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By Isaac Ampong & Chief Supt. Frank Abrokwa
Christian Service University

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An Investigation into Performance Appraisal System as an Effective Tool for Motivation

Isaac Ampong [α] & Chief Supt. Frank Abrokwa [σ]

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I. Background of the Study

Managers and staff often dread performance appraisal like the plague but - done correctly – they can actually be enjoyable and productive for both parties. Performance appraisal is perceived to be a critical human resource management function in most organisations. In the United States of America, research estimates that over 90% of all large private sector organisations in the country employ some form of systematic employee appraisal and review (Locher & Teel, 1988). At the same time, the number of public sector organisations employing the formal appraisal process continues to steadily increase (Maroney & Buckely, 1992).

In recent years, widespread attention has been paid to the role of the formal appraisal process because of the belief that an effectively designed and implemented appraisal system can provide the employee, the manager, and the organisation with a host of positive benefits. The appraisal process can: provide managers with a useful communication tool for employee goal setting and performance planning; increase employee motivation and productivity; facilitate discussions concerning employee growth and development; provide a solid basis for wage and salary administration; and provide data for a host of human resource decisions (Mohrman Jr, Resnick-West & Lawler, 1989).

Education delivery and implementation is devoted to institutions, districts and regions through various agencies of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), one of which is the Ghana Education Service (GES) which implements the basic and senior Secondary School Education components including technical and vocational institutions (Ghana Education Service Act (1995) Act 506). GES is therefore responsible for pre-tertiary education. GES has a procedure for evaluating staff performance.

The appraisal of performance has been a major subject of late. There have been public discussions about the future and quality of staff of the Ghana Education Service. The situation calls for the need to establish performance appraisal systems in order to have clearly defined causality between the performance and pay of its personnel. Performance appraisal systems have several other important functions (e.g., career planning, service quality assurance).

Moreover, a well-established performance appraisal system should help educators to position or reposition themselves in the organisational setting of the service. Performance appraisal is a process aimed at determining the results of an employee's work, one of its main functions being to offer a justified compensation for his/her efforts. It can be based directly on a particular employee's work results or on his/her activities or competencies and is regarded as the main component of performance management, through which it is also possible to evaluate the effectiveness of an organisation.

Performance management is a much broader concept than performance appraisal, its main purpose being to create suitable conditions for management by objective and effective work.

Performance management defines, measures and motivates an employee's performance on the job and aims to increase the effectiveness of the company (Hartog, Boselie and Paauwe, 2004).

Like many other management tasks, performance appraisal and performance management have a longer history than usually thought. References to performance management – an 'imperial rater' – have been found from the era of Wei Dynasty in China from 3 AD (Pratt, 1991). However, in modern times the re-emergence of performance appraisal is related to the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century, but it gained popularity among managers only before World War I. At first, performance appraisal systems were dominated by quantitative figures of units produced. Thus, initially performance appraisal was directed towards evaluating production workers by setting them work standards. In the middle of the 20th century, the qualitative aspects of performance gained more recognition. However, the qualitative appraisal of employees' performance started from the subjective judgements of the boss. Then the concept of management by objectives offered a meaningful alternative in the form of appraising professionals and managers by achievement of their preset goals. Later on the appraisal by objectives has been criticised as problematic, because evaluated employees tend to lose

Author α: Christian Service University College, Post Office Box KS 3110, Kumas.
Author σ: Ghana Police Service, Central Police Station, Kumasi.
e-mail: iampong@csuc.edu.gh

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interest in setting challenging goals in favor of easy-to-achieve goals, due to which organisational development will suffer. This has led to modern multifactor appraisal systems which combine goals and objectives, quantity and quality standards, and key accountability elements (Pratt, 1991).

Performance appraisal activities enable determination of whether employees' performance accords with the established objectives and are primarily based not only on the appraisal of employees' work results and activity (behaviour), but also on their competence (skills, abilities and characteristics). Diverse appraisal methods and their combinations are used to analyse employees' performance. During the appraisal process primarily those work results are valued that create preconditions for their improvement in the future and enable differentiation between compensation, rates, thereby, on the one hand, diminishing equalisation and on the other hand, increasing fair compensation. Evaluators often tend to attribute too much importance to the situational circumstances, regardless of whether they evaluate their own activities or the activities of others, especially when the results were not satisfactory. In order to avoid that, more appraisal interviews between the appraiser and the appraised should be used and special computer programs would be useful, enabling most efficient and accurate registration and evaluation of the information obtained during the appraisal (McHale, 2003). The decisions based on evaluation can be backed up by properly documented performance appraisals which can also include additional documentation in the form of a journal, notes, diaries and other materials (Crawford, 2003).

The advantages and disadvantages of various appraisal criteria contribute to their balanced usage. For example, the appraisal systems of several well-known British companies are based on their employees' skills and competence, behavioural traits and outputs from the job. As work is very diverse by its nature and it lacks objective measures in more than one third of cases, it is difficult to establish the exact objectives of the work and make them congruent with individual interests. Therefore, British companies exploit distinct appraisal criteria simultaneously, while increasingly placing value on cooperation (Sisson, 1994).

A performance appraisal criterion has to be relevant, reliable and justly measurable, while also closely linked with the objectives of the organisation and its subdivisions. Such criteria are relatively difficult to set and in consequence the best result is achieved through balanced combination of distinct criteria.

However, as indicated above, in modern management, performance appraisal is viewed in the broader context of performance management, whereas precision of measurement and accuracy of ratings are accompanied by social and motivational aspects of the appraisal process (Fletcher, 2001). Boyd and Kyle (2004) also stress that one of the antecedents to distributive justice (i.e. the fairness of compensation in the light of an employee's performance) and procedural justice (i.e. the accuracy and suitability of appraisal procedures) of performance appraisal is social justice that defines the nondiscriminatory nature of the process between social groups (no gender, racial or other similar discrimination) (Boyd and Kyle, 2004; Brown and Benson, 2003).

Alongside with task performance, which covers job-specific behaviours and an employee's core responsibilities, in the appraisal process more attention has been devoted to non-job specific behaviours, such as cooperation, dedication, enthusiasm and persistence. These aspects form contextual performance, which because of increasing organisational and task complexities, is becoming more and more important (Boyd and Kyle, 2004). The notion of contextual performance is also related to organisational citizenship which incorporates pride of being a member of the organisation. A study by Fletcher and Williams (1996) showed that the characteristics of the performance management system are related to job satisfaction and positive employee attitudes.

Performance appraisal and management practices should be regularly reviewed and evaluated, especially in terms of their impact on performance and employee development. The introduction of total quality management and the use of teamwork have rendered unsuitable the traditional appraisal schemes that encourage competition among employees rather than cooperation and integration. Therefore, performance appraisal schemes should take into account the strategic objectives of the organisation (Smith, Hornsby and Shirmeyer, 1996).

However, performance appraisal has also been viewed as a "painful annual event" when the manager evaluates the employees' performance; it rarely had close links to the overall mission and program of the organisation that were designed to maximise human effort. Yet, in the ideal case, a performance appraisal system should establish a connection between the organisational and personal goals as well as shape and change organisational culture towards a result-driven climate (Grote, 2000).

Performance appraisal ratings might be used during layoffs in order to retain more valuable employees, to determine the quality of training programs, to measure equality of treatment, to manage employees' compensation, and to promote or dismiss them. Thus, appraisal results have a very important role in the human resource management (HRM) activities of the organisation. A well-established appraisal system helps make justified decisions and avoid litigation by terminated employees (Mani, 2002). Thus, the modern appraisal process is an essential part of organisational life, for it helps justify, besides compensation

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differentiation, for example, promotions, demotions, selection validations and terminations (Longenecker and Fink, 1999).

A well-established performance appraisal system should render enough information for determining justified compensation. Employees' compensation is a process of rewarding employees with monetary and non-monetary benefits according to the value of their work contribution, thus compensating them for their efforts. The value of work (employee's worth) done during a set time period is determined via performance appraisal, while taking into account the value of other factors.

II. Theoritical Issues

a) The Benefits and Purpose of Performance Appraisals

Performance appraisal has been one of the most hotly debated topics in personnel management circles and, fortunately, has been the subject of much research. Assessments of performance appraisal range from the openly hostile [(Thayer, 1978)] to the generally benign, envisioning well-designed performance appraisals as a tool for correcting worker deficiencies, for motivating employees, as well as for giving feedback (Latham and Wexley, 1981).

Performance appraisal is being practiced in 90% of the organisations worldwide. Self-appraisal and potential team appraisal also form a part of the performance appraisal processes. To Gabris (1986), performance appraisal serves many purposes within organisations. One very important purpose of performance appraisal is to provide periodic, formal feedback to individual staff members. If supervisors never provide any type of formal feedback to employees, they may never know how well, or how poorly, they are performing. This situation is obviously troublesome for both employees as well as supervisors.

A second, and perhaps more debatable, purpose involves management's attempt to control employee behaviour and results (Gabris, 1986). Most performance appraisal instruments are designed around managerial objectives and the types of behaviours that management would prefer to routinise in employees. Instruments based on simple trait measurements clearly illustrate this orientation by encouraging employees to be enthusiastic, loyal, dependable, and team-oriented. Job-related performance-appraisal instruments, such as behaviour observation scales (BOS), are considered more sophisticated than trait-based instruments. These performance appraisal instruments strive to measure highly effective and ineffective behaviours associated with specific job duties. By requiring employees to behave in specific ways as a condition for receiving high performance appraisal scores, management feels it has a tool for controlling employees the way it wants (Latham and Wexley, 1981).

Another purpose of performance appraisal is that is used as a tool for managing employee compensation (Heneman, 1992). This is primarily done through linking performance appraisal to merit-pay. If public organisations intend to reward individual employees on some type of performance basis, they need a method for rating, measuring, and scoring work performance in a routine way. Performance appraisal fits this need by providing ostensibly objective measures of worker productivity. However, empirical research does not necessarily support this relationship between performance appraisal and merit incentives (Daley, 1987). Nonetheless, some evidence does exist that merit-pay can work under special circumstances, and can increase general organisational cost effectiveness (Heneman, 1992).

