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Performance Appraisal and Staff Commitment in Higher Education

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author DDK designed the study and the questionnaires, searched for relevant literature and participated in the data collection and analysis as well as the first and final write up. Author MP participated in the initial design of the study data collection and analysis. She also contributed to the final write up.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the impact of performance appraisal system (PAS) on staff commitment in tertiary institutions. The study adopted the exploratory research design, using a sample of 138 administrative staff working with tertiary institutions. The study found that management of the institutions does not involve the staff in the design of the appraisal. More so, it was observed that the current performance appraisal practices implemented in the tertiary institutions do not motivate the staff to give off their best towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the institution because there are no implications on the outcome. In relation to improving PAS in tertiary institutions, it was thus recommended that management should provide feedback to staff on the outcome of the appraisal and also introduce reward system.

Keywords: Performance appraisal system; tertiary institutions; staff commitment; administrative staff.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Employees' satisfaction with various aspects of Performance Appraisal Systems (PAS), such as performance targets setting, and performance feedback is related to the fairness of appraisal system [1]. Brown et al. [2] suggested that there is a significant relationship between performance appraisal system and employees' perception of justice which in turn affects their attitudes and general behaviour. Fairness and justice in organisational practices such as performance appraisal system (PAS) offer the opportunity to the administrative staffs to feel a sense of belongingness as inferred by Cheng [3] and become satisfied with their jobs.

Notwithstanding, some previous studies have shown that in some cases, employees are not happy with their organisations' performance appraisal system. For example, in their study, performed in Great Britain, Cook and Crossman [4] discovered that most employees (80%) were dissatisfied with their performance appraisal system. In another study by Posthuma and Campion [5] involving 50,000 employees, it was revealed that only a few (13%) of managers and employees and very few (6%) of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) believe that PAS meets their expectations, indicating high levels of employees' dissatisfaction with their performance appraisal systems.

This dissatisfaction with performance appraisal system could be due to several factors. For instance, [6] believe that "If employees feel that appraisal outcomes are based more on politics, personal agenda or inaccurate or hastily collected information, they will not experience the required connection between their performance" or motivation. Brown et al. [2] also argued that performance appraisal dissatisfaction reduces commitment among employees to their organisations. Others may also develop the intention to leave. He further stated that "If the organisation is not able to provide a high-quality Performance Appraisal (PA) experience, employees are less likely to know of, internalise and be committed to the goals and values of their employing organisation"

Similarly, Zheng et al., [7] mentioned that performance appraisal is a process that captures a unique form of social interaction between workers and their supervisors. It involves social exchanges between employees and their superiors. As a result, a high-quality PA experience will lead to increased organisational commitment among workers [8]. Armstrong and Taylor [9] defines commitment as a level of employee attachment felt toward the organisation in which they are employed. Nonetheless in the absence of a high-quality PA experience, one should expect that workers will not feel any sense of reciprocal obligation to their organisations [10].

Thus, when fairness as fundamental elements of any form of PAS is in doubt, the consequences may be several forms of negative behaviours of the employee [11,12,13]. This means that any system of PAS that demonstrates acceptable levels of fairness and equity in all of its aspects can trigger positive employee outcomes such as job satisfaction and commitment. It is against this background that this study seeks to assess the effects of PA on employees' commitment among the administrative staff of tertiary institutions in Kumasi.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Although several researchers (see [14,15,16,17,18,19]) have examined the link between PA practices and organisational effectiveness in several countries including Ghana, the issue of the impact of PAS on employees commitment is generally limited. Again, presently, only a few studies (see [14, 20,21,22]) have highlighted the importance of performance appraisals in ensuring that workers are committed to their respective organisations.

Nonetheless, these studies are limited in some other areas and hence could potentially suffer from generalisation. For instance, [22] in their study admitted that their findings were limited, and consequently recommended that "future research could include and compare data both from appraisees and their appraisers to examine the gap in perception among those two parts, and its possible impact on employee commitment".

Besides, these studies have focused mainly on sectors like the banking and financial services sector, agricultural sector, high-tech industries and the non-governmental sectors to the neglect of educational administrative staff. Moreover, it is essential to recognise that there are environmental factors which make institutions and other organisations to be managed differently [23] regarding the way they practice or

implement their PAS. In other sectors, companies are concerned with their profit margins and bottom-line performance. In contrast, managers of Educational Institutions are judged by how well they help in improving student performance and the growth of the institution.

