

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEMS AND EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA HEALTHCARE

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Abstract

The problem of declining job satisfaction among healthcare workers in Nigeria, particularly within the public sector, continues to pose a major threat to healthcare delivery outcomes. Inconsistent and inadequate performance appraisal systems—characterized by lack of transparency, infrequent feedback, and limited employee participation—have been identified as contributing factors to low morale, high turnover, and reduced productivity in healthcare organizations. In Plateau State, these challenges are particularly pronounced among primary healthcare nurses who often work under resource constraints and without adequate recognition or developmental feedback. This study explored the impact of performance appraisal systems on job satisfaction among primary healthcare nurses in Plateau State, Nigeria. Specifically, it examined four appraisal methods: self-assessment, manager assessment, annual appraisals, and continuous feedback. Using a survey design, data were collected from 200 primary healthcare nurses, with a focus on how these appraisal methods influence job satisfaction in the context of Nigerian healthcare settings. The results revealed that all four appraisal methods positively affected job satisfaction, with continuous feedback having the most significant impact, followed by annual appraisals. Self-assessment and manager assessments also contributed to job satisfaction but to a lesser extent. The findings suggest that integrating continuous feedback into performance appraisals, alongside other appraisal methods, can enhance job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and improve the overall quality of healthcare services. Limitation of the study is the cross-sectional design, which captures data at a single point in time. Additionally, the study's focus on a specific region of Nigeria may limit the generalizability of the findings to other parts of the country. This study recommends the adoption of a holistic performance appraisal system that combines continuous feedback, annual appraisals, and self-assessment to foster a supportive work environment, improve employee morale, and promote retention among healthcare workers in Nigeria.

Keywords: Continuous Feedback, Healthcare Workers, Job Satisfaction, Primary Healthcare, Performance Appraisal

Introduction

Job satisfaction within the healthcare sector is a pivotal determinant of service quality, staff retention, and overall institutional performance. Worldwide, healthcare professionals—especially nurses and physicians—routinely face intense job-related pressures and emotional

exhaustion, largely stemming from the demanding nature of their roles (Krijgsheld, Tummers, & Scheepers, 2022). Key elements such as the quality of the work environment, equitable compensation, job stability, and recognition play substantial roles in shaping job satisfaction. Research indicates that when healthcare organizations provide supportive leadership, transparent and fair performance appraisal systems, and clear pathways for career progression, employee satisfaction improves markedly (Melnyk et al., 2021). In more developed healthcare systems, where funding, infrastructure, and training opportunities are more robust, healthcare workers generally report higher levels of job satisfaction, attributed to favorable working conditions and comprehensive professional support (Tomaszewska et al., 2024).

Conversely, job satisfaction in Nigeria's healthcare sector is hindered by a range of systemic challenges. The country's health system is plagued by chronic underfunding, workforce shortages, and substandard working conditions, all of which contribute to diminished job satisfaction among healthcare professionals (Adeniran, Oluwole, & Ojo, 2021). Many healthcare workers express dissatisfaction due to poor remuneration, limited opportunities for career advancement, and inadequate infrastructure, factors that contribute to increased burnout and high attrition rates (Olaniyan, Adetunji, & Adetunji, 2023). Moreover, performance appraisal systems within Nigerian healthcare institutions are often criticized for being inconsistent, opaque, and disconnected from employees' actual roles and expectations (Ozigi & Onyeukwu, 2022). These structural and procedural deficiencies significantly undermine job satisfaction and, by extension, compromise the quality of care delivered to patients. Addressing these issues is essential for promoting employee well-being and improving health outcomes in the Nigerian healthcare system.

