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Identifying Gaps and Opportunities to Improve Performance in University Libraries Using Benchmarking and Performance Appraisal System

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Abstract
This research presents a benchmarking and performance appraisal system used to help libraries in identifying gaps and opportunities for improving performance in university libraries. The paper identified various types benchmarking and appraisal system, and also the approaches by which gaps are identified, how to prepare for performance review session and what to do after gaps are identified to improve performance. Findings showed that benchmarking and appraisal system are effective means of discovering performance lapses which necessitate performance improvement of the university library as an organisation and quality job performance of the library staff in meeting diverse information, curriculum, recreational and creative needs of the students, faculty, researchers and entire members of the university system.

Keywords: Performance, Performance Improvement, Benchmarking, Appraisal, Performance Gap

Introduction

Improving job performance of employees by the management is one the core duties of every organisation as it determines how effective services are delivered. Effective job performance facilitates objective attainment of the team members. It is the responsibility of the library managers to identify gaps and opportunities to improve, as to enable employees achieve better performance and growth. Benchmarking and performance appraisal system are measures used to compare one's performance against the performance of others. Benchmarking is a process that often compares processes, products, services or operations against other parts of the business, external companies (such as competitors) or industry best practices. It is also used to compare customer or user satisfaction, costs and quality (Marr, 2020).

Benchmarking means more than just giving a mark. It is a way of assessing the strategies used by an institution and performance against sections within the institution and related institutions in the sector. The purpose is to discover best practices that can be adopted and implemented by the organisation with the aim of enhancing the institution's performance. It is a progressive enhancement mechanism and a change management process. However, benchmarking is an aspect of the total quality management (TQM) system, and it connects to other TQM initiatives (Freytag and Hollensen, 2001). Managers typically use benchmarking and performance appraisal system to discover underperforming employees and help them meet the organization's standards and requirements, both in terms of productivity and behaviour. Performance improvement is required at an individual level, team level, department level, and organization level. University libraries may adopt various measure or metrics to assess performance improvement of librarians

at different times. Benchmarking and performance appraisal are performance management measures that are used to track staff progress over time.

In the library, the management could measure performance on user-services, technical services, ICT compliance, research outputs, and much more to keep track on larger scale performance. It is expedient to know that benchmarking and performance appraisal system is mostly effective if the performance gaps identified fit in the strategic goals of the university library. For instance, resources and infrastructural deficiencies lend themselves well to an organisational performance improvement plan because they are easy to measure; the same is applicable to ineffective job performance of employees in their various job roles. Perhaps, it may be challenging to measure attitude or behaviour of the staff members and leadership deficiencies using benchmarking and performance appraisal system.

Overview of Benchmarking and Appraisal System
Acceleration of organisational performance in the contemporary era remains a very crucial campaign in university libraries. This is no surprise owing to the technological breakthrough that is rapidly changing the roles of librarians from information custodians to information gateways. However, the library authorities are fraught with additional management policy options that are more stiff and demanding than ever before in a bid to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in organisational performance. It is very essential for the university libraries to improvise ways of getting the librarians do what is expected of them promptly, accurately, effectively and efficiently. Benchmarking and performance appraisal are the initiated management control tools relevant for enhancing job performance of workers and bringing innovation in product and services. Benchmarking is a game changer and trail blazer in organisation when rightly implemented.

Benchmarking is a performance management mechanism with the potential to accelerate job performance. It is used for comparative measurement of organisational performance as to determine how well or bad an organisation has done over a period of time. (Aimiuwu, 2007). University libraries most times engage in comparative studies of individual libraries to determine which among them rank higher in quality job performance. Through benchmarking, library services and user satisfaction can be compared among others. Ugbaja (2008) opines that benchmarking introduces organisations to a world of new ideas, methods and techniques to manage their performance for a purpose of achieving organisational goals effectively and efficiently. Ugbaja adds that benchmarking helps to maintain flexibility in implementing other methods of solving problems than the one currently employed by the company. Through benchmarking, the university library produces and renders high quality services that meet user's information needs.