Given the above apparent differences in the management and administration of PA, to research into the effects of PA practices on employees' commitment to a public University setting is a pressing need. The study relates to the tertiary institutions administrative staff's commitment to use performance appraisal to foster commitment among university staff.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal system and performance management are among the most important human resource management issues [24]. This is because performance management and appraisal are regarded as an important foundation of human resource development, since it is used for taking important decisions like training and development and promotion [25], among others. Typically, the performance appraisal system is designed by human resources (HR) department.

It requires that supervisors or line managers appraise their employees' work performance regularly. The issue of performance appraisal is also one of the more greatly studied subjects in work psychology [26]. It has gained the attention of researchers for more than seven decades. Before the 1980s, most empirical and theoretical studies focused on developing the psychometric characteristics of the appraisal method to decrease the bias inbuilt in performance assessments [27].

2.1.1 Performance appraisal systems

The concept of performance appraisal system has been variously defined by several scholars or researchers (see [15,28,29]). Performance appraisal is about measuring, monitoring and enhancing the performance of the employee as a contributor to the overall organisational performance [29]. Dessler [30], defined performance appraisal as 'evaluating how well employees do their jobs according to performance standards'. Performance evaluation is a review and discussion of an employee's performance of assigned duties and responsibilities [28].

Performance appraisal is part of the overall management process and is considered as a process of making judgements about an employee's performance as a basis for effective and objective personnel decisions [31]. Lawaj, [15] explained that performance appraisal is a methodical evaluation of staff performance compared to the organisational performance standards. It includes the appraising and development of the performance of the employees. Work standards are included in the process to assess the real work performance of employees compared to those standards and provide them with feedback, putting in mind their motivation to perform effectively.

Performance appraisal usually involves evaluating performance based on the judgments and opinions of subordinates, peers, supervisors, other managers and even workers themselves' [32]. It is a regular review of employee performance within organisations and is concerned with the process of valuing a person's worth to an organisation to increasing it. Begum [33] described performance appraisal system "as a structured formal interaction between a subordinate and 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 identifying weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for improvement and skills development". Performance appraisal has also been defined as the process of identifying, evaluating and developing the work performance of employees in the organisation.

Performance appraisal as pointed out by [34] is not a static evaluation activity, but a dynamic process, which should be viewed as follows; planning the employees' performance, evaluation, and improving the employees' performance. This process brings the new concept: performance management. Consequently, an efficient performance appraisal system requires evaluating the current levels of performance and enhancing strengths, discovering weaknesses, and providing feedback to the staff as well as the organisation, to have better performance in the future [35].

2.1.2 Types of performance appraisal

Companies adopt and employ different performance appraisals depending on the needs and nature of the job, work and the company profile. The most commonly used appraisal techniques include 360-degree appraisal, Peer Review, Self-Review, Essay appraisal, Graphic rating scale, Forced-choice Rating, Critical Incident Appraisal, Management-by-objectives approach, Ranking methods [31]. Accordingly, each of these methods has its combination of strengths and weaknesses, and none can achieve all the purposes for which management performance appraisal systems are intended. Neither is any one technique able to evade all of the pitfalls.

The best anyone can hope to do is to match an appropriate appraisal method to a particular performance appraisal goal. If a performance appraisal system is new to an organisation, it should first be pilot tested with a selected group of employees before it is instituted throughout the organisation, or it may fail. Here is a review of some of the types of appraisal methods used, which are in no particular order of importance.

2.1.3 The relevance of performance appraisal

Performance appraisal is employed by employers when they anticipate obtaining some benefits from its use. For example, [36] asserted that employers will have to decide not only if it is important for them to adopt a formal system of performance appraisal, but also how the appraisal system will be practised so that the organisation can make gains from its usage. According to Kampkötter [37], although performance appraisal is commonly thought for one specific purpose, which is paid, it can, be used to serve a wider range of purposes or goals. These goals of which performance appraisal can be used for may include; identifying training needs, enhancing current performance of workers, improving employees' abilities and talents, enhancing organisational or internal communication, stimulating of employee morale and motivation, among many other uses.