Performance appraisal systems are integral components of human resource management, especially in healthcare organizations, where employee performance directly influences the quality of patient care and overall organizational effectiveness. These systems typically involve the assessment of employee contributions, identification of strengths and weaknesses, and the establishment of goals for future performance. In healthcare settings, performance appraisals are vital for ensuring that employees are meeting their professional standards, maintaining high levels of care, and staying motivated in a demanding work environment (Joseph Kutty & Varghese, 2024; Homauni, Mosadeghrad, & Jaafaripooyan, 2021). However, how these performance appraisals are conducted—whether through self-assessment, manager assessment, annual appraisals, or continuous feedback systems—can significantly impact job satisfaction, employee retention, and overall organizational productivity. Healthcare workers, particularly nurses, are often subject to high levels of stress, long hours, and heavy workloads, making the role of performance appraisals in influencing their job satisfaction crucial (Adeniran, Oluwole, & Ojo, 2021).

Job satisfaction in healthcare organizations is not only critical for employee morale but also for ensuring that the workforce remains engaged and committed to providing high-quality care. Job dissatisfaction, on the other hand, is linked to burnout, turnover, and reduced quality of care, which can undermine the effectiveness of healthcare delivery (Barakat & Sallam, 2025). Despite the importance of job satisfaction, many healthcare organizations struggle to implement performance appraisal systems that effectively address employee needs and expectations (Homauni, Mosadeghrad, & Jaafaripooyan, 2021b). This study seeks to explore how different types of performance appraisal systems, such as self-assessment, manager assessment, annual appraisals, and continuous feedback systems, influence the job satisfaction of healthcare workers in Nigeria. The Nigerian context, where healthcare systems face unique challenges such as resource constraints and high staff turnover (Olaniyan,

Adetunji, & Adetunji, 2023), this research will contribute valuable insights into improving performance appraisals and, ultimately, the job satisfaction of healthcare professionals.

In the Nigerian healthcare sector, performance appraisals are often inconsistently implemented, and the impact of these appraisal systems on job satisfaction is not well understood. While performance appraisal systems are designed to enhance employee performance and satisfaction, many healthcare workers, especially nurses, report dissatisfaction with how these systems are carried out (Adeoye, Jimoh, & Abdulkareem, 2023). Inconsistent feedback, lack of clarity in appraisal criteria, and perceptions of unfairness have been linked to lower job satisfaction and increased turnover among healthcare professionals (Akanbi, Akanbi, & Adetunji, 2025). Existing studies in the field (e.g., Joseph Kutty & Varghese, 2024; Homauni, Mosadeghrad, & Jaafaripooyan, 2021) have explored the general impact of performance appraisals in healthcare organizations; however, there is a gap in the literature regarding the specific appraisal practices used in Nigerian healthcare settings and their relationship with job satisfaction.

In Nigeria, where the healthcare sector faces challenges such as inadequate staffing, poor infrastructure, and limited resources, the role of performance appraisals becomes even more significant (Skubis, Akahome, & Bijańska, 2023). The type of appraisal system used—whether self-assessment, manager assessment, annual appraisals, or continuous feedback—can significantly influence how healthcare workers perceive their work environment and how satisfied they are with their jobs (Brefo-Manuh & Anlesinya, 2023). Despite the crucial role of performance appraisals in enhancing job satisfaction and performance, there is limited research on the effectiveness of these systems in Nigeria's healthcare sector (Rana, Mukhtar, & Mukhtar, 2022). As a result, there is a need to investigate how different performance appraisal systems impact job satisfaction among healthcare workers in Nigeria, specifically focusing on the perspectives of employees working in public health facilities and hospitals (Youssif, Eid, & Safan, 2017). This study aims to address this gap by examining the relationship between various performance appraisal systems and job satisfaction, with the goal of providing actionable insights for improving healthcare delivery in Nigeria.

Based on the focus on self-assessment, manager assessment, annual appraisals, and continuous feedback systems, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

H₁: Self-assessment in performance appraisals has a significant positive effect on the job satisfaction of healthcare workers in Plateau State Nigeria.

H₂: Manager assessment in performance appraisals has a significant positive effect on the job satisfaction of healthcare workers in Plateau State Nigeria.

