Marrying Digital Performance Appraisal with Tutors' Work Output: Evidence from Colleges of Education in Ghana

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Abstract

In this Digital Era teachers are required to develop professionalism in accordance with the development of time, science and technology, and the needs of society. Professional teachers should be able to understand the components of applicable educational concepts so as to appreciate the foundation and education policy, the development level of learners and learning approaches in accordance with the learning needs. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of digital performance appraisal on teachers' performance in Colleges of Education in Ghana. The study employed descriptive research design where simple random sample was used to choose 5 principals and 139 tutors from Colleges of Education in Ahafo and Bono regions of Ghana. Data for this study was collected using close-ended questionnaire. Data analysis was done with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25). The study results indicated that teachers' appraisal processes are phenomenal in determining the performance of the teacher. The appraiser and appraisee need to be in collaboration in order to ensure the process is successfully undertaken. Communication is very essential on how the teachers' appraisal is conducted and perceived. Training has the greatest influence on the appraisal of teachers which also affects significantly the performance of the teachers. Recommendations for further studies were made to address the study results found.

Keywords: Digital Era; Teachers' Appraisal; Communication; Colleges of Education; Performance Evaluation.

1. Introduction

In this Digital Era teachers are required to develop professionalism in accordance with the development of time, science and technology, and the needs of society.

Professional teachers should be able to understand the components of applicable educational concepts so as to appreciate the foundation and education policy, the development level of learners and learning approaches in accordance with the learning needs. The success of learning is determined by the teaching methods and learning media [1]. Through the use of assistive devices in the form of media, there is hope of increased communication relations for it to be able to run smoothly with maximum results [2]. Learning outcomes are abilities that students have from the learning process that are influenced by internal and external factors [3]. Thus, in this digital era teachers are expected to have the ability to use technology, and there would be transformation and creative power in the digital era [4].

Formal Performance Appraisal systems were established by mid 1950s and Personality Based Systems were in use back in the World War 1 in the United Kingdom. There were issues regarding the use of Personality based ratings so there were suggestions on the use of performance-based approach [5]. The main aim of the performance appraisal process was to look at what an individual can achieve in future [6]. This process was more interested on the future (forward) rather than the history (backward) in other words the personality of employees. By 1960s performance appraisal had developed into goal setting in assessing of performance abilities due to the influence of the movement of managing by objectives.

Globally in 1970s the appraisal process was now open to scrutiny and legal cases started appearing, also the use of psychometrics in the appraisal process started. From 1980 to 1990 the concept of performance management became fashionable as it provided a larger approach that encouraged motivation, performance improvement and human resource management [6]. For example, the schools in United Kingdom use performance appraisal to improve on the standards of teaching both locally and nationally [7]. Appraisal therefore deals with accurate measurement, factors influencing quality performance appraisal data, perception of employees on appraisal process and how to use the appraisal process to motivate plus develop staff. Employee development is supported by qualities such as; self-awareness, seeking for feedback and being open to a range of ideas and concepts [8]. Most recent developments such as hierarchical leadership have led to multi-rater feedback methods also known as 360- degree feedback. Most research on performance appraisal are UK and US based. The culture of each country influences how appraisals are conducted. For instance, in the western cultures the appraisal focuses on individualism while in Asian cultures appraisal focuses on hierarchy and authority. Therefore one cannot assume that one performance appraisal research from a certain culture will represent all the cultures in the world [9]. In the Ghanaian tertiary education space, performance appraisal in this context is a process where a teacher's work is reviewed. During this process all teachers are appraised by students via electronic means. The appraising process entails all the teaching aspects notably, classroom organization, management of classroom activities, management of time and resources such as professional knowledge and application, time management, innovation and creativity in teaching, learner protection, safety, discipline and teacher conduct, promotion of co-curricular activities, professional development, collaboration with parents/guardians and stakeholders, maintenance of learners' progress records, lesson attendance and teacher performance appraisal and development tool. Performance appraisal is conducted in order to obtain information that would help the administration and the employer in making the decisions such as need of training, salary increments, motivation, counselling, promotion and transfer of teachers [10].