Benchmarking is a vital tool for policy makers. Ugochukwu (2012) posits that benchmarking is a management performance tool used by organisations to generate data for policy making and performance improvement and must be used properly. When data is generated and policy made, identified performance lapses become easily resolved. Fonta (2008) defines benchmarking as a systematic procedure used by institutions to identify strengths and weaknesses within its organisation to compare its job performance with best practice and implements changes in order to bridge any identified lapses in performance. The central focus of benchmarking is both

comparison between an organisation with other similar organisations and measurement of performance in order to determine the areas the organisation is lagging behind and to find a way of mitigating the identified gap. In agreement with the foregoing, Nwatu (2005) who posits that benchmarking is the art of identifying which area in an organisation needs to be improved on; what quality can make a positive or negative effect on the operation system; and what strategies can be used to achieve organisations' target.

Various organisations initiate and implement measures that conform to global best practices and excellent job performance. Medrano (2007) encourages the university libraries to initiate and implement measures that will ensure that their performance conforms to the best practices consistent with the contemporary trend of the profession. With the use of benchmarking, organisations can measure themselves against their institutional practices and other competitors. Oladunmi (2005) opines that a well implemented benchmarking promotes superior performance and provides an organised structure for organisations to learn what and how successful they have fared so far, understand how other organisations' methods differ from its own and then apply measures that will mitigate the gaps and therefore, improve its operational process. Although university libraries might have similar functions and objectives, their method of operations might differ from each other which may be as a result of the library environment, management system or core values of the library.

The use of benchmarking as a "Total Quality Management System" cut across different organisations. Using manufacturing firms for example, Agbaeze (2007) states that the application of benchmarking as a tool of Total Quality Management (TQM) in manufacturing firms may usher in the climate of change and continuous improvement in all the areas of operations. In other words, benchmarking may be a very good intervention technique for a positive change and for manufacturing firms to survive in a competitive business environment, there is the need for the acquisition and exchange of practices among the firms. The above assertion may be no different from the university libraries.

Using benchmarking as a tool to control job performance engenders high and lasting performance in virtually all areas of library operation. Ugochukwu (2012) affirms that through benchmarking, organisations like university libraries can maintain high performance over a long period of time, initiating and implementing measures that will ensure that its performance conforms to the acceptable best practices according to the laid down rules and regulation of the library system. This becomes attainable when there is effective management control system to enhance job performance.

Benchmarking can be defined as a yardstick which measures those variables that ensure efficient and effective job performance in the organisation. Variables that determine high job performance for which benchmarking is established must include skills, level of education, the availability of required facilities, leadership style, performance management system, internal control, staff training and so on. Benchmarking is used to improve job performance determinants. In agreement, Ugochukwu (2012) opines that benchmarking serves as a veritable performance measurement tool used in improving performance indicators. University libraries all over the globe have been actively engaged in search for effective management practices that will sustain the dynamic library activities. Library administrators have always wanted to observe what other

libraries are doing and how they are doing it; innovations that have taken place in other libraries; the new trend in librarianship and what software and databases they are using and the skill required to operate them. These can be determined through benchmarking which is a global best practice in comparative performance research in contemporary era.

Having observed what makes other libraries prosper in their performance, the library management should focus her benchmark on critical activities. Critical activities, according to Adei (2006), critical activities refer to various activities that must be carried out successfully if the business is to realise its strategic goals. University libraries being "user entered" go beyond directing the users on where the information they are looking for could be found to assisting the them in getting the right information that meets their information need. University libraries ensure that their control system is adequate.

In spite the importance of benchmarking as a management control tool, its application varies from one library to another. The importance of applying benchmarking in university libraries cannot be overemphasised. Kotler (2009) emphasises that firms can often get better deals from their suppliers which benchmarking provides a way of showing what is available. University libraries can as well get better deals from their book vendors as benchmarking enables them to know the available information resources in the market, may be in terms of book title, author, edition etc .Adei (2006) opines that benchmarks can be set both for price and product/service quality.

