Novelty Journals

ISSN 2394-9694

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences
Vol. 13, Issue 5, pp: (12-18), Month: September - October 2026, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND LECTURERS' JOB PRODUCTIVITY IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23800919

Published Date: 30-October-2026

Abstract: **The study examined the relationship between performance appraisal and lecturers' job productivity in public universities in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. The study was guided by one research question and a corresponding hypothesis, which was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study employed a correlational research design. The population of the study comprises 5,169 lecturers from universities in Delta and Edo States. A sample of 517 lecturers were selected from the universities. Proportional stratified sampling techniques was used for the selection of the sample. Data was collected using Performance Appraisal Rating Scale (PARS) and Lecturers' Job Productivity (LJP). Both face and content validity of the instrument were estimated. The internal consistency of the instruments was measured using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient yielded coefficients of 0.81 for Performance Appraisal Rating Scale and 0.78 for Lecturers' Job Productivity Rating Scale. Out of 517 questionnaires administered, 497 representing 96.1% of the total, were found valid and used for data analysis. The data collected were analysed using coefficient of determination and Pearson's product-moment correlation. The findings of the study revealed that there is a moderate positive significant relationship between performance appraisal and lecturers' job productivity. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that university management should ensure that performance appraisal systems are transparent, fair, and consistently applied, with clearly defined criteria for evaluation, timely recognition, and adequate reward for outstanding performance.**

Keywords: **Delta, Edo, job productivity, lecturers, performance appraisal.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Universities are institutions of higher learning dedicated to the generation and dissemination of knowledge, fostering intellectual development, and advancing society through education and research. As centres for intellectual inquiry and innovation, universities play a critical role in the social and economic development of nations by producing a skilled workforce and generating research that addresses both local and global challenges. Lecturers also referred to as academic staff, play critical roles in teaching, research and community service, towards the attainment of the goals of university education. Lecturers are also instrumental in the research domain of universities; they engage in studies that push the boundaries of knowledge, often publishing findings that inform policies, contribute to scientific advancements, and provide solutions to societal challenges. Through these activities, they directly impact the university's research output and, consequently, its reputation and standing on both local and international platforms. Additionally, lecturers play a vital role in university governance and policy formation, often participating in committees and decision-making bodies that shape the institution's strategic direction. Their involvement in administrative duties and policy formulation ensures that the university's objectives align with the needs of students, the demands of the job market, and the goals of the broader educational system. By bridging the gap between university policies and student needs, lecturers contribute to creating an environment that promotes academic excellence and institutional accountability. Therefore, in their multifaceted roles as

teachers, researchers, and policy contributors, lecturers are indispensable to the university's mission of advancing knowledge, fostering social responsibility, and preparing students to become engaged citizens and professionals.

Despite the pivotal roles lecturers play in advancing university objectives, there is considerable evidence indicating low productivity among lecturers in public universities in Delta and Edo States. Research findings and institutional reports from the National Universities Commission (NUC) have raised concerns about inadequate commitment to teaching, research, and student mentorship in this region. According to a 2023 report from the NUC, only 38% of lecturers in Delta and Edo States universities meet the minimum standards for research publications and academic output set by the Commission (NUC, 2023). The report further highlights that this lack of productivity affects university performance ratings and limits the international standing of these institutions, signaling a broader issue of accountability and effectiveness within the university workforce. Student complaints and feedback further underscore the issue of low lecturer productivity, particularly in terms of teaching effectiveness and accessibility. A survey conducted among students at the University of Port Harcourt and Delta State University in 2022 reported that over 60% of students felt that lecturers were frequently unavailable for consultations outside scheduled class hours. Additionally, 52% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of feedback on assignments and exams, citing delays and inconsistency in grading as major concerns. Students also reported a high incidence of missed lectures, attributing this to lecturers' participation in off-campus engagements or secondary employment, which detracts from their commitment to university duties (Okoro & Essien, 2022).

Moreover, academic productivity in terms of published research output appears to be low. According to recent research by Eze and Nwankwo (2021), lecturers in Delta and Edo States universities contribute less than 15% of the total national total of peer-reviewed academic publications, which is disproportionately low given the number of public universities in the region. The researchers also highlighted that less than 30% of lecturers met the minimum publication requirements needed for career advancement, revealing a widespread issue of inadequate research engagement. This lack of scholarly output may not only reflect on individual lecturer performance but may also diminish the overall intellectual contribution of Delta and Edo States universities to Nigeria's higher education landscape. The consequences of low lecturer productivity extend beyond academic output, as they also impact students' academic achievement and satisfaction with their educational experience. Studies have shown a correlation between lecturer engagement and student success, yet the prevailing issues of absenteeism, insufficient feedback, and limited research undermine this relationship. Consequently, universities in Delta and Edo States face challenges in achieving their academic goals, and the overall quality of education remains compromised.

