

Tasks Performance Strategy and Employee Performance of Selected Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Delta State Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the influence of task performance strategy employee performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprise (SMEs) in Delta State. Growing competitiveness of the SME sector has escalated the need to adopt effective internal management practices that will increase the productivity of employees, better work quality and sustainability of business. In particular, the research involved two key task performance strategies; supervision and feedback mechanism and their effects on employee performance in SMEs. The study employed survey research design, and data were gathered using structured questionnaires administered to employees of SMEs in Delta State. A total of 212 questionnaires were issued to the target population with 200 responded to representing 94 percent response rate. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to analyse the data. It was found that the supervision and feedback practice possess a great positive impact on the staff performance which proves the effectiveness of constant guidance to employees, positive feedback, and clear communication channels. Moreso, performance appraisal practices were observed to have great impact on employee performance since fair appraisal processes and effort recognition encourage employees to enhance efficiency and commitment towards a task.

Keywords:

Task Performance Strategy, Employee Performance, Supervision, Feedback.

Introduction

The problem of employee performance has been of key focus in organizational behaviour and human resource management since it is what contributes to

the survival, competitiveness, and growth of organisations in the long term. Employee performance is more vital in the context of Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs) as SMEs have limited resources, smaller workforce and are more exposed to the lack of productivity than big companies (Akinyele and Igene, 2020). With the increasing growth of SMEs in Nigeria and Delta State in particular, the necessity to discover the methods of enhancing employee performance in tasks has become quite urgent. Task performance strategy means the premeditated managerial functions and systematic methods aimed at making employees perform their job duties and accomplish the established objectives and make a contribution to the overall productivity of the organisation (Borman and Motowidlo, 2019).

Task performance on its own outlines the behaviours and actions, which are included in the formal job description of an employee. These are achievement of targets, accomplishment of the set tasks, problem solving, decision making and the organisational standards. Koopmans et al., (2014) argue that task performance is one of the primary determinants of organisational efficiency since it concentrates on the substantive or technical tasks on the core of an employee job. One of the key areas of strengthening the task performance is the application of the relevant strategies to encourage employees, create clarity of expectations, workflow efficiency, and eliminate performance barriers in the workplace. These strategies can include goal setting, performance appraisal plans, training and development, job design, employee engagement, supervision quality, and incentive plans (Aguinis, 2019).

Over 90 percent of businesses in Nigeria are

SMEs, and they contribute to the growth of the economy, creation of jobs, and alleviation of poverty (SMEDAN, 2021). With its varied State has experienced the rapid growth of SME in the last decade. In spite of this increase, low productivity, employee turnover, poor work attitude and inconsistency in job execution continue to bedevil the state SMEs (Ogbechie & Uche, 2022). Such challenges are usually based on poor task performance strategies, unstructured managerial systems, poor communication, and poorly defined roles. The majority of SME owners stick to day-to-day survival but not to formal structures that would uplift the performance of the employees (Onodugo & Ugwu, 2020).

The problem with performance of employees in SMEs is that it is usually determined by how the tasks are given, followed and aligned with the organisation goals. As opposed to big organisations with formalised HR systems, SMEs in Delta State often use informal forms of administration that are not always adequate to ensure steady employee performance. Research indicates that employees who have a clear understanding of their position, are well trained and receive feedback in good time and are well motivated, will perform their duties more efficiently (Decenzo, Robbins and Verhulst, 2020). On the other hand, inadequate skill development, inadequate supervision, low incentives, and poor expectations usually result in poor performance, low job satisfaction and inefficiency in operation (Okwu & Abah, 2021).

Some scholars have highlighted the relevance of task performance strategies since they hold the view that employee performance enhances significantly in organisations that utilize systematic approaches to work design, goal clarity, coaching, and evaluation (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). In the SMEs, some of the strategies of task performance might involve establishing performance goals that are measurable, giving an employee frequent feedback, coordinating the performance of the individual employees with the organisational goals, training employees and finally encouraging them to be part of the decision-making process. Such strategies improve not only the competence and motivation of the employees, but the organisational commitment which is critical in SME competitive nature.

economic endeavours, comprising of trade and manufacturing, services, hospitality and agriculture, Delta

The SMEs faced by the Delta State have to deal with the human resource effectively; this is due to the peculiar socio-economic environment, which is characterised by unstable business conditions, infrastructural challenges, and high operating costs. Individuals in these companies usually have to work in tough environments that demand high degree of flexibility and creativity. Lack of proper task performance strategies can lead to the employees being unable to perform to the expected level, which will lead to poor customer services, underperformance, and the failure to maintain competitive advantage (Erumebor & Onwuezbizie, 2022).

