

Impact of Performance Appraisal on Employee Performance in Nigerian Telecommunication Industry (A study of MTN, Nigeria)

Sajuyigbe, Ademola S. (Ph.D)

Department of Business Administration & Management

Osun State Polytechnic, Iree

sajuyigbeademola@yahoo.com

Abstract

Many organizations are experiencing low productivity due to lukewarm attitudes of their management to performance appraisal system. Organizational training needs can only be identified from performance appraisal outcomes. Performance appraisal system has been identified as an alternative paradigm to high productivity and performance. The study, therefore examined the impact of performance appraisal system on employee's performance in Telecommunication sector. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select two hundred and sixty (260) respondents from the total population of one thousand three hundred (1,300) employees of MTN, Nigeria. Data were sourced through a structured questionnaire and personal interview. Analysis of data was performed with the aid of Mean, Standard Deviation and Linear Regression. Results revealed that the level of performance appraisal awareness is high among the staff of MTN, Nigeria. Results also established that performance appraisal system has significant impact on employee's performance. Results also revealed that inability to provide on time feedback is a challenge to performance appraisal system in MTN, Nigeria. Subsequently, the study recommended that management should be objective during appraisal exercise, provide regular feedback and offer career development in order to help an organization wins the desired competitive advantage.

Keywords: *Appraisal, Performance, Employee, MTN, Human Resource Management.*

Introduction

Performance appraisal is one of Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP) that has been well researched in both developed and developing countries and it has equally been identified as a strong motivator. Performance appraisal is considered as important human resource function because performance appraisal results are used for managerial decision making and for variety of other purposes including administrative decisions, employee development and personnel research (Muhammad & Surayya, 2013). According to Fletcher (2001), performance appraisal has increasingly become part of a more strategic approach to integrating human resources activities and business policies which can be seen as a generic term covering a variety of activities through which organizations seek to assess employees and develop their competence, enhance performance and distribute rewards. In the same vein, Anso (2014) attests that performance appraisal has emerged as a tool for enhancing organisational growth and professional development. Performance appraisal is a continuous process through which performance of employees is identified, measured and improved in the organization. This process includes various practices like identification of employees' strengths and weaknesses, providing them regular feedback and offering career development (Aguinis, 2007). Grubb (2007) also sees performance appraisal as a process of

assessment individual employee's performance and how it can be improved to contribute to overall organization's performance.

In the world of globalization, there are a lot of cut - throat competitions in the market, especially in the Telecommunication industry. The advent of deregulation of Telecommunication sector in Nigeria has brought competition to the industry. MTN, Nigeria is one of Global Systems Mobile Communication (GSM) operators that has the largest coverage and known for a large number of subscribers and effective service delivery. The company maintains a leading position in Nigeria as an infrastructure provider to other telecom operators and corporate customers of the country (www.mtnonline.com). However, the increasing number of subscribers on daily basis can make the job stressful for employees due to pressure from management. The success of the MTN, Nigeria in term of quality of network services, dependable and consistent in solving customers' complaints and ability to provide variety of value added services depends on the calibre of its employees.

Human resource is the most valuable asset having the greatest potential in determining the statuesque of an organization in today's competitive business world (Belete, Tariku & Assefa, 2014). In order to survive and wax stronger in this global competition, employees have to be motivated through performance appraisal system (Kumbhar, 2011). In line with this assertion, Grote (2011) observes that an organization without a suitable and consistent performance appraisal will experience failure and poor performance of its employees. Chemedda (2012) also opines that to continue enjoying efficiency and effectiveness of members of staff, each organization has to carry out employee performance appraisal from time to time so as to keep them in check and replace, motivate, retain or take any other appropriate action.

Statement of the Problem

Many organizations experience low productivity despite their acclaimed effective performance appraisal system (Armstrong, 2006). In Nigeria, many organizations are experiencing low productivity and performance due to ineffective appraisal system. Performance appraisal is viewed and conducted solely in terms of its evaluative aspect thereby overlooking its use for facilitating growth and development in workers through training, coaching, counselling and feedback of appraisal information (Asamu, 2013). The inability of many organizations to install an effective performance appraisal strategy has hindered them from achieving competitive advantage (Obisi, 2011). Some of the questions bothering the mind of the researcher are; what is the level of awareness of existence of performance appraisal in MTN, Nigeria?; What impact does the performance appraisal system have on employee performance? And what are the problems that hinder effectiveness of performance appraisal in MTN, Nigeria?

