

Perceptions of Fairness and Transparency in Performance Evaluation Systems among Staff of Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education and Legal Studies Daura

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Abstract

This study aimed to assess perceptions of fairness and transparency in staff performance evaluation systems among Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education and Legal Studies Daura, Katsina State. The objectives were to assess perceived fairness and evaluate perceived transparency. A survey research design was employed, with a population of 231 academic and non-academic staff. A sample of 148 participants (64 academics, and 84 non-academic) was selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected through a Staff Questionnaire (SQ) with a reliability index of 0.70 and consisting of four sections: demographics, staff performance, perceived fairness, and perceived transparency. Data analysis methods included descriptive statistics and inferential analysis. Findings revealed a weak negative correlation between perceived fairness and staff performance ($r = -.126$, $p = .132$, $N = 144$) and also indicated a moderate positive correlation between perceived transparency and staff performance ($r = .553$, $p < .001$). The study concluded that perceived fairness and transparency in staff evaluation system has yielded intriguing results with significant implications for institutional management and human resource practices. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the college administration prioritize increasing transparency and improving fairness in their performance evaluation process among others.

Keywords: Evaluation, Fairness, Performance, Perception and Transparency.

Introduction

Performance evaluation systems in educational institutions have garnered significant attention globally, with a particular focus on fairness and transparency. These systems play a crucial role in assessing staff performance, guiding professional development, and informing administrative decisions. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on ensuring that

these evaluations are perceived as fair and transparent by the staff being evaluated (Johnson et al., 2023). This trend is observed across various educational institutions worldwide, including Colleges of Education.

On a global scale, the importance of fairness and transparency in performance evaluations has been recognized as a key factor in maintaining staff morale and productivity. A study by Zhen-qi and Zhang (2021) found that institutions with perceived fair and transparent evaluation systems reported higher levels of job satisfaction and lower turnover rates among staff members. This underscores the significance of these factors in creating a positive work environment and retaining valuable human resources. In the context of Nigeria educational system, the Nigerian Commission for Colleges of Education has emphasized the importance of fair evaluation systems in enhancing the overall quality of education provided by these institutions (Adebayo & Oluwatoyin, 2024).

The concept of fairness in performance evaluation encompasses several dimensions, including procedural fairness, distributive fairness, and interactional fairness. Procedural fairness refers to the perceived fairness of the methods and procedures used in the evaluation process. This includes aspects such as consistency in application, opportunity for voice, and absence of bias (Choi & Park, 2021). Distributive fairness, on the other hand, relates to the perceived fairness of the outcomes or rewards resulting from the evaluation. This dimension considers whether staff members feel that the rewards or consequences of their performance evaluations are commensurate with their efforts and achievements. Interactional fairness, the third dimension, focuses on the quality of interpersonal treatment received during the evaluation process. This includes aspects such as respect, dignity, and clear communication of expectations and feedback (Anderson et. al., 2024). These three dimensions of fairness are interconnected and collectively contribute to the overall perception of fairness in performance evaluation systems.

Transparency, as a key variable in this context, refers to the openness and clarity of the evaluation process. It encompasses several sub-variables including clarity of evaluation criteria, accessibility of evaluation procedures, and timely communication of results. Transparency in performance evaluation systems ensures that staff members understand how they are being evaluated and can trust the process (Chen et al., 2022). The interrelationship between fairness and transparency in performance evaluation systems is significant and multifaceted.

Transparency often serves as a prerequisite for perceived fairness, as clear and open processes are more likely to be viewed as equitable. Conversely, fair processes contribute to the perception of transparency, as they demonstrate a commitment to openness and objectivity (Kim, & Cho, 2021).

In the context of Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education and Legal Studies in Daura, Katsina State, understanding the perceptions of fairness and transparency in performance evaluation systems among staff is crucial. The institution, like many others in Nigeria, faces the challenge of implementing evaluation systems that are both effective and perceived as fair by its staff members. The perception of fairness in performance evaluations can significantly impact staff motivation, job satisfaction, and overall organizational commitment. When staff members believe that their performance is being evaluated fairly, they are more likely to engage positively with the process and use the feedback constructively for their professional development (Cheng & Hackett, 2024).