Performance appraisal is a process of evaluating an employee's performance of a job in terms of its requirements. It is the systematic, periodic and an impartial rating on an employee's excellence in matters pertaining to his/her present job and to his/her potentialities for a better job [11]. Reference [12] sees it as a process of identifying, measuring and developing an individual's performance in accordance with organizational goals. According to [13], from a broad perspective, performance appraisals are designed to help organizations draw the best out of their employees, by enabling individual employees to perform at optimal levels. However, the execution of such systems is not always easy and the appraisals frequently do not achieve their goals, with the result that both the employees and their supervisors are often dissatisfied with the system. Indeed, as [14] argued, performance appraisals often have the opposite of their intended effect. In other words, if the system is not used properly, evaluations can lead to frustration, anger and reduced motivation levels, rather than motivating employees to perform better. Evaluation of individuals in terms of their job performance is a task requiring a quality of managerial judgment which places a considerable responsibility on the managers involved. It is a task that is delicate as well as complex [15]. In the view of [15], the most likely reason for the adoption of staff appraisal is to draw attention to present performance in the job in order to reward people fairly and to identify those with potential for promotion or transfer. He further ascertained that appraisal programs are designed not only to provide more systematic control of behavior of subordinates, but also to control the behavior of superiors. Despite the fact that the performance appraisal system has been in existence for several years now issues like biasness with the appraiser, lack of trust in the appraisal process, lack of resources, low motivation of the appraisee, lack of clarity in the criteria and lack of frequent trainings are all identified. It is still a major challenge to overcome the issues of training, attitudes, leadership and communication which affect the appraisal process being taken negatively. Teachers have raised concerns about the appraisals thus posing a challenge on their implementation. Some of the teachers view the system as way of victimizing them based on their relationship with the appraiser and the fact that the findings are not used in key decision making like promotions to a desired rank, promotion to the next job groups, motivation, and salary increments [16]. The main aim of the performance appraisal was to provide clear feedback on the teachers' performance, thereby acting as a good guidance on making decisions on promotions, transfers and training; unfortunately this has not been the case [17].

Essentially, educational researchers regard teacher appraisal as an important vehicle for promoting educational quality [18]; [19] which is believed to have the potential to facilitate teachers' professional development and to stimulate instructional improvement. However, critics of teacher appraisal regard it as a mechanical and meaningless exercise [20]; [21]. Teacher appraisal becomes a perfunctory ritual activity that is disjointed from the process of teaching improvement and teachers' professional development [22].

With the limited studies on teacher performance appraisals in Ghanaian Colleges of Education and in response to the concerns expressed by previous researchers on this matter, the present study will address the gap by investigating the practice of teacher performance appraisals and how they influence teachers' performance (work output).

Judging from the above discussion, the study was guided by the research questions below:

1.   How is training on digital performance appraisal of teachers' performance evaluated in the Colleges of Education?

2.   In what ways can communication in digital performance appraisal on teachers' performance be improved in the Colleges of Education?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Agency Theory

The theory of agency which was proposed by [23] is about the relationship between agents or principals and the control of delegation [23]. This theory is based on two sides: one is about the principal (employer) determining on the work to be done, while the other one is on the junior (employee) who performs the duties. Agency theory explores on how organization can align the interests between the employer and the employees. Reference [24] contends it is assumed that workers are motivated by self-interest. The manager and the employee appraisal process is the widely used mechanism in performance management in most organizations [25]. Researchers have identified many problems associated with performance appraisal implementation. The research done shows that the appraisers are bias in the way they see others, they don't appreciate their juniors neither do they motivate them, they lack feedback skills, they have poor listening skills, they are glued to the appraisal forms, they rarely offer feedback to the higher authorities neither to the employees and they are not fully trained on the appraisal process neither do they understand the appraisal systems [26]. The agency theory has been used by economists to bring out the understanding of the relationship between performance measurement systems and provision of incentives. This theory also explores on the interests of stakeholders in an organization [27]. The function of management systems in performance appraisal is viewed as a way of aligning all employees' activities with the needs of the owners but not aligning the owner's behavior with the need of other stakeholders. This means that all activities being done in an organization should be to achieve the set goals or objectives in line with the set vision and missions [27]. The Agency theory brings out the relationship between the employer and the employee, the greatest challenge in this is harmonizing and balancing the interests of both since some tend to be egocentric. The employer's main agenda is to maximize performance and production but unfortunately he ends up minimizing motivation for his employees thereby reducing performance and production. The Agency theory was advanced by [23] as he continued with his research. The concept of Agency Theory is to attempt to resolve disputes over priorities between the Principals and the Agents [23].

