

# PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND PERFORMANCE OF THE NIGERIAN CIVIL SERVICE IN FIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF LAGOS STATE

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## **Abstract**

This paper assesses the role of performance appraisal on the performance of the Nigerian civil service. The poor performance of the civil service in rendering qualitative service to citizenry was the problem that justified the need for the study. Sample of 265 respondents participated in the survey and they were selected using a simple random sampling technique. Multiple regression technique was used for the test of the hypotheses. The study found that objective assessment does not have significant effect on performance of the civil service, while it was found that feedback mechanism has significant effect on the performance of the civil service. The study recommends that for improved performance of the service, there is need to ensure that employees are provided timely feedback on their performance appraisal in the service. The basis for promotion or upgraded should be made clear and all should be transparent, as it affects employees' performance, which in turns affects the civil service performance.

**Keywords:** Appraisal, Civil service, Employees, Performance and Nigeria

**JEL classification:** M1, J5

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The relevance of employees in the performance of public service has been acknowledged globally. Public servants are a fundamental pillar in the accomplishment of government plans and activities, as such; their overall behaviour to work forms a major factor that demands continuous assessment. Performance appraisal is one of the fundamental tools that have been adopted in measuring and evaluating the performance of employee in an organization (Laschnau, 2015). The need to maintain a system that helps in decision making on critical issues such as

promotion, remuneration and training that will contribute to the organizational growth and achieve its objectives (Jose, 2011).

Performance appraisal system has a substantial impact on every aspect of an organization (Eneanya, 2013). Moreover, Obi (2016) contends that performance appraisal is amongst the most complicated issues in managing human resource. This is because the success of an employee in an organization relies heavily on the nature of appraisal system that is inherent in the organization. Hunnes, Kvaloy and Mohn (2012) opine that the basis of performance appraisal is to institute a compensation system that improves the contribution of managers and employees towards the attainment of organizations goal and objectives.

Scholars have debated on the best form in conducting performance appraisals (Daoanis, 2012; Brumbach, 2003; Dogbe, 2011), however, it seems to be commonly accepted that it must be continuous, though, annually. This is because the yearly performance appraisal allows organization's management to measure and check whether the standards, aspirations and goals, assigned responsibilities and tasks are accomplished by the employee. Performance appraisal is very essential within an organization as it assist in employees' assessment in accordance to their assigned jobs so as to ensure it is performed based on the established standard set by the organization (Armstrong, 2001). In some cases, the appraisal forms a critical basis for their compensation, as the overall productivity, quality of output and support contributes to ensuring that organizations goals, plans and strategy are effective.

Further, Singh, Kochar and Yuksel (2010) state that modern performance appraisal is the arrangement of interaction, usually done annually between superior and subordinate mostly in the form of periodic interview. They further stated the broad discussion deals with annual or semi-annual SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of employee performance. Moreover, many organizations used performance appraisal system to reward their employees in form of monetary and non-monetary form, thus, it is not restricted for been a human resource management instrument for developing employees (Mathew & Johnson, 2015).

Conversely, despite all the benefits performance appraisals encompass, it has negative consequences on employees. If the employees are discriminated about their performance because of the appraiser's biases, prejudices and stereotypical attitude, they can suffer overwhelming consequences (Selvarajan, Singh & Solansky, 2018). Singh and Rana (2013) identified awareness of existing performance appraisal, significance of existing performance appraisal system, fairness in appraisal, views towards ratter and performance-based payment practices as dimensions of performance appraisal.

Whereas, Eneanya, (2013) identified fair pay system, promotion, clarity of roles and feedback as proxies of performance appraisal. However, in this paper we

would concentrate more objective assessment system and feedback. This is because this factors best explains the problem affecting the performance in the Nigerian civil service. Objective assessment system provides for an appraisal system that is performance based that allows for assessing the employees in line with the work done over a period (Alo, 1999).

The performance-based system allows to determine the actual contribution of the employees, as it objectively captures the roles employees have contributed in the organization in the financial year (Selvarajan et al., 2018). The feedback is another measure of appraisal system that encourages organization to provide employees with a perspective on their role and the shared opinion about the inputs by the employees over a period. Mathew and Johnson, (2015) stated that whether the objective or the feedback system, it is critical that organization should tailor the appraisal to the performance of the organization.