Similarly, Jackson and Schuler [32] inferred that when conducted properly, appraisals may help by (1) showing workers how to enhance their performance, (2) setting goals for employees, and (3) helping managers to assess subordinates' effectiveness and also make decisions about hiring, promotions, demotions, training, compensation, job design, transfers, and terminations of the employees. Likewise, Agyen-Gyasi & Boateng [38] assessed the impact of performance appraisal on the productivity levels of professional and para-professional librarians in selected higher institutions of learning in Ghana. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the research participants. The results revealed that performance appraisal systems were instituted for good reasons such as promoting teamwork, reducing grievances, identifying employees' strengths and weaknesses and their training needs.

In a related opinion, Kofi & Opare-Adzobu [39] assessed the performance appraisal process or practices at Cape Coast University. The study revealed that the University's appraisal scheme was directly related to a reward structure such as the annual increment in salaries and promotions. More recently, [4] in their research paper "evaluating organisational uses of performance appraisal system - a conceptual analysis and framework for the future" argued that "employee performance appraisal results are used by organisations as an instrument to enhance employee motivation, improve corporate communication, facilitate employee training and development and boost overall corporate success or effectiveness". Similarly Brefo-Manuh et al. [40] posit that Performance appraisal also serves as a useful tool for developing and sustaining employee motivation or morale, as well as training and developing existing talents.

Prior to the above assertions on the uses of performance appraisal practices, Aguinis [41] suggested that performance appraisal could be used to perform an administrative role. This can be done by facilitating an orderly means of determining rises in pay and other rewards as well as by delegating authority and responsibility to the most capable individuals. The informative function is fulfilled when the appraisal system supplies data to managers and appraisees about individual strengths and weaknesses. When effectively used, performance appraisals will be seen to be performing a major role in assisting employees and managers to formulate objectives for the period before the next appraisal [41]

Additionally, Rasch [42] posits that this process of performance appraisal system can improve the quality of working life by increasing mutual understanding between superiors and their

subordinates. In summary, it is evident from the above that scholars and researchers have generally explained uses of employee performance appraisal results in relation to employee reward and motivation, corporate communication, economic importance or performance value, and employee training and development. Hence, organisations that institute an effective system of employee performance appraisal can gain significantly.

2.1.4 Challenges in performance appraisal system implementation

Despite the potential benefits or contributions of employee performance appraisal system as noted in the preceding sections, its practices are not without challenges. In the view of Waldt [43], the challenges confronting performance appraisal systems in organisations can be classified into three areas: the process and format, evaluator's role and problems involving the evaluatee. In the Ghanaian context, [38] results revealed that while performance appraisal systems were instituted for good reasons such as promoting teamwork, reducing grievances, identifying employees' strengths and weaknesses and their training needs, there were challenges. The challenges include lack of standardised format for conducting a performance appraisal and the fact that the top management conducts the appraisals instead of the Line Managers who work closely with these employees on a daily basis.

In a related study, Kofi & Opare-Adzobu [39] assessed the performance appraisal process or practices at the Cape Coast Municipal Assembly. The study noted that even though the majority of the respondents perceive the appraisal system to be fair, they do not know the exact method of using the appraisal. There was also a significant absence of feedback reviews. Karuhanga [44] thus argued that these problems come about as a result of conflicting roles of being a coach and judge at the same time, lack of rater training or personal bias such as favouritism, subjectivity or leniency.

In addition to these, employees tend to overrate their performance, they may feel aggrieved when receiving appraisals which are lower than they expected [45]. This could explain why acceptance might be lowered. It must be noted that the lack of user acceptance of the performance appraisal system may engender resistance and a reduction in user motivation [46]. In conclusion, performance appraisal systems become useless if they do not generate positive reactions among raters and ratees [47]. A good performance appraisal system is that which is accepted by all involved in the process. In general, the performance appraisal system that is accepted is perceived as being distributional and procedural fairness. On the other hand, the absence of fairness will affect the acceptance and effectiveness of the system. Because of the large amount of time and money that need to be invested in developing and implementing an appraisal system, an ineffective appraisal system would be a severe threat and loss of resources to an organisation. From these, it seems important for each organisation to regularly check whether their performance appraisal is perceived as being fair and effective as intended and if users still support the system and its processes.

