



Original Research Article

Staff performance appraisal practices in two colleges of community health nursing in central region (Ghana): Challenges and existing support systems

Received 10 January, 2019

Revised 20 February, 2019

Accepted 25 February, 2019

Published 12 March, 2019

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This study explored challenges of staff performance appraisal in two Colleges of Community Health Nursing in Central Region (Ghana) and existing support systems. The sequential explanatory mixed methods design, which involved the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data was used for the study. The quantitative phase of the study involved a census frame of 40 College tutors, who responded to a structured questionnaire, while the qualitative phase involved a semi-structured interview with 4 Senior Tutors and 4 Junior Tutors, selected through maximal variation sampling technique. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations, while the qualitative data was used to support the quantitative data when necessary. The study revealed that the major challenges to the appraisal of the performance of the tutors in the Colleges included the appraisees' lack of understanding of the processes involved, irregular feedback to appraisees, and setting overly challenging goals for appraisees. Among others, the study recommended that management of the institutions should organise training programmes on performance appraisal for the staff to create awareness and acceptance, and to improve their understandings of the processes involved.

Key words: Tutors, performance appraisal, community health, nursing training colleges, challenges, support systems, appraiser, appraisee.

INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal is a method by which the job performance of an employee is evaluated (generally in terms of quality, quantity, performance, cost and time) typically by the immediate supervisor or line manager (Kuvaas, 2006; Rudman, 2003). It is a part of the process of guiding and managing career development in both private and public sectors. Performance appraisal also involves the task of obtaining, analyzing and recording information about the relative worth of an employee to the organization.

It is argued that performance appraisals are probably the most powerful employment process managers have at their disposal for getting results, after employee selection (Dessler, 2011). Performance appraisal systems help managers evaluate employee job performance and develop a fair system of salary increment and promotions. Mani (2002) notes that performance appraisal is an analysis of an employee's successes or failures, personal strengths and weaknesses and suitability for promotion or further training. Thus, the relevance of performance appraisal

systems and practices in enhancing employee performance and the success of organizations cannot be underestimated.

However, literature suggests that appraisal systems in many countries are poorly implemented, and there is a lack of knowledge and experience about them. Duffin(2006) indicated that health-care appraisal systems are inadequately implemented, with only six out of ten NHS staff in England ever receiving an appraisal or personal development review. Denkyira (2014) revealed that the current performance appraisal system in the civil service in Ghana does not fulfill the aspirations of the employees because it is characterised by certain flaws which need to be addressed. The widespread dissatisfaction associated with performance appraisals as typically practiced (Alam & Banerjea, 2003) calls for managers of various organisations to put relevant measures in place to improve such practices for the achievement of desired goals.

Ackah (2015) indicated that health training institutions are key settings for appraising staff, but the practice of this system still seems to be a problem in these institutions in Ghanaian context (Ackah, 2015). He further stressed that there are gaps in the area of how staff performance appraisal really takes place in the Nursing Colleges in Ghana and the problems encountered. The Colleges of Community Health Nursing in the Central Region of Ghana are not an exception to these problems. Specifically, it has been observed that performance appraisal practices in Community Health Nursing Colleges in Winneba and Twifo Praso appear not to be impacting on staff. The employees in these institutions seem to fill their forms in a rush, and most often without supervision (GHS, 2013). Prah (2015) suggests that a systematic inquiry would be needed to unravel the challenges of performance appraisal in the Colleges of Community Health Nursing in the Central Region and how they are being of Ghana. This study attends to this suggestion or recommendation by exploring challenges in staff (tutors) performance appraisal practices in two of these institutions and the support systems that are put in place for addressing the challenges.

This study is significant in many ways. In the first place, by highlighting the challenges in staff performance appraisal, the findings will help the principals and supervisors of the selected colleges to develop better ways of appraising staff. Also, through the findings, the authorities of the institutions could re-assess the existing support systems for staff performance appraisal to determine whether they are appropriate for addressing identified challenges or not. The outcome of the study will form the basis of further research into staff performance appraisal, and contribute to existing knowledge in the health sector.