This study justified the need for a detailed explanation in this area if the Nigerian Telecommunication industry is to achieve its vision of taken a leading position in the global Telecommunication space.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of performance appraisal on employee performance in MTN, Nigeria. Other specific objectives include;

- i. To determine the level of awareness of existence of performance appraisal in MTN Nigeria.
- ii. To assess the impact of performance appraisal on employees performance.
- iii. To identify the problems to effective performance appraisal system in MTN Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

H₀: Performance appraisal has no significant impact on employee's performance.

H₁: Performance appraisal has significant impact on employee's performance.

Theoretical Framework

Performance appraisals of employees, which are typically scheduled annually or semi-annually, are one of the most important human resource management practices and have been widely researched (Kampkotter, 2014). Tsai and Wang (2013) see performance appraisal as one of the most critical tools for managers to assess the performance of employees. According to Boswell and Boudreau (2002), performance appraisals are used for a variety of reasons such as promotions, pay rises, detailed and valuable feedback, and career progression. According to Muhammad and Suraya (2013), performance appraisal system is not only an important tool of human resource management to develop their employees, but is also used by different companies to reward their employees in form of bonuses, promotions, and pay raise. Aguinis (2007) defines performance appraisal as a continuous process through which performance of employees is identified, measured and improved in the organization. This process includes various practices like recognition of employees' achievements, providing them regular feedback and offering career development. According to DeNisi and Pritchard (2006), performance appraisal is a diagnostic tool for evaluating employee performance against set objectives with a view towards identifying their potentials for improvement and development. Performance Appraisal systems helps the organization to accomplish their mission and vision by judging effectiveness of the employees i.e. recruitment, selection, training and development (Jain & Garg, 2013).

Performance Appraisal and Employees performance

According to Maund (2001), appraisal is a key component of performance management of employees. When effective, the appraisal process reinforces the individual's sense of personal worth and assists in developing his/her aspirations. Bekele et al., (2014) affirm that performance appraisal has positive and significant relationship with employee's performance. Cumming (1972) writes that the overall objective of performance appraisal is to improve the efficiency of an enterprise by attempting to mobilize the best possible efforts from individuals employed in it. Such appraisals achieve these four objectives including salary reviews, development and training of individuals, planning job rotation and assisting in promotions.

Meysen, Mohammad and Ebrahim (2012), Maimona (2011), and Behery and Patron (2008) also attest that performance appraisal has significant impact on employee's performance. Cokin (2004) also admits that performance appraisal system is important for organizations, as it mainly focuses on employees to develop their capabilities. In the same vein, Malcolm and Jackson (2002) summarize the benefits of performance appraisal to the organisation as the effective basis for retention of employees, reward decisions; targeted training based on identified needs and future employee promotion decisions. In another study, Jonsson and Jeppesen (2012) relate the benefits of performance appraisal to affective commitment on the part of the employees. They opined that employees can influence the growth of the organisation through commitment leveraged by effective relationship between individuals including supervisor-subordinate relationships.

Problems in Performance Appraisal

Lawler (2000) notes that performance appraisals have been the most praised, criticized and debated management practices for a number of decades. According to Bekele,

et al., (2014), performance appraisal practice has been criticized due to lack of skills and knowledge of the supervisors, the subjectivity, favouritism and bias of the supervisors, lack of continuous documentation and inability to provide on time feedback. Employees' perception towards the performance appraisal system is adversely affected and they express dissatisfaction about the implementation of performance appraisal practice (DeNisi & Pritchard, 2006). Vroom (1990) also confirms that managers tend to balk at the appraisal process, particularly the interview. The author notes that managers tend to have a normal dislike for criticizing a subordinate, and often mistrust the employee performance appraisal system instrument. Studies also identify five different types of problems in performance appraisal such as; an unfair perception of performance appraisal system, the use of inconsistent criteria which may lead to negative attitude towards the appraisal system, unskilled appraisers who lack communication skills and consequently are not able to conduct an effective performance feedback, absence of tools aiming at improving the performance appraisal system and finally the lack of the senior management support (Kampkotter, 2014; Muhammad & Suraya, 2013; Armstrong, 2006; Vroom, 1990).