Additionally, the contemporary SMEs require constant development of skills due to the dynamic nature of work. This is more so in areas like ICT based services, retailing, hospitality and light manufacturing which prevails in SME environment in Delta State. Training and development, therefore, become essential strategies of performance of tasks. Research indicates that when employees develop the right skills, they can perform their tasks much better and hence become more productive and the organisation expands (Ekwoaba and Ikeije, 2020).

Employee motivation is another important component of task performance strategy. According to motivation theories like Expectancy Theory and Goal-Setting Theory, the employees will be more effective when they believe in the existence of a distinct relationship between effort, performance, and reward (Vroom, 1964; Locke and Latham, 2019). Most Delta State SMEs lack systematic rewards, and that motivation is usually done based on simple salary. Such a disconnection undermines the performance of employees, their engagement, and leads to absenteeism or turnover intentions.

Performance appraisal is also very imperative. An effective performance appraisal system would assist employees in knowing their performance levels and how they expect to be improved. Nevertheless, most SMEs fail to perform

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Performance appraisal is also very imperative. An effective performance appraisal system would assist employees in knowing their performance levels and how they expect to be improved. Nevertheless, most SMEs fail to perform appraisals or apply them in a casual manner without a specific set of criteria and, as a result, they become ineffective (Nwokocha, 2021).

Based on such gaps, it would be important to analyse the effects of task performance strategies on the performance of employees in SMEs in Delta State. The study of this relationship is important as the better the task performance, the greater the productivity, service quality, organisational resilience, and competitiveness. The necessity to find out the task performance strategies that can empower the employees output, decrease the performance inconsistencies, and enhance the business development illustrates the importance of this study.

Thus, the paper aims at examining how task performance strategies, including goal-setting, supervision, training, motivation, and performance appraisal affect employee performance in the identified SMEs in Delta State.

Statement of the Problem

Small and Medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Delta State help a lot in creating employment as well as reducing poverty and economic growth. Nonetheless, most of the SMEs still face the challenge of low employee performance, poor work quality, missed deadlines, and unpredictable employee productivity despite their importance. It has been observed and recent research shows that the majority of SME employees in Delta State are unable to perform to the expectations because of poor job description, lack of supervision, training and performance rewards (Okwu & Abah, 2021; Ogbechie & Uche, 2022).

The primary problem is that formal task performance strategies are not followed by many owners and managers of SMEs. The jobs are often allocated informally without having set objectives or performance standards. The employees tend to perform according to assumptions instead of systematic expectations, which causes errors, inefficiency and minimization of output. Moreover, the performance appraisal systems where they exist are generally informal and subjective and are hardly used in terms of development. This absence of a structured feedback does not provide the employees with a chance to see areas of weaknesses and enhance their abilities (Nwokocha, 2021).

Furthermore, motivation among most SMEs is only restricted to remuneration and there are minimal incentives to non-financial

motivations like recognition, rewards, decision-making and skill upgrading. As a result, morale, commitment and poor engagement of the employees tend to be low. There is also a lack of training and development because most SMEs consider training as an expense and not an investment. The employees are poorly prepared to carry out their work, particularly in industries where skills have to be updated continuously (Ekwoaba and Ikeije, 2020).

With these longstanding challenges, the overall issue is that, the performance of employees in most SMEs in Delta State is not as high as it should be because there is no presence or bad application of the task performance strategies. What is poorly known is how much the task performance strategies (role clearance, supervision, training, motivation and performance evaluation) influence the performance of the employees in these businesses. This void highlights the importance of an empirical study to determine how the strategy of task performance can be used to enhance employee performance in the chosen SMEs in Delta State.

