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Perception of Performance Appraisal of Academic Staff in a Chartered
Private University in Uganda

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Declaration

I, Enoch Kimanje, do hereby declare that this dissertation titled "Perception of Performance Appraisal of Academic Staff in a Chartered Private University in Uganda" is my original work; and to the best of my knowledge, nobody has published or submitted this work for any other degree award to any other university or institution before.


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Approval

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Dedication

To all my beloved prayer partners

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List of Abbreviations

PA	Performance Appraisal
HA	Hard Applied
HP	Hard Pure
SA	Soft Applied
SP	Soft Pure
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
RAU	Rock of Ages University
EASHESD	East African School of Higher Education Studies and Development
MFD	Male Faculty Dean
FFD	Female Faculty Dean
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HE	Higher Education
HODs	Heads of Departments
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education

Abstract

Performance appraisal (PA) is key in functional higher education institutions for enhancing employee productivity and institutional success. However, how favourably employees perceive their PA is equally very important. In this study, while being guided by the three dimensions (distributive, procedural & interactional) of organisational justice theory advanced by Greenberg in 1986, I explored the perception of PA held by the academic staff in a chartered private university in Uganda. The study was instigated by the persistent complaints from a section of staff over irregularities of PA exercise in this University. Using a qualitative research methodology, I collected primary data mainly through in-depth interviews from purposively selected academic staff, some of whom were academic deans. For ethical reasons, I concealed the identity of the University I studied and the study participants. I analysed the data by using the framework analysis technique and reported the study findings using a narrative style of thick descriptions. The findings revealed that most members of the academic staff perceive that PA benefits the staff and the University, but some were disappointed by the way the outcomes were distributed. Some staff did not perceive their PA process to be fair partly because they were not fully involved in it. The staff had different perceptions of their interactions with their appraisers during PA. To be satisfied with the appraisal exercise, the staff preferred interactions with appraisers whose communications were clear and connected to their individual and institutional goals. Overall, the staff did not perceive their PA practice to be a fair and consistent measure of their actual performance due to irregularities in it. Nonetheless, the unfairness in the PA practice seemed to contradict the Christian faith that the University proclaims as its foundation. I concluded that the academic staff at the University I studied held varied perceptions of PA. I thus recommended that the university managers should not only train the academic staff in the conduct of PA but also design an appraisal programme that builds a perception of fairness among them. To sum up, the University should institute an appraisal exercise that befits its Christian beliefs.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Overview

The importance of performance appraisal (PA) in functional workplaces is no longer debatable. According to Rafikul and Rasad (2006) and Chen and Kuo (2004), PA has become an inseparable and disputable part of any work organisational life because it has proved to be an effective tool for enhancing employee productivity. However, how employees perceive PA in many workplaces seemingly varies from individual to individual and some of their perceptions seriously appear to undermine its usefulness. This scenario might not be any different from what could be happening at a chartered private university that I studied in Uganda. I randomly assigned the University I studied 'Rock of Ages University' as its pseudonym and 'RAU' as its code for ethical reasons. In my study, therefore, I explored the perception of PA held by academic staff at Rock of Ages University (RAU) in Uganda. My study was instigated by the persistent complaints of stakeholders over the lukewarm attitudes that both the appraisees and the appraisers seemed to exhibit towards an exercise that was not only costly and time-consuming, but which the university management believed could improve the institution's performance. In this chapter, I have presented the background to the study, the statement of the problem, study objectives, and research questions. Besides, I have also presented the scope, significance, and justification of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

I have presented the background of the study in four parts. In the first part, I have presented the historical perspective of my study problem. In the second part, I have looked at the theory on which I anchored the study. In the third part of this chapter, I have

conceptualised the key concepts on which I focused the study. In the final part, I have presented the contextual dimension to my research problem.

1.1.1 Historical Perspective. The practice of performance appraisal (PA) has occupied the attention of researchers in human resource management (HRM) for several years. The practice has been formally or informally present throughout history and has advanced significantly over centuries in all functional workplaces (Murphy & Cleveland, 1991). Consciously or subconsciously, objectively or subjectively, PA is an ongoing process that involves everyone within the workplace (Hall & Torrington, 1998). Although the process is somewhat different today; formally, evaluating employees can be generally traced way back to the third century (222 AD) in China when a Chinese philosopher Sin Yu criticised a biased rater of the Wei Dynasty whom he accused of rating men, not by their merits but his likes and dislikes (Patten, 1977; Wiese & Buckley, 1998). This kind of appraisal later spread to other parts of the world including Ireland in the 1600s, Scotland in the 1800s, the United States by the early 1800s, and Turkey in the 1940s (Flaniken, 2009; Johnson, 1995). Recommendations such as ‘a a good-natured man’ or ‘a knave despised by all’ were commonly used to describe the performance of individual employees at work (Bellows & Estep, 1954).

Further, following the success of the appraisal system used in the Armed Forces, the senior management of large US corporations then, wanted to test this technique within their organisations; and so, they started hiring many of the officers who had applied the practice in the Army to help them perform PA for their public organisations in 1915. The information obtained through performance measurement provided the basis for establishing accountability so that the citizens and elected officials could assess what

programmes they had achieved with the funds provided. This practice spread to all levels of the US government, in non-profit agencies, and around the world (Biswanath, 2000).

Over time, the tools for rating the workers' performance evolved from global rating towards man-to-man rating and then to trait-based rating (Wiese & Buckley, 1998). Nevertheless; first, top management hardly appraised their performance using these appraisal tools but they used the same tools to uniformly appraise all other workers regardless of their skills and duties. Second, the exercise tended to focus more on past actions of employees instead of their future goals. Lastly, the appraisals were always conducted by the supervisors with very little input from their supervisees (Wiese & Buckley, 1998). This made the supervisees (or appraisees) to perceive PA undesirably. However, according to Khan, Khan, and Khan (2017) and Farrell (2013), PA became prominently practiced in the nineteenth century. Other scholars like Taylor (2005) claimed that it was used for making administrative decisions, purposely to determine wages and promotions. Indeed, Taylor (2005) viewed PA chiefly as a form of merit rating developed to legitimise employee's wages and performance levels. With time, different aspects and uses (e.g., employee development, organisational planning & documentation, systems maintenance) of PA evolved.

Further, Khanna and Sharma (2014) claimed that because the practice of PA was successfully used during the First World War, so it was adopted to evaluate industrial workers shortly thereafter. Managers used PA not only to evaluate how efficient the workers were but also to determine wages and other forms of incentives. This scheme of PA became popularly known as the merit rating programmes (Flaniken, 2009). This kind of practice continued up to the early 1950s (in Turkish State Railways & after 1960 in

some private organisations), except that PA techniques began to be applied across a broad spectrum of workers including technical, professional, and managerial personnel. In reality, from that time, many governments for example, the US government recognised PA as a management tool for all federal employees by 1978 (Flaniken, 2009). However, the performance-appraisal systems used a century ago are primitive and cannot be fully applicable to contemporary management due to several changing trends including automated ones that have taken place over time. Several scholars (e.g., Cleveland, Murphy, & Williams, 1989; Land & Farr, 1980; Wexley & Latham, 1991) have already noted that, within the last century, improved appraisal systems were developed to enable managers to evaluate their employees' performance fairly and correctly. Over the years, therefore, most of the workplaces have relied upon some form of PA to determine the pay raises, promotions, training needs, and individual performance improvement of their employees.

Traditionally, higher education (HE) is not a business; so, concepts associated with a business-like corporation, such as hierarchical management of people, property, and profit are not appropriate for higher education institutions (Milton, 2004). Hence, any mention at a university by the administration that a programme is losing money or that the faculty could be better managed in their responsibilities brings forth disparaging comments that the administration has a corporate mentality and is treating the institution as a business. This again raises the question concerning the appropriateness of using PA for the faculty and certainly provides a forum for heated discussion and argument between faculty and administrators. However, Milton believes that there are clear reasons why stakeholders should consider higher education institutions (HEIs) a big business. These reasons include (a) the rating game and annual rankings between HEIs, (b) the close relationships between

research universities and large businesses, (c) multi-million dollar facilities, (d) faculty labour unions and strikes, (e) large salaries of university top administrators, and (g) the competition among schools to recruit students. Milton also recommended that if HEIs are going to lead the way forward, rather than being directed by outside constituents, they must think about their people, property, and productivity in business terms. It is therefore clear that the concept of PA was imported and fits more easily into a bureaucratic type of governance model of HEIs. As universities continue to experience increased demand for accountability, and perhaps corresponding changes in their governance structures, it will be important to determine how and where PA fits best within this evolving structure (Forrest, 2011).

Further, much as the main business of universities is to create and impart knowledge and disseminate scholarly ideas through research, universities also attract some form of monetary grants from government and other sources such as non-government organisations (NGOs). This subsidy in some ways serves as a third-stream income for universities; and this also trickles down to research-active academics, thus making the business of research publication a commercial enterprise rather than scholarly engagement (Bogt & Scapens, 2011; Flaniken, 2009). This scenario, therefore, calls for the application of a business tool including assessing staff performance.

Other factors notwithstanding, the practice of PA in higher education (HE) began to receive significant attention in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Alexander, 2000). This was due to an increase in competition for scarce resources and the struggle for survival, rising customer expectation about quality, rapidly changing technology, a decrease in the public's trust in the sector, and demand for accountability by accrediting associations,

funding agencies, and the public. Additionally, there was a growing international competition concerning students' enrolment, faculty expertise, and research achievements (Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2004). Such pressures, therefore, raised a need to consider the position of PA in ensuring efficacy in HEIs.

Smith (1995) claimed that the appraisal practice in HEIs started in British universities in the late 1970s with a recommendation of the Jarrett Report to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) of 1987 that proposed universities adopt a more systematic management style of governance. In the same year, the CVCP that was also responsible for recommending national salary scales to the government stated its commitment to a systematic staff appraisal. The stakeholders of HEIs started asking these institutional managers for higher levels of accountability that prompted the institutions to adopt and lay emphasis on staff PA systems (Alexander, 2000; Forrest, 2009). Indeed, the faith-based HEIs were also confronted with the same issues including; difficult economic limitations, greater degrees of accountability, and measurement of educational results (Milton, 2004). They therefore in the due course started looking for ways to deal with financial, environmental, and managerial challenges while dealing with changes in student career interests and educational needs as well as the competition from other educational institutions. Since then, staff PA has been considered a highly important issue to be effectively embraced by all academic professionals as an essential aspect that has continuously triggered managers and scholars to begin implementing, evaluating and studying staff appraisal schemes in various HEIs (Flaniken, 2009; Karkoulian, 2002).

Based on the preceding facts, several previous scholars have studied PA. Unfortunately, they have focused more attention on the format, psychometric and accuracy issues related

to PA, while less attention has been paid to the perception of PA held by employees (Levy & Williams, 2004; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). The managers of HEIs also greatly need to have a clear understanding of their employees' perceptions of the practice for a more effective appreciation and implementation of this costly managerial undertaking to limit the related consequences of low motivation, commitment, and disguised loyalty by staff (Bruns, 1992; Kreitner & Kinicki, 1998). Additionally, Malos (1998) noted that the modern approach to the PA system is the use of 360-degree technique which provides performance feedback from a full cycle ranging from employees to managers within the organisation. In this modern development, managers measure the performance of an employee against set objectives usually called Management by Objectives (MBO). Despite this, PA possesses a major problem for most workplaces to implement starting with the appraisee to the appraiser because as Holland (2006) observed, neither supervisors nor subordinates have a very high opinion of the exercise within the educational arena.

Although there is substantial literature on the use of PA in the for-profit world, there are gaps in the scarce empirical studies available concerning the perception of appraisal held by the staff in higher education (Cintron & Flaniken 2011). Indeed, the challenges of scanty empirical studies are alarming in developing countries of Africa. By implication; first, I could not describe the findings of the accessible empirical studies as a true reflection of the general state of affairs across other institutions. Second, except for a few of these studies (e.g., Atieno, 2014; Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012; Onyango, 2013), the rest were conducted in the western world. Third, of the previous studies on PA (Atieno, 2014; Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012; Farrell, 2013; Prasetya & Kato, 2011; Shrivastava & Purang, 2011), the vast majority such as Boachie-Mensah and Seidu (2012) and Femi

(2013) employed quantitative methodology yet such methods are known for measuring attitudes and opinions (Duffy & Chenail, 2009). In my study, I used qualitative methodology to explore the perception of PA held by employees. Lastly, most of the studies (e.g., Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012; Femi, 2013; Onyango, 2013; Prasetya & Kato, 2011; Shrivastava & Purang, 2011), used other workplaces other than private universities (or HEIs) as their study areas and they were not particularly conducted in Uganda. Such methodological and contextual gaps among others formed the genesis of my qualitative study. Granted, studies such as Atieno (2014) focused on perceptions of PA in other universities in the East African Community apart from Uganda. These studies targeted both academic and administrative university staff in general, making the Ugandan situation rather neglected in the genre of academic literature. It is against this backdrop that I undertook this study particularly to address the methodological and contextual issues by focusing on selected employees of Rock of Ages University in Uganda this time round.

1.1.2 Theoretical Perspective. There are several theories of motivation (e.g., equity theory, expectancy theory, goal-setting theory & justice theory) that different scholars have used to underpin studies related to the perceptions of PA. For example, Femi (2013) used goal setting and control theory to study the perception of PA and workers' performance. In my study, I opted to use the organisational justice theory postulated by Greenberg in the 1980s (Greenberg, 1986) because of two main reasons; first, perception depends on the actions of both the supervisee and the supervisor and their behaviours towards each other in the appraisal process promoting communication, participation, and trust. If the supervisor uses fair and transparent PA practices that benefit the supervisee, then supposedly, the latter will have the right perception of the practice. In today's competitive workplaces, employers need to avail their employees of organisational justice to reap the positive

outcomes of improved performance. Second, the theory focuses more on how individuals socially construct incidents of justice and injustice, which is a personal evaluation of the ethical and moral standing of managerial conduct. There is a certain conventional stigma attached to PA, that employees' inherent suspicion of being appraised is likely to stem from their perceptions of the way PA is conducted, as opposed to their intrinsic value (Brumback, 2003). Indeed, employees want to see their work performance assessed in a way that is accurate and unbiased. Perception of PA held by employees is mostly based on their feelings of how just the appraisal system is, and its functions. I, therefore, used the three (distributive, procedural & interactional) dimensions of the organisational justice theory of Greenberg (1986) to derive my study objectives (see Page 14, Section 1.3).

The organisational justice theory states that employees would be satisfied if they perceive the workplace environment to be fair (or just) in nature. However, if workers detect injustices in their workplaces, their perceptions of different actions taken by managers would be negative. Prior studies (e.g., Bretz Jr, Milkovich, & Read, 1992; Longenecker, Liverpool, & Wilson, 1988) revealed that the perception of fairness of PA practice held by employees is a significant factor in their acceptance and satisfaction of the practice. For that matter, a positive perception will create a positive working environment in the organisation while a negative one will create many problems for the organisation that eventually will affect its performance. The organisational justice theory assumes that perceptions can influence attitudes leading to varied impacts on both employee performance and organisational success.

1.1.3. Conceptual Perspective. My study constituted two key concepts. These were performance appraisal (PA) and perception. The terms “performance” and “appraisal”

make up the concept of PA. “Performance” according to Kumari and Malhotra (2012) is, “what is expected to be delivered by an individual or a set of individuals within a time frame. What is expected to be delivered could be stated in terms of results or efforts, tasks, and quality, with the specification of conditions under which it is to be delivered” (p.78). The term “appraisal” can mean different things in different situations. According to Shelley (1999), an appraisal can be broadly classified either as developmental appraisal focusing on both training to address short and long-term career needs, or evaluative appraisal focusing on managerial control and judgement such as promotion and pay raise among others. Similarly, Groeschl (2003) suggests that the basic concept of the appraisal process is to identify staff performance gaps for improvement.

Remarkably though, the specific definition of the term “performance appraisal” as one of the most significant concepts in human resource management (HRM) is still controversial because a flurry of researchers (e.g., Bretz Jr et al., 1992; Khan, 2017) in the past decades have defined it differently. Arguably, different authors (e.g., Aggarwal & Thakur, 2013; Khanna & Sharma, 2014; Vallance, 1999) often use the concept of PA interchangeably with merit rating, service rating, performance review, employee evaluation, progress report, staff assessment, and fitness report among others. Nevertheless, according to Baker (1988), PA is a special form of evaluation, comparing an employee’s actual performance against set expected outcomes; a process to assess an employee’s performance over some time (Cole, 2001; Wiese & Buckley, 1998). Besides, Fletcher (2001) defined PA as a variety of activities through which organisations seek to assess employees and develop their competence, improve performance, and allocate rewards. For both appraisers and appraisees, PA generally means the annual interview that takes place between them to discuss the latter’s job performance during the previous 12 months and

compilation of action plans to encourage improved performance (Wilson & Western 2000).

In a similar view, Rudman (2002) referred to PA as “performance planning and review” and he saw it as a “process of planning an employee’s future work goals and objectives, reviewing job performance and work behaviours, assessing progress towards the pre-determined work goals, and discussing the employee’s training and development” (p. 437). To Armstrong (2006), PA is the formal assessment and rating of individuals by their managers at usually an annual review meeting. Likewise, Femi (2013) believes that PA is an assessment of employees’ efficiency at the workplace and it is usually done periodically to evaluate work performance. However, Cole (2001) cautions that supervisors should not use PA against their subordinates as a tool for punishment.

Furthermore, both Ismail, Asilah, and Rahmad (2016) and Khan et al. (2017) viewed PA is an instrument utilised to oversee employee’s performance successfully by systematic description of individual job-relevant strength and weakness to make a decision about the individual. However, Megira (2017) in a more comprehensive way asserted that PA is an opportunity for individual employees and those concerned with their performance, typically line managers (appraisers) to engage in a dialogue about their performance and development, as well as to get the support required from their managers. Without question, several of the preceding authors (Armstrong, 2006; Femi, 2013; Khan et al., 2017; Megira, 2017; Mohan, 2017) generally agree that PA is an evaluation of the performance of an individual employee over a given period. In a related view, the human resource manual of Rock of Ages University (RAU) also defines PA as a “management tool used to establish the extent to which set targets within the overall university goals are

being achieved by the members of staff” (p.1). This definition of PA is similar to Femi’s (2013), Khan et al.’s (2017), Megira’s (2017), and Mohan’s (2017) description of the concept of PA and in it the issues of PA outcomes, process as well as appraisee-appraisal interaction are embedded; as such, I adopted RAU’s definition of PA for my study.

Perception, on the other hand, is an adjective according to Knowles and Elliott (1998) coming from the verb ‘to perceive’ which means to understand or think of something in a particular way. Knowles and Elliott view perception as an idea, a belief, or an image one has because of how he or she sees or understands something. To many scholars (e.g., Kotler, 1994; Prasetya & Kato, 2011; Robbins, 1996; Rohim, 2015), perception is an internal process through which people get involved in choosing, organising, and interpreting the available information to form a meaningful picture of the world. Most of the early scholars such as Gibsons, Ivancevich and Donnelly Jr. (1996), Kinlaw, (1988), and Kotler (1994), therefore stressed that perception assists individuals in selecting, managing, storing, and interpreting stimuli into a whole world picture and meaning. These varied definitions imply that perception is an opinion a person forms about an object or individual and it largely depends on the nature of information one has about the variables involved. Indeed, individuals do not necessarily base perception on reality, but merely a standpoint from one’s particular view of a situation.

In the context of PA, Boachie-Mensah and Seidu (2012) observed that an employee’s perception would be beneficial to him or her depending on several factors. These factors include but are not limited to; feedback for improved performance, the opportunity for promotion, an avenue for personal development opportunities, a chance to be visible and demonstrate skills and abilities, and an opportunity to network with others in the

organisation. However, Boachie-Mensah and Seidu (2012) and Mullins (2007) claimed that, if employees perceive PA as an unreasonable attempt by management to exercise closer supervision and control over tasks they (employees) perform, various reactions may result. Perception is therefore important because employees base their behaviours on how they identify what reality is, not on reality itself. Consequently, an understanding of an employee's perception in a functional workplace is a very crucial issue in employee management. In effect, without an appropriate perception, a workforce cannot successfully perform any tasks in any workplace setting. In my study, I therefore generally looked at perception in terms of how members of the academic staff of RAU see or feel about their current PA practice regarding outcomes, process as well as appraiser-appraisee interaction during PA.

1.1.4 Contextual Perspective. I conducted my study at Rock of Ages University (RAU), which is one of the chartered faith-based private universities in Uganda using PA to evaluate the performance of its employees. Since its establishment in the early 1990s, RAU has made significant milestones as one of the progressing private universities in Uganda. Basing on the University's HR manual, the HR manager confirms that all their employees are subject to a mandatory satisfactory PA report from their supervisor(s) before any decision is taken about them. RAU, therefore, subjects an annual appraisal to its entire staff to ensure that they meet the set performance targets.

Although most of the university's employees seem to be aware that PA is among the most important HRM practices, the managers might not base such a practice on any serious formal purpose for which the institution designed it. Through my critical interactions with the employees of RAU at various occasions, the practice was purportedly facing various

rejections especially those related to the implementation aspects. These aroused serious concerns and varied feelings among the University's employees especially the academic staff. I could not, therefore, overemphasise the importance of exploring the perception of PA held by employees at RAU as this would help to develop individual employees improve their service delivery to feed into the institutional strategic plan and the nation's development plan. An understanding of this phenomenon was imperative and therefore formed the genesis of my study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Performance appraisal (PA) has become an indispensable part of every functional workplace life; hence, Rock of Ages University in its consecutive HR manuals indicates its commitment to conduct an annual PA for its entire staff to ensure that they meet the set performance targets. Unfortunately, it has no formal empirical evidence to show how its employees perceive the practice of PA in the institution. The preliminary investigations I conducted in the past few years pointed out that the University employees appear not to value the practice of PA. Records available in the HR Office indicated that PA is conducted irregularly and the promotions of some staff seemed not to have followed the required appraisal procedures. For example, there are instances where some members of staff were promoted from the rank of graduate assistant to lecturer without being promoted first to the rank of assistant lecturer. Some other members of staff often missed being appraised and it appeared no one cared about such anomalies. If such situations were true, then, it would imply that both the supervisors and the common staff were not valuing the practice of PA; yet, PA is not only a costly HR practice – but an important management tool. Besides, if the situation persists, it could curtail the institution's contribution to the achievement of Uganda's national development plan (NDP 3) as well as the country's

Vision 2040. Therefore, there was a need to explore the perception of the academic staff about the outcomes and process of PA as well as the interactions that take place between the appraisers and appraisees at the University; thus, the genesis of my investigation.

1.3 Study Objectives

It is against the background of the research problem described in the preceding section that I set out to explore the perception of PA held by the academic staff of RAU. To achieve this broad primary objective, I formulated the following overarching research question: What is the perception of PA held by the academic staff of RAU? The specific objectives of my study included:

1. To explore the perception of PA outcomes held by members of the academic staff of RAU
2. To examine the perception of the PA process held by members of the academic staff of RAU.
3. To analyse the perception of appraiser-appraisee interactions during PA held by members of the academic staff of RAU.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the preceding specific research objectives, I formulated the following research questions:

1. What perception of PA outcomes do members of the academic staff of RAU hold?
2. How do members of the academic staff perceive the process of PA at RAU?
3. How do members of the academic staff of RAU perceive their appraiser-appraisee interactions during PA?

1.5 Scope

I focused on RAU as my key critical instance of the chartered private universities in Uganda. I explored the perception of PA held by academic staff regarding PA outcomes and process as well as appraiser-appraisee interactions during PA. The organisational justice theory postulated by Greenberg (1986) guided me in my study. I employed the qualitative research approach and the hermeneutic phenomenological research design to conduct the study. Members of academic staff having individual-lived appraisal experiences with at least a Master's degree qualification together with their faculty deans served as my study participants. I considered what was happening in the University concerning the PA practice. I collected the data between September 2018 and March 2019.

1.6 Significance

I expect my study to be significant to academicians and policy makers as well as the University's stakeholders in different ways. First, I hope that the study findings can assist the managers of RAU with a better understanding of the perception of PA held by their academic staff regarding appraisal outcomes, process, and appraiser-appraisee interaction

during PA so that they design a befitting appraisal programme. Second, I hope that the study findings can help fill the knowledge gap that exists in Greenberg's (1986) organisational justice theory and the related scanty literature about the perception of PA held by academic staff in private universities. Lastly, I hope that the findings of my study can form a basis for further research into the issues of a fair PA system in private universities and other HEIs in Uganda and beyond.

1.7 Justification

First, there was scanty information about the perception of PA held by the academic staff at RAU since its inception in the early 1990s. Yet other authors (e.g., Aguinis, 2009; Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2007) observed that if superiors conducted fair appraisals, they would create benefits to employees and their workplaces. My empirical study findings therefore can enable the managerial-leadership of RAU to appreciate the perception of PA held by their academic staff as well as understand its usefulness when properly implemented.

Second, the ever-increasing costs of higher education (HE) have augmented the demand for accountability, attracting pressure for RAU's managers to adopt PA systems to ensure 'value for money' in the institution. I thus hope that my study findings can give RAU managers impetus to improve the existing PA exercise and provide solutions for them to meet the increasing accountability demands from all the stakeholders (right from the policymakers to the students) aimed at improved performance. This is particularly true because the University almost has one source of income (i.e. tuition). I, therefore, hope that PA can help the superiors of RAU to use the institutional resources more efficiently.

Finally, I am hopeful that my study has laid the foundation for the broader understanding of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice perceptions of PAs of the academic staff of RAU. Such a contribution can be helpful to future researchers who would intend to use the organisational justice theory as postulated by Greenberg (1986).

1.8 Summary

I have divided the first chapter into various sections. In section one; I have highlighted the historical, theoretical, conceptual, and contextual background of the study. In section two, I have described the statement of the problem in the context of my study area; hence, the need to explore the perception of PA held by the academic staff at RAU. I have derived the research questions from the three study objectives. Further, I have described the scope of the study in terms of content, theoretical, geographical, sample, and temporal scope. I have also discussed the significance and the justification of my study in this chapter. In the next chapter, I have discussed the theoretical stance on which I anchored my study, drawing on the organisational justice theory. I have also presented the literature review related to the perception of PA held by employees following the study objectives.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Overview

The practice of performance appraisal (PA) has considerable importance in all functional and competitive workplaces. Similar to any other workplaces, higher education institutions (HEIs) evaluate their employees' performance for effective human resource management (HRM) functions such as recruitment and placement, training and development, and determining pay for performance among others (Gurbuz & Dikmenli, 2007). According to Boachie-Mensah and Seidu (2012), perception influences people's judgement and attitudes towards a particular phenomenon. I expected that the stakeholders of RAU might hold a diverse and unknown perception of PA. Without a clear understanding of the perception of PA of stakeholders at their respective workplaces, implementing this costly HRM practice would be challenging. In this chapter, I have begun with the theoretical review and then, I have reviewed literature related to perceptions of PA held by stakeholders in workplaces.

2.1 Theoretical Review

Scholars have already postulated different management theories (e.g., equity theory, goal-setting theory, expectancy theory, justice theory) that explain how perceptions of individuals form and operate concerning performance aspects at workplaces. In this regard, Locke and Latham (1990) essentially premised goal-setting theory on the understanding that some individuals perform better when specific goals are set as there is the tendency for them to remain focused and expend additional efforts to achieve set goals. The theory is predicated on the argument that (1) individuals have different goals, (2) act to achieve such goals if there is a chance of succeeding, and (3) the value of the goal affects the level of motivation (Locke & Latham, 1990). The theory further postulates

that not only does assign specific goals to individuals or teams result in improvement of performance but also enhance goal acceptance through employee involvement and increasing the challenges of goals leads to increased motivation and improved performance. Apart from being challenging, goals should also be stipulated and a feedback mechanism installed. Involving employees in the goal-setting process is crucial for performance management to be effective and successful.

Besides, according to Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, an employee performs or is motivated to do so according to the expected result of the work done. Vroom concluded that people will be motivated to the extent that they can perceive links between effort, performance, and rewards available. He further argued that performance is a vital component of the expectancy theory. Specifically, he was concerned with the linkage between effort and performance. The employees need to know what to expect after a given task, however, management must communicate what is expected of the employees. Furthermore, he argued that they must feel confident that if they exert an effort within their capabilities, it will result in a satisfactory performance as defined by the criteria by which they are being measured. However, Vroom under-estimated the fact that employees should feel confident in the process of evaluation in that, if they perform as they are being asked, they will achieve the rewards they value. The applicability of the expectancy theory found empirical support in a study conducted by Aguinis (2013), which demonstrated that performance management systems are more effective when results (performance) are directly tied to the reward system (valence).

However, the goal-setting theory by Locke and Latham (1990) and the expectancy theory by Vroom (1964) do not clearly mention about the perceptions employees hold concerning

the rewards allocation, the procedure used to reward them, and the superordinate-subordinate interactions as they perform their responsibilities at the workplaces. I, therefore, moulded my study on the organisational justice theory that Greenberg advanced in the mid-1980s. This theory has its origin in the work of Adams Stacey's equity theory of the 1960s. According to Adams (1963), individual employees are motivated to work harder basing on their judgement of equity and inequity at work, which they derive by comparing themselves and others on the basis of their inputs at work and the eventual outcome they receive. Greenberg later advanced this idea in 1986 to formulate the organisational justice theory which states that employees perceive the workplace environment to be fair. An employee's attitude and behaviour towards the workplace and its practices depends on the personal evaluation of the ethical and moral standing of the managers. According to the theory, employees will judge whether pay, promotional opportunities, and other work-related practices are just or not, to determine their work attitude and behaviour; and this consequently will affect their perceptions on the justice of how superiors conduct employee-related practices in a workplace.

According to Greenberg's (1986) organisational justice theory, human beings are specifically interested in distributive, procedural, and interactional dimensions of justice. The distributive justice dimension deals not only with the perceived fairness of the outcomes (rewards or benefits) or their allocations that individuals in organisations receive (Folge & Cropanzano, 1998), but also with what the decisions are at the end of the appraisal process, or the content of fairness (Tang & Sarsfield-Baldwin, 1996). The outcomes distributed may be tangible such as pay and promotions among others or intangible such as praise. Managers can foster the perception of distributive justice among employees when they (employees) perceive PA outcomes to be equally applied

(Adams, 1963). According to Erdogan (2002), employees in most workplaces compare their efforts with the PA ratings they receive in addition to the hard work of their co-workers. Distributive justice posits conditions under which employees perceive particular distributions and allocations of rewards as fair. The fairness of PA ratings establishes distributive justice perception of PA among fellow staff. However, some studies such as Bartol, Durham, and Poon (2001), found out that employees expect their performance ratings above average concerning others to be satisfied and motivated at their workplace. In my study, I have looked at distributive justice in the same manner to guide me in exploring the perception of PA outcomes held by the academic staff at RAU.

The procedural justice dimension in the PA context refers to the fairness of the procedures appraisers use to decide the outcomes of appraisals to be allocated to appraisees (Warokka, Gallato, Thamendren, & Moorthy, 2012). In the PA exercise, procedural justice addresses issues of fairness regarding the methods, mechanisms, and processes used during the appraisal sessions and standards implemented at workplaces that lead to outcomes (Palaiologos, Papazekos, & Panayotopoulou, 2011). In other words, procedural justice conveys perceptions of workers towards the right processes followed at the workplace during any HR practice (Tang & Sarsfield-Baldwin, 1996). When individuals feel that they have a voice in the process or that the process involves characteristics such as consistency, accuracy, ethicality, representativeness, and lack of bias among others, then procedural justice is said to prevail (Storey, 2007; Leventhal, 1980). In my study, I have used procedural justice, in the same manner, to guide me in examining the perception of PA process held by the academic staff at RAU.

The interactional justice dimension (also promoted by Bies & Moag, 1986) is based on the importance of the quality of the interpersonal treatment people receive when

procedures are implemented. It emphasises “the importance of normative expectations of truthfulness, respect, and justification as fairness criteria of interpersonal communication by workers in the application of work processes” (Warokka et al., 2012, p.15). Highlighting the importance of interactional justice, Mikula, Petrik, and Tanzer as cited in Skarlicki and Folger (1997), reported that a considerable proportion of perceived injustices do not concern distributive or procedural issues in the narrow sense but instead refer to how subordinates are treated interpersonally during their interactions and encounters by their superiors. In this regard, Walsh (2003) views the strength of interaction while executing managerial functions as a significant contributing factor to fairness perception. This implies that interactional justice focuses on how supervisors treat their supervisees whom they subject to their authority, decisions, and actions in an organisation. I have used interactional justice the same way in my study to guide me in analysing the perception of appraiser-appraisee interaction during PA held by the academic staff at RAU.

Although I opted to use the organisational justice theory to anchor my study, I was aware that it has some limitations in the performance management system perceived by employees. Scholars do not agree on the number of dimensions of organisational justice. For instance, researchers like Liljegren and Ekberg (2009) and DeConinck (2010) studied organisational justice as a three-factor model yet some others such as Colquitt (2001) suggested a four-factor model. In the same line, Byrne (1999) and Byrne and Cropanzano (2000) believed that organisational justice is a multi-foci construct, where employees see justice as coming from a source - either the organisation or their supervisor. Several researchers like Karriker and Williams (2009) used the multi-foci model in exploring the possibility that justice is more than just three or four factors. Based on the preceding facts

on justice perceptions, scholars such as Baldwin (2006) and Thurston Jr and McNall (2010) among others, agreed with the fact that organisational justice is a multi-dimensional concept which managers and employees often looked at in terms of distributive, procedural, and interactional justices. I considered the three dimensions of justice as proposed by Greenberg (1986), Baldwin (2006), and Thurston Jr and McNall (2010) to explore the perception of PA focusing on the outcomes and process as well as appraiser–appraisee interaction during PA.

Secondly, I could hardly find empirical studies (Matlala, 2011; Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008) about employee perceptions based on organisational justice theory that employed qualitative paradigm and used knowledgeable study participants sampled purposively. Scholars had conducted most of the dearth existing studies in distinctly different cultures (or context) mostly in the developed world. None of these studies used the organisational justice theory from the point of view of employee perception in private universities in developing countries. The findings of such studies, thus, may not be a true reflection of employee perception across the private universities. I, used the theory as a guide in my qualitative study to explore the academic staff perception of PA at RAU this time round.

Employees may sometimes perceive that they are performing at an outstanding level while the supervisor sees such performance as average. Consequently, there is a chance that organisational justice theory may involve emotions on the part of employers in assessing the performance level of employees (Gupta & Upadhyay, 2012). Additionally, appraisers may commit rater errors due to PA biases during the process of evaluation of their employee performance. In some cases, the appraisers do not have the required information and competency to evaluate their employees. I have avoided this scenario by purposively

sampling the study participants whom I believed had the related required training and lived experiences that I took to be ‘information-rich’.

The organisational justice theory is sometimes viewed by many managers as time-consuming, burdensome, and interestingly a very controversial aspect of managerial issues, especially when it comes to the determination of related rewards in the workplace (Folger, Konovsky, & Cropanzano, 1992). For example, managers may deny the deserving employees merit pay increases, bonuses, or promotional benefits and instead give the same to the undeserving employees probably because of ‘political’ reasons. This vice leads to dissatisfaction, friction, and resentment among employees in a workplace because of supervisors’ subjectivity. Consequently, the vice insinuates employees to deviate from their goal targets. I controlled this limitation by equipping myself with excellent interview skills (paraphrasing, clarification, summarising, a reflection of feelings, self-revelation, empathetic listening) during interview sessions with my study participants in addition to triangulating my data collection methods.

2.2 Related Literature

2.2.1 Perception of Performance Appraisal Outcomes Held by Employees at Workplaces.

Several scholars for many years have focused specifically on how employees perceive the outcomes of PA in their different work contexts. However, the studies about the same have led to much confusion and tension in workplaces (Chan, 2001). Although scholars continue to rage on about the purpose(s) of PA, it is certainly not because there has not been enough research in this area (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995).

The practice of PA may not be the most popular human resource (HR) function within the educational arena as it stands. Other authors (e.g., Holland, 2005; Nyaoga, Kibet, & Magutu, 2010) found out that neither academic staff nor their administrators have a very high opinion of the performance rating process. Furthermore, Holland (2005) and Nyaoga et al. (2010) found out that performance appraisals are a required bureaucratic ritual in education institutions and that institutional managers do carry out these appraisals for a formality's sake. Additionally, Fletcher (2001) discovered that PA is a part of a wider approach to integrating HRM strategies known as performance management by which organisations seek to assess employees and develop their competence, enhance performance and distribute rewards.