The techniques of performance appraisal are varied, but can generally be condensed into three major categories: trait, management by objectives (MBO) formats, and behavioural system formats. Trait formats are intended to evaluate employees based on specific personality traits. MBO formats are intended to evaluate employees on how well they have achieved previously developed work-related goals, while behavioural system formats, such as Behaviour Observation Scales (BOS) are intended to evaluate employees based upon specific work-related behaviours that the organisation deems important and desirable. Each of these performance appraisal techniques has its strengths and weaknesses.

Typically, performance appraisal is aimed at reviewing the performance of the employees over a given period of time. It helps management to judge the gap between the actual and the desired performance and also in exercising organisational control. Also, it helps to diagnose the training and development needs of the future and provide information to assist in the human resource (HR) decisions like promotions, transfers etc.

Performance appraisals provide clarity of the expectations and responsibilities of the functions to be performed by the employees and help to judge the effectiveness of the other human resource functions of the organisation such as recruitment, selection, training and development. It also helps to reduce the grievances of the employees and also strengthen the relationship and communication between superior-subordinates and management-employees.

Performance appraisal is a key tool for meeting the managerial needs of the modern organisation. Daley (1990) examines the entire process of designing a performance appraisal system from determining its organisational purpose to constructing an objective appraisal instrument for measuring employee performance. According to a survey conducted in India in 2008, the percentage of organisations (out of the total of fifty organisations surveyed) using performance

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appraisal for the various purposes are as follows: 80% used performance appraisal results for making payroll and compensation decisions; 71% used it for training and development needs; 76% used it to identify the gaps in desired and actual performance and its causes; 42% used it to decide future goals and course of action; 49% used it for promotions, demotions and transfers and 6% used it for other purposes such as job analysis and providing superior support, assistance and counselling (Singh, 2008).

Any performance review process is incomplete without the feedback to the employees. The feedback could be given in the review discussion. Review discussions are semi formal, scheduled, periodic interactions – usually bimonthly or quarterly – between a manager and his/her employee. The basic purpose of the review discussion is to analyse the performance of the employee in the past to improve the performance of the employee in future.

A review discussion is an opportunity to coach, mentor, learn and understand. The manager encourages his/her employees to critically reflect over progress made on the performance appraisal plan and to develop creative, yet feasible alternatives for problem areas. The manager uses this opportunity to review the performance of the each employee individually and discuss the problems faced by the employees during the course of action. The manager also uses the opportunity to review the solutions tried, and the degree of success achieved in solving the problems faced. It also used to revisit with the employee, his/her annual plan for the remaining time period and develop revised action plans, if necessary.

It helps to review discussions, reassure the employees that each one of them has structured opportunities for one to one interaction with the manager once every two or three months during the year. These opportunities are influential as they provide an important chance for performance monitoring or development mentoring. The aim of the performance review discussions is to share perceptions, solve the problem faced during the course of the action, decide on the new goals jointly and provide a feedback to the employee for the past performance i.e. to look at his strengths and weaknesses and also help to chart out a career plan for the employee.

The focus of these performance review discussions should not be to judge the employees' past performance; rather it should be to motivate the employee to improve his future performance and reinforce his good behaviour (Singh, 2007).

Tznier, Joanis and Murphy (2000) suggest that organisations generally use performance appraisal for two broad purposes. First, performance appraisals are used in administrative decisions such as promotions, salary allocations, and assignments and secondly, they are used as a tool for employee development processes such as offering feedback, critiquing performance, and setting goals for improvement. With these broad purposes, organisations establish their own often unique performance appraisal systems to evaluate and develop their employees. But, it is often difficult for organisations to evaluate whether their performance appraisal system is accomplishing their desired outcomes.

The benefits of performance appraisal are also to establish employee performance plans and communicate these plans to employees at the beginning of the appraisal period. It is also used to evaluate each employee during the appraisal period on the employee's performance plan and recognise and reward employees whose performance so warrants and also assist employees in improving unacceptable performance, reassign, reduce in grade, or remove employees who continue to have unacceptable performance, but only after an opportunity to demonstrate acceptable performance (Tznier, Joanis and Murphy, 2000).

It is to provide employees with a sense of their work accomplishments relative to expectations and predefined performance indicators and also support employee development through discussion of assigned opportunities and training. Performance appraisal helps to emphasise an organisation's commitment to continuous improvement and learning and also encourage an appropriate relationship between pay levels and work performance (Tznier, Joanis and Murphy, 2000).

b) Implementation of the Performance Appraisal System

There is no one best way to conduct an appraisal. Some companies develop an appraisal form with space for appraisers to rate appraisees on aspects of their work such as their contribution to the team, role development, effectiveness, etc. The approach will depend on the nature of the business and the people involved. However as a minimum it is helpful to have a form to collect consistent information on the appraisal. This may be in the form of a free dialogue from appraisers with the opportunity for appraisees to reply and comment (Hutchinson and Purcell, 2003).

There is a view that the content of appraisal discussions should be confidential to the individual and the appraiser. But increasing pressure to provide information to assess the contribution of people to organisational value makes it desirable that performance data be recorded and stored in such a way that it can be used to feel into indicators of human capital value (Hutchinson and Purcell, 2003).

They go on to say that in implementing performance appraisals, both parties (the appraiser and appraisee) should prepare for the meeting beforehand if a successful outcome is to be delivered. The person conducting the meeting or the appraiser should consider how well the individual has performed since

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the last meeting and also the extent to which any agreed development plans from the last meeting have been implemented. The appraiser should think about the feedback to be given at the meeting and the evidence that will be used to support it and also review the factors that have affected performance both those within and outside the individual's control.

The appraiser should consider the points for discussion on the possible actions that can be taken by both parties to develop or improve performance, the possible directions the individual's career might take and the possible objectives for the next review period. The individual or appraisee should consider their achievements during the review period, with examples and evidence, however they must give examples of objectives they were not able to achieve with explanations (Hutchinson and Purcell, 2003).

They should report on the most enjoyable part of their job and how they might want to develop the role and also explain any aspect of their work in which improvement is required and how this might be achieved. They should come out with their learning and development needs with arguments to support their case for specific training and the level of support and guidance they require from their managers. They come out with their aspirations for the future both in the current role and in possible future roles and their objectives for the next review period (Hutchinson and Purcell, 2003).

In some instances it may be helpful to guide appraisees through a self-assessment process encouraging them to assess and analyse their own performance as a basis for discussion and action. This can improve the quality of the appraisal discussion because individuals feel actively involved in the process and this encourages them to work through the points above beforehand. This can be particularly useful with more junior staff or those not used to appraisals (Hutchinson and Purcell, 2003).

However, self assessment can only work if individuals have clear targets and standards against which to assess themselves. It can also only be effective in a climate of trust where individuals believe their appraisers will not take advantage of an open self-assessment (Hutchinson and Purcell, 2003).

In a performance appraisal setting, a supervisor must make a cognitive decision on how accurately he or she will complete the performance appraisal process as outlined in the organisation's performance appraisal program. The basis for this decision is the level of importance that the supervisor views in the performance appraisal. If the supervisor views the performance appraisal as extremely important (high valence) it is likely that the supervisor will put forth great effort to complete the performance appraisal accurately. However, if he/she does not value the performance appraisal (low valence) he or she will likely not put forth much effort in completing the performance appraisal accurately (Higgins, 1997; Vroom, 1964).

Small (2007) also says that there are several issues which must be addressed to help the appraisals be an experience that creates positive outcomes for all parties. Prior to any meeting, the appraiser must review the staff member's history thoroughly, recognising the context of their career development, history with the business, and any external issues the appraiser is aware of. The job description and any previously identified strengths or work areas must be reviewed. When setting up a meeting, plenty of notice and issue of an agenda must be given so that the employee can prepare. Both the staff member and their manager should have an equal opportunity to bring information to the appraisal.

She goes on to state that appraisals should always be done in a neutral environment, ideally, with a peer manager present for an independent perspective and also the staff member must always be allowed to speak first at sharing their perspective on their role, outlining what they are responsible for and how they have set about achieving what their role requires. This will both demonstrate their understanding and create an environment more conducive to reaching agreement around the path forward.

Feedback should be conveyed positively and in an encouraging manner, wherever possible. The manager should be specific in defining issues and behaviours that are barriers to the level of performance required. Staff involvement is important in identifying their role in improving things, where corrective action is required. Actions plans that would be developed should follow the SMART principle: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Related to outcomes, and Timely. Minutes should be taken to ensure that there is a record of the performance appraisal. These should be documented and signed by all present as a written record of the occasion, with a specific focus on agreed action points (Small, 2007).

According to Murphy and Margulies (2004), the following can be considered as elements of a successful performance appraisal system. There should be clear instructions and training for performance raters. Performance raters should be familiar with the nature and importance of job duties on which employee is being rated and with the employee's actual performance. The performance appraisal system should be job-related and understandable as possible and there should be precautions against improper bias by performance raters. There should be some additional level of review and signature beyond the performance rater.

Again, there should be some amount of monitoring to ensure uniform approach or application of the standards in the performance system and the employee should have the right to review and comment. The employee should sign to signify reading of review

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but not necessarily agreement with any rating and should have the right of appeal if the system is oriented toward that. The rating method for the performance appraisal system, numerical and traditional, or collaborative, or some means should be agreed upon to ensure specific and mutual goals (Murphy and Margulies, 2004).

c) *Obstacles/Challenges Encountered in Implementing and Managing Performance Appraisal Systems*

A large number of managers, human resource professionals, human resource consultants and researchers are recommending companies to get rid of the performance appraisal systems.

The main argument given by the researchers is that the system of performance appraisals itself is based on a few wrong assumptions and it fails to fulfill its basic purpose.

The first and the foremost argument is the fact that there are discrepancies between the theory and its application. There is often a disconnect between the theory and the practical implementation.

Again, performance appraisal is a bitter process for most of the employees which can create emotional pressures and stress for the employees. Performance appraisal is often used as a tool to control the employees by the superiors and this dampens the intrinsic motivation of the employees.

The focus of the performance appraisal process is too narrow i.e. it is just used to determine the rewards and punishments for the employees by measuring their past performance. Most of the managers and superiors are not trained enough to carry the processes in the appropriate and the structured manner. This obstructs the genuine feedback, as it includes subjectivity and bias of the raters leading to incorrect and unreliable data regarding the performance of the employees.

