

An Evaluation of the Annual Performance Appraisal System at the University of Cape Coast

Joyce Emma Atta-Quartey

Office of the Provost, College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana
Email: jattaquartey@ucc.edu.gh

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Abstract

The study was conducted to investigate staff's perception on the effectiveness of the annual assessment system and examine the motivation status of staff after assessment. Convenience sampling technique was used to select some senior members and senior staff who were drawn from the various administrative departments within the University. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to help analyze the primary data collected. The paper concludes that performance appraisal, likewise performance management at the University of Cape Coast, lacks policy direction. Without the use of guiding principles for monitoring performance and appraising staff, it is possible that many people are actually not performing and therefore assessments at UCC suffer a variety of judgment errors and biases due to subjective appraisals. Part of the recommendations is that the Division of Human Resources (DHR) should arrange training programmes for all supervisors who are raters in order to equip them with appropriate skills of providing feedback to staff which will motivate staff to improve upon their performance. Finally, the DHR should review the appraisal system from start to finish and introduce new appraisal systems for the various levels of administrative staff.

Keywords

Performance Appraisal, Performance Management, Organisations, Employee Performance, Motivation, Effectiveness, Annual Assessment, Appraisal System

1. Introduction

Performance appraisal is an extensively used formal assessment in many organisations to determine employees'

performance in relation to the achievement of organisational goals, and to settle on ways for future improvements. A performance appraisal system embodies the tools and procedures/guidelines used by trained assessors in conducting the assessment of employees. In the view of many contemporary research analysts on performance management and work reviews such as MacMillan [1], the use of properly constructed appraisals should form part of an ongoing performance management process and they should represent a summary of an ongoing, year-round dialogue. As noted by Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) [2], even though performance appraisal is a very significant part of performance management, it is not performance management in itself but a system used to assess performance of employees. Many organizations use the results of the assessment to make decisions on employees' promotions, compensations, rewards, increments, training and career development programmes [3].

As already stated, performance appraisal is not the same as performance management as envisaged by some people, but it is part of the performance management process. Performance management (which includes appraisal), according to Cascio [4], is the total process of observing an employee's performance in relation to job requirement over a period of time, *i.e.* clarifying expectations, setting goals, providing on-the-job coaching, storing and recalling information about performance; and the appraisal part is the formal assessment done on employees' performance usually at the end of a period to find out whether goals were achieved, standards were met and feedback communicated to employees to encourage them to perform better to meet corporate set goals. As part of the performance management process, supervisors interact with and evaluate employees' work output with respect to successes achieved in the previous year and use the feedback to set new goals for the next appraisal period [5]. However, before this formal annual assessment is conducted, there can be a number of informal reviews held with staff all geared towards measuring the employees' performance.

Researchers on performance appraisals such as Lawler *et al.* [6] indicate that performance appraisals are effective when the performance management of an organisation's employees is based on goals that are jointly set (by supervisor and staff) and are driven by the organisation's business strategy; and trained managers do the appraisals. They add that if performance appraisals are designed and executed correctly by trained personnel and the managers are held accountable for how well they do the appraisals, they are very effective. According to Mitchell and Gamlem [7], appraisal systems are effective when the design and conduct of the appraisal "align with the vision, mission and strategic objectives of the organization because 'each organization is unique and their processes should reflect their uniqueness'". They suggest that e.g. if a rating scale is used, the organization must decide which rating style best suits its needs. Shawn Smith and Mazin [8] support this assertion and categorically add that provision must be made for employee self-appraisal and the evaluation of the employee's work by the supervisor "should be an interactive process, giving the employee the chance to participate, ask questions, respond to feedback and offer suggestions", usually with guidelines.

When conducted professionally, *i.e.* effectively, appraisals motivate employees to increase productivity and to meet corporate goals. Motivation (which can be the inner drive in humans or external factors that influence people to take certain actions) has been a critical factor in determining employee performance. Motivating employees to achieve a desired outcome is one of the most important functions of a supervisor and that supervisors who are able to motivate their staff to achieve the highest results help the organisation to achieve success [9]. There is therefore the need for organisations to have good motivational programmes to encourage staff to continuously improve upon their work performance.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The University of Cape Coast (UCC) is a large corporate body with a huge mandate to appraise the performance of its staff. However later, staff (both supervisors and direct reports) of the University have taken the whole process of appraisal for granting. Researcher's past experiences with some staff indicated that they (staff) found it strange to be invited and interacted with during the formal appraisal period for feedback. Upon invitation of staff by researcher for appraisal (during an end of year appraisal session), some responses given by staff included: "nobody has ever invited me for a performance review interaction"; "madam the interaction is not necessary, just put some marks there for us" which presupposes that in many cases, some scores are just recorded for everybody in some departments without any interaction.