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the study is to investigate the impact of the task performance strategy on the employee performance in the chosen Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Delta State. The specify objectives are to:

- i. Examine the impact of supervision and feedback systems on performance of workers in SMEs.
- ii. Investigate how performance appraisal practices affect performance of employees in the SMEs of Delta State.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the impact of supervision and feedback in SMEs on employee performances?
- ii. What is the extent to which performance appraisal practices affect employee performance in the SMEs within Delta State?

Research Hypotheses

The hypothesis under test in the study will be as follows:

H01: There is no significant difference between supervision and feedback processes and the performance of employees in SMEs.

H02: The performance appraisal practices do not affect the performance of employees in SMEs in Delta State significantly.

Significance of the Study

This research is important in a number of aspects. One, it adds to the academic body of human resource management and organisational behaviour that empirically demonstrates the role of task performance strategies on employee performance in SMEs. Second, the results will be of use to the owners and managers of SMEs because they will shed light on how to enhance the productivity of employees using the structured performance approaches that include training, supervision, and motivating employees. The research will also be of benefit to the policymakers and SME development agencies (including SMEDAN) since they will be informed on the critical areas, where the SMEs need to be supported in human resource development. Lastly, the study will be advantageous to students and researchers since it can be used as a reference in future studies.

Scope of the Study

The research focus on SMEs that function in Delta state. The geographical coverage also encompasses large business regions like the Warri, Asaba, Ughelli, Sapele and Agbor. The content scope of task performance strategies like goal-setting, supervision, training, motivation, and performance appraisal and their impact on employee performance is covered. The research is restricted to SMEs in retail, hotel, manufacturing and service sectors. The time frame would be cross-sectional and look at the existing performance practices.

Operational Definition of Terms.

Task Performance Strategy: Organisational

strategies employed to steer employees to complete their best duties assigned to them such as goal setting, supervision, training, motivation and appraisal. Employee Performance: The extent to which the employees perform successfully, realise organisational expectations, attain work goals and objectives and improve the overall productivity.

Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises (SMEs): Those businesses that are officially classified as SMEs in Nigeria according to the classification made by SMEDAN, normally have fewer than 200 employees. Goal-Setting: The act of outlining measurable and specific tasks and expectations of the employees.

Supervision: Managerial control which entails surveillance of employee operations, guidance and feedback.

Motivation: Factors, whether internal or external, that arouse employees to participate in productive work behaviour.

Performance Appraisal: A methodical comparison of the employee performance through a set of set criteria.

Literature Review**Concept of Task Performance**

Task performance is job-related behaviour and actions which employee indulges in the performance of their formal duties. These behaviours are directly associated with the technical core of the organisation, which is accomplishing given tasks, fulfilling of deadlines, problem-solving and adherence to the quality of work (Borman and Motowidlo, 2019). According to Koopmans et al. (2014), task performance refers to the expertise at which workers can execute the tasks that involve the direct contributions to the core operations of the organisation. Task performance in SMEs is a necessity since employees tend to perform various functions owing to low staffing levels and thus performance on tasks is crucial in determining the survival of the organisation.

Task Performance Strategy

Task performance strategy is described as well-organized managerial strategies, which aim at raising employee capacity to responsibly execute their tasks.

These interventions are role clarity, goals setting, supervision, training, motivation, and performance appraisal (Aguinis, 2019). Strategies on task performance are effective as they allow employees to know what is expected, acquire the skills required, stay motivated, and get given feedback and guidance in due time. In the opinion of Bakker and Demerouti (2017), these strategies assist employees to cope with the demands of the job and in the process increase the availability of resources, which eventually leads to better performance.

Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to the extent to which the employees deliver anticipated work results, show competence, and productivity to their organisations (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020). The performance indicators of the employees encompass completion of tasks, the quality of work, timeliness, innovation, and organisational standards. Performance is crucial in SMEs due to the lean staffing organization and the direct relationship between staff performance and business performance. The enhanced competitiveness and profitability are supported by high employee performance (Ogbechie & Uche, 2022).

SMEs in the Nigerian Context

In Nigeria, SMEs are more than 96 percent of the businesses and play an important role in GDP, employment, and innovation (SMEDAN, 2021). The retail, services, hospitality, and light manufacturing sectors prevail in Delta State as SMEs. SMEs have problems such as a small amount of capital, insufficient training, poor management, and inconsistent performance of employees, despite their significance (Erumebor and Onwuebuzie, 2022). Such difficulties indicate the importance of well-developed task performance strategies to help employees to be competent and business sustainable.