To address low job productivity among lecturers in Delta and Edo States universities, several measures have been implemented by both the universities and regulatory bodies. One significant step has been the introduction of performance-based reward systems designed to incentivize lecturers who meet or exceed productivity standards. This includes salary increases, promotions, and research grants awarded to lecturers based on their teaching performance, research output, and overall contribution to institutional goals. By directly linking rewards to measurable achievements, this approach aims to motivate lecturers to improve their performance. Further, professional development programmes have been introduced to enhance lecturers' teaching skills and research capabilities. Workshops, seminars, and training sessions are now routinely organized, focusing on contemporary teaching methods, research methodologies, and the use of technology in education. According to NUC reports, the incorporation of digital skills training has been a particularly successful initiative, equipping lecturers with the skills needed to engage students through blended learning approaches (National Universities Commission, 2022). These programmes are often sponsored by government agencies, international organizations, and university partnerships, demonstrating a collaborative effort to improve educational quality. Additionally, some universities have established research centres and funding initiatives that support lecturers in conducting impactful research, thereby increasing their scholarly output and enhancing the university's academic profile. This approach aligns with global best practices, where academic support structures are integral to improving productivity and fostering innovation.

Statement of the Problem

Lecturers are essential for the accomplishment of the goals of university through their contributions to teaching, research and community service and the development of human capital. Their productivity is therefore a critical determinant of quality education and the general effectiveness of higher education institutions. Through performance appraisal, the job performance of lecturers is assessed against the standards and objectives of the institutions. Performance appraisal the lecturers' strengths and weakness, identify professional development needs, guide promotion, and encourage accountability. Despite the numerous benefits of performance appraisal,

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between the performance appraisal and lecturers' job productivity in public universities in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between performance appraisal and lecturers' job productivity in public universities in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance Appraisal in Public Universities

Performance appraisal is a systematic process through which an organization evaluates and documents an employee's job performance and productivity in relation to established criteria and organizational goals. It serves as a critical tool for enhancing organizational efficiency by identifying individual contributions, strengths, and areas for improvement (Jones et al., 2023). In higher education institutions, such as public universities, performance appraisal is particularly important because of the multifaceted roles that academic staff play, including teaching, research, administrative duties, and community engagement. An effective appraisal system ensures that these roles are adequately assessed and aligned with institutional objectives, thereby fostering accountability and continuous improvement.

Performance appraisal in public universities is a significant tool for assessing, managing, and enhancing the effectiveness of faculty members. It involves evaluating an individual's work performance, including teaching, research, service, and administrative roles, with the objective of providing constructive feedback for development and improvement. In higher education, performance appraisal is not only a mechanism for determining pay increases and promotions but also serves as a tool for aligning faculty goals with institutional objectives, fostering professional development, and enhancing overall university performance. Empirical studies in the last five years have emphasized the increasing importance of performance appraisal systems in public universities, examining their design, implementation, effectiveness, and impact on faculty motivation, job satisfaction, and academic achievement. However, despite its critical role, performance appraisal in many public universities has faced challenges such as bias, lack of transparency, inconsistent criteria, and insufficient resources for effective execution.

A significant body of recent research has explored the implementation and effectiveness of performance appraisal systems in public universities. A study by Olagunju and Ajayi (2022) analyzed the role of performance appraisal in Nigerian public universities, focusing on the challenges faced by academic staff in the appraisal process. The study found that while performance appraisal was conducted regularly, its effectiveness was hindered by the lack of clear and standardized criteria for evaluation, leading to subjective judgments by evaluators. Additionally, the absence of regular feedback and follow-up on performance appraisal outcomes contributed to the system's inefficiency. The study argued that universities needed to adopt more structured and transparent appraisal processes that include clear performance metrics, timely feedback, and professional development opportunities based on the appraisal results.