The Concept of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is the process of evaluating how well employees perform their jobs when compared to a set of standards and then communicating that information to those employees (Mani, 2012). It serves many purposes for

the individual worker, for the worker's supervisor and the whole organisation (Cleaveland et al., 1989). Cleaveland et al (1989) explained that for the worker, performance appraisal serves as a means of reinforcement, career advancement, information about work goal attainment and a source of feedback to improve performance. The supervisor uses performance appraisal as the basis for making personnel decisions, assessment of workers' goal attainment, opportunity to provide constructive feedback to workers and an opportunity to interact with subordinates. (Noe et al., 1996) noted that, organizations use performance appraisal in many administrative decisions, including salary administration (pay rise), promotions, retentions, termination, lay-offs and recognition of individual performances.

(Mathias and Jackson, 2004) noted that performance appraisal is also widely used for giving performance feedback and identifying individual employee's strengths and weaknesses. These writers further noted that performance appraisal can be a primary source of information and feedback for employees which are often key to their future development. In the process of identifying employee strengths and weaknesses, potentials and training needs through performance appraisal feedback, supervisors can inform employees about their progress, discuss what areas they need to develop and identify development plans (Hartog et al., 2004).

A manager's role in performance appraisal is similar to that of a coach. A manager as a coach rewards good performance with recognition, explains what improvement is necessary and shows employees how to improve.

Guidelines for Effective Staff performance Appraisal Systems

Studies in the field of human resource management highlight three critical components of successful staff appraisal systems. These components are the systems design, managerial practice, and appraisal systems support (Longenecker and Fink, 1999). Each of these has some factors.

(Longenecker and Fink 1999) indicated that the first of the factors of the systems design requires that the purpose for conducting the appraisal is stated clearly to facilitate the employees' understanding of the process. Stating the purpose helps managers/appraisers to select performance criteria that will support the organization's objectives and enhance their motivation to conduct the appraisal effectively. The second factor for effective systems design is to ensure that both the managers and the appraisees have made an input into the design, development and in choosing criteria to be employed in the appraisal process. 'This promotes acceptance and ownership of the system by the employee, which then increases the effectiveness of the system' (Cintron and Flaniken, 2011). Employee participation gives them voice in the appraisal process, which gives the employee opportunity to refute performance ratings, documentations, or verbal feedback.

The third factor of the systems design requires the development of user-friendly and easy-to-understand procedure and forms. (Longenecker and Fink, 1999) noted that the performance criteria, rating procedures, and feedback should be relevant to both the appraiser and the appraisee, and facilitate communication between them. They noted that the last, but not the least, factor of the systems design is that both the appraiser and appraisee should understand the appraisal process and their respective roles in the process. These could be ensured through training and education.

According to (Longenecker and Fink, 1999), the second critical component of effective staff performance appraisal is managerial practice, which has three factors. The first of the factors requires the appraisers to carry out performance planning at the initial stage of the appraisal process. Performance planning should include 'writing of job description, reviewing them with appraisees, setting and agreeing upon goals, and communicating the expectations of behaviours and results for which the employees will be held accountable' (Cintrón and Flaniken, 2011). The second factor of the managerial practices, according to (Longenecker and Fink, 1999), requires that the appraisers provide an ongoing informal feedback to the appraisees to clarify minor issues that may arise in the course of the appraisal process to promote acceptance of the final report or feedback. The final factor of the managerial practice is that the appraisers should be motivated to carry out the performance appraisal. Appraisers would realize the importance of the performance appraisals and be committed to it they themselves are appraised.

Organizational support for the appraisal systems is the third and final component of successful performance appraisal systems (Longenecker and Fink, 1999). These writers indicated the first factor of the organizational support is that performance ratings should be linked to organizational rewards and that appraisees who are highly-rated should receive better rewards than those who are rated low. The second factor requires that the top administration within the organization should demonstrate support for and commitment to the appraisal process, while the third requires an ongoing review of the appraisal systems and any changes to ensure that the procedures are carefully and effectively followed.

Methods of Performance Appraisal

Various methods for conducting staff performance appraisal are highlighted in literature. These methods include rating scale, check lists, 360 degrees, work standards, management by objectives (MBOs) critical incidents, comparative methods, field review and the essay method (Armstrong, 2009; Stone, 2010). However, Numerical Rating Scale, Management by Objective (MBO), 360-Degree Appraisal, Critical Incidence and Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) have been identified as the most popular tool used by most employers (Lopez, 2015;

Drucker, 2006).

