

**PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AS AN EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT TOOL IN THE  
STATE OWNED UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN GHANA**

**By**

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**Abstract**

*Performance appraisal is viewed as a distinct and formal management procedure used in the evaluation of employees' work performance. There has been considerable growth and interest in the process in recent years as a result of the fact that it is considered as one of the most important requirements for a successful business and human resource development. Productivity is very important in every organization. This is because it is only with high level of productivity that an organization's strategic goals can be achieved. Organizational productivity depends largely on the interplay of certain factors namely, capital, technology and human resource. This study discusses the impact of performance appraisal on librarians in six state owned university libraries in Ghana. In particular, it explains the concept of performance appraisal, methods used in appraising employees and how far it is being implemented in the state owned university libraries in the country. The challenges facing these institutions in implementing effective performance appraisal strategy are highlighted. Appropriate recommendations and solutions to the problems identified are suggested to ensuring quality service delivery.*

**Keywords:** Job evaluation, performance appraisal, work ethics, human resource development, performance indicators, performance interview, academic libraries, Ghana

**Introduction**

Traditionally, academic institutions only collected and reported data about their academic library's operating expenditures, staffing levels, and holdings for accreditation purposes and annual reports, without linking those data to usage or outcomes and performance of staff (Wolff,

1994). According to Pritchard (1996), “the main objective for academic libraries, especially in an environment of increasing economic pressure . . . must be to align themselves with the structures of higher education and the criteria by which those institutions are judged”. The library and information science profession should therefore, move beyond inputs and instead focus on the performance measures associated with the academic library resources and services to ensure quality service delivery.

Although according to DeNisi and Pritchard (2006), performance appraisal in academic libraries has been a subject of research dating back as far as the early 1920s, most of the studies have focused on developed countries compared to the developing countries particularly Africa south of the Sahara. Moreover, a number of these studies have concentrated on the rating system rather than its effectiveness as a management tool and also in other disciplines such as business and psychology rather than in the library and information profession. Even in the university setting, emphasis has been limited to the human resource department of the parent institution rather than the library. The objective of this study therefore, is to fill this research gap of the concept of performance appraisal in relation to university libraries in Ghana.

Performance appraisal has a number of important uses. It is frequently used in organizations as a basis for administrative and corporate decisions such as employee promotion, dismissal, transfer, and allocation of financial rewards, employee development (including identification of training needs and performance feedback) and personnel research. It provides an excellent opportunity for employee and supervisor to communicate on a one-to-one basis about their goals and general direction to their staff. Performance appraisal can also help librarians to observe their subordinates more effectively, to do a better job of coaching, developing and to motivate them. It again encourages high levels of employee motivation and performance. Through an appraisal system, good performers know that their efforts are valued and appraised while poor performers also know that their lackluster performance needs improvement. In addition, it provides an avenue for both good and poor performers to know their strengths and weaknesses and ways in which they can improve their performance in the future. Another reason for conducting performance appraisal in academic libraries is to ensure that staff training takes place on a regular basis.

The performance appraisal process has come under intense criticisms because of the growing influence of the principles of total quality tools and practices used by globally competitive corporations and other organisations including academic and research libraries. Among the criticisms include the seemingly impossible task of obtaining accurate appraisal of employee job behaviour, a difficulty most often attributed to faults in the rating format used, deficiencies in appraisal content, rater resistance to judging others, and the implications of the specific purpose of appraisal for the rater and the ratee. In addition, supervisors are often reluctant to conduct performance appraisals because of the feelings of retribution, alienation, and personal failure. Appraisal reliability and validity still remain a major problem in most appraisal systems, and new (and presumably improved) appraisal systems are often met with substantial resistance. In essence, effective performance appraisal in organizations continues to be a compelling but unrealized goal.

Performance appraisal can be structured or unstructured and are of different types namely trait, behaviour or results which can be carried out by manager/superior appraisal, self-appraisal, team appraisal, peer appraisal, subordinate appraisal and customer/user appraisal. Whether librarians or managers appraise performance in terms of traits, behaviour and results, the information they assess is either objective or subjective. Objective appraisals are based on facts while subjective appraisals are based on managers' perception. Librarians and managers often use objective appraisals where results are being approved because results tend to be easier to quantify and are accurate, compared to subjective appraisals where the results are likely to be inaccurate because they are based on the managers' perceptions.

