

Performance appraisal and employee service delivery in Anambra state civil service (2007-2020)

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate performance appraisal and employee service delivery in Anambra State Civil Service (2007-2020). Specifically, this study examined the effect appraisal non acceptability, reward, time management and, quality of work on delivery. A survey research design was employed while secondary data were collected through the use of questionnaire. The population of this study comprised of 1139 civil servants in 13 selected public offices in Awka South, Anambra state. From the thirteen (13) public government ministries identified in the area, eight (8) were selected for the study, and twenty (20) respondents were selected randomly from each of the ministries making a total of one hundred (160) respondents (cross-sectional). The researcher used t-test in analyzing the data collected. The findings reveal that civil servants have positive attitude towards appraisal as a process of service delivery, it also shows that reward resulting from appraisal affects civil servants service delivery in the study area. It was recommended that Government should endeavor to provide adequate payments of promotion arrears to civil servants to boost their morale for effective service delivery. There is also a need to expose civil servants to conferences and seminars to acquire modern techniques of effective service delivery.

Keywords:

Assessment, Employee, Delivery, Performance, Services.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Employee productivity, whether at local, state, or federal levels is dependent on effective institutions. Such institutions must be deliberately reinvigorated for efficiency and underscored by the management of human resources. Assessing workers' performance is beneficial as it enables an organisation to assign their labour force according to their suitability for tasks, thereby advancing productivity (Berman, 2015). Performance appraisal describes techniques and procedures adopted by organisations to improve operational schemes and structures. The processes and resultant effects are useful for both managerial and developmental purposes. In the Nigerian Public Sector, performance appraisal is a routine task in which worker's job-related behaviours are assessed with the expectation that such exercise will reveal employees' present service delivery on the job and how much performance can be improved upon in the future. However, according to the National Productivity Centre (2018), productivity measured by outputs concerning capital and labour inputs is not as it should be in the Nigerian public sector and this constitutes a major challenge in the Nigerian public sector. Despite the hype on Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER) in the Nigerian Public Service, a seemingly huge gap exists between theory and practice making the enforcement and efficacy of the system contestable. Scholars argue that it is a mere ritual because it does not reflect the essence of conducting it, let alone engender productivity (Tukur, 2013). This accounts for the various civil/public service reforms from the 1934 Hunt Commission to the 2012 Oronsaye Public Service Panel (Ibietan, 2019), which has not impacted public sector productivity maximally in Nigeria. Appraisal outcomes tend to motivate or identify future training needs. Additionally, the feedback mechanism constitutes a very crucial area of human resource management (HRM) substructures in several third-world nations (Lambert, 2009). Despite these, public sector productivity is still low, and this necessitates the investigation on the relationship between performance appraisal and public sector productivity and an examination of the obstacles to implementing performance appraisal in the public sector. The subject of this work, therefore, is to determine the inherent deficiencies in the performance appraisal system of civil servants as highlighted by Iorfa (2014) which includes poor knowledge of the roles of performance appraisal as a tool of management by many Nigerian workers and supervisors, the strong cultural values which confers respect to elders and makes the younger appraiser practically incapable of appraising the latter's