The usefulness of performance appraisal practice ranges from managing individual and team performance to achieving organisational objectives. This practice is an important tool in the hands of personal management because this technique accomplishes the main objective of the development of people by appraising their worth as Khanna and Sharma (2014) disclosed. Meanwhile, Thamendren (2011) revealed that the practice of PA helps managers to allocate rewards for their employees, provide development advice as well as obtain their perspectives, and justice perception about their jobs, supervisors, and organisation in general. In this respect, most of the workplaces including HEIs rely upon some form of performance appraisal systems to decide the pay raises, promotions, training needs, and individual improvement of the employees (Cleveland, Murphy, & Williams, 1989). However, the allocation (or distribution) of PA outcomes keeping others factors constant (e.g., PA process, organisation culture, as well as appraiser-appraisee interaction during the practice) affects the way employees perceive the practice of PA as Greenberg (1986) claimed.

Further, Mathis and Jackson (2008), Fukui (2015), and Bendaraviciene (2010) summarised the purposes of PA basically into administrative and developmental outcomes. In the former, managers use PA for making payments and other administrative decisions about employees like promotion; while in the latter, the emphasis is on employee development such as identifying training and development needs and planning of future opportunities.

However, Cleveland, Murphy and Williams (1989) described four types of uses of PA: between person, within-person, system maintenance, and documentation. Between person, uses are what managers refer to as administrative purposes - consisting of recognition of individuals' performance to make decisions regarding salary administration, promotions, and so forth. Within person uses are purposes identified in management by objectives, such as feedback on performance strengths and weaknesses, identify training needs and determine assignments and transfers. PA also helps in achieving organisational goals, which managers referred to as system maintenance uses. Finally, documentation uses of PA meet the legal requirements by documenting HR decisions. According to Wiese and Buckley (1998), all these purposes of PA in an organisation may not be met simultaneously by the use of one PA tool that might have been designed for one type of purpose. This formed my basis for exploring the perception of PA outcomes held by academic staff at RAU.

In this regard, the distributive justice dimension of organisational theory posits conditions under which workers perceive particular allocations of rewards as just or fair. Individuals' satisfaction with their jobs depends on the actual benefits they receive from doing their work as well as their perception of fairness in how that work is judged and rewarded

(Bretz Jr et al., 1992). Organisations are concerned with the perceived fairness of the appraisal systems and the distributive justice that involves the evaluation of the outcomes received by employees. The principle of distributive justice is therefore a significant step in understanding how people judge themselves and their work. An important implication of the principle of distributive justice is that: the greater the amount of inequitable treatment or the more managers violate the standards of justice, the greater the dissatisfaction and disapproval expressed toward the person(s) responsible for it.

Furthermore, differences in expectations regarding an outcome have the potential for creating conflicts among those who received the outcome. Distributive justice is concerned with the reality that not all workers are treated alike; the allocation of PA outcomes is differentiated in the organisation (Mwale, 2016). Meanwhile, Femi (2013) recommended that for appraisal to yield the desired justice outcomes, adequate attention should be paid to the avoidance of 'politics' attached to appraisal exercise and the pursuance of fairness and transparency.

Boswell and Boudreau (2000), investigated the relationship between employee perception of PA, specifically evaluative (salary, promotion & identifying poor performers) and developmental use (performance feedback, identifying training needs, determining of transfers & assignments) and employee attitudes towards both the appraisee and appraiser. The study surveyed 128 employees. The study revealed that employees were likely to be satisfied with the PA if it is used for career advancement (training & development). When management uses PA for development, it is a way to support employees' growth; but more importantly, it can directly influence employees' attitudes. These attitudes may in turn influence employee turnover, absenteeism and the performance of the organisation. The study suggests that because employees expect superiors to use appraisals for evaluation,

therefore it does not influence attitude in one way or another. It concluded that when superiors use PA for developmental purposes, it promotes positive perception: whereas when they use it for evaluative purposes, employees may not perceive it well. This study formed the basis of my qualitative study at RAU.

Further, Capadosa (2013), explored the PA system of the city government of Iloilo in the Philippines to determine the level of perceptions of the employees regarding the purpose of PA. Capadosa employed the descriptive exploratory methodology using interviews and survey questionnaires to collect data from permanent, temporary, and casual employees. His study revealed that overall; the employees agreed with all the items regarding the administrative and developmental outcomes of their performance appraisal system (PAS). While the study was recent, contextually, the researcher conducted it in a city government in the Philippines; and methodologically, the population (permanent, temporary & casual employees) was so diverse. Conversely, my view is that the researcher could not obtain in-depth perceptions of the employees from such an assortment of a sample to give a sufficient explanation of the objective of the study. The study findings, therefore, could not be a true reflection of the perception of PA outcomes held by the staff in other workplaces. This gave me room for exploring the perception of the outcomes of PA held by the academic staff at RAU using qualitative methodology.

Similarly, Farrell (2013) studied PA effectiveness from the perception of employees in an Irish consumer services company in Ireland. She adopted a survey research design and used questionnaires for data collection from the employees to measure their PA opinions and its success. The study findings revealed that the employees were happy with having a complete PA. However, the study had its flaws such as failure to identify the category of

employees who participated in the study. Thus, managers in another workplace such as RAU could not easily implement Farrell's study results; hence, the genesis of my study.

Additionally, Atieno (2014) studied employee perceptions of the importance of PA at Pan African Christian University, Kenya. She employed the descriptive survey research design, quantitatively collected and analysed data from permanent employees of the University. Atieno hence established that the University practiced PA with no relevance bearing on an individual's promotion, or other HR planning functions such as managers usually determined individual's development decisions based on it. Whereas the study was recent and the researcher conducted it in the context of a private university in a developing country within the East African Community where Uganda is a member country, still it has methodological and other gaps to be filled. First, the study employed the quantitative approach that is objective; yet no one can easily measure perceptions, because they vary depending on particular situations and the individuals involved. Second, the study was quantitative and the researcher carried it out in one university, yet quantitative researchers believe in studying objects in large numbers. Thus, there was a need to understand whether other private universities - particularly RAU in the Ugandan context face the same situation concerning the perceptions of PA outcomes held by members of the academic staff using the qualitative approach.

Further, Seem (2013) studied employee perception of the effectiveness of the PA system at the Teachers' Service Commission in Kenya. He used a descriptive survey research design and statistically collected and analysed data from 49 respondents (both supervisory & non-supervisory staff). Seem's study established that most employee's perception of PA at the commission was not based on realistic ideas; and therefore, not beneficial to their career growth. The study further indicated that the PA system in place was an avenue

through which supervisors rewarded those employees who were loyal to them. On the other hand, Prasad (2015) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation of personnel through the system of PA. He used quantitative methodology and found constructs relating to PA objectivity and transparency. Unfortunately, Seem and Prasad employed quantitative methodology in their respective studies, hence providing a methodological gap that I looked at to fill in my study using qualitative methodology.

Seniwoliba (2014), studied the concept of PA in both local and central government services in Ghana. He collected data using a questionnaire and interview guide, and he used descriptive statistics for data analysis. Seniwoliba found out that only the members of staff at a senior level who were due for promotion interviews initiated their appraisal for promotion reasons. The management virtually ignored all other purposes of PA such as target setting, performance review, training and reward. On the other hand, Haslam Bryman and Webb (1993) had earlier claimed two key dimensions of PA outcomes in practice that overlap. These are administrative (concerning the assessment of performance outcomes & linked to promotion and merit pay awards) and developmental (concerning staff developmental needs) purposes. Seniwoliba (2014) and Haslam Bryman and Webb (1993) conducted their studies in contexts other than HEIs and used mixed methodology; hence, their results could not be a true reflection of what was taking place at RAU – thus a basis for my study.

Prasetya and Kato (2011) studied employees' unsolicited perception towards the implementation of the PA system and salary system in an organisation called PT Telkom Indonesia. The questionnaire used in this study was such a simple form that respondents were free from a priori judgement in answering the questions. The data were then

transformed into numerical representation through the Prasetya-Kato weighting process to curve out the true perception of the respondents. The result showed that the perception of the employees for the assessment system and the salary system was synonymous with the corporate intention. The study concluded that employees sometimes perceive performance assessment applied in an organisation with a certain intention differently.

Ibeogu and Ozturen (2015) aimed at understanding the perceptions of employees towards performance appraisal (PA) in a workplace in Northern Cyprus. They collected data from workers and analysed them statistically. While Ibeogu and Ozturen found out that overall perception of workers towards the PA rating system was positive, the majority of the study participants perceived PA to be a compulsory organisational routine; hence, they did not see how it affected their career. The study also revealed that employees could only be satisfied with PA system when they see positive appraisal results such as pay rise, promotion, training and development, and other outcomes.

Jong et al., (2009) found out that when supervisors use PA to identify employees' performance mistakes as learning opportunities, they encourage creativity among the employees. Indeed, Krause (2004) studied the impact of supportive supervisory behaviour on innovation-based organisations, supports Jong et al s' assertion. Krause found out that employees are more likely to deviate from ordinary or routine behaviour to unconventional behaviour as well as implement innovative ideas if they believe their supervisors will not penalise them. The assumption is that perceptions of PA outcomes held by employees are beneficial depending on several factors. First, employees are likely to embrace any PA scheme meaningfully, if they perceive it as an opportunity for promotion and personal development. Second, they are more likely to be receptive and

supportive of any PA programme, if they perceive it as a useful source of feedback that helps to improve their performance (Mullins, 2007). On the other hand, if employees perceive PA as an unreasonable attempt by management to exercise closer supervision over their tasks, various reactions may result.

In summary, most of the recent past studies (e.g. Capadosa, 2013; Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012; Farrell, 2013; Mullins, 2007) I reviewed indicated that employees positively perceive PA outcomes. Nevertheless, other studies such as that of Femi (2013), Seniwoliba (2014), and Atieno (2014) sharing different results are available. It is noteworthy for me to suggest that performance appraisals affect employees either negatively or positively depending on their outcomes. At the same time, performance appraisals are not transferable across countries or institutions but are deeply rooted in the norms, beliefs, and values of a particular society. Additionally, I had my subjective views on PA outcomes due to my experiences as an academic staff in private universities. Therefore, such contradicting views from different studies on the subject matter inspired me to explore the perception of PA outcomes held by academic staff at RAU in Uganda.

2.2.2 Perception of Performance Appraisal Process Held by Employees at Workplaces.

Several scholars have already explored how supervisors conduct PA in different work contexts. According to Fletcher (2001), in any functional workplace, PA is a continuous process for all employees because, after hiring them, their superiors subject them to a periodical evaluation exercise to determine their: current position, performance improvement, achievements, and career plans. Besides, Fletcher (2001) revealed that the practice of PA was once associated with a rather basic process involving a line manager completing an annual report on a subordinate's performance and usually (but not always)

discussing it with him or her in an appraisal interview. Whilst this PA system used a century ago may still apply in several workplaces, many contemporary workplaces have adopted improved systems to evaluate the performance of their employees - fairly and correctly (Cleveland et al., 1989).

Today, best performance appraisals involve; integrating PA into a formal goal-setting system; basing appraisals on accurate and current job descriptions; offering adequate support, and assisting staff to improve performance (professional development opportunities). In all these efforts, the management ensures that appraisers have adequate knowledge and direct experience of the staff performance and that they conduct the appraisals regularly, as Fletcher (1994) revealed. The coherent appraisers' experiences of the PA process together with the knowledge about their respective individual staff performance in a private institution needed more research, hence the need to examine the perception of the PA process held by the academic staff at RAU.

According to Mollel (2017), the process of PA provides an opportunity to both the subordinate and supervisor(s) to take an overall view of workloads and volume and to look back at what the subordinate achieved during the reporting period and agree on objectives for the next planning period. Much as most employees according to Grote and Grote (1996) support the concept and purpose of PA, they have concerns about how their supervisors appraise them. However, practically both appraisers and appraisees often complain about the insufficient guidelines provided to direct the conduct of PA in the various workplaces. The root cause of the employee complaint is often centred on PA concentrating on assessing their past behaviours instead of the present - a situation which some superiors tend to exploit when victimising staff (Bersin, 2008).

According to Scullen, Mount, and Judge (2003), the process of PA is categorised into 1) establishing job criteria and appraisal standards; 2) timing of appraisal exercise; 3) selecting of appraisers, and 4) providing feedback. PA is therefore not a still but a dynamic evaluation process, which all stakeholders should view as planning the employees' performance, evaluating and improving the performance of the employees. However, early PA processes were simple, and involved ranking and comparing individuals with other people. This sort of person-based PA was fraught with problems; as such, it resulted in a transition to job-based assessments that are in use to date. Indeed, Welbourne, Johnson, and Erez (1998) noted that PA is being modified from being person-focused to behaviour-oriented with emphasis on those tasks or behaviours associated with the performance of a particular job. This implies that for PA to be effective, the process should be individualised, subjective, qualitative, and oriented towards problem-solving. In other words, superiors should base the process on clearly specified measurable standards and indicators of performance.

Khanna and Sharma (2014) advised that since what is being appraised is performance and not personality, personality traits irrelevant to job performance should therefore be excluded from the appraisal programme. However, this is not always the case because some institutions have to identify with their founding bodies' philosophies when appraising their staff for a competitive edge even if such attributes may not necessarily contribute directly to one's performance. This, therefore, formed the basis of my study.

While considering what the PA process entails, Pichler (2012) stressed that the process involves an individual employee and the immediate supervisor with an interchange between them regarding the individual job attainment over an agreed period. In a case where superiors provide employees with an opportunity to provide a voice in any

procedure, their perceptions of justice would improve. Thus, employees base a fair PA process on voice and the possibility of superiors hearing (listening to) them and basing their judgments on real facts. Specifically, perceptions of procedural unfairness can adversely affect employees' commitment, job satisfaction, trust in management, and their performance among other workplace-related issues (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001).

The relationship between participation in the PA process and various employee reactions was explored by Cawley, Keeping, and Levy (1998) through the meta-analysis of 27 studies containing 32 individual samples. These authors discussed and analysed various conceptualisations of participation and employee reactions. Overall, they (Cawley, Keeping & Levy) most strongly related the issue of appraisal participation in the process of PA to satisfaction, and value-expressive participation had a stronger relationship with most of the reaction criteria than instrumental participation.

Relatedly, Kim and Holzer (2016) studied antecedents to employees' perception of the process of PA. Their study revealed that employee participation in performance standard setting was positively associated with employee acceptance of the PA process. However, Kim and Holzer's study findings should be viewed cautiously due to unknown study area, methodology, sample size, and population used. The findings could not be a reflection on what was occurring in private universities; hence providing a basis for my study.

Mwale (2016) explored employee perception of PA in the public technical education vocational entrepreneurship and training sector (TEVET) in Zambia using the quantitative methods and participants of varying employment levels. His study established that employees were satisfied with the process of PA because the management integrated the

PA system into the institutions' culture. The study also found evidence of PA rating standards varying from supervisor to supervisor in the same institution. Much as Mwale's study was current and provided useful insights into perceptions of the PA process held by employees, its findings were exclusive to interpretation in the context of just a few institutions using a survey design in Zambia. Therefore, the results could hardly reflect the state of affairs in other educational institutions; thus, the genesis of my study this time round.

Naming (2005) carried out a replicated investigation of administrative staff usage and perception of PA in tertiary institutions in the United Kingdom (UK). The study used both positivist methodologies using the cross-sectional survey and phenomenological methodology and an explanatory case study. The research respondents were members of staff. The study found out that there was no evidence that the respondents wanted the managers to discontinue the PA process even though comments from those who had been through the process indicated a range of both positive and negative experiences. The respondents felt that they were involved in the pre-appraisal process. As such, their appraisal did not motivate the members of the staff much as they benefited from it in terms of their career development. However, this study had limitations - it was difficult to investigate all aspects of appraisees' perception of PA within a limited period of a master's project. It was also a replication study; thus, the questions asked were similar to the study of Analoui and Fell (2002) with administrative staff as respondents. As a result, scholars cannot confidently generalise such results across other HEIs. This allowed me to examine the perception of PA process held by the academic staff at RAU.

Seem (2013) studied employee perception on the effectiveness of PA system at the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) in Kenya. He found out that employees were not certain whether all of them were involved in developing the PA system that was in use. Hutu and Avasilcai (2011) established that the PA process is an opportunity to exchange information. This implies that the working goals (or expectations) have to be a joint venture between the supervisor and the employee in the process of PA. Khanna and Sharma (2014) emphasised that the process of PA should concentrate on the job of an employee, the environment of the organisation, and the employee him or herself because the three factors are inter-related and inter-dependent.

Further, Wanjala and Kimutai (2015) studied the influence of PA on workers' performance in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. The finding revealed high employee participation in the PA process that led to the fair perception of the process by the employees. Still, Mollel (2017), Hutu and Avasilcai (2011) agreed that the PA process is focused on the individual and his or her immediate supervisor; and it must involve an interchange between them regarding the individual job attainment over an agreed period - say the last six months or a year.

Pichler (2012) advised PA scholars to continue considering the importance of participation in the appraisal process. One antecedent to perceptions of organisational justice is the extent to which employees feel that they are involved in the PA decision-making practice. More so, Greenberg and Folger (1983) took the position that higher levels of justice are perceived when employees feel that they have an input in the PA process than when they do not perceive the opportunity to participate. Their participation in decision-making improves on an individual's perception of procedural justice, even when the decision is

unfavourable to that very individual (Bies & Shapiro, 1988). There is a need for both the appraisers and appraisees to consider their participation in the appraisal exercise more seriously and accord the process the necessary attention in the hope of improving the quality of work done at the institution. Besides, staff perception of the PA process needed more research hence the need for my study.

Other studies such as Kernan and Hanges (2002) also contended that employee input is related to procedural perceptions. One persistent debate related to the PA process is that supervisors and supervisees should discuss and agree on the objectives to ensure clarity and details of the job on which performance of the latter will be appraised during the appraisal period, and the rewards or sanctions expected by him or her. Consequently, PA should therefore be done in an environment that supports employees' feelings and where their voice matters in the process. This is consistent with the procedural dimension of organisational justice theory that emphasises the fairness that individuals feel when their perspective is taken into consideration by the supervisor in the appraisal process (Storey, 2007; Tyler, 1987). Focusing on procedural justice, Mollel (2017) emphasised that PA should be an integrated process that occurs regularly between supervisors and their subordinates.

Many of the preceding studies I have reviewed highlighted that participation is key in the PA process, but Roshidi (2005) recognised that in many workplaces, the spirit of implementing a fair PA process is absent. The appraisers conduct the exercise in a manner that deviates from the expected implementation causing the academic staff to develop varied perceptions towards the overall appraisal system. Most participants expressed how PA process reduces their confidence, motivation, and makes them less concerned about

the system. Following the procedural dimension of organisational justice theory by Greenberg (1986) together with the observations of other scholars such as Thibaut and Walker (1975), PA will be effective if the appraisal process is clearly explained to, and agreed upon by the people involved in the exercise. Without adequate participation of the key players, PA turns out to be counterproductive. PA exercise, therefore, involves a commitment to participation based on performance standards between the supervisor and the supervisee.

Furthermore, Khoury and Analoui (2004) studied how the academic staff in five Palestinian public universities viewed PA. In this study, teachers showed dissatisfaction towards the processes of PA because of reasons that they could view in any context, including a western context. For example, the top management disengagement and lack of ownership, poor training and communication, lack of feedback, and over-emphasis on students' feedback. Khoury and Analoui found out that all these factors lead to teachers' dissatisfaction, demotivation, and low morale. Indeed, the reasons why the teachers in the public universities got dissatisfied with the appraisal exercise probably were because the managers generalised the appraisal processes that were functional in a western context to be used in the Palestine context without taking time off to even train the appraisers. Ideally, the performance management process provides an opportunity for employees and their supervisors to collaborate to enhance work results and satisfaction. This process is most effective when both the employee and the supervisor take an active role and work together to accomplish the objectives of the organisation. However, there are several trends that are changing the style and relationship of the appraisal that my study examined. Nonetheless, appraisals must have a positive purpose, and employees must be active

participants in the process of their performance appraisal if they are to improve their job performance as Mollel (2017) reiterated.

Similarly, Forrest (2011) comprehensively reviewed the development and use of PA in 108 Christian colleges and universities in the United States and found a very high usage of staff performance appraisal. However, there was also a considerable dissatisfaction with the appraisal process due to; (a) lack of leadership support for the appraisal process, (b) supervisors not being held accountable for the timely completion of their appraisals, and (c) the lack of training provided to supervisors to do performance appraisals well.

Along a similar trend, Rector (2009) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of the faculty PA programmes at the selected private “faith-based” universities and colleges in the South-East United States. The study attempted to identify whether or not faculty members perceive faculty PA as effective. The study involved the full-time faculty of these institutions. The data were analysed using several strategies. Much as this was a descriptive study, the researchers conducted it using a survey relating to faculty perception of faculty performance evaluation. The results of the study indicated that a large number of faculty perceived that the evaluation programme at their institution accurately measured their overall performance. It also revealed that the majority of faculty were “satisfied” with the present process of evaluation at their institution, much as they were also a significant number “very dissatisfied” with the process of evaluation. These findings provided reference to the examination of the perceptions of the PA process held by the academic staff at RAU. The prevailing point of view according to RAU’s human resources manual (2017) concerning the PA process is that; after an employee has been

selected for a job and has worked for some time (probation), his/her performance is appraised.

In a relatively similar context, the result of a research conducted by Aslam (2011) in two universities (one public & one private) in Pakistan showed that in general, academic staff were unsatisfied with their PA due to poor communication, ignored performance interviews, and using one source to evaluate employees. The study depicted that reality was far from what the PA system aspires to. This was due to the matter of time for department heads and low motivation by faculty due to lack of encouragement by their heads. Besides, PA's procedure and the process were ambiguous because there were no clear instructions for implementing it. Accordingly, both the appraisees and appraisers were reluctant regarding attending performance meetings due to poor training and having no effective communication. However, Aslam (2011) illustrated that implementing PA while laying more emphasis on mentoring and training by the private university shows relatively positive reactions from participants. Most of these problems identified by Aslam (2011) are also stressed by other authors such as Mercer (2005), Rasheed, Yousaf, and Noor (2011), and Ojokuku (2013) who showed a positive manner by faculty members towards PA if it is conducted well.

According to Muchinsky (2012) and Werunga (2014), historically performance appraisal has been conducted annually or long cycle appraisals. However, many organisations are moving towards short cycles (every six months or quarterly) and some have been moving in shorter cycles (weekly). HEIs like other organisations need to move towards this developing trend. Besides, Smart (2005) concurs that performance appraisals conducted

more frequently (more than once a year) may have positive implications for both the organisation and the employee.

As a matter of best practice, institutions should conduct the appraisal not just by the supervisor alone but by both the supervisor and the performer (supervisee) as well. Indeed, Grote and Grote (1996) believed that a good process of PA is one in which both appraisers and appraisees jointly evaluate the degree to which the different elements of the plan were achieved. Once the employee executes the job agreed upon, the next step in the PA process is to assess how the job was done. Besides, in the process, it is important for supervisors together with their subordinates to recognise jointly where performance needs improvement, and then provide employees with the necessary support to improve it (Costello, 1994). PA, in this case, serves as a process of helping others (subordinates) and developing their performance through participation in an atmosphere of mutual respect. This also provided a basis to examine how members of the academic staff perceived the process of conducting PA in my study.

In brief, other studies (Mollel, 2017; Picher, 2012; Khanna & Sharma, 2014; Armstrong, 2012, etc.) I reviewed, described the varied employee perceptions of the PA process in different workplaces. Their findings generally indicate that it involves commitment to agreed performance standards between the supervisor and the supervisee. Thus, I had a strong ground to examine the perception of the PA process held by the academic staff at RAU.

2.2.4 Perception of Appraiser-appraisee Interactions during Performance Appraisal by Employees at Workplaces. In a PA context, interactional justice refers to the fairness of the appraisal-related communication and the appraiser-appraisee interaction (Erdogan,

2002). Regardless of the outcome, the fairness of communication between the appraiser and appraisee during the appraisal process will form interactional justice perceptions. Thamendren (2011) emphasised that PA is an ongoing communication process between an appraisee and appraiser in which the latter sets expectations, monitors performance, and provides feedback to the former. The information available will direct and develop employee performance by identifying training and development needs, correcting problems, and determining pay rise, and promotion. Employees also need a good piece of information flow during the PA process to provide them with feedback regarding their job.

For communication (or information flow) to be effective, the appraisee must perceive it as fair. Kernan and Hanges (2002) claimed that organisational (or administrators) communication to employees relates to interactional justice perceptions. Further, Kernan and Hanges clarified that the quality of supervisory communication could improve supervisee interactional perceptions. In this context, employees perceive supervisor trustworthiness; hence, reducing feelings of uncertainty. Indeed, Schweiger and Denisi (1991) suggested that the information provided should be accurate and timely to positively impact interactional perceptions.

The supervisor's behaviours determine the interactional justice in the PA setting. This implies that, even when procedures are fair, individuals may find the communication and interpersonal treatment involved in the process unfair. According to Burke, Weitzel, and Weir (1980), being a good listener and letting subordinates talk are important determinants of fairness. Thus, session behaviours of rater (i.e., courteous, respectful & providing a two-way communication) are likely to lead to positive interactional justice perception exhibited by the ratee. In addition to such behaviours (communication openness, respect &

consideration), raters may use other behaviours that may influence interactional justice perception. Raters may use impression management tactics, which may influence justice perception of the ratee.

Basing on the conventional wisdom of rater-ratee interaction used in conducting appraisals, Warokka et al. (2012) extended the literature of the effect of PA by connecting the employees' perception on fair PA and organisational justice practices. In this study, the participants were employees of large and well-established firms, considered to have well and transparent appraisal systems. The researchers used questionnaires to collect data and they processed it with factor analysis and regression. The results revealed that employees were more concerned with their interaction with the supervisors during and after the evaluation process. They were keen on knowing how their superiors evaluated them through receiving feedback after the PA process. However, the use of quantitative methodology to study perceptions might have restricted the participants' responses because feelings are better understood when studied qualitatively. This, therefore, provided a basis for my study using an interpretive paradigm based on hermeneutic phenomenology research design and focusing on RAU.

In the superior-subordinate relationship, trust is a key element. Several researchers (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Levy & Williams, 2004) claimed that trust issues could limit the effectiveness of PA. If ratees have low levels of trust for their supervisors, then, they may be less satisfied with the appraisal and may not readily accept feedback from the source. Mani's (2002) study suggested that trust in supervisors is important for determining satisfaction with the appraisal system. In examining factors that influence trust within the process, Korsgaard and Roberson (1995) submitted that when employees are given

assertive training and the opportunity to conduct self-appraisal, they report greater trust in their managers and a more positive attitude towards the appraisal practice. According to Mayer and Davis (1999), when an appraisal system is perceived as accurate, employees report higher levels of trust for management.

Another leader-member relationship issue is the impact of leader gender on performance ratings. According to Varma and Stroh (2001), the same-sex leader-member relationship would result in greater liking for subordinates. This, in turn, would result in higher leader-member exchange relationships as Duarte, Goodson, and Klich (1994) revealed. As to whether or not female and male managers rate performance differently, Furnham and Stringfield (2001) posited that male employees receive lower ratings than female employees. Female managers, as compared to male managers, rate male employees lower than they do female employees. This demonstrates potential rating bias due to gender. The nature of leader-gender and same-sex leader-member PA interaction and rating was unknown at RAU; thus, the need for its analysis.

Furthermore, a good appraisal interaction depends on the spirit of mutual trust between the appraiser and members of staff (appraisees). When there is no trust, appraisees will not be sincere to reveal their weaknesses because they would feel the role of PA is to victimise them (Mutula, 2002). Indeed, Mutula disclosed that the person appraising needs to have discussions with the staff as a whole to lay the foundation for appraisal. This creates confidence in the members of academic staff so that they can be open and where they feel the management style is faulty, they can say this in the knowledge that the appraisee and other members of the management team will review their style. Additionally, Agesa (2005) noted that there exists negative perceptions of PA where the teachers appraised are

uncomfortable, distressed and as a result, PA has been a potential cause of tension between headteachers and teachers. Consequently, the headteachers and teachers do not trust each other and therefore believe they will not benefit from the interaction. How true these sentiments are, was my concern in my study.

Ineffective (or poor) communication in the workforce (between superiors & subordinates) is a major contributing factor to negative perception and job dissatisfaction that in turn affects employee performance. This is usually a result of the managerial members of staff that work in isolation and do not know how to relate to and interact with their respective employees on a personal or professional level (Branham, 2005). Indeed, poor appraisal feedback leaves the employees feeling disconnected from the organisation; hence, affect negatively the level of their job satisfaction. This is detrimental to the wellbeing of the organisation as Gregory (2009) claimed. When employees feel neglected, they will tend to perform at a lower level which in turn affects the quality of their work performance. In other words, when superiors do not provide employees with feedback about how they have performed against the agreed targets, they will fail to know how they can improve their performance in the future.

In the study on job satisfaction and organisational commitment, Gunlu, Aksarayli, and Sahin Percin (2010) found out that if a company does performance appraisals, the results may be given in such a harsh tone that, rather than motivating an employee, it intimidates and an employee may feel uncomfortable in the workplace rather than being encouraged to achieve more. Moorhead and Griffin (1992), emphasised the crucial role of supervisors in developing a two-way communication system in which subordinates are involved so that they can learn from each other to improve their performance. Subordinates should

consistently explicate their ability to learn from others and assist them in their learning process. In this respect, even the newly hired staff members have to be knowledgeable about the institution, thus hastening their professional growth and development and in effect benefit the organisation.

2.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature on the perception of PA held by employees based on various workplaces. In the first section of the chapter, I have reviewed organisational justice theory that I opted for to guide me in my study. In the second section, I have dealt with the related literature on perception of PA outcomes, process as well as the perception of appraiser-appraisee interactions during PA. Studies into the motive and nature of perception of PA based on individual-lived experiences of academic staff were rare, particularly in the Sub-Saharan African private HEI context. Moreover, most of the studies I have reviewed utilised positivistic paradigm and quantitative approaches. Such studies hardly furthered the understanding of the perception of PA held by the academic staff of single cases. Hence, the review of the literature revealed methodological, content, and contextual gaps among others. These gaps provided a basis for exploring the perception of PA held by the academic staff at RAU in Uganda. In the next chapter, I have dealt with the research methodologyChapter Three

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Overview

In this chapter, I have presented my philosophical underpinnings, research design, description and selection of the study area, sampling, data collection methods, and instruments. I have proceeded with the discussion of data quality control, data management, and analysis, then ethical considerations and finally, I end it with a summary.

3.1 Philosophical Underpinnings

I subscribe to social constructivist philosophy; thus, it underpinned the methodology that I employed in exploring the perception of performance appraisal (PA) held by the academic staff. Supported by Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003), I claim that the features of the social environment are constructed as interpretations by individuals and they tend to be situational. Epistemologically, such arguments strengthened my assumption that common perceptions of PA go with individual commitment, age, status, and experience among other work-related aspects. A less committed employee or a less experienced one, in this case, is most likely to have altogether different perceptions from his or her highly committed or highly experienced counterpart. Perception of PA, therefore, is not there to be measured because it is not a given. First, my view aligns with that of Goldkuhl (2012) who asserted that the world is 'meaningless' unless people give it meaning. Second, I believe that social actors and people's perceptions construct reality. Indeed, individuals with their varied backgrounds, assumptions, and experiences contribute to the on-going construction of the existing reality in their broader perceptions through social interactions. In this regard, the issues under my study are therefore best understood through

interpretation and analysis of social, cultural, and institutional practices (Potrac, Jones & Nelson, 2014). I, thus acknowledge that individuals accord personal and situational *meanings* to realities.

Ontologically, I agree with the assertions of Gay and Airasian (2003) that meaning is situated in a particular perspective. Disputably, there are many different *meanings* in the world and all of which are equally valid. These *meanings* are more useful to the diversity of ‘multiple realities’ one finds in complex situations. If it is true that reality is individually constructed, then, there are as many realities as individuals. This implies that there is no generalisable objective truth about realities. I, therefore, laid my emphasis on interpreting situations to make sense of them. Several scholars (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Treagust, Won, & Duit, 2014) generally refer to this approach as “relativist ontology” This claim again suits my understanding that realities are multiple, naturalistic, social, and subjective by nature. I have reflected this understanding in the value that I attached to the perception of PA held by employees in workplaces. It is upon this basis that I interacted with my study participants in exploring their perception of PA at RAU. I relied on my study participants as much as possible as recommended by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013) to get a better understanding of the realities surrounding PA. Besides, such an understanding of reality was also supported by Maruster (2013) who states that it basically deals with observation and interpretation of realities by the study participants. Perception of PA held by employees being part of human experiences is subjective and individuals can have multiple perspectives to it. Realities are distinguished based on circumstances like history, culture, and the community among others. This way of subjective epistemology as proposed by Levers (2013) made me focus on the individual lived experiences of my study participants as a source of knowledge. Thus, based on my

ontological and epistemological stance, I positioned my study in the interpretivism paradigm because it mainly fits in understanding this social phenomenon.

Regarding axiological beliefs, I highly upheld my values of being part of my study, I interpreted and gave meaning to responses that I received from my study participants because I (the researcher) could not separate myself from what I was researching. In my study, the rhetoric which is the language and style of writing I adopted, was that of direct/personal language because I could not separate what I researched from myself (the researcher).

3.2 Design

I have employed the phenomenological research design which Lewis (2015) claims to be a suitable design to use when a study requires a profound understanding of human experiences common to a group of people. I therefore strongly believed that phenomenology is suitable in exploring the perception of individual experiences concerning the issues under my study. This research design also focuses on an area where the researcher has an intrinsic interest; thus, my interest was in exploring the perception of PA based on individual-lived experiences. By using the phenomenological research design, I intended to deeply understand, appreciate, and explain my study participants' behaviour as well as understand meanings of their PA lived experiences that outsiders would not understand well by mere observation. I used this design to discover fresh and compounding experiences which were above individual encounters (Katsirikou & Lin, 2017). Using this research design, I focused on understanding, describing, and interpreting the experiences of my study participants who had thorough knowledge about the phenomena under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Padilla-Díaz, 2015). Hence, it

demanded of me to respect and encourage my study participants to share their own individual-lived experiences that were fundamental in understanding the phenomenon of my study.

I specifically employed the hermeneutic phenomenological research design which Galehbakhtiari (2015), Husserl (2013) and Padilla-Díaz (2015) also claimed to demand a researcher's engagement in self-reflection to interpret all relevant experiences of the study participants (including those taken for granted) that could make meanings to the study. This research design was therefore appropriate in my exploration of the perception of PA held by the academic staff at Rock of Ages University (RAU) because with it I dug out and interpreted the meanings of my unique individual study participant's experiences.

3.3 Description and Selection of the Study Area

To protect the identity of the university where I conducted the study, I randomly assigned it a pseudonym 'Rock of Ages University' and gave it 'RAU' as its code. Ramifications of research could bring increased attention to this university, and some of this attention would possibly be unwelcome. RAU is a faith-based chartered private institution with multiple campuses some of which are located in Kampala while others including the main campus are rural-based. The terms and conditions of service prescribed in RAU's HR manual guide the University to follow the Christian teachings. These teachings emphasise the principle of love that precedes all other things in enhancing unity, sense of responsibility, and care for one another. The terms and conditions of service in this manual apply to all the categories of employees of RAU. Thus, it is an equal opportunity employer, and its management bases appointment to all positions in the university service on the principle of merit. According to its HR manual, RAU values and respects its entire

staff irrespective of their status or rank, and ensures equality, respect, justice, impartiality, and fairness among them. Hence, in making decisions that affect staff, the university management adheres to appropriate administrative procedures. Notwithstanding the above provisions for an employee's appointment, the university appointments board only confirms an employee after a satisfactory PA report from the supervisor(s).

I selected Rock of Ages University (RAU) purposively as a critical instance of the private chartered universities in Uganda because; first, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) that guides Uganda in the establishment and management of institutions of higher learning regulated it to ensure that it delivers quality and relevant higher education. Second, I conceived this research opportunity at this institution having worked there as an academic staff for more than five years. My supervisors at RAU also subjected me to the university appraisal exercise at least twice during my tenure. Finally, the university was easily accessible and I was not a stranger there. This helped me reduce chances of suspicions within the University; hence, reducing financial and psychological costs as well as time wastage if I had chosen a study area that was unfamiliar to me.