Literature also points out that the Numerical Rating Scale is one of the most widely used methods, and tends to be highly effective. Lopez (2015) argues that Rating Scale is beneficial because it can be customised to rate whatever employee traits of characteristics deemed important. It involves rating individuals on a scale with lower numbers being satisfactory and higher numbers being unsatisfactory.

Management by Objectives (MBO) requires the manager and the employee sitting together to determine objectives, and the manager occasionally assesses whether the objectives have been met. Engaging the employee can create great opportunities for the employees and a good working relationship between the employee and the manager. Drucker (2006) indicates that Management by Objective requires setting goals that are objectively measurable and mutually agreed on with the employees (Drucker, 2006; Adofo, 2011).

The 360 degree appraisal works by gathering feedback from multiple parties such as the manager, co-workers, and everyone that is familiar with the person. Lopez (2015) states that many employers prefer this method because of the unbiased data they receive and the multiple dimensional vantage points it creates (Lopez, 2015). According to Mathias and Jackson (2004), 360 degrees feedback recognises that the manager is no longer the sole source of performance appraisal data. Instead, various colleagues and constituencies supply feedback about the employee to manager, thus, allowing the manager to obtain input from a variety of sources. Mathias and Jackson (2004) again postulate that, the sole purpose of 360 degrees feedback is not to increase reliability by soliciting like-minded views but rather to capture the various evaluations of the individual employees' different roles.

The Critical Incident Method (CIM) involves the manager identifying and describing specific events where the employee did something really well or something requiring improvement. Sudhir (2001) indicates that a critical incident means a significant act by an employee exceeding or failing, any of the requirements of his or her job. Critical Incident Method denotes an exceptional behaviour of an employee at work, for example, resisted the implementation of charge and refused to help a fellow worker to accept the management decisions. This method requires every supervisor to record all such significant incidents in each employee's behavior which indicates effective or successful action and those which show ineffective or poor behaviour. This method looks at behaviours and that a list of critical incidents on a given employee provides a rich set of examples from which the employee can be shown which of their behaviours are desirable and which ones call for improvement.

The Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) described by Drucker (2006) works by looking at the interpersonal relationship of the employee. The method uses specific narratives to outline whether a behaviour needed to complete a job is good or poor. BARS method has received considerable attention by academics in recent

years (Wayne, 1992). He maintains that, these scales combine major elements from the critical incident and graphic rating scale approaches in that the appraiser rates the employee based on items along a continuum but the points are examples of actual behavior on the job rather than general descriptions or traits. BARS were developed as a response to the shortcomings of the graphic scale approach. According to Adofo (2011), the major aim of BARS is to provide a set of scales that is defined in a precise behavioral manner.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed mixed methods approach underpinned by pragmatism. Specifically, the sequential explanatory mixed design which involved using two methods in the same study in order to check the results of one and the same subject (Rothbauer, 2008; Creswell, 2009). The purpose of this design is to use qualitative data to explain and/ or clarify the quantitative findings. The initial phase of the study involved the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the second phase in which qualitative data was gathered to explain or clarify the quantitative results.

The population of the study comprised all full-time tutors (teaching staff) of the two Colleges of Community Health Nursing - Winneba and Twifo Praso - in the Central region of Ghana. The Colleges in Winneba had a tutor population of 25, while Twifo Praso had 15. Therefore, the total population for the study was forty (40) tutors, comprising 9 males and 31 females. All the forty (40) tutors were involved in the quantitative phase of this study through census frame. Census strategy was employed in order to reduce the risk of bias in the findings of the study since the entire population of study is represented. The use of the census frame is suitable when the population of study is not vast and the area of study is also not large. One of the advantages of the census frame is that all members of the population have the same opportunity to participate in the study, and it is also more capable of yielding representative results (Parker, 2011). The qualitative phase of the study involved interviews with 8 tutors (4 Senior Tutors and four 4 Junior Tutors) who had already responded to the questionnaire. The interviewees were sampled through maximal variation strategy, which enabled us to build multiple perspectives into the study.

