

LECTURERS' PERCEPTION ON APPRAISAL SYSTEM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

(Persepsi Pensyarah Mengenai Sistem Penilaian di Universiti Awam di Negeri Kwara, Nigeria)

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Abstract

Performance appraisal of lecturers is required in any tertiary institution to determine their performance in relation to the anticipated outputs. In view of this, this paper examined lecturers' perception on appraisal system in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study population was 1,375 lecturers, while the sample was 300. One hypothesis and three research questions were raised, while data were collected from respondents with the use of questionnaire. Percentage and t-test were used to analyze the data. It was revealed among other things that principle of fairness was upheld in carrying out academic promotion and the tripartite mandate of the university was adequately given consideration in carrying out academic staff promotion; financial benefit was promptly attached to lecturers' promotion carried out in public universities in Kwara State. Sequel to the findings of the study, it was concluded that administration of public universities should sustain the level and possibly improve in the conduct of academic promotion, the principle of fairness; tripartite mandate and prompt accompany of financial benefits with lecturers' promotion.

Keywords: Perception, Performance, Appraisal, Promotion, Tripartite Mandate.

Abstrak

Penilaian prestasi pensyarah diperlukan di mana-mana institusi pengajian tinggi untuk menentukan prestasi mereka berhubung dengan hasil yang dijangkakan. Makalah ini mengkaji persepsi pensyarah mengenai sistem penilaian di universiti awam di Negeri Kwara, Nigeria. Populasi kajian melibatkan 1,375 pensyarah, sementara sampel kajian adalah 300 orang. Satu hipotesis dan tiga soalan kajian telah dibangkitkan, sementara data dikumpulkan dari responden dengan menggunakan soal selidik. Peratusan dan ujian-t digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa prinsip keadilan telah ditegakkan dalam menjalankan kenaikan pangkat akademik dan mandat tripartite universiti telah diberi pertimbangan sewajarnya dalam menjalankan kenaikan pangkat kakitangan akademik; manfaat kewangan berkait rapat kepada kenaikan pangkat pensyarah yang dilaksanakan di universiti awam di Negeri Kwara. Lanjutan daripada penemuan kajian ini, dapat disimpulkan bahawa pentadbiran universiti awam harus mengekalkan tahap sedia ada dan ini mungkin akan menambah baik kenaikan pangkat akademik, prinsip keadilan; mandat tripartite dan sekaligus memanfaatkan faedah kewangan dengan kenaikan pangkat pensyarah.

Kata kunci: Persepsi, Prestasi, Penilaian, Kenaikan Pangkat, Mandat Tripartite

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The significance of personnel in any establishment cannot be underrated, for they determine the outputs. Hence, employees need to be given adequate attention to facilitate attainment of organizational goals. Managing personnel requires proper appraisal of their performance, to determine the contribution of each of personnel to the attainment of organizational goals. As a result of this, appraising lecturers' performance in universities is very essential.

Performance Appraisal (PA) is an integral element of personnel administration. It is a means of assessing employees' level of inputs in any establishment. In tertiary institutions, PA needs to be periodically carried out on lecturers. The performance of lecturers is appraised through teaching, research and publications and community service. Fairness is necessary in carrying out appraisal. It is a crucial part of personnel administration in an organization because it completely links with personnel satisfaction and improved commitment. According to Lawal and Sulyman (2018), PA has to do with evaluating performance of lecturers to determine its relevance to the actualization of the institutional goals. In universities in Nigeria, PA is always carried out with the aim of comparing the lecturers' inputs with the set standards in order to determine the deserved reward.

Fisher, Schoenfeldt, and Shaw (2003) explained that PA is a subset personnel administration which is required for deriving workers' productivity. Grote (2000) stated that PA assists in piloting and encouraging employees to improve their contributions towards the organization; and it is therefore, an important tool for an institution to achieve its stated goals. Lawal and Sulyman, (2018) observed that the success of an establishment has a link with assessment of how good its workers discharge their duties as expected in relation to the set standards. PA is a way of managing performance through which a worker's inputs to the establishment is evaluated within a specified time. According to Werner, Schuler and Jackson (2004), the basic aim of PA is to enhance effective services delivery of an individual worker, and subsequently result in increasing productivity of an institution as a whole. Performance appraisal is one of the varieties of instruments which can be employed in managing workers' inputs properly, in that it helps to generate information for other aspects of the process of performance management. As opined by Mullins (2012), a performance appraisal system is considered as the connectivity between increment in pay and other rewards accrued to the workers and their inputs to the institution. If utilized properly, performance appraisal can increase commitment to the discharge of duties, but if otherwise, it could have negative impacts (Lawal & Sulyman, 2018). For PA to achieve its aim, it is probably necessary to be measured against the set standards, as a way of determining effective or ineffective job performance. Performance criteria highlight certain components of a job and assist in developing the ways of determining the degree of effectiveness or otherwise of an employee's performance on the job. Therefore, It can concluded that an appraisal system not anchored on these essential determinants, can neither be proper nor fair, particularly to the worker whose inputs are being assessed. Basically, some of the fundamental positions in the submissions of those who are against performance appraisal are that, sometime, wrong things are scored high and inappropriate methods are utilized (Mathis & Jackson, 2008; Demin, 1995). Gilliland and Langdon (1998) emphasized that performance appraisal is a sensitive and all-encompassing activity which at times not properly carried out in some establishments. The aftermath of this is that it brings about just the contrary results to what is expected (McKerney, 1995; Coleman, 2000).