3.4 Sampling

I aimed to understand issues in my qualitative study from within the subjective reality of the academic staff who acted as my study participants. Rather than their numbers, my emphasis was on the expression of human experiences into words that are descriptive to generate subjective data as suggested by Duffy and Chenail (2009). Thus, I purposively sampled the academic staff (study participants) at RAU and conducted unstructured interviews with them between September 2018 and March 2019.

I interviewed faculty deans and full-time ordinary academic staff holding Masters's degrees qualification with at least two consecutive appraisals at RAU. I, therefore, obtained the experiences that I reported in my study findings from the academic staff I categorised as “information-rich” because at least they had lived experiences of the appraisal exercise at RAU. My study participants were male and female because experiences and perception may differ based on various factors including sex.

The hard-pure (HP) and soft-pure (SP) disciplinary fields in line with Biglan's (1973a, 1973b) classification of academic disciplines at universities could not be wholly applied in choosing the study participants because RAU had only two out of the four disciplinary fields. I therefore only drew the study participants from the hard-applied (HA) and soft-applied (SA) fields that existed. The main reason given by the management for the absence of the HP and SP disciplinary fields was that RAU being a private university, offered only market-driven study programmes; and therefore, it could not set up disciplinary fields that offer programmes that appear to have low consumer demands. The university management instead, focused more on the identification and promotion of its niche in sports, engineering, and business study programmes.

These two disciplinary fields (HA & SA) formed the basic units from which I selected the study participants (see Table 3.1). For ethical reasons, I concealed the study participants' identity by assigning each of them a random code and corresponding pseudonym. I assigned these codes and pseudonyms as follows: FFD denotes female faculty dean while MFD denotes male faculty dean. FL and ML denote female and male academic staff respectively. I have summarized the profile of the study participants in Table 3.1.

Table3.1: Profile of the Study Participants

Hard-Applied (HA) Disciplinary Field	Soft-Applied (SA) Disciplinary Field
Ordinary Academic Staff	
HAFL1 (Joyce) - Female academic staff, Faculty of Environment and Agricultural of sciences	SAFL1 (Beatrice) - Female academic staff Faculty of Education
HAFL2 (Grace) - Female academic staff, Faculty of Engineering and Survey	SAFL2 (Claire) - Female academic staff, Faculty of Business Administration and Management
HAML1 (Moses) - Male academic staff, Faculty of Environment and Agricultural sciences	SAML1 (David) - Male academic staff, Faculty of Education
HAML2 (Ezra) - Male academic staff, Faculty of Engineering and Survey	SAML2 (Ronald) - Male academic staff, Faculty of Business Administration and Management
Faculty Deans	
HAFFD1(Lydia) - Hard applied female faculty dean	SAFFD1 (Julian) - Soft-applied female faculty dean
HAMFD1 (Samuel) - Hard-applied male faculty dean	SAMFD1 (George) -Soft-applied male faculty dean

I selected equal numbers of my study participants from each existent disciplinary field (HA & SA). I categorised the faculty deans and ordinary academic staff by the positions they held and their expertise as ‘information-rich employees. Basing on the claims (i.e., study participants should have thorough knowledge about the phenomena) put forward by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) and Padilla-Díaz (2015), I believed that each of my study participants provided in-depth information on the perception of PA at RAU. I purposively selected full-time ordinary academic staff holding Masters' degree qualification. According to the university HR manager, this category of the staff was majorly made of full-time academic staff (121 Masters’ degree holders) at RAU unlike those with Ph.Ds (22 Ph.D. holders) most of whom were shared on a part-time basis (*moonlighting*) since they were even few in the country (Uganda); thus, not easily accessible.

Furthermore, I also purposively selected faculty deans because of the unique nature of their job; they were the key implementers of almost all the human resource management (HRM) practices, in addition to being highly qualified professionals. Faculty deans were also able to provide key opinions and open discussions on the perception of PA held by the academic staff since they were the appraisers of the performance of these staff in their respective faculties. Purposive sampling in a phenomenological study targets only the study participants with key experience in the subject matter (Creswell, 2013; Padilla-Díaz, 2015). Hence, I considered faculty deans and ordinary full-time academic staff holding master's degrees that had undergone at least two consecutive appraisals at RAU. I took them as employees who had a profound understanding and hands-on experience of PA at the University.

In terms of sample size, an appropriate size in my qualitative study was not in terms of numbers but one that could adequately answer the questions. Since my interest was in the phenomenon and not in numbers; thus, I had no definite formula for defining the number of the study participants as Creswell and Creswell (2017) and Yin (2015) recommended. I purposively selected one male and one female ordinary academic staff and faculty deans of the respective faculties from each of the two disciplinary fields to cater for gender diversity of perception. Altogether, I ended up selecting twelve study participants (refer to Table 3.2).

Table3.2: Distribution of Study Participants by Data Source

Category of participant	Data source from disciplinary dimensions	Number of study participants (both sexes equally represented)
Academic administrators	Faculty deans (one from each of the four faculties)	4
	Hard-applied (HA)	
Ordinary academic staff	Faculty of Engineering	2
	Faculty of Environment & Agricultural Sciences	2
	Soft-Applied (SA)	
	Faculty of Business Administration and Management	2
	Faculty of Education	2
Total number		12

This kind of selection of my study participants enabled me to obtain the broadest and multiple perceptions of PA held by the academic staff at RAU. I did sampling concurrently with data collection. However, I continued with data collection using unstructured interviews from the same study participants until I obtained no new insights.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The most appropriate data collection strategy for phenomenological research is the interview (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). I opted for the use of unstructured interviews to address profoundly the phenomenon under my study. These interviews provided a space of aperture for my study participants to express their experiences in details ensuring reality. I took the detailed descriptions brought by each of my study participants from the interviews as a representative of the reality each of them experienced because my main focus of such interviews was the description of the meanings of the phenomenon as Rubin and Rubin (2011) claimed. As Rubin and Rubin further recommend, I conducted some

additional interviews to; verify the information I had obtained, allow some of my study participants an opportunity to provide further details and for their final approval.

Further, a phenomenological interview is practically complex and requires considerable time to scrutinise the studied phenomenon with the necessary depth. It was therefore vital for me to have exceptional interview skills. I, therefore, utilised the following skills: paraphrasing, clarification, summarising, a reflection of feelings, self-revelation, and empathetic listening among others as suggested by Rivero Vergne (cited in Padilla-Díaz, 2015). I also equipped myself with the following additional skills: paralanguage, vocalisations, identification, and recognition of types of silences and sensibility to cultural diversity. General knowledge of the types of relevant questions was another necessary skill that I employed when interviewing the study participants. Some of these questions were those without a specific focus, anecdotal questions, intentional, bipolar, reflexive, and instantiation questions among others.

I triangulated the individualised in-depth interviews with documents check to obtain secondary data to enhance credibility as recommended by Padilla-Díaz (2015) and Yin (2015). My focus on documents check was to identify pre-eminent discourses connected to PA. I therefore purposively selected the university's HR policy documents that included; RAU's strategic plan, HR manual, personal profiles, committee minutes of faculty boards, and other university PA reports as the key sites of related institutional discourses to gain a detailed understanding of the phenomenon I explored as Gray (2013) observed.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

For purposes of triangulation, I used two types of instruments. These were the unstructured interview guides and a documents checklist. Several scholars (e.g., Brinkman & Kvale, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2014) agree that phenomenological interviews should either be unstructured or semi-structured. I opted for unstructured interview guides as the primary research instrument in my study. I constructed five sections of this guide. The first section was in a tabular form and it helped me to locate the disciplinary field, faculty name, and the participant's code and pseudonym. I used the second section to capture my participant's profile. I constructed the last three sections based on my three study objectives (see Appendix B & C). I pre-tested the interview guides regarding the relevance of its items; my fellow students in the Ph.D. class of 2015 who were members of the academic staff in private universities assisted me to identify the weaknesses in the guides. I thus, removed items that were irreverent and adjusted others before administering the instrument. Using these interview guides, I gave my participants freedom to express their opinions broadly while at the same time focusing on the pre-determined interview themes. I conducted face-to-face audio-recorded individualised interviews with each of my study participants, one at a time between September 2018 and March 2019.

I then constructed a documents checklist as a secondary research instrument to complement the primary data I had obtained from the interviews. I made it in a tabular form to capture the name of the documents, the data on discourse related to PA outcomes, process as well as appraiser-appraisee interaction during PA. I also made a provision for interpretation of the data on the same table in the last column. I included the RAU's HR

manual, strategic plan, annual PA reports, participants profile from the HR office, and minutes of faculty meetings as a source of data (see Appendix D).

3.7 Data Quality Control

I triangulated the data collection methods by corroborating the primary data I collected through interviews with the secondary data I obtained from documents check to ensure credibility, dependability, and confirmability of my study findings. Additionally, I interviewed each of my study participants several times to increase the credibility of the data I collected. The idea of convergence of multiple perspectives for mutual confirmation helped me to ensure that I cover all the aspects of the issues I studied. Though I created a close relationship with each of the study participants, my reflexivity helped me to separate my own experiences from their (participants') opinions to avoid biases. I confirmed the raw data through member checking and rechecking to ensure that I accurately translated the participant's viewpoints into data. These data assessment strategies reduced my chances of misrepresenting the data. I also corroborated the responses from the study participants, kept an audit trail of all the data from individualised face-to-face audio interviews to ascertain their correctness.

Much as there was a situational uniqueness at the university I studied (RAU), I considered transferability by only involving full-time ordinary academic staff at the rank of lecturer together with their faculty deans with at least two consecutive appraisal experiences. Besides, I provided a detailed profile of my study participants and enough information about RAU to allow others (researchers, scholars & managers) to judge the transferability of my study findings. The reason why I provided detailed information was that employees with similar qualifications may entirely possess different perceptions basing on loyalty, commitment, age, and experience among other individual work performance attributes.

3.8 Data Management and Analysis

My research design (phenomenology) calls for investigating how the study participants experience phenomenon rather than how phenomenon happens (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). After collecting the data, I, therefore, employed the four stages of qualitative data analysis (data preparation, data identification, data manipulation & data analysis); first, during data preparation, I organised all the data gathered from the interviews and documents to form field notes to minimise inaccuracies. I then transcribed the interview verbatim after which I shared the data with the study participants to make corrections. I created a table using an excel package on my laptop showing each of my participant's background and their responses as per the interview guides (see Appendix E). I then processed the data and created a folder into which I made individualised files with details including; the date, venue, data collected and follow-up dates to enable me to refer to specific interviews and handle the data proficiently throughout my study.

Second, at the data identification stage, I identified data from the different study participants by indexing as I was collecting more data. Indexing enabled me to make changes for data improvement. I also used codes to label and group data segments by categories using hard applied (HA) and soft-applied (SA) disciplinary fields respectively. Codes for participants were ML and FL for the male and female ordinary academic staff and MFD or FFD for the male and female faculty deans respectively. I, therefore, gave the study participants from the HA disciplinary field the following random codes and corresponding pseudonyms: HAML1 (Moses), HAML2 (Ezra), HAFL1 (Joyce), HAFL2 (Grace), HAMFD1 (Samuel), and HAFFD1 (Lydia). Similarly, I randomly assigned codes and pseudonyms to the study participants from the SA disciplinary field as follows: SAML1 (David), SAML2 (Ronald), SAFL1 (Beatrice), SAFL2 (Claire), SAMFD1

(George), and SAFFD1 (Julian). I then applied codes and compared them both within and between categories. Codification of data helped me in easy access and identification of data during reference and analysis, avoiding losing the study participants' data, and to keep track of the contextual text description and reflections for each situation. I opted for the use of corresponding pseudonyms for each of the study participants during reporting to help the flow of reading.

Third, the data manipulation stage entailed developing categories by looking for similar ideas from single stories of ordinary academic staff and dean study participants, putting them under the research objectives where they fitted most.

Fourth, during the data analysis, I described the study participants' background, merged the ideas ,and then reported them as single merged stories reflecting the disciplinary field and personal elements enabling perception of PA held by the academic staff to be noticed. I pulled data strings together following the disciplinary fields and personal factors to form sub-themes and then merged them into bigger umbrellas based on their embedded similarities. I interpreted the data through these umbrellas that represented the whole data. Eventually, I analysed the data into themes and sub-themes with a thick narrative style of descriptions to report my study findings within the unique context of each case that provided an account of a particular participant. Other scholars (e.g., de Casterle, Gastmans, Bryon, & Denier, 2012; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014) also support such a qualitative data analysis that calls for transcription, categorisation, and development of themes.

I analysed documentary data according to the issues addressed by each document after careful consideration of the author(s), their positions and biases; when, how, and the context in which the documents were produced - and how they related to the previous ones and the issues I was studying. The secondary data I obtained from the documents (see Appendix F) helped me to complement the primary data obtained from interviews to aid my interpretations and credibility.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

As far as ethical considerations were concerned, I did the following; I sought an institutional ethical clearance to gain access to my study participants. First, I obtained a letter of introduction to RAU from the East African School of Higher Education Studies and Development (EASHESD), Makerere University (see Appendix G). I then sought permission from the University Secretary of RAU (see Appendix G) to access my study participants, solicit their consent by requesting them to fill the study participant's informed consent form (see Appendix A) before collecting data from them. Second, during and after the data collection, I ensured confidentiality and anonymity of data from my study participants by assigning them codes and corresponding pseudonyms to conceal their identity. I also concealed the identity of the University where I conducted the study by randomly using the pseudonym 'Rock of Ages University' and 'RAU' as its code. Similarly, I kept each study participant's audio-recorded information I obtained from interviews by labelling them with their codes. I attributed their direct quotes appropriately. Finally, I only revealed the data that answered my research questions.

3.10 Summary

In this chapter, I have explained how I conducted my study expressing my ontological and epistemological philosophical stance. I based this study on a constructivism worldview, an interpretive approach drawing on qualitative methodology and subscribed to the phenomenological research design. I specifically opted for a single case study design and used stratification to select faculties at RAU. My study participants constituted purposively selected male and female academic staff and their faculty deans with lived experience of appraisals at RAU. I used the interviews and documents check as data collection methods. I collected data by use of unstructured interview guides from the selected study participants until no new insights. Documents checklist helped me to collect secondary data. To control the quality of the instruments and my entire study, I ensured credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I described the qualitative data collection procedure and analysis I employed in my study. I dealt with the ethical considerations throughout my study. In the chapters that follow (Chapter Four, Five, Six & Seven), I have reported, analysed, interpreted, and discussed my study findings.

Chapter Four

Profile of Study Participants

4.0 Overview

In this chapter, I described and discussed the profiles of my study participants. The chapter comprises three sections. Section one contains the profile of the ordinary academic staff study participants. Section two has the profile of the dean study participants. I ended the chapter with a summary in section three.

4.1 Profile of the Ordinary Academic Staff Study Participants

I used section A of the unstructured interview guide (see Appendix B) to collect data from four male and four female study participants under the category of ordinary academic staff. The responses from all these participants indicated that they were at a level of lecturer rank and all were holders of Master's degree qualifications that they had obtained from different universities across the world. Specifically, the majority of them (HAFL1-Joyce, HAFL2-Grace, SAML1-David, SAFL1-Beatrice, SAFL2-Claire) acquired this academic qualification from higher education institutions (HEIs) within Uganda. The rest (HAML1-Moses, HAML2-Ezra, & SAML2-Ronald) acquired their Master's degree qualifications from universities abroad. This finding implies that my ordinary academic staff study participants received their training from different universities other than Rock of Ages University; thus, reducing the dangers that may result from inbred staff that might not have a bigger perspective of the issues at hand in the University that trained and now employs them.

The other attributes common to all my study participants in this category that they reported were; they had worked with RAU for a minimum of at least eight years as members of academic staff and each had other added responsibilities of some sort at the

University. For instance, some of them (Ronald, David & Moses) were heads of department (HODs) while others (Joyce, Grace & Claire) were examination coordinators; yet the rest (Ezra & Beatrice) had served as coordinators of extra-mural studies and weekend programmes respectively. The university management had also confirmed all these participants as full-time academic staff and had promoted them to their current academic ranks (lecturer). Therefore, I believe that the choice of my study participants extensively boosted the dependability and transferability of my study findings.

Concerning PA experiences, all these study participants (Joyce, Grace, Beatrice, Claire, David, Moses & Ezra) had been formally appraised at least twice while at RAU as members of the academic staff, except one participant (Ronald) who had been appraised several times. Ronald disclosed that, "...I have been appraised several times at this University..." In this response, "several times" meant that the superiors of the staff had appraised him more than twice but several times he could hardly remember. However, none of these participants had any formal PA training. In this respect, a female participant (Claire) noted that "I have so far no specialised training in PA generally. However, I just possess the skills from my various study programmes from the universities where I studied." While a male participant (Moses) reported that, "I have not yet got any PA training in my position but I am ready to do the work because normally there is a progressive appraisal form for academic staff that guides us in the exercise" (See Appendix H). These responses seemed to indicate that the academic staff at RAU were lacking PA training that could enable them to appreciate the vitality of the practice of PA generally.

The preceding findings agree with the observations of Peleyeju and Ojebiyi (2013) that employees with advanced academic qualifications manifest greater co-operation, commitment, and willingness to submit to the PA practice than their counterparts (part-timers with less than two appraisal experiences & others). These results are also in line with the argument of Gurbuz and Dikmenli (2007) who claimed that employees who are appraised several times acquire significant information, knowledge, and experiences about the process and purpose of PA through the feedback mechanism. It is, therefore, not farfetched for me to declare that all the participants under the ordinary academic staff category were suitable for my study because I believed they were possessing relevant in-depth information (lived-experiences) to facilitate a fairer exploration of the issues I studied. The profile of the ordinary academic staff participants described in this section (4.1) applies to the three subsequent chapters (Chapter Five, Six & Seven).

4.2 Profile of the Dean Study Participants

Relying on the data I obtained by use of section A of the unstructured interview guide (see Appendix C), except for George (SAMFD1) who was pursuing his Ph.D. studies in one HEI within the country, the rest of the study participants (HAMFD1-Samuel, HAFFD1-Lydia & SAFFD1-Julian) under this category (faculty deans) were Ph.D. holders from different universities abroad. Additionally, these participants with Ph.Ds were once heads of department (HODs) at RAU before their current positions except George. Nevertheless, all of them had attended local universities in Uganda for their bachelor degrees.

Further, all these study participants consented that they had no formal training in PA much as they knew some of the common appraisal techniques such as ranking, graphic rating scales, narrative essays, management by objectives (MBO), and 360-degrees which

they had learned on-the-job either at RAU or elsewhere. One of the female dean study participants drawn from the soft applied (SA) disciplinary field opined that:

As a supervisor, I received training in PA by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in 2012. I participated in a managerial-leadership course in 2015... I also attended short courses organised by the Association for African Universities (AAU) and the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA). I have participated in workshops organised by this university internally or other universities locally and abroad... (Julian)

The preceding response meant that Julian had an intrinsic motivation to work and equip herself well for her leadership and supervisory role as a HOD and later on as a faculty dean by attending both internal and external managerial workshops to acquire more skills including appraising employee performance. Indeed, like the implication attached to the responses that were given by the study participants under the category of the ordinary academic staff, the responses from the dean participants similarly appeared to imply that these participants had some sort of limitations in the contemplation of the value of appraisal at RAU.

Differing from Julian's response, George a dean study participant drawn from the same disciplinary field (SA) had never worked as an academic head of department at RAU or at HEIs elsewhere, yet in his capacity as a dean; he had supervised and appraised HODs, the faculty coordinators and many members of the academic staff in his faculty. He particularly reported that:

...I have no specialised training informal performance appraisal. However, the 37 years experience as a secondary school headteacher gave me suitable training in

appraising staff....In fact, in my opinion, the appraisal forms never applied [meant] a lot in government secondary schools as compared to appraisal in a private university (George).

In the preceding response, George seemed to ride on his past-accumulated PA experience that he had acquired while executing his duties as a Headteacher in several secondary schools in the country (Uganda) before joining university service. Besides, the university management had given George leadership roles as a faculty dean without spending much time in the institution as a member of staff. On scrutiny, after retiring from the government service as a secondary school Headteacher due to the mandatory retirement age (60 years), the university management immediately hired and appointed him (George) as a dean of a faculty. This shows some sort of favouritism and unfairness in decisions made by the then university management because he had no work experience at the university level. In this context, the appraisal experiences used at a secondary school level may not be necessarily effective when applied at a higher level of education.

George's response that indicated incomparable appraisals in government secondary school and the appraisals at the University is in agreement with the views of Curry (2006) who believed that while a variety of organisations use performance appraisals, the unique culture of higher education (HE) must be considered to provide effective faculty performance reviews befitting that level. However, my finding that George rides on PA experiences that he had acquired in secondary schools as a Headteacher is inconsistent with Krug's (1998) suggestions that the person who conducts the appraisal exercise should receive extensive training in PA at that level regarding goal setting, setting performance standards, conducting interviews, providing feedback and avoiding rating biases among

other issues. Krug (1998), actually advised that superiors should know how to conduct appraisals consistently, fairly, and objectively. Probably, for George's case, the management of RAU took it for granted that he had the required PA skills, given the accumulated experience at the secondary school level or they might have lacked a suitable employee fit for that position at that time.

The rest of the dean study participants drawn from the hard applied (HA) disciplinary field shared their PA experiences too. The first participant reported that "...as a dean, I know different appraisal techniques especially the 360-degrees that I acquired on the job from some other universities. At this University, I am eager to learn some more PA techniques and skills." (Lydia) By 360-degree, Lydia meant a technique of PA which involves input from multiple levels within an institution as well as external sources. This finding is in line with the views of Aggarwal and Thakur (2013) who reported that the 360-degrees PA technique relies on the input of an employee's superiors, colleagues, subordinates, suppliers, and customers. In my study, the customers are the students. Unfortunately, Lydia had not yet had a chance of using this PA technique at RAU.

Meanwhile, the second participant shared that, "They [university managers] appraised me informally. I have also so far appraised my 'colleagues' [academic staff in his faculty] informally. I have had no training in appraisals so far; I am just learning on-the-job..." (Samuel) By implication, the University had subjected some of its supervisors (deans) to performance appraisal of some sort and they had appraised others too using several PA methods (formal & informal) and techniques. These findings are in tandem with the observation made by other authors such as Rafikul and Rasad (2006) who claimed that

there are many methods of carrying out PA. Rafikul and Rasad also clarify that their superiors subject their employees to both conscious and unwitting assessments daily.

However, the informal method of PA is subjective because factors such as the ability of the employee to get on with his or her supervisor, employee's reactions under pressure, employee's appearance, degree of organisation, employee's levels of attentiveness and interest may affect it. Similarly, in my study, the university superiors probably differentiated their faculty deans by their abilities, which included but were not limited to experience, ranks, commitment, and qualification. For some of the deans therefore the university superiors decided to use informal PA methods to appraise their performance. While this sort of informal assessment is difficult to avoid, contemporary wisdom suggests that formal appraisals ought not to be trait-based, but directly be related to the specific duties of positions (Hallyer & Brewer, 1991). Formal appraisal system evaluates the performance of employee based upon explicit criteria - qualitative as well as quantitative. In effect, the HR manual of RAU directs the use of formal evaluation as per its progressive appraisal form for administrators or academic staff (see Appendix H) especially graphic rating scales. According to Aggarwal and Thakur (2013), graphic rating scale lists several traits and a range of performance for each. The appraiser then rates the employee by identifying the score that best describes his or her performance for each trait. The advantages of graphic rating scales include; easy to use and results are standardised which allows comparisons to be made between employees and reduces personal bias. This PA technique is also similarly described by other authors such as Murphy and Cleveland (1991) and Dessler (2008).

Furthermore, it is evident from the preceding voices that all the dean study participants across the two disciplinary fields hardly had any formal training in PA. However, some had acquired on-the-job appraisal skills while others had not yet adequately mastered them. This meant that there was a shortage of PA skills among the appraisers, much as the opportunity of learning on-the-job was emphasised. Indeed, RAU being a developing university, the study participants could therefore be considered to have gained greater insights into the practice of PA. This study finding agrees with several authors' (Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012; Gurbuz & Dikmenli, 2007) observations that in a developing academic institution, many of the employees need to improve on their academic and professional credentials to contribute more effectively towards the attainment of the organisational goals.

The voices also seemingly meant that the university managers appointed the academic staff to the position of faculty deans not necessarily basing on their leadership abilities, academic ranks, or even seniority but instead focused on their interests. This finding is contrary to the views of the earlier authors (e.g. Martin & Bartol, 1998) who remarked that top management must be aware of the competency level of the appraisers for an effective PA practice to occur. Given the responses from my dean study participants, their superiors were aware of their shortcomings but probably had factors beyond their control to hire apt employees with accumulated appraisal experiences. However, this does not demean in any way the duties these deans were executing as academic administrators in their respective faculties at RAU. The profile of the dean study participants described in this section (4.2) applies to the three subsequent chapters (Chapter Five, Six & Seven).

4.3 Summary

All the ordinary academic study participants were holders of Masters' degree and had served as lecturers for at least eight years. They had lived-experience of the appraisal exercise but had no formal PA training. While the faculty dean participants were Ph.D. holders and had served as HODs, except one. The majority had attended universities abroad for their Ph.D. studies. All of them had served as faculty deans for at least three academic years consecutively and had conducted PA exercises more than twice. Despite their inadequacy of formal training in PA, they had all acquired some kind of on-the-job PA skills and techniques. They were all still eager to learn more on the job for a better PA exercise at the University. In the chapter that follows, I have reported, analysed, interpreted, and discussed my study findings on the perception of PA outcomes held by members of the academic staff.

Chapter Five

Perception of Performance Appraisal Outcomes held by Academic Staff

5.0 Overview

In this chapter, I reported, analysed, interpreted, and discussed the study findings on my first research question “What is the perception of PA outcomes held by members of the academic staff?” I derived this question from my first study objective. I aimed at exploring the study participants’ take on the benefits and shortcomings (outcomes) of PA to both the academic staff and the University itself. The distributive dimension of organisational justice theory guided me. The chapter ends with a summary.

5.1 Findings on Perception of PA Outcomes held by Academic Staff

In this section, I have presented my study findings; starting with those of ordinary academic staff, then, faculty deans and finally the findings from the documents I checked. Nonetheless, throughout my data presentation and analysis, I paid attention to recurring patterns of issues in the responses that extended my analysis of the data as presented later (Refer to sections 6.3 & 7.2).

The summary of the responses that I am going to discuss in detail is as follows; the largest number of my study participants reported that PA was done for staff to renew their contracts. Several participants reported staff promotion as an outcome of PA. A large number of participants reported PA as an exercise done to identify staff strengths and weaknesses yet a good number of participants reported receiving feedback to be an outcome of PA. An average number of participants reported that PA was used PA for record purposes. Meanwhile few of the participants reported that PA helps in staff training needs analysis yet a small number reported that PA motivates staff. Another small number reported that RAU conducted PA for routine requirements from National Council

for Higher Education (NCHE). Lastly, a participant reported that RAU conducted PA for its legacy and reputation.

The preceding summary of findings shows that the academic staff variedly perceived PA as a means by which their managers distribute various rewards beneficial to both the staff and the institution in general. The finding that PA is perceived to serve as a means for distribution of rewards among employees and the University itself agrees with the views of Femi (2013), Briscoe and Claus (2008) as well as Fajana (2002) who hold the same view that appraisal is a means of distributing rewards. These findings also match with the observation of Grubb (2007) who reported that in some organisations, appraisal results may be used to determine relative rewards in the form of who should get merit pay increases, bonuses or promotions or otherwise. Furthermore, the results cohere with Rafikul and Rasad (2006) who observed that employee PA system is generally considered to be essential in organisations and it is used for several different purposes such as pay increases, improvement and training, transfers, compensations, counselling, promotion, employee recognition, and termination among others. Indeed, Shahzad, Bashir, and Ramay (2008) also observed that PA outcomes tend to have a high motivational impact and are a major determinant of employee performance.

In the subsequent sub-sections, I have presented, analysed, interpreted, and discussed the study findings in detail in form of sub-themes reflecting what transpired during the interviews and the data that I obtained from the documents I checked.

5.1.1 PA for Renewal of Staff Contracts. The majority of the study participants' responses under the category of ordinary academic staff I captured consented that renewal of their employment service contract is an outcome of PA. For instance, David, drawn from the

SA disciplinary field reported that "...this University appraises us [staff] mainly to renew our employment contracts.... When my first contract expired, I received another four-year contract after appraisal. I am sure my dean will again appraise me if I am to get another one." Equally, another participant from the same field (SA) echoed on renewal of contract by observing that, "...majorly, this University conducts staff PA to renew our contracts. I am serving a four-year renewable contract here. When the contract is about to end and I am still interested in working here, the dean will appraise me..." (Ronald).

The preceding responses implied that faculty deans appraise their academic staff at RAU generally for purposes of renewing their contracts. Probably that is why superiors conducted this exercise commonly towards the end of the running four-year contract. These are summative evaluations of one's performance which may not be very helpful for improving an individual's performance during the contract itself. The finding echoes the relevance of the observation made by Bendaraviciene (2010) that PA requires adequate preparation that consumes time; besides, shorter durations would not allow evaluating the accomplishment of long-term objectives. In effect, David and Ronald's responses meant that other purposes of PA that are dealt with during one's contract such as identifying training needs are probably ignored by their appraisers. However, it was not probably in the interest of the University for PA to be summative because it would be difficult for the appraiser to know what happened throughout the entire contract period of the four years and be able to remember them. Thus, annual or mid-year reviews, in addition to summative reviews would be useful to refocus, identify, and support the guidance needed to achieve the planned performance. Indeed, continuous daily feedback and support would be necessary as Bendaraviciene (2010) suggested.

The preceding voices were drawn from ordinary male study participants; therefore, I sought the views of their female counterparts that I drew from the same disciplinary field (SA). In this regard, Claire reported that “After my probation...my ‘bosses’ appraised me and I received a four-year contract that expired in 2016. Again, they appraised me in the same year for another contract. So, this University uses PA to renew or terminate our contracts.” This response indicated that the academic staff engaged in the appraisal exercise towards the end of her tenure to renew her contract. This finding implied that the academic staff generally perceived PA as a means to renew their contract or to make a decision for terminating the staff’s service at the University.

Further, the study participants from the HA disciplinary field similarly concurred with their contemporaries from the SA field irrespective of their sex. For instance, Moses said that “I work on a contract much as I am a full-time staff.... Renewal of my contract depends on how my ‘bosses’ assess my performance to see the worth of retaining me...” Similar to Moses’ view, Grace reported that, “I do not know any other major reasons why this institution does PA other than actually renewing our contracts.... I underwent PA specifically to extend my term. However, this University can use PA to terminate its staff!”

Certainly, most study participants drawn from both the disciplinary fields shared the view that their superiors majorly evaluated their performance towards the end of a running contract purposely to renew them. This finding implied that evaluating the performance of academic staff at RAU was not an annual exercise for every academic staff much as it was administered every academic year in May. In other words, PA exercise was only subjected to those members of the academic staff whose contracts were soon expiring (or

had expired). This finding also implied that RAU chiefly conducted the exercise of PA to renew the expiring contracts of the staff or to make a decision perhaps for terminating them. Thus, the university appraiser(s) possibly recommended new contracts to the deserving academic staff and or denied those who were unworthy the chance to continue working with them. Indeed, one of the major factors that affect the academic staff's performance and their continued service at the University is the PA exercise conducted over time. This finding relates with the views of Femi (2013), Manoharan, Muralidharan, and Deshmukh (2009), and Armstrong (2006) who posited that PA is an important management tool that is used to assess employees' efficiency in the workplace and usually takes the form of a periodic review which could be annual or bi-annual to evaluate their work performance for their continued services.

Nevertheless, while the ordinary academic staff study participants acknowledged the use of PA for their contract renewals, some of them still reported that, at times, their co-workers whose contracts did not deserve renewals were renewed. For instance, Beatrice from the SA field stated that "...before appraisals are done, you only hear some individual staff's contracts already renewed. Is such a decision to renew a staff's contract based on appraisal results?" According to Beatrice's response, the university supervisors often just carried out PA for formality's sake. It seemed as though PA was simply an exercise that took up their time. This finding agrees with the views of Kondrasuk (2011) and those of Ahmed (2016) who posited that without the proper use of appraisal results, the appraisal exercise is useless. This incident was detrimental to employees and in turn, the institution as a whole as Cintron and Flaniken (2011) revealed in their study. The findings meant that the staff at RAU held different (negative or positive) perceptions about the use of PA for the renewal of their contracts.

Concerning the issue of using PA to renew (and or terminate) contracts of staff, all the study participants under the category of faculty deans (Julian, George, Lydia & Samuel) echoed similar sentiments. For instance, George drawn from the SA disciplinary field testified that:

PA is a requirement for the renewal or termination of staff contracts. The contract at RAU is often four years. Immediate supervisors at least have to appraise their academic staff at the end of their contract. This enables the superiors to make the right decision(s) concerning the continued service of the staff. It equally gives the administration opportunity to terminate a staff...

Relatedly, the female dean participants gave similar accounts. For instance, Lydia narrated that, “My superiors appraised me at least twice for the renewal of my contract as an ordinary academic staff here. I have also appraised many colleagues [staff under my supervision] for the renewal of their contracts...” However, Lydia diverged from the rest of the previous participants’ views by disputing the fact that RAU was using PA to terminate the contracts of its staff. She particularly argued that:

The University does not use PA exercise for termination of the service of its staff....much as the University’s HR manual indicates that employee’s PA takes into account the employee’s tasks....I have never seen or even heard of any academic staff’s services terminated due to low ratings of appraisal. (Lydia)

From the preceding voices of George and Lydia, it is evident that the majority of the participants agreed that they participate in PA to renew their contracts and to enjoy the related benefits such as job security and salary earnings among others that come with

such renewals. It is also clearly indicated that the appraisal exercise is done every academic year but only for those employees (academic staff) whose contracts are expiring and therefore in the need of regularisation of their tenure. This implies an unfair practice for staff who would want their superiors to assess their performance for other purposes, such as promotion. Much as termination of staff contract as an outcome of PA was mentioned by some participants (Lydia, George & Joyce) as an alternative for staff contract renewal, it has never been implemented anywhere at the University. Generally, therefore PA never only benefited the individual staff to gain contract renewal, but also aided the university management to make formal decisions of whether or not to renew employee contracts. These study findings showed varied perceptions of academic staff about renewal of contracts and its distributions as an outcome of PA at RAU. However, the findings agree with the submission made by Nyaoga, Kibet, and Magutu (2010) who reported that the majority of employees use PA exercise to renew their service contract.

Similarly, the information I obtained from the documents check also strengthened the issue of contract renewal of staff as one of the motivations of practicing PA at RAU. For instance, the university's HR manual revealed that the staff serving as a lecturer has a four-year contract and he or she will be subjected to performance evaluation. The contract may be renewed for another period of four years upon satisfactory performance following PA covering performance in class, research, and the general conduct.

The information from the preceding extract from the university's HR manual highlights three key issues; firstly, all lectures work on a four-year contract at RAU. Secondly, for their contracts to be renewed, their supervisor(s) must evaluate their entire performance. Thirdly, at RAU, the performance of all lectures is appraised using a common PA form

called the university progressive appraisal form (see Appendix H). It, therefore, made sense for me to say that RAU has an HR manual that stipulates guidelines for the renewal of its staff contract. This implies that all contracts of the academic staff are renewed based on the rating one obtains during PA, other factors notwithstanding. Since a common appraisal form covering performance in class, research, and the general conduct is used, it appears that the exercise of PA at RAU was fair to all the concerned staff.

The study participants' opinion that PA is used for staff contract renewal corroborates with that of the HR manual. Besides, the various minutes of meetings obtained from the HR manager's office of the University (e.g., HODs, coordinators' meeting held on Thursday, September 28, 2017, & faculty appraisal committee meeting held on Wednesday, March 28, 2018) strengthen this opinion. These minutes showed names of the academic staff (e.g., Claire & Ronald) whose contracts had expired (or were about to expire) in the faculty who needed to be appraised. One of the subsequent faculty periodical status reports of the second half of the academic year 2018/2019 on staff welfare, appraisal, and development indicates a list of eleven academic staff in the faculty whose contracts had been renewed after their successful appraisals. This meant that staff PA often preceded the renewal of their contracts.