There are varying perspectives on what accounts for performance in the civil service (Adegoroye, 2015). However, scholars have agreed that performance in the civil service is the ability of the service to achieve the purpose for the establishment of the service (Cornelius & Sunday, 2016). Most studies on the performance of civil service have acknowledged that efficiency of the service to meet its obligation is a major criterion to adjudge their performance (Fatile&Adejuwon, 2010). In this study, efficiency is used to measure performance in the civil service.

The local government system has been acknowledged to be faced with weak appraisal system, which is affecting the performance of the local governments. There are reported cases of employees' high turnover (Adegoroye, 2015). There is also the challenge of fair pay system and this have been said to be because the local government does not have a good appraisal system that allows them adjudge efforts of employees and compensate them appropriately. Also, it has been observed that there are limited studies that have assessed the influence of performance appraisal system on performance of local government in Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that we sought to assess the influence of performance appraisal system on performance of local government in Nigeria.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical and Hypotheses Development**

Social exchange theory was adopted to underpin the study and the theory has its root from sociology and social psychology. George Homans, John Thibaut, Harold Kelly and Peter Blau were the researchers behind the development of this theory (Emerson, 1976). This theory highlights individuals and organizations exchange relationships. Therefore, major assumption of the theory is anchored on the fact that the more advantageous the transaction from either the person's perspective, the more committed he or she is to the organization. (Holthausen, 2013).

The theory proposes that individual behaviour in human relationship is inspired by the wish to maximize profits and minimize losses, just as it is related to human behaviors in the marketplace (Miles, 2012). The theory assumes that all human relationships are about cost and rewards, and individuals assess the value of their relationship and decide on whether to continue with it or not (Kim, 2016). It also suggests that rewards gained in the social exchange are the motivating factor as to why individuals are in exchange relationship (Holthausen, 2013). According to the hypothesis, people in different situations adopt behaviors that maximize the chances of achieving their own personality.

Two people engage in social interaction when any of them delivers certain value to another in return for incentives from another. (Holthausen, 2013). Consequently, Miles (2012) opined that for behaviors to be considered as exchange, it must be oriented towards goals that are reached in interaction with others. This implies that means must be sought in connection to achieving these goals. Therefore, the satisfaction people will derive from a given relationship is what determines their choices about social interactions (Kim, 2016).

Kim (2016) added that though rewards and costs and the contents of interaction may differ from setting to setting, the exchange perspective views social interaction as the process by which individual actors conjointly pursue an activity that is self-profiting for each of them. However, Blaus (1964) cited in Cropanzano (2005) claimed that the social exchange advantages may not have a precise value in favor of a finite quantifiable means of payment.

Nonetheless, Kim (2016) critique gives the impression that describes people as individualistic and reward-seeking. In addition, the theory does not give proper attention to differences in the cultural context and cross-cultural disparities issues in relation to the norms and rules regulating social exchange relations. The application of the theory to this study is hinged on the assumption that when employees feels that leaders in the local government are willing to appraise them appropriately, they would be willing to work more towards actualization of organizational goals and objectives.

### **Performance Appraisal**

Performance refers to the result presented after an organization completes a joint of task, and also the contribution made to that organization by staff, which is a kind of objective phenomenon and can be comprehensively predicted and evaluated in aspects of skills, opportunity, motivation, environment etc.

According to Fakhimi and Raisy (2013) performance appraisal is a reference for moral and financial appreciation of employees and because of development of continuous communication between employees and the organization, it improves employees' performance. Thus, employees' activities, performance and outcomes are organization's expectation that performance appraisal process assists in explaining them.

Performance appraisal is defined by Malik and Aslam (2013) as a formal process that allows for determining the extent organization's current employees have been able to manage their job in line with the organizations predefined criteria. It is the degree to which an organization fulfils its pre-agreed set objectives''. Performance appraisal evaluates every employee's real performance with the assigned job against the organization's performance standards (Dessler, 2013). Therefore, recognizing the appraisal system and the benefits the organizations supposed to achieve from using it. Performance appraisal is, therefore, a significant effort that search for better, right, and cost-efficient process of measuring employee's work performance and motivation (Dilawari, 2015).

