



¹ patrickaarthurr@gmail.com

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THE CHALLENGES FACING PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL MANAGEMENT: LESSONS FOR POLYTECHNICS IN GHANA

Arthur, P.

Business Advisory Directorate, Cape Coast Polytechnic, Cape Coast, Ghana

Abstract

The justification for performance appraisal is to improve individual employee's performance in the organisation in an attempt to improve the overall institutional performance and effectiveness. This study explores performance appraisal systems in the selected polytechnics in Ghana. The objectives are to identify the appraisal systems; to identify the challenges and to assess the role and effectiveness of the performance appraisal systems in the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics. The research design is both quantitative and qualitative and generated data through semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires from 185 polytechnics' employees in Ghana. Descriptive statistic was used to analyse the data which included the use of frequencies, percentages, and mean. Content analysis was used to analyse exiting literature. The results indicate that generally the perceptions of the administrative staff concerning the effectiveness of the present performance appraisal systems of the polytechnics were skewed towards dissatisfaction because they lacked essential characteristics of an effective performance appraisal system. These include lack of clearly formulated and defined policies and objectives, performance measures, effective staff participation and training and development that could make them effective. The study concludes that there is a need for the polytechnics to recognise their employee as valued resources and treat them as a source of competitive advantage, which have to be strategically managed to achieve improved employee performance and development as well as the effectiveness of the polytechnics.

Keywords: Appraisal; Performance, Management; Polytechnics; Ghana

INTRODUCTION

Human resource is the institution's most crucial resource whose behaviours, talents and aspirations affect the other resources that the organisation uses, the organizational efficiency and its effectiveness (Holbrook, 2002; Murphy and Cleveland, 1995). To this end, performance appraisal has occupied the attention of human resource management, organizational behaviour and industrial psychology researchers for some time now. This is because the performances of the individuals within the institutions improve with definite goals and feedback on their performance complemented by an adequate reward system (Lawrence, 1986).

Performance Appraisal which is variously termed performance review, annual appraisal, performance evaluation, employee evaluation and merit evaluation (Sanguine 2003) is an ongoing process of evaluation and management of both the behaviours and outcomes of



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employees in the workplace, the collection and analysis of data on the overall capabilities and potentials of individual worker in an attempt to make decision in tune with a purpose (Bratton and Gold, 1999). It is an observation and measurement of employee performance against pre-determined job related standards, for purposes delineated by the organization (Schuler and Jackson, 1987). Essentially, performance appraisal is about measuring, monitoring and enhancing the performance of employee as a contributor to the overall organizational performance (Agyenim-Boateng, 2006). It is not a standalone process but an approach to create a shared vision of the purposes and aims of the organization, helping each individual employee to understand and share the work load to achieve those aims (Martinez and Martineau, 2001).

To achieve this, there is the need for precise determination of activities to be accomplished by the employees, such activities need to target the accomplishment of institutional effectiveness as well as an agreement between the employee and the employer on what to do and how to do it. Performance appraisal is systematic and coordinated assessment of employees current and past performance standards. It involves identifying, measured human performance in the institution. The process involves setting work standards, assessing the employees' actual work performance relative to these standards with the view to motivating them to eliminate performance deficiencies. Thus, an effective performance appraisal system needs to measure current performance levels and contain mechanisms for reinforcing strengths, identifying weaknesses, and feeding the information back to the employees and organization in an attempt to improve present and future individual and institutional effectiveness.

There are a variety of reasons why institutions introduce performance appraisal and this sometimes creates conflict as to what the objectives of performance appraisal are. However; the most usual rationalization and justification for performance appraisal is to improve individual employee's performance in the organisation (Bratton and Gold, 1999) in an attempt to improve the overall institutional performance and effectiveness. Under such a broad purpose come a number of varied purposes. Among other things, performance appraisal marches the achievements of the employees with the expected results in order for management to make a decision on such matters as promotion, salary reviews and conditions of service, job redesign, redeployment and reposting. The data also help in self-assessment and personnel management research. The process is a vehicle for validating and refining organisational actions such as employee selection, training, reward and other management practices. In addition, the data are used for succession planning and employee development or to institute discipline or discharge procedures (Billikopf, 2006) Performance Appraisal therefore assesses the work accomplished in relation to the goals and objectives of the organisation to determine whether the activities accomplished have in any way contributed to the organisational success. The data acquired therefore, help to improve individual performance in the organisation with the view to improving the organisational performance and effectiveness (Martinez and Martineau, 2001; Bratton and Gold, 1999).