performance, poor objectivity by supervising officers and poor feedback to employees.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The performance appraisal system is a vital tool for enhancing service delivery in organizations because it promotes effective communication, recognizes high-performing employees, facilitates staff retention, enables fair promotions, and aids in decision-making about underperformers. However, despite its numerous benefits, the system's effectiveness, credibility, and impartiality can be challenged when employees do not accept it. This non-acceptance by employees can undermine the efficacy of the system, making it difficult to achieve its intended goals of improving service delivery. For instance, if employees perceive the appraisal process as unfair or biased, it can lead to decreased motivation, poor morale, and ultimately, lower service delivery. Therefore, it is crucial to address any concerns or issues related to the performance appraisal system to ensure that employees perceive it as a fair and effective tool for enhancing service delivery. Despite the numerous studies conducted on performance evaluation systems, very few have explored the impact of the appraisal process on employees' service delivery. While several studies have examined the overall effectiveness of performance evaluation systems (Adler, Campion, Colquitt, Grubb, Murphy, Ollander-Krane, & Pulakos, 2016; Mihai, Bajan, & Cretu, 2017; Pulakos, Hanson, Arad, & Moye, 2015), they may not necessarily provide a comprehensive understanding of how the appraisal process affects employee service delivery. Therefore, there is a need for more in-depth research that examines the impact of the performance appraisal system on employee service delivery. Sharma, Sharma, & Agarwal (2016) highlight this gap and call for studies that explore the impact of employees' performance appraisal and how it affects employee service delivery. Such research can provide valuable insights into the factors that contribute to the success or failure of performance appraisal systems in enhancing service delivery. By understanding these factors, organizations can develop more effective performance appraisal systems that motivate employees to improve their service delivery.

Employees' reaction to the evaluation system is a significant factor that informs of the system's acceptability. Despite the system redesign and benefits attained for the employee and organization, the non-acceptance by employees has inferred the invalidity and uselessness of the system (Harrington & Lee, 2015). The nonacceptance of the appraisal system has continuously challenged organizations due to the ineffective

administration of the system and doubts about its efficacy, credibility, and impartiality (Kim & Holzer, 2016). The unacceptability of the appraisal system by employees has made it difficult for the appraisal system to fulfil its purpose. Organizations have continued to be plagued by this problem, although new methods sought after addressed performance measures, evaluation, and rewards (Trosten-Bloom, Deies, Carsten, 2014). According to Iqbal, Akbar, and Budhwar, 2015; Sharma and Sharma, 2017, employees perceived the performance appraisal system as ineffective. The specific management problem indicated a lack of knowledge on the employees' perspectives of the appraisal system (Harrington & Lee, 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Sharma, Sharma, & Agarwal, 2016). This is mostly applicable in government organization such as Anambra State Civil Service. Thus, this study will investigate the practice of performance appraisal and employee service delivery to ascertain the key performance appraisal variables that will determine employee productivity in Anambra State Civil Service.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is as follows:

- To determine the impact of performance appraisal non acceptability on employee service delivery in Anambra State civil service.
- To ascertain how rewards affects employee's service delivery in Anambra State civil service.

2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

One of the arduous tasks among many to perform but a notable feature of any human resource management, which is vital to the individual and organisational progress is performance appraisal (Obisi, 2011). An appraisal is the process of measuring the output of an employee and also his/her qualifications that should be within the requirements upon which employment was given. It can be conducted periodically to review the efficiency and quality of work done by an employee. The human resource management team is often in charge of conducting performance appraisal and setting up an effective management system. Thus, the HRM unit is the domain of performance appraisal in any organisation (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2017). These further stresses that without a reliable performance appraisal system, the organisation can collapse. The principal goal of any performance evaluation is to ensure that workers get constructive criticism on ways through which their future accomplishments can be made better, thus enhancing productivity and competency levels in an organisation (Lambert, McCarthy, O'Donnell, and Wang, 2009; Abasilim, 2014). Performance appraisal in Nigeria's public sector from 1950 - 1974 was subjective (emphases on personal traits like loyalty, drive, foresight, honesty, courage, industry and penetration) rather than being objective (effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and speed of operations), and these underscored the Udoji Public Service Commission report in 1974.

However, the Civil Service Reform of 1988 and the Ayida Review Panel of 1994 brought about target placement and performance appraisal structure in Nigeria's public sector. Performance appraisal was contingent upon "objective assessment, subject to measurable job performance and demonstration of professional competence with effective rewards and sanctions" (Ekpe, and Ekpe, 2013:50). Nigeria's public sector uses the Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER), which is in recognition of the potential of performance assessment to identify ways to improve employee's performance, thus enhancing the productivity of the public service. According to Obisi (2011), three main types of performance appraisal exist, namely: semi-secret/semi-open, open and secret or confidential evaluative styles. The secret appraisal occurs where workers do not take part in the appraisal procedure, and the outcomes of such a report are unknown to the employee.