Performance appraisal process increases the dependency of the employees on their superiors. It can adversely affect the morale of the employees and create dissatisfaction among them, thereby affecting the organisational performance.

Even though performance appraisal process encourages accountability and approvals, it also discourages the spirit of creativity and initiative by employees and also demotivates them. Performance appraisals and reviews are often time consuming, with faulty methods to measure performances and generating false results and the decisions taken can be politically influenced (Singh, 2007).

In another similar vein, the identification of the appraisal criteria is one of the biggest problems faced by the top management. The performance data to be considered for evaluation should be carefully selected. Top management should choose the raters or the evaluators carefully. They should have the required expertise and the knowledge to decide the criteria accurately. They should have the experience and the necessary training to carry out the appraisal process objectively. For the purpose of evaluation, the criteria selected should be in quantifiable or measurable terms (Singh, 2007).

The focus of the system should be on the development of the employees of the organisation. Many errors based on the personal bias like stereotyping, halo effect (i.e. one trait influencing the evaluator's rating for all other traits) etc. may creep in the appraisal process. Therefore the rater should exercise objectivity and fairness in evaluating and rating the performance of the employees. The purpose of the performance appraisal process is to judge the performance of the employees rather than the personality of the employees (Singh, 2007).

The appraisal process may face resistance from the employees and the trade unions for the fear of negative ratings and so the employees should be communicated to and the purpose and the process of appraisal should be clearly explained to them. The standards should be clearly communicated and every employee should be made aware of his/her expectations (Singh, 2007).

McNay (1997) says that performance appraisal does not enhance team work; it is time-consuming and difficult to administer and record and unsystematic appraisals might bring forth more negative than positive results. He goes on to say that performance appraisal brings about frequent changes, excessive competition and conflicts. It impairs the work climate and diminishes cooperation between colleagues.

The need to prove oneself all the time can cause burnout and also increases the possibility of being trapped by numerous tasks. It sometimes leads to Social Darwinism. This implies that only the strongest will survive. The criteria used to measure efficiency are limited and fail to consider the staff's contribution to the development of the organisation (Mylonas, 2004).

Several other problems have been related to the implementation of performance appraisal. Performance appraisal system is not considered as an ongoing yearly cycle process, but as a mechanistic once a year obligation ("filling of a form"). At times, there is lack of dialogue between the appraiser and the appraisee and criteria are not used as they are supposed to and there is a lack of specific objectives and agreed targets to be achieved, either in departmental or individual level (Mylonas, 2004).

Again, he states that appraisers seem reluctant to fairly evaluate employees, so as to avoid negative reactions and conflicts. Employees themselves are not willing to accept criticism and comparison with their colleagues. There is a perception, among some employees, that appraisers are unable to appraise in a fair manner.

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In certain instances, both appraisers and appraisees are not trained to a satisfactory extent to engage themselves in fairly perfect performance appraisals. There is also external interference and influences (Mylonas, 2004). He states that the system is quite vulnerable to problems related to human nature, such as subjectivity, and to pressures related to family and other relationships. There is a tendency for appraisers to appraise in a more lenient manner in the case where promotions are imminent.

The problems associated with the design, implementation, and operation of formal performance appraisal systems are well documented, and they continue to frustrate both academics and practitioners alike. Researchers have concluded that there is no such thing as an "ideal" appraisal format and system. Every organisation must design an appraisal instrument and process that supports the organisational goals that it wishes to accomplish (Greenberg, 1986). In addition, participant acceptance of an organisation's performance appraisal system is perceived to be a critical factor in appraisal effectiveness (Ash, 1994). Further research suggests that having a technically sound appraisal system and procedure is no guarantee that an organisation's appraisal process will be effective (Wright, 1985).

Managers and subordinates must have a shared perception of the purposes and functions of the process and the belief that the appraisal process is useful to them on an individual basis (Maroney and Buckley, 1992). To this end, an effective appraisal system is one that satisfies the needs of the parties involved in the process (Lawler, Mohrman and Resnick-West, 1984). In addition, an effective appraisal system requires that managers not only have the skills necessary to conduct the appraisals, but also the willingness to do so (Longenecker and Goff, 1990).

Greenberg (1986) in a research has found that employees react more favourably to the appraisal process when it satisfied their needs and included an opportunity to state their position; when factors on which they were being evaluated were job-related; and when objectives and plans were discussed openly. Managers and subordinates do not always agree on what constitutes an effective appraisal. When managers and subordinates have a shared understanding of the purpose of the appraisal as well as each party's role in the appraisal, the subordinate's acceptance of the appraisal is increased (Longenecker, Liverpool & Wilson, 1988).

Research and organisational practice suggest, however, that managers and subordinates have different needs and expectations regarding the appraisal event. Research strongly indicates that the manager's (rater) purpose, intentions, and perceptions of the rating process may differ significantly from those of the subordinate (ratee) (Bernardin and Beatty, 1984). In a recent study conducted in a medium-sized organisation, researchers found that managers and subordinates differed significantly in their perceptions of both the role and effectiveness of the appraisal process on such key issues as: the purpose of the appraisal process; the level of fairness; the link between pay and performance; honesty of communication; completeness of feedback; means to improve the manager-subordinate relationship; and the extent to which an appraisal lets subordinates know where they stand (Longenecker, Gioia, & Sims, 1987).

d) Effective Performance Appraisal System

Aside from formal traditional (annual, six-monthly, quarterly, or monthly) performance appraisals, there are many different methods of performance evaluation. The use of any of these methods depends on the purpose of the evaluation, the individual, the assessor, and the environment. The formal annual performance appraisal is generally the over-riding instrument which gathers together and reviews all other performance data for the previous year (Gillen, 2007).

Performance appraisals should be positive experiences. The appraisal process provides the platform for development and motivation, so organisations should foster a feeling that performance appraisals are positive opportunities, in order to get the best out of the people and the process. In certain organisations, performance appraisals are widely regarded as something rather less welcoming which provides a basis only on which to develop fear and resentment. Staff performance appraisal should never be used to handle matters of discipline or admonishment (Cash, 1993).

Gillen (2007) argued that regular informal one-to-one review meetings greatly reduce the pressure and time required for the annual formal appraisal meeting. The holding of informal reviews every month is ideal for all staff as there are several benefits of reviewing frequently and informally.

The manager is better informed and more up-to-date with his or her people's activities (and more in touch with what lies beyond, e.g., customers, suppliers, competitors, markets, etc). Difficult issues can be identified, discussed and resolved quickly, before they become more serious. Help can be given more readily - people rarely ask unless they see a good opportunity to do so - the regular informal review provides just this.

Assignments, tasks and objectives can be agreed completed and reviewed quickly – leaving actions more than a few weeks reduces completion rates significantly for all but the most senior and experienced people. Objectives, direction, and purpose is more up-to-date and modern organisations demand more flexibility than a single annual review allows - priorities often change through the year, so people need to be re-directed and re-focused. Training and

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development actions can be broken down into smaller more digestible chunks, increasing success rates and motivational effect as a result (Gillen, 2007).

The 'fear factor', often associated by many with formal appraisals, is greatly reduced because people become more comfortable with the review process. Relationships and mutual understanding develop more quickly with greater frequency of meetings between manager and staff member. Staff members thus can be better prepared for the formal appraisal, giving better results, and saving management's time. Frequent review meetings increase the reliability of notes and performance data, and reduce the chances of overlooking things at the formal appraisal (Gillen, 2007).

To Capko (2003) performance evaluations provide employers with an opportunity to assess their employees' contributions to the organisation, which are essential to developing a powerful work team. The primary goals of a performance evaluation system are to provide an equitable measurement of an employee's contribution to the workforce, produce accurate appraisal documentation to protect both the employee and employer, and obtain a high level of quality and quantity in the work produced.

Performance evaluations should be conducted fairly, consistently and objectively to protect employees' interests and to protect organisations from legal liability. One way to ensure consistency is to use a standard evaluation form for each evaluation. The form should focus only on the essential job performance areas. Limiting these areas of focus makes the assessment more meaningful and relevant and allows the employer and the employee to address the issues that matter most. Every detail of an employee's performance in an evaluation should not be covered in the form (Capko, 2003).

For most staff positions, the job performance areas that should be included on a performance evaluation form are job knowledge and skills, quality of work, quantity of work, work habits and attitude. In each area, the appraiser should have a range of descriptors to choose from (e.g., far below requirements, below requirements, meets requirements, exceeds requirements, far exceeds requirements). It is often important that the appraiser also have space on the form to provide the reasoning behind his or her rating depending upon the specificity of the descriptors (Capko, 2003).

Performance evaluations for those in management positions should assess more than just the essential job performance areas. They should also assess the employee's people skills, ability to motivate and provide direction, overall communication skills and ability to build teams and solve problems. Standard performance measures, which allow employers to evaluate an employee's job performance objectively, can cut down on the amount of time and stress involved in filling out the evaluation form. Although developing these measures can be one of the more time-consuming parts of creating a performance evaluation system, it is also one of the most powerful (Capko, 2003).

A current job description for each position is the first step toward creating standard performance measures, which are essentially specific quantity and quality goals attached to the tasks listed in a job description. A job description alone can serve as a measurement tool during an evaluation if, for example, employers assessing whether an employee's skills match the requirements of the position. Standard performance measures however take the job description one step further. Standard performance measures can even objectively measure some of the more subjective job performance areas, such as work habits. For example, employers can establish an objective measure for attendance by defining the acceptable number of times an employee can be tardy or absent during a specific time frame (Capko, 2003).

However, standard performance measures do not always work for other subjective areas, such as attitude. In these cases, it is still important to be as objective as possible in evaluation of employees. An attempt should not be made to describe attitude, however, the employee's behaviour, which is what conveys the attitude, and the consequences of that behaviour for the practice should be described (Capko, 2003).

Employers must not make the common error of glossing over an employee's deficiencies and focusing only on his or her strengths. It is by understanding their weaknesses that employees can take ownership of their performance and role in the practice. When employees are given the support they need to make improvements in these areas, they learn to take pride in their work and are willing to take on new challenges with confidence (Capko, 2003).

