

**PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND EMPLOYEE JOB MORALE IN BAYELSA STATE
ELECTRONIC MEDIUM: A STUDY OF BAYELSA STATE BROADCASTING
CORPORATION EKEKI, YENAGOA**

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between performance appraisal and employee work moral in public information sector with particular reference to Radio Bayelsa, Bayelsa state, Nigeria. The study employed descriptive analysis through review of literature. Findings show that there is positive significant relationship between employee performance appraisal, and work morale in the public information sector, with particular reference to radio Bayelsa. Performance appraisal in Radio Bayelsa influences employee job performance, hence job satisfaction, but the level of implementation of the outcome of evaluation is poor. The study concludes that performance appraisal system is the only tangible metric way by which an electronic medium could know the level of performance of its employees. Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations: the administration of employee performance review should be transparent to clear any ambiguity that may be ascribed to the exercise; assessment of employees of all ranks should be regarded as a holistic exercise as all employees are collectively responsible for the achievement of the organization goals; and management should emphasize implementation of the outcome of evaluation exercise, as implementation to organizational commitment which increase job satisfaction and work moral among employees.

Keywords: performance, appraisal, employee, job, morale.

INTRODUCTION

The ministry of Information, Radio Bayelsa in particular, is the only public radio station in the state with the sole responsibility of disseminating information to the people of

Bayelsa state and its neighboring states. Radio Bayelsa, also known as Glory FM (Frequency Modulation), was established in 1999. The radio corporation broadcast news, sports and current affairs programmes mainly in English as well as in major local languages in the state.

Since inception, Radio Bayelsa has remained the voice of the people and has not shirked in its corporate social responsibility through its programmes, which are aimed at informing, educating and entertaining the interested listening public. With the launch of its online broadcasting service, the corporation has repositioned itself for a more efficient service delivery, increased productivity and listenership across the region through search for enhanced employee job performance, job satisfaction, increased work morale and motivation. These are achievable through effective employee performance appraisal.

In every bureaucratic organization, there are planned or set out goals, which the manager or the chief executive and the subordinates are expected to achieve in a given period of time. With effective and efficient management, which involves checking, controlling, testing, regulation or verification and maximum utilization of both human and material resources, these goals can be achieved. This then implies that in any organization, there is that element of human factor (Ekwelem, 2009).

The public service occupies a significant position in the administration of any state. Unfortunately, the role of the public service has been hindered and drastically reduced to mere rubber stamps by the political class. The functions of the public service have been reduced to mere routine a position that can be by-passed any time. The public service personnel have been reduced to an ordinary machine that can be disposed of without prior notice (Odo, 2004).

Idemobi and Onyeizugbe (2011) assert that the competitive nature in the global business environment are pushing business organizations, whether private or public owned, to reorganize, restructure and re-engineer to enable them to be more competitive in the market place. The success depends on the effective mobilization of the potentialities in the work force and adequate utilization of tools. The human factor is delicate and dynamic and requires special attention in grappling with the contending issues of personal mobilization, motivation and utilization. Hence, performance evaluation becomes a key tool of an organization drive towards competitive which leads to the development of integrated performance management system based on a competency framework (Akinyele and Obamiro, 2005).

Job satisfaction is an emotional agreeable state that results from the performance evaluation of someone's work values. There is strong influence of job satisfaction on employee behaviour after appraisal exercise such as psychological distress, absenteeism, turnover and job performance (Chen, Yang, Shiau and Wang, 2006). Positive attitude of the employees with their works is related to job satisfaction, and it is not only linked with general satisfaction but also on correlates regarding how the performance appraisal exercise. Thus, work morale arising from performance appraisal exercise could be positive or negative, depending on the outcome of the exercise. The level of job satisfaction and morale are influenced by the level of perception of performance appraisal in an origination.

Job performance evaluation is important in public organizations as it correlates with the level of employee retention in the organization. Public organizations that have political influence in their rating of workforce lose their key employees to other establishments that appreciate and acknowledge employees' contributions. In essence, the productivity of an organization is jointly determined by the efficiency with which the organization effectively utilizes several factors during appraisal to increase employee work morale and retention.

Ouchi (1981) clearly pointed that out when he addressed the issue of what he called "the organization's search for rationality (Technological determination) and the human beings search for happiness (as in the Doctrine of Hedonism). The scientific management theorists strongly affirmed that management and labour had a common and mutual interest in ensuring employee's job performance and work moral towards achieving high organizational productivity.