Kemboi (2015) stated that the systematic examination of work performance and understanding of a person's talents for future success is known as performance appraisal. As a result, the supervisor does the process of performance appraisal to determine the employee's income in comparison with the organization's set standard and objectives. The supervisor examines the issues in relation to the employee's under or over performance. The plan for identifying employees training and development needs are determined by performance appraisal (Kemboi, 2015). It is then the foundation of human resource development (Kumari, 2013). However, Daoanis (2012) critiqued human resource professionals for ignoring the use of psychometric methods in performance appraisal, they thus assert that disparity exist between theory and practice (in appraising employee).

Eisalou (2014) assert that performance appraisal as a continuing method where employee's behaviour and results are supervised and assessed in an organization. It is a recurring evaluation that is done either monthly or quarterly (but usually yearly) where the standard and efficiency of accomplished task of an employee is measured. Ibeogu and Ozturen (2015) stated that performance appraisal is done yearly to ascertain the total contribution of employee to the organization's performance. Though, long time ago, traits, deficiencies and abilities were given much emphasis by appraisal systems. But now, the result of employee – organization relations, contemporary appraisal concept stress more on jointly set goals with superior, and on current performance and future objectives (Kumari, 2013). Usually, employee work hard in accomplishing the objective they take part in outlining them.

Daoanis (2012) described performance appraisal as a procedure for assessing employee's achievement for a period of not more than a year. The employee is being assigned a critical task to perform, and the superior would evaluate how best it is performed. Eisalou (2014) defined performance appraisal to incorporate a rater-ratee conversation and even the achievement evidence needed by the standardized assessment method

The appraisal is done after the employee undergone an induction course, and acquired the necessary training, then regularly, (usually a year) evaluation of performance is carried out (Dhas, Joseph & Krishnan, 2013). It is further described as the procedure used by an organization to evaluate the performance and

advancement of their employees, and to measure the entire organizational status (Dhas et al., 2013). Conversely, Obi (2016) argued that performance appraisal is amongst the complicated issues in human resource management because the total success of employees in an organization relies heavily on the result of the appraisal system.

### **Dimensions of Performance Appraisal System**

Human resource issues within an organization are interrelated to performance appraisal system, and therefore its dimensions can influence a significant part of the system usage irrespective of its purpose. Performance appraisal has progressively considered as a vital instrument for efficiently controlling the performance of employees in an organization (Salvarajan, Singh & Solansky, 2018). Therefore, it is pertinent to ascertain the factors that influence the design of the appraisal system. Furthermore, performance appraisal can boost employee and organization performance in such areas of productivity and or customer services (Hunnes, Kvaløy & Mohn, 2012). Chen (2011) described the information generated during performance appraisal process as the basis for recruitment and selection, staff training and development, and for compensating employee's performance to motivate them for higher efficiency in the organization.

### **Objective assessment practice**

Performance appraisal system that is effectively linked with objective assessment practices can influence the performance of the organization. Objective assessment is also known as performance-based system. This involves a system that takes an objective analysis of the effort of employees that commiserate with the payment over a period (Hunnes et al., 2012). Hanley and Nguyen (2005) described performance-based system as involving an assessment based on the contribution of individuals in achieving the overall goal of the organization over a period.

Salvarajan et al., (2013) opined that objective assessment supports a performance-related pay is a catch-all phrase for compensation packages in which rewards are given depending on the performance of a person (on that pay) or a team of people (team achievement pay) (team achievement reward). Therefore, a pay scheme that is associated to employee's performance and implemented through appraisal system could use as administrative purpose of performance appraisal, and it is regarded as simple and more standardized (Bayo-Moriones, Galdon-Sanchez & Martinez-de-Morentin, 2019).

Further, they maintained that it is helpful to build uniform framework for determining employees whenever the HR manages compensation professional, since they have a stronger insight of how overall salary is calculated. That is why organizations are emphasizing more on performance-based payment (Hanley & Nguyen, 2005). Singh and Rana (2013) in their study asserted that performance-based payment practices have an impact on the organizational commitment.

### **Feedback practices**

Direct communication between supervisor and employee is one of the significant aspects of performance appraisal process. Samuel (2013) opined that these responses are used as a communication mechanism to help the evaluator and the individual under assessment build a stronger interaction and knowledge of the role requirements. Therefore, employee's feedback is essential for the success of the appraisal process (Paul, Olumuyiwa & Esther, 2015) and it enhances the organization efficiency and assists in decision making process (Obi, 2016).

