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Impact Of Staff Appraisal Frequency And Feedback On Professional Growth Of Teachers In Delta State Public Secondary Schools

Adugbo Gloria Oghenekparobo

**Department of Educational Management and Foundations
Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria
adugbo8@gmail.com**

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of staff appraisal frequency and feedback on the professional growth of teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State. Staff appraisal is a vital tool for evaluating teacher performance, yet its effectiveness depends largely on how frequently it is conducted and the quality of feedback given. Using a descriptive survey research design, data were collected from 150 teachers selected across 15 public secondary schools. The findings reveal a significant relationship between frequent appraisals, constructive feedback, and improved professional development among teachers. The study recommends that school management prioritize regular staff appraisals with effective feedback mechanisms to promote continuous teacher growth.

Keywords: teachers, staff appraisal, professional growth

INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving field of education, teacher performance plays a critical role in ensuring quality student outcomes. One key strategy employed by educational administrators is staff appraisal. Orhero, Okolie & Chukwu (2020): perceived staff appraisal is a systematic evaluation of personnel's performance by supervisors or others in an organizational setting." Gupta (2024): also sees "staff Performance appraisal is the process through which an organization assesses an employee's work performance, provides feedback, and sets goals for improvement." conducted frequently and paired with meaningful feedback, appraisals can enhance professional development, motivation, and instructional effectiveness. Some authors like Gupta (2024), Orhero, A. E., Okolie, U. C., & Chukwu, C. (2020), Zimyo HR Insights (2023), Superworks HR (2023), highlighted some examples of modern methods of staff appraisal, which includes Management by Objectives (MBO), 360-Degree Feedback, Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS), Assessment Centers, Psychological Appraisals, Self-Appraisal, Peer Review / Peer Assessment, Team-Based Appraisal, Continuous Performance and so many. But in most cases organizations increasingly favor continuous performance management, paired with constructive methods like 360-degree feedback, behavioral anchors (BARS), and self-assessment, especially training needs for professionals in dynamic work environments.

The roles of staff appraisal in a school system is enhancing teacher quality and motivating teachers through recognition and also identifying growth, promoting accountability and standards, and Providing continuous feedback for improvement. The nature of staff appraisal in public secondary schools is formal, standardized, supervisory-driven, and periodic, with an emphasis on accountability, compliance, and

performance outcomes. While it has the potential to foster teacher development, it often functions more as an administrative tool than a developmental one. The main challenges of staff appraisal includes bias, lack of clear criteria, inadequate training, resistance from teachers, overemphasis on student results, poor feedback, and weak follow-up mechanisms. Wikipedia (2023 synthesis, Luwenda Bashir Muhammad (2024) Uganda many public schools in Delta State, teacher appraisals are either infrequent or not followed up with actionable feedbacks.

This study examines how the frequency of staff appraisals is given and the nature of feedback provided impact in the professional growth of teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Statement Of The Problem

Despite the introduction of appraisal systems in Nigerian schools, many teachers in Delta State still experience stagnation in their professional development. Inconsistent appraisal schedules and lack of constructive feedback appear to limit the effectiveness of the process. This study seeks to empirically determine whether appraisal frequency and quality feedback contribute meaningfully to teachers' professional growth.

Objectives Of The Study

The study aims to:

1. Examine the frequency of staff appraisal in Delta State public secondary schools.
2. Investigate the quality and nature of feedback provided during appraisals.
3. Determine the impact of appraisal frequency and feedback on teachers' professional growth.

Research Questions

1. How often are teachers appraised in Delta State public secondary schools?
2. What is the quality of feedback given to teachers after appraisal?
3. To what extent do appraisal frequency and feedback affect teachers' professional growth

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between staff appraisal frequency and teachers' professional growth.

H₀₂: There is a significant relationship between appraisal feedback and teachers' professional growth.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Staff Appraisal in Education

Staff appraisal is a systematic process of evaluating teachers' performance to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. According to Orhero, Okolie & Chukwu (2020), staff appraisal serves both developmental and accountability purposes.