Peleju and Ojebiyi, (2013) maintained that the major significance of PA is to assist employers to closely monitor their employees to make them increase better on their duties. If properly carried out, performance appraisal could bring about to

increased employees' commitment towards better job performance. Okoye, Nbagwu, Abanum and Nwaohir (2019) believed that performance appraisal is used in educational institutions to decide on compensation and also enable to design future plan for both employees and the institutions. Performance appraisal is an activity that is probably expected to serve various purposes and every personnel manager needs to be precisely acquainted with the purposes which performance appraisal is expected to actualize within the organization. According to Mollel, Molongo and Razia (2017), performance appraisal has been universally acknowledged to be instrumental to assisting educational institutions in enhancing workers' productivity and consequently organizational goals. Ellen and Amani (2018) stated that the ultimate desire of every worker is to reach the pinnacle of his career and without passing through periodic performance appraisal, this would not be achieved. For an organization to achieve high level of motivation on the part of the employees through performance appraisal, the principle of fairness needs to be well embedded in the process. Wilson (2012) opined that performance appraisal is a logical means towards assessing employees' job performance in order to determine the areas where their knowledge and capabilities need to be improved to facilitate realization of institutional goals.

Promotion, increased monetary rewards as well as enhanced professional status are regarded as the expected outcome of performance appraisal which should be handled with utmost priority in an organization (Tessema & Soeters, 2006; Shahzadd, Basir & Ramay 2008). The results of performance appraisal are likely to have significant influence on workers' job performance. The tripartite mandate of any university in Nigeria which consequently describes the universities' academics are knowledge imparting, conduct of research and involvement in community service (B-HEART, 2010; Shayelfu, 1999). Considering the incessant global increase in knowledge and wide access to information, university lecturers have to be up and doing in knowledge organization and acquisition. Furthermore, they are expected to carry out researches and make their findings known through publications. In addition, community service is also one of the ways through which lecturers' performance is assessed. These enormous responsibilities make university lecturers' job a highly tasking one, which requires performance appraisal system which would facilitate effective services delivery (Aslam, 2011). It should be noted that an appropriate PA is one which properly observes all the elements of job performance of a worker, rather than being selective.

In public universities in Nigeria, the practice is that assessment of lecturers is basically hinged on accomplishments in research, as evident in the number of publications made available within a specified period of time, while community services and teaching are not given a thorough attention. No matter the ground breaking achievements accorded to a lecturer in community service and teaching, without effective performance in research and publications, it scores him or her less in appraisal outcome.

However, in spite of the fact that research and publications assist in boosting, sharpening, enriching and widening the lecturers' knowledge horizon, which consequently transmits to the learners. The current situation in Nigerian public universities seems not suitable for carrying out cut edge researches. Enabling environment which would enhance academic researches such as up-to-date textbooks and other printed materials, well-equipped laboratories and libraries, access to internet facilities, grants for research and the likes are in an acute shortage, making research a herculean task and expensive exercise for the university lecturers to embark on. However, Shahzadd, et al. (2008); Anjum, Yasmeen and Khan (2011); Akinyele (2010), Ahmad, (2001), Rasheed, Aslam, Yousaf and Noor (2011) and Aslam (2011) had carried out a number of related studies to the appraisal system in

universities within and outside Nigeria, but none of these previous studies focused on the topic of this present study. This was the gap which this study filled. The study, specifically:

2.0 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- a) Investigated the extent of adherence to the principle of fairness in the conduct of academic staff's promotion in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria;
- b) ascertained the attention given to the tripartite mandate in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria while conducting academic staff's promotion;
- c) investigated prompt accompany of financial benefits with the lecturers' promotion in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria; and
- d) examined the difference between the perceptions of male and female lecturers on the conduct of performance appraisal in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

3.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The following research questions were raised:

- a) Is there principle of fairness in the conduct of academic staff's promotion in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria?
- b) Is tripartite mandate given adequate attention in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria while conducting academic staff's promotion?
- c) Is lecturers' promotion promptly accompanied with financial benefits in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria?