Training on the other hand is the link between what employees know and what they should know in any process. In employee appraisal the appraisee needs guidance on preparation and how to conduct self in the entire process, sometimes this is needed in forms like a manual [28]; [29]. A lot of training is focused on upgrading and improving technical skills for employees due to emergence of new technology and new structural designs [30]. Performance Evaluation (PE) is a systematic way of examining how well an employee is performing in his duties [31]. Systematic means that the system should be a planned system that allows feedback to be given in a formal way. Performance Evaluation System should be implemented in order to encourage a positive performance and behavior, to satisfy employees' curiosity for them to know how they are performing their duties, as a tool to develop employee's career and to provide a basis for salary increment, promotions or legal disciplinary actions. A PE System is one of the most important parts of an organization [32]. Every organization

should determine how often they should give the performance appraisals either once, twice or thrice a year and being a continuous process. According to [7] PE is a tool for evaluation of training programs of the organizations, which are used to help managers to identify the most effective programs in performance appraisal. Performance Evaluation stands for Merit rating, Appraisal, Evaluation, Performance report, Performance appraisal, Personal evaluation, Audit and Survey. A leader is in a position to decide on the employees' promotion, transfer, progress and appointment. He can also identify skill deficiency of his juniors, their strengths and weaknesses through PE and then plan for training programs. In some cases, the superiors might be bias in regard to promotions, appointments and rewarding [30]. This may lead to problems in making decisions and rewarding of incentives in future. Therefore, passing across the message of this process and documenting the whole process is very important for future feedback. Communication (Organizational communication) is a process of creating and exchanging messages from one person to another. The process includes several key elements such as network, interdependence, relationship, environment, uncertainty and messages. Communication is closely connected to organizational structure and culture, every organization has its own developed mode of communication [33]. Communication can be used to analyze and reflect as well as affect what is happening in the organization. Communication is here seen as a pervasive role rather than an individual skill. In almost all school activities, communication plays an important role. "How and what we talk about both construct and form our reality. This implies that communication can be both a way to analyze and understand processes in schools and a process to influence others' actions and understanding. An ordinary working day for school leaders and teachers contains many meetings, interactions and conversations [34]. According to [35], a communicative leadership is very important in organization's values that are non-negotiable. Even if the principal takes part in different processes and therefore is affected by them, there are organizational expectations on how the leader shall contribute to these processes. What principals and teachers talk about and how they communicate both reflect and construct what is considered important in different processes and activities. Communication therefore reveals what is in focus in the organization's everyday work. How the principal listens, transmits information, makes decisions and leads dialogues will affect the school leadership, communication processes and ultimately the school outcomes. The different techniques and how individual skills are used in conversations can reveal the communicator's pre-understanding, values, knowledge and preparations. Communication becomes a way to understand and conduct leadership and actions within the organization. A communicative leader uses language and communication to motivate different actions [33]. Work motivation refers to the psychological processes that influence individual behavior with respect to the attainment of workplace goals and tasks [36].

3. Methodology

This study adopted quantitative approach grounded by positive paradigm which was appropriate for developing a comprehensive understanding of an issue [37]; [38]. A descriptive research design was used to investigate effects of digital performance appraisal on teachers' performance in the selected Colleges of Education. Study sampled population consisted of 5 principals and 139 tutors from the 5 Colleges of Education in the Ahafo and Bono regions of Ghana. The total number of the population based on the existing data of the said institutions was 231. The choice of the population stemmed from the fact that the colleges in question possess uniform characteristics (regarding appraisal processes, training, etc.) comparable to other Colleges of Education in

Ghana. Interestingly, for fairness of the sample selection, [39] table for sample size determination was adopted. The accepted sample size was 144 which proportionally represented the approved population. The sample used for the study was simple random. The choice of this sampling technique became necessary since it was hoped to pprovide opportunity where everyone in the target population has equal chance of being selected for the study [40]. The main instrument used for the study was closed-ended questionnaire. The selection of the said instrument prevented the respondents from giving divergent views thereby providing valid data lending credence to the study findings. The salient issues the instrument sought to address included training and teachers' performance, communication and teachers' performance and teachers' performance. The said issues inherent in the instrument were to validate how digital performance appraisal correlates with teachers' actual performance thereby acting as a good guidance on making decisions on promotions, transfers and training in the colleges under consideration. Data analysis was done with SPSS version 25.

4. Data Analysis and Results

Table 4.1: Training and Teachers' Performance.