Benchmarking enables organisations to determine how satisfied customers are with their products and services. According to Ugochukwu (2012), the survival of any business in a competitive business environment is determined by how the customers are satisfied with their services. Furthermore, businesses need to understand the benchmark for customer service and strive to achieve it. In the university library, the customer service units which are Reference and Circulation sections are the "first port of call" for library users, therefore, they are the "image maker" of the library. These sections are very sensitive as different patrons congregate into the library for one information need or the other. The way they are treated determines how they will view the library and whether they will find it interesting to patronise the library again or not. There is perhaps, need to benchmark for reference and circulation services. Peterside (2006) identifies two important elements of customer service that can be benchmarked. These include speed in turning around orders and product/service quality. Users of the university libraries want their information needs met with relative speed and in rightful manner. Another area in which benchmark is applied in any organisation is budget and finance. Budgetary and financial control is an indispensable area that benchmark has made its presence.

Kotler (2009) opines that benchmarking is used to determine how efficient an organisation manages its finances. This is also applicable to how the library generate fund internally and externally. There are several types of benchmarking. According to Darel (2005), benchmarking is divided into two types namely, internal and external benchmarking. Internal benchmarking is carried out within the business itself. For example, this provides an excellent ground to make comparison between departments. Although this type of benchmarking is indispensable it has challenges of complacency and prejudice. External benchmarking in the other hand is the process of comparing the performance of one organisation against that of another to determine what

changes have taken place and the performance of the organisation in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and general welfare of the organisation.

From the foregoing, internal benchmarking is very useful in comparing departments with other departments within an organisation. University libraries could adopt this system to compare performance within various units, sections or departments of the library. For instance, with internal benchmarking, the library management would be able to compare cataloguing section, reference section, circulation section, e-library section, acquisition and collection development with one another to determine which of the sections have performed more excellently than the other and also know what caused the excellent performance or what deters the other in order to find a way to mitigate the identified gap.

Holder and Stoughton in Ugochukwu (2012) classifies benchmarking into three broad categories which include: metric benchmarking, diagnostic benchmarking and process benchmarking. Metric benchmarking helps the management identify performance gap within organisation. This form of benchmarking is a performance indicator used to identify leading competitor. It is more concerned with identifying leading competitors other than proffering a solution. Many university libraries use metric benchmarking as a means of direct comparison both internally and externally with other university libraries. Metric are performance indicators used for comparative measures, studies or analysis.

Performance appraisal remains an important approach for achieving effective job performance. It is a measure for assessment or review of staff performance on their designated duties usually over a period of time following the laid down principles. Performance appraisal is a system by which a formal review of an employee's work performance is conducted. However, the essence of conducting performance appraisal is to achieve the objectives of the organisation. Perhaps, Kuvaas (2006) defines performance appraisal as a management control strategy of knowing if employees' behaviour is consistent with the overall strategic objective of an organisation.

In other hand, performance appraisal is a method of aligning the objectives of the individual employees with the organisational objective. Onah (2008) affirms that performance appraisal is an official assessment to determine how well employees are performing their duties. He further stresses that appraisal is a well-designed procedure that involves setting performance standard, assessing the employee's key performance indications, and providing feedback to the employees with the aim of motivating them to eliminate performance deficiencies or to continue to perform above par. Ibekwe (2012) opines that performance appraisal is an exercise usually conducted over a period of time to assess or review an employee's performance on his job following laid down principles.

University library management adopts appraisal technique to measure the degree in which librarians had performed in their jobs in their respective departments. Denisi and Criffin (2005) state "performance appraisal is the specific and formal evaluation of an employee to determine the degree to which the employee is performing his or her job effectively". This informs them how effective or ineffective they have performed over a period of time; and should be impartial, systematic and periodic (Njoku, 2005).