Again, when areas where improvement is needed are addressed, it helps employers to outline their expectations for improvement and how they can help employees meet them. For example, if an employee is speaking harshly with other employees and does not seem tolerant with customers or clients, the employee must be given some examples of his or her behaviour and some suggestions to resolve the problem, such as role-playing sessions or a communication skills/customer-service workshop or seminar. The boundaries must be defined by letting the employee know what is acceptable and what will not be tolerated, and then establishing a plan for monitoring performance and re-evaluating the employee (Capko, 2003).

The employee must be encouraged to give you some non-defensive feedback after the results of the evaluation have been discussed. The employee must be

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asked whether he or she agrees with the assessment, and/or suggestions for improvement must be invited. This should lead to an open exchange of information that will allow the employer and the employee to better understand each other's perspective (Capko, 2003).

In some cases, even after a thorough performance evaluation and a discussion of expected improvements, an employee will continue to perform poorly. Employers need to be prepared to handle such a situation by having well-defined, written disciplinary and termination procedures in place. These procedures should outline the actions that will be taken when performance deteriorates - a verbal warning, a written warning if there is no improvement or a recurrence, and termination if the situation is not ultimately resolved.

The employer just need to decide when to conduct the performance evaluations once he/she have built their performance evaluation system - the evaluation form, the performance measures, the feedback guidelines and the disciplinary procedures. Some employers do all employee evaluations at the same time of year, while others conduct them within thirty days of each employee's anniversary of employment. However when employers decide to schedule the evaluations, they must ensure that each appraiser consistently meets the deadline. Ignoring employees' overdue evaluations will make them feel devalued and may hurt morale and performance (Capko, 2003).

A performance evaluation system should be a key component of an organisation's structure. When implemented effectively, it ensures fairness and accountability, promotes growth and development and encourages a sense of pride in your employees' contributions to the practice. Other means of implementing an effective performance appraisal system establishing performance standards which will be used to as the base to compare the actual performance of the employees (Capko, 2003).

This step requires setting the criteria to judge the performance of the employees as successful or unsuccessful and the degrees of their contribution to the organisational goals and objectives. The standards set should be clear, easily understandable and in measurable terms. In case the performance of the employee cannot be measured, great care should be taken to describe the standards (Singh, 2007).

Once set, it is the responsibility of the management to communicate the standards to all the employees of the organisation. Employees should be informed and the standards should be clearly explained to them. This will help them to understand their roles and to know what exactly is expected from them. The standards should also be communicated to the appraisers or the evaluators and if required, the standards can also be modified at this stage itself according to the relevant feedback from the employees or the evaluators (Singh, 2007).

The most difficult part of the performance appraisal process is measuring the actual performance of the employees that is the work done by the employees during the specified period of time. It is a continuous process which involves monitoring the performance throughout the year. This stage requires the careful selection of the appropriate techniques of measurement, taking care that personal bias does not affect the outcome of the process and providing assistance rather than interfering in an employees work. The actual performance is compared with the desired or the standard performance. The comparison tells the deviations in the performance of the employees from the standards set. The result can show the actual performance being more than the desired performance or, the actual performance being less than the desired performance depicting a negative deviation in the organisational performance. It includes recalling, evaluating and analysis of data related to the employees' performance (Singh, 2007).

The result of the appraisal is communicated and discussed with the employees on one-to-one basis. The focus of this discussion is on communication and listening. The results, the problems and the possible solutions are discussed with the aim of problem solving and reaching consensus. The feedback should be given with a positive attitude as this can have an effect on the employees' future performance. The purpose of the meeting should be to solve the problems faced and motivate the employees to perform better (Singh, 2007).

The last step of the process is to take decisions which can be taken either to improve the performance of the employees, take the required corrective actions, or the related human resource (HR) decisions like rewards, promotions, demotions, transfers, etc (Singh, 2007).

e) Conceptual Framework of the Study

Public sector performance appraisals are a significant aspect of making employees more productive and are the "tool of choice" in such performance enhancing efforts (Roberts, 1994). It has been said that "anything worth doing is worth doing well." Given the goals of most appraisal systems, this saying appears to be quite appropriate and, yet, effective appraisals are not assured by a technically sound system alone. Other elements, such as managers' and subordinates' attitudes toward performance appraisals, and expectations also play a significant role in achieving effectiveness of performance appraisal (Daley, 1990).

This study should serve as a case study for organisations to assess the effectiveness of their appraisal systems. Organisations must continually look for ways to keep effective management and appraisal behaviour in the forefront of managerial consciousness

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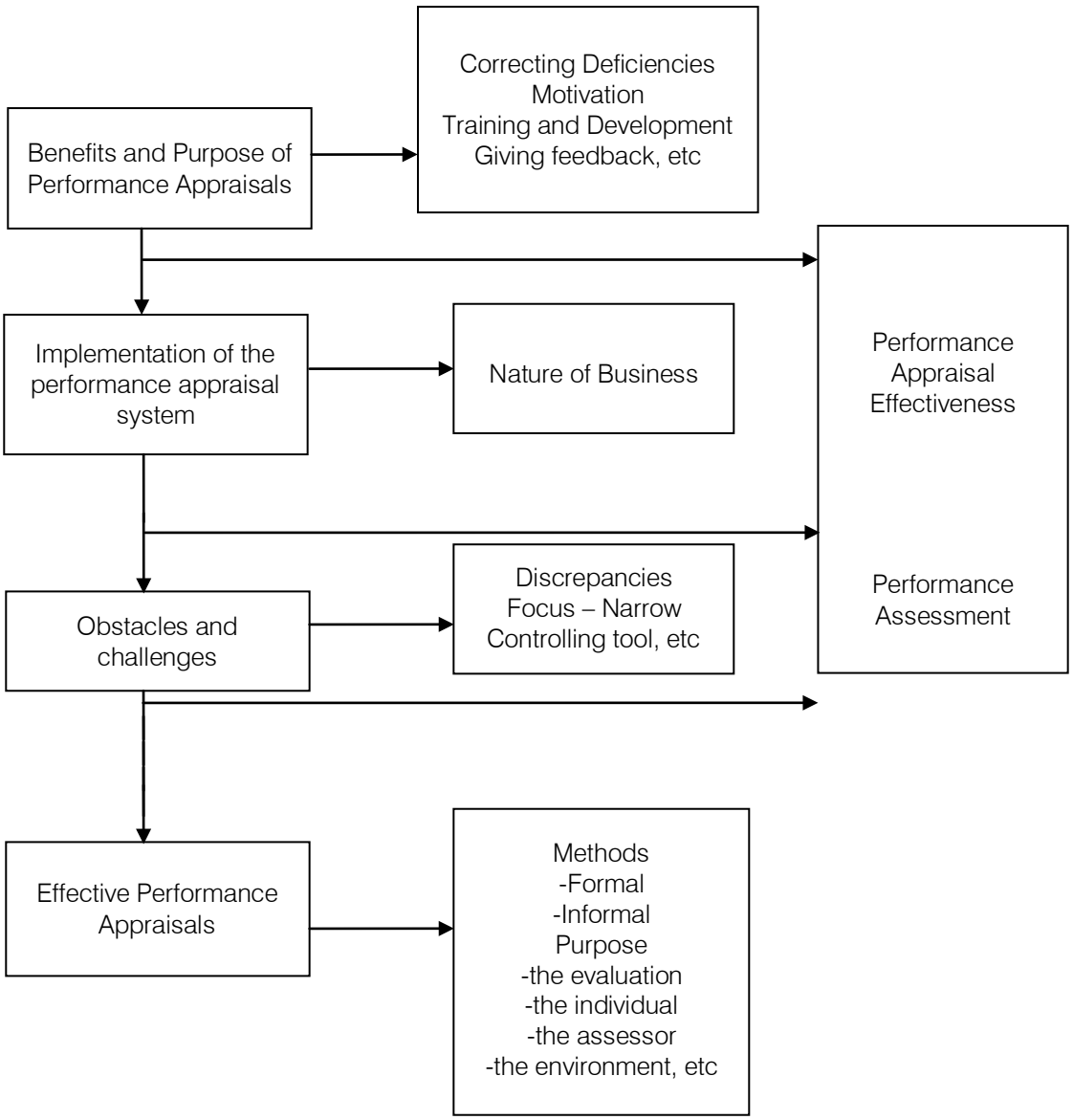
or the things worth doing will not be done well. Appraisals are no exception.

The Performance Appraisal Process



(Reference: Author's Own Construct, 2020)

The literature looked at the benefits and purpose of performance appraisal in organisations and comes out with several of these, among which are correcting deficiencies of workers, motivation, training and development, giving feedback, etc.

These benefits and purpose can be affected by how organisations implement their performance appraisals, the obstacles and challenges of the performance appraisal system and the extent to which they can conduct effective performance appraisals. The implementation of a particular kind of performance appraisal system or method would depend on the kind of business. Business critical of the decisions they make use different performance appraisal systems.

The obstacles and challenges of the performance appraisals identified were many and varied, for example, there were discrepancies between the theory and its application, a narrow focus and some managers used it a tool to control their workers among others.

The study examined that the extent to which organisations could conduct effective performance appraisals depended on the purpose of the evaluation, the individual, the assessor and the environment.

The connection that exists between the benefits and purpose of performance appraisals can be a factor for performance appraisal effectiveness and assessment (Anderson, 2002).

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f) Research Design

The research design used in this study was the survey technique. This research design is desirable for the objectives of data collection. The researcher collected both qualitative and quantitative data that was used for the study. The research design tried to assess the performance appraisal systems of the Ghana Education Service. This technique was chosen because of the nature of the research topic which demands the collection of significant amount of data from a meaningful population size in an efficient manner (Ihenacho, 2005).

g) Research Population

The study population is the collection of all elements about which the researcher wish to make some inferences. The population was one hundred and fifty people and they were made up of thirty staff members drawn from the Regional Education Office and one hundred and twenty teachers of the Junior and Senior High Schools in the Kumasi metropolis. The choice of this population for the study was informed by the need to extract relevant information that will guarantee reliable findings and assist the researcher to make appropriate recommendations (Ihenacho, 2005).

h) Sample

A sample of the staff at the Regional Education Offices and teachers of the Ghana Education Service in the Kumasi metropolis was selected for the study. The choice of the sample size was influenced by the following: the confidence needed to have on the data in respect of the total population, the margin of error that can be tolerated; and the type of statistical analyses to be undertaken (Ihenacho, 2005).