Training	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
The time performance appraisal takes place is well planned	15	10.4	10.4
The appraiser and appraisee understand the appraisal process	18	12.5	22.9
The appraiser and appraisee are adequately trained on appraisal	12	8.3	31.2
The appraiser and appraisee have adequate support	14	9.7	40.9
The appraisal system is easy to use and understood by all staff	10	6.9	47.8
The colleges regularly prepare staff for performance appraisal	16	11.1	58.9
The appraiser and appraisee have enough skills in appraisal process	13	9.0	67.9
The appraiser and appraisee are comfortable with the appraisal system	13	9.0	76.9
The appraiser documents performance before the appraisal period	19	13.4	90.3
The appraisee always appraises him/herself before the appraisal process	14	9.7	100.0
Total	144	100	

Source: Field Data February 2023

From the findings above in table 4.1, majority of the respondents agreed that training influences teachers' performance as indicated by the cumulative percent of 100.0 Greater part of the respondents agreed that the appraisee always appraises him/herself before the appraisal process based on the indicated percent of 9.7 and a

cumulative percent of 99.9. Also, majority of the respondents agreed that the appraiser documents performance before the appraisal period as indicated by a percent of 13.4 and a cumulative percent of 90.3. Again, another appreciable number of the respondents concurred that both the appraiser and appraisee understand the appraisal process and its aim as shown by a percent of 12.5 and a cumulative percent of 22.9. Similarly, an acceptable number of the respondents were in agreement that the colleges regularly prepare the staff for the performance appraisal as shown by a percent of 11.1 and a cumulative percent of 58.9. In addition, an encouraging majority of respondents agreed that the time the performance appraisal takes place is efficient and well planned for as indicated by a percent of 10.4 and a cumulative percent of 10.4 respectively. It was also observed that a good number of respondents whole-heartedly agreed that the appraiser and appraisee have adequate support during the appraisal process as indicated by a percent of 9.7 and a cumulative percent of 40.9. It is interesting to note that the appraiser and appraisee are comfortable with the appraisal system had a percent of 9.0 and cumulative percent of 76.9. Next of appreciation is a welcoming number of the respondents supported that the appraisal system is easy to use and it is understood by all staff as denoted by a percent of 6.9 and a cumulative percent of 47.8. It was equally noted that worth mentioning number of the respondents admitted the appraiser and appraisee have adequate training on the appraisals with resultant percent of 8.3 and 31.2 cumulative percent. The appraiser and appraisee have enough skills in the appraisal process was agreed by acceptable number of respondents as indicated by the percent of 9.0 and a cumulative percent of 67.9

Table 4.2: Communication and Teachers' Performance.

Communication	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
The appraiser communicates time of appraisal a month before	16	11.1	11.1
The appraisal process takes place per the agreed timing	20	13.8	24.9
The appraiser and appraisee prepare a month before the appraisal	18	12.5	37.4
The appraiser always provides feedback to the appraisee	15	10.4	47.8
The appraisee always makes a follow up after getting feedback	19	13.1	60.9
The appraiser ensures the appraisee meets the appraisal targets	18	12.5	73.4
The appraisal system is interactive with appraiser and appraisee	25	17.3	90.7
The required period for staff evaluation is appropriate	13	9.3	100.0
Total	144	100	

Source: Field Data February 2023

In line with the findings in table 4.2, majority of the respondents supported that communication influences teachers' performance as indicated by the cumulative percent of 100.0. Speaking to the said findings, overwhelming number of the respondents concurred that the appraisal process takes place per the agreed timing as indicated by a percent of 13.8 and a cumulative percent of 24.9. Also the appraisal system is interactive with the appraiser and appraisee was agreed with a percent of 17.3 and a cumulative percent of 90.7. Worth admiring

number of the respondents equally agreed that the appraiser always gives feedback to the appraisee as indicated by a percent of 10.4 and a cumulative percent of 47.8 Most of the respondents agreed that the appraiser ensures that the appraisee meets the appraisal targets was indicated by a percent of 12.5 and a cumulative percent of 73.4 Similarly, encouraging number of the respondents attested to the fact that the appraisee always makes a follow up after getting the feedback as shown by a percent of 13.1 and a cumulative percent of 60.9. In addition, appreciable number of the respondents supported that the appraiser communicates the time of appraisal a month before as indicated by a percent of 11.1 and a cumulative percent of 11.1 coincidentally. The findings indicate that there is an appreciable preparation between the appraiser and appraisee by the indication of a percent of 12.5 and a cumulative percent of 37.4. The required time period for employee evaluation was supported by the respondents with a percent of 9.3 and a cumulative percent of 100.0.