2.2 The Concept of Employee Commitment

Organisational commitment is the relative emotional strength of employees' identification with and involvement in a particular organisation [48]. Organisational commitment shows the psychological state involving employees and their employing organisation and implies the decision of employees to continue working in an organisation [49]. Organisational commitment can also be explained as the emotional attachment of employees with the values, goals, and missions of the employing organisation [50]. An employee with a high level of organisational commitment is an asset to the organisation since it reduces labour turnover and increases performance.

Buchanam et al. [51] suggested that organisational commitment consists of three components. The first one is identification. This has to do with adopting an employee to own the goals and values of the organisation. The second component is involvement. This is the psychological immersion or absorption in the activities of one's work role. The last component is loyalty, that is, a feeling of love for an attachment to the organisation. According to Meyer et al. [52], organisational commitment can be divided into three components. They are effective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. According to them, the strength of each of the components of organisational commitment, however, is influenced by different factors.

2.3 Performance Appraisal and Employee Commitment

Employees' perception of fairness in their institutions' performance appraisal experience can increase their faith in the system, thereby, resulting in an increased commitment to their organisations or jobs [53]. According to Pearce and Porter [10], employees who perceived recognition of their performance to the organisation in their performance appraisal system, have a higher tendency to be committed to their jobs. However, with a perceived absence of a high-quality performance appraisal experience, employees are unlikely to become committed and consequently feel any sense of reciprocal obligation.

In Australia, Brown et al. [2] investigate how performance appraisal quality affects job satisfaction. Data were collected from 2,336 employees in the Australian Public-Sector Organisations ("PSR"), and regression was used for the analysis. Findings indicated that employees with "low quality performance appraisal experiences relative to those with mixed and high quality performance appraisal experiences are more likely to be less committed to the organisation and more likely to be contemplating leaving the organisation".

Likewise, Arshad et al. [54] explored the link between performance appraisal politics and employee loyalty in the telecommunication industry in Pakistan. The researchers utilised data from 207 employees, and used regression analysis. The study showed that the political motives of the appraisers in performance appraisal exercises reduce employees' loyalty or commitment levels.

Recently, Bekele et al. [55] investigated the link between perceptions of performance appraisal practice on auditors' commitment at the Office of the Auditor General of the Amhara National Regional State. The researchers employed stratified sampling and survey data from 110 employees. The regression results indicated that employees' perception of performance appraisal practice has a significant positive effect on the workers' commitment.

In a related study in Ghana, Agyare et al. [56] used a sample of 200 employees from selected microfinance organisations to examine performance appraisal justice on job satisfaction. Findings of the study indicate that the "employees' commitment is positively related to and impacted by the linkage of appraisals with salary, identification of training needs, clarity of performance appraisal purpose and employee involvement in the formulation of appraisal tools". The studies [56,54,55,2] from various contexts suggest that performance appraisal justice or fairness is instrumental in increasing employee commitment.

2.4 Effects of Performance Appraisal on Employee Commitment

Studies on the effects of performance appraisal on employees' commitment emphasise the need for feedback [57] and rewards [58]. Arthur et al. [14] in a study to investigate the effects of performance appraisal on employees' commitment revealed the relevance of performance appraisal to organisations and also emphasised the need to give feedback to employees due to the positive impact that will have on their performance. They asserted that feedback after appraisal helps to strengthen communication between supervisor and employees and also motivates the employee. The study also underscores the role performance appraisal plays in guiding employees to work towards attaining organisational goals and their own goals as well. Poorly undertaken performance appraisals, they warn, could have detrimental effects on the organisation by causing employees to perform worse.

A recent study by Daoanis [59] revealed that the performance appraisal system strongly affects the commitment of employees in both positive and negative ways. She discovered that employees' loyalty is strongly influenced, hence their initiative in doing their work. It follows that the efficiency and effectiveness of the employees are strongly affected as they claimed that their motivation in doing their work is affected. On the positive side, responses by employees revealed that they would not mind working extra hours, on the negative side; however, employees will be unwilling to work for extra hours or beyond the hours for which they are paid because they feel they are not rewarded sufficiently.

This study gives credence to the assertion by [60] that employees are willing and feel obliged to repay the organisation through high-performance levels if the organisation shows a commitment regarding rewards and the development of employees. Employees will thus

feel motivated to work towards achieving organisational goals, even those who may be superordinate, and will also cause an increase in their affective commitment [61]. Again, research on salespersons asserts that giving clear explanations on the criteria used in evaluating employees and giving employees the chance to partake in designing appraisals has a positive relationship with their commitment. However, if the employees' roles in the organisation are not clearly defined, it will have a negative impact on commitment [62].