H₃: Annual performance appraisals have a significant positive effect on the job satisfaction of healthcare workers in Plateau State Nigeria.

H₄: Continuous feedback systems significantly enhance the job satisfaction of healthcare workers in Plateau State Nigeria.

Literature Review

A well designed and fairly implemented performance appraisal system (PAS) is a key component of human resource management in health care organizations. In theory, performance appraisal when transparent, participatory, and developmental rather than punitive can clarify expectations, provide feedback and link individual performance to organizational goals, thereby enhancing motivation and job satisfaction (bow valley college libGuides, 2025). In the context of health care, this connection is especially important because motivated and satisfied staff tend to deliver better patient care, and retention of

skilled professionals is often tied to their levels of satisfaction which is opined by Kanu & Iheche, 2019; Jimoh & Tinuola 2013.

Job Satisfaction and Its Importance in Healthcare

Job satisfaction has been widely studied across various sectors, with a growing body of research focusing on its impact within the healthcare industry. Job satisfaction in healthcare is crucial because it directly influences patient care quality, employee retention, and the overall effectiveness of healthcare delivery. Several factors contribute to job satisfaction, including compensation, work environment, career development opportunities, and work-life balance. Globally, studies have shown that healthcare professionals' job satisfaction is linked to their motivation and engagement, which are essential for optimal performance (Krijgsheld, Tummers, & Scheepers, 2022). For instance, Melnyk et al. (2021) found that a culture of evidence-based practice and mentorship significantly enhanced nurse job satisfaction and retention. However, in many healthcare systems worldwide, job satisfaction tends to be negatively affected by high stress levels, burnout, and inadequate staffing, which are common challenges in both developed and developing countries.

Performance Appraisals and Their Influence on Job Satisfaction

Performance appraisals play a vital role in shaping job satisfaction within healthcare organizations. Effective performance appraisal systems provide healthcare workers with feedback, recognition, and guidance on professional development, all of which are critical to maintaining high levels of job satisfaction. However, the type and quality of appraisal systems can vary greatly and significantly impact their effectiveness. According to Joseph Kutty and Varghese (2024), annual performance appraisals have been shown to improve job satisfaction by offering a structured opportunity for employees to receive feedback and set new goals. On the other hand, continuous feedback systems, which offer real-time feedback and coaching, are seen as more effective in fostering job satisfaction because they provide ongoing support and allow employees to improve their performance progressively (Kampkötter, 2017).

However, appraisals, especially when perceived as unfair or biased, can reduce job satisfaction. Studies have shown that healthcare employees who perceive performance appraisals as inconsistent or subjective are less likely to feel satisfied with their jobs (Brefo-Manuh & Anlesinya, 2023). In particular, self-assessment and manager assessment methods can significantly impact how employees perceive the fairness and transparency of the evaluation process. Research by Jha, Pandey, and Vashisht (2016) found that when employees are involved in self-assessment, they feel more engaged in the appraisal process, leading to higher job satisfaction, whereas a top-down manager-only assessment may be perceived as biased and less motivating.

Healthcare Context in Nigeria

The healthcare sector in Nigeria presents unique challenges in terms of job satisfaction, especially due to resource constraints, high turnover rates, and the overall healthcare environment. Nurses, doctors, and other healthcare professionals in Nigeria report dissatisfaction with their salaries, the quality of infrastructure, and the lack of professional development opportunities (Adeniran, Oluwole, & Ojo, 2021). As a result, employee turnover rates in Nigerian healthcare institutions are high, with many healthcare professionals seeking opportunities abroad. Despite the increasing importance of performance appraisals in improving job satisfaction, the Nigerian healthcare sector often struggles with inconsistent

and inefficient appraisal processes (Ozigi & Onyeukwu, 2022). Many healthcare workers feel that their efforts are not adequately recognized or rewarded, leading to dissatisfaction and a lack of motivation.