However, the approval of the method determines the effectiveness of the feedback. The source of the feedback must be regarded as honest, authentic, dependable, unbiased, and adequately driven by the recipient. Paul et al., (2015) opined that there should be a workflow for tracking of feedback sessions. They further affirmed that through feedback, remedial steps can be taken quickly to correct the mistake spotted to minimize the company's loss.

Moreover, Bayo-Moriones et al., (2019) believed that continues formal and informal performance feedback is essential for an effectual appraisal system. Feedback is believed to be the effectiveness of appraisal procedure when meetings between supervisor and workers are taken place on performance and developmental (Okoth, 2016).

Additionally, Paul et al., (2015) opined that an assessment program enables organizations to evaluate and remark on existing employee, along with make suggestions for improving apparent flaws. Therefore, Okoth, (2016) defined feedback as the information reflecting past performance and results given by the manager to the employee. Kisang and Kirai (2016) described feedback as a communication instrument intended to promote and enhanced relationship and understanding of the anticipated work between the appraiser and the individual employee under the review process. Thus, appropriate and accurate feedback should be provided to employees with optimistic method (Obi, 2016).

Consequently, it is worthy to note that feedback is of immense importance to the employees and its' organization, as it allows for a sufficient and sustaining process of communication that allows the employees know the desire of the organization and work within that timeline (Eisalou, 2014). Paul et al., (2015) assert that leadership must constantly remind people of their importance, ideas, and ability, praise employees for a sense of accomplishment, and establish a legacy of accessible and legitimate criticism in order for the organization to survive.

### **Civil service performance**

Performance in the public service has been an issue of debate in public administration literature. This is because it defines the essence of managing government activities and the entire process of governance, since public service is about meeting the needs of citizenry. There have been varying views on what constitute performance in the public service, however, what is generally agreed on

is performance in the public service is the excellent delivery of service to the public over a period of time (Magbadelo, 2016). Ogunrotifa (2012) stated that civil service performance entails the efficiency, productivity and effectiveness in delivering qualitative service to members of the public. It defines the expectations of the populace in terms of service delivery to members of the public most especially in both the paid and free services.

In the views of Adebayo (2004) civil service performance measures create the link between the government's efficiency and the expectations of the members of the society. Similarly, Adegoroye (2015) held that civil service performance can be measure in two broad views, which are the extent of the efficiency and the productivity in the delivery of the services. Productivity entails the input and output ratio, which is a function of the perception of the populace on how the resources of government have yielded greater value for the country.

Efficiency on the other hand involves the quality and timely delivery of services in line with the mandate of the government agency. Cornelius and Sunday, (2016) held that the efficiency comprises of mostly both quantified and unquantified measures on the position of the government agency relatively on its mandate to service delivery to members of the public. Adebayo (2004) stated that the perception of members of the public is a major way to assess the performance of the public service, as the measure of performance that takes peoples opinion of performance over a period provides an easy way to measure efficiency.

In this study, efficiency was adopted based on the need to cover the perception of the people on what they think have been the performance of the civil service over a period. This is imminent as access to financial data of the public service would be difficult since they are not a profit-making organization but designed to contribute towards delivering excellent service to members of the public.

### **Relationship between objective assessment system and efficiency of civil service in Nigeria**

Thomas and Nagalingappa (2012) study focused on the objective assessment of employees' appraisal system in the organizations. Questionnaire was used to collect the data that was used for analysis. T-test was used for the analysis of the data. The study found that objective assessment affects employees' performance in the organization. However, the study was focused on manufacturing, education, transportation, IT and ITES sectors which differs from this study that focus on banking industry.

In another study, Wanjiru (2012) assessed objective performance appraisal practices systems. The study used banks and was conducted in Kenya. The study adopted cross-sectional survey design and the data collected was the use of a face to face interview. Analysis of the data was focused on content analysis. The result found that objective assessment affects the banks employees' performance. The



sample size was relatively small, and as such, there is need for another study with higher sample size.

The findings from the study of Isimoya, Olajide and Onafalujo (2018), indicates that objective assessment has effect on the extent of commitment. The study used insurance firms. Sample of 217 respondents provided useful responses that were analyzed using correlational analysis. The findings indicate that objective assessment affects insurance firms' performance and that supervisor's support was useful in ensuring that organizational commitment is sustained and developed in the organization. However, senior staffs were the only respondents in the study, junior staff need to be included in the study.