On the other hand, since performance appraisal system is enhanced by employee participation and perceived clarity of goals [46], it may also be positively related to affective commitment, thus supporting the arguments about communicating superordinate goals [63]. Moreover, developmental performance appraisal is concerned with giving employees a sense of belongingness and that sense of being valued by their teams and the organisation at large as this is vital in making employees more effectively committed to the organisation [64].

3. METHODOLOGY

The exploratory research design was adopted to conduct the study. Considering the objectives of the study, a mixed methods approach was adopted. The approach was adopted because as observed by Gray et al. [65] neither quantitative nor qualitative research approaches are adequate by themselves to explain the trends as well as the details of the circumstances under study. Additionally, the approach allowed the researcher to use the strengths of one approach to compensate for the weaknesses of the other toward attaining triangulation. The target population was all the administrative staff of the selected tertiary institutions in the Kumasi metropolis. There are about a total of 1238 Administrative staff working in the selected three tertiary institutions in the metropolis. However, it is highly impracticable to survey all the staff hence; the convenient sampling technique was adopted to select the sample to represent the target population. The technique was adopted because the potential participants were sparsely distributed among the various faculties of the institutions surveyed. This is centred on making a deliberate choice of a research participant based on the qualities they possess. The researcher decided on what needed to be known and then sought out participants who could and were willing to provide the required information because of their knowledge and experience [66, [67].

In the end, the researcher decided to use a total of 138 administrative staff of tertiary institutions in Kumasi as the sample for the study. The sample comprised of junior and senior staff as well as some senior members of tertiary institutions in Kumasi. The three main public tertiary institutions in Kumasi which are the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), University of Education, Winneba – Kumasi (UEWK) and the Kumasi Technical University (KTU). Primary data was collected through interviews and questionnaires. To ensure validity and reliability of the outcome, the data collection instruments were piloted to ascertain whether they measure what they were intended to measure. The Cronbach alpha was determined which was $\alpha = 0.78012$ which indicates that the instruments have a 78% chance of yielding similar results should it be re-administered. Muijs & Reynolds [68] indicated that a reliability alpha of more than 0.7 is considered acceptable for a test to be internally consistent. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis strategies were adopted. The quantitative analysis was done using IBMs SPSS version 25 whereas the qualitative analysis was done using NVivo version 10. The qualitative data was themed according to the major themes and further analysed.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Effective Work-based Interactions among Employees

Fig. 1 represents respondents' views about their participation in the designs of appraisals used in evaluating their output. The responses have been computed using frequencies and percentages. The result shows that out of the 138 administrative staff surveyed, 41% of the staff pointed out that authorities of their respective institutions involved them only to a small extent when it comes to designing the performance appraisal tool for evaluating their output. Additionally, 35% also emphasised that they were not involved in any way at all. However, 24% of the staff admitted that they were moderately involved in the process at the time of the study. From the results, it can be concluded that the authorities of the institutions to a small extent involve staff in the design of the