Table 4.3: Teachers' Performance.

Performance	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Feedback in performance appraisal is used in decision making	14	9.7	9.7
The appraisal necessitates increase in professional knowledge	20	13.8	23.5
Appraisal helps staff to identify weaknesses and strengths	26	18.1	41.6
Performance appraisal process has made all staff innovative	19	13.2	54.8
The appraisal exercise keeps track of staff performance	35	24.4	92.8
Recording appraisee's performance before appraisal helps appraiser	30	20.8	100.0
Total	144	100	

Source: Field Data February 2023

In response to the findings in table 4.3, lesser number of the respondents accepted the fact that the feedback in the performance had been adequately used in decision making for promotions, salary increment, confirmation, termination and retraining as indicated by a percent of 9.7 and a cumulative percent of 9.7 correspondingly. Moreover, encouraging number of the respondents agreed that the performance appraisal process necessitates staff to increase on professional knowledge as indicated by a percent of 13.8 and a cumulative percent of 23.5 Again, a worth noting number of the respondents granted that performance appraisal helps staff to identify their strengths and weaknesses as represented by a percent of 18.1 and a cumulative percent of 41.6 while the statement that performance appraisal process has made all staff to be innovative and creative was highly agreed by a majority of the respondents as indicated by a percent of 13.2 and a cumulative percent of 54.8. Performance appraisal exercise continuously keeps track of staff performance record over time was accepted by overwhelming majority of the respondents as indicated by a percent of 24.4 and a cumulative percent of 92.8. Lastly, next appreciable majority of the respondents admitted that recording of the appraisee's performance before appraisal process helps the appraiser during the appraisal process as shown by a percent of 20.8 and a

cumulative percent of 100.0.

5. Discussion

This study sought to assess the effects of digital performance appraisal on teachers' performance in 5 selected Colleges of Education in Ahafo and Bono regions of Ghana. Below are the findings of the analysis based on training and communication effects on teachers' performance.

5.1 Training

Addressing the findings of the above subject, a landslide threshold of the respondents agreed that training influences teachers' performance as indicated by the cumulative percent of 100.0. In this vein, greater part of the respondents agreed that the appraisee always appraises him/herself before the appraisal process based on the convincing percent of 99.9 cumulatively. Besides, majority of the respondents testified that performance documentation was done by the appraiser way before the appraisal period was supported with a cumulative percent of 90.3. Again, another appreciable number of the respondents concurred that both the appraiser and appraisee understand the appraisal process and its aim and this was lauded with a cumulative percent of 22.9. Likewise, an acceptable number of the respondents were in agreement that the colleges regularly prepare the staff for the performance appraisal and this was openly accepted with a cumulative percent of 58.9. In addition, an encouraging majority of respondents agreed that the time the performance appraisal takes place is efficient and well planned with a cumulative percent of 10.4. It was also observed that a good number of respondents whole-heartedly agreed that the appraiser and appraisee have adequate support during the appraisal process which was welcomed with a cumulative percent of 40.9. It is interesting to note that the appraiser and appraisee are comfortable with the appraisal system also chalked a cumulative percent of 76.9. Next of admiration is a welcoming number of the respondents supported that the appraisal system is easy to use and it is understood by all staff as shown with a cumulative percent of 47.8. It was equally noted that worth mentioning number of the respondents admitted that the appraiser and appraisee have adequate training on the appraisals with the resultant feedback of 31.2 cumulative percent. The appraiser and appraisee have enough skills in the appraisal process was agreed by acceptable respondents with cumulative percent of 67.9

On the whole, the findings above portray critical aspects in the training of the respondents as far as the matter of appraisal is concerned. The need for more training was evident with some of the respondents highlighting that they were somehow comfortable with the appraisal process and they lack adequate skills for the appraisal process. A lot of training was focused on upgrading and improving technical skills for employees due to emergence of new technology and new structural designs [31]. Buttressing this finding, [32] opined that Performance Evaluation System should be implemented in order to encourage a positive performance and behavior, to satisfy employees' curiosity for them to know how they are performing their duties; as a tool to develop employees and to provide a basis for salary increment, promotions or legal disciplinary actions. It is indeed undeniable that Performance Evaluation System is one of the most important parts of an organization's success

