

**PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES AND CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEES IN SELECTED COMMERCIAL  
BANKS IN LAGOS STATE**

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**Abstract**

*The study examined the nexus between performance appraisal practices and career development of employees in commercial banks employees in Lagos State. The study adopted the survey research design. The simple and stratified random sampling techniques were used. A sample size of 450 respondents was drawn from the target population of 1,399 senior employees of nine (9) out of the twenty (20) commercial banks which have their headquarters in Lagos State and are quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. Four hundred and fifty (450) copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents, 307 representing 68 percent were returned and used for analyses. Findings from the correlation analysis showed that performance appraisal practices and career development of employees were significantly correlated ( $r=0.442$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The regression analysis result shows that the career development of employees is significantly affected by performance appraisal practices in the Commercial Banks, and also as a strong predictor of employee career development i.e. having a predictive relationship). This study proposes/recommends that banks should go beyond the performance-related pay outcome of performance appraisal as well as derive desired behaviour/attitude on the job. They should emphasize more career development objectives of performance appraisal. From the foregoing, it is recommended that banks should adopt appraisal systems that will motivate employee contribution to organisation profit and further enhance employee career development. The HR practitioners in banks should guide management to redesign, implement and practice performance management systems/programmes that will support employees to enhance their competencies and develop their careers in the banking industry in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Appraisal, Career, Development, Employees, Performance.

## **1. Introduction**

Every organisation uses multifarious techniques and tools to measure the performance of its employees and for various purposes. When an employee had been duly engaged in a job, it is pertinent to evaluate employees' performance on the basis of the objectives of an organisation. Consequently,

the expected performance is expressed in terms of productivity, indexed as output per unit input. Performance appraisal is the process and technique of evaluating individual and team performances either annually or bi-annually. It entails deciding on how employees execute their responsibilities/jobs as well as future potential in achieving the goals and objectives of an organisation. Organisations use appraisal mechanisms to ascertain the reward and the developmental needs of employees as well as employees' strengths and weaknesses. However, for employees to be effective in their jobs, they need to be motivated to perform their jobs optimally (Abdulkadir, 2012). As Welch (2005) argues, a good performance system allows people to be conversant with their standing in the organisation, the extent they can progress in the organisation, and what their performance improvement needs are. From the foregoing, therefore, this present study seeks to ascertain the effect of performance appraisal practices on the career development of employees in the studied commercial banks in Lagos State.

## **2. Literature Review**

This section examines the conceptual framework as well as the theoretical underpinning of the study.

### **2.1 Conceptual Framework of the Study**

Employee and organizational performance are measurable and can be managed especially when there are definite or defined goals and targets. According to Bates and Holton (1995), performance as a construct is multi-dimensional, and measuring it involves a variety of factors. It is a prerequisite for goal setting and feedback (Latham, Sulsky & Macdonald, 2007). Armstrong (2009) posits that the earliest performance evaluation system took place in AD 221- 65 during the Wei dynasty when the emperor engaged an 'imperial rater' to appraise the performance of the official family. As noted by Armstrong (2009), the first official evaluation system is traceable to the scientific management principles of Frederick Winslow Taylor at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the 1920s, a performance evaluation system was used to evaluate the performance of officers in the U.S armed services. The formal performance appraisal system later spread to the United Kingdom in the 1950s and 1960s.

Performance appraisal involves the process and practice of assessing employees' work behaviour, and focuses on qualitative and quantitative dimensions of job performance. An evaluation system entails the process whereby employees are communicated about their job performance periodically which could be annually or bi-annually. The outcomes of the appraisal are then used as the basis for establishing a plan of improvement where necessary. Performance is the degree of achieving set goals. It is the degree of accomplishing the variety of tasks that make up a job.