It was observed that performance appraisal encompasses all forms of assessment, evaluation or review carried out systematically and periodically to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the employees with respect to their job performance. This can be done with the use of structured questionnaire and interview by the human resources department at a particular interval for the purpose of identifying the weakness and strength of the staff as well as opportunity. Njoku (2005) views performance appraisal as a logical attempt to peruse the future prospects of an organisation and to measure present performance of the employees. The above view could be said to have relevance in the policy making process. According to Onah (2008) performance appraisal may be necessary for assessing the impact of training programmes and making decisions about pay rises, promotion and training.

The major objective of performance appraisal is to enable the management formulate policies and make decisions relating to selecting, promoting, rewarding and firings. For instance, the present job performance of a librarian is often the most significant factor to consider before determining whether or not to promote the person. It is important that managers recognise the fact that an employee's development is a constant process of setting performance standards including provision of training necessary to achieve set goals, assessing work done by employees as to determine the accomplishment of the goals and then setting better and higher targets (Vigoda, 2000).

Types of Benchmarking and their Usefulness in University Libraries

Different types of benchmarking as total quality management initiatives are available for library implementation. These include the following:

Internal benchmarking
Internal benchmarking is the form of benchmark that is used to determine the internally operational performance. It is used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of various parts of the organisation with a view to discover the practices that work and export such practices in other sections. With internal benchmarking, new operational procedures and etiquette could be identified. Internal benchmarking compares performance, procedures and practices against other parts of the business such as different teams, business units, groups or even individuals (Marr, 2020). For example, benchmarks could be used to compare processes in one public services unit of a university library with those of public services unit in another university library system.
Benchmarking with respect to internal operations is among the simplest forms of benchmarking owing most companies have related job roles inside their business units. One of the primary benefits is that it identifies the best internal process, and later transfers them to other parts of the institution. Organisation that applies only internal benchmarking could often have a limited view of organisational performance, except they use internal benchmarking as a standard for external benchmarking in the subsequent time (Freytag and Hollensen, 2001). Internal benchmarking gives the university libraries clue on how staff in various sections of the library has been contributing to achieve the library's objectives of supporting teaching, learning and research activities of the parent institution.

External benchmarking
External benchmarking which are referred to as competitive benchmarking, compares business performance against other companies. It performs some kinds of macro comparison which involves the performance of the whole company against another. Marr (2020) opines that though external companies are peers or a competitor that's not always the case; that benchmarking can be used to compare performance, processes and practices across different industries. One of the challenges with direct competitors is that information is difficult to obtain. Information is most accessible public domain. If some key patrons in the market have knowledge of more suppliers (competitors) they may be interested to give their assessment of these suppliers. One disadvantage of this method is that it costs more (Freytag and Hollensen, 2001).

Industry / strategic benchmarking
Industry benchmarking is the assessment of different areas of the institution's mode of operations and comparison of these to related measurements from other institutions or leaders of the institutions within the industry group. Many industry groups publish data to compare similar organisation either privately or publicly or both. The benchmarking partners either members of an organisation or organisations of similar functions usually share some common technological and service characteristics (Freytag and Hollensen, 2001). Strategic benchmarking involves comparison of strategies, business approaches and business models in order to improve one's strategic planning and also determine one's strategic priorities. The intention is to discover what strategies yield better result for other companies or teams or business units and subsequently compare these strategies with your own to ascertain how you can be more competitive.

Diagnostic benchmarking
Diagnostic benchmarking requires a little more effort toward identifying areas of strength and providing more details on areas of weakness. They opine that this process would be helpful in formulating policies on how business practice can be improved in order to enhance performance. Diagnostic benchmarking helps institutions to identify and transfer improvement into their operations and strategies. Strategy drives performance and hence quality. Diagnostic benchmarking is required in the university libraries conduct to determine which aspect of library operation is more effective in terms of available facilities, requisite skills of librarians in various areas, services rendered and perception of patrons towards the services they were rendered to. Through this means, the library identifies the areas of strengths and weaknesses of performance and therefore designs strategies that will improve organisational performers (Holder and Stoughton in Ugochukwu, 2012),

Process benchmarking
Process benchmarking demands a thorough understanding of your processes, comparing performance against internal and external benchmarks, and finding ways to increase and improve your processes. The essence is that, by understanding how outstanding performers complete a process, you can identify ways to make your own processes more excellent (Marr, 2020).
This method of benchmarking involves a situation where similar procedures at dissimilar companies are benchmarked. Although it proves very effective it is difficult to be implemented. Process benchmarking requires elaborated view of the overall process and a deep comprehension of procedures. (Freytag and Hollensen, 2001).