Brief History of MTN, Nigeria

MTN Nigeria Communication Limited is a Subsidiary of a South African owned Multinational telecommunication group by name MTN Group. The birth of MTNN (MTN Nigeria) was necessitated by the dare need of Nigerian government to ensure that communication is made available to every citizen, as a result of which the Nigerian Telecommunication regulatory body (Nigerian Communication Commission) carried out a GSM auction in the year 2001. MTNN obtained the first operational license on February 9, 2001, at the sum of US\$285 million for a period of 15 years to provide a 900 and 1800MHZ 2G network within Nigeria. The very first call on MTNN network was initiated on May 16, 2001, and in August 2001 business Operations kicked off in three major cities in the country namely Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt. Over the years MTNN has consistently evolved from just being a 2G Telecoms Company to 3G in March 2007 and soon to become a full-fledged LTE ICT provider by 2013. MTNN has remained the Nigeria number one since 2001 till date. It is also on record that MTNN has made tremendous impact on the lives of the Nigerian Citizens in terms of investments, career, products, services and engagements in corporate social responsibilities (www.mtnonline.com).

MTN, Nigeria existing in a rapid changing environment due to extreme competition, government policies, challenging cost demands and poor infrastructure in Nigeria, has been able to maintain the leading position in the Nigeria telecommunication space for the past 10 years. MTN, Nigeria has the largest market share, the most profitable company and highest company paying tax in Nigeria. Remarkably MTN have achieved this feat, through strict compliance to its business core values and mission. Having achieved all the mile stones as mentioned, there is still room for improvement with regards to network quality and coverage, and overall customer service and satisfaction. MTN, Nigeria being the "Nigeria number one" has successfully built an expansive network covering 88.8% of Nigerian Land Mass and thus provides network access to 86.2% of the population, these spans across 2840 cities, towns and villages in the whole 36 states of the federation including the federal capital territory (FCT). MTN also provides interconnection services to other telecoms networks (www.mtnonline.com).

Methodology

Research Design

This study makes use of survey research in order to assess thoughts, opinions, and feelings of participants through a structured closed ended questionnaire. A structured questionnaire is to guide the respondents not go astray of the topic and researcher adopted snowball technique in the distribution of questionnaires among the staff of MTN Nigeria. The survey research design was used based on the recommendation of Wyse (2012) that survey is relatively easy to administer and can be developed in less time and more also it can be administered remotely via online, mobile devices, mail or telephone.

Sampling Method and Sample Size

Simple random sampling technique was employed to select two hundred and sixty (260) respondents from the total population of one thousand three hundred (1,300) employees of MTN, Nigeria. The sample size was determined by the formula suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003).

Measures

The items used in the study were:

Performance Appraisal System Scale: This scale was used to measure performance appraisal. The scale was developed and validated by Bekele *et al.*, (2014). It is a Likert type scale anchored on 5-point rating scale. Its response format ranges from “strongly agree” (5) to “strongly disagree” (1). The performance appraisal scale consists of twelve (12) items with reliability alpha coefficient of .912.

Employee Performance Scale: This scale was used to assess employees’ perceived levels of performance. The scale was developed and validated by William and Anderson (1991). It is a Likert type scale anchored on 5-point rating scale. Its response format ranges from “strongly agree” (5) to “strongly disagree” (1). It consisted of 11 items and the authors reported Crombach reliability alpha of .91.

The scales were subjected to further item analysis as to determine their psychometric soundness as indicates in Table 1;

Table 1: Summary of results of the measurement instruments validation

Scale	No of Items	Meaning Bartlett	KMO	Eigenvalue of the principal component	% of the variance	α of Cronbach
Performance appraisal Questionnaire	10	p = .000 (significant)	0.775	3.072	71.78%	0.79
Employee’s performance Questionnaire	12	p = .000 (significant)	0.812	3.588	73.03%	0.81

Source; Author’s Computation, 2017

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed with aid of Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and Linear Regression. Criterion mean of 3 was generated by adding the total assigned values of

the responses and dividing by the total number of responses ($5+4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 15/5 = 3$). Thus any mean score up to 3 and above was interpreted as acceptable by respondents while 2.99 and below is adjudged rejected by the respondents.