Similarly, Kuvass (2011) examined the employee attitudes and behaviors among knowledge works under different forms of pay administration and pay levels. The study used questionnaire randomly on a 5-point Likert scale to a total of 577 employees from unit A and B for data collection and analyzed using ANOVA. The findings support previous studies that also showed that objective assessment was useful towards the improvement and administration of local government in the country. However, the study was conducted in large multinationals of Norway, thus, the result could not be applied in Nigerian context. Hence, we propose that:

***H<sub>1</sub>: Objective assessment system has effect on the efficiency of civil service in Nigeria***

### **Relationship between feedback and efficiency of civil service in Nigeria**

In the study of Kuvass (2011) the emphases were on examining the link between performance appraisal and employee outcomes. The study used a cross-sectional survey of 803 employees from three organizations. The study measures perceived helpfulness, perceived regular feedback and work performance and affective organizational commitment through questionnaire and analyzed in different phases using factor analysis, multiple regression analysis and hierarchical moderated regression.

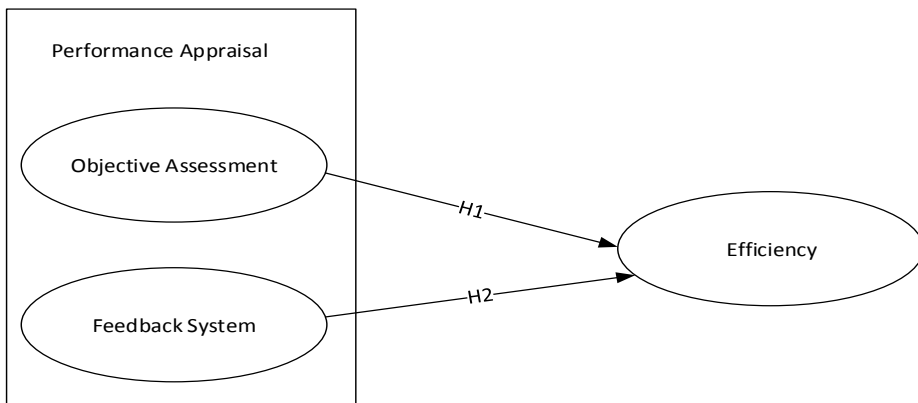
Kaymaz (2011) examined the effect of performance feedback on individual based reflections and the effect on motivation. Data was gathered through questionnaire and face-to-face interviews and were analyzed using multi-linear regression analysis. The result indicated that the only reducing performance ambiguity have positive effect on motivation.

Choi et al., (2018) examined the effects of feedback mechanisms relatively on emotion and work performance of students. 120 undergraduate and graduate students took active part in the survey. The study was carried out in Korea and random sampling was adopted. Outcome from the study shows feedback supports improved positive emotions from the students towards their work performance. The study was conducted using university students; therefore, the result cannot be applied in an organization.

Marthouret and Sigvardsson (2016) examined how quick feedback from the manager to the employees can affect their behaviour, motivation and ultimately influence their performance. The study used inductive and qualitative approach in Swedish insurance company and collected data through interview and analyzed using grounded theory. The findings show that feedback is essential to the employees, as allows for them to know what the organization expects from them and the extent, they have been able to satisfy this request.

Velema (2015) conducted a study aimed to examine how the leaders give feedback to their followers influence the team effectiveness. Data was obtained from video-recorded regular staff meetings and follower surveys and analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The finding shows that there is a positive relationship between both negative and positive feedback on the team effectiveness. Hence, we propose that:

***H<sub>2</sub>: Feedback appraisal system has effect on the efficiency of civil service in Nigeria***



**Figure 1:** Theoretical diagram showing the link between performance appraisal and civil service performance in Nigeria

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross sectional survey design. Five local governments in Lagos state were selected and samples of 265 employees were selected randomly. The choice of the selection was based on the need to cover a good number of employees in the study. Primary data was used for the collection of data for the study. The method employed in gathering data for this research is a questionnaire. It is justified on the fact that questionnaire serves as the foundation for both empirical and behavioral research. 5 point Likert scale instrument ranging from Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1) for performance appraisal was adapted from the work of Walsh (2003) and the study adapted the instrument of Cornelius and Sunday (2016) in measuring civil service

performance. Content validity was done, as we relied on the rating of four experts in public administration and 1 in measurement science. We received a V-rating of 0.712 for the instrument, though minor corrections were found in terms of the grammar suitability. Cronbach alpha was used for reliability and we got a coefficient index between 0.732 to 0.822 for the scales in the study. Multiple regressions were used for the analysis.