Performance differs from the effort, which is the exertion of energy. Performance measurement is concerned with results or outcomes. For instance, students exert enormous effort while preparing for an examination but managed to get a poor grade, which means effort is high; performance is low. Performance is the extent to which an individual, unit, or department carries out set assignments or tasks. It is not limited to fault finding but focuses on employee development and provides opportunities for joint action. It makes managers to be coaches rather than judges. The overall objectives of a sound and effective performance appraisal are to evaluate the employee's performance, communicate his/her performance using defined criteria and use the data generated to make decisions pertaining to pay, promotion, and training to name a few. An appraisal is also used to discover the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation, e.g. developing a healthy relationship. Other objectives are:

- i. **Compensation decision:** It is used to discover employees who perform at par or above expected performance levels and reward such employees based on merit rather than seniority or performance-related pay.
- ii. **Human capital development programmes:** It is used to formulate appropriate learning and development programmes for employees in an organisation. That is, it brings out the deficiencies and offers the necessary training to fill existing skill gaps.
- iii. **Personal Development:** It serves to stimulate and guide employee development by telling the employee how he fared, such employee could also be informed on what to do to improve his present performance.
- iv. It makes for a better employer-to-employee relationship through mutual confidence as a result of frank discussion.

Every organisation decides on what is to be appraised. The objective of performance evaluation may be to contribute to the organization's objectives, cost-effectiveness i.e. quality, quantity (amount produced in monetary terms), need for training, returns on capital, employee behaviour & attitude, and personal characteristics. The objective of appraisal may vary with the purpose of the appraisal, type, and the level of employees concerned. It may also vary from company to company and is mainly determined on the basis of job analysis exercises (Rao, 2005).

### **Conduct of appraisal**

This provides an answer to the question of 'Who appraises? The appraiser should be one who is knowledgeable about the contents of jobs or what is to be appraised, understands the expected standards, observes the employee while performing the job, determines what is important or otherwise, and should make judgments without bias. There are four approaches to responsibility for formal performance appraisal.

- i. **Supervisor Rating Subordinate:** The common norm is that the immediate superior assesses employees' performance on the job. The outcome could be further reviewed by the head of the department or management. In some cases, it could be done by a group of superiors/supervisors. However, the appraisal of the immediate superior officer is usually very important in the appraisal of their subordinates. This is because the immediate superior is directly responsible for managing the subordinate, and has the opportunity to observe, direct and control them continuously. However, the superior officer could lay more emphasis on certain dimensions of performance at the expense of others.
- ii. **The peers or colleagues:** In this approach, the employee is rated by his/her workers on the same organisational level. However, this approach is common in the military and academic to identify leadership potential and then qualities in the business organisation.
- iii. **The subordinate:** As superiors evaluate the performance of subordinates, it could also be vice-versa in that the superior would be rated provided the relationship between the two is cordial. Such rating could be useful in identifying competent superiors and help to improve their performance.
- iv. **Self-appraisal:** In this form of appraisal, employees are allowed to assess their performance on the job. This is based on the premise that they understand their set objectives on organisational standards. If properly done, it could be a drive to self-development and motivation.

### **Recent development in performance appraisal**

Performance appraisal practices have witnessed some changes in recent times. Conventionally, the performance evaluation of employees has been left solely to managers/ supervisors. Currently, many organisations have observed the need to extend the appraisal process beyond supervisors/managers to enhance the objectivity of the process. As noted by Bowles and Coates (1993), appraisal is conceived as more crucial in the maintenance employees' commitment and loyalty than in directly managing employees' performance. The shrinkage in careers especially in delayered and flat organisations, HRM system/procedure of performance appraisal have become important managerial tools in inspiring and controlling the workers (Redman, 2006). Recent improvements in reward systems, harmonisation and the increased use of merit- and performance-based pay systems have been robustly connected to the development of performance appraisal. As Redman (2006) noted, the traditional or conventional systems of performance appraisal have reemerged in new forms. Employees are increasingly being appraised not only on the basis of objective measures such as productivity and quality, attendance, and timekeeping but also on more subjective aspects such as initiatives, loyalty, dependability, and flexibility to name a few.

**Upward Appraisal** - This is an emerging trend in performance evaluation. It entails the rating of superiors'/ managers' performance by their subordinates using an anonymous questionnaire. The anonymous nature of the appraisal is to avoid being victimized in the event of low ratings given to superiors and for honesty in the entire process. Anonymity prevents the likelihood of managerial 'retribution' or what is termed the 'get even' factor of upward appraisal. The proponents of upward appraisal claim that there are significant benefits to adopting it such as increased employee voice and empowerment, improved managerial effectiveness, and leadership through 'make-you-better feedback'. Appraising the performance of managers using upward appraisal is gaining currency in many organisations. Thus, the aim is to align managerial actions/behaviour with corporate values and mission statements through the incorporation of questions into appraisal forms meant to be completed by employees (Redman & Snape, 1992).