Frequency of Appraisal

Frequent appraisals provide teachers with continuous insights into their teaching practices. Adeyemi (2021) argues that regular evaluations reduce performance stagnation and enhance adaptability to curriculum changes. Conversely, infrequent appraisals leave gaps in teacher monitoring and improvement.

Feedback in Staff Appraisal

Constructive feedback enables teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses, improving professional competence (Johnson, 2022). Feedback that is timely, specific, and actionable promotes teacher motivation and commitment (Azah & Taibu, 2023).

Professional Growth of Teachers

Professional growth encompasses teachers' improvement in knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enhance student achievement. Research has shown that staff appraisal linked with feedback directly influences teachers' career development and classroom efficiency (Obi & Eke, 2020).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Goal-Setting Theory by Locke and Latham (1990), which posits that feedback is essential in achieving professional goals. The Goal-Setting emphasizes the importance of setting clear, specific, and challenging goals to enhance individual performance. According to this theory,

goals act as motivational forces that directs the attention of an individual and the efforts toward goal-relevant activities. When goals are specific and difficult but attainable, they stimulate higher levels of effort and persistence, leading to improved outcomes compared to unclear or easy goals. This theory highlights that goal setting is not merely about having objectives but about the nature and clarity of those goals.

An essential aspect of the Goal-Setting Theory is the role of feedback in the goal achievement process. Feedback provides individuals with valuable information about their progress, enabling them to understand how well they are doing in relation to their goals. This ongoing feedback loop allows for self-monitoring and adjustments in strategies or effort, ensuring that the individual remains on track to meet the established goals. Without feedback, it becomes difficult to gauge progress, which can reduce motivation and hinder performance.

In the context of professional development for teachers, appraisal feedback plays a critical role in facilitating goal setting and achievement. Through performance appraisals, teachers receive specific details about their strengths and areas needing improvement, which helps them formulate meaningful and measurable professional growth goals. This feedback-driven goal-setting process empowers teachers to focus their efforts on targeted development activities, ultimately enhancing their teaching effectiveness and contributing to better educational outcomes for their students.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Which comprises of some public secondary school teachers in Delta State. A sample of 150 teachers from 15 schools was selected using stratified random sampling. A structured questionnaire titled “Staff Appraisal and Professional Growth Questionnaire (SAPGQ)” was used. Data were analyzed using mean scores and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *How often are teachers appraised in Delta State public secondary schools?*

| S/N | ITEM DESCRIPTION | MEAN | STANDARD DEVIATION | REMARK |
|-----|---|------|--------------------|----------|
| 1. | I receive formal performance appraisals from my school administration? | 3.05 | 1.34 | High |
| 2. | Appraisals are conducted on a fixed schedule (e.g. yearly and twice a year) | 2.65 | 1.29 | Low |
| 3. | Appraisal sessions are conducted after the completion of a teaching term | 2.86 | 1.32 | High |
| 4. | Appraisal sessions in my school are scheduled, as-needed | 2.45 | 1.28 | Moderate |
| 5. | We usually have informal feedback sessions outside of formal appraisals | 3.38 | 1.21 | Moderate |
| 6. | The frequency of appraisals vary by subjects | 2.59 | 1.27 | Low |
| 7. | Appraisals are conducted uniformly across all Delta State public secondary schools I know | 2.69 | 1.26 | Low |
| 8. | How much time typically passes between appraisals? | 2.96 | 1.33 | High |
| 9. | The frequency of appraisal is sufficient to support your teaching performance | 3.12 | 1.40 | High |
| 10. | There are obstacles that affect how often appraisals can be conducted | 2.35 | 1.25 | Low |

The results presented on Table 1.1 contained the following indications that participants agreed that their school engages in appraisal with a $X=3.05$, $SD=1.34$; participants disagree that appraisals are conducted on a fixed schedule (e.g., yearly, twice a year) with a $X= 2.65$, $SD= 1.29$; Participants disagree that Appraisal sessions are conducted after the completion of a teaching term with $X=2.86$, $SD=1.38$;