Process benchmarking is classified into three - generic, operational and functional benchmarking. This type of benchmarking focuses on any key business processes for continuous improvement of performance. Process benchmarking requires considerably adequate resources, efforts, time and finance (Holder and Stoughton in Ugochukwu, 2012). Studies show that a successfully completed process benchmarking yield much results and guarantees benefits of transferred best practice. Generic process benchmarking involves the best practices of a recognised world-class organisation which offers great opportunity for innovation, creative and stimulating ideas (Ugochukwu, 2012).

Operational process benchmarking focuses on the particular activity within a firm's functional operation and then identifies ways to authenticate the practice of best-in-class. This type of benchmarking is more detailed in terms of data gathering and the rigour of analysis. On the other hand, functional process benchmarking as explained by Foster, Gupta and Sjolom (1996) is the type that is involves studying the practice of other institutions with respect to the functions or processes such institutions undergo in production or services including branding, packaging and distribution. All these are done in order to produce a standard and render services. This could be obtained when the management of a university library often visits other libraries to learn from them how they handle various aspects of library operations.

Product and service benchmarking
Product and service benchmarking is a type of benchmarking that carefully examining the product of other organisations. Product and services might vary from one university library to another but whatever is the product or service is focussed on meet the information needs of the patrons. For instance, some university libraries render reprographic services to patrons, bindery service, indexing and abstracting service, translation services etc. while other libraries do not render such services. Product/service benchmarking can be used to examine the services of other university libraries in order to adopt what works for those libraries as to ensure effective and efficient service delivery

Customer or user benchmarking
Customer benchmarking is concerned with the relationship between the external customers and the firm which enables the firm achieve competitive edge. However, the relationship is based on the quality of product and services and how these products and services are rendered to the customer. In the context of university libraries, the library customers (patrons) who include students, lecturers, researchers and other members of the university community and librarians are meant to enjoy some level of relationship with the library for the purpose of creating favourable atmosphere to meet the users' information needs. Through users or customer benchmarking, the librarians would be able to discover perception of users with their university library against users' perception in other university libraries.

Competitive benchmarking
Competitive benchmarking is used in a competitive business environment or where there are direct competitors. The main purpose external benchmarking is to compare organisation providing competing products, services or processes in the same industry. Competitive benchmarking is based on what others have been able to achieve therefore sets standards for performance. It enables firms to maintain competitive edge, gains superiority over their rivals

and also maintain standard service delivery. In the digital era, some libraries have overtaken others in terms of use and application of ICTs in library operations. Competitive benchmarking enables the library to search out those digital innovations that would make the library stay relevant and maintain competitive edge in a rapidly changing library environment.

Statistical benchmarking
Statistical Benchmarking is a process of using numerical data for a purpose of measuring a company's performance. It is concerned with comparison of performance in an organisation over a given period of time to determine when the best practice was achieved. In the university libraries, this will enable the management to determine the number of registered users, number of books consulted in a given period of time, statistics of most frequently consulted books etc. This kind of benchmarking serves two purposes in the library. Firstly, it is used to formulate policies that will improve general performance of the library. Secondly, it is used for preparing annual report which tells how far the library has performed in the fiscal year.