In other words, employees are unaware of their shortcomings and strengths. The appraiser who conducts the performance appraisal ignores periodic counselling after the process has been concluded. The open appraisal type is used in Nigeria's public sector. The semi-open or semi-secret appraisal is neither completely open nor completely secret. The process is made known to the employee at the beginning but becomes secret later. In open appraisal, the contributions and failures are made known to the employee, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. As DeCenzo and Robbins (2002) state, the open appraisal encourages self-awareness as a result of the communicated outcomes to the employee, which makes such employee reflective and objective about their tasks and operations. The employee is also aware of situations they have performed

better and the value they bring to the organisation, which serves as motivation.

2.1 Employee Service Delivery

Employee service delivery is a critical aspect of organizational success, and it has been a topic of interest for scholars and researchers. Scholars who agree on the importance of employee service delivery argue that it is essential for organizations to prioritize service delivery as it has been shown to have a direct impact on organizational performance and customer satisfaction (Akintayo, 2019; Iqbal, Anwar, & Haider, 2020; Mahmood & Basharat, 2017). These scholars believe that employees are the driving force behind service delivery, and organizations need to provide them with the necessary resources and support to enhance their service delivery capabilities. For instance, Iqbal et al. (2020) suggest that organizations can improve employee service delivery by ensuring that employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their jobs effectively. They also recommend that organizations should create a supportive work environment that encourages employees to provide high-quality service to customers. Furthermore, Akintayo (2019) argues that organizations need to provide employees with adequate training and development opportunities to enhance their service delivery capabilities.

On the other hand, scholars who disagree on the importance of employee service delivery argue that it is not the only factor that contributes to organizational success. For instance, some scholars suggest that factors such as product quality, price, and marketing strategies are equally important (Ahn & Lee, 2017; Füller, Schroll, & von Hippel, 2013). These scholars argue that while service delivery is essential, it may not necessarily be the most critical factor in determining organizational success. For instance, Füller et al. (2013) suggest that product quality is the most important factor in determining customer satisfaction and loyalty, while Ahn and Lee (2017) argue that marketing strategies play a crucial role in attracting and retaining customers. However, it is important to note that while these scholars may not prioritize service delivery as the most critical factor in organizational success, they do acknowledge its importance. In conclusion, while scholars may have different opinions on the importance of employee service delivery, it is widely accepted that it is a critical factor in organizational success. Organizations that prioritize employee service delivery and provide employees with the necessary resources and support to enhance their service delivery capabilities are likely to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty, leading to increased organizational performance.

2.2 Performance Appraisal and Public Service Performance in Nigeria

The paper examines the Nigerian public service, otherwise referred to as the civil service. Section 277 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria defines the Civil Service as the "Service of the Federation in a civil capacity, as staff of the office of the President, the Vice President, a ministry or department of the Government of the Federation assigned with the responsibility for any business of the Government of the Federation" (FRN, 1999). The Nigerian civil service comprises all Nigerian government employees excluding the military. Employees are mainly careered civil servants, progressing through the ranks based on qualifications and seniority. The Nigerian civil service has five basic functions, namely;

- Policy implementation; ii) Provision of inputs for policy formulation; iii) Investigative and regulatory functions; iv) Ensuring continuity of public administration; and v) Informative function (Office of Head of Service of the Federation, 2009).