The performance appraisal system in UCC does not appear to be effective because in the first instance, there are no documented guidelines set out for supervisors to follow to enable them to monitor the whole performance management process which ends with performance appraisal as set out by Human Resource experts such as

Cascio [4] and Shawn Smith and Mazin [8]. These observations call for the adoption of an effective appraisal system based on an effective performance monitoring system; hence the conduct of this study in order comes out with a more effective and efficient contemporary approach that UCC could adapt for performance management in general and performance appraisal in particular that would facilitate the achievements of its corporate goals. For purposes of this study, the words “assessment” and “appraisal” will be used interchangeably to give the same meaning.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

This is an exploratory study which involves an investigation into an existing situation and the search for improved and more effective methods. The study was therefore conducted to:

- investigate staff’s perception on the effectiveness of the annual assessment system;
- examine the motivation status of staff after assessment; and
- finally make recommendations to management for improvement on the appraisal system.

2. Understanding Some Basic Concepts

2.1. Performance Appraisal Explained

Traditionally, many Human Resource (HR) practitioners have considered the formal performance appraisal system that is administered once or twice a year as the primary means for managing employees performance, but Noe *et al.* [10], like many other HR practitioners take a different view of the whole performance management process and see performance appraisal as that aspect of the process of performance management that measures the performance of employees. They add that what comes out of the assessment, which is the feedback, is used in helping employees to adjust their performance to be in line with the organisational goals and to help staff improve upon their work.

According to Farnham and Pimlot [11], when appraising performance of employees, the manager is examining “what improvement in employee performance can be made as well as helping to build in their strengths and enabling them to perform more effectively in future”. They note that appraisal is important because “reviews of the potential and development needs of employees predict the level and the type of work which employees will be capable of doing in future”; and at the same time, “proposals are made on how best employees’ future careers can be developed through training.

Shawn Smith and Mazin [8] explain performance appraisal as the formal assessment and rating of employees by their managers usually at an annual review meeting. They say some organisations have replaced the once or twice a year evaluation with more informal performance management processes that revolve around providing better and frequent feedback that aid training of employees in order to meet organisations goals. Shawn Smith and Mazin [8] claim further that in recent times while some organizations are able to do away with formal structured evaluations, others rather limit their performance management activities to only appraisals, forgetting that appraisal is only a sub set of the whole process of performance management. They reiterate that a poor evaluation system however, may do more harm than good and advice that organisations that have systems in place that are not helping them achieve performance results should take a break from the process, review it from start to finish and introduce a new evaluation system that will help them achieve their corporate goals.

2.2. Views on Performance Appraisal

Armstrong [12] agrees with Townley (1989), that the use of performance appraisal tools once or twice a year as the only means of managing performance has been discredited by many HR practitioners because it is perceived as solely a means of “exercising managerial control”, it is backward looking, concentrating on what had gone wrong rather than looking forward to future developmental need’. Armstrong again observed that some organisations handled the performance appraisal in isolation and there was little or no link between them and the needs of the organisation. He reiterates that either line managers reject the performance appraisal schemes as time consuming and irrelevant or employees resent the superficial nature because managers tend to be bias as they simply go through the motions. He corroborates with Murtis (1998) that performance appraisal too often degenerates into “a dishonest annual ritual”.

Bohlander *et al.* [13] note that for a number of reasons, formal performance appraisal programmes sometimes

yield disappointing results; the reasons being unclear performance standards, lack of inputs from staff in designing assessment tools thereby staff perceiving the whole process as unfair and rater bias; lack of feedback to employees; inadequate training to both staff and supervisors on the appropriate design and use of the appraisal tool; too many forms to complete and the use of the same programme for conflicting purposes.

Much as employees are often dissatisfied with methods of managing performance using the appraisal methods, managers also find the administration of performance appraisal a challenge and are frequently reluctant to engage in the process because of its confrontational nature.

Price [14] agrees with Pettijohn *et al.* (2001) that a positive attitude towards appraisal (from both employees and managers) “is possible if managers are provided with information designed to increase the benefits of engaging staff in the evaluation process and more thought is given to the appropriateness of the measurement criteria”. Nonetheless, surveys, according to “HR practitioners show that annual performance appraisal is still the norm for reviewing employees” performance in many organisations and it is effective especially if employees are involved throughout the management process, the design of the tool and if the appraisals are designed to reflect on the organisational needs, goals and objectives.