Performance benchmarking
This involves assessment based on collection information on how well employees are doing in terms of meeting of the organisation and set targets, which could be in form of revenue generational growth or customer satisfaction and comparing these outcomes internally or externally. For instance, this can also be referred to as functional performance benchmarking. This may require using parameters like employee net promoter score or staff engagement surveys for HR team or measuring net promoter score or brand awareness for the marketing

Gap Identification and Reasons for Poor Performance in University Libraries

As a library manager, it is imperative to examine the required performance standards and compare these requirements to the actual performance of the employee members in the role. If a team member is found not achieving the required standard, a performance gap exists. Where a gap is identified, the library manager must work with the team to ameliorate it.
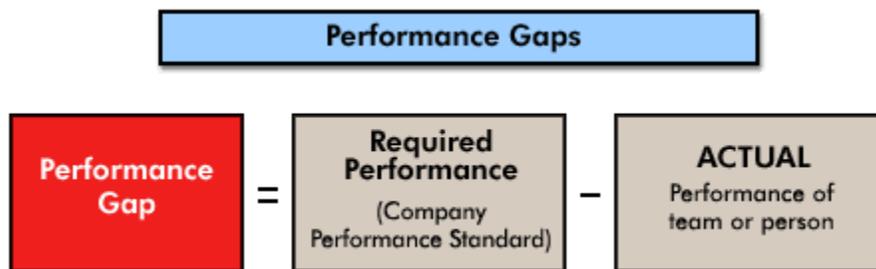

Fig. 1. Required and Actual performance

"Required Performance" involves the performance standard of a university library while "Actual Performance" involves the performance of a group of library staff in a unit or individual staff member of the library. The members of library staff need to know exactly what their job requirements are, and how to meet or exceed their performance standard.

Reasons for Low Performance

Several factors may be responsible for staff inability to achieve the required performance standard. The factors could be as a result of the following:

- lack of job satisfaction
- lack of understanding of their role
- lack of necessarily resources and facilities
- personal problems at home
- physical conditions in the workplace
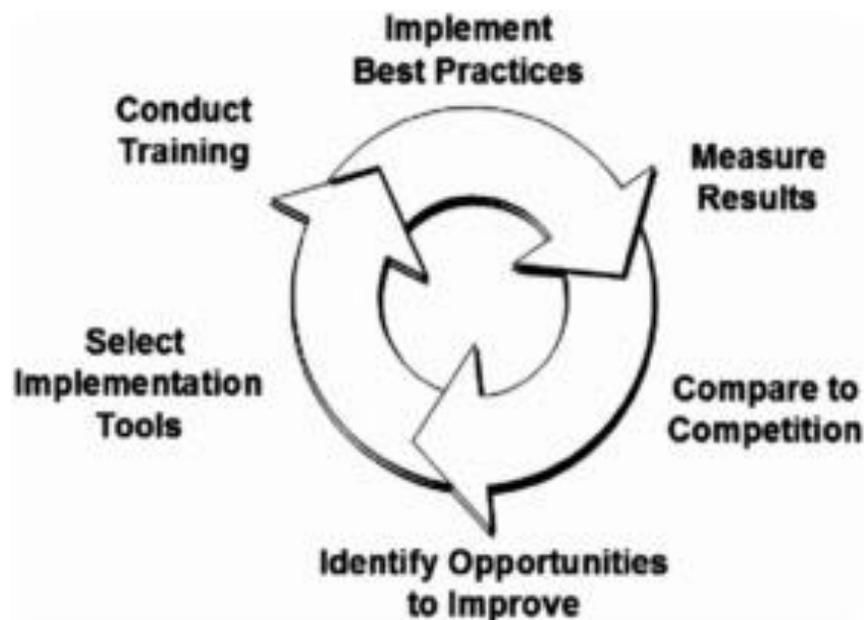- management lapses
- Health issues

Fig. 2. Performance Improvement Cycle. Source: CII, 2004.

Improving job performance using benchmarking and performance appraisal system is an international best practice that systematically follows a cycle of actions tailored towards achieving optimum attainment of goals and objectives of an organisation.

Having generated data for assessment of the organisation, units and employees' performance using benchmarking and appraisal system with either quantitative or qualitative approach, results are analysed and used to compare to competition. Competition with respect to this study involves organisation that offer similar products or services. In case of university library, competition involves other university or academic libraries, their services, resources and mode of operation.