**Customer Appraisal** – The management of quality as espoused by the Total Quality Management (TQM) principle is critical to customers' care and satisfaction. Customers' care has become the vogue and is widely used by organisations in the private and public sectors to ensure customers' loyalty and satisfaction (Redman & Wilkinson, 2006). The usage of service guarantees entails the payment of monetary compensation in the event that organisations fall short of expected standards. Customer appraisal has prompted greater use of customer data via a variety of methods such as surveys, customer care cards, telephones surveys, and interviews in performance appraisal ratings.

**Team-based appraisal** - Redman (2006) noted that work is increasingly being restructured with the use of highly interdependent work teams. This involves giving teams the task of assigning responsibilities, selecting new staff, setting bonuses, and disciplining errant members. There are two main variants; the managers appraise the team as a whole, targets are set, performances are measured/ assessed; rewards are allocated as with traditional individual appraisals. The manager does not attempt to differentiate one team member from another. In the other variant, the individual member of the team is appraised by peers and not by the management. Team members appraise each other usually via the use of an anonymous rating questionnaire.

**Competency-based appraisal** – Redman, and Wilkinson (2006) describe competency-based appraisal as the use of the proficiency approach to developing an integrated human resource strategy. They further noted that employers have increasingly extended their use from performance appraisal to learning and development, selection, and reward management to name a few.

**360° feedback performance appraisal**

The 360° feedback appraisal is an all-encompassing method for evaluating employee performance. Using this method, feedback is generated from different people or sources external and internal to the organisation, such as peers, subordinates, supervisors as well as customers (Redman, 2006). It is a veritable performance appraisal system for evaluating individual employee performance and team performance against some set standards or goals. The 360° feedback appraisal enables the rater to compare the various results. It is possible to let individuals know where their self-perceptions differ from those that others have of them.

**Performance management versus Performance appraisal**

Performance appraisal is one of the components of performance management, which is a series of activities designed to ensure that the organisation gets the performance it needs from its employees and determine how well employees do their job relative to a standard, and communicate that information to the employee (Mathias & Jackson, 2008). A significant difference exists between performance appraisal and performance management. According to Longo (2011), some employers misinterpret their meanings as well as the scope of each of the HR functions. Table 1 shows a graphic comparison of the two processes. Performance appraisal can be considered a process that aims to assess and rate employees' performance (Armstrong, 2006) or review employees' performance. Redman (2006) noted that performance management was imported from the U.S. like many HRM innovations. Mabey and Salaman (1995) opined that performance management is a set of procedures that has the following features:

- i. It provides necessary information on the performance of the human resource and their strategic contributions to the realization of organisational objectives.
- ii. It is a technique to achieve maximum objectives for given inputs; and
- iii. It is a means for examining the functionality of the process as well as performance against objectives.

Bevan and Thompson (1991) view performance management as:

- i. a collective dream/vision of an organisation transmitted through the vision and mission statements to all stakeholders.
- ii. performance goals/targets of employees which are connected to the departments/ units and the objectives of the organization.
- iii. periodic and standard official evaluation of progress towards set targets/goals.
- iv. an assessment of the efficiency of the entire process and the role/contributions to the bottom-line or organisational profitability.

**Table 1: Performance Management versus Performance Appraisal**

<b>Performance Management</b>	<b>Performance Appraisal</b>
It is strategic	Operational
It is a long run	Short to mid-run goals
It is forward-looking	Retrospective
It is constant	Episodic
It is a process	System
It is integrated	Isolated from business needs
It is managed by an agreement	Management by command
It is holistic	Individualistic
It is managers' –owned	HR owned
It is simple and adaptable	Rigid and inflexible
It is focused on an individual's growth	Focused on individual's past mistakes and misbehavior
It is practical and effective	Bureaucratic and superficial
It is mainly focused on the qualitative aspect of performance	Mainly focused on the quantitative aspect of performance
It can be linked to total reward	Can be linked to financial reward