As noted by MacMillan [1], forward thinking organisations are strategising to address the negative views of work reviews and are taking steps (including the use of automated systems) to ensure that processes (including the appraisal process) deliver results and improve performance. Other tactics that may be used to reduce appraisal problems are handling staff with respect; recognising and rewarding staff appropriately; providing training to raters; involving users in the development of rating forms; educating supervisors on the importance and conduct of performance appraisals; rewarding managers for conducting performance appraisal; choosing the appropriate raters [15]. Other organisations use co-workers, peers, customers as in the case of the 360 degrees feedback appraisal system. The situation where students of UCC are involved in evaluating staff is very appropriate.

2.3. Benefits of Performance Appraisals

According to Lloyd [16], if performance appraisal systems are well-designed and well-executed, they have strong motivational impact on the staff indicating that effective appraisal systems have the power to motivate staff to perform better. Citing examples of the benefits, Lloyd and other HR practitioners observe that through effective appraisals, top performers can tell that they are valued; effective communication is encouraged between managers and employees; employees are made aware of how their performance compare with organisation’s standards and areas where they need training; skills deficiencies are identified and addressed appropriately; employees’ future career development are directed and uniform standards for evaluating employees are established. In addition, organisations are able to make decisions on promotions, compensations, dismissals or termination of appointments and link performance to rewards. Employees are encouraged to corporate and companies are enabled to focus on smooth operations and customer loyalty [17].

2.4. Approaches to Appraising Employees

Methods of evaluating employees have evolved considerably. There are new approaches that reflect technical improvement and legal requirement which are more consistent with purposes of appraisal. Performance can be measured by focusing on ranking employees to compare employee’s performance or breaking down the evaluation into ratings of individual attributes/traits, behaviours or results [13]. Many organisations develop systems that incorporate a variety of measures. Harris [15] advises that it is important to provide training to the managers who are raters on how to use the forms in order to reduce judgment errors.

In contemporary times organisations tend to focus gathering information from different sources in order to obtain a comprehensive and true evaluation of employee’s performance, such as the 360 degree multi-rater approach where data is gathered from more than two rating sources [12]. These may include self appraisal, supervisor’s ratings, peers and subordinates, customers and supplier’s evaluation. The major advantage of this 360 degree technique is that it provides a means for minimising bias in a subjective evaluation technique. It is made for strategic and developmental purposes [17]. This may be appropriate for staff of UCC.

2.5. Setting of Goals

In fact, the setting of goals and objectives by staff at all levels before monitoring is to be encouraged because according to Daniel [18], a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) consultant on HR issues, during

that time a two-way conversation occurs between the supervisor and the staff that results in complete understanding of what is required, when it is required and how the staff's contribution measures up to the standards set. She adds that in the end, the staff knows exactly where he/she stands in relation to achieving goals and reaching performance standards; the manager becomes aware of the motivation of the people he/she is working with and the organisation is able to retain motivated staff who understand their roles and that of others in contributing to the overall success of the organization. McShane and Von Glinow [19] reiterates in their book "Organisational Behaviour" that "goal-setting theory is one of the most widely practiced theories of motivation in organizations" and that setting of goals "give employees clearer role perceptions so that their effort is channeled toward better behaviours that will improve work performance".

In setting the goals and objectives, supervisors will have to guide their direct reports to set realistic and achievable goals in relation to UCC's corporate strategic goals. This should begin during or soon after the staff's orientation if the person is newly appointed or during the first week of the beginning of the academic year. The goals are not set once a year and ignored until it is time for the next annual review. Rather they are set and reviewed as and when necessary. According to Culbert [20], goal-setting time is an important period for lighting the intrinsic fire in employees because that is the time trusting relationship can be built (between supervisor and direct report) where direct reports can always come back for feedback. He adds that new and more challenging goals combined with an understanding of an employee's passions, strengths and ambitions give managers the ability to align business and employee goals and create a deeper sense of purpose for work to be done properly.

During this same period, training and developmental needs will have to be discussed, planned and documented. Before the assessment form can be used to appraise staff effectively, there is the need for every staff to be properly inducted and oriented in job-related issues where lessons should be given on tasks to be performed, responsibilities and standards against which performance will be monitored and measured (Nickels *et al.*, 1999).

2.6. Monitoring Performance before Appraisal

Monitoring the performance of staff and helping them to adjust where necessary should be part of the day-to-day activities of supervisors as they interact with their direct reports while recording both good and bad behaviour attitudes towards work and supporting them to achieve their goals. It is after performance has been properly monitored and documented using performance indicators that the assessment form for staff appraisal can be effectively used at UCC. While monitoring, "the manager/supervisor is able to control staff by comparing actual results with planned objectives and determining to make adjustments", because "without the objectives there is nothing to measure against and without controls there is no information about what has been achieved" [21].