It is based on this background that this study seeks to determine the relationship between performance appraisal of employee's job performance and work morale in public information sector in Bayelsa State with particular reference to Radio Bayelsa.

Statement of the Problem

Annual performance appraisal has been a veritable instrument in the hands of personnel or human resource managers to assess workers performance, and reward or punish them. Unfortunately, the essence of performance evaluation has been defeated in Radio Bayelsa as a result of poor administration and implementation of the performance evaluation method used (Eze, 2006). Radio Bayelsa utilizes the self appraisal method in tfeir evaluation scheme. Due to a lack of knowledge of proper analysis and implementation of the evaluation results, employees are often not rewarded or punished as they should, based on the result of their self-assessments. This leaves employees to wonder if at all their performances are recognized by the administration in order to bring about positive/negative reinforcements as at when due. Consequently, employees at Radio Bayelsa perform poorly and have very low job morale, which in turn impact negatively on overall organizational effectiveness (Idemobi and Onyeizugbe, 2011).

Also, discontents among employees arise in Radio Bayelsa due to failure of management to evolve and articulate a job evaluation scheme that could be said to be uniform. In Radio Bayelsa in general, criticisms are leveled on management that relate worth of jobs of its employees to improper application of proper objective appraisal criteria. The outcome of self- appraisals are determined, more often than not, by a host of extraneous subjective factors such as impression of management about the appearance or personality of prospective employees, the kinship relationship, etc. In essence, implementation of appraisal results in Radio Bayelsa is associated with theoretical problem such as biasness, unfairness and excess bureaucracy (Eze, 2006). In this regard, the self-evaluation method is everything short of standard. Absence of standard and good performance evaluation scheme results in incompatible wages, friction, tension, disharmony, disaffection and dissatisfaction among the employees thereby affecting their job performance, morale, and personal development.

There is also political interference in the appraisal of staff. At times management ensures that evaluation of staff performance is done to the extent it satisfies the aspirations of the political classes, their wishes and hunches (Odo, 2004).

It is in consonance with these anomalies that this study has become pertinent to determine the relationship between performance appraisal and employee job morale in- Radio Bayelsa.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to determine the influence of employee performance evaluation on employee work morale in public information sector in Bayelsa State, with a focus on Radio Bayelsa.

The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the relationship between employee performance appraisal and employee work morale in Radio Bayelsa in order to enhance employee performance.
2. To determine the influence of extraneous factors in the rating system in Radio Bayelsa with a view to boost worker performance.
3. To ascertain the extent political interference in the appraisal scheme influence employee morale.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in the contribution it makes towards organizational effectiveness by making information available on the best appraisal technique(s) to use for objective evaluation of the employees performance. Employees remain the most determinant factor of organizational effectiveness and adopting proper technique enhances employee motivation, job performance, job satisfaction, retention, development, etc.

The findings of this study will add to the stock of literature problems. The findings will equally benefit those organizations, institutions, ministries agencies and parastatals who have not approached the need for appraising their staff or who do not get know how to go about it. The findings will complement the efforts of human resource managers, who have been charged with the responsibility of evaluating employee performance from time to time.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Many studies have been undertaken in Nigeria and other countries on the relationship between performance appraisal and employees job morale and job performance (Ile, 2002, Idemobi and Oynyeizugbe (2011)). In this chapter, several studies have been reviewed. In the theoretical framework, the conceptual definition of performance appraisal, theory of performance appraisal, methods of performance appraisal, and problems of performance appraisal have been reviewed.

Empirical Review

Odo (2004) conducted a study on annual performance evaluation report in Nigeria with the aim to determining why there is decadence and low morale in the civil service. The study used mainly pilot survey and descriptive literature. Findings show that there is positive relationship between performance appraisal and employee work morale. The author observed that low morale among civil servants was as a result of poor administration and implementation of performance appraisal exercise in the civil service. The study concludes that the evaluation process should be accepted as a cumulative means for the development of the employee, strengthening his weakness as rather stressing them, and used to check if the organization has satisfied the need of the workers. The study recommended that sustainable service could only be achieved when performance evaluation is focused on the job and the individual personality. Also the assessment should not be used only as means of promoting the staff, since other factors to the employee could contribute to low performance.