Model specification

The present study estimates one regression model. The model seeks to investigate the impact of performance appraisal system on employee's performance. The specification of this model is as given below.

$$employee'performance_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 performance\ appraisal_i + e_i$$

Where;

β_0 = intercept

β_1 = regression coefficient

e = stochastic error term

Data Analysis and Discussion

Awareness of Existence of Performance Appraisal System in MTN, Nigeria

Table 2 reveals that majority of respondents with one hundred and four (40%) agreed that the level of performance appraisal awareness is very high, seven two (27.7%) agreed that performance appraisal awareness is high, fourthly five (17.3%) agreed that the level of awareness is low while only thirty nine (15%) agreed that the level of awareness is very low. This indicates that majority of staff do aware of performance appraisal system in their organization.

Table 2: Awareness of Performance Appraisal among the Employees

Level of Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	104	40
High	72	27.7
Low	45	17.3
Very low	39	15
Total	260	100

Source; Field Survey, 2017

Level of Perceived Performance Appraisal among the Staff of MTN, Nigeria

Table 3 reveals that majority of respondents with one hundred and thirty (50%) agreed that the level of performance appraisal in MTN, Nigeria is manageable. Ninety eight (37.61%) respondents agreed that the level of performance appraisal is outstanding while only thirty two (12.4%) respondents agreed that the level of performance appraisal is below expectation. The mean performance appraisal score of the respondents was 34.12 and standard deviation was 5.86. From this, it is clear that majority of the respondents had manageable level of performance appraisal. This implies that management of MTN, Nigeria should seek to enhance its employee's motivation so that they become satisfied toward the performance appraisal system.

Boswell and Boudreau (2002) confirm that performance appraisal system could only be satisfied if organizations motivate their employees in term of promotions, pay rises, detailed and valuable feedback, and career progression. In the same vein, Muhammad and Suraya (2013) note that performance appraisal system is not only an important tool of human resource management to develop their employees, but is also used by different companies to reward their employees in form of bonuses, promotions, and pay raise. In another study, Bekele *et al.*, (2014) also affirm that people experience outstanding performance appraisal

when organizations creating trust on the mind of employee about performance appraisal, establishing organizational plans for the career and development of employee and providing opportunity to employee to suggest improvement in the ways things are done.

Table 3. Level of Perceived Performance Appraisal

Level of Job Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Out standing	98	37.6
Manageable	130	50
Below Expectation	32	12.4
Total	260	100
Mean	34.12	
Standard Deviation	5.86	

Source; Field Survey, 2017

Level of Perceived Employee's Performance among the Staff of MTN, Nigeria

It is observed from the Table 4, that one hundred and forty - five (55.76%) respondents agreed that the level of their performance is outstanding; one hundred and two (39.23%) respondents agreed that the level of their performance is manageable while only thirteen (5.01%) respondents agreed that the level of their performance is below expectation. The Mean employee's performance score of the respondents was 54.18 and Standard Deviation was 18.51. From this, it is clear that majority of the respondents have outstanding level of job performance. This implies that performance appraisal system has direct link to employee's performance.

Table 4. Level of Employee's Performance

Level of Job Performance	Frequency	Percentage
Out standing	145	55.76
Manageable	102	39.23
Below Expectation	13	5.01
Total	260	100
Mean	54.18	
Standard Deviation	18.51	

Source; Field Survey, 2017

Problems to Effective Performance Appraisal System in MTN, Nigeria

The table 5 scores a grand mean of 3.3 which is above the criterion mean of 3. This shows that respondents agreed that the above listed items are the challenges that confront performance appraisal, except lack of skills and knowledge of the supervisors. However, a grand mean of 3.3 shows significant level of acceptance of the items as challenges to performance appraisal in MTN, Nigeria. Furthermore, results show that inability to provide on time feedback was most challenge of performance appraisal in MTN, Nigeria.

The result is similar to the work of Bekele *et al.*, (2014) who discover that major hindrances of performance appraisal system are; lack of objectivity during appraisal, favouritism and bias of the supervisors, lack of continuous documentation and inability to provide on time feedback. The result is also similar to the findings of Cole (2004) who discovers that not strict with the appraisal outcome, poor remuneration of employees, problem of effective communication, lack of funding, irregularity in promotion of staff, poor leadership by the superior, work load not evenly distributed, lack of objectivity during appraisal, incompetency on the part of supervisors, delay in decision making and non-

rewarding of hard work or overtime are major factors affecting performance appraisal system in organizations.