Appraisals are triggered by scheduled and specific events $X=2.45$, $SD=1.28$; frequency of informal feedback sessions $X=3.38$, $SD=1.21$; Frequency of appraisal varies by subjects $X=2.59$, $SD=1.27$; Appraisals are conducted uniformly across all Delta State Public Secondary Schools $X=2.69$, $SD=1.2$; The frequency of appraisal is sufficient to support my teaching performance $X=2.96$, $SD=1.33$); There are obstacles that affect how often appraisals can be conducted $X=3.12$; $SD=1.40$, showing a high rate of appraisal sessions in Secondary Schools in Delta State. Based on the result above the question is answered that Delta State Public Secondary Schools engage in timely appraisals.

Research Question 2: What is the quality of feedback given to teachers after appraisal?

| S/N | ITEM DESCRIPTION | MEAN | STANDARD DEVIATION | REMARK |
|-----|--|------|--------------------|--------|
| 1. | How clear and specific is the feedback you receive after an appraisal? | 3.00 | 1.30 | High |
| 2. | Does the feedback identify both strengths and areas for improvement? | 2.90 | 1.28 | High |
| 3. | Is the feedback constructive and actionable? | 2.85 | 1.29 | High |
| 4. | Do you receive written feedback or only verbal comments? | 2.20 | 1.22 | Low |
| 5. | How respectful and supportive is the tone of the feedback provided? | 2.20 | 1.22 | Low |
| 6. | Are you given opportunities to discuss or respond to the feedback? | 2.95 | 1.30 | High |
| 7. | Does the feedback align with your own perception of your teaching performance? | 3.00 | 1.28 | High |
| 8. | How well does the feedback address your professional development needs? | 2.80 | 1.26 | High |
| 9. | Are follow-up actions or support clearly outlined in the feedback? | 2.65 | 1.20 | Low |
| 10. | How satisfied are you with the overall quality of the feedback you receive after appraisals? | 2.90 | 1.27 | High |

The results in Table 2 show that respondents generally rated the feedback received after appraisal as clear, constructive, and mostly aligned with their self-perceptions of performance, with mean scores ranging from 2.80 to 3.00 on most items. High agreement was recorded for clarity of feedback ($X = 3.00$, $SD = 1.30$), identification of strengths and areas for improvement ($X = 2.90$, $SD = 1.28$), and opportunities to discuss feedback ($X = 2.95$, $SD = 1.30$). However, teachers reported low levels of written documentation ($X = 2.20$, $SD = 1.22$), respectful/supportive tone ($X = 2.20$, $SD = 1.22$), and explicit follow-up actions ($X = 2.65$, $SD = 1.20$). These findings indicate that while the content of appraisal feedback is often helpful, its delivery and formal documentation require improvement.

Research Question 3: *To what extent do appraisal frequency and feedback affect teachers' professional growth?*

| S/N | ITEM DESCRIPTION | MEAN | STANDARD DEVIATION | REMARK |
|-----|--|------|--------------------|----------|
| 1. | Regular appraisal helped me improve your teaching skills | 3.20 | 1.25 | High |
| 2. | Feedback from appraisals has influenced my classroom practices | 3.15 | 1.22 | High |
| 3. | I feel more motivated to pursue professional development after appraisals | 3.05 | 1.30 | High |
| 4. | Appraisal feedback helped me set professional goals | 3.00 | 1.28 | Moderate |
| 5. | The frequency of appraisal affects my confidence as a teacher | 2.90 | 1.35 | Low |
| 6. | High-quality feedback from appraisals affect your job satisfaction | 3.25 | 1.27 | High |
| 7. | In your opinion, does appraisal frequency correlate with improvements in student outcomes? | 2.85 | 1.31 | Low |
| 8. | Appraisals have led to meaningful changes in your teaching methods | 2.95 | 1.29 | Low |
| 9. | I believe appraisal and feedback help in career advancement opportunities? | 3.10 | 1.22 | High |
| 10. | Overall, how important are appraisal and feedback in your continuous professional growth? | 3.30 | 1.20 | High |