The civil service was set up as a machinery of government responsible for the initiation and implementation of public policy. The successes and failure of the public sector is a function of the public service. Performance appraisal in the public sector is a system of setting employees individual targets, monitoring those targets, measuring the results through evaluation and either correcting or rewarding the employee's performance. In other words, an appraisal is the evaluation of employee's work (Obisi, 2011). In appraising workers performance, the Nigerian public service sector currently uses the Annual Performance Evaluation System (APER). This is based on the overall evaluation of employee's contribution to the organization on yearly basis. The yearly APER is divided into five sections.

Part 1 contains an employee's personal record and leaves records;

Part 2 contains tasks and targets set, job description, key achievements, training/course attended in the year under review and job performance; in this part, the employee fills his tasks and targets based on

his job description for the year to measure whether he has performed to expectation.

Part 3 evaluates character traits, assessment of performance by superior, work ethics, leadership qualities, training needs and teamwork;

Part 4 specifies next year's tasks and targets, comments by the employee on the assessment, declaration/signature by the employee and the reporting officer;

Part 5 is the countersigning officer's report, who is normally the immediate superior of the reporting officer. The countersigning officer makes the process more transparent and creates room for feedback mechanism and monitoring which can control supervisors and reviewers from being subjective to some extent.

In addition, The APER form is well structured and comprehensive. It captures all the relevant aspects of what is to be measured in the appraisal process in terms of job descriptions and character traits; hence it is more of a developmental approach format. The form makes it possible for employees to specify their future training needs which will further boost their careers and make them more efficient thereby also reduce the tasked placed on the human resource department of determining the kind of training an employee needs. Declaration section is also a sign of objectivity because an employee can express his/her opinion about the appraisal process and one is not liable to sign the form if he/she feels the process is subjective.

2.3 Components of Employee Service Delivery

Employee service delivery refers to the ability of an employee to provide satisfactory services to their clients or customers. It is a crucial aspect of organizational performance that contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Several components are involved in employee service delivery, and they include knowledge, skills, attitude, time management, quality of work, and communication. Knowledge is an essential component of employee service delivery as it enables employees to provide accurate information to clients. Employees must possess relevant knowledge about the organization, products, and services to effectively serve clients. According to Hameed and Amjad (2011), knowledge is a key determinant of service quality, which is crucial in ensuring customer satisfaction. Therefore, organizations must invest in training and development programs to enhance employee knowledge and ensure they are equipped to provide satisfactory services. Skills are also critical components of employee service delivery. It refers to the ability of an employee to perform tasks and duties required in their job function. According to Sari, Kusumawati, and Abdurrahman (2019), employees' skills significantly influence their ability to provide quality services to clients. Therefore, organizations must hire employees with the necessary skills and provide regular training to enhance their skills and improve their service delivery.

Attitude is another component of employee service delivery that is often overlooked but is equally crucial. It refers to an employee's disposition towards their work, colleagues, and clients. Positive attitudes among employees can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. According to Harris and Ogbonna (2006), employees' attitudes have a direct impact on service quality and customer satisfaction. Therefore, organizations must cultivate a positive work culture that encourages employees to have a positive attitude towards their work and clients. Time management is another important component of employee service delivery. It involves the ability of an employee to manage their time effectively to ensure timely delivery of services. According to Lee, Park, and Lee (2016), time management skills are essential for ensuring efficient service delivery. Therefore, organizations must provide employees with tools and resources to manage their time effectively and ensure they deliver services within the stipulated time. Quality of work is another crucial component of employee service delivery. It refers to the degree to which an employee's work meets the required standards. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985), service quality is a function of the perceived quality of work by the client. Therefore, organizations must provide employees with the necessary resources to ensure they deliver quality services that meet clients' needs and expectations. Communication is another critical component of employee service delivery. It involves the ability of an employee to convey information effectively to clients. According to Odeh and Mazahreh (2013), effective communication is a key determinant of service quality, which significantly influences customer satisfaction. Therefore, organizations must provide employees with the necessary communication skills and tools to effectively communicate with clients.