Table 5: Mean Response Scores on the Problems Hindering Effectiveness of Appraisal System in MTN, Nigeria

Statement	Observation	Mean	Remark
Lack of skills and knowledge of the supervisors	260	2.91	Rejected
Favouritism and bias of the supervisors	260	3.59	Accepted
Not strict with the appraisal outcome	260	3.09	Accepted
Lack of continuous documentation	260	3.20	Accepted
Problem of effective communication	260	3.02	Accepted
Inability to provide on time feedback	260	3.71	Accepted
Non-rewarding of hard work or overtime	260	3.21	Accepted
Lack of objectivity during appraisal	260	3.67	Accepted
Grand Mean		3.3	

Source; Field Survey, 2017

Testing of Hypothesis

H₀: Performance appraisal has no significant impact on employee's performance.

H₁: Performance appraisal has significant impact on employee's performance.

Impact of Performance Appraisal on Employee's Performance

The result of the regression model shown in table 6 indicates the value of the regression coefficient $R = 0.362$, $R^2 = 0.131$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.127$ and the model $F = 39.557$ and significance level of $P = .000$ indicates that the model is significant at 1%. The performance appraisal accounted for 13.1% of variance of employee's performance, while remaining 76.9% could be due to the effect of extraneous variables. Therefore, the prediction of employee's performance by the performance appraisal variable was not due to error.

The beta coefficient of the model in table 6 indicates the beta value of the constant is 2.647 whereas; the beta value for the performance appraisal is 0.398. The t-value of 6.289 and the p-value of 0.000 indicate the model is significant at 1%. Therefore, the beta coefficient of 0.3985 implies the level of employee's performance is increase by 39.85% if performance appraisal increases by one unit. This implies that performance appraisal is a strong predictor of employee's performance. As highlighted in Youngcourt, Leiva and Jones (2007), performance appraisal through employee assessment has invaluable contributions to the state of the organization in terms of individual and organizational advancement including career development, professionalism and enhanced business operations.

The result corroborates with the work of Bekele *et al.*, (2014), who discover that performance appraisal has positive and significant relationship with employee's performance. In support of this result, Muhammad and Suraya (2013) attest that performance appraisal system is an important tool of human resource management that influences employee's performance. In another study, Meysen *et al* (2012), Maimona (2011), and Behery and Patron (2008), confirm that performance appraisal is an alternative paradigm to employee's performance.

Therefore, null hypothesis which states that performance appraisal has no significant impact on employee's performance is rejected while alternative which states that performance appraisal has significant impact on employee's performance hypothesis is accepted.

Table 6: Regression Result of Performance Appraisal and Employee's Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
1	.362 ^a	.131	.127	.56961	1.936	
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	85.332	1	12.834	39.557	.000 ^b
	Residual	12.834	263	.324		
	Total	98.166	264			
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.647	.283		9.366	.000
	Performance Appraisal	.398	.063	.362	6.289	.000

Source; Author's Data Computation, 2017

Discussions

The study focuses on the impact of Performance appraisal on employee's performance. Specifically, the study determines the level of awareness of existence of performance appraisal; assesses the impact of performance appraisal on employee's performance, and also identifies problems to effective performance appraisal system in MTN, Nigeria. The obtained results show that the level of performance appraisal awareness is high among the staff and performance appraisal system has significant impact on employee's performance. Results also reveal that inability to provide on time feedback was a challenge to performance appraisal in MTN, Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the level of performance appraisal awareness is high among the staff and the performance appraisal system plays a very vital role in contributing to high performance of employees in MTN, Nigeria. However, study reveals that inability to provide on time feedback, lack of objectivity during appraisal, favouritism and bias of the supervisors, non-rewarding of hard work or overtime, not strict with the appraisal outcome, and lack of continuous documentation are major short comings of performance appraisal system in MTN, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that:

- i. Management of MTN, Nigeria should provide regular feedback and offer career development. This will enable its staff to identify areas of their strengths and weaknesses.
- ii. Management of MTN, Nigeria should be objective during appraisal exercise. The employees should be sent on training, seminars, workshops and programs based on their job roles and performance irrespective of their cadres or status.

- iii. Management of MTN, Nigeria should continue to evaluate and audits the performance of its employees in order to help the organization wins the desired competitive advantage.
- iv. Performers should be rewarded accordingly so as install confidence in the appraisal system.

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