

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

TEACHER PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS

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Introduction

Secondary School Principals get the bulk of their school academic work done through subordinates, especially heads of subject departments and classroom teachers, who differ sometimes widely in their contributions, potentials and work habits. In the exercise of their control, developmental and motivational functions, these principals form impressions about the relative worth of each teacher from the point of view of the secondary school organisation. An important medium through which principals draw meaningful impressions about their teachers is performance appraisal.

Performance appraisal as a concept has been given several definitions some of which are noted below. According to Casteter (1981), performance appraisal is a process of arriving at judgements about an individual past or present performance against the back-ground of his work environment. It is a system or method of seeking to achieve or improve an individual's performance which matches the results required by the organisation. Barick and Baxter (1986), have described performance appraisal as a judgemental process that is evaluating the performance of another individual. It has also been defined as a system or method of seeking to achieve or improve an individual's performance which matches the results required by the organisation, (Sederlund, 1981). Writing on teacher appraisal, Yeager (1969), defined it, as a process in which value is set on performance or worth of performance estimated officially. It has also been conceptualised as a systematic review of an individual employee's performance on his job to evaluate the effectiveness or adequacy of his work (Rober, 1971). Whatever differences may lie in the above definitions, certain facts are clear in all of them. First, performance appraisal is a judgemental process which is aimed at evaluating the performance of an employee. As a concept, it synonymous with performance evaluation. It is a systematic description of the job — relevant strengths and weaknesses of employees. In this study, teacher performance appraisal is used to mean the evaluation of a teacher's performance on the job to which he is assigned. It includes the evaluation of job and personal characteristics which influence the teacher's performance in terms of the appraisal factors which have been formulated for the school concerned, as well as the teacher's potential for development.

Impressions on each teacher are usually formalised in a periodic (usually weekly, monthly or annual) performance appraisal system, in which the principal writes a report on each of the teachers under his jurisdiction. Criteria used in this form of appraisal often include personality traits, comparative ranking and predetermined goals against which the individuals' performance is measured

(Sisk, 1977). Teacher performance appraisal, as a leadership role, is performed by the principal who officially, must ensure that it is conducted as objectively as possible. However, leadership process is dependent on the leader, the follower and situational elements of any organisation (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977). In any situation in the secondary school, teacher appraisal is said to be progressive when the principal assigns appropriate tasks to individual teachers, supervises their work and evaluates their performance against the background of the goals and objectives of the school.

Several research reports have been written in the general field of employee performance appraisal in work organisations and in the area of teacher, on teacher appraisal were directed to finding out the traits or qualities which make effective teachers. It was assumed that teachers are born and not made and as teachers in their own right, they had certain characteristics and traits which distinguish them from other categories of school personnel (Landers and Myers, 1977 and Aruayi, 1985). Within a short time, several thousands of different traits possessed by successful teachers were identified (Barr, 1955 and Fafunwa, 1969). Teachers effectiveness were then rated mainly on the basis of the essential traits possessed, rather than on actual job performance. (Bernadin and Walter, 1977 and Ackerson, 1978). Ratings based on personal traits constitute the traditional appraisal system and it is founded on the notion that employees having certain personal attributes are likely to fit better into certain organisations (Hall et al, 1970). Unfortunately, this traditional appraisal system lacked so much in terms of objectivity and it was vigorously criticised (Cascio and Bernadin, 1981). In 1984, a review of about 124 studies related to trait concept revealed that there were no general traits which can be used as indices for the effective evaluation of a teacher or any leader for that matter (Sanford, 1952 and Stogdill, 1948). The traditional system of appraisal anchored on trait concept had a number of draw backs. First, it gave room to subjective ratings bordering on halo effect and interpersonal relationship. Secondly, it gave room to employee victimization. If anything, the weakness of the traditional concept of performance gave rise to further research that provided promise of great significance.

The idea that teachers, possess certain acquired traits was soon laid to rest by emphasis on the situational concept of leadership (Merton, 1969). A teacher's effectiveness depends not only on his personal traits but also on the students he is teaching and the environmental situation in which he finds himself.

The most striking feature about most of these studies is that they have been conducted mainly in the developed countries. Studies on teacher performance in the developing countries are rather scanty. The present study, conducted in selected secondary schools in Bendel State of Nigeria is therefore significant since its findings can be compared to those documented in developed countries.