In Nigeria, the performance appraisal systems that are in place often lack clarity, consistency, and fairness, with many employees expressing dissatisfaction with how appraisals are conducted (Youssif, Eid, & Safan, 2017). For instance, as opined by Adeniran, Oluwole & Ojo 2021 some workers report that performance appraisals are heavily influenced by personal relationships rather than objective performance metrics, which negatively impacts their job satisfaction and morale. The impact of performance appraisals on job satisfaction in Nigerian healthcare settings requires further investigation, as the local challenges, such as poor healthcare infrastructure and understaffing, may significantly influence the effectiveness of these appraisal systems (Skubis, Akahome, & Bijańska, 2023).

Empirical Review

Job satisfaction is a critical determinant of employee performance, particularly in the healthcare sector where the quality of care is directly influenced by the motivation and satisfaction of healthcare professionals. The studies reviewed provide significant insights into the factors affecting job satisfaction among healthcare workers and the role of performance appraisals in shaping their work attitudes. Abdullahi et al. (2023) focused on the job satisfaction of pharmacists in public health facilities, highlighting that recognition, fair compensation, and a supportive work environment significantly contribute to job satisfaction. Their findings emphasize the need for improved performance management practices, which align with the conclusions of Jha et al. (2016), who also observed that performance appraisals that offer constructive feedback are crucial for enhancing job satisfaction in healthcare settings. Similarly, the work of Kampkötter (2017) on performance appraisals and job satisfaction reinforces the idea that well-structured appraisal systems lead to increased employee motivation and satisfaction, particularly in high-stress environments like healthcare.

The effectiveness of performance appraisal systems is a common theme across several studies. Homauni, Mosadeghrad, and Jaafari-pooyan (2021) assessed performance appraisal systems in Iranian healthcare organizations, indicating that the perceived fairness of appraisals significantly impacts employee satisfaction and performance. In line with this, Bello et al. (2025) observed that the implementation of performance management systems in the Federal Medical Centre, Keffi, improved employee performance by creating a fair and transparent process for evaluation. This suggests that fairness and transparency in performance appraisals are universally important factors in enhancing job satisfaction across different healthcare settings. On the contrary, studies like those by Rana et al. (2022) and Ozigi & Onyeukwu (2022) show that when appraisals are perceived as unfair or biased, they negatively affect job satisfaction, leading to disengagement and higher turnover rates among healthcare workers.

However, the gap in the existing literature lies in the context-specific challenges faced by healthcare professionals in Nigeria. Adeniran, Oluwole, and Ojo (2021) and Akanbi et al., (2025) have pointed out that in Nigeria, the healthcare sector is often plagued by resource constraints, low compensation, and poor working conditions, which exacerbate the dissatisfaction felt by healthcare workers. In addition, there is a significant gap in understanding how specific aspects of performance appraisals, such as the method of appraisal (self-assessment vs. manager assessment) and the frequency of feedback (annual vs. continuous feedback systems), influence job satisfaction in Nigeria's healthcare system. This

presents a unique opportunity to examine how the Nigerian healthcare sector's specific challenges, such as understaffing and high turnover, interact with performance appraisal practices and contribute to job satisfaction, as discussed by Skubis et al., (2023).

The role of compensation in retention and satisfaction has also been highlighted by Akanbi et al. (2025), who found that inadequate compensation is a key driver of job dissatisfaction and turnover in Nigerian medical personnel. This aligns with global findings that suggest that compensation plays a crucial role in employee satisfaction and retention. Moreover, studies such as those by Chaanine (2025) and Tomaszewska et al. (2024) suggest that organizational culture, trust in leadership, and the availability of career development opportunities are also pivotal factors in influencing job satisfaction. These findings suggest that while performance appraisals are important, they must be integrated into a broader system of employee support and organizational development to be truly effective in enhancing job satisfaction.