A sample size of one hundred and twenty was selected and they included twenty staff members of the Regional Education Office and one hundred teachers from selected Junior and Senior High Schools within the Kumasi Metropolis.

i) Sampling Technique

The sampling technique was chosen considering the nature and characteristics of the population elements being studied. The simple random sampling method which is a probability sample in which each population element has a known and equal chance of being included in the sample was used to select the respondents. It helped the researcher to identify and enumerate the finite population.

j) Data Gathering Instruments

The instruments used for the study were questionnaires and interviews.

k) Structure of Questionnaire

The questionnaire is recognised as an important method of quantitative data collection and therefore, attempt was made to design it in a way as to capture accurate data and high response rate. In designing the questionnaire, it was assumed that the respondents who are major stakeholders were sufficiently informed on the subject matter.

Questions were asked about performance appraisal planning, monitoring, data management, supervision and budgeting in order to get a sense of if and how the performance appraisal process had been integrated into routine management systems.

In constructing the questionnaire in terms of wording and layout, consideration was given to its usefulness as a guide for decision or opinion making. The funneling approach was adopted in designing the overall structure of the questionnaire. This approach involved asking general questions first before gradually restructuring the focus through more specific questions, thereby leaving the most direct questions until the last. This technique is used to reduce elements of bias which could come from asking specific questions up front.

Efforts were made to eschew biased wording in the framing of the questionnaire. Cooper and Schindler (2001) observed that strong adjectives can be particularly distorting in the formation of questions. Also, attempts were made not to personalise questions.

i. *Administration of Questionnaire*

Questionnaires were prepared and administered by the researcher to the respondents used for the study. A total of eighty questionnaires were distributed to the target population elements comprising the teachers, and administrative staff at the Regional Education Office. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents to fill them out three weeks earlier before these (questionnaires) were collected from them to be used for the analysis.

The following steps were taken to improve on the return rates for the distributed questionnaires: questionnaire length was made very limited to elicit ease of response; cover letters were used to dispatch the questionnaires. It is considered a logical vehicle for persuading individuals to respond and repeated visits and phone calls to the respondents though costly, assisted to ensure good response.

ii. *Interview Schedules*

Regional Education Offices included in the study sample were contacted prior to the study in order to inform them of the study and ask their agreement to participate in the study. The study protocol was shared with all participating respondents prior to being disseminated.

To ensure informed consent, interviewers explained the purpose of the evaluation prior to beginning the interview. Interviewers were provided with a script describing the study, its purpose and the right of interviewees to decline to be interviewed. After receiving this information interviewees were asked to consent to be interviewed before the interview could be conducted.

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In all cases, interviewees were assured that the interview was confidential and that no personal information about the interviewee would be conveyed in the report.

iii. *Structured Interviews*

The structured interview is an oral presentation of a written questionnaire. The researcher read out the questions and the interviewees gave their responses. Conscious effort was made to explain further questions which interviewees did not understand. This type of interview was used to increase response rates and improve the quality of answers to the questionnaire items. This kind of interview was challenging as it required a personal sensitivity and adaptability as well as the ability to stay within the bounds of the designed protocol.

iv. *Unstructured Interviews*

An unstructured interview is where the researcher asks as few questions as possible, permitting the interviewee to talk freely, intervening only to refocus the discussion or probe for additional insights into a key area. The questions asked were more open-ended, with the interviewee providing responses in their own words. The respondents had more control over the conduct of the interview in that they were often allowed to discuss issues as they arise and not necessarily in an order predetermined by the interviewer.

The interview ensured a high contact and response rate and also helped clarify certain issues on the topic. The researcher was able to probe for specific meanings of responses made by supplementing respondents' responses with observations of them. A disadvantage was that it took a long period of time to complete.

l) Method of Data Collection

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected using interviews and questionnaires. Structured interviews were formalised and involved standardised questions for the respondents (Abdullahi, 2004). Unstructured interviews were undertaken by taking note of responses to a list of questions on the subject matter.

Journals, textbooks, handbooks and manuals, review articles and editorials, literature review, informal discussions with experts, colleagues, seminars and conferences as well as published guides were used as sources of secondary data.

The importance of consulting secondary sources of data and information was recognised in the study. Hakim (1982) noted the need for researchers to consider the possibility of re-analysing an existing data in order to answer their research questions and meet their research objectives.

Data on the Internet were located using search tools. The World Wide Web was searched for information. The convenience of the Web and the extraordinary amount of information to be found on it are compelling reasons for using it as an information source (Cooper and Schindler, 2001). Search engines such as Yahoo (http://www.yahoo.com), Google (http://www.google.com) and MSN (http://www.msn.com) were used to access vast information on performance appraisal that assisted in the study. Other sources of information used include personal or informal discussions with associates and friends in the sector relevant to the study as well as personal documents provided by them. All sources of data, both primary and secondary sources were evaluated to ensure that they are relevant to the research objectives as well as assist the researcher to answer the research questions.

m) Methods of Data Analysis

The data resulting from the study could be both quantitative and qualitative and as such, need processing and analysis. The essence is to put the data in contextual form to enable the researcher answer the research questions as well as address the research objectives (Ihenacho, 2005).

Consequently, quantitative analysis using simple tables, pie-charts and bar charts were carried out in order to establish the relationships between the various variables. The analysis carried out enabled the researcher establish the relationships between variables and trends in patterns of associations.

III. Results and Discussion

This section attempts to analyse data generated from the study which include quantitative and qualitative information collected from the two groups of respondents. The two groups of respondents were staff of the Regional Education Office and teachers of Junior and Senior High Schools in the Kumasi metropolis. The instrument used for generation of the data analysed which is the questionnaire was structured in a way as to elicit as much responses as possible on the subject. The questionnaires were distributed and retrieved from these groups of respondents for analysis.'

The general distribution pattern of the questionnaires was as follows; twenty (20) questionnaires were distributed to staff at the Regional Education Office and one hundred (100) questionnaires were given to teachers in the Junior and Senior High schools in the Kumasi metropolis. Out of the twenty questionnaires sent to the staff at the Regional Education Office, ten was retrieved while for the one hundred (100) questionnaires sent to the teachers, seventy were retrieved. In all eighty questionnaires were retrieved. The retrieval rate for the questionnaires tendered in the survey was 66.67% and this was considered to be very reasonable considering the difficulties in getting people to respond to questionnaires on study of this nature in Ghana.

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The section also presents in a comprehensive manner the discussions on the analysis of the data generated from the survey. The objective of discussing the findings from the data analysis is to establish if the findings are supportive to existing knowledge on the subject matter of the research study or provided a new knowledge as well as strategies that could help improve performance appraisal in the Ghana Education Service.

Table 1: Age * Gender Crosstabulation

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Age	20-24	Count	1	1	2
		% of Total	1.2%	1.2%	2.5%
	25-29	Count	4	4	8
		% of Total	5.0%	5.0%	10.0%
	30-34	Count	7	8	15
		% of Total	8.8%	10.0%	18.8%
	35-39	Count	9	4	13
		% of Total	11.2%	5.0%	16.2%
	40-44	Count	23	10	33
		% of Total	28.8%	12.5%	41.2%
	45 and above	Count	8	1	9
		% of Total	10.0%	1.2%	11.2%
	Total	Count	52	28	80
		% of Total	65.0%	35.0%	100.0%

(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

Table 1 shows that 52 respondents representing 65% were males while 28 representing 35% were females. It can also be seen that 2 respondents were within the age group of 20-24 years, out which one (1) was a male and the other one (1) a female.

Eight (8) respondents were within the age group of 25-29 years, out of which four (4) were males and the other four (4) females. Fifteen (15) respondents were within the age group of 30-34 years, out of which seven (7) were males and eight (8) were females.

Thirteen (13) respondents were within the age group of 35-39 years, out of which nine (9) were males and four (4) were females. Thirty three (33) respondents were within the age group of 40-44 years, out of which twenty three (23) were males and ten (10) were females. Nine (9) respondents were 45 years and above, out of which eight (8) were males and one (1) was a female.

In analysing the data, the study revealed that more males were represented than females. It came out that those in the age group 40-44 years were in the majority. This was followed by those in the age group 30-34 years. Following closely were those in the age group 35-39 years. They were followed by those in the age groups, 45 years and above, 25-25 and 20-24 years in that order.

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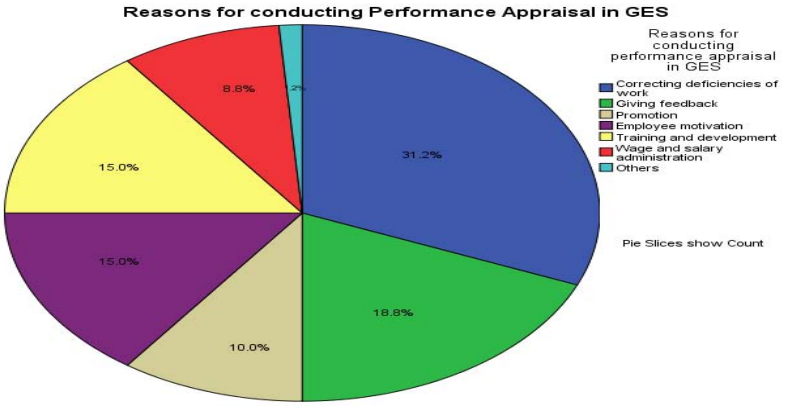

(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

Figure 1: Reason for conducting Performance Appraisal in the Ghana Education Service

Figure 1 shows that 25 respondents representing 31.2% said correcting the deficiencies of workers was the reason for conducting performance appraisal in the GES.

15 respondents representing 18.8% felt giving feedback on the work done by teachers was the reason for conducting performance appraisals in GES.

8 respondents representing 10% said promotion was the reason for conducting performance appraisal in the GES.

12 respondents representing 15% felt employee motivation was the reason for conducting performance appraisal in the GES.

Another equal number of 12 also representing 15% felt training and development was the reason for conducting performance appraisal in the GES.

7 respondents representing 8.8% felt wage and salary administration was the reason for conducting performance appraisal in the GES.

One respondent representing 1.2% felt there were other reasons for conducting performance appraisal in GES.