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Performance appraisal which hitherto used to be the preserve of the private sector, has become widespread and an important cornerstone of human resource management practice that is capable of channeling the energies of employees towards the achievement of organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Masterson and Taylor, 1996; Lee, 1996). It has now been extended to new work settings like education and health sectors and is a central element in the concept of performance management (Fletcher, 1997). It has grown to include previously untouched organisations and occupational hierarchy such as secretarial and administrative employees in both the public and private sectors. New forms of performance appraisal systems such as competency based, upward appraisal, 360 degree and team appraisals have also been introduced these days.

Employees of tertiary institutions both academic and administrative like other employees in the public sector expect to be appraised and not to be evaluated (Analoui and Fell, 2002). However, very little seem to be known about performance appraisal in the public sector, including the polytechnics, and about the people who are appraised there in the literature. The empirical evidence on how employees in the public sector polytechnics in general and polytechnic administrative employees in developing countries in particular, respond to the processes involved in performance appraisal in the tertiary institutions has remained scarce and sparse (Analoui and Felt, 2002).

Aim and Objectives

This study, therefore, was an exploration into the role and effectiveness of performance appraisal systems, with special emphasis on the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics.

The objectives are to identify the appraisal systems; to identify the challenges and to assess the role and effectiveness of the performance appraisal systems in the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this study was to explore performance appraisal systems in the Ghanaian public polytechnics to consider the perceptions and experiences of the administrative staff about the performance appraisals management and its associated challenges. The research design is both quantitative and qualitative which involved mixed methods. The design require researchers to employ both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study to collect and analyse data, and report research findings simultaneously. Meaning the researchers will implement the quantitative and qualitative data concurrently. Creswell further posits the design help one set of data to compliment the other, helping to overcome any weakness associated with each other.



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Population and Sampling Procedures

The study population consisted of all the administrators and registrars. The estimated population of administrators and registrars at the four selected polytechnics in Ghana during 2013/2014 was 467 (Polytechnics Statistical Reports, 2014). At the quantitative stage, one hundred and eighty five (185) administrators and registrars were randomly selected, while fifteen administrators and registrars were involved in the qualitative aspect. That is, 15 administrators and registrars' interviewees were conveniently sampled to probe on issues that emerged in the study. This sample size was selected for the qualitative study because it was controllable. Also, it was necessary to select a sample that would enable the phenomenon under study to be explored for a better understanding.

Data Collection Procedures

A structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were the instruments used to collect data for this study. The questionnaire was used to collect data for the quantitative stage, while the interview schedule was employed to gather data in the qualitative stage. The design of the questionnaire schedule was based on the issues that were discussed in the literature review and were related to awareness of performance appraisal policies and procedures, process of performance appraisal system process of the polytechnics performance appraisal system and sources of performance information. The key issues that came out from the questionnaire data formed the basis of the interview schedule.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

By way to establish validity of the instruments, two (2) independent raters with key knowledge in administration and analysis of data were given the instruments for a thorough check for flaws and problems in the study. Remarks from the independent raters were favourable and no massive changes were made in the instruments. Moreover, to grant the content validity of the instrument, it was given to one (1) retired registrar from Kumasi polytechnic, who had knowledge about the case to scrutinize the instruments.

Steps to check internal consistency of the instrument; it was pre-tested among ten (10) administrators and three (3) registrars from Sunyani and Tamale Polytechnics respectively. The other step the researcher used to check reliability of the study was asking the interviewees to either confirm or disconfirm their statements after each interview has been transcribed.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistic involving the use of mean, frequency and percentage. Descriptive research provides an accurate portrayal or account of characteristics of a particular individual, situation or group for the purpose of discovering new meaning, describing what exists, determining the frequency with which something occurs and categorizing information.



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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicated that the public sector polytechnics had policies that guided the implementation and management of the performance appraisal systems of the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics and the administrative employees of the polytechnics knew these. More than 60 percent, (69%) of the respondents affirmed that they were aware that polytechnics had policies guiding the implantation of their performance appraisal systems. Similarly a high percentage of the front line management (63%). confirmed that they were aware that the polytechnics had performance appraisal policies in place for the management of the performance appraisal systems of the Ghanaian public sector polytechnic (see Table 1).