Theoretical Review

1. Goal-Setting Theory

The Goal-Setting Theory by Locke and Latham, (1968) was later updated in 2019, and it is based on the fact that specific and challenging objectives are more effective in

increasing employee

performance than vague or easy objectives. The theory posits that goals guide attention, marshal effort, add persistence and spur strategy formulation. Locke and Latham (2019) argue that the performance of employees is enhanced when the goals are clear, measurable, and there is an accompanying feedback. Goal-setting assists in organizing activities in an environment where formal systems may be compromised, in SMEs. Therefore, the theory is applicable as performance expectations are usually the starting point of the task performance strategies.

2.Expectancy Theory

According to Expectancy Theory by Vroom, (1964) employees will be motivated in case they believe that good performance will be rewarded (expectancy), that good performance will be rewarded (instrumentality), and the rewards will be valued (valence). The theory also describes how employees in SMEs can be under motivation in case of unclear or ineffective reward systems. This theory forms the basis of motivation-based strategies of task performance like incentives, recognition and there is clear performance relationship.

3.Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory.

According to the Resource-Based View by Barney, (1991), the performance of the organisation relies on inimitable, non-substitutable, valuable and rare resources. When properly handled, human resource is the foundation of competitive advantage. The RBV can accommodate task performance strategies that help to increase employee capabilities (training, feedback, supervision). Investments in the skill of employees, motivation and well defined tasks can help SMEs to perform at a higher level.

Empirical Review

Okeke and Nwankwo, (2020) conducted a quantitative research that investigated the impact of supervision on employee productivity in south-eastern Nigeria based on Anambra and Enugu States. The researchers have opted to take a survey research design and gathered 312 employees who were sampled among 48 SMEs and were stratified using a random sampling method.

The main tool consisted of a structured questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale, and the reliability of which was proved with the help of a Cronbach alpha equal to 0.82. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze data. The results showed that the positive influence of the supervisory support (as measured by coaching, monitoring and guidance) served as a significant positive influence on employee productivity. The research has found that when employees are supervised in a clear way, not only are their accuracy in their tasks increased, but also their error and work quality are minimized, which proves that supervision is a significant contributor to employee performance in the Nigerian SMEs.

In Kenya, Otieno, (2019) evaluated the importance of feedback systems in the performance of employees in SMEs of Nairobi. The research design that was followed was descriptive research design and a survey was conducted on 265 workers in the retail and service sector through administering structured questionnaires. Otieno conducted a Pearson correlation and a regression analysis and concluded that frequent feedback was a key aspect of enhancing employee performance since it enabled the workers to know their performance expectations and rectify the mistakes early on. The research observed that constructive feedback maximized the motivation of employees, clarity and task perfection whereas an absence of feedback resulted in negative performance and indecision. Otieno concluded that task performance in SMEs that have a limited formal system to supervise the tasks need timely, specific and consistent feedback to enhance performance.

Research by Nwokocha, (2021) in Nigeria was undertaken to determine how performance appraisal practices impact employee performance in the SMEs based in Port Sokta, Rivers State. The research design was a survey and a sample of 280 employees selected among 20 SMEs in service and hospitality industries was used. The data was gathered with the help of a validated questionnaire and analysed with the multiple linear regression. The findings indicated that that the structured performance appraisal system and especially

those that had clear criteria, employee involvement and constructive feedback had a positive positive impact on employee performance by providing job expectations and pointing out areas of performance improvement. The research came to the conclusion that frequent appraisal leads to better employee commitment, development of skills and productivity in SMEs.

Hassan and Mahmood, (2020) also investigated the similarity of performance appraisal and task performance in small and medium enterprises in Lahore, Pakistan, at an international level. The researchers selected 325 employees of SMEs operating in manufacturing and service sectors by the proportionate random sampling technique through a quantitative method. A validated questionnaire was used and analysis of data was done based on hierarchical regression analysis. Their results revealed that the use of effective appraisal systems greatly enhanced employee task performance as it gave it a point of reference to allocate rewards, as well as, feedback and skill development. The research found that open and regular appraisal systems help in increasing employee engagement and job performance particularly in SMEs with limited human resource systems.