A study on job satisfaction and work morale among employees with Ph.D's in public and Private University in Peahawar, Pakistan was conducted by Muhammad (2013). The aim of the study was to investigate how job satisfaction and work morale affected the work performance of doctoral degree holders based on performance evaluation results. The study applied regression and correlation analyses to analyze data generated from the questionnaire. Findings showed that there was positive and significant effect of work morale

and job satisfaction and correlation to quit employment as a result of poor evaluation exercise. The study concluded that performance appraisal should serve as a guide to enhancing employee job satisfaction and work morale in order to minimize the intention of quitting the job. The study recommended that organization's commitment would increase with increase job satisfaction and work morale for faculty members with Ph.D's through effective and efficient administration and implementation of the outcomes of performance appraisal.

Bharati et al. (2012) conducted a study, on the effect of employee satisfaction on organizational performance in the Hotel industry in Mumbai. The aim of the study was to determine the relationship between employee job satisfaction and organizational performance after performance evaluation. The study applied analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Chi-square (χ^2). Findings showed that there was a positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational performance after effective performance appraisal. The study concluded that employees increased their performance whenever they were appreciated and evaluated higher which made them feel satisfied in their job. The study recommended that management should ensure that the satisfaction level of the employees in the organization is high for the smooth running of the organization through effective appraisal of employee performance.

Akinyele (2010) conducted a study on performance appraisal systems in private University in Nigeria. The study focused on evaluating the effectiveness of performance appraisal system (self) appraisal in private university with special reference on reference on administrative staff. The study applied Chi-square with statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) to analysis data collected through structure questionnaire. Findings show that generally, performance appraisal system is the only tangible metric way by which organizations can determine the level of performance of its diver's staff. The study concludes that the performance appraisal system (self-appraisal systems) used in private universities and other organizations are not effective as a result of poor implementation; the systems were used as a matter of formalities, and therefore it also very difficult to achieve the intended human resource management objective. The study recommended that there should be a tool used to evaluate employees' performance and decision support system for renewing employee's contract.

Performance management is imperative for Idemobi and Onyeizube (2011) conducted effective performance in Delta State of Nigeria Public Owned Organizations. The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of performance review techniques on employee's performance, and also to determine if there was significant relationship between performance incentives and employee morale. Data obtained through structured questionnaire distributed was analyzed using chi-square (χ^2). Findings showed that employees performance incentives and employees morale. The study however concluded that absence or poor performance appraisal system would lead to high rate of business collapses in Delta state public sector. The study recommended that the public sector in Delta State should establish, adopt and implement incentive systems that would motivate employees to work performance better, after performance review exercise.

Theoretical Review

Performance Appraisal System in the Public Sector

Performance appraisal system could be traced back to late 1980s and early 1990s under the constructive government reforms. It was during these periods that organizations

and managerial reforms was introduced and public sector performance management became firmly established (Powler, 2000). All public sector organizations will be required to scrutinize the performance of the organization and its staff. The public sector was becoming much market oriented and successive constructive governments tried to improve accountability by developing standards and targets. Those reforms triggered the idea that there should be a link between individual's performance and his pay.

In 1993, the local government management board (in Nigeria) published the first guidance to performance management aimed specifically at the public sectors and its clear message was to establish a relationship between performance and also to link performance management to reward strategies. The guidance gave a clear emphasis on the fact the organizational performance is a product of what people achieve and do (Rogers, 1999). Two key elements emerged as the individual perspectives of performance management in the public sector:

- i. There should be quantitative and qualitative standards for judging individual and organization performance.
- ii. Training and development needs should be identified to improve individual performance (Audit commission, 1995).

The guidance indicated that performance appraisal was just as much as about development (forward looking) as reviews of performance (backwards looking). Ezeali and Esiogu (2009) noted how stressful it was at the time for managers to have to introduce new management practices. Whilst continuing to deliver for customers, with little additional resources to facilitate implementation, all systems were stood down with little participation in designing task of individual employee. All the public sector employees are labour intensive and so they need to capitalize on the abilities and performance of staff. Following this, the goals of performance management is to achieve human capital advantage recognizing that the individual staff member is the most important source of capital advantage (Armstrong and Baron, 2005).

Methods of Job Evaluation

Every formal organization adopted any of the following four methods to ensure effective performance appraisal exercise:

1. Ranking method

In this method, the group or committee in charge of the exercise will consider the job descriptions provided and rearrange the job been evaluated in order from highest to the lowest in accordance with each difficulty and importance to the relevant organization (Cole, 2004). This ranking of job in order of difficulty and importance will be easy to do in a formal organization like Radio Bayelsa-under the ministry of information-because the organizational structure already provides the necessary framework for the ranking of jobs within the departments and units since the relative importance of the job is indicated within departments and units (Uche, 2011.).