Academic libraries' services worldwide have changed very fast in recent times owing to the changes in society and the education system as well as advent of information technology that has led to changes on the information landscape. In the view of Payne (2005), academic libraries "must be able to demonstrate the value of what they are doing and provide evidence of the impact that they are making". They must therefore manage staff, and other information resources effectively to provide quality services to satisfy the user's expectations. In particular, academic and research libraries should consider it as an important tool of appraising their staff because of

the unique position they occupy in the colleges, universities as well as the institutions in which they serve.

This paper therefore looks at performance appraisal as an effective management tool in state owned academic and research libraries in Ghana. It defines the concept performance appraisal, discusses the types of appraisal systems, who appraises performance, the benefits associated with performance appraisals, methodology used for the study, the findings and discussions based on the data analyzed as well as the challenges confronting librarians in carrying out performance appraisal in their libraries.

### **Definition of Performance Appraisal**

The term “performance appraisal” refers to the process by which an individual’s work performance is assessed. In other words it is the formal process of observing and evaluating an employee’s performance. The Online Dictionary of Library and Information Science, (2012) defines performance appraisal as “a structured formal interaction between a subordinate and a supervisor that usually takes the form of a periodic interview, in which the work performance of the subordinate is examined and discussed with a view to identify weakness, strength and opportunities for improvement and skills development”. It is also defined as “a systematic and periodic process that assesses an individual employee’s job performance and productivity in relation to certain pre-established criteria and organizational objectives” (Wikipedia, 2012).

Lansbury (1988) defined performance appraisal as “the process of identifying, evaluating and developing the work performance of the employee in the organization, so that organizational goals and objectives are effectively achieved while, at the same time, benefiting employees in terms of recognition, receiving feedback, and offering career guidance”. Performance appraisal involves the process of evaluating the performance and the behaviour of individuals in the context of their specific positions of employment (Painter, 1994).

It could be concluded from the above definitions, that performance appraisal is the formal assessment and rating of individuals by their managers, usually on an annual basis with the

primary objective of improving the performance of the individuals and the institutions, thereby creating a more positive working environment for all concerned.

### **Types of Performance Appraisal**

Basically, there are three main types of performance appraisal, namely traits, behaviour and results performance appraisals.

#### ***Trait Appraisals***

Trait appraisals are used when managers assess subordinates on personal characteristics that are relevant to job performance such as skills, abilities or personality. For example, a social worker may be appraised based on his empathy and communication skills. Among the disadvantages of trait appraisals are: Firstly, possessing certain personal characteristics does not ensure that the personal characteristics will actually be used on the job and result in high performance. For example, a social worker may possess empathy and communication skills but be a poor performer due to low motivation. Moreover, traits do not always show a direct association with performance; workers and courts of law may view them as unfair and potentially discriminatory. Also, they do not enable managers to provide employees with feedback that they can use to improve performance (Middlesex Community College, 2009).

#### ***Behaviour Appraisals***

Through behaviour appraisals, managers assess how workers perform their jobs – the actual actions and behaviours that workers exhibit on the job. Whereas trait appraisals assess what workers are like, behaviour appraisals assess what workers do. For example, with a behaviour appraisal a manager might evaluate a social worker on the extent to which he looks at clients when talking with them, expresses sympathy when they are upset, and refers them to community counselling and support groups geared toward the specific problem they are encountering. Behaviour appraisals are especially useful in determining ‘how workers perform their jobs’. In academic and research libraries, how they organise their resources is important. Also important is how the users are taught to effectively access these resources to ensure that learning takes place. Behaviour appraisals have the advantage of providing employees with clear information about what they are doing right and wrong and how they can improve their performance. It is

also much easier for employees to change than the traits performance appraisals (Middlesex Community College, 2009).

### ***Result Appraisal***

With result appraisal, managers appraise performance by the results or the actual outcomes of work behaviours. For some jobs, how people perform the job is not as important as what they accomplish or the results or the actual outcomes of work behaviours (Middlesex Community College, 2009).

### **Who Appraises Performance?**

Often times it is assumed that managers or supervisors of employees are the only people who evaluate performance. This is indeed a reasonable assumption because supervisors are the most common appraisers of performance. However, appraisals by managers can be usefully augmented by appraisal from other sources such as individual employees, managers/supervisors, subordinates, peers, team, and customers.