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The technique for analysis was the use of multiple regressions. Preliminary analysis of the questionnaire shows that only 220 of the distributed were useful for further study, which is 83% of the distributed instrument. The assumptions of multiple regressions were fulfilled from the result obtained from the analysis. The assumptions of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity were examined, and it revealed that none of the assumptions were violated. The correlation matrix not above .70 and the VIF not exceeding 10 and tolerance value not lower than .10 as suggested by Hair et al., (2018) ensured that the assumption of multicollinearity was not violated.

**Table 1:** Model summary on performance appraisal and efficiency of civil service in Nigeria

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.411 <sup>a</sup>	.169	.161	1.07324	1.662

a. Predictors: (Constant), Feedback mechanism, Objective assessment

b. Dependent Variable: civil service efficiency

**Table 2:** ANOVA on performance appraisal and efficiency of civil service in Nigeria

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.307	2	23.654	20.535	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	232.673	202	1.152		
	Total	279.980	204			

a. Dependent Variable: civil service efficiency

b. Predictors: (Constant), Feedback mechanism, Objective assessment

**Table 3:** Coefficients performance appraisal and efficiency of civil service in Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta				Tolerance	VIF

1	(Constant)	1.404	.291		4.827	.000		
	Objective assessment	.064	.087	.058	.742	.459	.667	1.499
	Feedback mechanism	.390	.082	.375	4.771	.000	.667	1.499

a. Dependent Variable: civil service efficiency

Findings shown from the result of the regression indicates that performance appraisal has a weak relationship with performance of civil service. It was shown that performance appraisal and performance of civil service in Nigeria has a shared relationship of 41.1% and the extent that performance of civil service is influenced by changes in the appraisal system is 16.9%. Assumption of autocorrelation was satisfied as the Durbin-Watson test result was less than 2 (Klein, 2005). Model of the study is fit as the f-value (20.535,  $p < 0.05$ ). The assumption of multicollinearity was not violated. Objective assessment was found not to be significant while feedback mechanism was found to be significant. This implies that hypothesis one is rejected and hypothesis two was accepted.

The result shows that objective assessment does not have effect on civil service performance. The result differs from the findings of Thomas and Nagalingappa (2012), Wanjiru (2012). The difference in findings could be because the samples are different, and the location of study differs. Also, this agrees with the study of Isimoya, Olajide and Onafalajo (2018) and Kuvass (2006).

Further, the study result agrees with the finding of Kuvass (2011) that also found that feedback mechanism affects performance. The outcome supports the result of Kaymaz (2011) that examined the effect of performance feedback on individual based reflections and the effect on motivation. Similarly, our paper result also agrees with the study of Aguinis, Gottfredson and Joo (2012) that conducted a study on delivering effective performance feedback using strengths-based approach. Therefore, confirms that ensuring that employees contribute to the growth of the organization there is need to develop a functional feedback system that supports the operation of the organization.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions reached are based on the result of the analysis of the study, as such; the study concludes that performance appraisal is an effective tool that influences civil service performance in Nigeria. The study concludes that feedback mechanism is vital to drive improved employees' performance that would improve the performance of the local government. The study further concludes that feedback has influence on the performance of the civil service. Based on the findings from the

data analysis and conclusions reached, the study makes the following recommendations.

1. Since performance appraisal has appeared to be significant influence of employee commitment. Therefore, the local government managers should implement fair appraisal system to maintain their employee's job satisfaction and subsequently boost their commitment.
2. Managers should therefore relate performance appraisal with adequate compensation and reward system that involves promotion opportunities to stimulate their employee commitment.

## **6. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

The paper was limited to a survey design, as such; future studies can use a longitudinal data for the study. The study was limited to five local governments in Lagos State; as such future studies can cover more than five local government to enrich scholarship in this area of public administration. Further research can be carried out to assess employee's perception of motivation as a mediator between performance appraisal and employee commitment using other sector like manufacturing to determine whether these findings could be generalized to other employees.

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