2. Classification Method

In this method, numbers of classes or grades are defined which describe a group or range of job (Grade Level 1-17). The class or group descriptions of jobs are compared with general job descriptions by the evaluator. Ministry of information-Radio Bayelsa adopts this method to evaluate its employee's job performance. This method of evaluation is acceptable because certain such as employee performance must be considered when evaluating employee job (Eze, 2006).

3. Factor method

Factor method requires that those conducting appraisal should keep the entire job in mind while evaluating (Eze, 2006). They make decisions on separate aspects of factors of the job such as mental requirements, skill, physical requirement, responsibilities and working conditions.

4. Point Method

This method requires that job factors are selected according to the specific group of job being evaluated (Noe, et al., 2002). The factors are weighted in accordance with their relative importance to the organization.

Organizational behaviours are affected by the emotions (feelings) employees experience in response to important events on the job. In essence, affective events theory focuses on how people feel while working. What workplace events cause those feelings and how those feelings influence subsequent job attitudes and behaviors, is the focus of affective events theory. Performance appraisal theory (adopted by affective events theory) suggests that the occurrence of specific events initiates a two part appraisal process by which an individual assesses the meaning of the event for an individual as well as the causes of the events (Eze, 2006). The primary appraisal system assesses the importance of the event for the individual well being while the secondary and more specific appraisal assesses issues such as cause of events and coping potential.

The relationship between affective event theory and this study lies on the fact that organizational events influence employee appraisal, and this is applicable to Radio Bayelsa.

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6. Point Method

This method requires that job factors are selected according to the specific group of job being evaluated (Noe, et al, 2002). The factors are weighted in accordance with their relative importance to the organization.

Idemobi and Oyneizugbe (2011) asserted that performance management is a tool, which focuses on managing the individual and the work environment in such a manner that an individual or team can achieve set organizational goals. It is a systematic process of evaluating performance and providing feedback on which performance adjustments could be made. The goal of performance evaluation is to assess and summarize best performance and develop future work, performance goals and expectations (Akinyele, 2010). Above all, performance appraisal could be defined as the process of reviewing an individual's performance and progress in a job and the assessment of his potentials for further managerial decisions such as promotion, career planning and development; the development of individual's strengths and the overcoming of his weaknesses (Ekwelem, 2009).

Performance rating is a strategy and integrated process that delivers sustained success to organizations by improving the performance of people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of individuals and term (Armstrong, 2000). In other words, performance appraisal is a systematic method of managing people using performance goal measurement, feedback and recognition as a means of motivating them to realize their

maximum potential (Alo, 1999). Organization adopt employee appraisal to increase employees' commitment, job satisfaction and corporate effectiveness.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of performance appraisal is theoretically based on the theory of motivation. There are several motivational theories in the literature; Maslow's Hierarchy of need theory, Herzberg's two factor theory, expectancy theory, goal setting theory, and McClelland's needs achievement theories, the goal setting theory propounded by Robert House fits this study. This is because performance standards are antecedent parameters (benchmarks) in the employee work environment. Goals are set based on performance levels which individuals and organizations have agreed upon as performance standard.

Philosophically, the goal setting theory is based on the assumption that people have conscious goals that energize them and direct them through their behavior towards the end (Buteman and Zeithaml, 1993). People attain positions (whether in profession, politics, athletics or community service) because they are goal oriented. Many organizations have been turned into empire and conglomerates because they are goal oriented. Finally, from researchers in goal setting theory show that a properly conceived goal triggers a motivational process that improves performance (Locke, 1981). A general goal setting model has four components; goals, motivation, improved performance and feedback on performance. Goals motivate by directing employees' attention, encouraging persistence and fostering goal attainment strategies and action plan. For there to be performance measurement, there first must be goal setting.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation system should be regarded and accepted as a cumulative means for the development of the employee, and strengthening his weakness as rather than stressing it. It should be used to check how the organization satisfies the need of the workers. It is a practical comprehensive approach for planning and sustaining improvements in the performance of employees and teams so as to meet standard set in the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The administration of employee performance review should be transparent to clear any ambiguity involved in conducting the evaluation.
2. Assessment of employees of all ranks should be done holistically not only as individuals, as they are collectively responsible for the achievement of the organizational goals.
3. Management should emphasize on the implementation of the outcome of evaluation exercise as it leads to organizational commitment, which increases job satisfaction, and work morale among employees.
4. The evaluation should not only be applied as a way of promoting the employees since there are other factors extraneous to the employee that can contribute to low performance.

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