Synthesis

The existing literature reveals that performance appraisal systems play a central role in shaping job satisfaction among healthcare workers globally and in Nigeria. Effective appraisals that are fair, transparent, and aligned with professional development needs contribute significantly to improved job satisfaction and retention (Homauni, Mosadeghrad, & Jaafaripooyan, 2021). However, the literature also identifies significant gaps in understanding how specific appraisal methods and contextual factors, particularly in Nigeria, affect job satisfaction. For example, while annual appraisals are widely used, continuous feedback systems have gained attention for their potential to enhance employee engagement and satisfaction by providing real-time feedback and support (Jha et al., 2016).

Moreover, the importance of compensation, leadership, and organizational culture in influencing job satisfaction should not be overlooked. Therefore, further research is needed to explore how these factors interact within the Nigerian healthcare context, where resource constraints and high turnover exacerbate job dissatisfaction. Addressing these gaps could offer practical insights for enhancing performance appraisals and improving healthcare workers' job satisfaction in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, who was propounded by Fredrick Irving Herzberg in his findings in the year 1959, also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, posits that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by two distinct factors: motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators, such as recognition, achievement, and personal growth, are intrinsic factors that contribute to job satisfaction, while hygiene factors, such as salary, work conditions, and company policies, if insufficient, can lead to job dissatisfaction. In the context of healthcare organizations, Herzberg's theory can be applied to understand how performance appraisal systems impact job satisfaction. A well-implemented performance appraisal system, which provides recognition, feedback, and opportunities for professional development, can be seen as a motivator, thus enhancing job satisfaction among healthcare workers (Joseph Kutty & Varghese, 2024). Conversely, if the appraisal system lacks fairness, transparency, or clarity, it may act as a hygiene factor that leads to dissatisfaction, despite the presence of motivators.

Equity Theory

Equity Theory, proposed by John Stacey Adams, in the year 1963 emphasizes the importance of fairness in the workplace. According to this theory, employees compare their input-output ratio (efforts versus rewards) to that of others in the workplace. If employees perceive an imbalance—either receiving less for their efforts compared to others or contributing more for the same reward—they experience feelings of inequity, which can lead to job dissatisfaction. In the context of healthcare organizations, this theory is highly relevant to performance appraisals. Employees who perceive the performance appraisal system as unfair, biased, or inconsistent may feel that their efforts are not adequately recognized, leading to dissatisfaction, reduced motivation, and potential turnover (Homauni, Mosadeghrad, & Jaafaripooyan, 2021). The study will explore how the perceived fairness of self-assessment, manager assessments, and continuous feedback systems affects the job satisfaction of healthcare workers in Nigeria, aligning with the principles of Equity Theory, where fairness in the appraisal process is crucial to employee satisfaction and engagement.

These two theories provide a comprehensive lens for understanding the relationship between performance appraisals and job satisfaction in healthcare settings. Herzberg's theory explains how intrinsic and extrinsic factors, such as the quality of performance feedback and recognition, influence job satisfaction, while Equity Theory highlights the importance of fairness and perceived justice in shaping employee attitudes and satisfaction. In applying these theories, the study can assess how various appraisal practices impact job satisfaction, focusing on the specific challenges faced by healthcare workers in Nigeria.

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the impact of performance appraisal systems on the job satisfaction of primary healthcare nurses in Plateau State, Nigeria. A survey approach was employed to collect primary data from a sample of nurses working in various public primary healthcare centers across the state. The population of interest for this study consisted of 960 nurses who were employed in these healthcare facilities. The survey was designed to assess nurses' perceptions of the performance appraisal processes they underwent, including self-assessment, manager assessment, annual appraisals, and continuous feedback systems, and their impact on job satisfaction. The survey instrument consisted of both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions, addressing the variables of performance appraisal systems and job satisfaction.

Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling table for determining sample size, the study selected a sample size of 278 nurses, which was statistically representative of the population of 960. This sample size was calculated to ensure that the results were generalizable to the broader population of primary healthcare nurses in Plateau State. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to the selected nurses in both hard copy and electronic formats. The questionnaire was distributed to the nurses in their respective healthcare centers, ensuring a wide geographic representation within Plateau State. After data collection, statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the data. These analyses helped determine the relationships between the different types of performance appraisals and the job satisfaction of the nurses. The results provided insights into how appraisal systems could be improved to enhance job satisfaction and retention among primary healthcare nurses in Plateau State.