At the quantitative phase of the study, a structured questionnaire was distributed to all the 40 tutors, as noted earlier. The questionnaire contained 5-point Likert-scale items (Strongly Agree (SA) = 5; Agree (A)=4 Neutral (N)=3; Disagree (D)=2; Strongly Disagree; (SD)=1) on the challenges of staff performance appraisal in the Colleges, and the existing support systems. The quantitative phase of the study was followed by the qualitative phase which involved using a semi-structured interview guide to collect data to explain and/or clarify the key quantitative findings.

Validity in research expresses the degree to which a

measurement measures what it purports to measure (Bolanrinwa, 2015). Both face validity and content validity of the instruments were established before being used in the main study. Face validity refers to whether the instrument appears as though it is measuring the appropriate construct (Polit et al., 2001). The instruments were given to our colleague lecturers for their comments for face validation before submitting them to some experts in human resource management for content validation.

Reliability is the likelihood of obtaining the same or similar results when the instrument measures the same variable more than once, or when more than one person measures the same variable (Brink, 1996; Polit, et al., 2001). The instruments were pre-tested with 15 Health Tutors of Akim Oda Community Health Nursing College, which is closer to the context of the study. The institutions run similar programmes as those studied, implying the tutors also share similar characteristics. The reliability of the questionnaire was then determined with the help of the SPSS version 20. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient obtained for the internal consistency of the questionnaire was 0.71. A co-efficient of reliability value above 0.7 is considered reliable (Atindanbilla, 2013).

SPSS Version 20 was used to organize the data into simple percentages, frequencies means and standard deviations. The qualitative data generated through the interviews were also used to support, elaborate on or explain the quantitative findings when necessary. Specifically, verbatim quotations were used to add realism to the study. To attribute comments to the interviewees, the 4 Senior Tutors were given the serial numbers ST-1 to ST-4, where ST represents Senior Tutor. Also, the 4 Junior Tutors were given the serial numbers JT-1 to JT-4, where JT stands for Junior Tutor.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Challenges of Tutor Performance Appraisal Practices in the Two Colleges

An aspect the questionnaire gathered data on the challenges of staff performance appraisal practices at the colleges and the relevant data is presented in the Table 1.

Table 1 presents data on the challenges of staff performance appraisal practices in the colleges. The survey items attracted a range of mean score and standard deviation of 1.62 to 2.73 and .55 to .88 respectively. Table 1 shows that 18 (45%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement that 'rater's evaluations are often subjectively biased by their cognitions and motives' whereas 6 (15%) agreed with a mean score of 1.70 and standard deviation of .72. Also, 16 (40%) of the tutors indicated that they were uncertain about that assertion. These responses suggest that majority of the tutors believed that rater's evaluations on their performance is unbiased, which could have positive implications for the organization. Kuvaas (2006) argues that the effectiveness of the performance appraisal

Table 1. Challenges of tutor performance appraisal in the two colleges

Items	A	N	D	M	SD
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)		
Rater's evaluations are often subjectively biased by their cognitions and motives.	6 (15)	16 (40)	18 (45)	1.70	.72
Performance appraisal practices are not regular in the colleges.	25 (62.5)	8 (20)	7 (17.5)	2.45	.78
Supervisors do not have adequate skills in guiding appraisees in the appraisal process	9 (22.5)	17 (42.5)	14 (35)	1.88	.76
Appraisees sometimes do not have adequate understanding of the appraisal process	23 (57.5)	12 (30)	5 (12.5)	2.45	.71
Appraisees do not sometimes play active role in the appraisal process	7 (17.5)	11 (27.5)	22 (55)	1.62	.77
Feedback on appraisees performance is not always given so appraisees sometimes feel reluctant to avail themselves for appraisals	20 (50)	10 (25)	10 (25)	2.25	.84
The supervisor's personal values and biases sometimes replace organizational standards in the evaluation process.	12 (30)	13 (32.5)	15 (37.5)	1.92	.83
The validity of the ratings is reduced by supervisor's resistance to give actual ratings deserved by the appraisee.	13 (32.5)	9 (22.5)	18 (45)	1.88	.88
Poorly organized performance appraisal practices at the College do not reflect the actual performance of staff and therefore create fear.	6 (15)	14 (35)	20 (50)	1.65	.74
The existing performance appraisal practice in the Colleges is a tiresome process.	11 (27.5)	16 (40)	13 (32.5)	1.95	.78
Overly challenging performance appraisal goals can bring negative performance appraisal practice outcome.	16 (40)	11 (27.5)	13 (32.5)	2.08	.86
Performance appraisal is advantageous to quality improvement.	31 (77.5)	7 (17.5)	2 (5)	2.73	.55

Source: Field Data (2018) **Key:** [A-Agree, D-Disagree, N-Neutral, F-Frequency, M-Mean, SD-Standard Deviation]

process can only be made possible if the ratings of the appraisal are accurate and unbiased. Any form of bias in performance appraisal could create problems among staff and their organizations.