**Source:** Longo, R. (2011), HR professionals (online).

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

The Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity (AMO) theory was adopted for the study. According to the AMO theory: Performance = Ability + Motivation + Opportunity. Ability implies the skills as well as competencies necessary for performance. Motivation connotes the drive or force towards a particular action or behaviour. Opportunity refers to favourable circumstances or situations relevant to performance. According to MacLinnis and Jaworski, (1989), motivation directly has an effect on individual action or behaviour which in turn is affected by ability and opportunity. Considering the hierarchy of needs theory by Maslow, self-fulfillment/actualization which is at the apex of the pyramid is the ultimate goal that all aspire to achieve. Thus, career development is pivotal to self-fulfillment/actualisation. The AMO enables a more theoretically and specific understanding of the linkage between HR practices and employees retention. Organisations use varied techniques and programmes to plan their employees' careers; which play an important role in maintaining a balance between an individual's needs such as (development, promotion, and job security) and the organisation's need (trust, commitment, employees' loyalty). Career development and management policies on the capacity building can give a supportive climate for human capital development (Greenhaus & Callanan, 1994). Consequently, both career planning and career management processes when properly communicated will help individuals to get information about their skills (strength & weakness), identify their career goals (an employee's dream & desire), and involve themselves in career activities and techniques in order to achieve career goals.

Different organizations define competencies in different ways; while most organisations use competencies as synonymous with knowledge, skills, or ability required to get a job done. Competencies are used to create unique standards within disciplines and specialties. It is more than knowledge, but rather includes the understanding of knowledge, technical, and communication skills, and the ability to solve problems through the use of judgment. Competencies are behavioural indicators peculiar to a particular context, Roberts (1997) defines competencies as ‘all work-related personal attributes, knowledge, experience and skills and values that a person draws on to perform their work well. Many employers develop competency models for jobs i.e. a graphic model that consolidates, usually in one diagram, a precise overview of the competencies someone/an employee will need to do a job well (Dessler, 2011). Career planning must be centered on building competencies; consequently, the individual employee has a significant role in self-career management supported by the organisation. This must be properly communicated to employees in such a way that will enable them to see the career ladder before them clearly. Employees take responsibility for their career aspirations and planning by identifying their values, interests, and competencies/skills (Leibowitz, Farren & Kayen, 1986). However, a well-designed employee career development system enables organisations to tap into these resources to match the needs of the organisation. Career development involves efforts directed at evaluating the potentials of employees, identifying likely career paths for employees, and designing and implementing various forms of training and experience to prepare them for more advanced jobs whether now or in the future. Career development has organisational and personal dimensions. At the organisational level, it involves a planned programme designed to match the needs of the individuals with those of the organisation (Peterson & Tracey, 2000). The essence of career development is to align the career aspirations of employees with opportunities and challenges that exist within an organisation. The focus of career development is to successfully place employees in positions for which they are economically most useful. Therefore, the career planning of employees must be taken seriously by organisations/ managers so that talents can be nurtured to cope with the rapidly changing operating environment or milieu as well as for future human resource requirements by organisations (Aplin & Gerster, 1987). Career development entails the results which are derived from the interactions of employee career planning and institutional career management processes (Hall & Associates, 1986).

### **Research Hypothesis**

**Ho:** Performance appraisal practices are not significantly related to the career development of employees in commercial banks in Lagos State.



### 3. Methods

The adopted research design for the study is the survey design considering the large population of the study. The survey research design is most suitable as respondents' views/ opinions are required to proffer answers to the research questions (Bordens & Abbott, 2002). The study population comprises employees of the chosen commercial banks in the Nigerian economy. Senior employees of nine (9) quoted commercial banks with head offices in Lagos State were randomly selected. The size of the population is 1,399 employees as obtained from various annual reports of the banks. Four hundred and fifty (450) sample size were drawn from the population. Both the simple and stratified random sampling techniques were used. With a view to selecting equal sample size of 50 from each of the banks surveyed, the proportional stratified sampling technique was used (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). The 4-point Likert scale, which measures the degree of the responses, was used. Response options range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4).

### 4. Results

The outcome of the test of the hypothesis revealed that performance appraisal practices have a significant effect on the career development of employees, with a *p-value* of 0.000. This is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). The  $R^2$  value of 0.195 indicates an approximately 20% variation in the banks' performance appraisal practices which accounted for the employee career development. The result of the study also revealed that this effect was not a chance occurrence with an F-ratio value of 73.576 ( $p < 0.05$ ), which shows the strength of the performance appraisal as a predictor for the career development of employees in the studied Commercial Banks in Lagos State.