In Nigeria, the public is more concerned about the progress of secondary schools. The reason may be due to the fact that success at this level leads to brighter academic future (Arubayi, 1985). The teacher with a brilliant academic performance is usually looked upon as an effective teacher and leader. Effective teaching does not consist of competence in teaching of subject matter but also the ability to exhibit high intelligence, scholarship, language ability, resourcefulness and confidence in handling activities relevant to the achievement of school organisational goals. (Nwankwo and Ohikhena, 1979). Effective teaching is often attributed amongst other things, to schools whose students perform well in both internal and public examinations as well as in extra curricular activities. The general feelings of the public in Nigeria and particularly in Bendel State is that principals and teachers have become ineffective since the control of secondary schools was taken over by the government from individuals and voluntary agencies. Since the take over, many Nigerians have had the opportunity of becoming principals with the exit of their foreign missionary counter-parts. Complaints are that most of these principals are insufficiently skilled in the art of teacher appraisal (Onymunwa, 1987). They neither take critical incidents of teachers performance on a frequent and regular basis nor offer teachers the desired professional counselling (Yalokwu, 1986). The number of secondary schools increased from 240 in 1979 to 518 in 1987. The

increase in the number of schools coupled with mounting quest for secondary school education, led to alarming increase in school enrolment. Increased enrolment without a corresponding improvement in the number and quality of staff and teaching facilities gave rise to poor performance in examination, examination leakages and low morale among the rank and file of students and teachers. The cry from the public is that inadequate supervision and appraisal by principals are the main causes of these problems. It is against this background that this study seeks to identify the various problems facing teacher performance appraisal in secondary schools in Bendel State.

The following question and hypotheses will direct the thrust of this investigation.

1. What are the problems facing teacher performance appraisal in Bendel State Secondary Schools?
2. There is no significant relationship between appraisal problems perceived by urban and rural teachers.

Methods and Materials

The target population for this study consisted of all the 3,578 secondary school teachers distributed in 109 Secondary Grammar Schools in Oredo, Orhionmon and Ovia Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Bendel State of Nigeria, during the 1987/88 school year. It is pertinent to note that the three LGAs which form the study area also make up the Bendel Central Senatorial District — a geographical and culturally cohesive area with some of the well established secondary schools in Bendel State. Of the 3,578 teachers, 2499 were distributed in 39 schools in Oredo LGA, 585 in 39 schools in Orhionmwon LGA and 494 in 31 schools in Ovia LGA. A stratified random sample of 716 teachers consisting of 500, 117 and 99 teachers from Oredo, Orhionmwon and Ovia LGAs respectively was selected from the population. The teachers were selected from a total of 16 secondary schools made up of nine schools from Oredo, four schools from Orhionmwon and three schools from Ovia LGAs. The stratification of sample used in this study can be seen mainly in terms of location and sex of teachers. Four hundred male teachers and three hundred and sixteen female teachers were selected randomly from eight urban schools and eight rural schools. The sample accounted for about 14% of the total secondary schools and about 25% of the total teachers present in the three LGAs in Bendel state during the said academic year. The sample size appeared very adequate since a minimum of 10% of the target population has been recommended, provided the sample size is not below 30 (ROSCOE, 1976).

The questionnaire method was used to generate data on the appraisal problem perceived by teachers. The instrument titled Secondary School Teacher — Appraisal Problem Questionnaire (SSTAPQ) was developed by the investigator. The instrument was divided into two main sections. Section 'A' solicited demographic information which include sex, experience, location and number of teachers from the respondents. Only the results of the variables which dealt with sex and location of the subjects have been reported in this paper. Section 'B' of the SSTAPQ contained eight statements on appraisal problems, each having two response alternatives — YES/NO.

The questionnaire was pilot tested to ensure its validity and reliability. To this end, the SSTAPQ was administered to a pilot group which consisted of 60 teachers (from five schools) which were not included in the study sample. The suggestions, comments and remarks provided by the pilot teachers were incorporated to improve upon the content and construct of the questionnaire. Experts who included the colleagues of the investigator in Educational Administration also assisted and ensured that the responses to each of the statements indicated the appraisal problems. The SSTAPQ therefore, assumed a face validity. Reliability was established using the responses provided by the 60 pilot teachers. The odd-even product moment correlation statistic was used to calculate the reliability co-efficient. The computed co-efficient was found to be 0.08 after it had been corrected by the Spearman-Brown statistic. The SSTAPQ was therefore found to be internally consistent in measuring or determining the appraisal problems as perceived by teachers.