In analysis the data presented, the study revealed that correcting deficiencies of workers was the major reason for conducting performance appraisal. When performance appraisal is conducted, it helps to expose the deficiencies and shortcomings of the appraisees. It thus helps them to be aware of these deficiencies and the necessary steps are taken to correct or minimise them. This is confirmed by Latham and Wexley (1981) who have stated performance appraisal can be used for correcting worker deficiencies, among other benefits.

Another reason that was also cited by the respondents was giving feedback. The feedback helps the appraiser to know whether his/her performance was acceptable. It helps the appraiser to accept responsibility for their good or bad performance. This is also confirmed by Gabris (1986) in the literature that performance appraisal provide formal feedback to individual staff members.

Promotion was also mentioned by group of the respondents as the reason for conducting performance appraisal. Bannister and Balkin (1990) has reported that appraisees seem to have greater acceptance of the appraisal process, and feel more satisfied with it, when the process is directly linked to rewards. Frequent appraisal and feedback sessions help to ensure that employees receive the ongoing, guidance and support and encouragement they need.

Employee motivation was in the next in line as one of the reasons for conducting performance appraisal. Performance appraisal can have a profound effect on levels of employee motivation – for better as well as for worse. Performance appraisal provides employees with recognition for their work efforts. If nothing else, the existence of an appraisal program indicates to an employee that the organisation is genuinely interested in their individual performance and development. This alone can have a positive influence on the individual's sense of worth, commitment and belonging.

Training and development was also another reason for conducting performance appraisal. Performance appraisal offers an excellent opportunity for a supervisor and subordinate to recognise and agree upon individual training and development needs. Performance appraisal can make the need for training more pressing and relevant by linking it clearly to performance outcomes and future career aspirations. From the point of view of the organisation as a whole, consolidated appraisal data can form a picture of the overall demand for training. It helps appraisers to measure employee performance by examining the extent to which predetermined work objectives have been met.

Wage and salary administration was also mentioned as one of the reasons for conducting performance appraisal. Managers and subordinates

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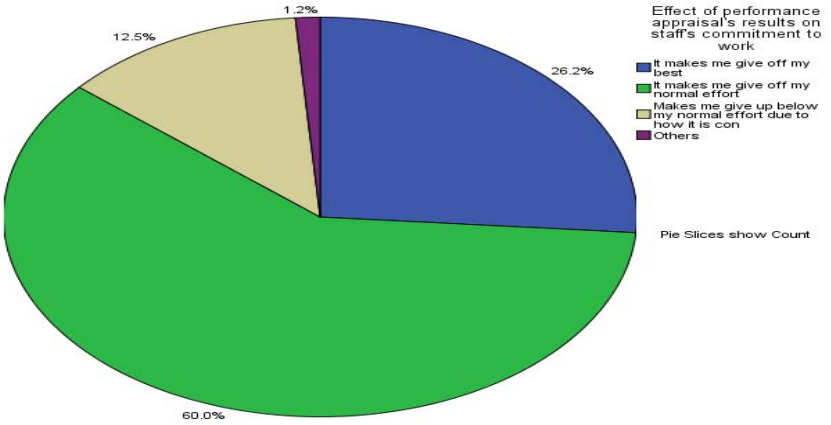
believe the performance appraisal helps to link pay to performance. Some managers use performance appraisal as a vehicle to administer wages and salaries. This is given credence by Tznier, et al (2000) that organisations generally use performance appraisal in administrative decisions such as salary allocations, among others.



(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

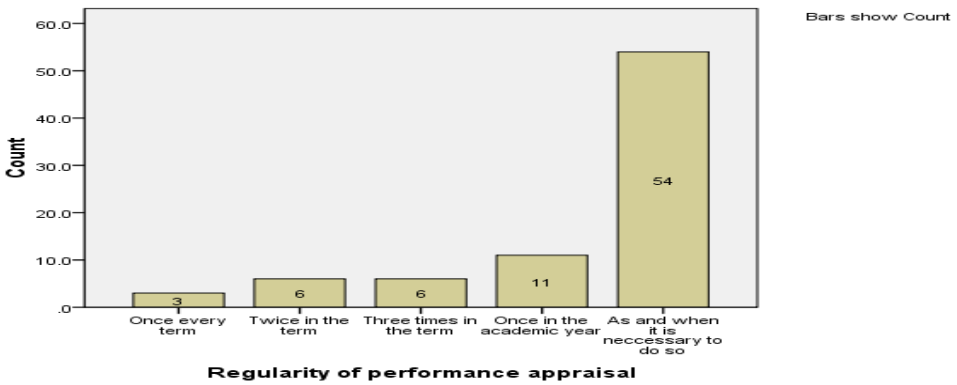
Figure 2: Effect of performance appraisal's results on staff's commitment to work

Figure 2 shows that 12.5% of the respondents said performance appraisal's results made them give up below their normal effort due to how it is conducted. 60% said it made them give off their normal effort. 26.2% said it made them give off their best. 1.2% said mentioned other effects.

In analysing the data, the study revealed that performance appraisal results made the workers give off their normal effort. They were not motivated much by the results of the performance appraisal and so they worked as normal as before the appraisal were conducted.

However, another said performance appraisal made them give off their best. Some of the employees said performance appraisal helped them to improve their performance and thus work to their utmost capacity. Nemeroff and Wexley (1979) have stated that employees are likely to feel more satisfied with their appraisal results if they have the chance to talk freely and discuss their performance. It is more likely that such employees will be better able to meet future performance goals.

Others said the results of performance appraisal made them give up below their normal effort due to how it was conducted. Performance appraisal was not conducted in a positive and friendly environment as some appraisers used it as a means of intimidating their subordinates. This has been confirmed by Greenberg (1986) that employees react more favourably to the appraisal process when it satisfied their needs and included an opportunity to state their position; when factors on which they were being evaluated were job-related; and when objectives and plans were discussed openly.



(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

Figure 3: Regularity of performance appraisal in the GES

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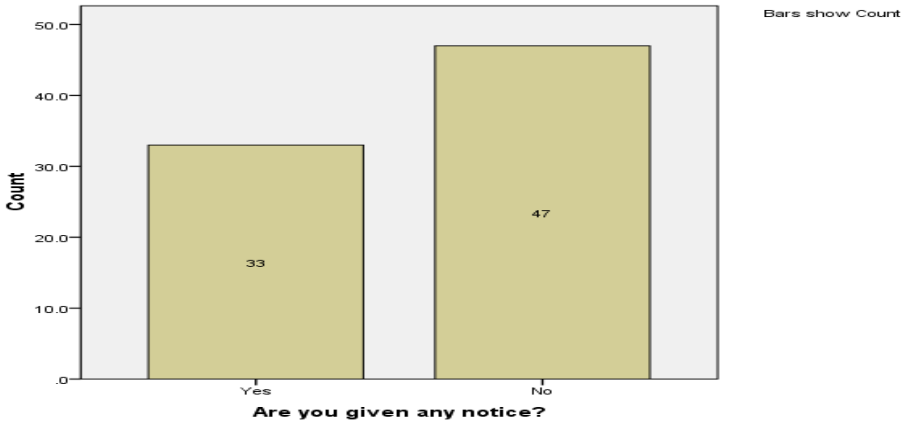
Figure 3 shows that 3 respondents said performance appraisal was conducted once every term. Six respondents said performance appraisal was conducted twice in the term. 6 respondents said performance appraisal was conducted three times in the term. 11 respondents said performance appraisal was conducted once in the academic year. 54 respondents said performance appraisal was conducted as and when it was necessary to do so.

In analysing the data, the study revealed that performance appraisal was conducted in the GES as and when it was necessary to do so. The GES undertook appraisal without any laid down time periods. Greenburg (1986) have argued that there is no such thing as an "ideal" appraisal format and system. Every organisation must design an appraisal instrument and process that supports the organisational goals that it wishes to accomplish. Ash (1994) says that participant acceptance of an organisation's performance appraisal system is perceived to be a critical factor in appraisal effectiveness.

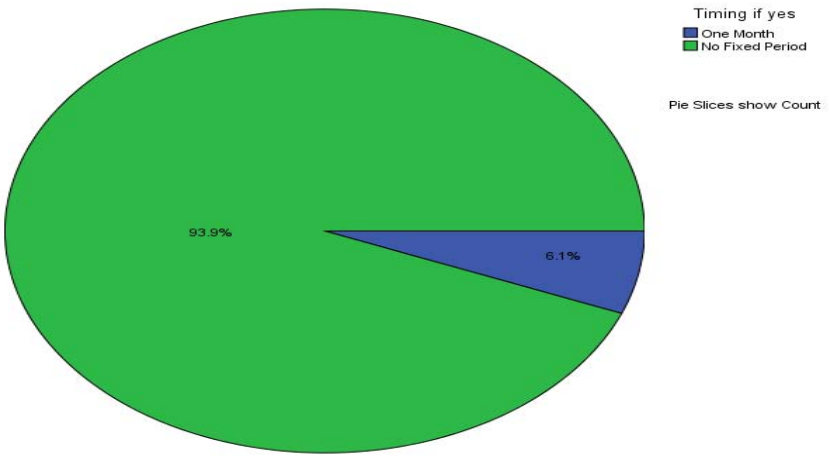


(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

Figure 4: Notice on the conduct of Performance Appraisal in the Ghana Education Service

Figure 4 shows that 33 respondents said they were given notice before the conduct of performance appraisal while 47 respondents said they were not given any notice before the conduct of performance appraisal.

In analysing the data, most of the respondents felt that they were not given any notice before the conduct of performance appraisal. Others, however, said they were given notice before the conduct of performance appraisal. Small (2007) says that plenty of notice and issue of an agenda must be given when setting up performance appraisal meetings. This could promote professionalism in the conduct of performance appraisals in the Ghana Education Service.



(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

Figure 5: Timing of Performance Appraisal in Ghana Education Service

Figure 5 depicts the analysis on the question of timing. 6.1% respondents said one month notice was given before the conduct of performance appraisal while 93.9% respondents said there was no fixed period for the conduct of performance appraisal in the Ghana Education Service.