While scholars agree on the importance of the components of employee service delivery, there is a divergence of opinions on which component is the most crucial. Some scholars argue that knowledge is the most critical component of employee service delivery. According to Hameed and Amjad (2011), knowledge is a key determinant of service quality, and employees must possess relevant knowledge to provide satisfactory services. Therefore, organizations must invest in training and development programs to enhance employee knowledge and ensure they are equipped to provide satisfactory services. Other scholars argue that skills are the most crucial component of employee service delivery. According to Sari, Kusumawati, and Abdurrahman (2019), employees' skills significantly influence their ability to provide quality services to clients. Therefore, organizations must hire employees with the necessary skills and provide regular training to enhance their skills and improve their service delivery.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Goal theory propounded by Locke & Latham (2002) was adopted for this study. The theory proposes that human beings are more motivated to act when there is a reward at the end of the performance of a task or behaviour. Motivation theories and need theories are all theories brought forward in view of understanding what underlying goals determine which kind of behaviour. The goal theory proposes that a reward at the end of a task or behaviour acts as a motivation for the performance of that said task or behaviour. However, the reward should be clearly stated. The end state can be the reward in itself. It is proposed that an efficient goal must have three components: proximity, difficulty, specificity and feedback. An ideal goal is a goal where the time between the reaching out and the end state is close. It is moderate in difficulty, neither too easy, to present some challenge, nor too difficult, so that success seem possible. The goal should be specific. The individual must understand what is expected out of him, to start out for the goal. A specific goal gives direction of focus to that specific goal and away from distractions. Feedback is necessary for measuring progress towards the goal. Feedback makes it possible to know whether the level of efforts is adequate and in the proper direction or needs corrections. Researchers have defined a goal as "an objective, a purpose or an aim" of an action that highlighted desired outcomes from performance (Locke & Latham, 2002; van der Hoek et al., 2016; Yousueng, 2018). Goal-setting has become an essential and widely tested motivational tool in the world of business (Miller & Weiss, 2015; van der Hoek, Groeneveld, & Kuipers, 2016). GST illustrates how the directive, energizing, persistent, and discovery functions of goals influence the performance of individuals (Locke & Latham, 2002). As a directive function, targets steer attention and efforts toward goal related tasks; as an energizing function, superior efforts demonstrate higher achievement than for purposes that require lesser efforts. As a persistent function, employees manage the time spent on the task. Hence, goals with strict timelines need fast performance. Finally, as a discovery function, goals are actioned indirectly through motivation. In this regard, goals influence performance, and the relationship between goals and performance is robust through motivation and commitment. GST references the purposeful action of an individual who is motivated to perform through the consciousness of regulated goals (Yousueng, 2018). By this, the theory signifies that an individual's performance is directly related to the goals set, an action supported by Locke and Latham (1990). Consequently, the purposeful ideas of individuals were within their control and allowed for goal selection and actions based on targets set for accomplishment.

3. METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted a survey research design for this study. According to Ogbu and Enete (2006), survey research is that research that involves large and small populations where samples are selected and studied to discover, for instance, such variables as relative incidence (extent), characteristics, distributions, and interrelations of the population. This study sought to investigate performance appraisal and employee performance in Anambra State Civil Service (2007-2020). The population of this study comprised of 1139 civil servants in 13 selected public offices in Anambra State Civil Service, Awka. Multi stage sampling technique was adopted in this study. From the thirteen (13) public government ministries identified in the area, eight (8) were selected for the study, and twenty (20) respondents were selected randomly from each of the ministries making a total of one hundred and sixty (160) respondents (cross-sectional). The instrument used for the data collection was a structured questionnaire constructed by the researcher. In this questionnaire, the respondents were instructed to choose the option they

agree with in the list of options. The data collected by the researcher were presented in figures and in a tabular form for clarity and easy understanding. The researcher analyzed the data using the mean score. In doing this, nominal values were assigned to the different scaling items.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Mean responses of the Respondents on appraisal non acceptability on employee service delivery in the Anambra State civil service.