The study also hypothesized the following:

- a) Male and female lecturers' perceptions on the conduct of PA in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria have significant difference.

4.0 RESEARCH METHOD

The study used descriptive survey design. The choice of the topic of this research was borne out of desire to address the issue of public outcry that usually trails the conduct of academic staff promotion in these universities in Kwara state. Hence, the findings of the study will be applicable to universities in Kwara state, Nigeria. Staff often complain of lack of fairness and adherence to the tripartite mandate of universities. One thousand, three hundred and seventy-five academic staff in the two public universities (Kwara State University, Malete; and University of Ilorin, Ilorin) in Kwara State, Nigeria constituted the study population while the sample consisted of 300 lecturers drawn from the two universities, using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. A self-developed instrument titled "Lecturers' Perception on Appraisal System in Nigerian Universities Questionnaire" was utilized to gather data from selected lecturers. The questionnaire was found appropriate because the study was a descriptive type that requires obtaining data from respondents and as such the questionnaire was developed in such a way that it contained items of the same issue under subheading that will help to get the appropriate response. The questionnaire had three sections (fairness, tripartite mandate and financial benefits) with four items each. Response options of Agree (A) and Disagree (D) were used for scoring.

Four lecturers in the fields of Educational Management and Test and Measurement, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria validated the instrument. Corrections were effected in line with the observations of the lecturers who carried out the validation. Cronbach's Alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and found reliability coefficient of 0.76. Out of the entire copies of the distributed questionnaire, only 269 were returned and used for data analysis. Percentage and Mean were used to answer all the three research questions while t-test was used to test the only hypothesis formulated at 0.05 level of significance. The benchmark (mean scores) of 1.00-2.50 was considered to mean lack of fairness in promotion exercise, inadequate attention to the tripartite mandate and lack of prompt financial benefits to the lecturers' promotion in Nigerian universities; while 2.51 and above was adjudged to mean fairness in the promotion exercise, adequate attention to the tripartite mandate and prompt attachment of financial benefits to the lecturers' promotion.

5.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Research Question 1: Is there principle of fairness in the conduct of academic staff's promotion in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria?

Table 1 Principle of Fairness in the Conduct of Academic Staff's Promotion in Public Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria

S/N	Statement	A	D	X
	Promotion exercise is usually carried out for lecturers in my university:			
1.	with level playing ground	235 (87.4%)	34 (12.6%)	3.74
2.	with openness and transparency	238 (88.5%)	31 (11.5%)	3.76
3.	without nepotism or favoritism	231 (85.9%)	38 (14.1%)	3.71
4.	without sentiment	233 (86.6%)	36 (13.4%)	3.73
	Grand Mean			3.74

Source: Fieldwork 2019

As shown in Table 1, 87.4% of the respondents agreed that level playing ground is always ensured in the conduct of promotion exercise in their universities while 12.6% disagreed. Also, 88.5% agreed that transparency and openness are always upheld in the promotion exercise in their universities while 11.5% disagreed. In addition, 85.9% agreed that promotion exercise in their universities is usually done without nepotism or favoritism while 14.1% disagreed. More so, 86.6% of the respondents opined that promotion exercise in their universities is usually done without sentiment while 13.4% disagreed. However, the overall mean score of 3.74 which is above 2.50 signified that there was adequacy of principle of fairness in the conduct of academic staff's promotion in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

5.2 Research Question 2: Is adequate attention given to the tripartite mandate in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria while conducting academic staff's promotion?