However, the data showed that the policies had not been effectively communicated to both the employees and their supervisors. For example, 31 percent of the employees and 37 percent of their supervisors who were aware of the policies stated that the policies had not been communicated to them neither had they been educated on the policies. The data showed that the respondents lacked knowledge of the objectives of the performance appraisal systems of the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics. At the operational Staff and supervisory level, majority of the respondents were not aware of what the performance appraisal systems of the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics sought to achieve.

Table 1: Awareness of Performance Appraisal Policies and Procedures

Responses	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Aware	102	69	17	63
Not Aware	46	31	10	37
Total	148	100	27	100

Source: Field Results, 2014



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Table: 2 Process of the Polytechnics Performance Appraisal System

No	Item	SD	D	NA	A	SA	Total	Mean
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Supervisors fill in Performance Appraisal Forms for staff to consent	14(14)	21(42)	6(18)	36(144)	71(350)	568	3.84
2	Staff fill in Part I of the Performance Appraisal Form while the rest are treated as confidential report	61(61)	24(48)	21(63)	6(24)	36(180)	366	2.54
4	Interview between supervisor and staff	71(71)	36(72)	14(42)	21(48)	6(30)	263	1.78
5	Performance Appraisal Forms treated as confidential filled in by only supervisor	57(57)	20(40)	36(108)	14(56)	21(105)	366	2.47

Source: Field Results, 2014

The results showed that the supervisors used a variety of processes in assessing the performances of the administrative employees of the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics (see Table 2). However among the five processes of assessing the staffs performance were mainly assessed by their supervisors who only filled in their performance appraisal forms and requested the staff to sign a portion to indicate their consent of the assessment it had a mean score of 3.84. Some of the respondents indicated that they fill in the Part 1 of the performance appraisal forms while their supervisors treated the rest as confidential reports. Interview between supervisor and staff had the lowest mean score with 1.78 stressing that only a few supervisors conduct interview with their staff during the assessment.



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Table 3: Source of Performance Information in the Polytechnics

Appraisers	Frequency	Percentage
Head of Department	44	30
Deans	9	6
Immediate supervisor	64	43
Faculty officers	6	4
Not known	25	17
Total	148	100

Source: Field Results, 2013

The results also indicated that the staffs of the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics were assessed by a variety of assessors who were all in supervisory positions. The performances of 30 percent of the staff of the polytechnics were assessed by the heads of department, 43 percent by their immediate supervisors who were Principal, Chief Administrative Assistants or Assistant Registrar while the school officers assessed the performances of only 4 percent of the staff (see Table 3). The results showed that both the employees and their supervisors had not been given enough training to ensure the effective management of the performance appraisal process.



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Table 4: Means of Polytechnics performance Appraisal Result

No	Item	SD	D	NA	A	SA	Total	Mean
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Promotion decisions	11(57)	25(40)	20(60)	51(204)	41(205)	566	3.82
2	Remuneration Decisions	30(30)	42(84)	17(51)	41(164)	18(90)	419	2.83
3	Staff Motivation and other rewards decisions	38(38)	34(68)	41(123)	18(72)	17(85)	386	2.61
4	Training and career development decisions	51(51)	41(82)	18(54)	17(68)	21(105)	360	2.43

Source: Field Results, 2014

The data showed that the polytechnics used their performance appraisal results in three main decision areas to ensure the effective management of their human resources at the operational level. These were rewards, employee rotation and transfers and Training and career development. Most of the respondents reported that the polytechnics used their performance appraisal results in deciding on the employees that should be promoted, given salary increase or other forms of rewards and had a mean score of 3.82. While other respondents confirmed that the polytechnics used their performance appraisal results in taking decisions concerning training and development needs of the employees and polytechnics and some respondents stated that the performance appraisal results were transferring and rotating employees within the polytechnics (see Table 4)

Lack of Communication of Policies to Employees

The study has revealed that all the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics had annual employee PAS in place. These performance appraisal systems of the polytechnics were said to be guided by formal policies and procedures. The performance appraisal systems of the Ghanaian public



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sector tertiary institutions were first introduced in the 1970s as Annual Confidential Reports in which the employees were denied access to the results. The secrecy surrounding the annual confidential reports led to many abuses such as favouritism and victimization. This resulted in loss of credibility of the Annual Confidential Report. As a result of the Ghana Civil Service Reform Programme in the 1990s ('CSRP: 1987-1992) all public organisations including public sector polytechnics and the Ghana Civil Service replaced their Annual Confidential Report with a ' Semi open' annual performance appraisal systems.