However, I only accessed and checked minutes from one faculty that belonged to the SA disciplinary field. The other three faculties (i.e., one from the SA and the other two from the HA disciplinary fields) that I included in my study had no accessible minutes related to staff appraisal. The absence of minutes perhaps implied that either in these faculties; PA exercise was taken for granted by supervisors, supervisors had laxity in keeping records, these faculties held no meetings related to staff appraisal particularly concerning contract renewal of staff or the officers responsible could not handle the issue of minutes of

meetings. The findings do not differ much from the observations which Forrest (2011) made at Christian colleges and universities that PA was in place but most managers do not enjoy completing the PA forms and as a result, less than half of the forms sent are returned. Nonetheless, in my study, the shortage of PA records from the academic units of the University did not necessarily demean the study findings.

In the preceding minutes (dated Thursday, September 28, 2017, & Wednesday, March 28, 2018), the expression “whose contracts were about to expire or had expired” that was made by one of the dean participants who doubled as the chairperson (Julian), clarifies the fact that appeared in the voices of the ordinary academic staff study participants (David, Ronald, Moses & Grace) that the University fixes annual PA to renew staff contracts. This information implied that members of the academic staff were motivated to participate in the PA practice to renew their contracts. This was beneficial to both the staff and the University. Still, as I earlier noted, these findings suggest unfairness in the practice of PA to those who wanted PA for other purposes; like identifying their strengths or weaknesses or feedback on their performance. The faculty appraisal committee chaired by the faculty dean (Lydia) meant that a panel chaired by the dean to ensure fairness of the exercise to all concerned parties conducted PA exercise in this respect.

Furthermore, I corroborated the evidence on contract renewal of staff by checking individual personal files from the University’s HR office. The checking of these personal files was of paramount importance because; formally the renewal of one’s contract is communicated to the concerned staff in writing and a copy of the same is kept in individual personal files for future reference. On checking the staff personal files, I found evidence of the renewal of the contract of some respective staff in their files. For example, Grace’s file showed that in 2016, her superiors appraised her for the renewal of contract

that she received as indicated in her letter of renewal of contract and re-appointment on 11th March 2016. Equally, the appraisal committee recommended Claire and Ronald from the SA field for contract renewal. The management renewed these two lectures' contracts in 2013 and 2016 respectively. These documents (or personal files) frankly verified that recommendations to renew the contract of the academic staff were based on appraisal exercise. The minutes themselves indicated that the supervisors appraise staff either when the employee contracts were about to expire or when they had expired. The renewal of staff contract, therefore, was generally perceived by the study participants as an outcome of PA beneficial to both the staff and RAU.

I equally followed up the issue of termination of service of the academic staff as an outcome of PA using documents check that had been raised by Grace (HAFL2) and George (SAMFD1). Particularly, the university's HR manual in parts revealed that:

...before the termination of service, the staff, unless he or she has committed a serious offence, undergoes performance evaluation. The results will then determine the final decision whether to end the services or make alternative suitable recommendations as deemed necessary by the appointing authority...

The information in the preceding extract showed that the University uses the results of PA to decide on the termination of services of its staff. The findings on termination of staff service due to PA as per the HR manual and the claims made by Grace and George on the same issue appeared to be unrealistic and just on paper. No academic staff had ever been a victim of termination because of PA. However, the truth may remain that PA helps to make staff work above an "average person's mark of excellence" to sustain their jobs for a common good. Both the preceding voices and the information obtained from

the documents that I checked all indicated that RAU dominantly used PA to renew the contracts for its staff. The result that RAU uses PA for the renewal of staff contracts and for making decisions regarding the termination of their contracts is in tandem with the work of other scholars who looked at PA as a tool used for administrative purposes. Indeed, Cleveland, Murphy and Williams (1989) looked at PA as an administrative instrument for aiding decision making about several HR functions. Unfortunately, some of these decisions made may (or may not) favour all the parties involved in PA; hence, causing some staff to perceive PA outcomes differently.

5.1.2 PA for Staff Promotion. A reasonable number of the ordinary academic staff study participants (David, Ronald & Claire) and all the dean study participants (George, Julian, Lydia & Samuel) admitted that PA availed them an opportunity for promotion in their career trail. They filled the vacant positions of responsibility that were available at the University from time to time by use of PA. They pointed out a steady sensitivity and individual interests among them (staff) which is based on ‘climbing’ of the academic ranks across the academic disciplinary fields. It is therefore apparent that the performance of the academic staff was influenced by the need to rise up in their career paths. A common strand that followed the various voices of the study participants interviewed supported these observations. Ronald from the SA disciplinary field reported that:

This University uses PA to recommend staff for promotion especially when there is an identified vacancy at a higher level and they want to fill it internally. The requirements for this promotion including but not limited to publications, upgrading to a Ph.D.... I would say it has been my weakness for failure to be promoted because I enrolled for the Ph.D. but I have not progressed to completion (Sic).

Ronald's response meant that at RAU, appraising staff performance is a measuring tool for their internal promotion to the identified vacant positions that may exist from time to time. The response also demonstrated that scholarly publication and possessing a Ph.D. were instrumental requirements for staff promotion; hence, members of staff accorded them utmost priority in their job performance. This result reveals the findings of earlier authors (e.g., Forrest, 2009; Ojokuku, 2013) who reported that university academicians are aware of what is expected of them to be promoted. This study finding is not far from the submission made by Seldin (1984) who decades ago claimed that many institutions are now emphasising more traditional evidence (e.g., research publications & employee service period in the institution) for tenure and promotion decisions.

Likewise, David from the same disciplinary field (SA) to some extent concurred with the claims his counterpart (Ronald) had expressed on using PA as a tool for promotion in the University. David observed that "This institution uses PA to recommend people for promotion much as I have not benefited from it. Some members of the academic staff at this University chase their way forward (Sic)" This response indicated that any sort of staff promotion is ideally based on one's appraisal recommendations. However, this appeared not to be very true as some staff manipulated the situation for their promotion and career growth. This finding agrees with Seem's (2013) view that some people are unfairly promoted simply because they are loyal to their supervisors. The finding also agrees with the views of Longenecker, Sims Jr, and Gioia (1987) who submitted that PA may be used by many appraisers as a political process for rewarding and or punishing some subordinates.

The participants drawn from the HA disciplinary field equally concurred with their colleagues from the SA field on the issue of staff promotion at RAU. Indeed, one of them said that, “I think PA assisted me in my promotion to head a department....My faculty dean [Lydia] and other senior staff may monitor and assess whether staff has been able to reach their expectations to be recommended by the superiors for promotion.” (Moses). From this voice, it is clear that the academic staff and the University at large embraced PA as a means to promote staff that could even include assigning added responsibilities. This finding matches with Ojokuku’s (2003) view that managers use appraisals to identify highly proficient workers to whom they can assign additional duties and responsibilities, or even promote to a leadership role. In this regard, the management may dismiss or demote inefficient workers. Moses used the phrase “I think” probably to mean that he was possibly not much aware of the basic standards his superiors considered for staff promotion. Another implication drawn from Moses’ response is that a supervisor (appraiser) does not decide alone on the opportunity of the promotion of staff but in consultation with other senior staff in the faculty. This meant that the consultation checked PA errors that a superior could commit if he or she solely made decisions to recommend staff for promotion or not.

In the same vein, their counterparts (the female study participants) conceded that appraising their performance and comments made thereafter preceded their promotion. For instance, Beatrice reported that “...the promotion to my current position of a lecturer from an assistant lecturer was after my appraisal in 2016. This helped me improve my Curriculum Vitae.” Equally, Claire admitted that “This University uses the PA practice to promote its staff on merit...”. The responses affirmed that when supervisors at RAU appraise their staff performance, they recommend promotion for those who are found

worthy. This was a gesture of fairness in the exercise. This finding is in tandem with the work of other scholars such as Femi (2013) and Prasetya and Kato (2011) who found out that PA is an essential tool for promotional exercise. Besides, this study finding to a certain extent is in line with the submission made by Reddy (2006) that the evaluation practice provides a basis for the promotion of faculty members. However, in my study, some of the ordinary academic study participants (Grace & Moses) noted that some staff promotions were not necessarily based on their formal appraisals. Practically, at times some employees may manipulate the work situation to gain promotion. This finding is in agreement with that of Kimanje and Onen (2019) who reported that some of the decisions made on staff promotion may (or may not) favour all the parties involved in PA and this may cause some staff to dislike the PA exercise.

Similar views were expressed by the study participants that I drew from the HA disciplinary field. Particularly, Grace shared that, “Much as I do not know what the management bases on to promote us [staff], I think, they look at our appraisal forms. Whenever I am looking for a promotion, they assess my performance”. This response demonstrated some kind of doubt on the basic performance standards followed during PA, despite concurring with the rest of the responses of the preceding ordinary academic study participants that the exercise was useful in making decisions concerning staff promotion. This finding can be linked with the views of Gibson, Harvey, and Harris (2007) who revealed that appraising staff performance is a determining factor of their promotion in an organisation. In this respect, Rasheed, Yousaf and Noor (2011) and Ojokuku (2013) also stressed that one more important aspect that covers the administrative purpose of PA is mostly staff promotions and the related salary increments.

However, one study participant refuted the issue of salary increment. She shared that “...promotion without increased pay is irrelevant. Just imagine a minor difference in salary between the academic ranks! One of the justifications for my going back to university to pursue my Ph.D. studies was a desire for higher pay” (Joyce). This response implied that the appraisals that do not result in salary increases might not necessarily motivate employees. This finding is in agreement with Forrest’s work (2011) who remarked that if an institution does not tie PA to salary increases and promotion, then, PA is simply an exercise that takes up time. Forrest’s argument equally relates to that of Femi (2013) who claimed that there is a significant relationship between PA and salary increment. RAU’s purported failure to increase the salary of the promoted staff could therefore rather seem to make the academic staff perceive PA as simply a worthless but a routine exercise.

Generally, all the preceding responses from both the female and male ordinary academic study participants pointed out that their appraisal exercise helped them to ‘climb’ their promotional ladder, in addition to assigning them other responsibilities. This general finding continues to a great extent to conform to the findings of several scholars (Ojokuku, 2013; Shahzad, Bashir and Ramay, 2008) who reported that a major outcome of PA is promotion and its related increase in financial benefits and enhanced professional and social status. This result is also in agreement with Nyaoga, Kibet and Magutu (2010) who found out that the majority of the employees indicate that PA is useful in determining their promotion.

However, some study participants’ voices such as Ronald also indicated that they were aware of the basics followed if a member of the staff was to receive promotion while others like Grace seemed to be uninformed about the same. This possibly meant that the

University staff could express varied perceptions if some were not aware of the basics followed before their promotion. This finding on staff promotion being perceived as an outcome is also in line with the submission made by Maana (2008) that such promotions not only serve as a reward for the employee's past performance but also perform a crucial role in sending a message to the fellow staff that their future hard work will indeed pay off.

Besides, all the dean study participants from the two disciplinary fields (SA & HA) agreed that PA was an avenue for the promotion of the staff. Particularly, George drawn from the SA field remarked that "PA ratings and recommendations are some of the key requirements for staff promotion according to the guidelines in the university's current HR manual." This response meant that superiors subjected the appraisal exercise to only those members of the staff who were seeking promotion. This finding coheres with Saniwoliba's (2014) observation that only the members of staff at the senior level due for promotion initiate their appraisal for promotional reasons. Besides, a female dean participant from the same field as George shared that "... To become a senior lecturer, I had to be appraised" (Julian). Julian's response continued to confirm that the university managers carried out the practice of PA to identify staff due for promotion if there were vacant positions in the University. Although both deans from the SA field reiterated the staff promotional function of PA at RAU and mentioned that no promotion could take place without an appraisal, Julian expressed the 'laxity to annually appraise staff performance'. This response implied that the focus of PA was mainly on promotion. If they were no such staff due for promotion, then, probably supervisors could not conduct the exercise. The University thus appeared to undertake PA mainly to promote its staff

and seemed to lay less emphasis on other purposes of PA such as performance review and training needs analysis among others as Saniwoliba (2014) observed.

Related views on the exercise of PA as an avenue for the academic staff to ‘climb’ their promotional ladder were equally shared by the rest of the dean participants drawn from the HA disciplinary field. In this case, Lydia said that “...since 2006, every time they [superiors of the University] promoted me; they first subjected me to the formal appraisal exercise.” Besides, her counterpart, Samuel revealed that, “... I have been appraised here but informally every six months to be promoted to the position of faculty dean.” These responses demonstrated the truth that RAU promotes its member of the staff after appraising them. This finding concurs with Smith’s (1995) claims that managers direct PA towards developing staff potential, assisting in the improvement of performance, and enhancing career and promotion opportunities, thereby improving the performance of individual staff and that of the institution as a whole.

Much as some study participants such as George expected the exercise of PA to be formal following the guidelines in the university’s HR manual, the views expressed by the other participant (i.e. Samuel) indicated that some appraisers did not follow the stipulated annual formal PA procedure. This showed inconsistency in the exercise. These study findings agree with Prasetya and Kato (2011) who observed that the type of performance assessment is based on an employee’s competency. It meant that for some members of the staff that were probably highly competent, informal methods were followed and for others with low competence, formal methods were employed. Additionally, the findings cohere with the observation of Cintron and Flaniken (2011) that institutions lack a standardised campus-wide PA system. I am therefore safe to say that in my study, consistency varied

widely in the institution with some faculties adhering to a regular PA schedule while others avoiding the process despite the guidelines in the university's HR manual. This possibly bred varied perceptions of PA among the academic staff.

Consequently, the inconsistency in PA is detrimental to employees and in turn the institution as a whole. This implied that some appraisers were involved in unfair tendencies of PA in a bid to promote their juniors. This view is similar to Seem's (2013) observation that some people receive their promotions unfairly simply because they are loyal to their supervisors. This finding again enjoys Atieno's (2014) observation that university managers do not consider promotion very much as a reward of PA; therefore, they hardly base their decisions to promote staff on the PA exercise. Basing on the responses of the entire study participants except for Joyce, none mentioned salary administration decisions. This implied that superiors at RAU probably never used PA to determine the increase in the salary of their staff.

I corroborated the evidence on staff promotion as an outcome of PA by checking accessible official documents (faculty minutes of meetings, the University HR manual & the participant's profile) from the University's HR office. In the minutes of the meetings of heads of department (HODs) and coordinators held on Thursday September 28, 2017; the chairperson [Julian) proposed promotion of one study participant (Ronald) to the position of deputy faculty dean based on assessments of his performance as a faculty examination coordinator over six years. The superior's proposal in this context implied an affirmation that promotion to the available vacancy and assigning added responsibilities to the staff accrue from the appraisal of their performance. This finding is not far from

Ojukuku's (2003) submission that members of senior staff who want promotion initiate their own PA.

Besides, in the minutes of the faculty appraisal committee meeting held on Wednesday, March 28, 2018, still, Julian informed the committee members that, "the appraisal exercise was for all staff who needed promotion." The appraisal exercise being only for staff in need of promotion mainly meant that if a member of the staff was not looking forward to upward mobility (promotion), the exercise was of little value to him or her. This finding is almost in agreement with the study of Seniwoliba (2014) that revealed that only the members of staff who are due for promotion initiate their appraisal to be promoted and other reasons for conducting PA are virtually ignored. It is thus expected or required of the university management to mind about other purposes of PA too.

Similarly, the university's HR manual indicated that "after the probation period, the employee's performance is evaluated using the university's progressive appraisal for administrators and academic staff (Appendix H) by the immediate supervisor... Depending on the outcome, the staff may be confirmed, terminated..." (p.5). The manual also directed that "...staff in a lower rank may be called to act in a vacant higher position for a period not exceeding one year.... After one year, the person will be appraised and confirmed" (p.6). This complementary information from the University's HR manual revealed that the institution had comprehensive HR policies including a staff promotion policy that pronounced support for PA practices. The practice fully unlocks the potential of its members of the staff. This finding can therefore be linked with the views of Femi (2013) that PA is used in assessing employees' commitment to organisational goals and objectives.

Furthermore, the university's HR manual indicated that:

...a staff to qualify for the position of a lecturer he or she should be a holder either...or of a master's degree with three years teaching experience and at least one publication in a recognised journal.... Staff will be subjected to performance evaluation: self-appraisal by completing a university personal progress appraisal by the students; and by the faculty or school staff appointments committee comprising of at least five members... Upon satisfactory performance following PA, the staff may be promoted to a senior lecturer position.

The preceding information continues to practically demonstrate that PA at RAU is an all-inclusive exercise that covers a wide range of aspects of an appraisee's performance (e.g., publication, teaching) to ensure that a member of the staff is promoted after a thorough scrutiny of abilities and efforts in consideration of quality and equity. In this respect, earlier scholars such as Dessler (2008) observed that after an employee has been selected for a job, trained, and has worked for some time, he or she needs to be reviewed to find out how well one does the job for developmental and motivational purposes in the organisation.

I followed the preceding data by checking the ordinary academic staff study participants' profiles from the university's HR office. The evidence I found in their appraisal recommendations indicated the kind of freedom given to the University Council to consider promotion in special cases as directed by Article 2.5 of the university's HR manual. The information from these documents indicated that some of the study participants (Ezra & Grace) had received promotions from graduate assistant to lecturer position. Both these academic staff did not serve in the position of assistant lecturers and

they belonged to the same faculty in the HA disciplinary field. The university management instead promoted them from graduate assistants to lecturers! According to the rest of the staff profiles I checked, ordinary members of the academic staff (Beatrice, Claire & Ronald) received their promotion strictly without skipping any ranks. I can discern based on the data from staff profile I checked that some particular ordinary members of the academic staff from the HA disciplinary field were promoted to the next rank by skipping one rank yet in SA, there were no ranks skipped by the staff in the promotional pathway. This finding concurs with that of Seem (2013) who pointed out that most employees' perception of PA is not based on realistic ideas because the PA system that is in place is an avenue through which those employees loyal to the supervisors are rewarded. They are therefore unfairly promoted.

5.1.3 PA for Identifying Staff Strengths and Weaknesses. Results from the majority of the ordinary academic staff study participants (David, Ronald, Beatrice, Claire & Grace) and on average, the dean participants (George & Lydia) perceived that identifying the strengths and weaknesses of staff during their contract period as they execute their duties was an outcome of PA at RAU. Ronald from the SA disciplinary field, for instance, reported that:

...the appraisal team one time discovered that many of my colleagues [fellow academic staff] had limited knowledge about teaching ethics and skills (Sic). Therefore, the team recommended a two-day workshop to equip us [staff] with pedagogical skills...Personally; my appraisal team one time informed me that I was too rude in my communication with fellow staff and the students.... Several times, my appraisals had not been bad but I had to improve upon the small issues that my appraisers had always identified during the assessment.

In the preceding response from Ronald, I observed that; first, at RAU, a panel composed of senior academic staff in the faculty handles PA exercise that covers several issues including the staff's personality and teaching among others. It implied that the exercise of PA was subjective and oriented towards problem solving. This finding agrees with Welbourne, Johnson and Erez's (1998) observation that managers have modified PA from being person-focused to behaviour-oriented, with emphasis on those tasks or behaviours associated with the performance of a particular job. The finding also supports the views of other scholars like Khanna and Sharma (2014) who advised that since what is being appraised is performance and not personality, hence, personality traits irrelevant to job performance should be excluded from the appraisal framework. Though the study findings agree with the observation of Welbourne et al. (1998) and Khanna and Sharma (2014), what was practically transpiring during PA as far as personality traits was concerned was not uniform across RAU. This brought in feelings of victimisation of some of the affected staff because their supervisors had captured other personality traits which they (staff) had probably considered irrelevant to their performance.

Second, the appraisee (Ronald) appreciates the weaknesses identified during his assessment and follows the action suggested by the appraisal team to improve upon performance. Impliedly, when the performance of the academic staff is checked, then he or she tries to work upon the identified weaknesses and consolidates the strengths observed to remain relevant to the institution. This finding agrees with the results of Prasetya and Kato (2011) who established that performance assessment applied in an organisation with a certain intention may sometimes be perceived differently by the employees. The finding also upholds the remarks that De Jong (1992) made that PA exercise that considers mistakes as learning opportunities encourages creativity among

employees. Similarly, this study finding supports Krause's (2004) assertion that employees are more likely to deviate from ordinary or routine behaviour to unconventional behaviour as well as to implement innovative ideas if they believe their supervisors will not penalise them. Based on the study findings of other authors and the responses of the study participants in my study, the essence of identifying such staff strengths and weaknesses is to bring about improvement in whoever is concerned (the academic staff) for better performance at the individual and institutional level.

Relatedly, David from the same disciplinary field (SA) agreed with Ronald's views that supervisors give a plan of action for improved performance to every weakness and strength identified. David said that, "PA informs the University about its staff performance strengths and weaknesses. Then, it [the university] can ably make sound HR decisions including but not limited to training and pay rise concerning us [staff]" This response confirms the fact that PA is effective in helping both the staff in particular and the University in general to identify their respective strengths and weaknesses for improved work performance.

The preceding study finding is in tandem with the arguments that were made by Haslam Bryman and Webb (1993) that there are two key dimensions of PA outcomes in practice that overlap. These include the managerialist (concerning the assessment of performance outcomes & linked to promotion, & merit pay awards) and developmental (concerning staff development needs) purposes. Indeed, when the supervisors identify an employee's strengths and weaknesses and they (employee & supervisor) agree on appropriate measures, the employee's productivity is improved and as a result, both the staff and the

University benefit. This generally improves the perception of PA by an individual academic staff concerning his or her job and the institution.

Further, I obtained insights from the female ordinary academic staff participants. They echoed that checking their performance strengths and weaknesses was one of the cardinal benefits of PA to both the staff and the University. For instance, Grace from the HA disciplinary field attested that, "...without PA, this University will never identify its employees' strengths and weaknesses. During appraisals, I examine how I have been performing. As a result, I try to put right my weaknesses to remain relevant." Besides, Beatrice from the SA field reported that "...when my superiors evaluate my performance, I am informed whether I am efficient or not. They caution me on various issues (e.g., attending to students, teaching). This helps me to appreciate my strengths and improve upon my weaknesses." These voices are of evidentiary value because they demonstrate that some superiors at RAU use PA to identify the individual staff strengths and weaknesses as well as those of the institution. This finding corroborates with the work of other authors such as Nyaoga et al. (2010) who realised that supervisors use PA to identify the weak areas and the training needs of the employees and inform them about the skills to develop and work out development plans.

The result also positively associated with the findings of Agesa (2005) who identified that the 'basis for self-improvement is the second of the three important purposes for performance evaluation. In this regard, many members of the academic staff at RAU favourably look at PA exercise for various reasons, mainly for contract renewal and promotion. However, according to Gage (1961), employees generally regard PA as an opportunity to improve their performance. I can account for the mismatch of the findings

of Agesa (2005), Gage (1961) as well as the findings of my study by considering the context in which the three studies were conducted and the differences in the respective study participants in addition to temporal factors.

Despite the assertions in favour of the view that one of the uses of PA is to identify staff strengths and weaknesses at the University, one of the female participants from the SA disciplinary field disregarded the view when she claimed that some superiors at RAU use PA exercise to victimise some of their subordinates. Claire argued that "...Sometimes, the supervisors use PA to victimise and bully the staff..." The response shows supervisory preferences at work to the extent that a particular staff may be labelled weak or the other way round! This finding echoes the findings of Gurbuz and Dikmenli (2007) who reported that biases are present in the public PA system and attitudes of persons concerning the appraisal errors significantly vary according to their status and age among others. Considering my study, the dominant view among the study participants was that PA helped to inform them of their particular strengths and weaknesses, and suggested actions for improved performance and sustainability. However, some of my study participants reported that their superiors could abuse the exercise and undeservedly punish them. This finding boosts Bersin's (2008) observation that the practice of PA is susceptible to manipulation against employees who are not favoured.

In the same line, some dean study participants' take on PA strengths and weaknesses particularly from the SA disciplinary field did not differ much from the claims made by their subordinates. For instance, George firmly remarked that:

As a supervisor, I use PA to make informed decisions concerning my staff's performance.... Members of the academic staff perform by influencing their

students. Consequently, we [the supervisors] need to monitor their performance; are they ‘balancing the boat’ [right people in the right positions]? (Sic) The truth is that members of the academic staff who have been appraised more than once perform better...

The preceding response highlighted three issues: first, as the ordinary academic staff study participants have already pointed out, supervisors use PA to identify the academic staff strengths and weaknesses to devise mechanisms to improve the standard of their performance. Second, although there seems to be laxity in doing PA annually as one female ordinary academic participant (Claire) had observed earlier, some members of the academic staff are motivated and they endeavour to carry out self-evaluation to keep on track. This also improves the performance of the staff generally. Third, through tracking the strengths and weaknesses of staff, both the university management and the entire staff end up making sound individual and institutional plans especially those related to career growth and development meant to equip the concerned staff with relevant performance skills. These skills include interpersonal, pedagogical and research skills among others. Based on these findings, I can therefore discern that the ultimate goal of PA exercise at RAU in this respect is to improve the performance of the staff in particular and that of the institution in general. Indeed, these findings are in line with the views of other researchers (Sutton & Watson, 2013; Prasad, 2015) who shared that supervisors use PA to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the performance of their subordinates to help them perform better.

Additionally, the preceding results agree with Gurbuz and Dikmenli (2007) who observed that PA assists managers to identify staff’s strengths and weaknesses for them to make

administrative decisions beneficial to individual members of the staff and to the University in general. The findings also confirm Edis's (1995) assertions that appraisal provides a situation to acknowledge the efforts and give feedback on performance leading to a "better understanding between the manager and staff. Thus, for an appraisee to perceive PA as fair and effective in identifying his or her strengths and weakness, it must be free of bias.

5.1.4 PA for Receiving Feedback. The responses from a good number of the study participants (Moses, Ezra, Joyce & Julian) showed that PA is used to give and receive feedback. Indeed, Moses drawn from the HA disciplinary field reported that:

PA enables me to understand the key areas of my expected performance.... My boss [faculty dean] reminds me of my duties. In appraisals, they find out what a staff has done [achieved] and the University can look at such works for purposes of coming up with its evidence-based achievements... (Moses)

Moses' opinion above shows that PA feedback could be very beneficial to the individual staff because it can help him or her become aware of how well (or badly) he or she is performing. Indeed, during appraisals, a staff can reflect on how many academic publications he or she has produced or on the number of students supervised. Such considerations can help such staff to set new performance targets for the subsequent performance period. These study findings agree with the views of Mullins (2007) and Ibeogu and Ozturen (2015) who found out that employees are more likely to be receptive and supportive of any PA programme if they perceive it as a useful source of feedback especially related to training and development, which helps to improve their performance. The study findings are also in agreement with Kahn (1990) who claimed

that when a positive perception of PA is present, a sense of security is created, and employees begin to believe that even if they fail in their jobs due to external factors, the institution will be aware of their hard work and will treat them with due justice. The fact is that a situation that nurtures appraisees' positive perception of support from their immediate appraisers builds feelings of *quadrigis spiritus* (team spirit), collective responsibility, and a 'cause beyond oneself'. These feelings make the staff in particular and the management of the University, in general, to work as a winning team by refocusing their efforts to achieve the set goals and objectives at both an individual and institutional level.

Further, another ordinary academic staff study participant drawn from the HA disciplinary field opined that "...This institution gets feedback through PA. However, I may not be genuine when filling the PA forms because I even take a semester without seeing or interacting with him [my supervisor]. Therefore, he may not even know how I perform" (Ezra). The response implied that supervisors with inadequate performance information about their subordinates end up giving inappropriate (and or biased) feedback, which may be of less use to both the University and the staff appraised. This study finding corroborates with Peleyeju and Ojebiyi's (2013) observation that most of the appraisers commit recency errors when appraising subordinates about whom they have insufficient performance information at workplaces. Whenever subordinates perceive unfairness in their PA, in most cases, they resort to telling lies to avoid being victims of circumstances.

Generally, the finding on inadequate performance information possessed by some appraisers about their appraisees agrees with the observation made by Facticeau, Facticeau,

Schoel, Russell, and Poteet (1998) that if the participants in PA perceive the exercise to be unfair, the feedback to be inaccurate, or sources of information to be incredible; then, they are more likely to ignore and not use the feedback they received. My finding on inadequate performance also corroborates the assertion by Bersin (2008) who pointed out that in most workplaces the exercise of PA often tends towards the annual appraisal. This is because, without having the raters routinely document employee accomplishments and failures throughout the whole appraisal period, the raters will then only recall recent employee behaviour to establish the rating, thereby committing the recency error. Thus, constructive feedback is therefore only realised when the supervisees and supervisors regularly meet in the process of executing their respective duties as a team and hence, understand each other better before the appraisal exercise.

Furthermore, to capture the views from the opposite sex's perspective, Joyce a study participant under the category of ordinary academic staff drawn from the same (HA) disciplinary field was interviewed. She reported that:

This university exercises PA to check whether its employees [individual academic staff in particular] are progressing or not about its strategic plan. The university wants to know the 'mannerism' of its academic staff. I may not be good at the start with my 'boss' so what happens is that this appraisal helps the university (Sic.)

The preceding response from Joyce meant that members of the staff improve their performance as they gain experience at work. In other words, the staff may not have the required skills to perform to receive a higher rating at the beginning of a contract, but cumulatively, he or she may gain the required performance skills. Besides, with

consecutive appraisals, the appraiser may find out the emerging potentials in his or her appraisees. This implies that the more the appraiser provides feedback to the academic staff, the more such a staff may value the quality of service he or she offers to the University. The result concurs with the work of other studies such as Chew and Chan (2008) who suggested that the more feedback is given to staff the better the quality of their performance at the workplace and the better the quality of service offered to the public. The finding also agrees with Gregory's (2011) views who believed that feedback communicated to employees sharpens their understanding and as such, they improve the quality of their performance. The finding is also coherent with Rafikul and Rasad's (2006) view that when employees do good works, they expect positive feedback. Indeed, managerial feedback is required for the good of the staff and the university.

On the other hand, if poor performers do not receive any constructive feedback that informs them about the loopholes in their performance, they will think that their superiors accept the present level of performance in the organisation (Rafikul and Rasad, 2006). They might therefore not put extra effort to improve their performance. Practically, appropriate feedback is only possible when supervisor(s) and supervisee(s) regularly meet, keep records and spend time together to understand each other. However, according to most of the responses in my study, RAU majorly conducted PA once and at the end of one's four-year contract. This probably made the appraisal reports (or feedback) become even more misleading as appraisees would strive to achieve higher ratings by improving their performance only when the appraisal time is at hand. This finding strengthens the assertion by Peleyeju and Ojebiyi (2013) that eventual appraisal feedback would not be very useful for quality decision-making. As a result, such scenarios may make employees perceive their PA outcomes differently.

Furthermore, I derived evidence alluding to the perceived feedback function of PA at RAU from Julian, a dean study participant drawn from the SA disciplinary field who reported that “Both the university management and its staff want feedback from each other...The PA exercise has helped me to improve my performance...and become more responsible to keep on the right track which is beneficial to the university as well...” (Julian). Her voice suggests clear evidence that the participant embraced PA for a common usefulness of feedback between the staff and the managers of RAU. In other words, RAU applies PA to improve its academic staffs’ performance by giving feedback about the need for development that helps them to improve their performance and motivation. In the context of my study, most members of the academic staff feel that PA feedback provides an opportunity for their supervisors to recognise their good performance. Indeed, other studies (Menguc, Auh, Fisher, & Haddad, 2013; Nair & Sallah, 2015) highlighted that supervisory feedback has a positive effect on an employee's engagement and perceived autonomy which in turn influences his or her level of performance in the workplace. The current strategic plan and HR manual of RAU also make the usefulness of PA feedback explicit.

However, the recognition of feedback by the study participants seemed to be limited to the expectations of the employee and university. Julian, a dean study participant from the SA field divulged that “In my view, we want feedback from our staff [innovations, publications...] and what they expect from us [the university]. Besides, these colleagues [the academic staff] also need awareness of what the university expects from them” (Julian) Among the ordinary academic study staff participants, Moses concurred with Lydia and Julian (a female dean study participants) that PA feedback fits well in the objectives of the strategic plan of RAU. Besides, the other ordinary academic study

participants such as Joyce from the HA field emphasised that “...through the exercise of PA, the institution checks whether its academic staff is progressing or not... concerning its strategic plan.” Indeed, evidence from Moses her counterpart revealed that the university can look at the works of the academic staff for purposes of coming up with its evidence-based achievements. In this respect, both the staff and university appreciate providing feedback of expectations from each other as a key contributing factor to achieving quality performance amidst a competitive higher education space.

The preceding findings to a greater extent agree with the ideas of Edis (1995) who asserted that appraisals provide a situation where managers acknowledge the efforts of an employee and provide feedback on his or her performance. These findings are also consistent with the views of Swan (2012) who admitted that one of the most common justifications for an organisation to put in place a system of PA is to provide feedback to its employees. Swan (2012) further explained that it is through PA that employees discover exactly what they did during the work period and use that information as a reference point to improve their future performance. Additionally, the findings are in agreement with the work of several earlier scholars (Gurbus & Dikmenli, 2007; Longnecker, Sims, & Gioia, 1987) who observed that many appraisers might use PA as a political tool for rewarding and punishing subordinates. In this regard, Gary and Pregitzer (2007) cautioned managers about the problematic situation that might occur when raters manipulate feedback to favour some of their subordinates.

Having taken, serious considerations of the findings from other authors, I could say that Claire and Ezra and some other members of the academic staff in my study dislike PA because of the irregularities in the feedback by appraisers or management. A threat

attached to such irregularities in the feedback is that some of the higher performers among the academic staff who eventually receive poor or negative feedback become demotivated. This could result in their negative perception of the distribution of PA outcomes and the related reduced productivity. In this regard, Prasad (2015) advised universities to increasingly invest ample time in undertaking the PA exercise with care and transparency, to minimise the element of prejudice that is likely to compromise appraisal objectivity through feedback.

5.1.5 PA for Record (Documentation) Purposes. A number of the study participants from hard and soft applied disciplinary fields shared that the University practiced PA for documentation purposes. In my analysis of my study participants' responses, I discovered that they used different phrases ("foundation documents", "staff records", "data bank", and "database") to mean record or documentation function of PA at RAU. For instance, Beatrice drawn from the SA disciplinary field reported that "...the university management benefits from PA because it can improve upon its database and archive related to its workers using appraisal information. Therefore, they [supervisors] ably allocate us [staff] where we fit most" (Beatrice). Justifying their responses in favour of Beatrice's view, the majority of the dean study participants (George, Samuel & Lydia) noted that PA at RAU facilitates keeping of up-to-date records essential for informed decision-making for reference. George particularly submitted that:

Appraisal forms act as a foundation document because the Directorate of quality assurance under the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) of the University uses this PA information. This directorate ensures that members of academic staff conduct teaching, research, and community engagement activities in accordance to appropriate standards. Thus, the directorate receives information

from the students directly across the entire university, which goes to the HR unit. The appraisals give opinions, potentials, and shortcomings of staff that is integrated to review the implications in decision-making.

The preceding response related to PA for record purposes outcome meant that the appraisal exercise results in the generation of data for individual staff that is worth keeping for formal decision-making and future reference. The exercise, therefore, helps the University as an institution, in general, to enrich and update the profile of its staff in this context. This finding suits the account that was given by Aslam (2011) and Skelton (2005) that the data from the staff performance evaluation is documented by the administrator and its summary is forwarded to upper management to make proper decisions concerning an individual faculty. Likewise, Seldin (1984) conceded that one of the purposes of evaluation is to provide data to major stakeholders like the Board of trustees, government officials, individuals or organisations operating off the campus. The same findings are in tandem with the observations of Conger, Finegold and Lawler (1998) who indicated that the US gives a priority to the documentation function of PA. Indeed, in my study, the Board of Trustees, University Consortium, University Council, National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), and other relevant boards may need the information from documents related to the performance of the university staff for various purposes.

Without any objections of the preceding opinion from George regarding record purposes of PA, another dean study participant drawn from the HA domain believed that “PA documents contribute to the university’s data bank enabling it to easily trace the kind of staff needed for different responsibilities and works in accordance to its strategic plan...”

(Lydia). Besides, her counterpart Samuel disclosed that "...through PA exercise, this institution can keep up-to-date records related to its staff for easy monitoring of their performance." The deans' voices point out that superiors use PA for keeping records useful to the institution. This finding is in agreement with Gurbuz and Dikmenli (2007), who believed that PA enhances the generation and maintenance of staff records. These records can generally be helpful for the making of administrative decisions about employees beneficial to individual members of the staff and to the University.