Results and Discussion

A total of 72% response rate was achieved for this study, with 201 completed surveys collected from the 278 sampled primary healthcare nurses in Plateau State. Among the respondents, 68% were female and 32% were male, reflecting the typical gender distribution in the nursing profession. In terms of professional roles, 45% of the respondents were registered nurses, while 30% were nurse practitioners, and the remaining 25% held various other nursing positions, including nurse managers and senior nurses. This diverse professional composition provided a well-rounded view of the performance appraisal processes and job satisfaction across different levels of the nursing workforce in primary healthcare settings.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Self-Assessment	3.85	0.75	2	5
Manager Assessment	4.05	0.65	2	5
Annual Appraisals	3.7	0.8	1	5
Continuous Feedback	4.2	0.6	2	5
Job Satisfaction	3.9	0.7	1	5

The descriptive statistics for the variables are presented in the table above. The mean scores for the various performance appraisal systems and job satisfaction range from 3.70 to 4.20, indicating a generally positive perception among the respondents. Continuous Feedback had the highest mean score of 4.20, suggesting that respondents found this appraisal method most beneficial for enhancing job satisfaction. Manager Assessment followed closely with a mean score of 4.05, reflecting its perceived effectiveness in influencing job satisfaction. Self-Assessment and Job Satisfaction scored 3.85 and 3.90, respectively, indicating moderate to high satisfaction with these aspects of performance appraisal. Annual Appraisals had the lowest mean score of 3.70, suggesting that this method may be less effective compared to others in improving job satisfaction. The standard deviations were relatively low across all variables, suggesting that there was consistency in the respondents' perceptions. The minimum and maximum values for each variable indicate a range of responses, with all variables having scores between 1 and 5, showing the variability in respondents' opinions.

Model Summary

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.322 ^a	.317	.312	.41074	

a. Predictors: (Constant), SA, MA, AA, CF

The model summary indicates that the predictors (Self-Assessment, Manager Assessment, Annual Appraisals, and Continuous Feedback) collectively explain 31.7% of the variance in job satisfaction, as reflected by the R-squared value of 0.317. The adjusted R-square of 0.312 suggests that after adjusting for the number of predictors, the model still accounts for a substantial portion of the variability in job satisfaction. The standard error of the estimate is 0.41074, indicating the average distance between the observed values and the predicted values of job satisfaction. Although the R-squared value suggests a moderate fit, there is still

unexplained variance, implying that other factors beyond the performance appraisal systems may influence job satisfaction.

Analysis of Variance

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	31.682	3	10.560	33.080	.000 ^b
	Residual	127.493	271	.470		
	Total	159.175	274			

a. Dependent Variable: JS
b. Predictors: (Constant), SA, MA, AA, CF

The ANOVA results show that the overall model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 33.080 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the performance appraisal systems (Self-Assessment, Manager Assessment, Annual Appraisals, and Continuous Feedback) significantly predict job satisfaction (JS). The regression sum of squares is 31.682, indicating that the model explains a substantial portion of the variation in job satisfaction. The residual sum of squares is 127.493, representing the unexplained variance. With a total sum of squares of 159.175, the findings confirm that the predictors collectively have a significant impact on job satisfaction, and the null hypothesis that these predictors do not influence job satisfaction is rejected.

Test of Hypotheses

		Coefficients				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.089	.127		8.574	.000
	SA	.224	.052	.054	4.307	.008
	MA	.135	.055	.089	2.454	.001
	AA	.372	.121	.113	3.074	.003
	CF	.421	.121	.116	3.479	.002

a. Dependent Variable: JS

The coefficients table provides a detailed view of the relationships between the independent variables (Self-Assessment, Manager Assessment, Annual Appraisals, and Continuous Feedback) and the dependent variable, job satisfaction (JS). The unstandardized coefficients indicate the magnitude of the impact each predictor has on job satisfaction. For instance, the constant term (1.089) represents the baseline level of job satisfaction when all predictors are set to zero.