Methodology

Research Design

The research paper is based on a descriptive study design of survey research, which is suitable in studying relationships among variables in their natural occurrence without subjecting them to manipulation. The design allows the researcher to gather information on a relatively large group of SME employees and managers, thus gaining their perceptions on how task performance strategies, namely supervision, feedback, motivation and performance appraisal strategies affect performance of the employees. The descriptive design of the survey is appropriate since it will be easy to use structured questionnaires, increase the generalizability of the findings as well as quantitatively analyse the perception of the respondents about organizational practices.

Population of the Study

This study focused on the employees and managers of the selected Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that are located in Delta State. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN, 2022) states that Delta state is home to a large number of SMEs in the most important business sectors, namely manufacturing, services, trade, and agro-processing. The target population include SMEs in Asaba, Warri and Ughelli. The approximate population of SMEs employees in these areas is about 450.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique.

To establish the right sample size of the study, the study used Taro Yamane formula that led to the determination of 212 as the sample size. The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where,

n = Sample

N = Population (450)

e = error of tolerance (0.05) 1 = statistical constant

$$n = \frac{450}{1 + 450(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{450}{1 + 450(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{450}{2.125}$$

$$n = \frac{450}{1 + 1.125}$$

$$n = 212$$

The study employed stratified random sampling technique. The stratification of SMEs was according to their sectors

(manufacturing, trade and services) and respondentswererandomlyselected proportionately. This approach provided equal representation and lessen sampling bias. The managers and supervisors were included on purpose due to their direct interaction in the task performance strategies.

Sources and Data Collection Methods.

The research primarily relied on primary data that was gathered by administering structured questionnaires. There were three major sections of the questionnaire: Section A: Demographic- based information. Section B: Supervision and feedback strategies, and Section C: employee performance and performance appraisal.

The approach was self-administered and the respondents filled the questionnaire at their free time. Follow-ups were also done by the researcher to guarantee high retrieval rates.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed in the analysis of the collected data with the help of the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 version.

The demographic data of the respondents were summarized using descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages.

The hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to establish the relationship between the task performance strategies (supervision, feedback, motivation and performance appraisal) and employee performance.

The level of significance (0.05) was used to test hypotheses, which allowed sufficient accuracy when it comes to interpretation.

Data Analysis and Results**Data Presentation and Analysis**

It is important to state that out of the 212 questionnaires administered, 200 were correctly filled and retrieved, representing a response rate of 94%, which is considered adequate for analysis in survey research.

Table 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	118	59%
Female	82	41%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025
The gender distribution shows a higher proportion of male respondents (59%). This implies that SMEs in Delta State may

have a slightly male-dominated workforce, although female participation remains significant.

Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–25 years	34	17%
26–35 years	92	46%
36–45 years	54	27%
46 years and above	20	10%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025
Most respondents fall within the 26–35 years age bracket (46%), reflecting a youthful workforce commonly found in

SMEs, indicating agility, adaptability, and high task engagement.

Table 4.3: Educational Qualifications

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SSCE	38	19%
OND/NCE	56	28%
HND/B.Sc	78	39%
Postgraduate	28	14%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025

Majority of respondents (39%) possess HND/B.Sc qualifications, showing that many SME employees have tertiary-level education,

which can influence task understanding and performance effectiveness.

Table 4.4: Position in the Organisation

Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Manager/Supervisor	42	21%
Senior Staff	66	33%
Junior Staff	92	46%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025
Junior staff constitute the highest proportion (46%), showing that operational-level

workers dominate SME employment structures.

Table 4.5: Years of Work Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 year	16	8%
1–3 years	68	34%
4–6 years	72	36%
Above 6 years	44	22%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025
A large proportion of respondents (36%) have 4–6 years’ experience, implying

adequate exposure to organisational processes and performance-related systems.

Table 4.6: Responses on Supervision and Feedback Strategies

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
My supervisor regularly monitors and guides my work.	38	42	10	7	3
I receive timely feedback on tasks assigned.	34	46	9	8	3
Supervisors encourage open communication about work challenges.	36	40	11	9	4
The feedback I receive helps improve my performance.	40	41	8	7	4
Supervisory practices motivate me to put in my best effort.	32	44	12	8	4

Source: Field survey, 2025

The results show that the majority of respondents Agree or Strongly Agree that supervision and feedback mechanisms are active and supportive in SMEs. Most items recorded combined agreement levels above 70%, indicating that structured supervision and regular feedback are commonly practiced. This suggests that

SMEs in Delta State rely on supervisory engagement and feedback processes to enhance employee performance, which has implications for the hypothesis testing regarding their significance.