The SSTAPQ which has been established to be appropriate and adequate in firmness and purpose was administered personally by the investigator to the 716 randomly selected secondary school teachers. A total of 490 teachers completed the questionnaire. The number accounted for 69% of the randomly selected teachers. Of the 490 teachers who completed the questionnaire, 270 and 220 were males and females respectively. Two hundred and sixty eight teachers represented teachers located in urban areas while the other two hundred and twenty-two teachers were in rural areas.

Result

The responses provided by the teachers were quantified, analysed and summarised in Table 2 below. The total number of teachers who responded were 80.

TABLE 1:
Problems Facing Teacher Performance Appraisal
PROBLEMS

CODE

- A Ratings are often trait-oriented and not strictly based on teacher performance.
- B Inadequate knowledge of the overall purpose of teacher performance appraisal by both teachers and principal.
- C Appraisal results are often not used for personnel actions e.g. Promotion, demotion, etc.
- D Inadequate appraisal feedback to teachers
- E Inability of the school administrators to draw a comprehensive set of plans to initiate and monitor objective appraisal system.
- F Psychometric errors such as leniency central tendency and halo effect hinder objectivity in teacher appraisal system,
- G Performance appraisal result is not often based on day-to-day records of teacher performance.
- H Failure of teacher appraisers to link appraisal procedures to school unit purposes and position goals.

TABLE 2:
Number and Percentage of Teachers that Responded (Yes/No) to Statements
Teachers' Responses
on Appraisal Problems

<i>Appraisal</i>	<i>Yes</i>		<i>No</i>		<i>Total Number Of Respondents</i>
<i>Problems</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	
A	60	75	20	25	80
B	56	70	24	30	80
C	65	81.25	15	18.75	80
D	64	80	16	20	80
E	55	68.75	25	31.25	80
F	66	82.5	14	17.5	80
G	60	75	20	25	80
H	64	80	16	20	80
Total	490	76.56	150	23.44	

The result of the percentage analysis given in table 2 showed that of the 80 teachers 60 (75%) identified problem A, 56 (70%) accepted problem B, while 65 (81.25%) revealed problem C as important. The problem which was identified as least important was E (only 68.75%) while the

one that was reported by the majority and therefore perceived as most important was F (82.5%). Of all the problems it was E that attracted the highest negative response (31.25%) while F had the least (17.5%).

Further statistical analysis have been done below using data on the positive responses of teachers. The analyses were based on the independent variables of sex and location of teachers and also in testing the hypotheses formulated in the foregone sections of the Chapter. Presented in Table 3 below is the chi-square test of significance and relationship between appraisal problems perceived by male and female teachers in secondary schools. The test of significance revealed a computed chi-square value of 0.54 at 0.05 level with 7 degrees of freedom. The chi-square value of 0.45 was below the critical value of 14.07 thus indicating non-significance. The hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between appraisal problems perceived by male and female teachers was therefore retained.

TABLE 3:
Test of Significant Relationship Between Appraisal Problems Perceived by Male and Female Teachers

Sex	APPRAISAL PROBLEMS									CHI Value	C-Value
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H			
Male	O	34	32	27	36	29	36	32	24	0.45	0.14
	E	33.1	30.9	25	35.3	30.3	36.4	31.1	35.3		
Female	O	26	24	28	26	30	28	30		0.45	0.14
	E	26.9	25.1	29.2	28.7	24.7	29.6	26.9	28.7		

- C = Contingency coefficient
 O = Observed frequency distribution
 E = Expected frequency distribution
 * = Non-significant at 0.05 level.

The data in Table 4 below showed the Chi-square test of significance and relationship between the dependent variable (appraisal problems) and the independent variable (location of teachers) of secondary school teachers. The chi-square test revealed no significance since the chi-square value of 0.68 was below the critical value of 14.7 with 7 degrees of freedom. The hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the appraisal problems perceived by urban and rural teachers was therefore retained.

The test of relationship between appraisal problems perceived by teachers and the situation variable of location revealed a contingency coefficient of 0.17. This was an indication that no relationship existed between appraisal problems perceived by teachers and their location.

