link between appraisals and development in a Philippine academic setting. Hee and Jing (2018) tied appraisals and training to performance in Malaysia's manufacturing sector. Oravee and Zayum (2017) linked appraisal techniques like 360-degree feedback to productivity in Nigeria's

Plateau State. Ramous et al. (2016) found appraisals boosted job satisfaction and commitment in Ghana's microfinance sector when fair and tied to rewards.

Prior studies provide mixed findings. While Tekalegn et al. (2016) and Geoffrey (2015) report positive impacts of appraisal on productivity, others like Eliphas et al. (2017) found that only recognition and feedback, not training affecting performance. These contradictions necessitate context-specific studies, particularly in under-researched settings like Kebbi State.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Theories explain and predict phenomena, often pushing knowledge boundaries (David, 2009). This study draws on equity and expectancy theories (Kellogg & Negros, 2002; Richer, 2002; Vroom, 1964) and goal theory (Armstrong, 2006). Equity theory posits that fair treatment in pay, promotions, and evaluations motivates staff, while unfairness reduces effort (Hyde, 2005). Expectancy theory suggests effort arise when staff believe it leads to performance, rewards, and valued outcomes, adjusting behavior to meet goals (Vroom, 1964). These theories suit this study by explaining how appraisals enhance performance through fairness and motivation. In Nigeria's public service context, fairness in appraisals (promotions, bonuses) and belief in appraisal-linked rewards are crucial motivators. The theories are therefore, appropriate for the study because they explain the significance of performance appraisal to employee performance in an organization.

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design, specifically a correlational survey, to examine the relationship between Performance Appraisal and Employee Performance in the Kebbi State Ministry of Health. Structured questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher to the respondents, who are the staff members of Kebbi State Ministry of Health. Data was analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, version 20, to perform multiple regression analyses to test the relevant hypotheses. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the three hypotheses, as this method accommodates simultaneous examination of the influence of one predictor variable (performance appraisal) on multiple outcome variables (task, adaptive, contextual performance). Assumptions of normality, linearity, and absence of multicollinearity were checked prior to analysis.

The study's population consists of all staff within Kebbi State Ministry of Health. The ministry has a total of 1,986 staff members. Among these, the Pharmaceutical Services Department has 138 staff members, the Medical Services Department has 433 staff, and the Nursing Services Department has 491 staff. The Public Health Department has 280 staff, the Inspectorate Department has 219 staff, the Planning, Research, and Statistics Department has 196 staff, the Personnel Management Department has 77 staff, and the

Finance Department has a total of 152 staff members (<https://www.kebbistate.gov.ng/about-kebbi-state>)

The participants are 333 staff of Kebbi State Ministry of Health which was arrived at using a stratified random sampling technique. Using Cochran's sample size formula for a known population, the sample was determined as 333. A stratified random sampling method was used to ensure representation across departments. A total of 300 valid responses were collected. Majority of the participants 153 (51.0%) are male, while the remaining 147 (49%) are female. Based on age, 84 (28.0%) are between 26-35 years, 82(27.3%) are between 36-45 years, 23 (7.7%) are between 18-25 years while 46-55 years and 56 years above are 63(21.0%) and 48 (16.05%) respectively. The description of participants also indicates that 181(60.3%) are married, 67 (22.3%) are single, 40 (13.3%) are separated, while insignificant number of 5(1.7%) and 7 (2.3%) for divorce and widow/widower respectively. The academic qualification of respondents shows that indicates that 124 (41.3%) had ND or NCE, 110 (36.7%) are B.Sc/HND holders, 14 (4.7%) had PhD/MPhil and 18 (6%) had M.Sc, while insignificant number of 34 (11.3%) are Secondary School certificate holders. In relation to the number of years of experience, 118 (39.3%) had 8-10 years of experience, 96 (32.0%) respondents have more than 10 years of experience, insignificant few respondents with a number of 52 (17.3%) and 24(8.0%) are within 4-7 years and 1-3 years of service respectively. However, only 10(3.3%) have less than one year of experience.

The performance appraisal scale (Bekele et al., 2014) contained 8 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Employee performance was measured using 3 subscales: task (6 items), adaptive (7 items), and contextual (10 items), adapted from Pradhan et al. (2017). The reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of all scales exceeded the acceptable 0.7 threshold. All the instruments underwent expert review and pilot testing in Kebbi State to ensure cultural relevance.