The results of the study however, clearly showed that even though a large proportion of the respondents were aware of the existence of the policies on performance appraisal systems of the polytechnics, their knowledge was very limited as the polytechnics had failed to effectively communicate their policies to the employees and their supervisors. In bureaucratic institutions, especially in the developing countries, information flow is a major problem. Employee's may have knowledge about the existence of policies which may concern them and their work but may hardly be fully educated on those issues as indicated by the data. For example, in the study, it was realised that a high percentage of the employees (69 %) and their supervisors (63%) were aware of the policies on performance appraisals policies but only a few (31%) had ever seen or been educated on the policies. This was not limited only to employees and their supervisors. Some management personnel who were supposed to be the custodians of the policies had very limited knowledge of the policies. For example, one interviewee stated:

'I have been looking for the policy ever since I assumed this position. I have not seen the document, but it has not been taken seriously by the Heads of Department who are expected to assess the performance of their employees'.

This finding is similar to what Analoui and Felt (2002) found concerning the PAS of the administrative staff of University of Bradford. In that study, the researchers found that even though the respondents had knowledge of a draft performance policy for the performance appraisal systems of the institution their knowledge was limited as no one could state what was in the policy document. This is an indication that tertiary institution in general and polytechnics in Ghana in particular, have not taken the appraisal of their administrative employees very seriously as they have done in the case of their academic employees.

Lack of Awareness of the Objectives of the Performance Appraisal Systems

Compounding the problem of lack of communication of the policies is the problem of lack of awareness of the objectives of performance appraisal systems of Ghanaian public sector polytechnics among the' personnel of the polytechnics. The documentary evidence revealed that the stated objectives of the performance appraisal systems of the polytechnics were: a) To find out whether the employees were performing as expected; b) to set targets for the ensuing year; c) to determine which employee merited salary increase, promotion or reassignment; and d) to



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identify training and development needs of the polytechnics and their employees. However the results indicated that generally, both the employees and their supervisors did not recognize these as the objectives of the performance appraisal systems of the polytechnics as a large proportion of the respondents. This was also not limited only to the employees and their supervisors. Almost all the interviewees displayed lack of awareness of the objectives of the performance appraisal systems as the following responses indicate:

"Most employees have positive perceptions about the performance appraisal systems because they are management's tools for measuring who should merit pay increase and promotion ". They aim at "assessing past results which is use for salary increases and indirectly for promotion, however, from the way the system is managed, I am not sure whether the employees and heads of department are aware of these objectives ".

Another interviewee responded by asking:

"Who but the Human Resource people knows anything about the performance appraisal systems? Looking at how the forms are filled, people only fill in the forms as an obligation".

With the exception of the interviewees of Accra Polytechnic, all the interviewees expressed different views about the performance appraisal system.

- a) Setting targets for the employees for the coming year;
- b) Documenting the agreed objectives, and
- c) Acting as a source for building up training needs of the polytechnics

They agreed that broadly the performance appraisal systems of the polytechnic had two objectives to:

- i) Enable the polytechnic achieve her broad objectives, and
- ii) Enable employees have job satisfaction and develop their careers.

Thus, the results indicated that the performance appraisal systems of the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics lacked clearly defined standards against which employees' performances were assessed which had been communicated to the personnel (Wilson, 2002; Swan, 1991).

The use of Variety of Processes

A variety of processes were used in the assessment of the performances of the administrative employees of the polytechnics. The official appraisal process of the polytechnics is a two-way process. By the calendar of the polytechnics, the PAFs leave the Human Resource Divisions at the beginning of the appraisal period (usually October) to the Departments and return to the Human Resource Divisions after the performance appraisal s had been completed (December



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ending). At the departments, the PAFs are distributed to employees (in some polytechnics) to fill in Part I (usually providing factual demographic information such as name and present grade) and returned the PAFs to their immediate supervisors. Arrangements are then made for performance appraisal interviews (PAIs) for open and frank discussion of the performances of the employees and completion of PAIs forms. After the completion, the employees sign a portion on the PAFs to indicate that they had taken part in the discussions, see the reports of the supervisors and either agreed or disagreed with the report. A copy of the report is then sent to the Human Resource Divisions for further action (usually salary increase, transfer or caution) while a copy is kept on the personal files of the employees at the departments/sections/units. Thus, the performance appraisal process (PAP) centers on performance appraisal interviews between supervisors and the employees.