2.7. The Assessment Forms Used for Appraisal at UCC

The annual assessment forms indicated as appendices A, B and C serve as the tools for assessing the performance of non-teaching staff (Junior Staff, Senior Staff and Senior Members respectively) at the University of Cape Coast, usually after a period of one whole year. Supervisors are served with the form without any spelt out guidelines and training for conducting the assessment.

The perception is that the assessment forms used in appraising staff at UCC is the only means of managing staff performance. Many supervisors at UCC are ignorant of the ingredients for the practical conduct of managing performance of staff that ends with effective performance appraisal. The Division of Human Resource (DHR) of UCC has either not developed or made supervisors aware of the appropriate guiding principles for managing and appraising performance. Using the appraisal form alone to manage performance as it is done in UCC is not enough. It does not constitute performance management [2]. The filling of the appraisal form at UCC has become just an annual ritual where no pains are taken to do any effective job as it is observed by Armstrong [12] that some "performance appraisal forms are handled in isolation and there is no link between the staff performance and the scores given" during appraisal.

2.8. Annual Assessment Form for Junior/Senior Staff

The annual assessment form for junior and senior staff marked B has a combination of ratings for traits/attributes and behavioural check statements that determine the characteristics of the staff's behaviour as observed by Bohlander *et al.* [13]. Even though there is a rating for speed and effectiveness in carrying out duties, no provision is made for appraiser to give specific examples of staff acting in ways that are effective or ineffective in some be-

haviour. The form does not include any results oriented measures (ROM)—a popular example being Management by Objectives (MBO) where staff could establish goals and objectives through consultation with their supervisors and then use them as basis for evaluation [14].

This assessment form is not suitable for assessing senior staff because many of them are supervisors and therefore need a more comprehensive appraisal system, similar to that of the senior members which will enable them to set goals that they can aspire to achieve. There is also no provision for discussion of staff's career development and training needs which many researchers on performance appraisals note as a very important component of the appraisal system.

2.9. Annual Assessment Form for Senior Members

The annual assessment form for Senior Members (non-teaching) marked A is a more comprehensive tool which has a combination of assessing traits and attributes using the graphic rating scale, the essay method, behavioural check list and establishing of goals and objectives. The appraisee is also given the opportunity to appraise her/himself as proposed by Shawn Smith and Mazin [8]; and a section provided for the Head of Department. Two or more other raters being their direct reports and peers, would have ended up placing this assessment system in the category of 360° rater scale method which is favoured in contemporary times [18]. Among the benefits noted in a survey conducted by the Performance Management Group in 1997 on the 360° rater scale method was that, the feedback obtained from using this rater scale method is considered "as more valid and objective", because it leads to the "acceptance of results and actions required" [12].

In the case of the forms for senior members, the one marked C is sub-titled Confidential Assessment by Head of Division/Directorate etc., and stated at the back of the form that it 'applies to Promotions, Rewards and Confirmation of appointments'. It being confidential means the appraisee does not have access to the information provided by the Head. This defeats one major aim of conducting appraisals effectively which is, communicating feedback for improvement of performance as suggested by Harris [15].

3. Methodology

This section examines the details of the methods used in carrying out the research. These include the research methods, the population/sampling, research instrument and its administration and data collection techniques.

3.1. Research Methods

The study was an exploratory research because it involved an investigation into an existing situation in an organisation and a search for improved methods for appraisal. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted because questionnaires were used in collecting data to help generate numerical data. Non-numerical data was also obtained using interview schedule. This was possible and easy as a result of proximity of respondents. Some data was gathered from text books, journals and periodicals.

3.2. Population/Sampling

The population is the administrative staff (senior members and senior staff) of UCC of which senior members and senior staff administrators number 64 and 497 respectively (DHR, UCC, 2015). Convenience sampling technique was used to select 20 senior members and 30 senior staff of UCC. This was used purposely to get the administrative staff that were available and to help meet the objectives of the study. They were drawn from the various administrative departments within the University.

Respondents were not expected to disclose their identity and therefore did not sign any document. This style was used to get respondents to be as frank as possible. However before the questionnaires were distributed, administrators were informed about the survey where they would be needed to answer some questionnaires. For easy retrieval of questionnaires and follow up interviews, names of all the respondents and their contacts were written down. There was 100% retrieval of questionnaires.

3.3. Limitations

Only thirty five (70%) of the respondents could be contacted for further probing. Since time was running out for the researcher and the answers being provided during the probing were similar, researcher decided to make use

of the answers obtained. The researcher however found the chosen sample feasible as it represents a reasonable proportion of the administrative staff to work with.

3.4. Research Instruments

The research instruments were questionnaire and interview schedule. Close-ended questions formed a major part of the questionnaire where respondents were to choose the best option that suited the specified condition on a Likert scale of 1 - 4, for the primary data to enhance the basis of the secondary data from books, journals and periodicals. The open-ended sections allowed respondents to express their views.