Table 1 shows that 23 (57.5%) of the tutor respondents with a mean score of 2.45 and a standard deviation score of .71. agreed that the 'appraisees sometimes do not have adequate understanding of the appraisal process', 5 (12.5%) disagreed, while 12 (30%) were uncertain about the statement. These responses suggest that understanding of the appraisal process was considered a challenge to effective performance appraisal in the colleges. According to Danku et al. (2015), the process of appraisal and its purpose should be clearly explained and communicated to employees by the responsible authorities. They further argue that if the process of appraisal and results are not clearly explained and communicated to employees by the supervisor responsible, they can affect the organisation of performance appraisal in the health service.

With regard to the item 'feedback on appraisees' performance is not always given so, appraisees sometimes feel reluctant to avail themselves for appraisals' in Table 1,

20 (50%) of the total respondents agreed, while 10 (25%) of them disagreed to the statement. Also, 10 (25%) of the remaining tutors were neutral on this assertion which attracted a mean score of 2.25 and a standard deviation score of .84. This indicates that most of the tutors held the view that the inadequate feedback from performance appraisal is a challenge to its effectiveness in the Colleges. This was confirmed by some of the interviewees.

I have worked in this institution for a long time and I always expect feedback after [staff performance] appraisal. Interestingly, this doesn't happen. Sometimes, you don't hear from them [appraisers] again after appraisal exercise [ST-4].

....I have been appraised severally, but, sometimes, I don't get any feedback from the supervisors who conduct the exercise. This is a worry to me [JT-3].

A well-constructed performance appraisal feedback can be valuable tool for communication with employees as pertaining to how their job performance stands with the organizational expectations (Kusi, 2017). Unless action is

taken to follow up issues identified through the appraisal, there can be no improvement in employee performance. Pulakos (2009) provides reasons for the reluctance of some appraisers to provide feedback to employees, among them, the manager's desire to avoid the risk of ruining the relationships with the employees.

Table 1 also shows that 16 (40%) of the tutor respondents agreed to the statement that 'overly challenging performance appraisal goals can bring negative performance appraisal practice outcome' with a mean of 2.08 and standard deviation of .86. 13 (32.5%) of the respondents declined to the statement, while 11 (27.5%) were undecided. This implies that most of the tutors were uncomfortable about the challenging performance appraisal goals set for them. Performance goals and performance appraisal systems are often used in association, and negative outcomes concerning the organization can occur when goals are overly challenging or over-emphasised to the extent of affecting quality. Challenging performance goals could impede employee's ability to acquire necessary knowledge and skills (Kusi, 2017).

Table 1 further points out that 25 (62.5%) of the respondents indicated that the 'performance appraisal practices are not regular in the colleges' with a mean of 2.45 and standard deviation of .78. 7 (17.5%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement, while 8 (20%) were uncertain about it. The responses imply that majority of the tutors considered irregular staff performance appraisal in the Colleges as a problem. The interview data confirmed irregular staff appraisal in the Colleges, suggesting that it has little impact on the work of staff.

.....we wait for too long to be appraised. Most times we are appraised when we had completed the semester so we do retrospective thinking to remember some of the things done. So, for me, it has no impact on my performance. I do what I have to do! [ST-2]

Performance appraisal is not often conducted in this institution. It appears we do not see its value. Sometimes, some of us believe it has no impact on our work! [JT-1]

Comments by some of the interviewees seemed to provide explanation for the irregular staff performance appraisal. For example, ST-1 explained:

.....sometimes I can understand the supervisors for the irregular staff performance appraisal. Well, I think it is the workload. The pressure of work sometimes makes it difficult for them [management] to appraise staff on regular basis. Also, because of the workload, we are unable to avail ourselves to be appraised even though we know it is important for performance improvement. Getting time to set objectives and meeting the supervisor for appraisal has always been my problem due to pressure of work."