#### Table 2 Regression Analysis

**R = .442**

**R<sup>2</sup> = .195**

**Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .193**

**Standard Error of Estimate = .29998**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remarks
1	Regression	6.621	1	6.621	73.576	.000 <sup>a</sup>	Significant
	Residual	27.266	303	.217			
	Total	33.887	304				

a Predictors: (Constant), Performance Appraisal Practices. Significant at  $F=73.576$ ;  $P < 0.05$

b Dependent Variable: Employee Career Development.

## 5. Discussion of findings

With an MIS of 3.52, quite a number of the respondents believed that the organisation's performance evaluation tools enhance employee career development. 253 (83 percent) of the sampled employees of Commercial Banks agreed that performance is enhanced by the performance management system adopted by their organisation, while 52 (17 percent) did not agree with the adopted practices. This shows that employee performance management information is vital to the decision-making on employees matters, especially when it provides adequate feedback to employees on their performance. The result of this hypothesis shows that the performance appraisal system adopted by the sampled banks has a moderately high correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.442$ ) with the employee career development in the sampled Commercial Banks. The F-ratio value of 73.576 confirms that performance appraisal practices are correlated with the employee career development of the sampled banks. This is consistent with the findings of Bowles and Coates (1993) who found that performance appraisal is important in promoting employee loyalty and commitment as well as the notion that employees are valued organisational assets (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). It was also revealed that performance appraisal practices have a significant effect on the career development of employees. It revealed appraisal practices as strong predictors of employee career development i.e. a predictive relationship. Performance-related pay schemes exist in the banks to achieve performance targets; while the adopted appraisal system is used to motivate employees' contribution to organisational profit.

**Table 3 Perceptions of Respondents on Performance Appraisal practices**

S/N	Statement	N	SA	A	U	D	MIS	STD
1	Formal employee performance appraisal programme is used for decision making in this organisation	306	148 (29.3%)	137 (60.0%)	20 (9.3%)	0 (2.4%)	3.41	.63
2	The feedback from the appraisal system is used to motivate employees' contribution to organisation's profit margin.	305	99 (25.0%)	165 (64.5%)	38 (7.7%)	03 (2.8%)	3.18	.68
3	Performance-related pay schemes exist in the organisation to achieve performance target.	305	104 (34.8%)	145 (51.6%)	49 (9.4%)	07 (4.9%)	3.13	.77
4	There is constant evaluation of employees in preparation for higher job roles in this organisation	305	73 (30.2%)	167 (63.0%)	60 (4.8%)	05 (2.0%)	3.01	.71
5	My organisation's performance evaluation tools enhance employee career development	305	88 (42.4%)	165 (37.2%)	46 (16.7%)	06 (3.7%)	3.52	.63

**Source: Field survey**

**Legend: N= Total Response, SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree, MIS=Mean Item Score, STD= Standard deviation.**

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Every organisation needs to know the strengths and weaknesses of its employees; in the same vein, employees need to know how he/she is performing. How employee performance is managed may go a long way to determine how employees are motivated and by extension contribute to the growth of the organisation. It is evident from the findings that SHRM practices of performance appraisals, influence positively employee career development. The study revealed the importance of accommodating employee needs in building a strategic competitive advantage that should embrace congruence between individual and organisational goals. It emphasizes the importance of self-management strategies with proper perceptions and adjustment to the prevailing new work order. Appraisal has many benefits; it provides a medium for systematic evaluation in support of pay/salary progression/reviews, advancements/promotions, transfers, and the provision of feedback on actual performance so that improvement could be brought about through attitudinal changes, behavioural modifications as well as personal development (McKenna & Beech, 2002).

It is hereby proposed/ recommended that banks should go beyond the performance-related pay outcome of performance appraisal as well as derive desired behaviour/ attitude on the job. They should emphasize more career development objectives of performance appraisal. From the foregoing, it is recommended that Banks should adopt an appraisal system that will motivate employee contribution to organisation profit and enhance employee career development. The HR practitioners in Banks are to guide Management to redesign, implement and practice performance management systems/programmes that will support employees to enhance their competencies and graciously develop their careers in the banking industry in Nigeria.

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