S/ N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	REMARK
1.	Have you ever received a performance appraisal that you felt was unfair or inaccurate?	3.34	Accepted
2.	How did the non-acceptability of your performance appraisal impact your motivation to perform your job duties?	2.99	Accepted
3.	Did the non-acceptability of your performance appraisal affect your willingness to collaborate with colleagues and superiors?	2.46	Rejected
4.	Does the non-acceptability of performance appraisals impact employee retention rates in the Anambra State civil service?	2.16	Rejected
5.	Would you recommend to the performance appraisal process in order to improve its acceptability among employees in the Anambra State civil service?	2.85	Accepted

Average mean score = 2.76

According to the above table 1, the respondents agreed with questions on item 1, 2, and 5 with the mean scores of 3.34, 2.99, and 2.85 which is above the criterion mean of 2.5. While they disagreed with questions in item 3 and 4 with mean score of 2.46 and 2.168 respectively because they are below the criterion mean of 2.5. Therefore, the total differential mean scores for items 1 to 5 above is 2.76 which is above 2.5 indicates high level non acceptability regarding appraisal with regards to employee service delivery in the Anambra State civil service.

Research Question 2:

How do rewards influence the service delivery of employees in the Anambra State civil service?

Table 2: Mean responses of the respondents on extent rewards affect employee's service delivery.

S/ N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	REMARK
6.	Do you believe that rewards (e.g. bonuses, promotions, recognition) motivate you to provide better service to customers?	3.18	Accepted
7.	Have you noticed an improvement in your service delivery since receiving a reward for your performance?	3.24	Accepted
8.	Do rewards influence your job satisfaction and willingness to go above and beyond for customers?	3.33	Accepted
9.	I frequently receive rewards for providing exceptional service to customers?	3.11	Accepted
10.	I have been motivated to work harder or improve you: service delivery based on the rewards received by you: colleagues?	2.71	Accepted

Average mean score = 3.11

From Table 2 above, the respondents agreed with the questions on items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 with mean scores of 3.18, 3.24, 3.33, 3.11 and 2.71 respectively because they were up to the criterion mean. This means that reward resulting from appraisal affects civil servants service delivery in the study area.

H₀₁: Appraisal non acceptability has no significant impact on employee service delivery.

Test of hypothesis 1 to establish if there is no significant relationship between appraisal non acceptability has no significant impact on employee service delivery is presented on table 1.

Table 3: Test of Significance of relationship between appraisal non acceptability and employee service delivery

Variables	N	R	Sig.	Remark
	160	0.058	0.374	Significant

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 5 shows that the statement of hypothesis 1 is rejected; implying that there is significant relationship between appraisal non acceptability and employee service delivery. This is because the p-value (Sig. = 0.058) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₂: Reward has no significant impact on the service delivery of employees

Test of hypothesis 2 to establish if there is no significant impact between reward and service delivery is presented on table 2.

Table 4: Test of significant of relationship between reward and service delivery

Variables	N	r	Sig.	Remark
	160	0.074	0.061	Significant

Source: Field Survey (2022)

From the result of the correlation analysis as shown in Table 2, hypothesis 2 is rejected; implying that there is significant relationship between reward and service delivery. This is because the p-value (Sig. = 0.061) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

5. CONCLUSION

This research has affirmed that appraisal is the fundamental basis for effective service delivery and quality service among civil servants in Anambra state. This study further concluded that performance appraisal is a common practice used mostly for staff promotion in Anambra state Civil service commission and it has significantly improved service delivery. The results from data analysis also established that there was a positive relationship between appraisal and employee service delivery.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendations were drawn

- There is the need for directors of Anambra state civil service commission to ensure that civil servant understand appraisal criteria in the bid to prepare their employees for effective service delivery.
- It is recommended that Government should endeavour to provide adequate payments of promotion arrears to civil servants to boost their morale for effective service delivery.

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