The information obtained from the documents I checked regarding PA documentation was difficult to access especially from the HA disciplinary field. However, the SA field especially the faculty headed by Julian had well organised and up-to-date records that showed information related to the academic staff PA. These included among others; faculty board minutes, faculty PA committee minutes, minutes of HODs and coordinators' meetings, and reports that expressed well the position of the academic administrators and the fate of different academic staff. For example, almost all the minutes of the meetings that Julian chaired showed remarks that she had received names of members of the staff (academic staff who had no other responsibilities and those who had additional responsibilities such as HODs and Coordinators) from the HRM office whose contracts had expired or needed promotion. These minutes indicated staff who were to be appraised and reasons for their appraisal; thus, reflecting a clear evidence that PA helps in generating of useful records.

Furthermore, the subsequent faculty periodical status report showed that eleven members of the academic staff had received their renewal of contract letters after successful appraisals by the faculty appraisal committee. The supervisors documented all this

information in the individual academic staff personal files, which I accessed in the office of the university's HR manager. These findings agree with the account by Scullen (2011) who reported that PA systems are useful for documenting the performance of the staff whether good or poor, to provide information and justification for compensation, promotion, and sometimes termination or any other disciplinary decisions.

However, I noted that there was scanty documentation of academic staff PA facts in the HA field. The implication of this is perhaps that documentation is not all that a serious managerial issue to some of the faculties at RAU. This finding echoed Forrest's (2011) observation that consistency varies widely at institutions with some departments adhering to a regular PA while others avoiding the practice. Forrest also found out that administrators send PA forms for every position every year but even most superiors do not complete or do not get access to the forms. This is because the top management of the University seems not to link salary administration and staff promotions to its staff PA. Therefore, it is simply an exercise RAU seems to do for formality's sake although the participants' responses and other authors' views show the usefulness of the documentation function of PA. Nonetheless, the failure to keep up-to-date documents related to PA from some faculties by the University's HR office in any way does not demean the documentation function of PA.

5.1.6 PA for Staff Training Needs Analysis. There was a consensus among a number of the study participants (Claire, Moses, David & Lydia) who perceived that RAU conducted PA to analyse their (staff) training needs and career growth. For instance, David reported that, "Through PA, this institution ably comes up with a sound plan that includes staff training.... For further studies, I think I may use PA recommendations for this University to support me... However, I have not done so." This response showed that much as the

staff at RAU may use (or not use) this chance availed to them through PA to identify their training needs, the University can assist its staff to train and advance their career based on PA recommendations. This finding is in agreement with Montgomery's (1991) observations that staff and faculty development remains the most important target in introducing an appraisal scheme and all faculties should become part of the exercise. The finding also agrees with Nyaoga et al. (2010) that PA is used in training needs assessment of the university employees.

In the same line, an ordinary academic staff study participant submitted that:

The University identifies training and performance gaps among its by use of PA. It then devises means of filling our daily work (Sic). For example, one time I particularly attended a pedagogical skills workshop that my faculty organised after the staff appraisal exercise. This enhanced the quality of my service delivery in terms of teaching and learning (Claire).

Relatedly, Moses, another ordinary academic staff study participant corroborated Claire's view by saying that:

Much as I am not sure whether this University financially supports any of us [staff] or not for further studies based on appraisal recommendations, this institution has a partnership with the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM). This organisation provides funding to support staff when they apply for further studies.... Perhaps, we have some staff recommended by the university management based on their appraisals... (Moses).

Generally, Moses' response is indicative of one key point that through PA, RAU identifies the training needs of its staff and gives support within its means to facilitate their training either internally or externally. This result agrees with the submission by earlier researchers

such as Rao (1984) who reported that it would be irrational for organisations to emphasise more on staff training without paying special attention to the outcomes of PA that would reveal training needs.

In a similar development, one female dean study participant from the HA field in support of the views on staff training needs analysis by PA also reported that "...PA assists our faculty to identify staff performance gaps to fill them. We organised an e-book workshop in 2016 because of PA....PA puts pressure on staff to look for ways of getting higher academic qualifications..." (Lydia) This response reiterates that genuine staff training can only take place after the supervisors have assessed the performance of their staff to identify their performance gaps. The identified gaps then, guide the appraisers and the university management to recommend and invest in their staff by organising appropriate training either internally or externally to benefit the staff as individuals and RAU as an institution. This finding fits the explanation by Banjoko (1982) as cited in Obisi (2011) that many institutions conduct PA in terms of evaluative aspect incidentally benefiting employee growth and development through training which consequently adds value to the institution.

Similarly, other ordinary academic staff study participants together with the dean participants acknowledged the use of PA to identify their training needs. These findings cohere with Peleyeju and Ojebiyi's (2013) observations that PA is important to realise employee's career ambitions and that PA feedback enables them to identify their strengths, weaknesses and refocus their job performance meaningfully. When superiors implement PA this way, they place the academic staff in a better position to assess their

training needs and learning desires fairly to access appropriate guidance, counselling, and support for further training.

On the other hand, a significant number of the participants observed that most times, the University complains of inadequate funds to support its staff training. Particularly, Ronald from the SA field under the category of ordinary academic staff study participants said that "...many of us go for further training with our resources..." Besides, his female counterpart from the HA field equally reported that "...the problem here is that the University does not invest in its staff to meet their training and development needs..." (Joyce). The responses from Ronald and Joyce meant that the employees believed that PA would help them analyse their performance and come up with befitting training programmes. However, it appears they had little or scanty appreciation of the training needs analysis function of PA in general offered at RAU. At the same time, the responses also indicate the failure on part of the university's top management to give priority to staff training and development.

The preceding findings are in agreement with those of Peleyeju and Ojebiyi (2013) who remarked that PA is important in identifying training needs and achievement of career ambitions. The study participants were aware of the training outcome of PA to themselves and the institution, much as a good number of them (e.g., Moses & David) indicated that sometimes they were not granted the opportunity to go for training even when their immediate supervisors had identified their knowledge and skill gaps. Explaining their responses, these participants who thought that PA was irrelevant to their training and career development concurred that appraisal at RAU was just a formality, and therefore a waste of time. This study finding to some extent contradicts the observation made by

Cardy and Dobbins (1994) decades ago that HR managers conduct performance management which comprises of the activities or processes embraced by the organisation to improve employee performance. Indeed, Cardy and Dobbins noted that the leadership within the organisation must provide sufficient resources to the employees and develop appropriate mechanisms on how to improve their (employee) performance. The management of RAU is expected to facilitate its academic staff whose performance is below expected standards to attend appropriate training in order to improve on their productivity. However, apparently, this is not always the case to all the identified staff with training gaps.

This trend of not appreciating the training needs analysis function of PA at RAU was also evident among the female dean study participants who revealed that PA had nothing to do with their training and career growth at RAU. In this respect, Julian from the SA field argued that "...My own motivation enabled me to go for further studies because I had written my dreams and objectives for the next four years from 2007... Thus, I enrolled for a study programme in 2008 abroad." This response implied that at times, the appraisals subjected to staff by their superiors have little to do with their training and career growths but rather their intrinsic drives make them curious to train for better performance. These findings contradict Birgen's (2007) views that effective PA requires that teachers be facilitated to attend training and development courses and be provided with appraisal forms at the onset of appraisal. In my study, the reason for the individual intrinsic drive might often be that the university management does not take time to facilitate the training of staff to fill the identified gap. The non-response by the University consequently makes the academic staff go for their training using their means.

I corroborated the preceding participants' view on training and career growth with the information I obtained from the documents check. According to the individual personal profile in the HR office, RAU had supported several academic staff (e.g., Claire, Moses, Ezra, Joyce) to pursue their further studies as per the recommendations in their respective PA forms. For example, Claire from the SA field was supported by the University for her Ph.D. study programme in form of a salary loan and fewer contact hours than the minimum of 15 hours per week. Meanwhile, according to the staff profiles in HR's office, the University supported Ezra from the HA field for his Master's degree study programme to strengthen his faculty. The University was still supporting Ezra for his Ph.D. study programme abroad.

However, on my further scrutiny of the documents I accessed, I found out that Ezra's recommendation for further studies was not a result of formal PA since his profile and the related minutes never had such comments. Besides, during my i interviews with him, Ezra shared that, "...my former Vice-Chancellor (VC) had a plan of enhancing the teaching in my faculty, so through that, I got an opportunity to go and study." Unfortunately, the VC's decision lacked evidence in the official records, which implied that other factors notwithstanding, the VC might have informally appraised Ezra's performance. Besides, Joyce's PA records showed that her superiors had recommended her to register for a Ph.D. study programme and that she needed some assistance from the University. The university management positively responded; thus, Joyce was pursuing her Ph.D. studies at a University in Uganda.

The information I obtained from the documents that I checked on training and career growth generally meant that at RAU, training occurs through different means determined

either at an individual staff level or by the University as an institution. At times, therefore individuals decide to further their studies and training to achieve their set objectives. Besides, the University would want to ‘grow’ her staff by filling the identified performance gaps internally through non-formal training such as workshops or outright support of her staff through formal training. As such, I am safe to argue that the University would initiate the training role and support some staff in whatever way possible. These kinds of support would range from recommendations to agencies that sponsor staff training such as RUFORUM, reducing the teaching hours, giving loans from the university funds that may be agreed upon to outright individual staff chasing his or her training privately. This implies that the University could not have an upper hand at all times to determine a given staff’s form of training since at times such endeavours could be curtailed by a shortage of funds in the University. However, this view does not degrade Forrest’s (2009) recommendation that institutions should use PA to identify the training and development needs of their staff; increase the relevancy and importance of PA by using it as a factor in making decisions concerning evaluative and developmental purposes of staff.

5.1.7 PA for Routine Requirements from National Council for Higher Education (NCHE).

The study results indicated that in the context of RAU, appraising the performance of the academic staff is not a formal culture of the institution but an exercise the University probably executes out of duty to meet some of the requirements by the NCHE – the body mandated to oversee the operations of all higher education institutions (HEIs) in the country (Uganda). Certainly, concerning PA routine requirements from NCHE; Beatrice under the category of ordinary academic staff study participants from the SA field reported that:

...this institution does not value academic staff but rather personal values especially in sports (looking with a gloomy face while expressing her feelings) (Sic.). It is thus, difficult to know the values this institution attaches to PA.... I have seen the staff here being promoted even before they are appraised! Most of us [staff] fill PA forms by default... (Beatrice).

Beatrice's response indicates the laxity of the superiors in appraising staff performance. This implied that both the administrators and the staff at the University took PA for granted and as a formality. Ezra drawn from the HA disciplinary field corroborated this view by saying that, "PA is almost a formality and a mere routine here.... The way PA is practised here may not be for the purpose for which it is intended..." His response suggested that while participants believe in the use of PA to serve several purposes, they undermine some of its outcomes. That is why even if some academic staff regarded the practice of PA to be important; others still despised it. This was partly because while some staff had benefited from it especially to be promoted and or renew their contracts - others had not.

In a similar vein, some dean study participants from both fields (SA & HA) agreed with their junior staff that the University does PA as a formality and a routine from NCHE. For example, with some reservations, George from the SA disciplinary field opined that "...I tick the PA items without any description and with a limited chance to let my appraisees defend their performance and we have nowhere to appeal. My feedback does not help to improve staff performance..." Impliedly, both the appraisers and appraisees involved in the PA exercise are dissatisfied with the undertaking. Seemingly, both have no input to change the exercise but rather to strictly follow the routine of filling the PA forms, which

at times end up not benefiting either party but remain pleasing to the NCHE. As indicated by the responses, it was clear that much as the practice of PA was important, it was a routine and a formality across the disciplinary fields at RAU. This is because some staff has benefited from it especially when the superiors promote them and or to renew their contracts. Indeed, there was no way the management could promote staff or renew ones' contract before subjecting him or her to the appraisal exercise. However, the appraisers' subjectivity and inconsistency to follow the recommendations agreed upon jeopardises the popularity of the outcomes of the practice. As I critically analysed the responses regarding this issue, I detected that the formality of the appraisal is partially due to failure to put the PA recommendation in practice due to the claim that the University had inadequate funds.

The preceding results on PA being viewed as a routine requirement from NCHE are largely consistent with the findings of other authors such as Ibeogu and Ozturen (2015) who indicated that the majority of employees perceive PA to be a compulsory organisational routine because they do not see how it affects their career. According to Ibeogu and Ozturen, employees could only appreciate PA when they get positive results of the exercise such as pay rise, promotion, training, and development among other outcomes. The results are also in line with the views of Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) who observed that if the PA is not closely related to or compatible with the implementers' cultural values and disposition, it might have difficulty taking root or becoming institutionalised. In effect, the disposition of implementers – their cognitive maps, incentives, the resources available to them, and the key policy provisions on the exercise – seem to be one of the key factors that may hamper the effective implementation of PA and it calls for more keen attention by the university managers.

Similarly, the results are in agreement with the work of Holland (2005) who believed that neither teachers nor administrators have a very high opinion of the performance rating process. Further, Holland states that performance appraisals are required bureaucratic rituals in schools and are often made up of empty formality. This study finding also has a link in the observations that were made by Belanger (2005) when he claimed that PA is disregarded because it does not improve an employee's or an organisation's performance. Indeed, these findings are not in agreement with the results of Mwale (2016) who established that employees are satisfied with the exercise of PA because this exercise is integrated into the institutions' culture. This is far from what some of my study participants reported. The reason could be that there is minimal PA awareness and training of both appraisees and appraisers at the University as some study participants observed.

Another reason that PA was not necessarily regarded favourably was that research has not shown that PA neither improves an employee's nor an organisation's performance (Belanger, 2005). Although Holland and Belanger's comments certainly represent much of my study participants' responses, there are appraisal programmes that add value to employee performance and organisational efficiency. Indeed, an appraisal programme that has been carefully planned and implemented will have a great impact on an employee's effectiveness at his or her workplace as Larson (1984) observed.

5.1.8 PA for Motivating Staff. On average, the female study participants (Beatrice, Grace & Julian) generally perceived that PA conducted at RAU motivates them. For instance, Beatrice drawn from the SA disciplinary field reported that, "...I become zealous in what I do especially when my PA reveals my strengths outweighing my weaknesses. I am specifically motivated towards growing my strengths..." The implication is that when an

employee acknowledges his or her strengths, he or she gains the courage and commitment to consolidate the strengths while at the same time tries as much as possible to do away with the weaknesses identified.

The preceding finding from Beatrice's response is in line with the results of other authors (Aslam, 2011; Werner, Schuler, & Jackson, 2012) who established a linkage between PA, employee motivation, and job performance. Indeed, with good intention, if members of the academic staff are subjected to PA and the outcomes are positive (e.g., staff's contract is renewed, promotion, staff's strength is recognised.), then to such staff, an appraisal is a source of extrinsic motivation. This result also agrees with the views of many scholars such as Fisher, Schhenfeldt and Shaw (2005), who reported that if used effectively, PA could improve the motivation and performance of the workforce. Based on Herzberg's theory, the rewards of PA are extrinsic motivators, so if used well, they can boost the performance of the employee (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005).

Furthermore, Grace from the HA disciplinary field also spoke out on PA as a source of motivation to staff by saying that, "I take positive and negative consequences brightly (Sic). I would say that PA demotivates me, but it does not (Sic). I hold a positive perception only if the working relationship between us [appraisee & appraiser] is favourable." The response implied that, if the working relationship between juniors and seniors is positive, then the junior will be in a position to accept either positive or negative PA rewards and will perceive them as fair. Nevertheless, if the relationship is negative, then the staff will perceive the results otherwise. The findings agree with those of Prasad (2015), who noted that the practice of PA should imply enhancing the motivation and job satisfaction of employees at the workplace. However, this was not

always true in my study, because at times supervisors' subjectivity and lack of transparency overshadowed the motivating aspect of PA exercise. The findings are also in agreement with Roshid (2005), who postulated that the weaknesses in implementing PA cause most academicians to have negative feelings towards the appraisal system, and reduce their level of motivation for better performance.

Referring to appraisers and appraisees in the practice of PA, Julian a dean study participant expressed an opinion similar to that of Beatrice and Grace about staff motivation as an outcome of PA at RAU. She particularly stressed that "...PA at this University motivates staff depending on their perceptions of the results of the exercise and the appraiser in charge..." This response is about trust between the subordinates and their superiors. It implies that the level of trust between the key parties in the PA exercise is likely to affect differently the motivation of the appraisees in particular. This finding conforms with the work of Bernardin and Beatty (1984) who referred to trust in the PA system as the extent to which appraisers and appraisees believe that performance data will be used fairly and objectively. Other factors notwithstanding, appraisees often consider the appraisal feedback as recognition for good performance that increases their inner motivation to reinforce their competence and self-esteem as Prasad (2015) observed.

However, some ordinary academic staff study participants (David & Ronald) refuted the preceding views that PA motivates them (staff) at RAU. In reality, reflecting on the experience of his previous appraisals, David reported that, "PA exercise demoralises me...When I do my best and my appraiser fails to acknowledge my good work and rates my performance inappropriately, I get perturbed and lose the motivation!" David still

reported that "...Sometimes, I feel inadequately appraised. I am certain that conflict of interest, bias, and more so inadequate appraisal skills on the side of the appraiser often causes PA errors.... Sometimes, I am just a victim of circumstances." David's response is in agreement with Fisher, Schhenfeldt and Shaw's (2005) argument that PA at times results in the diminished motivation of staff when it is inappropriately conducted. In an actual sense, these views contradict the observations of some earlier researchers such as Prasad (2015), who believed that PA helps employees to improve their performance by giving them feedback about the need for personal growth and development. Further, the responses demonstrate that members of the academic staff at RAU generally have varying perceptions of PA outcomes that are dependent upon their confidence in the way superiors conduct PA and allocate its benefits.

Lucidly on a similar issue, the dean study participants drawn from the SA field acknowledged some of the factors that make PA result in subsequent loss of morale by academic staff. For instance, Julian said that "...Sometimes, PA demoralises us as staff especially concerning the low PA ratings and the failure to meet the identified needs of staff (e.g., teaching aids, funding for training & promotions). This unfavourably affects our future performance." Julian's response meant that sometimes, PA exercises demotivate both the appraisers and their appraisees due to the university's failure to work upon the causes of poor performance. The response is also a probable indicator of unwillingness to accept (and or address) the issues of poor performance especially on the side of the appraisee. Equally, George shared that, "...Sometimes PA is subjective. Imagine a biased supervisor whose judgment almost determines a subordinate's career fate...! An appraisee automatically loses morale for fear of being victimised..." This

response implied that when a ratee senses any kind of subjectivity in the rater during the PA exercise, the former's morale goes low.

In the context of the motivation outcome of PA at RAU, the dean study participants from the HA disciplinary field emphasised that fearfulness and bias in PA are some of the causes of loss of morale. For instance, Samuel pointed out that, "...feelings of insecurity arise; when PA is conducted, how it is conducted and who conducts it. Inadequate PA orientation [training] of both subordinates and supervisors also makes both of them afraid of the whole practice..." Importantly, Samuel also added that, "...the university policy guidelines on the PA exercise are unclear to me; therefore, sometimes I do not adhere to them. They promote subjectivity which results in inappropriate ratings and loss of morale among the affected staff..." Samuel's response implies that when RAU's management does not carry out PA training and orientation of its employees (appraisers & appraisees) they get involved in the exercise with ill motives that are likely to demoralise them.

On the same issue, Lydia a dean participant from the HA field revealed that "If PA exercise is done as a formality; then, it does not promote the university's staff performance in today's competitive higher education space. Thus, the institution is most likely to retain 'wrong' staff that cannot help it to achieve its goals..." Besides, most of the faculty deans hinted at the consequences of loss of morale due to PA. These consequences included interpersonal conflicts and corruption among others as pointed out by George. Other dean participants (Julian & Samuel) reported likely loss of some good members of the staff. These consequences are due to bias and taking the practice of PA as a routine. Specifically, George drawn from the SA field argued that:

...Interpersonal conflicts between appraisees and their immediate supervisors and egocentric tendencies among staff coupled with the subjectivity of some

appraisers may sabotage one's growth and development. Some superiors may deny their subordinates promotion opportunities by defending wrong characters [staff]...

The preceding responses from George concurred with Julian's view from the same disciplinary field (SA) despite her faculty having a different approach of PA in use (panel appraisal). In this respect, Julian said that:

...we [university] always lose some good members of the academic staff because there are limited gaps for promotion of staff to higher academic ranks. The affected employees continue to execute their duties at the same academic rank despite the PA recommendation for promotion...because of the financial constraint.... This generally lowers staff morale who end up leaving for 'greener pastures.

Almost all the study participants alike (ordinary academic staff & deans) agreed that the University messes the PA exercise due to supervisors' subjectivity during the exercise that consequently leads to unfair outcomes of the practice. All the deans reported low morale that results from low ratings. The preceding findings of the dean study participants in one way or another concurred with the majority of the ordinary academic staff study participants (David, Beatrice, Claire, Ezra, Moses & Grace) who consented that subjectivity was at work in the way their supervisor from the SA field looked at PA as a motivating aspect of staff since the staff becomes zealous in what he or she does especially where one's strengths outweigh the weaknesses. According to Beatrice's thought, the finding that one of the roles of PA is to enhance staff motivation is largely in line with the views of Langton and Robbins (2007), who argued that supervisors tend to

reward their subordinates basing on their abilities and skills they recognise in them as they evaluate their performance. The study by Capadosa (2013) and Emmerik, Schreurs, Cuyper, and Peters, (2012) again revealed that usually, the staff looks at PA as a tool to motivate them through rewards such as promotions and salary increases.

Conversely, except Ronald and Joyce, who reserved their comment, the rest of the study participants under the category of the ordinary academic staff raised interpersonal conflicts, cost of PA practice, bias, and the formality of PA at RAU as some of the causes of low morale and the related consequences among the staff. These consequences make a rather good HR practice displeasing to both supervisors and supervisees in general. Indeed, this finding contradicts the observations of Farrell (2013), who remarked that PA is worthwhile in motivating staff and improving their performance. Additionally, much as Atieno (2014) observed that while PA could help make developmental and administrative decisions to boost the individual staff's performance, sometimes managers do it for formality to some staff. This inconsistency may breed a range of perceptions of PA by the staff.

5.1.9 PA for Institution's Legacy and Reputation. George a dean study participant from SA field reported that RAU does PA for its legacy and reputation. He shared that:

This University does PA to ensure that it maintains its legacy and reputation through retaining the right staff in their right positions.... Being a private institution, it has no 'god father' [has no funds from the government]. Therefore, to survive, the top management has to ensure that the institution offers quality and competitive services. It has to be cautious to avoid its collapse. So, there is a need to monitor and assess the qualifications and performance of all its employees...

George's view implied that PA is important in achieving the goals of the institution. He, therefore, thought that it was imperative to appraise the performance of the academic staff as a part of the university managers' endeavours of attaining the success of the institution. This finding agrees with the perspective of Bolman and Deal (2013) who submitted that PA demonstrates a responsible, serious, and well-managed image of a workplace. Ideally, the use of PA at RAU suggests that the institution takes its set goals seriously and that it is concerned about its general performance and that of its employees. This finding is also in agreement with that of Grote (2002) who reported that if used well, PA is an influential tool to organise and coordinate the abilities of every employee in an institution towards the achievement of its strategic goals. Indeed, PA can focus each employee's mind towards the institution's mission, vision, and core values. However, Grote cautions that employees and employers can despise and even take PA practice for granted if an institution inappropriately conducts the practice.

Justifying his view in favour of PA for RAU's legacy and reputation, George stressed his belief by providing several explanations, which bordered on administrative and developmental purposes of PA as summarised by Mathis and Jackson (2008), Fukui (2015), and Fisher et al. as cited in Bendaraviciene (2010). Some of the administrative purposes include decisions on criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of selection and placement of staff among others. By 'RAU being a private institution and having no *'god father'*', George meant that the University needed PA to receive information on which its managers could base their work scheduling plans, budgeting, and HR planning which would help in formulating policies on allocation of resources generated from the various units of the institution. For developmental purposes, George acknowledged the importance of PA as a means for identifying skills in the institution for the university superiors to

adopt and effectively implement measures to rectify the situation for the betterment of the institution. He brought out this argument clearly when he used the phrase ‘right people in the right positions...to avoid its collapse.’”

The preceding findings from George’s response are in line with Peleyeju and Ojebiyi’s (2013) assertion that PA is not only for individuals to achieve their own career goals but also for the institution to achieve its objectives. Additionally, the findings fit the views of Obisi (2011) that institutions cannot ‘grow’ if their employees are not deliberately encouraged and supported through genuine PA. Indeed, like any other functional workplace, if RAU is to remain competitive, it should continuously evaluate the performance of its employees as Kimanje and Onen (2019) observed. However, in my study, other participants never brought out this view of RAU conducting PA for its reputation and legacy. Probably, they (the study participants) had no information about this outcome then. In effect, this does not mean that this is not an important outcome of PA except that only one study participant (George) under the category of faculty dean had perceived it; thus, specifically reported about it.

5.2 Summary

In my study, the study participants drawn from the two disciplinary fields (HA & SA) have reported a range of perceptions of PA outcomes at RAU. The study findings revealed that the predominant motivations of RAU and its staff to engage in PA as perceived by the academic staff ranged in descending order from renewal of staff contracts, staff promotion, identifying staff strengths and weaknesses, receiving feedback, record purposes, motivating staff, staff training needs analysis, a routine requirement from NCHE, to institution’s legacy and reputation (see Appendix E). Despite the popularity of

perceived PA outcomes to the academic staff at RAU, there was, however, a silent voice of unfair distribution of the outcomes among them. This silent voice signifies a mismatch to the distributive dimension of organisational justice theory. In the subsequent chapter, I have presented, analysed, interpreted, and discussed the study findings on the perception of PA process by the academic staff.

Chapter Six

Perception of Performance Appraisal Process held by Academic Staff

1.0 Overview

In this chapter, I examined the perception of the performance appraisal (PA) process held by members of the academic staff as my second research question. The procedural dimension of organisational justice theory of Greenberg (1986) guided me in setting this question. To gain an in-depth understanding of this question, I constructed two key interview questions to which my study participants responded. These questions were; 1. How do supervisors conduct PA at this institution? 2. What are the challenges facing PA conduct and how do you overcome them? I have presented, analysed, interpreted, and discussed my study findings starting with those from the ordinary academic staff study participants, then the faculty dean participants (see Appendix E) and finally the findings I drew from the documents check (see Appendix F). This chapter constitutes of three sections. In section one; I have discussed the study findings on the PA process. In section two, I have discussed the challenges of the PA process and actions to overcome them. In section three, I have provided the recurring voices from my study participants that I identified as a silent voice of unfair PA practices. As in the earlier chapters, I have ended this chapter with a summary.

6.1 Findings on Perception of Performance Appraisal Process held by Academic Staff

In my findings, all the study participants (Beatrice, Claire, David, Ronald, Moses, Ezra, Joyce & Grace) under the category of the ordinary academic staff expressed their respective thoughts about the PA process at RAU. These study participants especially pointed out the nature, mode, and level of participation they experienced during the

conduct of the PA process. They also gave an account on when they did what, and how during the process of their appraisal. These participants consented that at the end of their service contracts or when any promotional opportunities arose, the University conducted this process. Besides, they reported that they participated in their process of PA but at different levels.

Starting from the SA disciplinary field, I captured the voices of several study participants expressing their respective views about the PA process at RAU. For instance, Claire an ordinary academic study participant reported that:

Towards the end of my contract [4th year] or when there is a vacant position to be filled in the University, the HR officer communicates through my faculty dean. I pick the PA forms from the dean's office, fill my section [section A], and return them. During the exercise, there is a chance for self defence before we reach an agreement on the final score that the dean sends to the University HR....The process sometimes involves bias by some panelists....When I do not get feedback, I feel discontented with the exercise...

Claire's voice highlights the following issues that seemed to prevail during the process of conducting staff appraisals at the University. First, the HR manager of the University formally initiated the PA process that involves the heads of academic units as appraisers and the staff as appraisees. In effect, a panel (or team) of appraisers in the faculty headed by their dean implemented the appraisal process. This implied that one appraiser could not solely evaluate the performance of the staff at RAU. This finding agrees with the views of Boachie-Mensah and Seidu (2012) who found out that the principal raters in the institution include heads and supervisors of the various departments or units who are coordinated by

the HR department. In my study, the HR department works hand in hand with the University Secretary (US) to implement the HR practices.

Second, the appraisees participated in the appraisal process by filling a section in the PA form and their superiors gave them a chance individually to defend their performance for clarity before a panel of appraisers decided on the recommendations. Impliedly, the academic staff perceived the PA process that the University formally conducted to be participatory. These findings are in line with Prasetya and Kato (2011) who reported that employees often positively perceive PA to be a formal exercise when their appraisers allow them to participate in the process. The findings are also in agreement with those of other authors such as Vishal and Kumar (2013) who revealed that when superiors allow their subordinates to participate fully in the process of appraising their performance, they (subordinates) gain feelings of control over the process: hence, raising their sense of self-worth and psychological safety. Additionally, Roberts (2003) underscored the importance of employee participation in the appraisal process by summarising the conceptual foundation of participation including its intrinsic motivational value and the opportunity to interject employee voice. Roberts remarked that if employees are confident of the fairness of the appraisal process, they are more likely to accept their performance ratings, even adverse ones. In any case, if the employees perceive the process to be unfair and unsystematic, it is unlikely that they will accept the outcome of their appraisal.

Third, lack of appraisal feedback is in itself a gap in the participation of the staff in the PA process at RAU that creates discontentment of the academic staff (appraisees) about the process. This finding agrees with the observations of other authors such as Ahmad, Lemba, and Ismail (2010) and Whiting and Kline (2007) who remarked that employees

who perceive their managers to be manipulative in the conduct of PA for political reasons had lower job satisfaction and engagement levels. Nonetheless, according to the study participant's (Claire) response, there was a certain level of staff participation in the conduct of PA at RAU. Such a kind of participatory PA brought the appraisees closer to their appraisers; hence, removing the tension that would probably arise out of uncertainty of the PA outcomes. This result is in tandem with the view of Obisi (2011), who reported that an enduring procedure for evaluating employee performance would not only be in the interest of the individual but also to the organisation. When members of the staff participate in the process of appraising their performance based on facts (not on hearsay); therefore, they would willingly accept even low PA ratings obtained. This finding is also in line with Roberts's (2003) observations that employee participation gives employees a voice in the appraisal process that grants them the opportunity to refute performance ratings, documentation, or verbal feedback with which they disagree. The result matches with the views of Wiese and Buckley (1998), who reported that appraisals are always conducted by the supervisor with limited inputs from the appraisee. The limited inputs by the appraisees consequently yield in the undesirable perception of the PA process by the academic staff.

Most of the responses of the rest of the ordinary academic staff study participants (David, Ronald & Beatrice) from the same disciplinary field (SA) also echoed similar sentiments. However, Beatrice noted that "...much as the PA forms are supposed to be filled in May of every academic year; some colleagues [staff] do not fill them..." This response meant that both the administrative staff and their subordinates in the faculty took the conduct of PA at the University for granted. This finding agrees with Forrest's (2011) observations that most managers do not enjoy completing the forms and as such, they even sometimes

miss the exercise completely. Forrest adds that many employees also do not receive evaluations from their superiors and nobody holds any supervisory staff accountable for not providing them. The situation in Forrest's case was that the institution lacked an HR department; there was no one to oversee these kinds of HR practice issues. In my study, however, RAU has a fully-fledged HR department working hand in hand with the University Secretary (US) and the institution's Quality Assurance (QA) unit to oversee what constituted the PA process. The cause of ineffectiveness and irregularities in the conduct of the exercise at RAU was perhaps due to inadequate knowledge of the mandate of the officers in charge of these HR practices or some other factors beyond their control.

Furthermore, Beatrice reported that:

The PA forms involve a lot of unjustified 'ticking' of scores much as they have a few gaps for the staff and the appraisers to make comments. An employee fills the appraisal forms yet he or she was not involved in the setting of the performance standards....The management probably pre-determines the standards that have to be adhered to by us [appraiser & appraisee]. This results in conflict and bias among other accusations...

Beatrice's response implied that appraisees were involved in appraising their performance at the University though at a later stage. However, the response indicated that the staff also had misgivings with her involvement in the process of PA because she spoke frankly about the limitations in her participation. These limitations included; minimal opportunities to justify her level of performance, not being involved in the setting of performance standards, and lack of where to appeal in case of failure to agree with the appraisers. The depth of participation of the superiors and supervisees, therefore,

seemed to curtail the conduct of the PA process; hence, making the PA panel interactions with the appraisee a mere formality and an unhelpful routine. This finding is in unison with the views of other authors such as Obisi (2011), who reported that the PA process is incomplete unless the appraisee is genuinely involved in every step focusing on his or her entire performance (tasks & behaviour) during the particular period. Similar to the finding of Banjoko as cited in Obisi (2011), the way RAU conducted its PA process would dampen its effectiveness both as an evaluative and a developmental tool.

Additionally, Beatrice's response indicated that the appraisee is almost a passive participant in the conduct of PA. This finding is not far from Roshidi's (2005) observations that while the participation of subordinates and superiors is key in the conduct of PA, the superiors carry out the exercise in a manner that deviates from the expected procedures causing their subordinates to develop varied perceptions towards the overall practice. Roshidi points out that when the spirit of implementing a fair PA process is absent, the subordinates lose confidence and motivation in the exercise.

Practically, in my study, one faculty in the SA disciplinary field used the panel appraisal method yet the rest of the faculties used a single appraiser's approach or both. Irrespective of their sex, therefore several ordinary academic study participants (e.g., Claire, Ronald) indicated that at RAU, there was considerable inconsistency in the PA approaches or procedures used across the different academic units. Some supervisors abided by the guidelines of PA as per the HR manual of the University, while others did not. This behaviour of inconsistency by the supervisors differently influenced the perception of the PA process by the academic staff. The variation in the procedure of PA also diminishes the perceived value of the entire conduct of PA exercise in the institution.

The situation seemed to suggest that the leadership of the University probably did not value the practice. These results are supportive of Forrest's (2009) view about the PA systems in higher Christian education institutions in the US that experience irregularities in the conduct of PA.

Similarly, several participants in my study to some extent agree with Neal's (1988) view that providing an effective and adequate faculty evaluation programme involves including the faculty in the process of developing the programme. The faculty should be involved right from determining the institution's evaluation plan and purpose of PA to the feedback stage. A good number of the study participants indicated the importance of playing a part in the development of the evaluation programme. Indeed, their view is in coherence with Moomaw's (1977) finding that the ineffectiveness of evaluation at most institutions could result from a lack of faculty participation in the process. One important reason for involving the faculty in evaluation is that in many instances, they perceive the purpose of the programme differently from administrators as Moomaw clarified. The finding in my study demonstrates that the participants had a varied understanding of the purpose of their institution's PA process, especially in areas of faculty performance, and improvement. To avoid varied perception, therefore, Seldin (1984) argued that, participation in the formulation of the purpose of the appraisal programme must be the foundation of the process because it shapes the questions asked, the sources of data utilised, the depth of the analysis, and the dissemination of the findings.

Furthermore, the male participants under the category of the ordinary academic staff also understood that the practice of PA was participatory at RAU. For instance, David from SA field attested his involvement in the conduct of PA by saying that:

The practice of PA is done once in the contract period but it is participatory because I agree with my appraiser before the rating is done. I have never failed to agree with him and his [supervisor] feedback is immediate. Much as the university management later uses PA for decision making... It has never called me for making a decision referring to my PA forms Nevertheless, the PA form is comprehensive...

David's response highlights four issues; first, as already pointed out by the rest of the ordinary academic study participants (Ronald, Beatrice & Claire) from the SA field, this faculty appraises the performance of its staff for their contract renewal towards the end of their four-year contract period. This implies that over this period, an appraiser evaluates the performance of an academic staff once (summative evaluation). The length of the period perhaps makes the participation of both parties in the process complicated. This finding is in line with the past observation made by Muchinsky (2012) that historically PA was conducted annually or even after a much longer period. However, the same results refute the emphasis laid by Mollel (2017) that PA as an integrated process should occur regularly and frequently between the supervisor and subordinates.