There were 20 items in the questionnaire, divided into three sections of A, B, and C. Section "A" requested for the backgrounds of respondents which helped in providing data on the length of their present employment and designation. Items in section "B" requested respondents to give some details on how often they are appraised; the basis for their appraisal; whether they are motivated and the form of motivation after appraisal. Section "C" items were put on the Likert scale where "Strongly Agree" was rated highest (4) and "Strongly Disagree" rated lowest (1). Likewise, "Very Effective" was rated highest (4) and "Very Ineffective" rated lowest (1). The rating helped respondents tick the fields that best suited their opinions.

The questionnaire is reliable because the questions are consistent and are all on appraisal of staff at UCC. The researcher is of the view that since UCC is still using the same appraisal system, if the same questionnaire is used or repeated, answers which are very close to what the respondents in this study provided will be obtained. Answers to the items actually brought out what the researcher wanted to find out which makes the instrument also valid.

The interview schedule enabled the researcher to probe further and to get respondents opinions on answers given to some of the items in the questionnaire.

3.5. Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to help analyse the primary data collected. Both quantitative and qualitative procedures were used in analysing the data collected and the narratives given by participants. Most of the data collected were presented in tabular form and in percentages using descriptive statistics as well as narratives.

4. Findings and Discussions

This section aims at presenting and discussing responses provided to the questionnaire items that were administered to staff (both the senior staff and senior members) of the University of Cape Coast, as well as information gathered from informal discussions using the interview schedule.

4.1. Background Information of Respondents

The respondents were drawn from the various administrative departments within the University with their designations stated in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Designation.

Designation	Frequency	Percent
Senior Staff		
Administrative Assistant	10	20
Senior Administrative Assistant	10	20
Principal Administrative Assistant	9	18
Chief Administrative Assistant	1	2
Senior Members		
Junior Assistant Registrar	5	10
Assistant Registrar	12	24
Senior Assistant Registrar	2	4
Deputy Registrar	1	2
Total	50	100

Field work, 2015.

The results in **Table 1** indicates that most ($n = 12$) of the respondents were Assistant Registrars representing 24% of the total number of employees that participated in the study. This was followed by 20% of Administrative Assistants and 20% Senior Administrative Assistants. Additionally, Principal Administrative Assistants also accounted for 18% of the respondents whereas Junior Assistant Registrars and Senior Assistant Registrars accounted for 10% and 4% respectively. Finally, Chief Administrative Assistants and Deputy Registrars each accounted for 2% of the total participants.

The reality on the ground is that, as depicted in the table, Administrative Assistants and Senior Administrative Assistants form the majority among the senior staff, while Assistant Registrars constitute the majority of senior members. Again, Chief Administrative Assistants and Deputy Registrars constitute the minority at the two different administrative levels at the University of Cape Coast.

4.2. Length of Present Employment

The period that respondents had been in employment at UCC is shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2 indicates that majority of staff (both senior staff and senior members) have been in employment for either between one to five years or have spent between six to ten years at UCC. These two categories of years (*i.e.* 1 - 5 years and 6 - 10 years) that staff had been in employment at UCC were the most prominent and constituted 70% of the respondents. This was followed by 18% of those who have spent 11 to 15 years.

Employees who have worked in their present employment within 16 to 20 years were three (6%) and these incidentally were only senior members. The study did not capture senior staff that had spent 16 to 20 years. Finally, three (6%) of the participants had worked in UCC for a period of twenty one years and above. Many staff being in the category of one to ten years signifies a high level of workforce that can be retained in UCC at a particular time. The results also indicate all respondents have worked for at least one year and should have gone through a number of performance appraisals if indeed the assessment form is used yearly as it is supposed to be. However the study indicated that two people had never been appraised and 11 respondents have not had the chance of going through the assessment done at UCC annually (see **Table 3**).

Table 2. Length of present employment.

Responses	Senior Members		Senior Staff		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	F	%
1 - 5 years	8	40	9	30	17	34
6 - 10 years	6	30	12	40	18	36
11 - 15 years	1	5	8	26.7	9	18
16 - 20 years	3	15	-	-	3	6
21 and above	2	10	1	3.3	3	6
Total	20	100	30	100	50	100

Field work, 2015.

Table 3. Frequency of appraisal.

Responses	Senior Members		Senior Staff		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	F	%
Annually	13	65	26	86	39	78
Every other year	3	15	2	7	5	10
Cannot remember	2	10	-	-	2	4
When necessary	2	10	-	-	2	4
Never	-	-	2	7	2	4
Total	20	100	30	100	50	100

Field work, 2015.