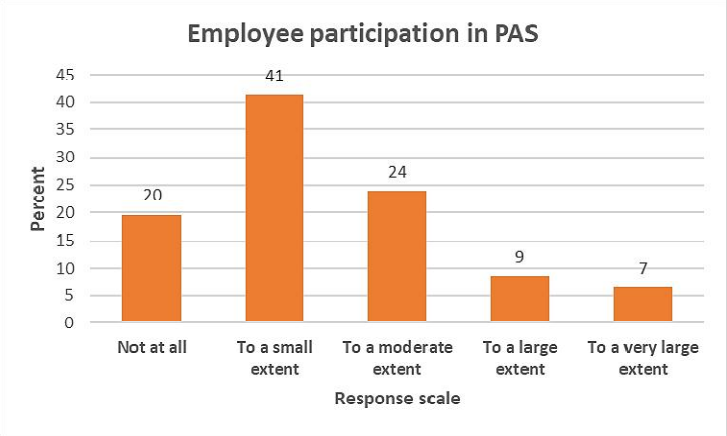

Fig. 1. Employee participation in the design of the performance appraisal system

Table 1. Performance Appraisal and employee commitment

Variable	Mean	±SD
Do you receive feedback from the Performance Appraisal	1.29	1.09
I am rewarded (promotions and other benefits) for my performance based on the appraisal	2.91	0.44
I believe PA, as practised in the institution, is good for the work environment	1.65	0.66
I am motivated to do more for the university	4.10	1.79
The PAS motivates me to work towards achieving the goals and objectives of the university	2.75	0.56
I think this is a good place to work	4.51	0.81
The results of the PAS make me feel committed to high levels of performances	2.12	0.75
Do you feel important and useful to the institution	3.14	0.41
Total average	**2.71**	**0.89**

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neutral 4= agree 5= strongly agree

performance appraisal instruments. The current situation has the tendency to negatively affect the level of commitment of the appraisee. This finding can be related to the works of Roberts and Reed [69] who asserted that if the performance appraisal system is enhanced by employee participation, clarity of goals is perceived.

Table 1 presents the summary of responses to a series of questions on the effect of performance appraisal at the institution. The responses in relation to the staff receiving feedback from the performance appraisals showed that with a mean and standard deviation of (m=1.29, ±SD=1.09). It could be inferred that the majority of the respondents strongly disagreed that they receive feedback from the performance appraisals done in the institution. In addition, the administrative staff were asked to indicate whether they were rewarded based on the appraisal of their performance. With a mean statistic of (m=3.91, ±SD=0.44) it was obvious that the staff were not sure whether their promotions and other benefits are given to them by their respective institutions were as a result of their performances.

From the responses, it can be concluded that the institutions do not provide the staff with feedback when they appraise the performance of the staff. This implies that the staff did not get to know which aspects of their performances they fell short so they could improve on those areas. This finding agrees with the works of Kampkötter [37] who studied the effects of performance appraisal feedback on employee commitment and found that feedback had a positive impact on the performance of employees. Furthermore, it was realised that the staff were unable to relate the rewards they were given by the institution to the outcome of the performance appraisals carried out in the institutions. Once workers cannot relate the rewards they receive to the performance evaluations, it paints a gloomy picture to the importance of the staff of the institution to performance appraisal activities.

Again, when asked about the fact that they believe the performance appraisal as practised in the institution is good for the work environment; the majority of the respondents disagreed strongly with a mean and standard deviation of (m=1.65, ± SD=0.66). The results further showed that the majority of the staff maintained that they were motivated to do more for the institution reference to a mean and standard deviation score of 4.10 (±SD=1.79). Furthermore, when asked whether the performance appraisal system motivates the administrative staff to work towards achieving the goals and objectives of the institution, the majority of the respondents were in the disagreement (m=2.75, ±SD=0.56) which suggests that the administrative staff at the time of the study were not motivated by the performance appraisal system. From the results, it was quite unsurprising that the staff indicated they were not necessarily motivated to do more towards achieving the goals and objectives of the institution. This follows Daoanis [59] who revealed that a poorly executed performance appraisal system affects workers motivation and commitment to work.

When the staff considered the institution an excellent place to work, responses showed that the respondents find the institution a good place to work (m=4.51, ±SD=0.81). When asked whether the result of the PAS makes them feel committed to high levels of performances, Table 1 shows that the performance appraisal system does not necessarily make them committed to high levels of performances (m=2.12, ±SD=0.75). Additionally, the results showed that the administrative staff surveyed were ambivalent about their importance or usefulness to the institution (m=3.14, ±SD=0.41) as the majority of respondents remained neutral.

4.2 Caring about the Fate of the Institution

Fig. 2 presents a summary of the responses when respondents were asked whether they care about the fate of the institution. From the chart, it could be observed that almost half (46%) of the respondents maintained that to a large extent they cared about the fate of the institution, and they were supported by 28% of the staff who pointed that to a very large extent they cared about the future of the institution. It is worth to note that 15% of respondents stated they did not at all care about the future of the institution. From the results, it can be implied that the administrative staff were concerned about the outcome and direction to which the institution is headed. The results give the impression that most of the respondents were not motivated by the performance appraisal at the institution. Thus, it could be deduced that administrative staff were concerned to the state of affairs in the institution when it comes to how performance appraisals were carried out in the institution.