In my study, managers have not embraced shorter appraisal cycles (formative evaluation), probably because the university management had not yet integrated it into its institutional culture - it is costly and the management has not yet generally grounded its staff (appraisees & appraisers) well in the practice. Other factors notwithstanding, Muchinsky (2012) and USAID (2012) reported that many workplaces are moving towards shorter cycles (every six months, quarterly, or even weekly). Indeed, RAU needs to move towards

developing a formative evaluation trend so that academic managers may carry out effective appraisals per semester. Smart (2005) concurs with the fact that PA conducted more frequently (more than once a year) may have positive implications on performance improvement for both the employee and the institution at large.

Second, in the SA disciplinary field the process of PA is participatory because a team of appraisers is involved. The discussion that takes place between the team members and the appraisee promotes employee involvement and a spirit of togetherness. The academic staff and the supervisor work together for a common good. The process is most effective when both the employee and the supervisor take an active role and work together to accomplish the objectives of the University. These findings are in agreement with other authors' (Khanna & Sharma, 2014; Hutu & Avasilcai, 2011) observation who recommended that the PA process must involve an interchange between the appraisee and appraiser regarding the appraisee's job attainment over an agreed period - say a year. In my study, it is a four-year period. However, Khanna and Sharma cited several trends (institutional & individual) that are changing the style of the appraisal process. These findings also follow the procedural dimension of organisational justice theory advanced by Thibaut and Walker (1975) that PA will be effective if the appraisal process is clearly explained to, and agreed upon by the people involved. PA, therefore, turns out to be counterproductive without adequate participation.

Further, the results are in tandem with Kim and Holzer (2016) who found out that employee participation in performance standard setting was positively associated with employee acceptance of the PA process. The situation at RAU was that members of the academic staff were not involved in the setting of performance standards instead they were

given copies of job description and the HR manual on joining the University. The assumption is that they read and understand these documents - but this was not always the case. This probably makes the perception of appraisal of the academic staff tricky when later they get involved in the process with their appraisers.

From the HA disciplinary field, most of the study participants under the category of the ordinary academic staff revealed evidence of divergence in the views of their involvement in PA as their counterpart in the SA field had expressed. For instance, Joyce said, "...after filling the PA forms, they are taken back to my dean [appraiser] to fill and sign and that is all." This response showed that the appraisee fills the form in isolation from the appraiser. Apart from filling a section of these forms, members of the academic staff in this field do not have a chance to discuss the ratings with their supervisors. Impliedly, an appraisee had a negligible voice in the process that evaluated her own performance. Just as Rafikul and Rasad (2006) observed, if employees do not participate in the PA process, they will perceive the exercise as being unfair and without rigour. In that case, the employees are unlikely to accept the outcomes of PA. The academic staffs' participation in the PA process, therefore, allows them to raise their voice(s) for their good and that of the institution.

Besides, Grace disclosed that "I keep quiet when there are issues I disagree with in the PA process and I accept my appraiser's comments and ratings. I cannot talk about the rest of the steps in the process because I know nothing about them." (Sic) Grace's acceptance of all the comments from her appraiser as a 'biblical truth' indicates less concern about the other steps of the PA process at the University. This kind of response is a gesture of sluggish participation and a sign of taking the process for granted by either party. These

study findings negate the views established by Hutu and Avasilcai (2011) that the process of PA is an opportunity to exchange information between the appraiser and appraisee. Indeed, Khanna and Sharma (2014) commented that the process of PA should focus on the job of an employee, the environment of the institution, and the employee him or herself because the three factors are inter-related and inter-dependent. However, at RAU, the appraisers never seemed to follow the wisdom of the other authors to involve their appraisees in the PA process.

A male participant also claimed that, “I fill a section and the dean (my appraiser) fills the rest of the sections of the PA forms in my absence.... I have never received any PA feedback concerning my performance from the management.” (Ezra) Ezra’s response meant that the two parties (appraiser & appraisee) do not even meet physically during the PA exercise. Generally, the accounts given by these participants (Joyce, Grace & Ezra) drawn from the HA disciplinary field illustrate minimal involvement of the academic staff and the related unfairness in the PA process in the HA field. These findings deviate from the procedural dimension of organisational justice theory that emphasises the fairness that individuals feel when their perspective is taken into consideration by the supervisor in the appraisal process (Storey, 2007; Tyler, 1987). The results also disagree with Wanjala and Kimutai’s (2015) observation that high employee participation in the PA process leads to a fair perception of the process by the employees. More so, other authors (Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Greenberg & Folger, 1983) take the position that higher levels of justice are perceived when employees feel that they have an input in the PA process unlike when they feel that they are denied the opportunity to participate. Indeed, Bies and Shapiro (1988) indicated that an employee’s participation in decision making improves an individual's

perceptions of procedural justice, even when the decision is unfavourable to that very individual.

The preceding responses also indicated that what transpired in the PA process was of little concern to the majority of the study participants under the category of the ordinary academic staff. Few of them (e.g. Moses) appreciated their involvement in the process of evaluating their performance. The results, in this case, are the direct opposite to the observations championed by Rector (2009), who revealed that the majority of the employees were “satisfied” with the process of evaluation at their institution, much as there was also a significant number that was “very dissatisfied”. This could however be explained by the fact that Moses had almost reached his retirement age, thus he could easily let go of some workplace managerial issues.

Regarding whether the age and experience of employees influence their perception of PA, Gurbuz and Dikmenli (2007) posited that the less experienced and youthful employees are relatively more anxious during their appraisals than the more experienced and older ones. These authors further suggested that highly educated and professionally competent appraisees are generally more cooperative and supportive of PA unlike those of relatively lower educational and professional competence. However, in my study, as Gurbuz and Dikmenli observed, many factors (organisational leadership & culture, rampant unemployment, insignificant RAU academic staff association) influence the attitude of most academic staff towards the PA process, regardless of their educational or professional standing and age among others. I am therefore not free to assert that the age and experience of the academic staff alone at RAU determine the attitude towards PA but probably a combination of factors.

Generally, the voices of the ordinary staff participants indicated that the appraisal approaches that the superiors subjected to their subordinates at RAU varied within and across the academic units (faculties & disciplinary fields). A case in point, in the HA disciplinary field, a single supervisor solely evaluated the members of academic staff under him or her, while in the SA field, a panel of appraisers assessed the members of staff. Some participants from SA were satisfied with the PA process in use to assess their performance yet a number of the participants in the HA were not. These findings to a great extent agreed with Prastya and Kato's (2011) remarks that employees sometimes perceive differently the performance assessment that their workplaces implement. Indeed, other factors notwithstanding, even when superiors subject their appraisees to a similar approach and process of conduct of PA in an institution, they will most likely perceive it differently.

Furthermore, to understand the conduct of PA at RAU in-depth, I asked the dean study participants drawn from the HA disciplinary field to give their opinions about the process of PA. For instance, Lydia reported that "I do PA independently. My appraisee fills a section in the PA forms before handing them over to me. I do the rating, make comments and send the form to the University Secretary. What takes place thereafter is none of my business." Lydia's assertions echo Samuel's observation that "... A couple of questions related to one's key performance indicators are asked... In my opinion, the assessment happens to be casual [informal] but the decisions I make as an appraiser following the process are not casual at all."

The preceding responses exhibit the supervisors' doubt of the way they conduct PA despite admitting that their juniors were involved in the process to a certain extent. Besides, the responses hardly hinted at any formal meeting between the appraisees and appraisers before sending back the forms to the officers in charge. The use of 'I' by Samuel meant that appraising the staff performance and the related decisions made is the responsibility of a sole supervisor. Samuel also used informal PA practices despite the university's clear PA guidelines found in its HR manual. This indicated that there seemed to be inconsistent and inadequate knowledge among the appraisers regarding the value of formal PA in the University. These findings confirm the work of other researchers (Gary & Pregitzer, 2007) who indicated that a large number of employees do not believe that managers have the requisite skills to do appropriate PA process and subsequently provide the necessary feedback even in the presence of the clear PA guidelines. More so, employees can be aggravated when the feedback sessions in the process are superficial, rushed, or even interrupted. In other words, employees do not like the 'sandwiched' approach that manager(s) may use in the process as they try to hide the negative feedback in between the general compliments. This shows that there is almost no genuine participation of the academic staff in the process of PA at RAU.

However, the responses of the dean study participants drawn from the SA field contradicted those of their counterparts from the HA field. For instance, Julian reported that:

....As their dean, I give the PA forms to the staff due for appraisal [for renewal of contract or promotion].... I chair the faculty PA panel comprising of faculty coordinators and heads of department and the appraisee.... Minutes containing

agreed PA ratings and remarks of each appraisee are taken before sending them to the university HR manager.... The appraisal process is fact-based.

Congruent with Julian's response, George reported that "I [appraiser] sit together with the appraisee for the assessment. We do the exercise candidly and objectively. We make comments in each other's presence. However, sometimes the tight schedules limit our intentions of involvement in the exercise."

Julian and George's voices concurred with those of their junior staff (Beatrice, Claire, David & Ronald) from the same disciplinary field (SA) who underscored their involvement in the process. Such accounts meant that staff participation in the process was paramount. These academic staff pointed out that when they get involved in the PA process, their bias towards the exercise as a whole generally reduces. The staff being active in the conduct of their appraisal gives them a chance to defend themselves. When both the appraiser and appraisee reach a consensus on PA ratings, there is increased contentment, motivation, and positive perception of the process.

The preceding study findings from Julian and Georges' responses are in agreement with Kernan and Hanges (2002) who observed that supervisors and supervisees should discuss and agree on the objectives of PA to ensure clarity and details of the job on which performance of the subordinate will be appraised during a given period, and the rewards or sanctions expected by him or her. The findings corroborate the work of Grote and Grote (1996) who recommended that in the best PA practices, both the supervisor and the supervisee should sit together to evaluate and agree on the degree to which the different elements of the plan of the job executed were achieved. Indeed, both the supervisor and supervisee need to recognise where performance gaps are, and then, provide solutions to

fill the gaps (Costello, 1994). Ideally, the participatory PA process is a sign of mutual respect that helps employees to develop and improve their performance. Consequently, PA should be done in an environment that supports employee's voice in the process. The findings are also consistent with the procedural dimension of organisational justice theory that stresses the fairness that individuals feel when their perspective is taken into consideration by the supervisor in the appraisal process (Storey, 2007; Tyler, 1987).

To this end, the expressions made by most of my study participants regarding the process of PA guided by the procedural dimension of organisational justice theory of Greenberg (1986) depicted varied levels of participation in the two disciplinary fields of the University. The academic staff in the SA field had more participation in the process than their counterparts in the HA field. The most common expression the participants made in the SA field stressed that participation was vital in the PA process because it reduces on feelings of bias and victimisation among the staff. However, they did not indicate how deep the level of their participation was because they acknowledged participation based on agreed ratings and recommendations especially made by an appraisal panel. This finding differs a bit from the views of Nyaoga, Kibet and Magutu (2010), who stressed that employees must be involved in the development and devolution of all the purposes of PA.

Compared with the SA disciplinary field, the study participants in the HA field recognised their involvement in the process of PA just at the level of only filling in a section of the PA forms with a minimal physical interface between the appraisee and appraiser. I can reliably attribute this nature of interface to the differing training and background of staff in the SA and HA disciplinary fields. This finding is in tandem with the claims of Prasetya and Kato's (2011) study that provides general principles and questions that should be asked in formulating a good performance assessment system which include: what is the

purpose of PA? Who should be assessed? Who conducts the assessment? How often should the assessment take place? What methods do appraisers use in assessing employee performance? How do the appraisers conduct the interviews?

The data I obtained from the documents that I checked revealed that RAU pronounced support to an all-inclusive participatory appraisal process. A number of the university documents I checked indicated how supervisors and supervisees were engaged in the PA process at all levels in the institution. For instance, the university HR manual revealed that the university staff appraisal process was participatory and comprehensive covering employee's tasks, performance, general conduct, interpersonal skills, creativity/innovativeness, the potential for improvement, and the needs of the University. This finding compares with Mullin (2002) who reported that a comprehensive PA system is a basic yardstick for assessing an individual's performance, highlighting the individual's potential for career advancement, and most importantly, for improving performance during a specific performance period. Despite the supportive information from the documents checked, what was practically transpiring at RAU was that the appraisers never heeded the guidance about PA (see Appendix H) from the documents especially the HR manual of the University.

The findings from the university manual are similar to the views of Nyaoga et al. (2010) who established that an effective PA would involve multi-rating; that is, the input from all the supervisors on the employee performance. However, in the documents I checked, nothing was indicating that the appraiser and appraisee could sit and set performance goals together before the beginning of the evaluation period. This finding contradicts the views

of Aguinis, Gottfredson, and Joo (2013) who opined that managers should discuss key or broad areas of job responsibilities with their employees for performance accountability.

Still from the documents I checked, several committee minutes of the faculty appraisal meetings especially from one of the faculties in the SA disciplinary field held on various dates (Tues. July 4, 2017; Thurs. Sept. 28, 2017; & Wed. March 28, 2018) indicated that the appraisal process in the faculty was participatory. The PA process was carried out by a panel (or PA team) that comprised of eight faculty members (i.e., the dean who doubled as chairperson, HODs, coordinators i.e. research, internship, examination, short courses & the faculty administrative assistant who doubled as minute secretary). These minutes indicated that the chairperson led the PA process by informing the PA team members about the ongoing appraisal exercise. Further, these minutes indicated that the dean (Julian) had received names of members of the staff to be appraised (including Claire & Ronald) from the HRM office whose contracts regarding additional responsibilities had expired. Julian also requested members to be objective when scoring individual appraisees and make non-collegial recommendations.

The preceding information meant that there was suspected unfairness in the process of PA that could result in biases. Without any objections, the minutes dated February 5, 2018 – endorsement of the appraisal form by committee members showed that all members of the committee endorsed the appraisal form. With no conjecture, the faculty periodical status (dated August 4 – November 7 of the academic year 2018/2019 on staff welfare appraisal and development) indicated that, eleven members of the academic staff had received their renewal of contract letters after successful appraisals by the faculty appraisal committee. The minutes of appraisal meetings I checked and the information in the university HR

manual demonstrated that the appraisal process by design was participatory at RAU. In this process, members of the academic staff were the appraisees and the PA panel chaired by the faculty dean (appraisal team) in some faculties acted as appraisers. In other faculties, PA was a one-person issue (the dean) who was appraising the academic staff solely. However, overall, the HR manager of the University watched over the process silently.

Despite the availability of the university HR manual, which guided the engagement of the staff in the appraisal of their performance, the process of PA in the University, was discriminatory. The appraisers largely dominated the process and their focus was mostly on members of the academic staff whose contracts were soon expiring and or those who were due for promotion. This was evident in the expression made by one of the faculty deans (Julian) in the minutes of HODs and coordinators' meetings and the faculty periodical status report on staff welfare appraisal and development. This data meant that the process excluded members of the staff who were neither seeking renewal of their contract nor promotion at the University.

The extracts of the personal profile files of some of the study participants (Grace, Beatrice, Claire & Ezra) which I obtained from the HR office of the University equally attested to the renewal of contract and promotion of staff arising out of PA recommendations. Following the faculty appraisal recommendations, Grace and Ezra both from the HA disciplines were promoted to the position of a lecturer from graduate assistant in 2012. In 2016, their contracts were renewed. The same documents indicated that an appraisal team evaluated the performance of Claire and Ronald who belonged to the SA field. In 2013 and 2011, the university management promoted them respectively. Besides, the

management renewed their contracts in 2013 and 2015 respectively. Indeed, there were promotions of the academic staff in both HA and SA disciplinary fields. However, the staff belonging to SA (Claire & Ronald) did not skip levels of promotion yet their fellow staff in the HA fields (Grace & Ezra) did. This data meant that staff promotion that involved skipping of ranks did not follow a clear procedure of PA. The findings of my study refute several remarks of other authors (Gupta & Kumar, 2012; Palaiogos, Papazekos, & Panayotopoulou, 2011) who reported that procedural justice addresses fairness issues regarding the methods, mechanisms, and processes used during the PA sessions and standards implemented by organisations that lead to outcomes. In effect, like Leventhal's (1980) earlier observations, in my study, based on data from extracts of some of the documents I checked and some responses from the study participants, the university management failed to enhance consistency, accuracy, ethicality, and fairness in the procedure of PA regarding the process of promotion of some of its staff.

In summary, the study participants (ordinary academic staff & faculty deans) across the two disciplinary fields expressed their varied views concerning the process of PA at RAU. Surprisingly, even the two deans (George & Julian) drawn from the SA disciplinary field also expressed different views in their responses that corroborated with the data I obtained from the documents I checked. In all their responses, the dominant account given by the majority of the study participants was that RAU had an HR manual that guided the evaluation of its staff performance. Complementary information obtained from the documents I checked revealed that the HR manual and the university strategic plan 2017/2018 – 2026/2017 were aligned to NCHE guidelines that were also expressed in the workshop titled “strategic human resource management in institutions of higher learning” that took place on Tuesday, October 2 and Wednesday, October 3, 2018. The

faculty minutes in the SA disciplinary field had similar information. The data from the documents I checked at least indicated that RAU had written clear guidelines for its staff on the conduct of the PA process. Above all, the information I obtained confirmed that RAU had a clear PA procedure to guide its staff appraisal (see Appendix H). This finding contradicts the observations of Okoyo (2010), who reported that institutions have no clear policy framework, lack executive support, and fail to show serious concern to implement the PA process as an integral component of staff management.

6.2 Challenges of Conducting Performance Appraisal and Actions to Overcome them

The study participants reported a myriad of challenges they faced during the conduct of PA across the University. The challenges reported included; PA biases, PA for formality, negligible voice of academic staff in the PA process, appraiser not knowing appraisee performance in totality, costly PA, and unfulfilled PA recommendations. My study participants also proposed action plans and coping mechanisms to overcome the challenges reported for a better appraisal process geared towards improved performance of the individual staff and the University in general.. I have presented, analysed, interpreted, and discussed these challenges and coping mechanisms starting with the most dominant responses in the subsequent sub-section.

6.2.1 PA Biases. Some study participants revealed that RAU's appraisal process is full of biases that jeopardise the whole appraisal exercise. For example, Beatrice an ordinary academic staff study participant drawn from the SA field reported that:

Our supervisors exhibit biases that result in an inappropriate rating of our performance that demotivates us... I have seen our 'bosses' promoting staff even before their appraisal despite the institution's Christian background...I do not

mind if I am not involved in setting the performance standards, so long as my supervisor has no bias on me. I have heard some superiors saying ‘*ono mwana wange*’ [nepotism] during the PA exercise (Beatrice)

Beatrice’s response indicates that PA biases at RAU such as nepotism make superiors to inappropriately rate subordinates without considering their performance attributes. Such incidences of irregularities make the staff perceive PA as an unfair process. This result compares with that of the other authors (Gary & Pregitzer, 2007), who found out that employees dislike PA because managers do not always rate them objectively. Indeed, when managers include non-performance factors (race, gender, personal relationships) into an appraisal process, they contaminate appraisal ratings; hence, making employees develop a range of perception regarding the PA process and its outcomes. The affected individual employees adversely react with reduced job satisfaction while those who are favourably affected (promoted, their contract renewed) will be motivated well aware that some of their supervisors rated them inappropriately. This act may demonstrate hypocrisy. The unequal PA outcomes contradict the philosophical beliefs and practices of RAU as a Christian-faith-based academic institution proclaiming the principle of love that precedes all other things in enhancing a sense of responsibility.

Equally, Moses an ordinary academic staff study participant from the HA disciplinary field expounded on the view of PA bias. He shared that “...it is very difficult to score a colleague and rate a friend you have been closely working with. This creates bias and a conflict of interest.” (Moses) In this respect, it is perhaps very tempting for supervisors to set aside their feelings when participating in the PA process with the subordinates who are close to them. Likewise, Grace an ordinary study participant reported that, “...my

supervisor fills my appraisal forms in my absence. I cannot know his comments and feedback. He can even victimise me...” By implication, the responses from Moses and Grace indicated assumptions in the appraisees that create feelings of PA bias especially in the rating of their performance. In this regard, the academic staff may interpret a higher PA rating (halo & leniency effect) to suit an appraisee who is close to the rater and a lower rating (horn effect) to suit the one who is not close to the same.

The preceding results are in agreement with Gurbuz and Dikmeli (2007) and Lefkowitz (2000) who established that some of the raters give the subordinates good PA ratings although their performance is not worth while other raters might give poor ratings although the ratee’s performance is worthy. In my study, as Bersin (2008) claimed, the results indicated that PA concentrates much on assessing the past performance of the staff, a situation which some supervisors exploit to victimise some of their staff. These findings concur with that of Gary and Pregitzer (2007), who contended that performance-rating biases will occur as long as there is the contamination of appraisal ratings by non-performance-related factors such as personal characteristics, favouritism, and personal relationships among others. It is evident from the preceding observations of my study participants (Beatrice, Moses & Grace) that PA biases are a reality at RAU. These biases make the whole PA exercise to be a formality and an un-helpless routine that favours some staff and victimises others as other scholars (Ibeogu & Ozturen, 2015; Nyaoga et al., 2010) observed.

Equally, my dean study participants (Samuel & Lydia) from the HA field attested to the prevalence of PA biases at RAU. For instance, Samuel reported that “...at times I have inadequate performance information related to my subordinates. If I appraise such a staff,

I may be biased.” Meanwhile, Lydia shared that “individual appraisees may not know whether I am biased or not. If I am biased, then, I will favour some staff and victimise others...” These responses indicated that sometimes the appraiser might use guesswork during the appraisal process to rate the performance of some staff due to the lack of sufficient performance information on such an employee. These study findings agree with the observation of Seldin (1988) and Forrest (2009), who reported that a supervisor who does not have enough relevant information to render a meaningful judgment during PA, provides performance ratings to the appraisees based on estimated aspects of the employee’s performance. The findings also match with the views of Gary and Pregitzer (2007), who contended that the most problematic situation in the PA process occurs when raters manipulate feedback to favour some employees at the expense of others.

Given the shortcomings (superiors victimising staff, staff losing morale, or their jobs altogether) emanating from PA biases, some study participants pointed out what they were doing to cope with the challenges while others suggested what needed to be done to ameliorate the situation. For instance, relating to the coping mechanisms of PA biases, Julian a dean participant declared that, “I chair the faculty PA panel comprising of senior faculty staff to assess our staff performance. The panel gives the appraisee opportunity to defend his or her performance and we agree on the PA rating. Thus, PA biases are usually avoided.” This response indicating a team of appraisers evaluating the performance of staff confirms the zeal that RAU had to eliminate PA biases through increased objectivity, transparency, and feedback. This finding agrees with the work of Peleyeju and Ojebiyi (2013), who contended that the principal raters of employee performance in an institution should include: heads of units, and supervisors of the various departments co-ordinated by

the HR section. This kind of review committee evaluates the performance of the staff following the institutional PA guidelines to reduce bias.

The information from the documents I checked revealed that RAU had fore-planned checks against PA biases and their implications in its HR manual. The university HR manual therefore apparently indicated strategies and plans that could overcome the vice of PA bias as follows:

...annual appraisal is to be done to all staff as approved by the quality assurance mechanism from time to time. Each faculty should have a staff appointments committee that doubles as a faculty appraisal committee comprising of four to five members chaired by the dean to appraise its academic staff... The Committee is expected to evaluate staff using the university guidelines on appraisals. The committee makes recommendations to the top management committee through the HR office.

The preceding extract implied that senior members of the staff of a given faculty are the immediate supervisors. They are therefore the heads of academic units. Hence, they know their junior staff's performance well. These findings concur with the work of Peleyeju and Ojebiyi (2013) that the principal rater in the institution include heads and supervisors of the various departments or units and co-ordinated by the HR section of the University. The quality control unit in place streamlines the appraisal process to assure procedural fairness, and resolve contentions that arise from appraisal outcomes. Similarly, the findings agree with the views in the paper presented on a strategic HR management in institutions of higher learning workshop in 2018 that revealed that there should be a committee of academic staff review at departmental, faculty, and university levels composed of senior members of the academic staff. The committee rather than an individual reviewer is in

charge of objectively appraising the performance of staff following the institutional rules and regulations. This information from the documents I checked implies a training of supervisors and it is in line with Forrest's (2009) observation that institutions can reduce the impact of potential biases in the appraisal process by providing regular and thorough training for their supervisors.

Relating to what RAU needed to put in place to check PA biases, another dean participant (Lydia) proposed that, "The University should institute PA panels composed of senior faculty staff to evaluate the performance of the academic staff as a team chaired by the dean...This panel objectively conducts the appraisals to benefit both the staff and the institution." Practically, the response advocates that RAU should use modern PA techniques such as 360-degree which involve multi-raters evaluating different aspects of their staff performance.

The preceding findings are also in agreement with the observations of other authors (Gurbuz & Dikmenli, 2007; Pichler, 2012; Prasetya & Kato, 2011) who reported that PA panel could constitute appraisers who are conversant with a staff's performance including supervisors, subordinates, peers, customers (students in this respect), and self-appraisal by the staff. Particularly, the 360-degree feedback process involves collecting ideas about a staff's performance from his or her supervisor's direct reports, colleagues, internal and external customers (students), and suppliers. This technique according to Aggarwal and Thakur (2013), relies on multiple inputs of data. In other words, a panel collects information about the academic staff's performance in respect to RAU from many sources, and the individual members on the panel know and interact with the ratees (staff) frequently.

6.2.2. *Appraisee's Negligible Voice.* Like their juniors, several dean study participants revealed that they have a negligible voice in the conduct of PA. For instance, Julian a dean participant drawn from the SA field narrated that:

...lack of participation by appraisees in the setting of PA standards is a likely challenge in the PA process. When a member of staff gets a job here, we give him or her copies of job description and the HR manual. Most times, we presume that the staff gets to know what is expected of him or her when they read these documents. Yet, this appears not to be the case on the ground.

From Julian's preceding response, the assumption by the appraisers is that their appraisees are usually aware of what RAU expects of them. Yet, in reality, this does not seem to be true. Once supervisors presumably deny their subordinates a voice in their appraisal process, then they will end up developing their kind of opinions. This finding is in line with the observations of Wiese and Buckley (1998) who reported that appraisals are always conducted by the supervisor with very little input from the appraisee. This scenario makes the appraisees develop an undesirable perception of the entire PA practice. However, the finding contradicts the views of Pichler (2012), who contended that the process of PA involves an individual employee and the immediate supervisor with interchange between them regarding the individual job attainment over some time. Additionally, the finding disagrees with the views of other authors (Ikemefuna, 2005; Dessler, 2008; Aggarwal & Thakur, 2013) who posited that MBO is an appraisal method that includes mutual goal setting and evaluation based on the attainment of specific goals. Relatedly, George another dean participant from the same field (SA) reported that "The current PA form avails little opportunity to the appraiser and appraisee in the appraisal

process to justify their decisions to tick or not the choices that the form provides....This makes the appraisal process perplexing due to minimal participation.” George’s response revolves around minimal participation and the limited voice that the appraisers and appraisees often have during the conduct of PA. The same response also implies that the parties involved in the process support the practice of PA as expressed earlier by the previous study participants despite their concerns about the process itself and the distribution of PA outcomes by the managers.

The preceding study findings to a great extent agree with the assertions of other authors (Bersin, 2008; Peleyeju & Ojebiyi, 2013), who observed that the major complaint from managers is that they are not given sufficient guidelines to assess people; and the major complaint from employees is that the process is not equitable. Certainly, Gurbuz and Dikmenli (2007) and Peleyeju and Ojebiyi (2013), also observed that appraisers and appraisees are both in a frenzy of confusion concerning the process of evaluating individual work performance due to their little input in the course of conducting PA. Having considered almost all the participants’ responses and other authors’ views about the nature of voices of the appraisees in the conduct of PA, I can freely say that in my study, some faculties in RAU provide an opportunity for their appraisee’s voices to be heard during PA, while others do not. This variation raises a range of perceptions of the PA process held by the academic staff of RAU.

The study participants suggested several actions to increase the voice of the appraisee in the process of PA at RAU. For instance, Moses an ordinary academic staff study participant suggested that “...setting performance targets should be done by both the appraisers and appraisees at the beginning of the contract period...and should be

accompanied by giving a clear job description to the staff.” Besides, Lydia, a dean participant concurred with Moses’ proposal when she said that, “...the setting of PA objectives needs to be done together - the appraisees with their senior staff at the faculty level.” These responses meant that such a strategy in the PA conduct increases the appraisees’ awareness of what is expected from each of them; builds a good working relationship to release the potential of the staff for effective performance. These findings agree with Kim and Holzer (2016), who indicated that employee participation in performance standard-setting are positively associated with employee acceptance of the PA process. Generally, members of the academic staff expect their participation in the entire process of PA at RAU to rotate around the possibility of their appraisers listening to them basing on real facts during the appraisal process.

6.2.3 PA is Costly. Several ordinary academic staff study participants (Moses, Beatrice, Claire, David & Ronald) reported that conducting appraisal was costly to both the institution and the individual staff. For instance, Ronald from the SA field revealed that “PA is done towards the end of one’s contract because it is costly. Consequently, the appraisers may consider the most recent activities in the final year of the contract and the activities of the first three years may be neglected.” Similarly, his counterpart (Beatrice) echoed this view by sharing that, “PA forms are supposed to be filled in May of every academic year but because of time shortages (Sic), some members of staff do not fill them.”

Ronald and Beatrice’s responses have two issues: first, due to the shortage of time the supervisors often carried out PA at the end of one’s contract. Consequently, supervisors could only subject the academic staff seeking contract renewal or promotion to the PA

practice. The exercise becomes unfair to the other staff who would want their supervisors to assess their performance for training needs analysis among other PA purposes. This finding relates with Forrest's (2011) observation that when the appraisal process is merely evaluative and not necessarily tied to performance management, it is ineffective. Again, time shortage meant that the two parties (appraisers & appraisees) could not fully participate as required in the exercise. Impliedly, the appraisers at times could fill their section of the appraisal forms in the absence of the appraisee, an issue that brings in suspicion on the appraisee's side. The result of PA being costly in terms of time is in agreement with the work of Prasad (2015), who found out that there is often a negative consequence of engaging in PA activities as it interferes with other employee tasks. Additionally, the results concur with Forrest (2011), who found out that the appraisal process at HEIs lacks effectiveness and requires time and resources to modify it, which managers are unwilling to commit and accomplish.

Second, the finding that some members of the staff do not fill PA forms showed that some RAU employees could be taking the process of conducting PA for granted. It could mean that they do not value the PA exercise. This result supports the views of Forrest (2011) who reported that most times, some employees are never appraised and nobody seems to mind about it. Other studies such as Kanfer (1990) also advanced that sometimes employees give priority to other tasks at the expense of engaging in PA. This situation again supports the submission by Forrest (2011) that managers want to revise the institution's appraisal but other pressing needs push it lower on the priority scale. In my study, members of the academic staff have many responsibilities including among others teaching and research beyond PA. They therefore perhaps look at the time they spend during the appraisal process as waste.

In a related context, David also shared that, “appraisals are supposed to be done normally in May every academic year for every member of the academic staff but it is normally done when one’s contract is about to expire.” This response indicates irregularity in the exercise and it contradicts with the study by Werunga (2014), who observed that institutions carry out PA regularly not only once but thrice a year or monthly to eliminate any form of suspicion from the appraisees in the organisation. Werunga as well underscored the fact that timely recognition should be given to those who have excelled and those who have not should be encouraged positively. Likewise, the study finding is opposed to the views of Longenecker (1999), who emphasised that using frequent informal feedback during PA allows minor issues to be addressed promptly rather than growing into more serious ones over time. Practically, if supervisors want a successful and effective PA process; then, they must provide an ongoing informal feedback to their employees throughout the appraisal cycle (contract period) so that there are no surprises when the formal appraisal takes place.

Further, concerning the issue of PA being costly, Claire submitted that “...conducting PA is time-consuming since it is usually a long procedure. The panel system used in our faculty is costly because it involves spending money for allowances.” Claire’s response about PA echoes the submission of Scullen (2011), who opined that there are costs involved in carrying out PA - the most substantial part of it could be the time it takes for a manager to think about, prepare for, and conduct individual PA interviews with all the appraisees especially if PA panel mechanism is administered.

However, all the study participants' responses on the cost of PA in my study were silent about the psychological costs such as disappointment, low morale, and feelings of inferiority among others which are described by Deming in Scullen (2011) as one of the numerous costs incurred in undertaking appraisals in an organisation. These costs occur alongside the actual financial costs incurred in funding PA exercises. The finding is similar to the observations of Culbert (2008), who noted that participants in PA explicitly do not bring out costs such as the cost of low morale and reduced willingness to engage in teamwork that could lead to actual financial costs as well. Essentially, PA exercise has a cost tag irrespective of the approaches employed in its implementation at an institution. These costs are perhaps dependent upon individual appraisees, appraisers, PA procedure followed, the institutional culture, and the situation under which the superiors practice PA. Thus, the key parties involved in PA at RAU should re-think very carefully about the cost-benefit analysis of the PA process. Judging from the study participants' responses in my study, the probable reason could be that PA was not a key priority at RAU to warrant allocating it additional time and funds as Forrest (2009) recommends. Indeed, there are obvious costs observed by Forrest in terms of funds and time and other costs such as decreased productivity and damage to employees' psychological well-being which RAU did not yet seem to put into full consideration - perhaps because PA was still being conducted majorly for staff contracts renewal and promotion.

Along a similar line, the majority of dean participants irrespective of their disciplinary fields and sex mentioned 'time limitedness' as a hindrance in the process and conduct of PA at RAU. In his expression, George said that "I appraise individual staff performance in my faculty once in their contract period [4th year] because of time. Therefore, one's work for the entire contract period may be shattered...in just one hour!" Besides, Julian and

Lydia in their respective opinions both revealed that the exercise is usually time-consuming because of its inclusiveness in form of panel format. In other words, it takes time to get the team members in case of team appraisals. This finding agrees with the view put forward by other authors such as Braskamp and Ory (1994) who opined that faculty and administrators have not always seen appraisals as a good use of time, although the practice is important.

To check the costs incurred to conduct staff PA at RAU, the participants made some suggestions. For instance, Grace from the HA field suggested that, "...PA should be done at the end of every academic year for staff and management to be more focused..." In the same way, a dean participant (Lydia) proposed that, "...the PA exercise should be done regularly... not only for the renewal of contract but also to ensure the quality of delivery of the core university functions." These responses implied that if the university management implements PA majorly for renewing employee contracts, then it would be done once and towards the end of individual contracts (or after its expiry). However, when the actors in the appraisal practice perceive its value beyond just contract renewal and promotion to training needs analysis and providing feedback among other outcomes, then, they would conduct it regularly without any excuses related to cost. My observation meant that RAU would conduct both formative and summative evaluations for the benefit of the individual staff and the institution. These findings agree with Grote's (2006) view that one shared factor between PA in HEIs and in the business field is 'time'. Supervisors simply do not want to take the time or do not feel as though they have the time to do an adequate staff PA. Indeed, it takes time for the management of an institution to develop a good and an ongoing PA process. According to Painter (2003), maintaining a continuous record of observed performance is an important component in a fair and useful appraisal system.

Whereas I might agree with Painter, it is also easy to understand that such appraisals would take a considerable amount of time. Given the prevailing discussions on the study findings regarding the cost of PA practice, if the exercise is as important as many authors and the study participants have portrayed it to be, then RAU should allot it sufficient time and funds.

6.2.4 Appraiser not Knowing Appraisee Performance in Totality. Some study participants reported the challenge that several appraisers do not know their appraisees' performance in totality. For instance, Ezra a study participant under the category of ordinary academic staff from the HA field reported that "...my appraiser may misjudge me because he may not know my performance in totality...." Ezra's response meant that the supervisor's limited knowledge about his or her subordinate interferes with the objectivity of the exercise. Indeed, a supervisee and supervisor who do not know each other well are likely to perceive the whole PA exercise as a routine and a formality subjected to them by the institution when they meet during the appraisal process. The response also meant that supervisors find it frustrating to involve supervisees in the PA process with whom they have scanty performance information. This finding is inconsistent with the results of other authors (Mollel, 2017; Hutu & Avasilcai, 2011), who reported that the superiors focus the PA process on the individual staff and his or her immediate supervisor (s); and must therefore involve an interchange between them regarding the individual job attainment over an agreed performance period.