Irregular staff performance appraisal system is detrimental to continuous performance improvement. Gupta and Kumar

(2013) and Moulder (2011) emphasise that the best practice is for the evaluation of performance to take place on a more regular basis. In some contemporary educational organizations, performance appraisals are carried out, at least, once a year to ensure its effectiveness.

In summary, the data in Table I above revealed that the major challenges to the appraisal of the performance of the tutors in the colleges included the appraisees' lack of understanding of the processes involved, irregular feedback to appraisees, overly challenging goals set for appraisees and irregular performance appraisal practices

Existing staff performance appraisal support systems in the colleges

The questionnaire also gathered data on the support systems put in place to overcome the challenges of performance appraisal the two colleges, which is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 presents the tutors' responses on the available support systems for staff performance appraisal practices at the colleges. The data in the Table 2 suggests the range for the mean and standard deviation scores as 1.33 to 2.50 and .57 to .85 respondents respectively. In a bid to find out from tutor respondents whether 'there is a clear policy on performance appraisal practices which is always followed in the College', the data revealed that 16 (40%) of them agreed to the statement with a mean of 2.13 and standard deviation of .82. The data in Table 2 further suggests that 11 (27.5%) of the respondents declined, while the remaining 13 (32.5%) were undecided. These responses suggest that a clear policy on performance appraisal practices in the Colleges is perceived by most the respondents as one of the support systems they have in ensuring appraisal success. Policy provides guidelines for the activities of the organization and it must be treated with all the needed attention it deserves.

On whether 'the use of performance appraisal is supported and encouraged by management of the Colleges', a mean score of 2.50 and a standard deviation score of .60 were obtained with 22 (55%) of the respondents agreeing to the statement, while 2 (5%) indicated otherwise. The remaining 16 (40%) did not decide on the statement. This means that most of the tutors acknowledged that performance appraisal is supported and encouraged by management of the Colleges, which was seen as one of the support systems. The interviewees also confirmed this view, as highlighted in the following comments:

..... I do receive support from my supervisor during appraisal sessions. When it is required of me, I set my objectives on a structured form and send to my supervisor. Then I am invited later for the appraisal interview. She first goes through the objectives with me before the discussion and think that is how it should be [JT-3].

....My supervisor encourages me to feel free to question and express any grievances. All issues that come up are resolved before completing the interview so I feel supported. [JT-4]

Table 2: Existing staff performance appraisal support systems in the two colleges

Items	A	N	D	M	SD
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)		
There is a clear policy on performance appraisal practices which is always followed in the College.	16 (40)	13 (32.5)	11 (27.5)	2.13	.82
Tutors are always actively involved in the appraisal process	23 (57.5)	10 (25)	7 (17.5)	2.40	.78
There is regular training for staff on performance appraisal development in the Colleges.	2 (5)	11 (27.5)	27 (67.5)	1.37	.59
Performance Appraisal determines' individual and organizational training and development needs.	23 (57.5)	10 (25)	7 (17.5)	2.40	.78
There is regular feedback on the performance of staff to generate and sustain their interest in the performance appraisal practices.	19 (47.5)	12 (30)	9 (22.5)	2.25	.81
The use of performance appraisal is supported and encouraged by management of the Colleges	22 (55)	16 (40)	2 (5)	2.50	.60
Supervisors recommend staff for further training based on appraisal results.	23 (57.5)	9 (22.5)	8 (20)	2.37	.81
Management offer employees moral support during the appraisal exercise.	2 (5)	12 (32.5)	25 (62.5)	1.43	.59
Supervisors provide adequate resources for the appraisers to achieve their objectives.	10 (25)	8 (20)	22 (55)	1.70	.85
The tutors are rewarded to motivate and develop their interest in performance appraisals.	2 (5)	14 (35)	24 (60)	1.45	.60
Perception of appraisees on performance appraisal is minimized by clarifying the purpose of the process.	5 (12.5)	20 (50)	15 (37.5)	1.75	.67
There is constant supervision of the work of appraisees in the Colleges for effective performance appraisal practices.	5 (12.5)	22 (55)	13 (32.5)	1.80	.65
Supervisors set goals with the staff to know their expectations, and reviews are always based on the objectives to increase fairness in the evaluation	11 (27.5)	14 (35)	15 (37.5)	1.90	.81
There is support from supervisors whenever a challenge is identified	13 (32.5)	19 (47.5)	8 (20)	2.12	.72
The supervisors of the Colleges provide opportunity for staff to challenge appraisal ratings/ results	2 (5)	9 (22.5)	29 (72.5)	1.33	.57