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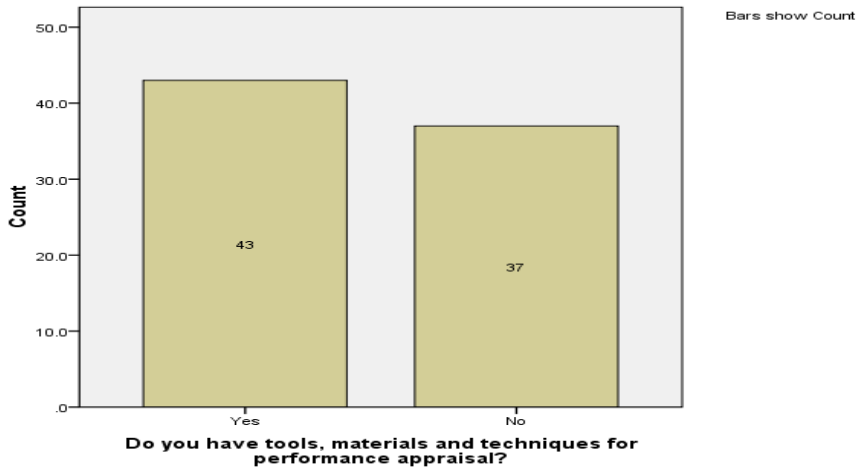
In analysing the data, a very large percentage of the respondents said there was no fixed period for the conduct of performance appraisal in the Ghana Education Service. Others, however, said they were given one month notice before the conduct of performance appraisals. When a period is fixed for conducting performance appraisals in organisations, workers become aware of their responsibilities and commit themselves to their schedules.



(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

Figure 6: Tools, materials and techniques for implementing performance appraisal

Figure 6 shows that 43 respondents said the GES have the tools, materials and techniques for conducting performance appraisal while 37 respondents said the GES did not have the tools, materials and techniques for conducting performance appraisal.

In analysing, most of the respondents said that the Ghana Education Service had the tools, materials and techniques for conducting performance appraisal. Others also felt that the Ghana Education Service did not have the tools, materials and techniques for conducting performance appraisals. When there are enough tools and materials, it helps officers to conduct effective performance appraisal. Officers and supervisors who have the requisite techniques are able to conduct effective performance appraisals.

Table 2

Biases associated with the Performance Appraisal Process

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Biases	29	36.2	36.2
	Favouritism	6	7.5	43.7
	It is difficult to measure quantitatively the amount of work done	4	5.0	48.7
	It sometimes leads to a situation where the strongest survive	1	1.3	50.0
	It tends to be discriminatory	4	5.0	55.0
	It tends to be mechanistic	2	2.5	57.5
	Personal affiliation to superiors by some section of subordinates	6	7.5	65.0
	Superiors are sometimes subjective in their appraisal of subordinates	1	1.3	66.3
	Superiors give some preferential treatment to some subordinates	6	7.5	73.8
	Superiors show some form of nepotism	5	6.2	80.0
	There is a halo effect	4	5.0	85.0

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	There is some form of leniency in cases where there is some relationship	5	6.2	91.2
	There is stereotyping	1	1.3	92.5
	Unfair treatment of some subordinates	6	7.5	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	

(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

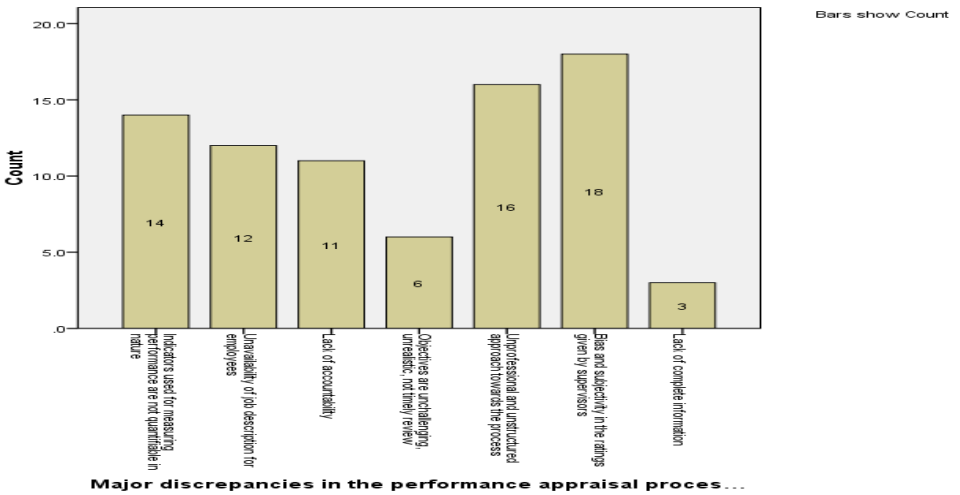
Table 2 shows that 29 (36.2%) respondents said there were no biases associated with the performance appraisal process.

6 (7.5%) respondents said there was favouritism. 4 (5%) respondents said it was difficult to measure quantitatively the amount of work done. 1 (1.3%) respondent said it sometimes lead to situation where the strongest survive. 4 (5%) respondents said it tended to be discriminatory. 2 (2.5%) respondents said it tended to be mechanistic. 6 (7.5%) respondents said superiors had personal affiliation to a section of the subordinates. 1 (1.3%) respondents said superiors were sometimes subjective in their appraisal of subordinates. 6 (7.5%) respondents said superiors gave some preferential treatment to some subordinates. 5 (6.2%) said superiors show some form of nepotism. 4 (5%) respondents said there was a halo effect. 5 (6.2%) respondents said there was some form of leniency in cases where there was some relationship. 1 (1.3%) respondents said there was stereotyping. 6 (7.5%) respondents said there was unfair treatment of some subordinates.

In analysing the data, the study revealed that the highly rated biases associated with the performance appraisal process was favouritism, personal affiliation to superiors by some section of the subordinates, preferential treatment given to some subordinates by superiors, and unfair treatment of some subordinates. Superiors were not very objective in their assessment of appraisees. Derven (1990) have expressed doubts about the validity and reliability of the performance appraisal process and have even suggested that the process is so inherently flawed that it may be impossible to perfect it.

Another revelation was that superiors showed some form of nepotism and also were lenient in cases where there was some relationship between them and subordinates. They treated subordinates they knew or were related to in some special way. Singh (2007) have stated that interpersonal relationships can influence the evaluation and the decisions in the performance appraisal process.

Other biases that were associated with the performance appraisal process were that it was difficult to measure quantitatively the amount of work done, it tended to be discriminatory and also there was a halo effort. The appraisers did not have a clear cut policy or standard for measuring the process and also displayed acts of discrimination towards the subordinates. They also used the same criteria approach for different people irrespective of their individual efforts and differences. This is given by credence by Türk and Roolaht (2005) who argue that the need to prove oneself all the time can cause burnout and also increases the possibility of being trapped by numerous tasks; and there is a Social Darwinism, that is only the strongest will survive.



(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

Figure 7: Major Discrepancies in the Performance Appraisal Process in the GES

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Figure 7 shows that 14 respondents said the indicators used for measuring performance were not quantifiable in nature. 12 respondents said there was unavailability of job description for employees. 11 respondents said there was lack of accountability. 6 respondents said the objectives were unchallenging, unrealistic and timely reviewed. 16 respondents said the approach towards the process was unprofessional and unstructured approach. 18 respondents said there was bias and subjectivity in the ratings given by superiors. 3 respondents said there was lack of complete information.

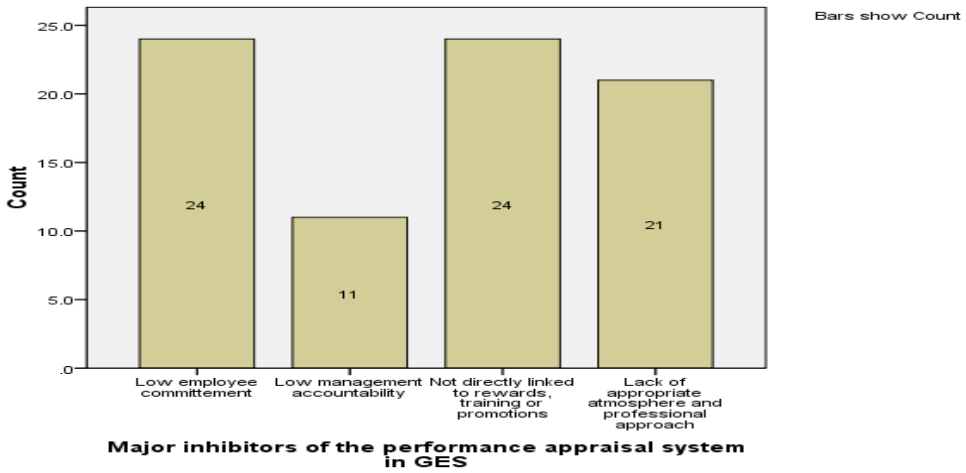
In analysing the data, the study revealed that the major discrepancy in the performance appraisal process in the GES was bias and subjectivity in the ratings given by supervisors. Supervisors displayed certain acts of bias towards some of the appraisers and were very subjective in the ratings they gave to appraisers.

Another revelation was that there was an unprofessional and unstructured approach towards the process. The performance appraisal process was not structured in any professional manner. It was done haphazardly in a manner that was convenient to appraisers.

The study also revealed that the indicators used for measuring performance were not quantifiable in nature and thus appraisers were very subjective in their ratings. Unavailability of job description for employees was also mentioned as one of the major discrepancies in the performance appraisal process in GES. The GES did not have a clear cut policy on the job description for their works and thus workers especially teachers were made to teach without any job description.

Lack of accountability was also mentioned as one of the major discrepancies in the performance appraisal process. Superiors did not take into account the strategic objectives of the organisation. It was viewed as a ritual event where managers evaluate employees' performance that rarely had close links to the overall mission and program of the GES.

Another discrepancy that was mentioned by the respondents was that the objectives set by the GES were unchallenging, unrealistically and not timely reviewed. The objective set by the GES did not challenge the workers in any high manner and were not reviewed timeously. They even conducted performance appraisal as and when it was necessary to do so.



(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

Figure 8: Major inhibitors of the performance appraisal system at the Ghana Education Service

Figure 8 shows that 24 respondents said one of the major inhibitors of the performance appraisal system in the Ghana Education Service was low employee commitment. An equal number of 24 respondents also said that one of the major inhibitors of the performance appraisal was that it was not directly linked to rewards, training or promotions. 21 respondents said lack of appropriate atmosphere and professional approach was also a major inhibitor of performance appraisal system in the Ghana Education Service. 11 said low management accountability was one of the major inhibitors of the performance appraisal system in Ghana Education Service.