TABLE 4:
Test of Significant Relationship Between Appraisal problems perceived by Teachers located in Urban and Rural Secondary Schools:

Location	APPRAISAL PROBLEMS									CHI Value	C-Value
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H			
Urban	O	32	31	35	35	35	30	31	36	0.68*	0.17
	E	32.8	30.6	36.6	35	30.1	36.1	32.8	35		
Rural	O	28	25	30	29	25	28	29	28	0.68*	0.17
	E	27.2	25.4	29.4	29	29.9	27.2	29	—		

- C = Contingency coefficient
 O = Observed frequency distribution
 E = Expected frequency distribution
 * = Non-significant at 0.05 level.

To test the relationship between the row (sex of teachers) and the column (appraisal problems of teachers) variables, the contingency coefficient statistic was used. The computed contingency index was 0.14 thus indicating a weak positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

Discussion and Sugestions

The results of this study show that majority of the secondary school teachers (7.56%) agree that the problems of teachers' performance appraisal listed in the foregoing sections of this chapter are real. In other words the findings suggest that until adequate steps are taken to solve the problems, our teacher appraisal practices in secondary schools will continue to be ineffective. Each of the problems have been discussed in detail below beginning with the problem ranked by teachers as most important and ending with the one adjudged to be the least significant.

1. Rater Error: About 82.5% of the respondents indicated that socio-metric errors such as leniency, central tendency and halo error are major problems hindering the success of teacher performance appraisals. Findings from the study suggest that rather, errors result mainly from some systematic bias on the part of the rater. Lenient principals, for instance are extremely easy with their ratings. Some of them tend to feel that if they rate any of their subordinates unfavourably, it will reflect poorly on their (raters) worthiness while others rate leniently in order to win promotions for their teachers and indirectly increase their future control over, than by earning a reputation as superiors with influence at the higher quarters. Central tendency errors tend to manifest when political considerations make raters to assign all their subordinates ratings that are neither very bad or very good. They avoid using high or low extremes of rating scale and cluster all ratings about the centre of the scales. Every body falls within the average domain. A common error committed by most of our principals is halo error. This is often committed when a rater assigns ratings on the basis of global (good or bad) impression of the ratee. These findings tend to support Landy and Farr (1975), who indicated that despite heavy reliance on appraisal ratings, they are often contaminated by systematic errors as leniency, central tendency and halo effect. To over come or at least minimize the frequency of these errors, principals should be given adequate training on how to standardize their appraisal activities and improve the outcome of ratings. Workshops and conferences should be organised by the Ministry of Education on strategies of conducting teacher performance appraisals.

2. Inadequate utilisation of appraisal results for personnel decisions. This is a crucial problem bordering on implementations of appraisal results for the purpose of executing annual promotion, advancement, demotion and the like. Results from data analysis show that 81.25% of the respondents identified this problem as a major one which demands urgent solution. The general complaint from the teachers appear to be that over the years, majority of them had been given high ratings but unfortunately only a tiny proportion of them had enjoyed promotion, advancement or training leave. Most of the teachers also complained that some of their colleagues who got relatively lower ratings were promoted before them — a practice that is highly suspicious. To avoid double standard in the utilisation of appraisal results, teacher appraisers should be more firm and fair and take steps that will maximise the rewards for hardwork and punishment for indolence.

3. Inadequate appraisal feed back to teachers. No fewer than 80% of the respondents indicated that their principals were not giving them feedback on their appraisal outcomes. The importance of appraisal interviews coupled with proper counselling of the appraisee cannot be over emphasized. Interviews help the one appraised to know his strengths and weaknesses, and take appropriate steps to correct them. Post-appraisal interviews and counselling should not be denied the teachers for as Landy and Trumbo (1980) asserted, infrequent and ineffective use of appraisal interviews make outcomes of most appraisal systems less than desirable. Besides, the open reporting system

to which teacher performance appraisal practices are based has identified feedback as an essential vehicle for improving performance (Agbonifoh, 1985). Our finding here is therefore, in line with Wilstead and Taylor's (1978) view that, effective feedback is an important factor in the success of a performance appraisal. Effective feedback usually results from discussion and counselling that follows evaluator's observation.

4. Failure to link appraisal procedures to school's unit objectives and position goals: This is an important set back in the teacher appraisal system in Bendel State. All the secondary schools in Bendel state use a common format of appraisal for rating teachers irrespective of the geographical, social and cultural differences between the various schools. Within the overall framework of state and national objectives of secondary school education, every secondary school by virtue of its unique social, cultural and geographical environment should strive to attain some specific objectives which will make the teachers fit into the immediate environment of the school. Findings from the study reveal that many of the teachers were not satisfied with the current teacher appraisal form which takes little cognisance of the need to attain the school unit objectives and position goals. For each school to be able to achieve the local and national objectives of its establishment, attempts should be made by school administrators to develop an appraisal format which enhances the attainment of school unit objectives and the overall national objectives of secondary education.