4.3 How PAS Can be Improved to Enhance Staff Commitment

The administrative staff were asked to express what they think could be done to improve the performance appraisal system implemented to enhance staff commitment at the tertiary institution. The results have been presented qualitatively below:

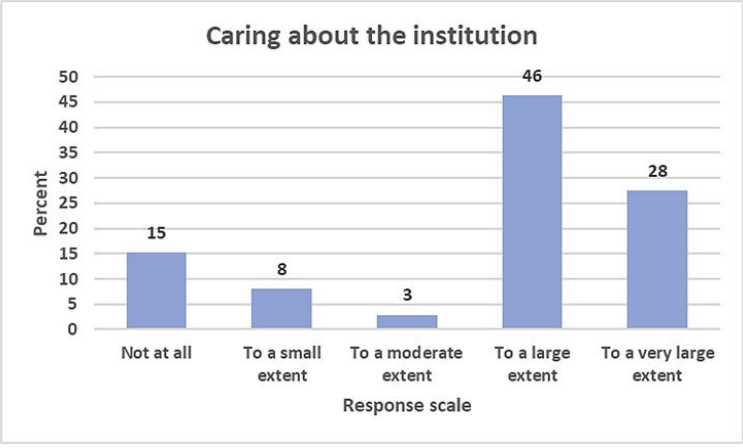

Fig. 2. Care about the fate of this institution

The responses showed some amount of ambivalence concerning how PAS could be improved. Most of the staff believed they should involve them when it comes to designing the performance appraisal tools and also the staff should be appraised at least twice in a year to keep the workers on their toes to do their jobs well. many also stated that the results of the appraisal should be linked to a reward system such as promotion and salary increment so that they can be motivated to work towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the institution. This is because most of them believed that it creates another form of motivation for the workers to work hard to earn something that is worthwhile. Selected comments are as given below;

> *"Oh, to improve this? to me, something like a reward for those who place high on the performance appraisal will be given this or that will stir up competition which is good for the system…"*

Another staff was quick to add that;

> *"The results of the appraisal should be communicated to the staff concerned to re-emphasise the positive and also improve the negative…and another major aspect is that if they really want to see its impact on the highest level, they should tell us that we will be promoted based on our appraisal results. They should do that, and they would see the outcome…"*

This also echoes another Instructor's remark regarding the need for negotiation;

> *"The supervisors who do the evaluation should highlight what was good as well as poor performance. And in effect, suggest ways for improving performance in the most effective manner. It can also be used to determine the training needs of staff when it is done well.*

Emphasis was also placed on the role of communication and collaboration in improving performance and clarifying the appraisal standards on which staff were evaluated. The results imply that to improve the PAS at the institutions, there is the need to attach some level of seriousness to the process. Also, there is the need to ensure that time after time the appraisal process itself is examined to identify weaknesses and other areas that need strengthening with time. Feedback also remains another important component of an effective performance appraisal without which the appraisee does not know where they need to improve.

5. CONCLUSION

The study found that some tertiary institutions in the Kumasi metropolis do not provide the staff with feedback when their performances are appraised. This implies that the staff did not get to know which aspects of their performances they fell short, so they could improve on those areas. Also, there were no reward systems related to the performance appraisal activities implemented in the tertiary institutions, and so some staff do not bother to do it.

Additionally, it was found that the current performance appraisal practices implemented in the tertiary institutions did not motivate the staff to give off their best towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the institution. Concerning how performance appraisal can be improved in the institutions; the study observed that there is the need to institute an effective feedback system in which the staff who are appraised get to know the full details of where they fell short, and training programme could be organised to meet the training needs of the staff so they can improve appropriately. This is consistent with [40] assertion that Organisations, public or private; profit or non-profit making, small or large may institute performance appraisal systems to influence employee behaviour via feedback mechanisms. This will in turn enhance internal communication or the relationship between the supervisors and their subordinates.

Performance management has become a continuous process that creates a working culture which seeks to encourage employees to improve their work performance and reach their full potential while in employment. The observations made from the study intimates that management of the institution utilises performance appraisal as a tool to provide strategic direction, develop staff competencies and instil organisational value in the staff. Management of the institutions needs to regard performance appraisal as a connection between staff and the organisation. This is because performance appraisal affords the institution a form of insurance that the staff will attempt to give their best performances.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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