Table 4.7: Responses on Performance Appraisal and Employee Performance

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
The performance appraisal system is fair and transparent.	30	43	13	9	5
Performance evaluations clearly outline expectations.	34	42	10	9	5
Appraisal outcomes help identify improvement areas.	36	44	8	7	5
I am more committed after receiving evaluation feedback.	32	45	11	7	5
Performance appraisal has improved my productivity.	38	41	9	7	5

Source: Field survey, 2025

Most respondents Agree or Strongly Agree that performance appraisal practices positively influence their work commitment and productivity. Combined agreement levels for most items exceed 70%, indicating that appraisal systems in the selected SMEs contribute meaningfully to employee performance. These results highlight the relevance of performance appraisal as a strategic tool for performance improvement, informing the suitability of testing its effect in the second hypothesis.

Test of Hypotheses

The study tested two hypotheses using the

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) technique. This method is appropriate for determining the strength and direction of the linear relationship between variables measured on interval scales.

Decision Rule

- If $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05 \rightarrow$ Reject H_0 (significant relationship exists)
- If $p\text{-value} > 0.05 \rightarrow$ Accept H_0 (no significant relationship)

Hypothesis One

H_{01} : Supervision and feedback mechanisms have no significant effect on employee performance in SMEs

Table 4.8: Correlation between

Supervision/Feedback and Employee Performance

Variables	Employee Performance	Supervision & Feedback
Employee Performance	1	.641**
Supervision & Feedback	.641**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
N	200	200

Source: Extract from SPSS Output

Correlation Coefficient (r):
0.641 p-value: 0.000
N: 200

Significance level: 0.05

The result shows a strong positive correlation between supervision/feedback strategies and employee performance ($r = 0.641$). The associated p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05 significance threshold. This means the relationship is statistically significant. The strength of the correlation indicates that improvements in workplace supervision, communication, and timely feedback are strongly associated with better employee performance in SMEs in Delta State. Since $p\text{-value} (0.000) \leq 0.05$, Reject H_{01} . It is

thereby concluded that there is a significant relationship between supervision/feedback mechanisms and employee performance in SMEs in Delta State. This implies that SMEs that apply effective supervisory practices and timely feedback processes tend to experience higher levels of employee productivity and commitment.

Hypothesis Two

H_{02} : Performance appraisal practices have no significant influence on employee performance in SMEs in Delta State.

Table 4.9: Correlation Between Performance Appraisal and Employee

Performance

Variables	Employee Performance	Performance Appraisal
Employee Performance	1	.587**
Performance Appraisal	.587**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
N	200	200

Source: Extract from SPSS Output

Correlation Coefficient (r):
0.587 p-value: 0.000
N: 200
Significance level: 0.05

The analysis shows a moderately strong positive correlation between performance appraisal practices and employee performance ($r = 0.587$). The p-value (0.000) is below the 0.05 threshold, indicating statistical significance. The relationship implies that when SMEs implement transparent and structured appraisal systems, employees tend to show improved productivity, better goal alignment, and increased job commitment. Since $p\text{-value} (0.000) \leq 0.05$, Reject H_{02} . It is concluded that performance appraisal practices have a significant influence on employee performance in SMEs in Delta State. Effective appraisal systems, therefore, play a critical role in motivating employees, improving task outcomes, and enhancing organisational

performance.

Discussion of Findings

This section addresses the findings of the empirical analysis as compared with the past researches as they appear in the literature review. The results are addressed on the basis of the two major objectives and hypotheses of the research.

The correlation analysis showed that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between the supervision feedback mechanisms and employee performance in SMEs in Delta State ($r = 0.641$, $p = 0.000$). It means that employees will become more productive when supervisors are able to give them clear

guidance, watch over the execution of tasks and timely and constructive feedback. The implication is that best practices in supervision are at the centre of the promotion of productivity, accuracy, and general commitment by employees at their job. This observation aligns with the study conducted by Okeke and Nwankwo, (2020) who observed that in South-East Nigerian SMEs, the level of supervision was crucial in increasing the productivity of the workers.