1. Staff's Perception on the Effectiveness of the Annual Assessment System

The first objective sought to find out staff's perception on the effectiveness of the annual assessment system used in UCC. The results of the findings are as follows:

Frequency of appraisal is one of the ways that is used to determine the effectiveness of the appraisal system as purported by Shawn Smith and Mazin [8]. How often an employee is appraised is very important because it tends to affect the system's effectiveness. Farnham and Pimlot [11] note that when appraisal is done frequently, supervisors get to know the needs of the staff that will make them work better for corporate goals to be achieved. Data gathered (see **Table 3**) indicate that majority of employees, 39 (78%), were appraised annually. This was followed by five (10%) of the respondents who said they were appraised every other year. Two (4%) of the participants who happened to be senior members said they could not remember the last time they were assessed while two (4%) members of the same group said they were appraised when necessary. Two (4%) senior staff said they had never been assessed since they joined UCC. The study revealed that eleven of the participants did not experience the yearly UCC appraisal exercise.

The high number of staff that is appraised annually indicates the importance UCC places on the annual assessment of its employees. Eleven participants not experiencing the yearly assessment exercise (even though data on the length of years participants had spent at UCC indicates that all of them have been in the University for more than one year) confirms the fact that some staff passed through the year without any appraisal. The irregularity of assessment of staff renders the appraisal system at UCC ineffective. Either the DHR does not send the forms regularly to the supervisors or supervisors are given the forms but refuse to do their work. This confirms the observation made by Armstrong [12] that line managers reject performance appraisal schemes because they find them to be either time consuming or irrelevant.

a) Basis of Appraisal

The responses for this study were categorized into five as annual assessment for promotion, confirmation of appointment, career development, renewal of contract and for increment for which participants were requested to indicate as many as they found applicable, as indicated in **Table 4**. Some respondents therefore selected more than one option as portrayed in the results.

The basis upon which appraisal is conducted contributes to its effectiveness. There are different basis upon which employees are appraised. Nickels *et al.* [3] like many other HR practitioners note that appraisal is conducted to enable organisations use the results to make decisions on employees' promotions, compensations, rewards, increments, training and career development programmes. As indicated in **Table 4**, sixty percent (60%) indicating majority of the respondents stated that they were appraised for promotion, 48% for confirmation, 14% for career development, 12% for renewal of contract and 44% for increment, The number of respondents sixty percent, (indicating majority) who were appraised for purposes of promotion indicates the importance that appraisal results play in the promotion of staff at UCC. Six (12%) of the senior members only stated that their appraisal was based on the fact that they were due for the renewal of their contract because appointment of senior members unlike senior staff is on contract basis.

b) Receive Feedback on Performance

Table 5 illustrates the number of respondents who receive feedback. The table was not disaggregated into senior members and senior staff because feedback is something every staff needs irrespective of level.

Feedback to employees generally aims at improving performance effectiveness through stimulating behavioural change; thus the success and effectiveness of performance appraisal could be determined by the manner

Table 4. Basis of appraisal.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Promotion	30	60
Assessment for confirmation	24	48
For career development	7	14
Renewal of contract	6	12
For increment	22	44

Field work, 2015.

Table 5. Feedback on performance.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	11	22.0
Agree	13	26.0
Disagree	12	24.0
Strongly Disagree	14	28.0
Total	50	100

Field work, 2015.

in which employees receive feedback on their job performance [13]. Results in **Table 5** illustrate that most of the respondents (52%) do not receive feedback on performance after appraisal. The absence of feedback negatively impacts on the success and effectiveness of the appraisal in UCC because without a constructive feedback, staff cannot correct their wrong behaviours. This defeats one major aim of conducting appraisals effectively which is, communicating feedback for improvement of performance as suggested by Harris [15] and Bohlander *et al.* [13].

c) Receive Training after Appraisal to Enhance Performance

Table 6 illustrates respondents who receive training after appraisal.

One of the characteristics of a good and effective performance appraisal system is the system's ability to identify employee's training need(s). From **Table 6** it could be noted that 70% of respondents disagree that they receive training after appraisal rendering the UCC appraisal system ineffective. Farnham and Pimlot [11] see the importance of linking appraisal results to training of staff. They say when appraising performance of employees, the manager is examining what improvement in employee performance can be made through training in order to build in their strengths and enable them to perform more effectively in future. Lloyd [16] affirms that during appraisal employees are made aware of how their performance compare with organisation's standards and areas where they need training to enhance their performance. Unlike the senior members' assessment form that has a portion to enable management to address the training needs of staff, that of the senior and junior staff has no portion on training needs of staff (see appendices A and B). These results defeat UCC's corporate goal of developing and retaining high calibre administrative staff, because it is through training that the capacity of staff is improved. This calls for a comprehensive review of the whole appraisal system.

d) Appraisal Process in UCC

Table 7 shows participants' rating to the overall appraisal process in UCC.