### **Self-Appraisal**

Self-appraisal is used when managers supplement their evaluation with an employee's assessment of his/her own performance. A self-appraisal system requires an employee to complete the appraisal form prior to the performance interview. This system of assessment allows the employees to think about their strengths and weaknesses which may consequently lead to discussion on barriers to effective performance. Sometimes it would be beneficial if employees are asked to evaluate themselves on a self-appraisal form. Critics of self-appraisal, however, argue that self-raters are more lenient than managers in their assessment and tend to present themselves in a highly favourable light (Middlesex Community College, 2009).

### **Manager / Superior Appraisal**

This system of performance appraisal is done by an employee's manager and is often reviewed by a manager one level higher. The Manager or Superior appraisal has been the traditional approach to evaluating an employee's performance. This is because, in most instances the supervisors are in the best position to perform this function, although it may not always be possible for them to do so. Managers who might not have the requisite time to fully observe the

performance of employees often delegate such functions to their Line Managers/Heads of Department. Such managers then rely on performance records to evaluate an employee's performance. If reliable and valid measures are not available, the appraisal may be less than accurate (Middlesex Community College, 2009).

### **Subordinate Appraisal**

Performance appraisal of a superior by an employee, is more appropriate for developmental than for administrative purposes. Subordinate appraisal is used by both large and small organizations to give managers feedback on how their subordinates view them. Subordinates are in a good position to evaluate their managers since they are in frequent contact with their superiors and occupy a unique position from which to observe much performance-related behaviour. In the university setting, the assessment of lecturers by students could be described as subordinate appraisal system. The major setback of this system is those managers who are appraised by their subordinates may fail to take needed but unpopular actions out of fear that their subordinates will appraise them negatively (Middlesex Community College, 2009).

### **Peer Appraisal**

This system of appraisal is provided by an employee's co-workers especially when subordinates work in groups or teams. Here, individuals of equal rank who work together could be asked to evaluate each other. The feedback from peer appraisals can motivate team members while providing managers with important information for decision making. A peer appraisal provides information that differs to some degree from ratings by a superior, since peers often see different dimensions of performance. Peers can readily identify leadership and interpersonal skills along with other strengths and weaknesses of their co-workers.

A major advantage of peer appraisals is the belief that they furnish more accurate and valid information than appraisals by superiors because the supervisors often see employees putting their best foot forward, while those who work with their fellow employees on a regular basis may see a more realistic picture. Among the shortcomings of peer appraisals are that peer ratings are simply a popularity contest; managers are reluctant to give up control over the appraisal

process and those receiving low ratings might retaliate against their peers (Middlesex Community College, 2009).

### **Team Appraisal**

Performance appraisals based on total quality management (TQM) concepts recognize team accomplishment rather than individual performance. An extension of the peer appraisal is the team appraisal. While peers are on equal standing with one another, they may not work closely together. In a team setting, it may be nearly impossible to isolate an individual's contribution. Advocates of team appraisal argue that, in such cases, individual appraisal can be dysfunctional since it detracts from the critical issues of the team. A company's interest in team appraisals is frequently driven by its commitment to TQM principles and practices. At its root, TQM is a control system that involves setting standards (based on customer requirements), measuring performance against those standards and identifying opportunities for continuous improvement (Middlesex Community College, 2009).

### **Customer Appraisal**

Sometimes customers or clients provide assessments of employee performance in terms of responsiveness to customers and quality of service. Under this system, managers establish customer service measure (CSMs) and set goals for employees which are linked to employee pay through incentive programmes. This will enable managers produce more objective evaluations, more effective employees, more satisfied customers, and better business performance (Middlesex Community College 2009).

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Evaluating employee performance in academic libraries is not a new phenomenon in the library and information profession. However, not much emphasis has been given to this subject by library administrators particularly in Africa south of the Sahara. A survey of library literature revealed that most academic libraries have implemented some type of performance appraisal although some disparities have existed regarding the process and the goals sought to achieve them. According to Arnold (2005), university libraries perform staff evaluation in line with

the rules and procedures set out by their parent institutions which in most cases are conducted based on the guidelines set forth by the Human Resource Department (HRD) of these institutions. In his view, such centrally devised appraisal systems have failed to address the differences in activities from one department to the other. Evans (2005) conducted a study and concluded that 90.6% out of the total of 407 librarians interviewed agreed that performance appraisal is necessary for good supervision. According to him, a further question posed to these interviewees on whether they feel comfortable in conducting performance appraisal in their libraries revealed that 83.3% of them answered in the negative, while 16.7% answered in the affirmative. This shows how librarians have down played performance appraisal as an effective tool in managing their libraries.