Theories that support this study are the Organizational Justice Theory and the Expectancy Theory. The Organizational Justice Theory, as described by Greenberg (1987) and further developed by Colquitt et al. (2001), provides a framework for understanding how individuals perceive fairness in organizational contexts. This theory is particularly relevant to the study of fairness perceptions in performance evaluation systems (Adamu & Umar, 2024). The Expectancy Theory, proposed by Vroom (1964), suggests that individuals are motivated to perform based on their expectations of outcomes. In the context of performance evaluations, this theory helps explain how staff members' perceptions of fairness and transparency can influence their motivation and performance (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2023).

The study of perceptions of fairness and transparency in performance evaluation systems among staff of Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education and Legal Studies is crucial for understanding and improving the effectiveness of these systems. By examining these perceptions, the institution can work towards creating evaluation processes that are not only effective but also perceived as fair and transparent by its staff, ultimately contributing to a more positive and productive educational environment.

The perception of fairness and transparency in performance evaluation systems among staff at Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education and Legal Studies in Daura, Katsina State, has become a critical issue affecting staff morale, productivity, and overall institutional

effectiveness. This study aims to investigate the factors influencing these perceptions and identify potential solutions to enhance the fairness and transparency of the evaluation process.

A significant problem affecting fairness and transparency in performance evaluation systems at Yusuf Bala Usman College is the lack of clear and standardized evaluation criteria. Staff members often express confusion and frustration regarding the metrics used to assess their performance, leading to perceptions of bias and inconsistency. This issue can be addressed by developing and communicating a comprehensive set of evaluation criteria that align with the institution's goals and objectives. By involving staff in the development process and ensuring that these criteria are consistently applied across all departments, the college can enhance the perceived fairness of the evaluation system (Iqbal et al., 2021).

Limited feedback and communication during the evaluation process may raise an alarm regarding the fair and transparency of the staff performance evaluation. Many staff members report feeling disconnected from their evaluators and lacking meaningful insights into their performance. To address this issue, the college can implement a more frequent and structured feedback system, incorporating regular check-ins and progress reviews throughout the year. This approach can foster open dialogue between staff and evaluators, allowing for timely adjustments and improvements. By prioritizing transparent communication, the institution can build trust and enhance the perceived fairness of the evaluation process (Sharma & Sharma, 2022).

The absence of proper training for evaluators is a third issue affecting the fairness and transparency of performance evaluations at the college. Evaluators may lack the necessary skills to conduct objective assessments, leading to inconsistencies and potential biases in their evaluations. To address this problem, the institution should invest in comprehensive training programs for all evaluators, focusing on objective assessment techniques, bias awareness, and effective feedback delivery. By ensuring that evaluators are well-equipped to perform their roles, the college can improve the consistency and fairness of the evaluation process (Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020).

Lack of accountability in the evaluation system can result to staff members to feel that the results of their evaluations have little impact on their career progression or institutional decision-making processes. By demonstrating that evaluation results have meaningful consequences, the institution can enhance staff engagement in the process and improve

perceptions of its fairness and relevance (Johari & Yahya, 2023). Limited use of technology in the evaluation process can hinder transparency and efficiency. Many staff members report difficulties in accessing their evaluation records or tracking their progress over time. By leveraging technology to streamline the evaluation process and increase accessibility, the institution can enhance transparency and build trust among staff members (Nurdiansyah et al., 2024).

By implementing clear evaluation criteria, enhancing communication and feedback, providing proper training for evaluators, establishing accountability measures, and leveraging technology, the institution can create a more effective and trusted evaluation process. These improvements will not only benefit individual staff members but also contribute to the overall success and growth of the college.

In this study, the research sought to assess the perceived fairness and transparency of the performance evaluation system among staff at Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education and Legal Studies Daura, Katsina State. The study also guided by a research question on how do staff perceived fairness and transparency of the current performance evaluation system at Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education and Legal Studies Daura, Katsina State? The research hypotheses were formulated as there is a significant relationship between perceived fairness and transparency of the performance evaluation system and staff performance in the institution.