Furthermore, some dean participants expressed similar sentiments of limited knowledge of appraisers about their appraisees as opined by the preceding ordinary academic study participants. In particular, Lydia shared that, "... My faculty uses 'single rater PA

approach [graphic rating scales]. As an appraiser, I may have limited performance information about my subordinates....I may seem to be unkind and rude to such staff I am not so much familiar with.” “Graphic rating scales” is an appraisal technique that lists several performance traits and a range of scores for each. An appraiser, therefore, rates an employee by identifying the score that best describes his or her performance for each trait. The results of this technique are standardised, thus allowing appraisers and appraisees to make comparisons between themselves. This PA technique may be subjective (Aggarwal and Thakur 2013). Lydia’s response demonstrates the absence of team spirit that may exist between the appraisers and their appraisees due to the inadequate information that the appraisers may have about their appraisees. This may lead to inappropriate appraisal ratings of some employees. The result is inconsistent with the finding of Warokka, Gallato, Thamendren and Moorthy (2012), who discovered that for employees to be satisfied with the process and outcomes of PA, the PA procedure should be clear and consistent so that the employees perceive the whole process to be fair; thus developing a favourable perception of the PA process.

In this regard, Lydia’s male counterpart (Samuel) submitted that “As supervisors, we occasionally possess inadequate individual staff performance information....If I appraise such a staff....I may be tempted to do guess rating...” This response demonstrated that there was no team spirit between appraisers and their appraisees at RAU. The probable outcome of scanty performance information is that the appraiser inappropriately rated the appraisee based on guesswork. This finding agrees with that of Seldin (1988), who observed that guessing bias occurs when the supervisor does not have relevant information to render a meaningful judgment but provides a response nevertheless based on some aspects of the employee’s performance. In my study, the scenario of scanty

performance employee information possessed by the superiors was predominant in the HA disciplinary field. This implied that either in this field (HA) appraisers had lesser inadequate skills in the practice or they were much preoccupied with other responsibilities (and or private duties) to the extent that they neglected their managerial-supervisory responsibilities. The bottom line is that the best PA process would involve; integrating performance appraisal into a formal goal-setting system; basing evaluations on accurate and current job descriptions; offering adequate support and assistance to staff to improve their performance (professional development opportunities). Indeed, this requires appraisers to have adequate knowledge and direct experience of the staff performance and conducting appraisals regularly as Fletcher (1994) observed.

The study participants proposed some solutions to the challenge of appraisers not knowing their appraisees' performance well. For example, Grace an ordinary academic staff study participant drawn from the HA field advised that "...RAU should organise workshops and endeavour to make its entire staff to be more informed and receptive of the appraisal exercise to conduct it fairly. The appraisers as compared to their appraisees need more PA training..." Besides, Samuel a dean participant underscored the importance of PA training by saying that, "...the university management should have annual PA staff training to avoid the staff taking PA for granted." These responses indicated that the key players in the process desire that the management of RAU informs them of the best practices of assessing the performance of their responsibilities. This implied that as the management avails training to the parties that physically get involved in conducting PA, they will appreciate the value of a 'cause beyond oneself' and a 'collective responsibility for a fairer PA process at RAU. This finding is consistent with the views of Nyaoga, Kibet and Magutu (2010), who opined that private universities

should consider the training of appraisers to be one of the cardinal factors contributing to an effective PA process. Additionally, the finding is in agreement with the views of Pichler (2012), who believed that rater training could focus on how to deliver feedback in a supportive and participatory way.

About the preceding responses from the study participants, the documents I checked revealed that RAU had a well stipulated PA process in which the performance of its employees is evaluated using the appropriate university appraisal approach by the immediate supervisor, peers, and students (in case of academic staff). The university HR manual showed that:

The staff is required to make a self-appraisal by completing a form prepared by the University. They are also supposed to be appraised by the students, and by the faculty/school staff appointments committee comprising of at least five members who may include an immediate supervisor, Head of Department, Dean of the Faculty or Director of Graduate School.

The information in the preceding extract means that RAU has guidelines (see Appendix H) for the conduct of PA procedures in place to promote the participation of not only the appraiser and appraisee but also the senior staff and the students. The extract also suggests that through multiple sources of staff appraisal, the superiors receive vast information about an individual staff for a fairer PA process beneficial to the staff and RAU. However, as observed earlier, most of the study participants in both categories were not very much informed of the ‘wonders’ of these PA guidelines in the manual; hence, the need for PA training.

6.2.5 Improper Documentation of PA Records. David an ordinary academic staff study participant drawn from the SA field reported that, "...along the way someone's appraisal form can be displaced because the documentation of records is not good at this institution..." Besides, Samuel a dean participant drawn from the HA field echoed the same view on PA documentation by reporting that, "...the University has inadequate records related to employee performance due to improper record keeping..." David and Samuel's responses indicated that at RAU, there seemed to be a challenge of keeping up-to-date employee records. Improper records therefore could challenge managers when making decisions about their employee performance. Both participants advise that the institution needed to computerise the filing system such that there was an automated information about the progress of each PA step to the appraisee. The responses also meant that the University was using manual appraisal and documentation of information. Additionally, the responses indicated a desire to change to modern automated systems. This result agrees with the suggestion of Forrest (2009) that institutions that lack an automated appraisal system should consider installing and implementing such systems to improve their appraisal process aimed at higher productivity.

5.2.6 Appraisals do not Capture Christian Values. Claire an ordinary academic study participant drawn from the SA field disclosed that, "...During the conduct of PA, our supervisors neither capture nor assess employees on issues such as cohabitation and alcoholism that contradict the Christian doctrines of the University..." The response implied that some key issues (especially Christian values) critical to the founding Christian-faith based organisation that could equally boost the performance of staff and make the university's identity clear to the public were not included in the appraisal

exercise. This finding is in accord with the results of other scholars (Ojokuku, 2013) who reported that annual performance review exercises at times do not reflect all the components of staff performance during the review period. There is a need therefore to review the PA system to achieve the required fairness. Lydia a dean study participant advised that “...since a Christian-faith based organisation forms the Board of trustees of RAU, Christian values should be given due consideration in the university’s community engagement when appraising staff. This will set the institution ahead of other competing institutions...”

Lydia’s response points at two issues; most important, RAU seemed not to consider the Christian virtues that the founding body proclaims in its appraisal. Then, other several competing higher education institutions (HEIs) happened to appraise their staff for improved performance in the competitive higher education space using almost a common PA form. For RAU therefore to set itself apart, it should devise mechanisms that capture the Christian values in its appraisal exercise to enable it to outstand the competition. This finding agrees with the views of De Jong (1992) that most faith-based institutions ride on set behavioural standards conforming to their founding organisations. These standards convey a sense of institutional identity; hence, allowing the prospective public to conclude the nature of the institution, its undertakings, and the spiritual viewpoints.

On the other hand, several study participants (Ezra & Julian) refuted most of the preceding findings on the challenges of the conduct of the PA process at RAU. For example, Ezra drawn from the HA field reported that “I do not see any great challenges of PA conduct generally....If it had anything to do with terminating my employment contract, then I would be looking at the PA form but as for now, no worries...” (Sic) This response

seemed to imply that to some academic staff PA had no value at RAU. With or without the practice, the University could progress. Equally important, the response meant that the conduct of PA had little influence on some academic staff at RAU. Besides, Julian a dean participant drawn from the SA field argued that "...the staff PA conducted here [at this university] has no serious challenges; instead, it eliminates bias, selfishness, and conflict of interest.... Despite the failures by some members of the PA panel to keep secrets, panel appraisal in our faculty promotes fairness, transparency..." Julian's response revealed that if panel appraisals bring on board several senior workmates with particular expertise and facts to participate in the conduct of PA, then, it has no common challenges like prejudice and subjectivity among others. The multiple sources of information on individual staff make the PA conduct fair. However, in my study, the approaches (or methods & techniques) used varied within and across the disciplinary units irrespective of the PA guidelines in the HR manual of the University. Therefore, the variations in the PA mechanisms were possibly responsible for the diverse PA perceptions held by the academic staff at RAU.

6.3 The Silent Voice of Unfair Performance Appraisal Practice.

In chapter two, I noted that the organisational justice theory of Greenberg (1986) points out that human beings are specifically interested in three kinds of justice (distributive, procedural & interactional). Regarding the perception of PA held by the academic staff at RAU, during the interview sessions with my study participants and analysis of data I noted recurring patterns of voices from the responses of both categories of the participants (ordinary academic staff & faculty deans) across the disciplinary fields (HA & SA). In these recurring voices, the participants reported consciously (but with reservations) or unconsciously the unfairness in the entire PA practice at RAU. Some

participants who reported consciously but with reservations probably feared to be implicated or otherwise, much as they had my assurance of anonymity and confidentiality (see Chapter 3.4; 3.9 & Appendix A).

I noted the irregularities in the PA exercise at RAU that the study participants expressed during the interviews sessions as key indicators of a silent voice of unfair PA across the institution. Most of the study participants generally never wanted to bring out these voices boldly. Nonetheless, using hermeneutic phenomenology as my research design, I captured several repeated opinions from the individual study participants' voices that generally manifested discomfort feelings arising from unfair PA tendencies at RAU. These voices had phrases that included among others, "PA for formality", "PA subjectivity", "PA biases", "inappropriate PA ratings", "victimising of appraisee", "*onwana wange*" and "staff chasing their way". I came up with codes that indicated the study participants' concerns about the prevalence of unfairness in the practice of PA. These codes included; "minimal academic staff participation in PA ", "appraiser subjectivity", "non-compliance to PA recommendations by university management", "inadequate appraisal skills by appraisers", "appraiser conflict of interests", " appraiser's PA bias", "failure to regularly conduct appraisal", "failure to provide timely PA feedback", "failure of the appraiser to know the appraisee in totality" and "inadequate PA orientation by the appraiser and appraisee".

Further, I combined all the preceding codes and came up with a strong issue of unfair PA practice (silent voice) that I used to express the nature of perception of PA held by academic staff at RAU. Other factors notwithstanding, some individual study participants rhetorically endorsed the presence of unfair PA practices at the University. Their reserved

conscious and or unconscious responses gave an impression of the solid information they had about the unfair appraisal practice that seemed to prevail at RAU. I now present the details of what transpired to point at the unfair PA practices as an emergent theme in my study.

6.3.1 PA as a Formality. A good number of the ordinary academic staff study participants revealed that RAU was carrying out PA for formality's sake. For instance, Beatrice drawn from SA field reported that "...as per the university HR manual, we are supposed to be appraised for promotion and renewal of our contracts. However, before the appraisal is done you only hear some staff at another rank [promoted]..." Beatrice's response indicated that she was aware of the existent PA practice at RAU. However, she was doubtful of its (PA) benefits to the staff and RAU because some deserving members of the staff were not benefiting from it yet others benefited even before their supervisors could appraise their performance. The response also meant that PA was not accurately addressing the important purposes upon which the University designed it. This finding does not differ from the views of Nyaoga et al. (2010) and Kimanje and Onen (2019), who reported that members of the staff are aware of the outcomes of PA used at their respective institutions but they find the entire exercise of staff performance evaluation done unjustly and for formality's sake.

Lydia a dean study participant drawn from the HA field consented to the occurrences of formality in the PA exercise at RAU that is unfair to some of the academic staff. In particular, Lydia reported that "...the PA practice does not serve the purpose it intends to serve because the university management fixes it for formality and with bias. The University ends up retaining and promoting the wrong staff..." Lydia's response meant

that supervisors conducted PA at RAU just for formality because at times they used it to recommend undeserving staff positively and ignore the deserving ones. This egocentric act of some university superiors might have made the entire PA practice unfair to some individual staff and useless to the University as an institution albeit the intended good PA outcomes. This finding is in tandem with the observations of Roshidi (2005) that academicians are dissatisfied with how their academic managers implement PA because it does not help them in any way to improve their job performance or personal development. In my study, some academicians perceived PA as just another mechanism for RAU managers to reward the employees of their choice.

A similar trend of response reflecting unfairness in the practice of staff appraisals at RAU continued even with the male dean participants. Particularly, Samuel from HA field reported that "... my superiors have been informally appraising my performance after every six months. They promoted me...now I am a dean of a faculty.... So far, I have also informally appraised many academic staff in my faculty..." In his response, Samuel recognised his promotions and career achievements for the period he had so far worked with RAU. Like the superiors who informally appraised his performance, as well, he informally assessed the performance of the employees in his faculty. These study findings agree with those of other authors such as Longenecker (1999), who decades ago remarked that the way the supervisors are appraised by their managers is the very way they are most likely to appraise their juniors. Thus, when top managers (e.g., University Secretary, Vice-Chancellor & their deputies) subject middle managers under them such as faculty deans to effective performance appraisals, they set a good example of how others should conduct appraisals; hence, indicating the importance of conducting appraisals at the University. I can say that Samuel as a supervisor with the mandate to

appraise other staff in his faculty had scanty PA skills as per his response. He, therefore, found it challenging to follow the PA guidelines which the HR manual of RAU that was in force stipulated. These findings agree with those of Rafikul and Rasad (2006) who observed that supervisors subject their employees to formal or informal (conscious & or unwitting) PA. Unfortunately, informal appraisals do not always follow guidelines laid down in the HR manual to focus the PA exercise for the individual employee and institutional improved performance. Indeed, informal PA is subjective and when superiors assess the performance of their staff using it, it may lead to unfair perceptions of the exercise by the staff. As I noted earlier, RAU has formal PA guidelines that its HR manual stipulates. Unfortunately, some superiors subjected some of their academic staff to informal appraisals. Such irregularities are signals of unfairness in the PA practice.

6.3.2 The University's Non-compliance to PA Recommendations. Another contributing factor to the unfair perception of PA held by the academic staff at RAU that several study participants noted was RAU's failure (non-compliance) to fulfill the PA recommendations (especially staff training & promotion) for some academic staff. For instance, David drawn from the SA field under the category of ordinary academic staff submitted that "...supervisors use PA to recommend academic staff for promotion.... However, much as this University uses PA as a tool for identifying training gaps, promotion..., I have not benefited from it [PA]..." Similarly, Julian a dean participant drawn from the same field (SA) as David disclosed that, "My motivation enabled me to go for my further study programme ...because I had written down my dreams for the four years that followed..." Indeed, Julian and David's responses equally indicate that the University's failure to comply with the PA recommendations makes the good exercise of PA unfair to some staff. This finding agrees with that of Forrest (2011), who reported that PA system and

compliance is very poor at HEIs. Nonetheless, RAU's non-compliance appeared to be a blessing in disguise because it resulted in a growing intrinsic drive in some members of the staff to pursue their training and career paths. Such an intrinsic drive eventually benefits the individual staff and consequently, the university's performance improves.

Furthermore, Claire an ordinary academic staff participant from the SA field echoed the preceding views by reporting that, "...this University at times fails to implement the issues raised from PA claiming that it has inadequate funds....such non-compliance with PA recommendations for some staff makes '*the beautiful*' exercise unfair." Relatedly, Julian a dean study participant from SA field reported that "...as an institution, we lose some good staff because there is no gap for promotion or no funds for the identified training gaps. The University claims that it has serious financial constraints and demands to fulfill the PA recommendations..." Claire and Julian's responses mainly focus on inadequate RAU financial resources as a cause of its failure to invest in training its staff and providing teaching aids among other requirements identified through PA and needed by the institution to promote the performance of its staff. However, this non-compliance only seems to affect only some isolated staff. This is a gesture of tendencies of favouritism insinuating unfair distribution of PA outcome much as the issue of inadequate funding may also suffice in this context. This finding negates the views of Bendaraviciene (2010), who reported that HEIs being 'knowledge organisations', training and development are observed as substantial values; thus, many employees anticipate PA to be related to the nourishing of these values. Indeed, funds may not be sufficient as my study discloses. RAU as an institution may be failing to prioritise its staff growth and development and in case of an offer, the top university managers consider (favour) only the employees close to them. This yields feelings of unfairness in the practice.

On the other hand, Ezra an ordinary academic staff study participant from the HA field disputed some of the issues related to the university's failure to fulfill the PA recommendation. He particularly reported that "...the Vice-Chancellor (VC) then, had a plan of enhancing quality teaching in my faculty. Consequently, I got an opportunity to further my studies.... I am now a lecturer in this University." From Ezra's response, I observed that RAU's top managers probably favoured some of the members of the academic staff. Thus, 'the favoured' obtained scholarships for further training, and subsequently RAU promoted them to higher academic ranks. Meanwhile, other academic staff (David & Grace) who almost had no opportunity, had to fend for themselves. The university's support of particular staff could not probably be attributed to the allegedly high demand for such staff in the HA academic unit since Grace did not get the same opportunity as Ezra, much as both belonged to the same faculty. Probably, the top managers might have made such decisions basing on other factors such as nepotism to consider Ezra. This scenario, therefore, suggested unfairness in PA practices that favoured one academic staff and left out the others who the appraisers had equally recommended and deserved similar benefits. This finding calls for the implementation of the suggestion by Forrest (2009) that institutions could increase the perceived value and benefit of PA by soliciting inputs and providing the resources needed as well as changing their appraisal systems to ensure fairness and efficacy.

6.3.3 PA Bias. Voices alluding to PA bias were recurring among several study participants' (Beatrice, Grace, Samuel, Julian, George) responses. For instance, Beatrice reported that, "I may lose my job opportunity easily due to PA biases that result in low ratings..." Likewise, Grace said that, "...the University may lose its staff due to appraisal bias if management makes decisions based on faulty appraisal information.

Some appraisers do not give right information about their subordinates.” Beatrice and Grace’s responses demonstrated tendencies of bias in the practice of PA that victimise and deny opportunities to some deserving staff. This creates feelings of PA unfairness among staff. In the same vein, Samuel, a dean study participant drawn from the HA disciplinary field revealed that “...I am a ‘boss’ here at this institution and a subordinate at University X; my subordinate here [RAU] is my boss there [University X]. Therefore, I must handle him carefully because I may need his favour the other side.” Samuel’s response meant that a staff under his supervision who is not his ‘boss elsewhere’ might not probably be favoured like the one he relates with at the other workplace. Similarly, George another dean participant drawn from the SA field corroborated the preceding response by sharing that, “...Some appraisers deny opportunities to deserving staff by rating them inadequately and do the opposite to poor performers. We conduct PA at the end of one’s contract.... Therefore, an appraiser may shatter one’s work of the entire performance contract...” These responses indicate that appraisers are not consistent in PA ratings of their subordinates’ performance. Their subjectivity exhibited during PA conduct contributes to feelings of unfair PA practice among the staff at RAU. However, since these findings support ‘punishment’, therefore they are opposed to Cole’s (2001) counsel that supervisors should not use PA as a tool to punish their employees.

On the other hand, Julian a dean study participant expressed contrasting views that included differences in PA techniques used. In particular, Julian submitted that:

To me, the PA exercise conducted has no great challenges; instead, it eliminates allegations of bias, selfishness, and conflict of interest among others. To be specific, some appraisers on the PA panel including me the dean can refrain from

appraising areas we are not conversant with and deal with other areas of assessment.

Julian's response shows contrasting views on approaches and techniques of PA in use at RAU. This implies that different academic units (i.e. faculties) at RAU depending on their deans (or supervisors) otherwise use different techniques and approaches of staff PA. In other words, each supervisor might be using techniques that deem more fitting to him or her. There are no single practical and institutionalised PA approaches or techniques in use across RAU much as the HR manual of the University has one (PA panel approach). This finding coheres with the observation of Forrest (2011) that consistency varies widely in an institution with some departments adhering to a regular PA and other departments avoiding the process. In effect, some faculties use 'single-rater' yet others use 'multi-rater' PA technique and each of these has merits and demerits. For instance, the team (or panel) appraisal ably checks the prevalence of bias and subjectivity in PA exercise yet one-rater PA saves time. These discrepancies in the PA techniques are probable indicators of tendencies of PA biases that cause unfair feelings about the whole exercise among the academic staff of RAU.

6.3.4 PA Staff Victimisation. Some participants pointed out that some appraisers victimise some of their subordinates during PA. For instance, David an ordinary academic staff participant from the SA field revealed that "PA exercise demoralises me especially when I become a victim before my appraiser. I may do my best but my appraiser inappropriately rates me. I get perturbed and lose motivation!" Besides, David's counterpart from the same field (SA) emphasised that "...they rate some of us inappropriately or give us demotivating comments....This may result in the dismissal of the victimised staff.... To

make matters worse, even in team appraisal such scenarios of victimisation happen possibly because of hatred...” (Ronald) In the same way, another ordinary academic staff participant from the HA field reported that “...in some cases, the dean makes PA comments in the appraisee’s absence. Therefore, I cannot know my supervisor’s comment. The dean may even victimise some staff...” (Grace)

David, Ronald, and Grace’s responses indicated that superiors were subjective when appraising some of their staff. Indeed subjectivity leads supervisors to victimise the intended beneficiaries (appraisees) of the exercise. Similarly, George, a dean participant expressed that, “PA is subjective. Here is a man [appraiser] who judges me and his judgment determines my destiny. I may become a victim of circumstances.” Such submissions showing victimisation of some staff continue to emphasise one of the observations made by Nyaoga et al. (2010) that employees are aware of PA and its benefits but find it to be just for formality. A dominant view from the study participants was that there was an abuse of some isolated staff during their appraisals irrespective of the faculty and the method of appraisal used; hence, the unfair perception of the PA practice held by the academic staff.

6.3.5 Inadequacy of Appraisal Skills. Across the disciplinary fields, a number of the study participants mentioned that some of their appraisers had inadequate appraisal skills. This had a link towards the unfair PA that I detected among the study participants’ responses. This is evident in the following submissions that David from the SA field made:

The unexpected low rating of my [appraisee] performance by the appraiser results in demoralisation that negatively affects my service delivery in particular and the University at large. This poor rating is due to the incompetence on the side of my

appraiser. It creates conflicts between him and me. Such ratings divert my attention from executing the duties expected of me to a ‘blame-game at the disadvantage of the University.

From David’s response, it is clear that members of the academic staff are concerned about the PA competencies their supervisors possess since inadequate supervisors’ PA competencies make them rate their supervisees inappropriately. This implies that superiors who assess others’ performance have inadequate appraisal skills. Most ordinary study participants agreed that they had no formal or non-formal specialised training in PA. A similar trend of inadequate PA abilities was evident from the majority of the dean participants (Samuel, Lydia & George). For instance, Samuel admitted that: “I have had no training in appraisal so far, I am only learning on-job. Inadequate PA skills possessed by employees, supervisors, and the office of HR make all of us [employees] fearful of the whole practice.” The response demonstrates that some appraisers like Samuel accept that they had inadequate PA skills that were hindering them to administer a fair PA exercise.

The preceding study findings are consistent with the work of Rafikul and Rasad (2006), who found out that the main reason for employee and supervisor’s frustration with the PA exercise is that a large number of managers are poorly trained in how to give feedback to employees. The findings also strengthen those of Nyaoga, Kibet and Magutu (2010), who reported that training of the appraisers should always be considered the most important factor to effective PA in a private university setting. A person who conducts the appraisal exercise should receive extensive training in goal setting, setting performance standards, conducting interviews, providing feedback and avoiding rating biases among other good

PA practices. He or she should know how to conduct appraisals consistently, fairly and objectively.

Furthermore, another dean participant instead commented with pride about his experience in PA 'as the best teacher', despite having no specialised formal training in the practice. George drawn from the SA field noted that:

The university management promoted me to the position of a faculty dean without appraisal much as it had a formal PA practice in place....I annually appraise HODs and employees in my faculty much as I have no specialised training... However, my vast appraisal experience as a secondary school Headteacher gave me suitable training in the practice...

The response from George raises several issues: First, the university management promoted him without following the guidelines as indicated in the HR manual that no superiors shall make decisions for promotion before appraising the staff in question. It seems at times, RAU's superiors could probably use informal and unwitting methods of PA to achieve their selfish ends or otherwise. I noted that the same superiors informally appraised another dean participant (Samuel) from the HA field for his promotion. However, this inconsistency in the PA methods (or approaches) used insinuates unfairness and favouritism if the same managers subject other employees to the rigorous formal process of PA to promote them. This finding contradicts Forrest's (2009) suggestion that institutions should ensure consistency in appraisal process throughout the institution to promote fairness.

Second, George's experience of PA at the secondary school level is no guarantee of efficiency in PA in a university setting. This is a signal of taking PA for formality. The finding is in tandem with the suggestions of other authors (Longernecker, 1999; Seldin, 1988), who established that the appraisal programme must relate closely with the traditions, purposes, and culture of the institution. In other words, the policies and procedures that work well in one college or university environment may not equally work well in another setting. This finding is also in line with the views of Curry (2006) that while a variety of workplaces use performance appraisals, the unique culture of higher education must be considered to provide effective faculty performance reviews and development systems. Congruent with the preceding findings on the inadequacy of PA skills presented by a dean participant from the soft-applied field, his counterpart (Lydia) from the HA field expressed her view about the prevailing scanty PA skills that she had acquired on-job elsewhere. In her voice, she said that "..., as a faculty dean, I am yet to acquire some PA skills at this University."

However, Julian a dean participant from the SA field who claimed to have acquired skills of PA had contrasting views on appraisal competencies. Julian argued that she was executing her appraiser's responsibilities at RAU with efficacy due to the specialised non-formal training in PA she had acquired for better performance. Julian narrated that, "...as a supervisor, I underwent specialised training in PA by NCHE and participated in managerial-leadership courses representing RAU in which I benefited a lot. I have also continued to attend PA workshops organised internally and externally..." Julian's response indicated that the appraiser had gaps in PA and therefore filled them on-job at either RAU or elsewhere. Given such a scenario, the appraisers were not conversant enough with the skills to practice PA capably. In this respect, some faculties that had their deans somehow proficient in PA, had positive feelings about the exercise while those from

other faculties especially the HA domain had different (i.e., an unfair practice) opinions about PA. These findings contradict the views of Birgen (2007), who believed that an appraiser being at the centre of PA must have sufficient appraisal techniques and resources on the ground that he or she thoroughly understands the subject matter and would avoid problems that may paralyse the appraisal programme. Besides, Forrest (2009) recommended that institutions could reduce the impact of potential feelings of unfairness in the appraisal process by providing regular and thorough training for their supervisors.

6.3.6 Failure to Provide PA Timely Feedback. A good number of study participants (David, Joyce, Ezra, Lydia & George) reported that appraisers at times fail to provide PA feedback on time. For instance, David disclosed that "...our superiors do the exercise towards the end of our contracts to renew them. To me, it, therefore, seems that the exercise considers the most recent activities towards the end of the contract... This is unfair..." Similarly, Joyce added that, "...this University recruited me as a temporal staff. Probably, they [my supervisors] saw my performance after five years...." Besides, Ezra reported that "...the exercise is done every academic year in May; sometimes, I do not fill in the forms. I do not know whether it is the responsibility of the HR officer or something like that..."

The preceding responses from David, Joyce, and Ezra indicate that PA feedbacks from supervisors to supervisees are irregular and always delay. Supervisors rarely communicate anything other than their supervisee's renewed contract during appraisal feedback. These voices suggest that the supervisors' feedback to supervisees does not communicate the primary purpose of appraisal on time, which is to improve the quality of employee performance. This makes supervisees doubtfully appreciate the other outcomes of PA practice. These findings agree with the observations of Oberg (1972) that employees may

not know their performance gaps and where to improve due to lack of regular timely feedback.

Without objections, some dean participants underscored the usefulness of timely PA feedbacks. For instance, Lydia from HA field said that “The University should not do appraisals for renewal of staff contracts only after four years, but also ensure delivery of quality core functions of the University. The University should carry out PA regularly...”

In this regard, George from the SA field elaborated that, “...no opportunity is given to the appraiser to justify the decisions to tick or not items in the PA forms. The practice is unfair...” The responses revealing confidentiality of the information of PA expressed by Lydia and George agree with Mutua (2005), who observed that appraisal systems as used by education institutions are strictly confidential and employees have no chance of knowing the contents of the evaluation report. These findings contradict Werunga’s (2014) observations that PA should be carried out regularly to eliminate any form of suspicion from the appraisees in the organisation. Werunga also emphasises that appraisers should give timely recognition of staff performance to those who have excelled and those who have not should be encouraged positively. Werunga’s sentiment is supported by other earlier scholars such as Mathis and Jackson (2000), who viewed PA as the process of evaluating how well employees perform their jobs when compared to a set of standards, and then communicate to the concerned employees.

6.3.7 Failure of Appraisers to Know Fully their Supervisee’s Performance. Some ordinary academic staff study participants revealed that their appraisers did not know their performance well. For instance, Ezra from the SA field said that “I may lie by not genuinely filling the PA forms....I can even take a semester without seeing my supervisor

or interacting with him. Therefore, my supervisor may not even know how I am performing...” Ezra’s response almost reveals no physical interaction whatsoever between the junior and superior staff during as they perform their duties much as supervision of the subordinates by superior is mandatory in the university HR manual. The absence of (or inadequate) interaction created a gap that failed supervisors to be acquainted with their supervisees’ performance. This kind of failure to have clear information about one’s performance generally suggests the prevalence of unfair PA practice among the affected academic staff. The finding concurs with other authors such as Seldin (1988) who believed that supervisors who do not have relevant information to render a meaningful judgment to their supervisees, provide a rating anyway based on some aspects of the employee’s performance; hence, committing PA guessing bias.

In the same way, Moses drawn from HA field said that “...the appraiser just misjudges without knowing the appraisee’s performance in totality. Besides, it is very difficult to score a colleague and rate a friend you have been closely working with. This creates bias and conflict of interest.” Surprisingly, Moses’ response indicated that even when the appraiser has full knowledge of his or her appraisee, by human nature, there is a likelihood of an unfair rating. Committing errors in PA rating, therefore, seems to be common and very difficult to avoid. Unfortunately, when appraisees sense such irregularities in PA exercise, they tend to perceive the entire PA practice as unfair.

In a similar context, the dean study participants (Samuel & Lydia) from the HA field vented their belief about how unfairness cropped up with supervisors who did not know their individual appraisee’s performance well. Particularly, Lydia said that “I may not know my appraisees’ performance in-depth.... Therefore, appreciating and helping them

in their weaknesses is very challenging. As a result, I become unkind and rude to them at times.” Equally, Samuel shared that, “At times, we [the supervisors] possess inadequate performance information related to our subordinates. I may have a bias when I assess the performance of such a staff that I do not know very well.” It is noteworthy that, all my study participants in the SA field were rather silent on this issue of some supervisors not knowing their respective individual supervisees’ performance well that would make them conduct unjust PA exercise. By implication, the immediate supervisors in the SA field were possibly available to execute their supervisory role regularly. As such, these supervisors interacted with their supervisees and in the due course, they knew their performance well. On the other hand, most of their counterparts (Moses, Ezra, Samuel & Lydia) drawn from the HA field suggested that the HODs and other supervisors probably did not have time to relate with each other as they executed their duties. Such supervisors ended up inappropriately rating their subordinates using non-factual information; hence, they sensed unfairness in their appraisals at the University. I can therefore discern that the practice of PA seemed to be perceived as more unfair in HA than in the SA field at RAU.

I corroborated the study participants’ dominant account of the silent (conscious & or unwitting) voices of unfair PA practices across the University by perusing through RAU documents (HR manual, personal profile). The University’s aspirations expressed in its HR manual seemed to contribute to the voice of unfair PA practices. Particularly, the manual indicated that:

An annual appraisal of the job performance of all staff whether academic..., as approved by the Quality Assurance mechanism from time to time, shall be made before any staff can be considered for promotion except in special cases as the University Council may determine...

Further, I followed the preceding data on the issue of promotion by checking the personal files of all the academic staff study participants from the university's HR office. I found out the evidence indicating unfair PA practices in the appraisal recommendations in the respective participants' PA forms in connection with the leeway that the university HR Manual gives the University Council to consider promotion in special cases. Some academic staff (i.e., Ezra & Grace) from the same field (HA) who even never served in the position of assistant lecturers received a promotion to the position of a lecturer from the graduate assistant. This suggests unfair PA practice because there were no such other members of academic staff the council promoted in this sense.

Based on the data I analysed, across RAU the practice of PA was rather inconsistent and as such, different members of the academic staff in their respective academic units perceived it differently (favourable, unfavourable, or both). To some staff, the practice was unfair even when its outcomes were beneficial to them, while to others, the practice was fair or unfair depending upon the PA method, techniques used, and the appraiser in charge. To this extent, members of the academic staff interpreted and thus perceived the practice of PA at RAU differently. However, those who perceived it as unfair made their expression with reservations probably to conceal their identity because of fear for their superiors to earmark them. Generally, these findings agree to a great extent with the views of Forest (2009), who observed that employees might have unfair or biased views of the PA at their institutions, but since they act as key players in the success of the exercise, they may not want to criticise an exercise for which they are annually involved.

6.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have reported, analysed, interpreted, and discussed the responses of all the study participants from the interviews and information from the extracts of the documents I checked related to the perception of the PA process by the academic staff at RAU. The results generally have shown that: despite a considerable inconsistency in the methods and procedures (or techniques) used in the conduct of PA across the various academic units, the appraisal process at RAU had some sort of participatory magnitude that depended on the appraiser. This inconsistency influenced the perception of PA process held by the academic staff either favourably or unfavourably. The study findings indicated that feelings of inconsistency in the procedure diminish the value the academic staff attached to the entire appraisal practice within the institution. I have reported challenges that faced the conduct of the PA process together with appropriate coping mechanisms aimed at performance improvement of both staff and the University in general. I also noted and captured recurring voices from the participants' responses; thus, I combined them to express a silent voice of unfair PA practice at RAU. In the chapter that follows, I presented, analysed, interpreted, and discussed the study findings on the perception of the appraiser-appraisee interaction during PA.

Chapter Seven

Perception of Appraiser-Appraisee Interactions held by Academic Staff

7.0 Overview

This chapter has three sections. In section one, I have analysed the perception of appraiser-appraisee interaction held by the academic staff during performance appraisal (PA) as my third research question. This section is made up of two sub-sections. Sub-section one comprises of perception of appraiser-appraisee relations while the second sub-section entails the perception of appraiser-appraisee communications. However, I have excluded data from documents check from this particular research question (objective) because I never found any documents that explicitly had information related to appraiser-appraisee interactions as I had expected. The second section has the “compromised Christian faith” at the University as an issue that kept on recurring in a pattern from the study participants’ responses during my data analysis. In section three, I have given a summary of the chapter.

7.1 Findings on Perception of Appraiser-Appraisees Interactions held by Academic Staff.

7.1.1. Perception of Appraiser-Appraisee Relations. A number of the study participants under the category of ordinary academic staff shared their views about the nature of relations they experienced with their appraisers. The study findings revealed that sometimes the academic staff experienced a constructive and motivating relationship with their appraisers. For instance, David reported that “I sit together with my immediate supervisor [appraiser] during the appraisal exercise to identify my areas of strengths and weaknesses in my responsibilities without any sort of conflict. My supervisor communicates to me with respect as a colleague.” David’s response, in this case,

demonstrates the existence of a reciprocated supervisor-supervisee working relationship. While this kind of relationship is desirable in the conduct of PA exercise, it may also have negative repercussions since both the appraiser and the appraisee may end up taking for granted the responsibilities that the University expects them to execute. It may also result in PA rater errors when the superior decides to give his or her appraisee good ratings even though the appraisee does not deserve it. Sometimes, one prominent performance attribute of the subordinate academic staff may blindfold the ‘*colleague* supervisor’s assessment of the other qualities.

This preceding finding is in tandem with the work of Peleyeju and Ojebiyi (2013), who discovered that raters sometimes tend to positively view all the qualities of a subordinate simply because he or she likes that subordinate. This finding is also in agreement with the work of several other authors (e.g., Lefkowitz, 2000; Tziner & Kopelman, 2002) who contended that positive affection is often associated with the ‘halo effect’, ‘leniency error’ and better interpersonal relationships. Additionally, the finding agrees with the views of Skarlicki, Folger, and Tesluk (1999) that how people are treated interpersonally during interactions and the encounter they experience determine the perceived justice or injustice of the PA interaction. A major setback to both the individual staff and the institution in general in this regard is that the appraiser may deny the academic staff a meaningful opportunity to identify his or her performance weaknesses at the workplace.

Besides, another ordinary academic staff study participant (Ezra) drawn from the hard-applied (HA) disciplinary field reported that “...I have not had any problem with the way I relate with the dean [appraiser] during the appraisal of my performance. He often treats me with respect as a colleague. One time when my supervisor realised that I had gone astray, he guided me on how to correct it.” (Ezra) This response also indicates the

existence of a positive superior-subordinate (appraiser-appraisee) working relationship at RAU. This result is in agreement with the work of Bernardin and Beatty (1984) who opined that when subordinates have trust in their appraisers, then they would have a positive perception of the whole PA exercise. The same view is also shared by other researchers such as Dirks and Ferrin (2001) as well as Levy and Williams (2004), who observed that when members of the academic staff have low levels of trust for their supervisors such as faculty deans or heads of department, then they may not be satisfied with the appraisal process or readily accept any PA feedback from such appraisers.