Table 2 Adequacy of Attention Given to the Tripartite Mandate in Public Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria while Conducting Academic Staff's Promotion

S/N	Statement	A	D	X
	In the scoring of candidate for promotion in my university:			
1.	attention is given to teaching as one of the universities' tripartite mandate	235 (87.4%)	34 (12.6%)	3.74
2.	research is accorded attention	239 (88.8%)	30 (11.2%)	3.77

3.	community service is not being considered	225 (83.6%)	44 (16.4%)	3.67
4.	the tripartite mandate is given equal weight	37 (13.5%)	232 (86.5%)	3.72
Grand Mean				3.72

Source: Fieldwork 2019

From Table 2, 85.9% of the respondents agreed that attention is given to teaching as one of the universities' tripartite mandate while 14.1% disagreed. Also, 88.8% of the respondents agreed that research is accorded attention while 11.2% disagreed. In addition, 83.6% of the respondents agreed that community service is not being considered while 16.4% disagreed. More so, 13.5% of the respondents agreed that the tripartite mandate is given equal weight while 86.5% disagreed. Therefore, with the overall mean score of 3.72 which is above the benchmark of 2.50, it clearly revealed that in the conduct of promotion of academic staff, the tripartite mandate of the University was given adequate attention.

5.3 Research Question 3: Is lecturers' promotion promptly accompanied with financial benefit in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria?

Table 3 Prompt Accompany of Financial benefits with Lecturers' Promotion in Public Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria

S/N	Statement In my university:	A	D	X
1.	lecturers' promotion is usually accompanied with financial benefits	225 (83.6%)	44 (16.4%)	3.73
2.	Commensurable financial benefits always accompany lecturers' promotion	243 (90.3%)	26 (9.7%)	3.67
3.	There is usual delay in financial benefit to lecturers' promotion	237 (88.1%)	32 (11.9%)	3.80
4.	Promotion does not usually attract financial benefits	23 (8.6%)	246 (91.4%)	3.76
Grand Mean				3.74

Source: Fieldwork 2019

Table 3 shows 83.6% of the respondents agreed that in their universities, financial benefits are usually attached to lecturers' promotion while 16.4% disagreed. Also, 90.3% agreed that in their universities, commensurable financial benefits always accompany lecturers' promotion while 9.7% disagreed. More so, 88.1% agreed that there is usual delay in the attachment of financial benefits to lecturers' promotion while 11.9% disagreed. In addition, 8.6% agreed that promotion does not usually attract financial benefits while 9.4% disagreed. However, with the overall mean score of 3.74 which is above the benchmark of 2.50, it depicted that financial benefits are promptly attached to lecturers' promotion.

5.4 H₀₁: Male and female lecturers' perceptions on the conduct of PA in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria have significant difference.

Table 4 Results of T-test Comparing Male and Female Lecturers' Perception on performance Appraisal in Public Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria

Gender	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	Sig (2-tail)	Decision
Male	179	1.92	0.26				
				267	3.328	0.000	H ₀₁
Female	90	1.90	0.28				

Table 4 shows a calculated t-value (3.328) while the p-value (0.000) is less than the significant level (0.05). Hence, hypothesis one (H₀₁) is rejected. This implies that

there was no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female lecturer's on the conduct of performance appraisal in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

6.0 DISCUSSION

The finding revealed that the principle of fairness in the conduct of academic staff's promotion in public universities, Nigeria was adequate. This means that the universities give equal treatment in carrying out promotion exercise for academic staff. No preferential treatment is given to any lecturer; but openness, transparency and objectivity are the watchword adhered to during the exercise. It is therefore evident from the findings of the study that Lecturers productivities in these universities would certainly be enhanced since it is a known fact that promotion is one of many factors that motivate workers in any organization and once this is conducted with fairness without favourism, there is tendency that lecturers will be motivated.

The finding revealed that in the conduct of academic staff promotion in public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria, adequate attention was given to the three tripartite mandate of the University. This denotes that, the universities usually emphasize on the tripartite mandate while carrying out academic staff's promotion. Notwithstanding, research and publications is given higher consideration among the three.

In Nigerian universities, every promotion conducted for lecturers is promptly accompanied with financial benefits as revealed by the finding of the research question three. This implies that every lecturer is usually compensated with prompt financial benefits the moment he or she is promoted. This has always been source of motivation to lecturers in the universities in Kwara state, Nigeria.

The perceptions of lecturers (both male and female) in public universities in Kwara State on performance appraisal were not significantly different as revealed by the finding of hypothesis. This connotes that lecturers held almost the same view in respect of the way in which promotion exercise is being conducted in Nigerian universities.

7.0 CONCLUSION

In view of the outcome of the study, it was concluded that public universities' administration should sustain the level of fairness in the conduct of academic promotion; universities' administration should maintain that adequate attention is given to the tripartite mandate in the conduct of academic's staff promotion and they should strictly ensure balanced attention to the tripartite mandate; and prompt financial benefits accorded to the lecturers' promotion in Nigerian universities should be sustained.

This study used public universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. Further studies could be carried out by other researchers using private universities in the state or public universities in other parts of Nigeria as locale of their studies.

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