In Table 3, respondents agreed that appraisal and feedback contribute positively to their professional development. The highest ratings were observed for the importance of appraisal and feedback to continuous growth $X = 3.30$, $SD = 1.20$; improved teaching skills $X = 3.20$, $SD = 1.25$; and job satisfaction $X = 3.25$, $SD = 1.27$; Teachers also indicated that appraisal influences classroom practices $X = 3.15$, $SD = 1.22$; motivates pursuit of further training $X = 3.05$, $SD = 1.30$; and assists in setting professional goals $X = 3.00$, $SD = 1.28$; Although the impact on student outcomes was rated slightly lower $X = 2.85$, $SD = 1.31$; the overall means suggest that appraisal frequency and feedback play a significant role in enhancing teachers' motivation, confidence, and career advancement.

Hypothesis Testing 1

Using PPMC, a significant correlation ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.05$) was found between appraisal feedback and professional growth, while appraisal frequency had a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.05$).

Using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), the correlation coefficient between appraisal frequency and teachers' professional growth was $r = 0.48$ at $p < 0.05$. Because the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected. This indicates a moderate significant positive relationship between appraisal frequency and teachers' professional growth.

Hypothesis Testing 2

The correlation analysis produced $r = 0.61$ at $p < 0.05$, showing a strong positive relationship between appraisal feedback and teachers' professional growth. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected. This confirms that appraisal feedback significantly enhances teachers' professional development.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal that public secondary schools in Delta State engage in staff appraisals with moderate frequency, though not always on a fixed or uniform schedule. Teachers' report that appraisal sessions occur regularly enough to support teaching performance, but inconsistency across subjects and schools was observed. This is in line with past research which suggests that frequent and systematic appraisals are important to minimizing performance stagnation and fostering continuous improvement.

As regards to the quality of feedback, teachers indicated that appraisal feedback is generally clear, constructive, and reflective of their own perceptions of performance. However, there were concerns about the lack of written documentation and weak follow-up mechanisms. These factors highlight a gap between feedback content and delivery, which could diminish the overall effectiveness of the appraisal process in supporting teacher development.

The impact of appraisal frequency and feedback on professional growth was strongly supported by respondents. Teachers reported that regular appraisals and high-quality feedback improve teaching skills, motivate further professional development, inform goal-setting, and enhance job satisfaction. Though the correlation with student outcomes was less pronounced, the data confirm that both frequency and quality of appraisal feedback contribute positively and significantly to teachers' professional growth.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that staff appraisal, when conducted frequently and paired with meaningful feedback, plays a crucial role in enhancing the professional growth of public secondary school teachers in Delta State. The findings support the rejection of null hypotheses, confirming significant positive relationships between both appraisal frequency and feedback quality with teachers' professional development. Despite their potential, current appraisal practices in many schools are hindered by irregular timing, variability across subjects, and deficiencies in feedback delivery—particularly in documentation and follow-up. Addressing these challenges would further improve appraisal effectiveness, leading to better teacher motivation, performance, and ultimately, potentially improved student outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Establish Fixed Appraisal Schedules:** Schools should adopt standardized appraisal timelines to ensure that all teachers receive evaluations regularly and uniformly across subjects, reducing disparities and gaps in development opportunities.
- **Enhance Feedback Quality and Documentation:** Feedback should be clear, respectful, actionable, and formally documented in writing. This will enable teachers to better understand their strengths and areas for improvement and track progress over time.
- **Provide Training for Appraisers:** School administrators and supervisors should receive training on delivering constructive, supportive feedback and conducting appraisals that focus on development rather than merely compliance or accountability.
- **Implement Follow-Up Mechanisms:** Schools need to develop structured follow-up procedures after appraisals to support teachers in implementing recommended improvements and to sustain motivation for continuous professional development.
- **Promote a Culture of Continuous Development:** Appraisals should be embedded within a broader culture that values ongoing learning, reflective practice, and teacher empowerment to foster sustained professional growth.
- **Involve Teachers in the Appraisal Process:** Mechanisms such as self-appraisal and peer review can complement supervisory assessments to provide a more comprehensive and participatory appraisal system.

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