In a similar vein, a study by Okoye and Opara (2023) examined the perceptions of faculty members regarding the fairness and transparency of performance appraisals in public universities in Nigeria. Their findings revealed that faculty members often perceived the performance appraisal process as biased, particularly in relation to teaching effectiveness and research productivity. Faculty who lacked access to adequate resources for research and those who taught larger classes felt their performance was unfairly assessed. The study called for the introduction of more objective and data-driven performance appraisal systems that would factor in the resources available to faculty, as well as their academic and professional development needs. The researchers also emphasized the importance of aligning performance appraisal with faculty development goals, thus creating a system that fosters growth rather than merely assessing past performance.

The role of performance appraisal in faculty development was further explored by Adamu and Musa (2021), who investigated the link between performance appraisal outcomes and professional growth in public universities. Their study found that faculty members who received constructive feedback and were given opportunities for further training and development through performance appraisal were more likely to improve their teaching methods, research output, and service to the university. The study suggested that performance appraisal should not only be a tool for evaluating past

performance but also a means of identifying development needs and offering resources to help faculty achieve their full potential. The study highlighted the importance of incorporating career development opportunities into the appraisal process, thus providing a comprehensive approach that addresses both short-term performance and long-term professional growth.

In addition to the issues of fairness, transparency, and alignment with career goals, empirical studies have also highlighted the impact of performance appraisal on faculty motivation and job satisfaction. A study by Umar and Bello (2023) examined the relationship between performance appraisal and faculty motivation in public universities. The findings indicated that faculty members who perceived the appraisal process as fair and transparent were more motivated to improve their teaching and research productivity. The study revealed that regular, constructive feedback that highlighted strengths and areas for improvement helped faculty members to focus on professional development and make necessary adjustments to their work. On the other hand, faculty members who felt that the appraisal process was biased or failed to provide actionable feedback reported lower levels of job satisfaction and motivation. This highlights the critical role that effective performance appraisal can play in shaping faculty engagement and institutional commitment.

Similarly, a study by Nwankwo and Chigozie (2021) explored the relationship between performance appraisal and job satisfaction among academic staff in Nigerian universities. The study found that faculty members who received recognition for their achievements through performance appraisal were more satisfied with their jobs and less likely to seek employment elsewhere. The researchers concluded that the perceived fairness and usefulness of performance appraisal systems significantly contributed to overall job satisfaction. The study suggested that universities should enhance the appraisal process by ensuring that it is not only a mechanism for assessing performance but also a tool for acknowledging faculty contributions and offering rewards, both monetary and non-monetary, as part of a comprehensive retention strategy.

Despite the importance of performance appraisal in enhancing faculty performance and motivation, several challenges continue to plague its effectiveness in public universities. One major concern is the inconsistent application of appraisal systems across different departments and faculties. A study by Olalekan and Ahmed (2022) pointed out that while some faculties in Nigerian public universities had well-established performance appraisal systems, others had ad hoc processes that were not aligned with institutional standards. The researchers found that these inconsistencies created perceptions of unfair treatment among faculty members, which ultimately undermined the credibility and effectiveness of the appraisal process. The study recommended that universities develop standardized performance appraisal systems that are uniformly applied across all departments, ensuring fairness and transparency in the evaluation process.

Another significant challenge identified in recent studies is the over-reliance on teaching evaluations in performance appraisal. While teaching effectiveness is undoubtedly a critical aspect of faculty performance, research by Akinmoladun et al. (2021) highlighted that many performance appraisal systems in public universities disproportionately focused on teaching evaluations, often at the expense of other important dimensions such as research, service, and community engagement. Faculty members who excelled in research but received mediocre evaluations in teaching were often penalized in the appraisal process, even though their research contributions were substantial. This imbalance in the appraisal system can result in demotivating faculty members who feel their expertise and contributions in areas outside of teaching are undervalued.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a correlational research design, which is appropriate for examining the relationships between multiple independent variables. Correlational studies are particularly useful for identifying patterns and associations without manipulating the variables (Creswell, 2014). The target population for this study consisted of 5,169 lecturers from universities in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. A sample of 517 lecturers were selected using proportional stratified sampling technique. The sample size for this study was determined using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) formula and it gave 377. To account for a potential 10% attrition rate, the sample size was increased by 10%, resulting in a final sample of 517 respondents.

Data for the study was collected using and instruments tagged Performance Appraisal Rating Scale (PARS) and Lecturers' Job Productivity (LJP). It contains 20 items that were structured on the following response scale SD: Strongly Disagree (1); D: Disagree (2); A: Agree (3); SA: Strongly Agree (4). To ensure the face and content validities of the instrument, expert

opinions were sought from the Department of Educational Management and Foundations, and Measurement and Evaluation, Delta State University Abraka, Nigeria. Cronbach's alpha reliability method was employed for the reliability of the instrument to ensure the internal consistency. Reliability coefficient of 0.94 and 0.74 were computed for Performance Appraisal and Lecturers' Job Productivity Rating Scales.