This will lead to identification of gaps and opportunities to improve on the job performance of the library staff, services rendering to meet the information demands of the users and provision

of resources that are up to date and relevant to the curriculum, recreational and self-development needs of the users.

Having identified the gaps and opportunities to improve through benchmarking and performance appraisal system, libraries can select implementation tools which are set of remedial actions or programmes that can address the identified gaps in performance. Implementation tools may also include policies or decisions by the management which set the stage for the library to adopt new systems or approaches that works better and drop the ones that do not work.

After completing the other stages of performance improving cycle, management can now conduct training and retraining of the library staff with focus on the identified areas of weakness or low performance. Approaches such as internal or external workshops, seminars, cross training, supervision can be applied.

In order to identify gaps and opportunities to improve, appraisal of staff performance through a questionnaire, interview, observations and focus group discussions would be required. This will help to identify the root cause or reason for poor performance. This should be done in a way that they will feel relaxed and comfortable to open up on the reason for their poor job performance. With the discovery of the reasons, the management will seek for ways to rectify the problems.

Performance Feedback Discussion

Conducting feedback sessions or performance review discussions is a systematic event that involves the leader of an organisation and the members of staff that aimed at investigating the performance of the staff by asking a number of questions and receiving feedback from the staff. It is a kind of performance appraisal system that is mostly done individually other than collectively. The model below will be used as a guide to conducting a feedback session.
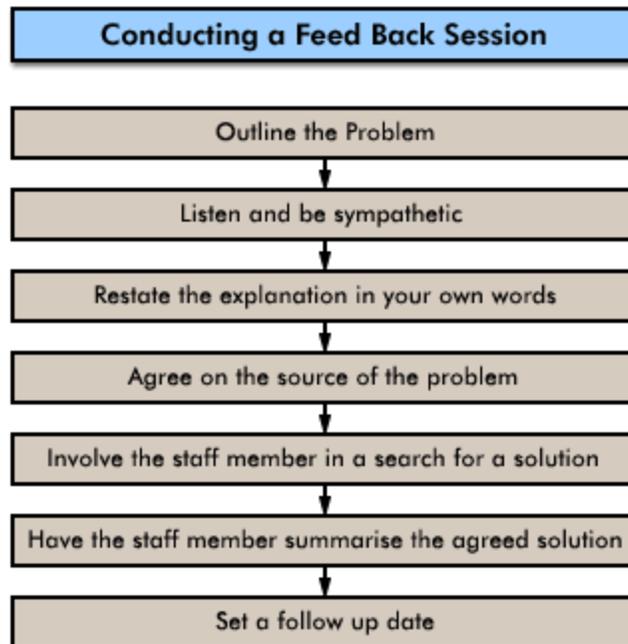
Conducting a Feed Back Session

Outline the Problem

Listen and be sympathetic

Restate the explanation in your own words

Agree on the source of the problem

Involve the staff member in a search for a solution

Have the staff member summarise the agreed solution

Set a follow up date

Fig. 3. Model for Conducting Performance Feedback Session. Source: Ian Lees, 1996.

Planning the Discussion Session

To conduct effective feedback session, the library manager needs to plan the feedback discussion and have a good construct of questions to ask him / herself according to Resource Library Concept (n.d) as listed below:

1. what is the appropriate atmosphere to create at the interview?
2. what performance criteria will you use?
3. is the person aware of these criteria?
4. what information do you have, or need to collect before the discussion?
5. what steps will you follow when conducting the discussion?
6. do you think there will be any disagreements, if so where?
7. what will you do or say to handle them?
8. how will you evaluate your own performance conducting the discussion?

After the effective planning of the discussion session, schedule for interview to the staff members. The members of the staff should be given a comprehensive guidelines and overview of the discussion, its objective and areas to be covered. Enough time should also be given to them to prepare for the discussion. Conduct the discussion in a private and conducive environment in order to put the staff at ease. Don't allow any form of distraction and focus on your prepared plan. Encourage a two-way discussion. Focus on the problem not the person. Above all remain objective (Resource Library Concept, n.d).