5.2 Communication

Juxtaposing the views of the respondents on this subject, almost all of them supported that communication influences teacher's performance with the glaring cumulative percent of 100.0. Highlighting on the said findings, an improved number of the respondents concurred that the appraisal process is always done in line with the agreed schedule as supported with a cumulative percent of 24.9. Also the appraisal system's interactivity with the appraiser and appraisee was admired with a cumulative percent of 90.7. Worth considering number of the respondents equally agreed that the appraiser always gives feedback to the appraisee as substantiated by a cumulative percent 47.8 In addition, most of the respondents agreed that the appraiser ensures that the appraisee meets the appraisal targets with a cumulative percent of 73.4 Similarly, encouraging number of the respondents attested to the fact that the appraisee always makes a follow up after getting the feedback with a resultant cumulative percent of 60.9. Moreover, appreciable number of the respondents supported that the appraiser communicates the time of appraisal a month before was as well greeted with a cumulative percent of 11.1. The findings indicate that there is an appreciable preparation between the appraiser and appraisee with a cumulative percent of 37.4. The required time period for employee evaluation was supported by the respondents based on a cumulative percent of 100.0.

Summing all these findings together, [33] argues that communication becomes a way to understand and conduct leadership and actions within the organization. A communicative leadership uses language and communication to motivate different actions. Much of the evidence for the effects of motivation focuses on teacher efficacy, their self-perceived capabilities to affect outcomes. There is considerable agreement that teachers' efficacy and skepticism is associated with enthusiasm, job commitment, and instructional behavior.

5.3 Performance

Considering the findings addressing teachers' performance, insignificant number of the respondents accepted the fact that feedback in the performance had been adequately used in decision making for promotions, salary increment, confirmation, termination and retraining as with a cumulative percent of 9.7. In the same vein, an encouraging number of the respondents agreed that the performance appraisal process necessitates staff to increase on professional knowledge with a cumulative percent of 23.5 Again, a worth noting number of the of the respondents granted that performance appraisal helps staff to identify their strengths and weaknesses which was supported with a cumulative percent of 41.6 while the statement that performance appraisal process has made all staff to be innovative and creative was highly agreed by a majority of the respondents with a cumulative percent of 54.8. Performance appraisal exercise continuously keeps track of staff performance record over time was accepted by overwhelming majority with unbeatable cumulative percent of 92.8. Finally, next appreciable majority of the respondents admitted that recording of the appraisee's performance before appraisal process helps the appraiser during the appraisal process was uncontestably backed by a cumulative percent of 100.0. Apparently, piecing all these findings in one bowl, [10] contends that performance appraisal is conducted in order to obtain information that would help the administration and the employer in making the decisions such as need of training, salary increments, motivation, counselling, promotion and transfer of teachers. In addition, [11] in agreement postulates that it helps to identify, measure and develop an individual's performance in

accordance with organizational goals. Performance appraisals are designed to help organizations draw the best out of their employees, by enabling individual employees to perform at optimal levels [13].

5.4 Summary

The first research question was about how training on teachers' digital performance appraisal affects performance of a teacher and it is highly noted that the appraisee always appraises him/herself before the appraisal process and that the appraiser always documents performance before the appraisal period. It was also noted that the appraiser and appraisee felt they understand the appraisal process and that both the appraiser and appraisee had adequate support as they carry forth with the performance appraisal of the teacher. The performance appraisal was well planned in advance and the colleges regularly prepare its staff for the performance appraisal exercise. The majority of the respondents agreed that the appraiser and the appraisee had a good understanding of the appraisal process and its aim. It was however noted that more needed to be done to ensure the appraisal system is easy to use and be understood by all staff members; also the appraisal system should be adjusted to make the appraiser and appraisee comfortable with it during the appraisal period in order to remove tension. The appraiser and the appraisee should be adequately trained and more skills impacted in them on how to use the appraisal system and any changes done should be communicated well and in advance. The performance appraisal has some challenges as quiet number of the respondents indicated that they are somehow comfortable in the appraisal process.