The study however revealed that in practice, only a handful of the appraisers followed the official process (4%) of assessing employees through performance appraisal interviews. The majority of appraisers (48%) either filled in the performance appraisal forms and requested employees to sign their portions or requested the employees to fill in Part I of the performance appraisal forms and treated the rest as confidential reports or treated the appraisals as strictly confidential reports (24%). It is observed that employees were either satisfied with this trend of affairs or were coerced into accepting it. For example, when asked whether there had been situations where some employees had challenged their assessments or the manner in which they were assessed, interviewees seemed argued of following.

"That rarely happens, for the employees either have confidence in their heads of department or decided because normally no specific actions followed the assessment"; or "Employees only complain where the negative remarks adversely affected their promotions and also, salary increases. I think they normally do not complain because nothing good comes out of their complaints. Management's best action in such circumstances would be to transfer the employees to new departments or sections"

Thus, employees accepted the situation either because they saw the process only as a political process with no performance value or to protect their positions in the departments or the units.

Sources of Performance Information

Related to the above is the problem of relying on supervisors as the only source of performance information. New sources of performance appraisal information such as peer appraisal, self-appraisal and 360 degree appraisal are yet to gain roots in most developing countries including Ghana, especially within the public sector. In all the polytechnics, the immediate supervisors (Deans, Heads of Departments or Faculty Officers) acted as the sources of performance information. In other words, there was only one source of performance information, the



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supervisor. Even though this is observed to be a good HRM practice as the immediate supervisors are best placed to assess the performances of their employees, the system has a number of defects especially in situations where the reports were classified as confidential to the appraisees and were not countersigned by any senior officer. The situation is also flawed as there were no opportunities for the employees to appeal against their appraisal results.

In these situations, the performance appraisal system of the Ghanaian public sector Polytechnics were likely to suffer from Halo Effect, rater leniency or strictness, Crony Effect (Wilson, 2002; Rotunda and Sacketh, 1999; Smither, 1988; Wexley and Yukl, 1977; Dorfman, 1961; Guilford, 1954). Even though these are 'ordinary' challenges of performance appraisal, they are likely to be made complex considering the kind of social network that exist in Ghana. By their adherence to the dictates of kinship system, the average appraiser in the developing countries, especially Ghana, would be inclined to 'temper justice with mercy' when it comes to assessing people who hail from the same clan/tribe or have good relationships with them.

Lack of Training for Stakeholders

The Ghanaian public sector polytechnics also lacked any serious training programmes that were based on or influenced by their performance appraisal results. In addition, there were no systematic training programme in place to train the personnel in both general management and management of the PAP of the polytechnics. Even though the employees agreed that training in performance appraisal had positive effects on their work performance, they had not been exposed to any meaningful training in performance appraisal procedures.

The Ghanaian public sector polytechnics did not see training as a continuous process that should concern the employees throughout their careers, something that applies to everyone whether a generalist administrator, a technical, a professional officer, junior or very senior officer. They also did not see training as being an integral part of the total administrative system of the polytechnics aimed at making the tertiary institutions more effective. Training programmes are most effective when they follow a systematic process. The training programmes for performance appraisal of the stakeholders therefore, could follow a systematic process that begins with an explanation of the philosophies, policies and objectives of the performance appraisal system of the polytechnics, mechanisms of the rating system, the frequency of the appraisal, parties involved in the performance appraisal system, standards to be assessed, benefits to the stakeholders and others. Appraisers have to be made aware of the challenges and weaknesses of the performance appraisal system in order to avoid them. The Ghanaian public sector polytechnics need to focus their training on eliminating the subjectivity errors such as halo effects which is often made by appraisers (Wilson, 2002). The training session should not only be a period of providing information to the employees and management personnel but also a process of skill acquisition. Participants need to be encouraged to practice, for example, how to



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fill in the performance appraisal forms, keep a log of observed behavior and conduct appraisal interviews. The issue of training the appraisers is very, important as appraisers' training has generally been shown to be effective in reducing rating errors, especially if they are extensive and allow for practice (Landy and Farr, 1980).

Linking the Appraisal to Rewards

The results indicated that the polytechnics linked their performance appraisal results with their reward systems. Even though the polytechnics hardly analysed their performance appraisal results, the appraisal results influenced decisions of management on the promotions and salary increases. The respondents believed that the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics mostly used their performance appraisal result, in deciding on employees that should be promoted or given salary increase (80%). This view was also apparent from the interview data. From the interviews it was realized that:

"Most employees have positive perceptions about the performance appraisal system, because they see them as management's tool for measuring who should merit pay increase and promotion".