In analysing the data, most of the respondents felt the major inhibitor of the performance appraisal was low employee commitment and lack of appropriate atmosphere and professional approach. When there is low employee commitment and lack of appropriate atmosphere and professional approach to issues of appraisal, workers tend to view the appraisal process with disdain and contribute less significantly towards it.

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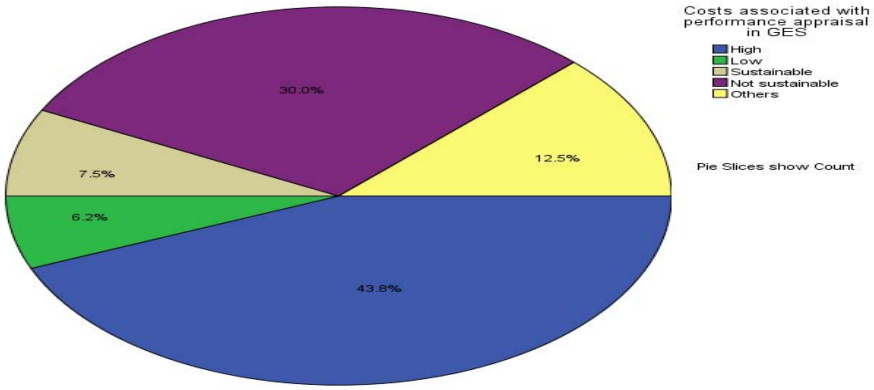
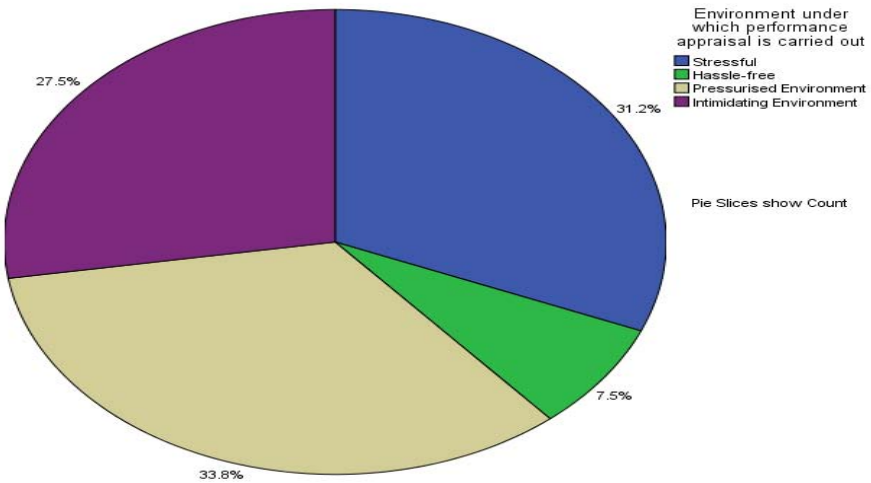


(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2008)

Figure 9: Costs associated with performance appraisal

Figure 9 shows that 43.8% said the cost associated performance appraisal in the Ghana Education Service was high while 6.2% said it was low. 7.5% said the cost associated with performance appraisal in the Ghana Education Service was sustainable while 30% said it was not sustainable. 12.5% mentioned other reasons.

In analysing the data, most of the respondents felt the cost associated with performance appraisal was high. The high cost associated with performance appraisal is a hindrance to the Ghana Education Service in conducting effective performance appraisals.



(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

Figure 10: Environment under which performance appraisal is carried out

Figure 10 shows that 33.8% of the respondents said performance appraisal was carried out pressurised environment. 31.2% said performance appraisal was carried out under stressful environment. 27.5% said performance appraisal was carried out under intimidating environment. 7.5% said performance appraisal was carried out under hassle-free environment.

In analysing the data, the study revealed that performance appraisal was carried out in a pressurised environment. In most instances, staff were not given any notice of the appraisal meetings and even pressurised to fill and submit forms in relatively short period of time.

Another section of the respondents mentioned that performance appraisal was conducted in a stressful environment. Performance appraisal was conducted in an environment where the managers dwelt on negatives and always pay particular attention to the weak points of the appraisees.

Others also said performance appraisal was carried out in an intimidating environment where the managers wanted to show subordinates that they were more superior to them. A small number of the respondents felt that performance appraisal was conducted in a hassle-free environment. Managers viewed the appraisal process in a much more favourable light and engaged subordinates in a two-way communication.

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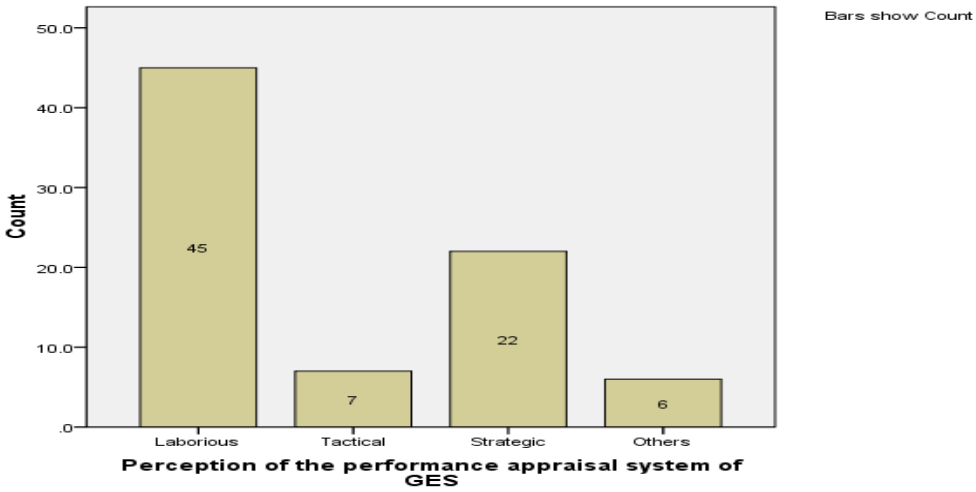

(Source: Researcher's Field Study, 2020)

Figure 11: Perception of Staff about Performance Appraisal in the Ghana Education Service

Figure 11 shows that 45 respondents said performance appraisal in the Ghana Education Service was laborious. 7 respondents perceived the performance appraisal system was tactile while 22 respondents perceived the system to be strategic.

In analysing the data, the study revealed that performance appraisal system was laborious. Appraisers and appraisees expended a lot of time and effort towards the appraisal system in the Ghana Education Service.

IV. Conclusion

a) Findings of the Study

i. *Benefits and Purpose of Performance Appraisal*

The research work examined the benefits and purpose of the performance appraisal and came out with several of these. Furthermore, the study described the extent to which an effective performance appraisal could be implemented and also the obstacles or challenges that were likely to be encountered in implementing and managing performance systems.

The need for this study was therefore imperative, primarily to assess the performance appraisal systems of the Ghana Education Service. Performance appraisal systems existed in the service but were not mostly linked to wage and salary administration, promotions and incentives as means of influencing performance. Performance appraisal was based on staff interviews and filling of statutory forms on an as and when it was necessary basis. The use of existing performance appraisal systems for determining skill gaps and training needs seemed less important to managers of the service. Feedback especially individualised feedback to staff on performance appraisals was almost absent in the Ghana Education Service. Staff meetings were however organised and seemed to cover broader welfare and institutional issues rather than direct performance of appraisees.

b) Recommendation

The following recommendations are suggested.

c) Policy on Performance Appraisal

The Ghana Education Service did not have a clear cut policy on the conduct of performance appraisal.

It is recommended that there should be a clear cut policy on the conduct of performance appraisal in the GES. Performance appraisal should be aligned with the GES mission and organisational culture. Performance appraisal schemes should take into account the strategic objectives of the organisation. There should be proper education on the intents and purposes of the performance appraisal systems. Adequate notice should be communicated to all interested parties before the process is undertaken.

d) Time for conducting Performance Appraisal

The Ghana Education Service did not have definite time for conducting performance appraisal.

It is recommended that performance appraisals should be made an informal and ongoing activity. Performance appraisal should not be done on an adhoc basis. Managers/officers can increase their appraisal effectiveness by scheduling periodic, informal appraisals with their subordinates on a regular basis. These mini-appraisals will encourage honest communication, give managers/officers an opportunity to monitor employee progress, provide the employee with an ongoing source of feedback, and help address minor problems before they build or snowball.

e) Environment for Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal was conducted in a non-friendly and non-intimidating and pressurised environment.

It is recommended that performance appraisal should be conducted in a friendly and non-intimidating environment. The environment should be welcoming for

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both appraisees and appraisers to give their maximum best to the exercise. Performance appraisal should be done in an objective manner. Performance should be measured by using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures to capture the complexity of the process. The process of assigning ratings should help minimise subjective aspects. It should not lead to a situation where the strongest survive and there should not be a halo effect.

f) Feedback

Appraisees were not given immediate and relevant feedback on their performance.

It is recommended that appraisees should be given feedback on their performance. Meaningful and accurate evaluation and feedback would help appraisees determine their strengths and weaknesses and take the necessary actions to improve their performance. There should be good communication and information dissemination to appraisees and there should be honest and accurate reporting with individual accountability for end results.

g) Training, Promotions and Financial Rewards

Training, promotions and financial rewards are not directly linked to the results of performance appraisal.

It is recommended that training, transfers, lay-offs, promotions and demotions, should be directly linked to the results of the performance appraisal process as it reveals the strengths and weaknesses of employees. Employee appraisal data should be used for determining any increases in wages and salaries for employees. It should help to diagnose the training and development needs of employees. It should be used for the correct purposes and help to identify the gaps in desired and actual performance and its causes.

h) Funds, Materials and Equipment

The Ghana Education Service did not have much funds, materials and equipment to conduct performance appraisal.

It is recommended that there should be enough funds, tools, materials and equipment to undertake an effective performance appraisal. The Ghana Education Service should provide all the necessary logistical support to help undertake successful appraisals in the service.

i) Skill Training for Managers or Appraisers

The appraisers lacked the training to conduct effective performance appraisal.

It is recommended that there should be appraisal skill training for managers or appraisers to enable them develop specific appraisal skills and confidence that can enable them to effectively evaluate others.

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