Results in **Table 7** show that twenty three (46%) of the respondents indicated that it is ineffective and five (10%) indicated the appraisal system is very ineffective. Data indicate majority of the respondents surveyed for the research believe that the current appraisal system of the University is ineffective as this represents 56% of the responses. Reasons given by respondents for the assessment of staff at UCC not being effective were that: there were no guidelines to use in appraising staff and therefore a lot of the appraisals at UCC tend to be subjective; that staff who excel in their jobs were not given any incentives; some assessments of senior members were not transparent; staff were not encouraged to set goals; goals were not set and therefore assessment was not targeted-driven. Human Resource practitioners like McShane and Von Glinow [19], Culbert [20] and Daniel [18] reiterate the important role goal-setting plays before, during and after appraisal. Another reason for the ineffectiveness of the appraisal system at UCC was that staff did not receive any feedback for them to know how they were faring on their job. Respondents found this demoralizing and suggested that supervisors should do well to interact with them to enable them know their short comings, confirming what Harris [15] said.

When asked whether the appraisal system had been effective in improving their performance as a follow up question, twenty six (52%) indicated that the appraisal system had not been able to improve their work performance. This means that the current appraisal system has not been effective in reaping the benefits that appraisal systems are supposed to reap as cited by Lloyd [16] who said among others that, through appraisals, employees are made aware of how their performance compare with organisation's standards and areas where they need training; skills deficiencies are identified and addressed appropriately through training and employees' future career developments are directed. The system must be able to identify employee performance gaps and fill in the

Table 6. Training after appraisal.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	3	6.0
Agree	12	24.0
Disagree	23	46.0
Strongly Disagree	12	24.0
TOTAL	50	100

Field work, 2015.

Table 7. Appraisal process in UCC.

Responses	Senior Members		Senior Staff		TOTAL	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	F	%
Very Effective	3	15	1	3.3	4	8
Effective	8	40	10	33.3	18	36
Ineffective	8	40	15	50.0	23	46
Very Ineffective	1	5	4	13.3	5	10
TOTAL	20	100	30	100	50	100

Field work, 2015.

gaps. The researcher finds this result to be challenging because performance appraisal needs to be effective and it should have the potential to improve performance; otherwise they are a waste of resources (time and money).

2. Whether Staff Are Motivated to Work Better after Assessment and Why

The second objective sought to find out whether staff are motivated to work better after assessment and why. The results of the findings are presented in **Table 8**.

The survey conducted revealed that 80% of the respondents are motivated after being appraised, while 20% of the respondents said that they were not motivated after being appraised. Data show that all the senior members with the exception of one were motivated to work. Fewer senior staff were motivated to work after appraisal.

a) Form of Motivation

Participants who indicated that they were motivated to work after appraisal were asked to state the form of their motivation. Respondents were given the option to choose more than one reason for being motivated. The results are stated in **Table 9**.

The results stated for the purpose of this study are that: thirteen (26%) of the respondents said they were motivated because they got promoted; nine (18%) said because they were commended. Only seven (14%) out of the fifty employees surveyed showed that they were motivated because they were offered a career development programme. Twenty two (44%) of them were motivated to work because their pay was increased. Eight percent (8%) of the employees indicated that they were not motivated because there was no job security while two (4%) of the participants were also not motivated because the results of the appraisal did not lead to any increment in their pay. The results indicate that extrinsic motivation in the form of promotion, and salary increase play significant role in motivating staff to improve upon their performance instead intrinsic motivation, examples being, commendation and career development programmes.

In another question to find out if Heads of Department (HOD) or supervisors discussed personal and career development issues with them 58% of the respondents agreed to the statement that personal development was discussed with HODs during appraisal process whereas 42% disagreed with the statement. Relevant discussion on staff's personal development is very paramount during the appraisal meeting because staff is motivated to know that the head is interested to help him/her progress in his/her career. Data however show that fewer people (14%) were offered career development programmes indicating that even though career development of staff is discussed not all staff are offered career development programmes in UCC. Farnham and Pimlot [11] see the

Table 8. Do staff feel motivated to work after being appraised?

Responses	Senior Members		Senior Staff		TOTAL	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	F	%
Yes	19	95	21	70	40	80
No	1	5	9	30	10	20
TOTAL	20	100	30	100	50	100

Field work, 2015.