It is therefore not for nothing that the employees regarded the performance appraisal system of the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics as managements tool for distributing rewards and punishment to deserving employees. This gives an indication that the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics used their performance appraisal system as a management tool for controlling employees (Bratton and Gold, 1999). Even though the polytechnics performance appraisal results influenced the decisions of management on promotions and salary increases, the systems, like that of the Ghana Co-operative Bank, did not recognise 'an out of turn promotion' for situations of consistent and exceptional employee performance which could be a motivation for continuous improve performance.

Thus, the results of the performance appraisal system of the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics did not affect the human resource development programmes of the polytechnics as they were not fully integrated into the HRD programmes of the polytechnics. This conclusion is supported by the interview data. For example, in an answer to a question about how the performance appraisal results influenced the training programmes of the polytechnics, the interviewees were unanimous that the polytechnics did not organize training in performance appraisals for the employees neither did the performance appraisal results influenced the training programmes of the polytechnics very much as the following responses indicate:

"The polytechnic uses two types of training programmes: In house and Out of house. Concerning out of house training, in the past, employees were given, the chance to choose the kind of



¹ patrickaarthurr@gmail.com

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training they wanted to undertake. Now, the Training Board through the heads of department/unit/section determines the critical training areas and requests interested employees to apply for sponsorship. About the in house training, it is global in nature. "The Training and Development manager looks at the system and where complaints are coming from and decides on whom to train and on what subjects/topics", "The performance appraisal results are not used as the basis for training because no seriousness is attached to the system, no motivation to work. People could have been made to work if we have performance standards."

CONCLUSION

The challenges of performance appraisal are supposed to be universal and limited to the intrinsic nature of the job in question, as revealed through the careful job analysis (Blunt and Popoola, 1985). For most part, the particularities of organisational life in the western world bear this expectation although as Beveridge (1975) and Child (1980) make clear they are, from appraisal point of view, rarely straight. In Africa and Ghana for that matter, however, ordinary problem of performance appraisal are exacerbated by a number of other considerations (Blunt and Popoola, 1985). All the problems listed above as hindering the successful implementation of performance appraisal system of the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics as well as those in other organisations in developing countries could be summed up in the problem of 'particularism'. This is the problem of considering the relationships between the appraisers and the appraises instead of basing the appraisals on what the employees have accomplished within the stated period of time.

As the Ghanaian public sector polytechnics used the supervisors as the only source of performance information and in situations where the reports were not countersigned by other senior management personnel, it is possible that people who received good appraisal results were those who were closely related to the appraisers in terms of kinship or ethnicity: or those who maintained good relationship with them. Thus, the actual job performance in terms of what the individual workers and the institutions were expected to accomplish would scarcely be taken into account.

It is observed that these and other challenges associated with performance appraisal system in both the developed and developing countries are not insurmountable. First, supervisors and their employees need to know and understand the challenges. They have to be made aware of these challenges and how they affect their operations in the polytechnics as well as how to avoid or minimize them. Second, the challenges could be solved or reduced by selecting the right appraisal method (Miller, 1987) as each method has its own advantages and disadvantages. For example, the ranking methods avoid the challenge of central tendency but can cause ill feelings when performances of employees are in fact all high. Rater training can also be an effective way



¹ patrickaarthurr@gmail.com

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of solving most of these challenges. Even though training is not a panacea. It can be used to reduce the challenges of Halo Effect as well as Crony Effect.

In addition, the raters can be trained to appreciate the reason(s) of the performance appraisal system, how to use critical incidents techniques in rating, how to do proper follow ups and behave during PAIs (Miller, 1987; Hobbe, 1957).

Attempts at solving the challenge could be summed up as:

'One way to achieve this is to design an appraisal scheme where the emphasis is on development, to use a 'safe' approach, which recognizes achievements and supports professional development and avoids the issue of accuracy and rating of performance' (Wilson, 2002: 621). In other words, there is the need for the Ghanaian public polytechnics to develop and implement an effective performance appraisal system by selecting the right appraisal method (Miller, 1987) and instituting rater training to help solve the challenges associated with the implementation and management of their performance appraisal system in order to derive the benefits associated with the use of performance appraisal system in the polytechnics.

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