Aluri and Reichel (1994), on their part stated that although many librarians favoured the performance appraisal process as a viable organizational tool, a noticeable attitude of skepticism pervade the literature regarding the effectiveness of such evaluation tools, especially as they relate to achieving the institutional goals and objectives of the library. Kaehr (1990) opined that majority of the studies carried out on performance appraisals seemed to indicate its acceptance as an ingredient of the management process, although most treatises did not see appraisal as the perfect panacea many assume it to be.

A few studies have expressed their reservations about the suitability of the appraisal system particularly in academic libraries. Evans and Rugaas (1982) stated that performance appraisals in most cases have focused on the process of conducting it at the expense of any distinct conclusions or objectives. According to Edwards and Williams (1998), many library administrators rarely took performance appraisals seriously, and failed to understand the vital link that connected their personal goals with the organizational behaviour. They claim that, academic librarians were reluctant to pursue a more objective approach to the evaluation process because very little opportunity existed for them to provide inputs concerning the overall process. In the view of Stueart and Moran (2002), instead of making performance appraisal decisions on the basis of supervisors' subjective decisions, a well documented assessment can help management make reasonable and sound personnel related decisions such as wage and salary treatment. Cohen (1989) suggested that the methods used for implementing the performance

appraisal process were approached from a very superficial perspective and therefore the use of a reliable and constructive data on job performance were oftentimes ignored in favour of personal and subjective information. He argued that instead of academic librarians stating specifically what to measure, what components to control, and why one application variable leads to another, they concentrate only on appraisal schemes that only touched the tip of the subject.

Hansen (1995) also conducted an in-depth study of staff appraisal schemes in three British university libraries in 1993 and concluded that the library using its own appraisal scheme devoted more time and attention to it as against those which applied general appraisal schemes. The study also revealed that when recommended follow-up actions such as enabling attendance at training courses were followed up, staff showed more interest in appraisals.

George (1995) opined that academic librarians disliked the performance appraisal system because they were not involved in developing the appraisal instrument although studies abound on the use of performance appraisal tools in libraries by these librarians. According to Jenkins (1990), workshops focusing on the new and emerging technologies, cataloguing, and the Internet are given more prominence in most academic libraries than seminars and instructional sessions on human resource issues such as performance appraisal. In her view, this attitude has remained consistent for quite a long time and needs to be addressed.

Perspectives on Africa have been carried out by Onuoha (2009) whose study sought to identify the perception of library staff on the effect of performance appraisal on productivity and career growth as a way of enhancing the provision of information services through effective performance appraisals. He concluded that majority of the respondents felt that performance appraisal has a positive influence on job performance and enhances career growth. He further concluded that performance appraisal can only be meaningful if employees' job descriptions were reviewed to include job performance and recommended that academic librarians should conduct their own appraisals separate from the university-wide appraisal system using the guidelines set by the H.R.D. for the sole purpose of correcting the deviations and weaknesses that would be identified for their improvement.

Based on the above studies, it could be summed up that academic library administrators implement staff performance appraisal in their libraries, some disparities however exist regarding the process used and the goals they seek to achieve. This problem has arisen because of the attention that these libraries have paid to performance appraisal systems compared to other issues and concerns in the modern academic library. If academic libraries must survive in the changing information age then, their approach to the performance appraisal system must be carefully looked at since they are implemented to provide specific documentation regarding current and future personnel actions such as promotions, salary increases, staff development opportunities, and disciplinary action that may be required to correct problematic situations.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study used a qualitative method in examining the Performance Appraisal Systems in the six public university libraries in Ghana to identify and analyze the similarities and differences between them with regard to the variables selected for this research. The main instrument for data collection was the use of interviews. The interview schedule was made up of open ended and close ended questions which sought to find out:

1. Personal information on the interviewee, including gender, age, status, number of years spent in their current grade, level of education etc., and
2. The study factors including whether these institutions have a formalized system of performance appraisal, purpose and ways of conducting it and the respondents' opinions about

performance appraisal. In addition, secondary sources of information such as books, journals and the Internet resources were used.