Table 9. Form of motivation after appraisal.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes Promoted	13	26
Yes Commended	9	18
Yes Career Programme	7	14
Yes Pay Increment	22	44
No Pay Increment	2	4
No Job Security	8	16

Field work, 2015.

need to take care of employees’ career development when appraising performance of employees and thereby assert that managers should review the potential and development needs of employees; predict the level and the type of work which employees will be capable of doing in future; and at the same time, make proposals on how best employees’ future careers can be developed through training.

b) Suggest Any Other Appraisal System/Tool That Can Be Used in Assessing Performance at UCC?

This open ended question gave respondents opportunity to suggest other appraisal system/tool for assessing performance at UCC. Only a few of the respondents nine (18%) suggested the 360 degree as the best appraisal approach to assess their performance. This is not surprising because in a typical 360-degree process, supervisor(s), subordinates, peers and (less frequently) internal and external customers provide feedback on performance for each target rate, using a standardized instrument which makes assessment more comprehensive [12]. The rest of the respondents could not suggest any other system/tool.

5. Summary and Conclusion

Most of the respondents 56% surveyed for the research indicated that the current appraisal system of the University was ineffective. Reasons given were that there were no guidelines to follow in appraising staff and therefore a lot of the appraisals at UCC tend to be subjective; staff who excelled in their jobs were not given any incentives; some assessment of senior members was not transparent; staff were not encouraged to set goals; goals were not set and therefore assessment was not targeted-driven. Another reason given was that staff did not receive any feedback for them to know how they were faring on their job. Researcher noted that the assessment form for junior and senior staff was not designed with slots for goal-setting and improvement programmes.

In spite of the fact that appraisals are conducted for a number of reasons, the ultimate aim is to motivate staff to work in order to achieve corporate goals. From the study, 80% of the respondents indicated that they were motivated to work after assessment and their reason for the motivation was due to the purpose for which the assessment was conducted; which was for promotion and salary increment. This indicates that their motivation was tied to rewards and not in terms of commendation (that promotes inner drive to work better) or recommendations related to improvement in their work or for career progression. It should also be noted that 70% of the respondents in the study said they did not receive any training after the year’s appraisal neither were they made aware of level of performance-whether their performance was up to standard. It is not surprising that most of the respondents used for the study indicated that the current appraisal system of the University is ineffective.

The 360 degree multi-rater approach where data is gathered from more than two rating sources as suggested by respondents may be adapted for both senior staff and senior members. This approach may include self appraisal, supervisor's ratings, peers and subordinates, and students' evaluation as the case may be for UCC. As already stated, the major advantage of this technique is that it provides a means for minimising bias in a subjective evaluation technique. This may be appropriate for staff of UCC.

Performance appraisal, likewise performance management at the University of Cape Coast lacks policy direction. Without the use of the guiding principles for monitoring performance and appraising staff, it is possible that many people are actually not performing and therefore assessments at UCC have suffered a variety of judgment errors and biases due to subjective appraisals as established by Harris [15]. As observed in the study, it is possible that staff might have been awarded satisfactory ratings even when they did not deserve them or for several years many people might not have been assessed or might have been given scores without any interaction and feedback. Interaction with staff during the study revealed that UCC's organisational culture of leniency coupled with lack of accountability where ratings are not challenged by Heads of Department contribute greatly to this irregularity.

As stated in the limitations, even though all the 50 respondents were not available for further probing, the answers provided in the questionnaire and those provided by the 35 respondents who were contacted (for further probing), indicated that the system for assessing staff at UCC is not effective. In spite of the limited time for the survey, my knowledge on performance appraisal as well as performance management has been enriched.

It is suggested that in future more time could be devoted to comparative studies on appraisal systems used in other universities in and outside Ghana which can help the Division of Human Resources at the University of Cape Coast generate a better assessment system for its staff.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations have therefore been made in support of the above:

- The DHR should review the appraisal system from start to finish and introduce new appraisal system that will include all the above suggestions and which will help UCC achieve its cooperate goal of recruiting and retaining high caliber administrative staff.
- The Training and Development section of the DHR should arrange training programmes for all supervisors who are raters in order to equip them with appropriate assessment skills, such as communication of feedback to staff to enable them to do meaningful interaction that will motivate staff to improve upon their work.
- When designing the appraisal forms, the DHR should include portions where supervisors will guide staff to set goals; and indicate learning objectives and developmental activities that will help improve performance, and develop knowledge, skills and capabilities.
- The DHR should vary the design of the appraisal forms. The forms should be designed according to job types, for example forms for labours should be different from those of administrative staff since many of the senior staff are supervisors.
- The DHR should add guiding principles to the appraisal form to enable supervisors to do more objective appraisals.
- As suggested by respondents, the 360-degree multi-rater approach where data are gathered from more than two rating sources may be adapted for both senior staff and senior members.

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