5. Ratings are trait-oriented: It was found in this study that some of the ratings of principals are trait-oriented and not based on the amount and quality of work done. Emphasis is often given to personal traits of teachers (e.g. their physical built, honesty, integrity, diligence, loyalty, and so on), rather than their performance. Despite the great strides made in the development of objective and sound appraisal instruments many principals still follow the traditional system of rating individual teachers on the basis of their personal attributes — majority which are neither quantifiable nor directly related to high performance. It is important that before any school administrator comes out with an appraisal result, he should ensure that proper records of the appraisee's day-to-day performance had been kept.

This tends to support the assertion that supervision and teacher appraisal are social transactions (Merton 1969). No matter the personality trait of the teacher, effective supervision and appraisal must involve some transactions between the principal and the teacher and at the appropriate situations. This finding is in disagreement with the belief that good and effective teachers are born.

6. Performance appraisal results are often not based on day-to-day records. It was observed from this study that principals hardly kept day-to-day records of teacher's performance. This finding did come as a surprise because the majority of the principals have taken teacher performance appraisal as a once-in-a-year event. But this is a wrong notion. A possible panacea to this problem is the provision of an adequate forum where appraisers would be given adequate training on how to make periodic first-hand observations of individuals performing their assignments. It is hereby suggested that every principal as a matter of policy, should maintain accurate records of critical incidents concerning each teacher under his jurisdiction.

7. Inadequate knowledge of the purposes of teacher performance appraisal: One of the startling revelations of this study is the fact that a considerable proportion of practising teachers and principals do not know the overall objectives of periodic appraisal of teachers. There is a common belief by the majority of the secondary school staff that performance appraisal is only a mere tool for effecting employee promotion. The result of this mistaken belief is that most principals do not take seriously the regular supervision of teachers, except when the time for completion of annual evaluation form draws near. Majority of the teachers on their own part do not take their work seriously until the time of final appraisal of teachers gets very close; then such teachers will pretentiously double their pace of performance in order to attract promotion. But according to Sederlund (1981), performance appraisal apart from being a tool for effecting promotion, serves other purposes some of which are noted below. It provides objectives for personnel training programmes, feedback to employees, and recognition of their strengths and weaknesses.

8. Inability of the School Administrators to draw a Comprehensive set of plans to initiate and monitor objective appraisal system. Most of the School Administrators whose responsibility it is to make use of currently useful concepts and methods to influence the result which people achieve in the work they perform are often unable to do so due to the fact that they lack a comprehensive set of plans needed to initiate and monitor the appraisal system. It was found that secondary school principals are not given free hand to develop comprehensive appraisal systems for their schools. Notwithstanding the above problem, principals should strive to generate relevant appraisal data from their immediate environment. With the co-operation of staff and students, they should be able to formulate policies that will enhance the attainment of objective appraisal systems.

Another finding of this study is that the two independent variables of sex and location of the secondary school teachers have no effect on the appraisal problem perceived by the teachers. This goes to support Webber (1978), that although present appraisal practices fall short of expected standards, teacher appraisal practices and problems appear to be similar in different schools within the same educational system. The unique aspect of this study over similar ones in Nigeria is that, this investigation was able to test the effect of personality (sex) and situational variable (location urban/rural) on the appraisal problems perceived by teachers. From the analysis, there is no significant relationship between these variables and appraisal problems in secondary schools. This implies that the majority of the teacher performance appraisal set-backs identified, cut across geographical boundaries and personalities of the teachers. This however, does not mean that there are no appraisal problems which are peculiar to certain schools, rather it appears that such problems are not entirely unrelated to those of the entire secondary school system in the state and country. This study was carried out in 16 Secondary schools located in three local Government Areas in Bendel State and its findings may not give a total picture of teacher appraisal problems in all the Secondary Schools in Nigeria. Consequently, further research on the complex issue of teacher appraisal problems in secondary schools is called for not only in other parts of Bendel State but also in different parts of Nigeria in order to provide a more comprehensive and enduring answers to the problems.

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