The population was made up of the University Librarians or their Deputies of the six public university libraries in Ghana namely: the University of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Cape Coast, University of Education, Winneba, University for Development Studies and University of Mines and Technology. All the six libraries were therefore covered giving a 100% response rate.

Qualitative methods such as the thematic analysis were used to summarize and analyze the data. For purposes of anonymity, the university libraries were categorized as UL A, UL B, UL C, UL D, UL E and UL F respectively. This was to enable the interviewees give accurate responses to the question without any fear of victimization.

### **ANALYSIS OF DATA**

#### **Gender Characteristics of Interviewees**

The sex characteristics of the interviewees showed that there were predominantly more males compared to females as far as the interviewees are concerned. Out of the six Librarians interviewed, only two were females, while the remaining interviewees were males.

#### **Status of Interviewees**

An assessment of the status of the interviewees reveals that there were two substantive University Librarians and four Deputy Librarians who responded for their superiors. Of the four Deputy Librarians, two were in substantive position while the remaining two were Senior Assistant Librarian and Assistant Librarian respectively and in an acting position.

#### **Number of Years served on Current Position**

To ensure that the true picture of performance appraisals in these libraries is uncovered, the interviewees were asked to state the number of years that they have served in their current position. Four out of the six answered that they have been in their current position for over 11 years. These included UL A, UL B, UL D and UL E. Only two interviewees namely UL C and

UL F declared that they have served their current position for between 1 and 3 years. It could therefore be concluded that majority of the interviewees have served in their current position for more than 11 years and therefore were more conversant with the appraisal system in their various university libraries.

### **Performance Appraisal as a tool for Promotion**

Performance appraisals are implemented to provide specific documentation regarding current and future personnel actions such as promotions, salary increases, staff development opportunities, and disciplinary action that may be required to correct problematic situations. It is evident from the responses provided by the interviewees that although the appraisal system is used as a tool for promotion, such elevation is determined by the number of years of satisfactory service, the number of one's publications in the case of Senior Members and other variables like extension service and performance.

When asked to rank these variables as tools for appraising performance, all the six interviewees were unanimous that in the case of the Senior Members, the number of one's publications is the major determining factor that qualifies an individual for promotion. This is because research is the core function of academic members of the university community including the Librarians. It should be noted however, that apart from the number of publications some of the interviewees mentioned other variables like performance, number of years of service and extension service and this refers to the services rendered to the nation, university and the international community. However, in the case of the Senior and the Junior staff, apart from the number of years of satisfactory service, their promotion is based on performance put up over a defined period of time.

### **Should a performance appraisal system be adopted and formalized in Academic Libraries?**

When asked to indicate whether or not performance appraisal is needed in the academic libraries, all the interviewees answered in the affirmative. A further question posed to find out whether they agree that there should be a formalised performance appraisal system in their libraries, they again answered in the affirmative. It could be inferred from the responses given by these

interviewees that performance appraisal is an important management tool in the academic library just as it is in the corporate setting.

### **Are you satisfied with the existing performance appraisal system in your library?**

Another important question to find out the interviewees impressions about the existing performance appraisal system in the academic libraries in Ghana gave varied responses. Two out of the six interviewees stated that they were satisfied with the current system while the remaining four expressed their disapproval about the appraisal system currently being used. The wide gap between the responses given by the interviewees thus indicates that these Librarians are not satisfied with the appraisal system as it pertains in their libraries.

### **Benefits / Importance of Performance Appraisal**

The study sought to find out from these interviewees their opinions with regards to the importance/benefits of performance appraisal in the University Libraries. Almost all of them gave not less than four benefits from the appraisal systems which have been summarized as follows: promotes co-operation and team work, increases employee motivation, helps in reducing grievances among the employees, helps the management to provide employee counselling, helps to identify the strength and weaknesses of employees. Also, transfers, demotions, suspensions and dismissals are based on performance appraisal.

### **Performance Appraisal as a Tool for Training Needs of Staff**

One of the objectives of performance appraisal is to identify the training needs of individual employees. The responses given by these librarians showed that majority of them strongly agree with the view that performance appraisal helps to identify the training needs of the staff in the various libraries. Five out of the six interviewees agreed with the assertion that performance appraisal is used as a major tool to assess the training needs of the staff in an organization including academic libraries.