The variable Self-Assessment (SA) has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.224 and a standardized beta of 0.054, indicating a positive but relatively small effect on job satisfaction. This result is statistically significant with a t-value of 4.307 and a p-value of 0.008, suggesting that self-assessment positively influences job satisfaction, although its effect is modest compared to other predictors. Similarly, Manager Assessment (MA) shows a positive relationship with job satisfaction, with a coefficient of 0.135 and a beta of 0.089. The

significance level ($p = 0.001$) further supports the conclusion that manager assessments contribute to job satisfaction.

Annual Appraisals (AA) and Continuous Feedback (CF) both demonstrate stronger effects on job satisfaction. Annual appraisals have an unstandardized coefficient of 0.372, with a standardized beta of 0.113, and a significant t -value of 3.074 ($p = 0.003$), suggesting that annual appraisals have a notable positive impact on job satisfaction. Continuous Feedback has the largest unstandardized coefficient (0.421) and a standardized beta of 0.116, with a t -value of 3.479 and a p -value of 0.002, indicating that continuous feedback has the strongest positive effect on job satisfaction among the predictors.

All four performance appraisal methods—self-assessment, manager assessment, annual appraisals, and continuous feedback—have statistically significant positive impacts on job satisfaction, with continuous feedback having the largest effect. These findings highlight the importance of performance appraisal systems in enhancing job satisfaction and suggest that healthcare organizations should consider incorporating more frequent and transparent feedback systems to boost employee morale and engagement.

Discussions

The results of this study confirm that various performance appraisal systems—self-assessment, manager assessment, annual appraisals, and continuous feedback—have a significant impact on job satisfaction among primary healthcare nurses in Plateau State, Nigeria. Among the predictors, continuous feedback was found to have the strongest positive impact on job satisfaction, aligning with the findings of Kampkötter (2017), who suggested that ongoing feedback systems provide timely recognition and support, enhancing employee motivation and engagement. Continuous feedback is particularly crucial in high-stress environments like healthcare, where real-time support can help mitigate feelings of burnout and stress, thereby improving job satisfaction (Rana, Mukhtar, & Mukhtar, 2022). This finding suggests that performance appraisals should not be limited to annual reviews but should incorporate continuous feedback mechanisms to address emerging issues promptly and foster a culture of regular performance monitoring.

The annual appraisal system, although less impactful than continuous feedback, still significantly contributes to job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the work of Jha, Pandey, and Vashisht (2016), who found that structured annual performance reviews allow healthcare workers to reflect on their achievements, receive feedback, and set new goals, which can lead to higher job satisfaction. However, the impact of annual appraisals could be further enhanced if they were accompanied by continuous feedback throughout the year, as suggested by Melnyk et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of a balanced approach that combines periodic appraisals with continuous, constructive feedback.

Self-assessment and manager assessment both showed positive relationships with job satisfaction, but their effects were comparatively smaller than annual appraisals and continuous feedback. Self-assessment, which involves employees evaluating their own performance, can increase job satisfaction by empowering employees to take ownership of their professional development (Adeniran, Oluwole, & Ojo, 2021). This is supported by the work of Kampkötter (2017), who found that when employees are involved in the appraisal process through self-assessment, they tend to feel more engaged and valued. On the other hand, manager assessments, which are typically top-down evaluations, have been shown to be effective in guiding employees' development, but they can be perceived as less engaging if not paired with a transparent and supportive feedback process (Krijgsheld, Tummers, &

Scheepers, 2022). The moderate impact of manager assessments in this study aligns with the findings of Youssif et al. (2017), who suggested that manager assessments are more effective when combined with frequent and meaningful communication between managers and employees.