Table 1; Cronbach's alpha value of constructs

Variables	Number of items	Overall Cronbach's Alpha
Performance appraisal (PA)	8	0.778
Task performance (TP)	6	0.80
Adaptive performance (AP)	7	0.88
Contextual performance (CP)	10	0.91
Total	28	

4. Results and Discussions

Hypotheses Testing

Ho1: Performance Appraisal has no significant positive effect on employee Task Performance

Ho2: Performance Appraisal has no significant positive effect on employee Adaptive Performance

Ho3: Performance Appraisal has no significant positive effect on employee Contextual Performance

Table 2: Summary of multiple regression analysis showing the effect of Performance Appraisal on Employee Job Performance (Task Performance, Adaptive Performance and Contextual Performance)

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-Value	Sig	R ²
PA > Task Performance	.198	.048	.258	4.083	.000	0.152
PA > Adaptive Performance	.000	.022	-.001	-.009	.993	0.000
PA > Contextual Performance	-.035	.022	-.103	-1.572	.117	0.011

Note: PA=Performance Appraisal

The Table 2 revealed there is a positive and significant relationship between Performance Appraisal and Task Performance. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.198 indicates that for each unit increase in PA, Task Performance increases by 0.198 units. The Beta value of 0.258 suggests a moderate positive impact. The t-value of 4.083, with a p-value of 0.000 which is ($p < 0.05$), indicates this relationship is statistically significant. The standard error value indicating the extent of variation from the predicted value is at (0.048). Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no positive significant relationship between Performance Appraisal and Task Performance in Kebbi State Ministry of Health is here by rejected and the alternative hypothesis is supported.

The relationship between Performance Appraisal and Adaptive Performance is negligible and not significant. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.000 indicates no change in Adaptive Performance with changes in PA, and the Beta value of -0.001 supports this

lack of effect. The t-value of -0.009, with a p-value of 0.993 which is ($p > 0.05$), indicates this relationship is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no positive significant relationship between Performance Appraisal and Adaptive performance in Kebbi State Ministry of Health is here by accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Furthermore, the Table shows there is a negative and insignificant relationship between Performance Appraisal and Contextual Performance. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of -0.035 suggests a small decrease in Contextual Performance with each unit increase in PA, but the relationship is not statistically significant given the p-value of 0.117 which is ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no positive significant relationship between Performance Appraisal and Task Performance in Kebbi State Ministry of Health is here by accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of findings

The research revealed that, Performance Appraisal is positively and significantly related to Task Performance in Kebbi State Ministry of Health; while regarding Performance Appraisal and adaptive performance, the result indicates no effect whatsoever exist between the two variables, hence the relationship is statistically insignificant and Performance Appraisal against contextual performance indicates a statistically negligible negative effect between the two variable in Kebbi State Ministry of Health.

The various implications of these findings clearly established that an effective performance appraisal system significantly improve employees' ability to perform their tasks. This implies that well-designed and executed appraisals can enhance productivity and performance quality in employee's task-related activities. This aligns with findings from Geoffrey (2015) and Tekalegn et al. (2016), supporting the notion that structured feedback enhances goal clarity and efficiency. The lack of impact on adaptive and contextual performance suggests that current appraisal systems may focus heavily on measurable outputs, neglecting flexibility and discretionary behaviors.

However, there seem to be exception to these discoveries, as this current studies revealed that performance appraisal do not have effect on employee adaptive and contextual performance, this implies that employee ability to carry out its adaptive and contextual task-related activity is not enhance by performance appraisal, this outcome slightly support that of Riego and Lapuz (2020) who posited that there was a low-moderate positive relationship between performance appraisal and employee development and ability to deliver on the job.

Furthermore, regarding adaptive performance, the finding of this study suggests that other factors are likely more influential in helping employees adapt to changes and new

situations. Public sector constraints, including rigid structures and inadequate reward systems, may also explain the weak association with adaptive and contextual domains.

From the lens of Equity Theory, the strong task linkage reflects perceived fairness in task-based evaluations. However, Expectancy Theory indicates that if appraisals are not seen to influence rewards related to adaptability or cooperation, employees may not be motivated to improve in those areas.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

It can be deduced that the management of Kebbi State Ministry of Health may need to consider additional training or support mechanisms specifically aimed at improving adaptability. Also, the finding established that while performance appraisals are crucial, they may not directly enhance behaviors such as teamwork, helping colleagues, and other contextual activities. Accordingly, the management of Kebbi State Ministry of Health may need to also focus on other strategies like employee motivation and work place spirituality to improve these aspects of performance, factors like additional support mechanisms are also essential for fostering contextual performance.

A key limitation is the study's reliance on quantitative methods due to unavailable qualitative data, raising the possibility of response and social desirability bias. Additionally, its cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation. Combining both could yield richer insights. Most appraisal research, including this, leans quantitative; future studies could mix methods for balanced, reliable results. The negative tie with contextual performance and negligible link with adaptive performance warrant further exploration to confirm these patterns. Future research should adopt longitudinal or mixed-method approaches, exploring moderating variables such as motivation, organizational culture, and e-human resource management systems.

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