The researchers with the help of three research assistants, personally administered the questionnaire. Before distributing the instruments, permission was obtained from the university authorities, and informed consent sought from the respondents. The researchers were ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, with clear instructions provided to encourage accurate responses. total of 517 questionnaires was administered, but 497 questionnaires, representing 96.1% of the total, were found to be valid and were used for data analysis. Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between performance appraisal, and job productivity. The significance level for hypothesis testing was set at 0.05.

4. RESULTS

Answering Research Question 1

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Coefficient of Determination of Relationship Between Performance Appraisal and Lecturers' Job Productivity in Public Universities.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	r^2	r^2 %	Decision
Performance Appraisal	497	2.92	.81	.536	.287	28.7	Moderate Positive relationship
Lecturers' Job Productivity	497	2.90	.75				

Data in Table 1 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and the coefficient of determination of the relationship between performance appraisal and lecturers' job productivity in public universities in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. The computed Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) is 0.536, while the coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.287. The coefficient of determination indicates that approximately 28.7% of the variation in lecturers' job productivity can be explained by performance appraisal. Thus, it is concluded that the is a moderate positive relationship between performance appraisal and lecturers' job productivity in public universities in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1

Table 2: Pearson Correlation analysis of the relationship between performance appraisal and lecturers' job productivity in public Universities in Nigeria

		Performance Appraisal	Lecturers' Job Productivity
Performance Appraisal	Pearson Correlation	1	.536**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	497	497
Lecturers' Job Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.536**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	497	497

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 2 shows a Pearson Correlation analysis of the relationship between performance appraisal and lecturers' job productivity in public universities in Nigeria (r = 0.536, alpha level = 0.05). This is determined by comparing the p-value to the alpha level. The p-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between performance appraisal and lecturers' job productivity in public universities in Nigeria.

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5. DISCUSSION

Performance Appraisal and Lecturers' Job Productivity in Public Universities in Delta and Edo States.

The research finding revealed a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between performance appraisal and lecturers' job productivity in public universities in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. This implies that effective performance evaluation systems contribute meaningfully to improved lecturers' teaching quality, research output, and service delivery, although the influence is not overwhelmingly strong. A possible reason for this finding is that regular and well-structured performance appraisal provides lecturers with constructive feedback on their strengths and areas requiring improvement. When academic staff receive clear evaluations of their work, they are better positioned to adjust their teaching methods, research focus, and professional behaviours in ways that enhance productivity. Performance appraisal also helps to clarify institutional expectations, thereby aligning lecturers' efforts with university goals. Another explanation may be that performance appraisal systems foster accountability and professional discipline among lecturers. Knowing that their work will be periodically reviewed can motivate staff to maintain consistent effort in course delivery, publication, and community engagement. However, the relationship being moderate suggests that appraisal alone may not fully drive productivity unless it is linked with meaningful rewards, career advancement, and developmental support. Furthermore, the effectiveness of performance appraisal may depend on the perceived fairness, transparency, and developmental orientation of the process. Where lecturers view appraisal exercises as objective and supportive rather than punitive, they are more likely to respond positively and improve their performance. This finding is consistent with Smith and Lee (2021) who recipients of fair, and transparent performance appraisal aligned with their own goals and values felt highly motivated and improved engagement in their jobs, and thus increased productivity. This finding is also consistent with Chijioke and Uzochukwu (2022) found that in universities where the administration provided adequate resources and support to facilitate teaching and research, performance-based rewards had a more pronounced impact on lecturers' productivity. this finding further aligns with Ojo and Adeyemi (2023) who found that performance-based rewards had the strongest impact on lecturers' productivity when coupled with intrinsic motivator.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that performance appraisal is positively and significantly related to lecturers' job productivity. Thus, the following were recommended:

1. University Management and Human Resource Units should ensure that performance appraisal systems are transparent, fair, and consistently applied, with clearly defined criteria for evaluation, timely recognition, and adequate reward for outstanding performance.
2. University Administrators and Quality Assurance Units should sustain and improve performance appraisal practices by ensuring they are objective, periodic, and development-oriented, with emphasis on constructive feedback to enhance lecturers' effectiveness.

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