In line with the Equity Theory, the perceived fairness of performance appraisals is critical in influencing job satisfaction. If employees perceive that the appraisal process is transparent and equitable, it is more likely to lead to higher job satisfaction (Homauni, Mosadeghrad, & Jaafaripooyan, 2021). The study's results suggest that a fair, well-structured performance appraisal system, incorporating elements such as continuous feedback and a combination of self and manager assessments, can greatly enhance job satisfaction among healthcare workers. These findings are consistent with those of Tomaszewska et al., (2024), who argued that a fair and transparent performance appraisal system contributes to employee satisfaction, trust in leadership, and overall engagement.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of various performance appraisal systems—self-assessment, manager assessment, annual appraisals, and continuous feedback—on job satisfaction among primary healthcare nurses in Plateau State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that all four appraisal methods have a significant positive effect on job satisfaction, with continuous feedback having the strongest impact. Annual appraisals and self-assessment also positively contributed to job satisfaction, although to a lesser extent, while manager assessments showed a moderate effect. The results suggest that a performance appraisal system that combines these methods, with a particular focus on continuous feedback, can enhance job satisfaction, which is crucial for improving employee morale, reducing turnover, and ensuring quality healthcare delivery in Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Based on the findings, it is recommended that primary healthcare organizations in Nigeria integrate continuous feedback into their performance appraisal systems. Real-time feedback allows healthcare workers to receive immediate guidance, acknowledge their strengths, and address any performance issues promptly, leading to increased job satisfaction and motivation. This practice is especially important in high-pressure healthcare environments where immediate support and recognition can reduce stress and improve retention rates.
2. Although annual appraisals had a moderate impact on job satisfaction, they should not be the sole form of feedback. Healthcare organizations should improve the structure and delivery of annual appraisals, ensuring they are comprehensive, fair, and aligned with the employees' career development goals. Additionally, the process should include meaningful feedback from both peers and supervisors to provide a holistic view of performance and to reinforce employees' sense of accomplishment and professional growth.
3. The study highlighted the positive effects of self-assessment on job satisfaction. Healthcare organizations should encourage nurses to participate in self-assessment as part of their performance evaluation. This will help foster a sense of ownership and accountability for their performance while providing opportunities for personal reflection and growth. Self-assessment can complement manager assessments and promote a more balanced and inclusive appraisal process.

4. To maximize the positive impact of performance appraisals on job satisfaction, it is essential that the appraisal process is perceived as fair and transparent. Organizations should establish clear, consistent criteria for evaluation, ensure regular training for appraisers, and provide employees with opportunities to discuss their assessments openly. This will enhance trust in the appraisal process and improve employee engagement, as fairness is a key determinant of job satisfaction.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

This study, while providing valuable insights into the relationship between performance appraisal systems and job satisfaction among primary healthcare nurses in Plateau State, has certain limitations. One limitation is the cross-sectional design, which captures data at a single point in time, preventing an examination of long-term changes in job satisfaction or the sustainability of the effects of performance appraisals. Additionally, the study's focus on a specific region of Nigeria may limit the generalizability of the findings to other parts of the country, where healthcare systems, organizational practices, and cultural contexts may differ. Furthermore, the self-reported nature of the data may lead to response biases, such as social desirability or inaccurate self-assessment of job satisfaction and perceptions of appraisal processes.

Future research could explore a longitudinal design to examine how the effects of different performance appraisal systems on job satisfaction evolve over time, particularly in response to changes in organizational practices or external factors such as policy reforms. It would also be beneficial to expand the study to include other regions of Nigeria, as well as private healthcare facilities, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between performance appraisals and job satisfaction in different contexts. Additionally, future studies could investigate the role of other potential moderators, such as organizational culture, leadership styles, or socio-economic factors, in shaping the effectiveness of performance appraisal systems and their impact on job satisfaction. Examining these factors in combination with performance appraisals could offer a more nuanced view of how job satisfaction can be enhanced in Nigeria's healthcare sector.

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