They had stated that employees were more concentrated and less likely to make mistakes when the supervisors guided and supported them closely. Likewise, the outcome is also in line with Otieno, (2019) in Kenya who established that frequent feedback enhanced employee motivation and assisted the workers in modifying their behaviour to achieve the organizational expectations. The fact that the feedback helps to enhance the performance of the current study is thus aligned with the focus of Otieno on the motivational importance of timely communication. This positive relationship is also consistent with Akinyele and Igene, (2020) who stated that the supervision and feedback are elements of intrinsic motivators that enhance the willingness of employees to work hard. Similarly, this paper confirms that the work environment of these SMEs is predisposed to employee success where the organization has open communication lines and a supervisor who supports employees with open communication channels.

Another finding was the moderately strong and significant relationship between the performance appraisal practices and performance of employees ($r = 0.587$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that in situations where the appraisal systems are equitable, open, and communicated well, the employees will tend to enhance their productivity and dedication to the work. The result shows that appraisal is not only a measurement programme, but also an incentive strategies, which harmonizes the behaviour of the employees with the objectives of the organization. This result aligns with the study of Nwokocha, (2021), who concluded that structured appraisal systems enhanced employee performance based on the SMEs in Rivers State because they helped workers to comprehend the performance standards and improvement requirements. This has been supported by the

current study which indicates that among SMEs in Delta State, those who employ structured appraisal systems have displayed elevated rates of performance amongst the employees. Equally, the high impact of appraisal on performance is in line with the findings of Hassan and Mahmood, (2020) who indicated that good appraisal systems boosted task performance in Pakistani SMEs. Their research revealed that when the appraisal process is objective and tied to both training and development, the employees react positively to it. Findings of this research support this claim by showing that appraisal is positive in enhancing commitment and productivity.

Moreover, Abdullahi, (2021) found out that performance appraisal, as well as motivation, positively influences productivity in manufacturing companies. This augers the existing results that appraisal is a critical factor in motivating employee behaviour particularly when the results of the appraisals are applied to enhance skills and competencies.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the empirical work, it is concluded that task performance strategies are very crucial in the determination of employee performance among the SMEs in Delta State. Proper supervision and feedback in time increase the motivation of the employees as well as better accuracy of the tasks and increased productivity. Equally, clear and organized performance appraisal protocols can assist employees to comprehend requirements, areas in which they need to make it as well as develop a feeling of dedication to the organizational goals.

The null hypothesis is rejected in both cases which implies that supervision, feedback mechanisms and performance appraisal practices have great impact on employee performance. Consequently, SMEs who are keen on these proposals have greater chances of realizing greater efficiency and competitiveness. The results underline why the SME managers must invest on employee-centred performance strategies in order to maintain organisational growth.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proffered:

- i. Enhancement of Supervisory Support: SMEs ought to develop supervisory behaviour, whereby the supervisors are trained on the communication, monitoring, and leadership skills. Supervision is important to bring about clarity in tasks, minimize errors, and enhance performance.
- ii. Efforts should be made in implementation of Structured Feedback Systems: Managers are expected to make employees have timely, clear, and positive feedback. The workflow must include feedback sessions that will foster constant improvement.
- iii. Embrace Open Performance Appraisal Culture: SMEs need to institute and enforce fair, objective and predictable appraisal systems. Employees should be provided with clear assessment criteria so that no biases occur and the process is more likely to be trusted.
- iv. Encourage Employee Involvement: employees should be involved in setting performance targets and feedback. Contribution helps to promote a sense of responsibility, dedication and ownership.
- v. Enhance Organisational Channels of Communication: Proper communication pathways must also be established so that there is free communication among the employees and the supervisors. This enhances trust and good working atmosphere.

Suggestions for Future Research.

Future researchers can take into account:

- i. It will be necessary to extend the research to other geopolitical regions of Nigeria besides the SMEs in Delta State in order to have a comparison of the findings.
- ii. Applying other statistical methods like regression modeling or structural equation models to give more in-depth information.
- iii. To get deeper insights about how the employees perceive the systems of supervision and appraisal, it is suggested to conduct qualitative studies.

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