### **Challenges Associated with Performance Appraisal in Academic Libraries**

Among the challenges interviewees identified with the current system as expressed in their responses included: “The areas indicated on the form are too general so one cannot appraise

specifically”, “Done on annual basis which is not good enough. Could be done every semester”, “the university has a unified format for all employees. This should be department specific” and “The University plans reviewing its current appraisal criteria and it is hoped that when it is revised, it would make it easier for management to undertake the appraisal process. Currently we don’t have a clear cut criterion for appraising staff which is a challenge”.

### **Suggestions for improving Performance Appraisal in the State owned University Libraries**

On what should be done to improve performance appraisals in these libraries, all the interviewees were unanimous that a separate Committee be set up to review performance appraisal results. Other varied responses from these Librarians include: “the library’s appraisal should be periodic at least biannually and also staff should be educated on the importance of appraisals”, “the performance appraisal should be done on a semester basis and not on an annual basis”, Library HOD’s should appraise their staff annually and the reports sent to the University Librarian for review and evaluation”, mentoring should be practiced in order to address all gaps”.

### **Findings**

- It is clear from the interviews conducted that all the university libraries in Ghana do have some form of performance appraisal system in existence and it is done on an annual basis and this is not good enough.
- All the interviewees recognize the importance that performance appraisal plays in their libraries. These include an aid in reducing grievances among employees, helpful for management to provide employee counseling, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of employees and also as a basis for transfers, demotions, suspensions and dismissals.
- Performance appraisal is also used to identify the training needs of the staff in the academic libraries in Ghana. The systematic procedure of performance appraisal helps the supervisors to frame training policies and programs which is vital for the success of these libraries.
- The Universities have a unified performance appraisal format that is used for appraising all their employees including the library staff. Academic librarians do not have any opportunity of appraising their own staff on periodic basis except when they are applying for promotion.

- The appraisal system in the university libraries is not participatory enough. Although the Heads of Department are expected to show and discuss their reports (section completed on their subordinate) before forwarding to the various University Registrars most of them fail to do so. It therefore turns out to be one sided.

### **Benefits of Performance Appraisals**

There are a number of potential benefits to libraries if they conduct formal performance appraisals (PAs). These include:

#### **Performance Feedback**

Most employees are very interested in knowing how well they are doing at present and how they can do better in the future. They want this information to improve their performance in order to get promotions and merit pay. Proper performance feedback can improve the employee's future performance. It also gives him satisfaction and motivation (Wikipedia, 2012).

#### **Employee Training and Development Decisions**

Performance appraisal information is used to find out whether an employee requires additional training and development. Deficiencies in performance may be due to inadequate knowledge or skills. Performance appraisal therefore helps a manager to find out whether an employee needs additional training for improving his current job performance or can perform well in a higher position, then he/she is given training for the higher level position.

#### **Validation of Selection Process**

Performance appraisal is a means of validating both internal (promotions and transfers) and external (hiring new employees from outside) sources. Organizations spend a lot of time and money for recruiting and selecting employees. Proper performance appraisal finds out the validity of the various selection tools and so the company can follow suitable steps for selecting employees in future.

### **Promotions**

Performance appraisal is a way of finding out which employee should be given promotion. Past appraisals, together with other background data, will enable management to select proper persons for promotion. In this regard, inefficient workers can be dismissed or demoted after carrying out performance appraisals.

### **Transfers and Dismissals**

Performance appraisal is also used to take decisions regarding transfers and dismissals. Transfers often involve changes in job responsibilities, and it is important to find out the employees who can take these responsibilities. Through performance appraisal, such employees can be easily identified and transferred to strengthen units that may need their services. In the same way, non-performing staff can easily be identified through an appraisal system and laid off.

### **Compensation Decisions**

Performance appraisal can be used to compensate the employees by increasing their pay and other incentives. This is truer in the case of managerial jobs and also in the case of employees in non-unionized organizations. Compensation packages which include bonuses, high salary rates, extra benefits and allowances are dependent on performance appraisal (Middlesex Community College, 2009).

### **Human Resource Planning (HRP)**

The appraisal process helps in human resource planning (HRP). Accurate and current appraisal data regarding certain employees helps the management in taking decisions for future employment. Without the knowledge of who is capable of being promoted, demoted, transferred, laid off or terminated, management cannot make employment plans for the future (Wikipedia, 2012).