However, when the feedback discussion is completed, ask the staff members to suggest and/or propose areas for improvement. Schedule a second interview to develop a learning agreement. After the whole discussion, prepare a brief report on the event and the actions reached. For your own development as a library manager, acknowledge how effective your plan was, limitations difficulties that occurred in the process of carrying out the discussion and how you might improve in the future.

Finally, the result of the discussion will reveal whether the performance gap has less to do with the individual team member and more to do with some systemic problem in the library.

Importance of Benchmarking and Performance Appraisal System

Identification of Gaps and Improvement of Performance

Benchmarking and performance appraisal will help the library management to identify gaps in performance of the library staff and discover opportunities to improve the entire workforce which will improve job processes, reduce laxities, and increase output in terms of quality of services rendered, boost users' satisfaction and also secure a positive image for the library. Due to the constant need for improvement in service delivery and staff development in university library, benchmarking and performance appraisal are thought to be very useful.

> *"Whether you desire to simply compare your internal performance, catch up to a competitor, better understand and track your peers, or become a market-leader in your industry, benchmarking can be an incredibly useful tool. However, benchmarking is not a magic bullet for improving performance – it's a part of the solution, not the complete solution. The complete solution requires you to set clear strategic goals, identify your critical business questions, design KPIs that help you answer those questions and track performance against your goals, and compare performance using benchmarking" (Marr, 2020 p.3)*

Performance appraisal has been shown to be very essential in promoting effective service delivery by identifying the employees' strength and weaknesses, the cause, effect and employing strategies necessary for promoting high level of performance among the employees.

Setting of Job Standard

Performance appraisal is carried out to meet the following objectives: to set a standard that can be used to judge future performance; to help a manager motivate employees and improve their performance; to strengthen communication; to enable employees to know how they are doing which will help them to learn more; to let the employee know what is expected of them; to assist the employee in setting career goals; to identify training needs of employees and to provide legal defensibility (Howes, Grandey & Toth, 1997).

Recruitment and Promotion of Employees

However, one of the reasons performance appraisals is indispensable to organisations is that they provide data for assessing the extent to which recruiting and selection process have met the goals

of an organisation. Organisations endeavour to select and employ high-quality employees who are capable of working effectively toward the accomplishment of the organisational goals and objectives (Ibekwe, 2012). As an integrated control system, Performance appraisal enhances decisions on recruitment and promotion of staff as a result of performance review outcome.

Training and Re-training of Employees
Benchmarking and Performance Appraisal is very useful in the library as it encourages constant training and re-retraining of employees which motivate library staff to be more committed to their jobs. It also provides valuable and useful information for human resource planning and decision making process. Onah (2008) opines that performance appraisal is importance in every organisation for the purpose of identifying training and re-training needs of the staff. In general, benchmarking and performance appraisal help to determine the outcome of the organisation; job expectations; training needs; performance problems, remuneration adjustment; feedback; and to make decisions such as promotion, tenure, future employment. It also help to ensure that employees are aware of what is expected of them and how their contribution fits into the organisation's strategic goals; establish objectives that the employees are required to achieve; measure the degree of employees performance; develop appropriate support and coaching of the employee throughout the period and giving appropriate recognition and reward for the employees achievement.

Conclusion
The strategic benchmarking and performance measurement in global operations incorporates the two main objectives which are to identify gaps and to improve areas of deficiencies. The two joint performance improvement systems in the context of this study - benchmarking and performance appraisal system are systematic efforts and practices aimed at improving the different facets of organisational performance involving systemic and individual job performance in line with pre-defined goals of the library. Identification of performance gaps and strength of the employees derived from different business units within the organization using benchmarking and appraisal system promotes organizational learning and innovative practices (Storey and Kelly, 2001). The overall approach identified in this research is designed for university libraries and other allied institutions, which have operational ambitions to perform effectively in the global wave of organizational complexities as a result of changing demands of information seekers. However, this research presents to libraries and other organisations a dynamic and feasible ways of identifying, measuring, tracking, and improving the performance of the organisation and the staff members.

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