Source: Field Data (2018) **Key:** [A–Agree, D–Disagree, N–Neutral, F–Frequency, M–Mean, SD–Standard Deviation]

The comment that the college management support the performance appraisal process, implies that they are committed to individual staff performance improvement and the general improvement of the performance of their institutions.

The data in Table 2 again shows a mean of 2.82 and a standard deviation of 1.33 for the statement 'The tutors are rewarded to motivate and develop their interest in performance appraisals'. In relation to this item, 24 (60%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement with only 2 (5%) of them agreeing to it. 14 (35%) of the respondents were found to be neutral in their position which yielded a mean score of 1.45 and a standard deviation score of .60. This is an indication that the respondents, after performance appraisal, are not rewarded in order to motivate and develop their interest in the exercise. Broady-Preston and Steel (2012) have established that linking rewards with performance leads to commitment of employees in the appraisal system. The failure to reward

performance has the propensity to derail the ultimate purpose of performance appraisal which is to improve practice.

As evident in Table 2, 29 (72.5%) of the respondents agreed to the statement that supervisors of the Colleges provide opportunity for staff to challenge appraisal ratings/ results with a mean of 1.33 and standard deviation of .57. Only 2 (5%) of the respondents registered their disagreement whereas the remaining 9 (22.5%) tutors were uncertain. This suggests that opportunity is not provided for staff to challenge appraisal ratings/ results which could lead to professional conflict in the organization. Professional conflict could happen, especially if appraisees are unclear about the appraisal processes, leading to their dissatisfaction with the results. Some of the interviewees believed there was lack of opportunity for staff to challenge appraisal results because the issues are usually addressed in the course of the interview to prevent any possible conflict:

.....*Oh, as for the opportunity to express my grievances it is there. I am always satisfied with my ratings since we agree on them [ratings] together. We usually arrive at the final rating together so there is nothing to challenge. Issues are clarified during the appraisal interviews!*[ST-2].

According to Grote (2002), the performance appraisal system should have an appeal process for employees who do not agree with their assessment. He indicated further that the process should allow employees to openly challenge or discuss their performance with managers without any adverse impact or retaliation, encourage employees to provide a written version of their performance, and provide a formal appeal process for employees to challenge their evaluations. Ensuring these could prevent potential conflict situations in the organizations.

Thus, the study revealed that some support systems exist in the Colleges for staff performance appraisal. These include a clear policy on performance appraisal practices; and College management supporting the entire appraisal process. The study, however, revealed that staff were not rewarded in order to motivate and develop their interest in the appraisal process; and were also not given the opportunity to raise concerns about appraisal results.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed that staff performance appraisal practices in the Nursing Training Colleges are beset with numerous challenges, making them ineffective. Specifically, it emerged that the tutors of the Colleges sometimes do not understand the appraisal processes, which could affect their commitment to such activity. The study recommended that management of the institutions should organise training programmes on performance appraisal for the staff to create awareness and acceptance, and to improve their understandings of the processes involved. This could generate their interest in the activity.

Another major challenge confronting the employee performance appraisal in the Colleges is failure of appraisers to provide appraisal feedback to staff, making them feel reluctant to avail themselves of the such activity. Therefore, it is recommended that the management of the institutions should ensure that appraisal results are given to appraisees to enable them ascertain their performance levels and to re-strategise to ensure continuous improvement. This could be a useful means of communication with the tutors and demonstrate management commitment to the performance appraisal process.

It came out of the study that there was no link between appraise systems and tutor motivation or reward as appraisal support system in the Colleges, which could weaken their interest in such exercise. The management of the Colleges should, therefore, ensure that staff are

rewarded for availing themselves of the appraisal process and the data generated are, among others, used as the basis of staff training, promotion and salary determination.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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