Methodology

The study employed a survey research design. The design is chosen to systematically collect quantitative data from a representative sample of the college staff, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of their views and experiences regarding the performance evaluation process. The choice of a survey research design for this study is appropriate to collect data on attitudes, opinions, and perceptions from a large group of individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The population for this study consisted of 231 academics and non-academic staff members from Yusuf Bala Usman College of Education and Legal Studies Daura, Katsina State. This population encompasses the entire workforce of the institution, including both teaching and administrative personnel. By including both academic and non-academic staff, the study provides a holistic view of perceptions across different roles within the institution, enhancing the breadth and depth of this findings. The sample size of 148 (64 academic staff

and 84 non-academic) in this study was determined using Research Advisory (2006) at 95% confidence level in a 5% margin of error. The sample size represents approximately 62% of the total population, which is a substantial proportion that should capture the diversity of opinions and experience within the staff. Stratified random sampling technique was employed to select the respondents based on specific characteristics. This ensures that each subgroup is proportionally represented in the sample.

For this study, a Staff Questionnaire (SQ) was utilized as the primary instrument for data collection. This instrument is suitable for gathering information from both academic and non-academic staff members. The SQ was designed by the researchers to collect relevant data from the participants. The instrument consists of four sections namely sections A, B, C, and D. Section A consists of the respondents' demographic information (Roles, Gender, and Years of experience), Section B consists of Likert-scale statements to assess staff performance. The section C of the instrument consists of statements focusing on the perceived fairness of evaluation performance process. While the section D part of the SQ contained statements to explore the perceived transparency of performance evaluation process.

Pilot study was conducted using 20 academic staff and 10 non-academic staff members in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument. The pilot study was conducted among members of other tertiary institution that are not part of the study area. Therefore, the instrument was validated by 2 experts, one from the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling while the other one is an educational measurement and evaluation expert. The reliability index of the instrument obtained was 0.70. The data collected was analyzed using Spearman Correlation Formula for hypotheses one and two while hypothesis three was analyzed using linear regression formula at 0.05 significance level with SPSS 27.0 version.

Results

Table 1: Pearson correlation analysis between fairness and staff performance in evaluation system.

variables	N	Mean	SD	Corr.	Sig.
Fairness	148	38.347	5.7065		
Staff Performance	148	2.904		-.126	.133

In the Table 1, the result revealed a weak negative correlation between perceived fairness and staff performance ($r = -.126$, $p = .133$, $N = 144$). However, this relationship is not statistically significant as the p -value (.133) is greater than the alpha level of .05. therefore, the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the staff perceived fairness and staff performance is rejected. The implication of this finding is that the perceived fairness of the evaluation system may not be a crucial factor influencing staff performance.

Table 2: Pearson correlation analysis between transparency and staff performance in evaluation system.

variables	N	Mean	SD	Corr.	Sig.
Transparency	148	40.56	2.491	.553	.000
Staff Performance	148	42.13	2.904		

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 2 above indicated a moderate positive correlation between perceived transparency and staff performance ($r = .553$, $p < .001$, $N = 144$). This relationship is statistically significant as the p -value is less than .001, which is well below the alpha level of .05. Thus, the alternate hypothesis of there is significant relationship is accepted. The implication of the result is that increased transparency in the evaluation process is associated with improved staff performance.

Discussion of Findings

In Table 1, the weak negative correlation between perceived fairness and staff performance contradicts the findings of Thurston and McNall (2020) and Dusteroff et al (2024). These earlier studies found positive association between fairness perceptions and staff outcomes job satisfaction, organizational commitment relationship. The current study's non-significant relationship suggests that the impact of perceived fairness on staff performance may be more complex or context-dependent than previously thought. This discrepancy highlights the need for further research to understand the factors that may moderate the relationship between fairness perceptions and performance.

In the Table 2, moderate positive correlation between perceived transparency and staff performance aligns well with the findings of Sharma et al (2016). Their study emphasized the

importance of transparency in evaluation criteria and processes, which led to higher levels of staff trust and satisfaction. The current study's statistically significant positive relationship between transparency and performance supports this earlier research, reinforcing the importance of clear communication and detailed feedback in performance management systems. This consistency across studies underscores the crucial role of transparency in fostering positive staff outcomes.

Conclusion

The research findings present a complex picture of the relationship among perceived fairness, transparency and staff performance. While transparency in performance evaluation systems appears to have a positive impact on staff performance, the relationship between fairness and staff performance is less strength forward and potentially counter intuitive.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study conducted, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. It is recommended that the college administration prioritize increasing transparency in their performance evaluation processes through collaborating with the academic affairs office to develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy in order to enhance transparency.
2. The college management board, in conjunction with the staff union representatives, should establish a task force to review and refine the concept of fairness in performance evaluation.

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