The second research question was on how communication on teachers' digital performance appraisal influences teachers' performance. The majority of the respondents agreed that communication was done in good time in line with the appraisal schedule, which was done by the appraiser communicating the dates the appraisal was to take place a month before. Appreciable number of the respondents agreed that the appraisee and the appraiser prepare for the appraisal process a month before performance appraisal exercise was conducted. Most of the respondents agreed that the appraisal system was open and interactive with both the appraiser and the appraisee. It was also noted that the appraiser always ensures that the appraisee meets the appraisal targets by highlighting the gaps to the appraisee. Also the appraiser always provides regular feedback to the appraisee after carrying out the appraisal, thereby enabling the appraisee to always make a follow up after getting the appraisal feedback by working on the weak areas. Another encouraging number of the respondents agreed that the appraiser always provides feedback to the appraisee which should be used in ensuring promotions are done accurately per merit and performance of the teachers. A concern was raised on the period for employee evaluation which sometimes not to the best of practice.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that teachers' digital performance appraisal processes are phenomenal in determining the performance of the teacher. The appraiser and appraisee need to be in collaboration in order to ensure the process is accurately undertaken and to enable better performance of teachers. The study also concludes that communication is very central on how the teachers' appraisal is conducted and perceived. According to the study, communication has the highest influence on the appraisal of the teachers which also affects the

performance of the teacher. Without communication the appraisal process cannot be fruitful. The study has also uncovered that teachers' appraisal had a great influence towards how teachers perform thus it is important that the process is simplified to ensure better understanding. The appraisal system should be made easier and user friendly for all teachers, both the appraiser and the appraisee. This study recommends that feedback from the teachers' appraisal be used to promote teachers in line with their ranking on the appraisals since the main aim of the feedback got from appraisals will be used for decision making such as promotion of performing teachers to desired ranks, salary increment cum promotion from one job group to another, confirmation of permanent employment, termination of employment and retraining of teachers in their weak areas for better performance. Performance appraisal process should be used in a way that will necessitate and encourage teachers to increase on their professional knowledge. It should be able to bring out the gaps that hinder teachers' performance and encourage the teachers in finding solutions to the problems encountered thereby improving their performance. Also, performance appraisals should be used in a way that will encourage the teachers to be more innovative and creative while teaching rather than discouraging them in their performance.

Performance appraisals should be made simpler and easier to be used for both the appraiser and the appraisee to avoid wastage of time thereby improving on the teachers' performance. Performance appraisals should also be made user friendly to both the appraiser and the appraisee so that they become comfortable in using them; this will enable both the appraiser and the appraisee to execute performance appraisals as a duty but not for formality hence becoming positive towards the appraisal process. Performance appraisals should be made a continuous process where the employees record their achievements over a period of time. This will enable the employer to get the right feedback from the employees and also enable the period of employee evaluation to be appropriate. The employer, the administrators and the parents should also come up with ways of motivating teachers in order to increase their performance. It is the duty of every employer to motivate his/her employees in order to maximize their performance. An improvement in communication should be done to ensure that the process helps the teachers perform better. Both means of communication and communication skills should be improved on. Means of communication should be made efficient since we are now in the digital era. In order to avoid the last minute rush to beat deadlines and to avoid wastage of time, time management becomes key concern in performance appraisals. Administrators should be made to undergo short courses on management and leadership in order to better their leadership skills and their communication skills to minimize collisions at the places of work thus foster unity thereby improving on the teachers' performance. Great emphasis should be placed on training the teachers regarding the use of the appraisal systems and on how to go about the appraisal process. More importance should also be laid on the reasons and aims of performance appraisals in order to deal with the teachers' negative attitude on appraisals; this will make them understand the role of performance appraisals in order to embrace the system without difficulty. The appraisal system should be made open to both the appraiser and the appraisee and be simplified. The appraisal system should also be reviewed by increasing the database to ensure that all teachers can access the system at the same time without any crisis from network challenges since semester remarks are filled by the end of the semester within a stipulated deadline. This will ensure that the employees will be able to fill the appraisals online and get the feedback soonest possible hence promote the teachers' esteem and this will go a long way to increase the teachers' performance.

7. Limitation

This study was carried out in only 5 Colleges of Education in Ghana and as such, its findings cannot be generalised across all Colleges of Education here and elsewhere where differences in digital performance appraisal systems persist. Future researchers should extend the population base to cover more colleges so that more comprehensive and conclusive data can be drawn to see the effect of problem in a broader perspective.

Authorship Contribution

Benjamin Baiden: Manuscript writing, editing and data analysis

Emmanuel Appiah Dankwah: Coding of data for analysis and proof reading

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