### **Challenges in implementing performance appraisal in Academic libraries**

In spite of all the potential advantages of formal performance appraisals (PAs), there are challenges.

### **Determination of the Mode of Performance Appraisal**

Determining the relationship between individual job performance and organizational performance could be a difficult task which could lead to complications in the organization. It has been discredited because too often it has been operated as a top-down and largely bureaucratic system usually carried out by top management personnel (Head of Department) rather than by line managers. Performance appraisal has been perceived by many scholars as a means of exercising managerial control. It has been perceived as backward looking, concentrating on what has gone wrong, rather than looking forward for future development needs. Moreover individuals, particularly the subordinate staff, quite often have negative perceptions about performance appraisal because it creates room for “tension between supervisors and subordinates”. This is because in most cases subordinates who receive poor appraisal perceive their supervisors to hate them (Middlesex Community College, 2009).

### **Identification of the evaluation criteria**

Identifying the appraisal criteria is a major challenge faced by top management. The performance data to be considered for evaluation should be carefully selected. For the purpose of evaluation, the criteria selected should be in quantifiable or measurable terms.

### **Resistance**

The appraisal process may face resistance from the employees and the trade unions for fear of negative ratings. The employees therefore, should be informed and clearly explained the purpose as well as the process of appraisal. The standards should be clearly communicated and every employee should be made aware of what exactly is expected from him/her.

### **Detrimental to quality improvement**

It has been proposed that the use of PA systems in organizations adversely affect organizations' pursuit of total quality performance. Some scholars and practitioners of quality management believe that the use of PAs is unnecessary, if there is a total quality management practice in place.

### **Negative perceptions**

Quite often, individuals, particularly, the subordinate staff, have negative perceptions about PAs. Most of them believe that such appraisals could adversely affect them especially in organizations that practice the vertical form of performance evaluation. Receiving and/or the anticipation of receiving a PA could be uncomfortable and distressful and potentially cause “tension between supervisors and subordinates” (Wikipedia, 2012).

### **Legal issues**

When performance appraisals (PAs) are not carried out appropriately, legal issues could result that would place the libraries at risk. PAs are used in organizations as disciplinary measures and also for promotional decisions within the organization. The improper application and utilization of PAs can affect employees negatively and lead to legal action against the organization.

### **Conclusions**

Employee performance appraisal system is an essential tool for management in every organisation including academic libraries as it is used for many different purposes such as pay increases, improvement and training, transfers, compensations, counselling, promotion, employee recognition, and termination. The appraisees discover what is expected of them, are able to set goals, gain better understanding of their faults and strengths and can adjust behaviour accordingly. Appraisers on their part benefit from appraisals by effectively identifying and measuring trends in the performance of their employees, and to compare subordinates more accurately. They also get a better understanding of their workers' needs and expectations and are able to use the information to assist their subordinates in planning long-term and short-term goals and career objectives as well as tailor their job responsibilities to make fuller use of their skills. Academic and research libraries benefit from the performance appraisal process through improved communication, which results in more cooperation and better decision making; greater staff motivation; and a more informed and productive workforce, which leads to a greater organizational focus on comprehensive goals. In particular, the performance appraisal process allows these libraries to achieve a more productive division of labour, develop training and education programs, eliminate bias and irrelevant data from evaluations and decisions, and design effective compensation and reward systems.

It is expected that the personnel decisions based upon the results of the appraisal exercise would be much better and also well informed, which would in turn lead to greater organizational goal achievement. To have an effective appraisal system, it should be closely monitored and feedback should be obtained on continuous basis.

### **Recommendations**

Academic and Research Libraries should conduct research to find out how to design and implement performance appraisal systems that would help their organizations improve upon individual's performance internally.

There is the need for an effective appraisal system that emphasizes continuous professional development since such professional development enhances a firm's overall performance. Performance evaluation process should be ongoing throughout the year. Even if a formal evaluation is given only once a year, an employee should be made aware of his or her performance periodically throughout the year.

Staff in academic libraries should be educated on the essence of performance appraisal so that they would give their maximum cooperation when it is being conducted. Furthermore, it must be remembered that the evaluation is not solely based on the employee's performance in the two to three week period before the evaluation, but it is based on the employee's work during the appraisal period, whether it is three, six, or twelve months.

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