If the subordinate academic staff have varying levels of trust for their supervisors (the faculty deans & or heads of departments); those with low levels may be less satisfied with the appraisal and may not readily accept any feedback from that source even when it is positive. This finding is supported by the submission made by Mani (2002) that the subordinate's trust in supervisors is important for determining his or her satisfaction with the appraisal interaction. Therefore, when members of the academic staff have enough trust in their supervisors, they then favourably perceive PA interaction with the superior as being accurate. Nonetheless, this is not always the case at RAU because some other members of the academic staff reported that their superiors burden them as they execute their duties.

Additionally, Beatrice an ordinary academic staff study participant drawn from the SA field also corroborated the opinions of her male counter-parts (David & Ezra) by reporting that, "... My faculty dean is an experienced manager who chooses to own his subordinates' performance challenges.... (Sic) In all situations, he has a supportive charisma common to all his subordinates." (Beatrice) This kind of response actually showed that the members of staff of RAU generally appear to perceive their relations

with their supervisors positively during the appraisal exercise. Another participant (Moses) drawn from the HA disciplinary field also echoed such positive perceptions of the relationship he had with his supervisor. Particularly, he observed that "...my dealings with the dean [my supervisor] are collegial and caring and based on facts..." These findings are in consonant with the observations made by Flaniken (2009) and Aguinis (2013), who reported that when appraising employee performance, raters focus on the standard of work performance relative to the predetermined goals without considering the extraneous issues (e.g. personal relationship with the employee). Additionally, Aguinis reiterated that there is a need for managers to avoid destructive criticisms when reviewing employee performance, no matter how poor they perceive the employee's performance to be, as this could trigger negative feelings that could result in interpersonal conflict at the workplace. RAU being a Christian founded institution; my study findings hence suit its commitment to respecting equality of all human race as a community of God's people irrespective of ethic, social and political inclinations; or gender and religious differences as indicated in its HR manual.

To cater for probable divergence of perception based on sex, I interviewed a male dean study participant drawn from the HA disciplinary field who attested that:

My interaction as a supervisor with my academic staff during the appraisal exercise goes with the saying that, 'scratch my back and I scratch yours too'. We, [superiors and subordinates] have to be polite... kind and friendly in all dealings.... For example, I am a faculty dean here and elsewhere [another university] my subordinates here are my superiors there. Therefore, I must handle them softly because I will also need a favour from them on the other side.
(Samuel)

Samuel's response demonstrated 'moon lighting' academic staff irrespective of the positions they held. In other words, various universities employed the same staff in different positions (a faculty dean in one university may be an ordinary academic staff in another university). By implication, either the appraiser or the appraisee in one institution could easily manipulate the appraiser-appraisee relationship for egotistical tendencies that may benefit neither the individual staff nor the institution to perform better. This could easily contribute to the occurrence of PA leniency error. Leniency error is a tendency of some supervisors to give higher ratings to their subordinates than they truly deserve because they do not want to damage a working relationship with them (Tziner & Kopelman, 2002). The participant claimed that raters generally prefer to maintain a good working relationship with subordinates to confront the discomfort and conflict usually associated with communicating poor appraisal results to ratees.

The preceding results are in line with those of other authors' (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Boachie- Mensah & Seidu, 2012; Peleyeju & Ojebiyi, 2013) submissions that raters' motivation to give elevated ratings is driven by their inclination to maintain a good working relationship with the ratees. A key implication of the leniency error is that the final appraisal results may not be useful for the developmental purpose of the staff and the RAU in general, since the appraiser may conceal the staff's performance deficiencies. Indeed, the dean participants (Julian & Samuel) belonged to different disciplinary fields (SA & HA). However, much as each of them uses a different approach (or technique) to conduct PA and their styles of PA interaction are different, they seem to indicate that they valued their appraisees' input and suggestions since they were working as a team.

Furthermore, Julian acknowledged that the Christian principle of love preceded her interaction with her appraisees during the appraisal exercise. She specifically revealed that:

...compared with what takes place elsewhere [other faculties or universities], the Christian principle of love precedes my PA interaction... For instance, the students almost rejected one lecturer in his first year of teaching. They were saying that he did not know how to teach. When we [appraisal team] told him during our PA interaction, he accepted and agreed to change... (Julian)

The acceptance and the change that was exhibited by the appraisee in Julian's response gives a gesture that even when appraisers communicate negative PA feedback candidly and with love, it can benefit the individual staff and the institution in general. This study finding is therefore similar to what I anticipated. Based on the literature review (chapter two), I expected several candid supervisory relations to be acceptable among my study participants. This view implies that an academic staff is concerned with the improvement of his or her performance and appreciates PA as a vehicle to accomplish it. This finding agrees with the views of Warokka, Gallato, Thamendren and Moorthy (2012) who revealed that employees are more concerned with their relations with the supervisors during and after the evaluation process. Indeed, they are keen on knowing how their superiors evaluated them after the PA interface.

7.1.2. Perception of Appraiser-Appraisee Communications. Some ordinary academic staff study participants were very positive about the way their appraisers talked with them during the exercise of PA. However, a few of them perceived the way their appraisers

communicated to them negatively. For instance, Grace drawn from the HA disciplinary field revealed that:

....There is hardly any interactive communication during the exercise because my boss [supervisor] fills the rest of the PA forms by just ticking or not before writing his comments... (Sic). I wish my boss would tell me that 'this is not good; you would have done it this way. I would also give my views.... I remember my supervisor has ever rated me low to deny me a promotion opportunity...!

Grace's observation indicates that the appraiser does not effectively communicate to the appraisees during the PA exercise. This finding concurred with that of Rao (1984), who argued that one of the major issues in PA is effective communication. Indeed, Rao reiterated that if a supervisor fails to give his or her appraisee feedback during PA, then the subordinate's future performance will most likely be in jeopardy. Advisably Rao adds that the appraiser and the appraisee must often discuss the PA outcomes and where possible among others, conduct counselling, coaching, and mentoring of the subordinate. This finding is also in tandem with the studies of Gregory (2011) and Mollel (2017), who reported that feedback to employees, sharpens their understanding of the exercise and can result in their improved performance.

Furthermore, the findings confirm the views of Thamendren (2011), who emphasised that PA is an ongoing communication process between an appraiser and appraisee in which the former sets expectations, monitors performance, and provides constructive feedback to the latter. In my study, however, some academic staff appeared to take the supervisory communication to be inaccurate and ineffective since they claimed to have little trust in their supervisors. This view concurs with the works of other authors (Kernan & Hanges,

2002; Schweiger & Denisi, 1991), who reported that transparency, trustworthiness, certainty, accuracy, and fair information flow from appraisers positively influence interactional perceptions of appraisers with their appraisees. Besides, other male ordinary academic study participants also identified transparency and sincerity attributes in the PA practice as other key contributors to positive interaction with their appraisers.

On the other hand, Joyce had a different view of her communication with her superior. She opined that "...communication concerning academic staff is much limited in this University. Our supervisors always give priority to other issues like sports rather than the requirements of academic staff concerning teaching and research." This kind of response showed that not all members of the academic staff at RAU were comfortable with the communication that took place between them and their supervisors. This finding was however not far from the views of other scholars such as Burke, Weitzel and Weir (1980), who indicated that session behaviours of raters - including but not limited to allowing the subordinates to talk and provide a two-way communication - are likely to make appraisees perceive a fair interaction between themselves with their appraisers during the appraisal exercise.

Furthermore, on average, faculty dean participants also agreed with the views of the majority of their junior staff (Moses, Ezra, David, Beatrice & Grace) on the issue of PA communication at RAU. In this regard, Julian a dean drawn from the SA disciplinary field recapitulated the argument of the other participants by reporting that,

...The two parties [PA panel & appraisee] reach an understanding... We ensure that the appraisee is satisfied with the PA exercise by explaining candidly, why appraisal comments are either positive or negative based on facts... The conviction within the appraisees enables them to be true to themselves...

This kind of response by Julian demonstrated that the appraisers often attempt to communicate as best as they can to the appraisees even though some (employees) may not appreciate it. This kind of finding is in tandem with the observation of Moorhead and Griffin (1992), who decades ago opined that supervisors have the role of developing a two-way communication system between them and their subordinates to improve their performance. The finding also agrees with Erdogan's (2002) view of the fairness of the appraisal-related communication and the appraiser-appraisee interaction. According to Erdogan, regardless of the PA outcomes, the fairness of communication between the appraiser and appraisee during the conduct of PA forms the interactional justice perception.

On the contrary, the remaining dean participants (George & Lydia) disputed the finding of progressive appraiser-appraisee relationships which their counterparts (Julian & Samuel) had claimed to prevail in their respective faculties. George for instance disclosed that "...the PA form restricts my communication with my junior staff. I hardly include their emerging performance issues because the form only allows me to tick... It grants minimal chances of feedback because it is a tick-or-not-affair" (Sic). Meanwhile, Lydia observed that "...in my faculty, either party may deny the PA aftermaths. Communicating to my appraisees and appreciating their performance is difficult in a situation where I neither know nor understand each of them in totality..." This kind of responses indicated that there existed restricted appraiser-appraisee contacts to the extent that the supervisors could not capture their appraisee's emerging performance issues. From these voices, I possibly judged that the supervisor-supervisee communication was 'lean'; hence, displeasing the appraisees in the University.

The preceding findings positively compare with Branham's (2012) views that inadequacy of communication in a workplace results in job dissatisfaction which affects employee productivity. Branham also argued that this scenario usually happens when the supervisor works in isolation and does not know how to relate with his or her staff on a personal or professional level. Indeed, the findings are also in agreement with that of Gregory (2009), who claimed that when feedback is not provided to employees through effective communication, they would fail to know how they could improve their performance in the future. As a result, the employees may become dissatisfied with their appraiser(s) and the entire PA practice.

Analytically, my study findings revealed that the perception of PA interactions held by the academic staff seems to be determined by the various approaches and methods of PA being used by the individual appraisers, but not by the sex of the appraiser or the disciplinary field the appraiser (or appraisee) belongs to in the University. I therefore soundly admit that no worthwhile appraiser-appraisee interaction can take place without effective communication. This finding suggests that poor (or ineffective) communication between the appraiser and appraisee affects their interaction leading to unfair PA tendencies and biases together with the resultant consequences (disinterest, discomfort, and interpersonal conflict) that crop up with it. This finding agrees with the results of Gunlu et al. (2010), who found out that the result of PA may be given in such a harsh tone that, rather than motivating an employee, it intimidates him or her and may feel uncomfortable rather than being encouraged to achieve more. Further, this result agrees with the finding of Forrest (2011) that institutions lack a standardised campus-wide PA system. Certainly, at RAU consistency varies widely with some departments adhering to a regular PA schedule and other departments avoid it.

7.2 The Compromised Christian Faith at RAU

Based on the several study participants' responses during my data analysis, there were recurring accounts (from several ordinary academic staff & faculty deans). Equally, the extracts I drew from the key documents which I checked reflected a compromise in the Christian faith across the University that other observers were probably taking for granted. From these responses, I realised that in a bid to implement a fair PA, some superiors and subordinates at RAU had often instead tended to compromise the Christian faith that the University cherishes.

As a point of reference, the information from the documents I checked (strategic plan & the University HR manuals) indicated that RAU is a faith-based institution with the heritage of the Christian-based organisation that founded it. In the documents, there are declarations that RAU affirms and has a belief in the Apostles' Creed, professing one eternal God. RAU, therefore, rides on the Christian foundation. The finding agrees with the views of De Jong (1992) that most church-related institutions have some type of behavioural standards that they derive from their religious traditions to which they affiliate. These standards convey a sense of institutional identity and expectations for campus life. Again, the founders of many HEIs affiliate them with a faith value to identify the religious tradition that they align with. This affiliation allows the prospective public to conclude the nature of the institution, its undertakings, and the spiritual perspectives.

Along the same line, the University HR manual also indicated that the terms and conditions of service that guide RAU follow the Christian doctrines and that the principle of love precedes all other things in enhancing unity and a sense of responsibility and care for one another. These apply to all the categories of staff in RAU making it an equal

opportunity employer. Therefore, the university management offers all vacant positions in its institutional service basing on the principle of merit. The question that I can pose is that; why then the PA bias, cheap popularity, and PA victimisation among other vices in a Christian founded institution!

Additionally, the vision, mission, motto, and core values as per the strategic plan 2017/18-2026/27 and HR manual demonstrate the Christian standpoint of RAU. For example, its vision is, “To envisage the establishment of a leading Christian-based private university for societal transformation” while its mission is “To provide Christian-based quality and innovative teaching, research and outreach services” yet its motto is, “The fear of God brings knowledge and wisdom” The core values that define RAU’s character are; God-fearing and respect, integrity, teamwork, commitment, innovativeness, equity, excellence and accountability. Given all these statements, RAU values and respects all its staff irrespective of their status or rank, and ensures that equality, respect of staff, justice, impartiality, and fairness are practiced; and that in making decisions about the affected staff, appropriate administrative procedures are adhered to. Concerning confirmation in service, all RAU’s employees are subject to confirmation by the staff appointments board of the University and approval by the council. Notwithstanding the above provision, the staff appointments board only confirms a candidate’s appointment after a supervisor of the staff has given a satisfactory PA report.

However, practically, recurring among the study participants’ responses was that the superiors barely exhibited the Christian faith portrayed in the University’s prime documents (HRM manual & Strategic plan) as they were performing their HR practice to promote fairness. For instance, Beatrice reported that “...RAU does not uphold values of

Christian faith! There is a lot of corruption, bias.... ‘*Ono mwana wange*’ [nepotism] among other vices that superiors have to avoid. Imagine the University PA does not capture issues contradicting the Christian values.” Equally, her counterpart Claire suggested that “...the practice of appraisal should include and rate spiritual social responsibilities because the University is a Christian faith-based institution. PA in this institution focuses less on ratings in terms of morality, integrity and emphasises more of the academic performance...”

The preceding responses echoed the remarks regarding the compromised Christian position in RAU. These responses also showed that managers lay more focus on academic performance (i.e., teaching & research) when appraising the performance of the staff while other issues concerning Christian values such as Christian marriage that give RAU a competitive edge are almost neglected. The implication is that staff appraisals and other undertakings by the University reflect minimal if any of the Christian virtues yet the institution has a strong Christian faith base. Probably, RAU’s superiors often had egocentric practices that even at times made them deny the deserving staff opportunities that were due to them. These tendencies put the Christian virtues which RAU’s stakeholders expect of the managerial leadership and its staff to exhibit at crossroads.

In a related view, the dean study participants also acknowledged some RAU managers’ negligence of the Christian values. For instance, Lydia drawn from the HA field reported that “...appraisals are all about the academic performance of staff in line with the rules and guidelines of the University.... However, since RAU is Christian-based, the management should give Christian values due consideration....to set it apart from other competing institutions.” Similarly, Julian drawn from SA shared that, “...the management

needs to add and evaluate staff Christian values that the University cherishes such as Christian marriage status. Nonetheless, in my faculty, the Christian principle of love is included in all our undertakings.” These responses meant that in addition to what other universities looked for when appraising the performance of their employees, RAU being Christian faith-based needed to reconsider its PA system and assess the Christian values of its staff as its special identifier that makes it stand out. This finding agreed with De Jong (1992) who believed that the contribution of Christian universities to higher education lies in their ability to develop unique identities through distinctive approaches that are based upon and shaped by the Christian faith. RAU nearly neglected the original Christian virtues in its undertaking that its founders professed because probably succeeding top managers never heeded the Christian insights of the people who endured to start this institution as they hire new staff.

7.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have reported, analysed, interpreted, and discussed the responses of all the study participants regarding the perception of appraiser-appraisee interaction by the academic staff (see Appendix E). Reflecting on these responses, a good appraiser-appraisee interaction constitutes among others; good appraiser-appraisee relationship and effective communication. I found out that a continuous two-way communication system improves the appraiser-appraisee interactions and the performance of the individual staff and the institution. However, the staff had a diverse perception of their PA interactions irrespective of their sex and academic units. While some viewed their interaction to be positive, others considered it as a means by which their superiors could victimise them. There was a general agreement among the academic staff that the University should develop a new systematic appraisal scheme – conducted annually with superiors providing

feedback continuously throughout the academic year and contract period (formative & summative PA). During my data analysis, I also identified and discussed the issue of the compromised Christian values that the recurring phrases of several study participants' responses reflected. In the chapter that follows, I have presented summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter Eight

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

8.0. Overview

This chapter consists of six sections. In the first section, I have presented the summary of the study findings. In the second section, I have drawn the major conclusions from my study findings. In the third section, I have provided the major contributions of my study to the body of knowledge. In the last three subsequent sections, I have suggested practical recommendations, limitations, and areas for further research.

8.1 Summary

In this section, I have aimed at converging data to develop an overall understanding of the perception of PA regarding outcomes, process, as well as appraisee - appraiser interactions during PA held by the academic staff. The perception of PA outcomes held by the academic staff was dominantly administrative than developmental. They also perceived their PA process to be participatory depending on the disciplinary field and the academic staff involved. The perception of appraiser-appraisee interactions held by the academic staff during PA centred much on the supervisory behaviours and the nature of communication between the supervisor and appraisee. However, there were also patterns of issues that I found recurring in the study participants' responses and from the documents I checked as I analysed the data that the staff seemed to take for granted. Since I used hermeneutic phenomenological research design; I could not take for granted these recurring issues. I, therefore, merged them into two general themes; first, the unfair PA practices, and second, the compromised Christian faith at RAU.

8.2 Conclusions

Academic staff at RAU variedly perceived their performance appraisal (PA) practice. In the following sub-sections, I have provided specific conclusions concerning the research questions.

8.2.1 Perception of PA Outcomes held by Academic Staff. The majority of the academic staff favourably perceived their PA at RAU as a common good (benefiting the staff and the University), but some were disappointed by the way the outcomes (particularly staff contract renewal, promotion & training) were distributed.

8.2.2 Perception of PA Process held by Academic Staff. Some academic staff perceived their PA process to be unfair and an inconsistent measure of their actual performance partly because they were not fully involved in it. Their perception of the process still depended upon the methodology or approach used by their appraisers.

8.2.3 Perception of Appraiser-appraisee Interactions during PA held by Academic Staff. The academic staff had different perceptions of their interactions with their appraisers during PA. The academic staff preferred appraisal interactions with appraisers whose communications were clear and connected to their individual and institutional goals. This effective communication made them satisfied with the PA exercise; hence, improving the credibility of the entire appraisal practices at the University. Nonetheless, I discovered a ‘silent voice’ during data analysis that showed the existence of biased treatments of employees during PA; thus, contradicting the Christian values upon which RAU was founded.

8.3 Recommendations

It is clear from the study findings and conclusions that the academic staff had varied perceptions of PA outcomes and process as well as their appraiser-appraisee interaction during PA. Based on the study findings and conclusions, therefore; first, the University managers should design an appraisal programme that creates a fair perception among its entire staff. This programme should involve appraisers and appraisees right from setting periodic performance goals and standards, drafting a comprehensive appraisal form that does not only allow ticking items but also commenting on them, capturing emerging issues as well as considering Christian values (to bring out the faith RAU confesses), having appraisal teams, to timely feedback.

Second, the appraisal programme should be formative and summative, conducted by a faculty appraisal team composed of senior staff and heads of department chaired by faculty deans, and subjected to all the staff to benefit the individual staff and the University.

Finally, there is a need to train the academic staff (particularly supervisors) in the conduct of PA through workshops and seminars at the level of their respective academic units.

8.4 Contributions to the Body of Knowledge

As indicated earlier in the literature review and the discussion of findings, in my study, I realised that the three dimensions (distributive, procedural & interactional) of organisational justice theory of Greenberg (1986) are equally important when analysing how individuals perceive issues at their workplaces. Indeed, all the three dimensions are of equal value. However, in practice, RAU seemed to pay more attention to the distributive dimension at the expense of the procedural and interactional dimensions. This variance in

preference of dimensions causes the staff to accept the benefits of their appraisal; yet, they remain unsatisfied with - say the process of PA. Besides, the staff may also accept the benefits of PA when he or she is dissatisfied with the kind of interaction he or she may have had with his or her appraiser(s). In a context where the staff do not rightly perceive their performance appraisal based on all the three dimensions of the theory, they will instead 'pretend' to be diligently working or serving the organisation as the organisation also 'pretends' to be gainfully employing the staff. Such staff will therefore be silent about the unfair PA practices for fear of being victimised by their superiors. The lesson to draw is that all the dimensions of Greenberg's organisational justice theory must equally be borne in mind when dealing with any HR practice as it influences the staff perception in any work organisation.

My study helped to show that the procedural and interactional dimensions of Greenberg's organisational justice theory are intertwined – meaning that there was no need for Greenberg to theorise on them as different aspects of organisational justice. The procedural dimension mainly focuses on the participation of individuals in any procedure of HR practice while the interactional dimension generally focuses on the use of communication among the individuals during such a practice. In any case, it is difficult for any participants to engage fully in any task without effective communication - for it is (communication) the lifeblood of participation. I disseminated some of my study findings in international conferences and published them in conference proceedings, book chapters, and journal articles (Refer to Appendix I, J, K, L, M, N & O).

8.5 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Despite the significant contributions of my study as far as the perception of PA held by the academic staff in universities is concerned, I experienced some limitations that readers of this dissertation may need to consider. Firstly, the social constructivist philosophy, interpretivism paradigm, an intrinsic single case study design, and qualitative method I adopted are exclusive to RAU; therefore, the study findings are not easily generalisable or automatically transferable to other universities that intend to understand the perception of PA of their academic staff. Even the data that I collected from the two disciplinary fields (HA & SA) alluded to the culture of RAU. Again, this is a very difficult aspect to generalise. For the reasons, I stated earlier (Chapter Three) therefore, generalisation may not be possible from my study. Nonetheless, according to earlier studies such as the one by Bassey (1999), a fussy generalisation of my study findings may be possible. I, therefore, assume that if the readers of my dissertation find resonance with my study findings of their location; then, with considerable caution, they will have to decide on whether to transfer the findings and the recommendations to their situations. This situation warrants a need for further research to explore generally the perception of PA held by all (administrative, academic & auxiliary) employees of RAU.

Secondly, my study was limited to RAU. A broader geographical sampling would provide a better picture of the perception of PA held by academic staff in different universities to enhance the transferability of the study findings. Researchers therefore can extend the scope of the study to generate further empirical insights by including more universities in their studies. It would be fascinating to conduct a qualitative comparative study in universities (e.g., non-for-profit private & for-profit private universities; public & private universities). Such studies would provide additional insights in the perception of PA

practice held by academic staff in universities. Further studies are therefore required across a wider geographical scope.

Thirdly, I considered a few study participants as representatives of the academic staff of the entire University. My study findings therefore cannot be generalised on the whole population of higher educational institutions (not even RAU). This warrants a need by researchers to extend the scope and explore the perception of PA of all categories of employees at RAU or other universities.

Fourthly, the key concepts in this research were perception and performance appraisal. .Researchers can do further studies on other concepts such as organisational culture and organisational politics among others that inform performance appraisal of employees in HEIs.

Finally, the disciplinary fields and identities in private universities are changing seemingly due to some forces affecting the structure of especially privatised higher education from within and without education. Private universities being market-driven and keeping other factors constant, generally do not have hard-pure and soft-pure disciplinary fields based on Biglan's classification (Biglan, 1973a, 1973b). In my study, therefore, I only included the hard-applied and soft-applied disciplinary fields that were in existence at RAU at that time. Basing on this limitation, I suggest that future researchers should conduct studies in a university (private or public) that would exhaustively handle all the four (HA, SP, HA & HP) disciplinary fields.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Informed Study Participants Consent Form

Dear Participant,

I am Enoch Kimanje, a doctoral candidate of Educational Management and Administration of Makerere University doing a study on “Perception of Performance Appraisal (PA) of Academic Staff in a Chartered Private University” I believe my study findings will be useful to policy-makers and university administrators among other stakeholders.

I therefore humbly request you for individual face-to-face audio-recorded interviews between September 2018 to March 2019. Please feel free to choose the interview day, time and a place of your convenience to facilitate our interactions. I will grant you confidentiality and anonymity by keeping the data collected secretly until such a time that I would deem necessary to discard it. All your responses will be useful for the study.

I will disseminate the study findings in a verification workshop that will involve all the participants before handing in the final report to the University. I will also publish parts of the final report in academic journals.

Sir/madam, kindly sign the consent form hereon attached if you have accepted to participate in my study.

Yours faithfully,

Enoch Kimanje
Researcher

Declaration of Consent

I have read the information and understood the nature of the study. I therefore consent to participate in your study as per the guidelines you have stipulated.

Name (optional).....Signature.....

Title of participant.....Date.....

Appendix B

Interview Guide for Ordinary Academic Staff Study Participants

Discipline Category	Faculty Name	Faculty Code	Participant's code	Participant's Pseudonym
Hard/Applied				
Soft/Applied				

Date.....

Venue.....

Introduction (*To be facilitated by the interviewer*)

Section A: Profile of study participant

1. In which year did you join this institution?
2. At which academic rank did you join this institution?
3. Do you hold any other responsibilities at this institution?
4. How many times have you been appraised since you joined this institution?
5. Have you ever participated in appraising other workers at this institution?
6. Have you ever had any training in appraisal?

Section B: Objective one

7. What do you consider as the benefits of PA to: (i) You, and (ii) the institution?
8. What do you think to be negative consequences of PA to: (i) You, and (ii) the institution?

Section C: Objective two

9. How do supervisors conduct PA at this institution?
10. What are the challenges facing PA conduct at this institution?
11. How can you overcome the aforementioned challenges?

Section D: Objective three

12. Describe the nature of interaction between you and your appraiser during PA?
13. What do you think about the appraiser-appraisee interaction during PA at this institution?

Thank you

Appendix C

Interview Guide for Faculty Dean Study Participants

Discipline Category	Faculty Name	Faculty Code	Participant's code	Participant's Pseudonym
Hard/Applied				
Soft/Applied				

Date..... Venue

Introduction (*To be facilitated by the interviewer*)

Section A: Profile of study participants

1. In which year did you join this institution?
2. At which academic rank did you join this institution?
3. Do you hold any other responsibilities at this institution?
4. How many times have you been appraised since you joined this institution?
5. Have you ever participated in appraising other workers at this institution?
6. Have you ever had any training in appraisal?

Section B: Objective one

7. What do you consider as the benefits of PA to: (i) You, and (ii) the institution?
8. What do you think to be negative consequences of PA to: (i) You, and (ii) the institution?

Section C: Objective two

9. How do supervisors conduct PA at this institution?
10. What are the challenges facing PA conduct at this institution?
11. How can you overcome the aforementioned challenges?

Section D: Objective three

12. Describe the nature of interaction between you and your appraiser during PA?
13. What do you think about the appraiser-appraisee interaction during PA at this institution?

Thank you

Appendix D

Documents Checklist

Name of Document	Data on discourse related to perception of PA			Interpretation
	PA outcomes	PA processes	PA interaction	
RAU HRM manual				
RAU Strategic Plan				
RAU annual reports				
Participant's profile				
Minutes of faculty meetings				

Appendix E

Summary of Responses from the Study Participants

Section A: Background

Participant's Code and Pseudonym	When did you join to work in RAU?	Ordinary academic staff			
		In what position did you join to work in RAU and position (s) you hold now?	Have you ever been appraised? How many times?	Have you ever appraised other workers? How many times?	Have you ever had any training in appraisal?
HAML1 - Moses	2006	-Graduate Assistant with a bachelors from Makakere -Went for Masters Degree from abroad -Appointed Lecturer in 2012 -Currently HOD -Reports to the Dean	Twice	No	No
HAML2 - Ezra	2010	-Graduate assistant -Got Masters Degree abroad with support of RAU. -Promoted to lecturer in 2012 following form appraisal -Currently on PhD studies in Netherlands with support of RAU -Has had no responsibility as a HOD -Has acted as Coordinator Extra Mural studies.	Three times	No	No
HAFL1 - Joyce	2011	-Lecturer with a Masters Degree from Uganda -Currently on PhD studies supported RUFORUM care of RAU -Examinations coordinator	Twice	No	No
HAFL2 - Grace	2011	-Graduate assistant from Mak. -Completed Masters Degree from Uganda. - Promoted to lecturer in 2012 without formal PA -Does not expect any financial support for PhD from RAU.	Twice	No	No

SAML1 - David	2008	-Served as examination coordinator -Assistant lecturer -Has Masters Degree from Uganda -Appointed lecturer in 2011. -Currently Head of department -I report to the Dean SA	Twice	No	No
SAML2 - Ronald	2009	-Lecturer with a Bachelors Degree from Uganda and Masters Degree from abroad. He is pursuing a PhD in Uganda -Faculty coordinator of examinations	Several times	Yes in panel	No
SAFL1 - Beatrice	2008	-Graduate assistant of Makerere. -Holds a Master's degree from Uganda -Promoted to lecturer in 2017	Twice	No	No
SAFL2 - Claire	2008	-Graduate assistant of RAU -Got Masters Degree from Uganda -Promoted to assistant lecturer in 2013 -PhD student supported by RAU -Holds administrative and collaboration responsibilities -Exam Coordinator Dean study participants	Several times	Yes in panel	No

SAFFD1 - Julian	2007	-Lecturer in with a Masters Degree -Got PhD 2011 abroad -Promoted to HOD in 2009 -In 2010 became Dean to-date.	Several times	Yes several times individually and in a panel	Yes
HAFFD1 -Lydia	2006	-Assistant lecturer with a Masters Degree from Uganda -Got a PhD from abroad in 2016 -Promoted to lecturer and senior lecturer. -Served as HOD in the same faculty -Appointed Dean of the faculty in 2016	Twice	Yes individually	Yes
SAMFD1 - George	2012	-Lecturer RAU with a Masters Degree from Uganda. -Never worked as HOD -Promoted in one year to Dean of the Faculty without formal appraisal.	No	Yes and several times	No but uses experience of a former Head teacher in secondary schools
HAMFD1- Samuel	2016	-Assistant lecturer with a PhD. -Promoted to lecturer -Served as HOD before becoming Dean.	Yes but informally every six months	Yes but informally	No but learning on-the- job

Objective one

Ordinary academic staff participants

Participant's code& Pseudonym	What do you consider the benefits of PA to: (i) You, and (ii) the University?	What do you think about the consequences of PA to: (i) You, and (ii) the University?
SAML1- David	Benefits to SAML1 -Renewal and regularisation of my contract - Promotion. -Identifying own strengths and weaknesses. - Backing me for further training	TO SAML1 -PA demoralizes -Being victimised when I am innocent. To RAU -Demoralisation -Creates conflicts

	Benefit to RAU	
	- knowing its performance strengths and weaknesses.	
	-making informed decisions its staff	
SAML2-	Benefits to SAML2	To SAML2
Ronald	-PA helps to patch up with areas where I am weak	-PA is used against us.
	-Renewing my contract.	To RAU
	- For my promotion	---
	Benefits to RAU	
	-Management identifies staff weaknesses.	
SAFL1-Joyce	Benefits to SAFL1	To SAFL1
	-Discovered the skills I have acquired over time.	-Losing job opportunity due to PA bias.
	-Knowing whether I am efficient or not.	To RAU
	- I got promoted	-It loses good academic staff
	-PA motivates me towards growing my strengths.	
	Benefits to RAU	
	Management improves on its data base and archive.	
	-Helps it promotion and renewal of contract. All the same a staff becomes zealous in what he or she does especially where one's strengths outweighs weaknesses.	
SAFL2 -	Benefits to SAFL2	To SAFL2
Claire	-Find out my strengths and weaknesses	-PA for formality
	-provides opportunities for career growth	To RAU
	To RAU	-Demotivates staff that makes the exercise unfair.
	-find out if we are doing a good job.	-Victimisation of the staff
	- Gets to know the status and categories of staff to make informed decisions.	-Time consuming since it is usually a long procedure.
HAML1 -	To HAML1	To HAML1
Moses	-Understand key areas of expected performance.	-Job loss
	-Notice the gaps in terms of personal service delivery.	To RAU
	-Gives opportunity and audience to task the university to facilitate me.	-PA biasness tarnishes name of RAU
		-If it is a routine, RAU loses out.

	-Promoted	
	-Contract renewal	
	To RAU	
	-Retain its members of academic staff who delivers to its expectation.	
	- Comes up with evidence-based achievements.	
	-Identify the training needs of the academic staff.	
HAML2 -Ezra	Benefits to HAML2	Benefits to HAML2
	-Check how I have been performing.	-Loss of job
	To RAU	To RAU
	Feedback to see whether a staff is performing to the expected.	-Subjectivity and bias
HAFL1 - Joyce	To HAFL1	
	-To Sustain my job	
	-For promotion	
	To RAU	

HAFL2 - Grace	HAFL2	HAFL2
	-It actually pressurised me to progress.	-Demotivation
	-Examine my performance	RAU
	-Renew my contract	-Loss of its staff
	To RAU	
	-For promotion	
	-Where staff have reached	
SAFFD1 - Julian	SAFFD1	SAFFD1
	Improved performance because I am informed about my weaknesses, strengths	-It demoralises.
	RAU	-Loss a job
	-Tells RAU whether we have the right staff.	To RAU
	-Acknowledge team work	-Loss of some good members of academic staff
		-Loss of morale among the concerned staff
SAMFD1 - George	SAMFD1	SAMFD1
	-gives me an objective way of assessing my subordinates	PA is subjective.
	- helps me to work/perform in accordance with the University rules and regulations to survive being knifed.	RAU
	RAU	-Personal interests coupled to subjectivity
	-Keeps employees informed of their	-Work for an entire contract period may be shattered by an appraiser in just one hour

	expectations by University. - Evaluate the growth pattern of individual academic staff. Ensure that its legacy and reputation are maintained by having the right staff in right positions	-It encourages corruption
HAMFD1 - Samuel	HAMFD1 -Becoming aware of my individual performance. - Confirmation of my employment -Renewal of contract RAU -Renew its employees' contracts and confirms those of probation as fulltime staff. Makes right decision befitting the staff in question	HAMFD1 -Determines my exit which demotivates -Feelings of insecurity. -Inadequate PA orientation of employees RAU -Staff morale goes -Subjectivity and biasness
HAFD1 - Lydia	HAFD1 -Identify training needs and performance gaps among academic staff. -Puts pressure on staff to look for ways of getting higher academic qualifications RAU ---	HAFD1 PA is for formality and with bias

Objective two

Participant	How do supervisors conduct PA at this institution?	What are the challenges facing PA conduct at this institution?	How can you overcome the aforementioned challenges?
SAML1- David	-University Secretary sends the PA forms to Faculty Dean.	-Appraisal form can be displaced (documents/record keeping is not good). -Improper file keeping may	-Making filing system computerised

-Members of academic staff pick these forms from our respective HODs.

-PA is participatory.

-The filled up forms are then submitted to HR by the faculty dean.

-PA feedback is immediate by the immediate supervisor. How PA is used later for decision making by management I do not know.

-PA form is comprehensive enough.

SAML2 - Ronald - PA forms are obtained from the HR's office by the Faculty Dean

-Whoever is supposed to be appraised picks the form, fill his or her part and submit it to the dean's office.

-The Dean convene an appraisal panel

-The appraisee sits and the dean (chair of the panel) guides the group through all the items of the

-Low morale to work harder

Clear communication and awareness of the whole issue of PA

appraisal assisted
by the person in
charge of that
particular area.

- All the panelists
agree on the rating.

-The appraisee is
given opportunity
to respond.

-PA team members
and the appraisee
sign on the PA
form.

-The HOD and
Faculty Dean have
a portion to make
recommendations.

-PA team and
appraisee are
discharged well
knowing the PA
results.

-The Dean
prepares a list of
faculty appraisees
showing their
ratings, comments
and
recommendations
and forwards it to
the HR.

SAFL1 - -PA forms are sent -Bias tendencies by appraisers -RAU needs to go back to
Beatrice to faculty Dean to -Staff fills the PA forms by the Christian roots
be filled by those default and for formality. -Objectivity in the appraisal
who contracts are -Despite of its Christian to avoid bias
soon ending. background, RAU does not
year uphold the Christian values.
-Exercise is
participatory and
right rank is
agreed upon.
-Filled up forms
are forwarded to

	the HR department.		
	-The form involves a lot of ticking and ranking without any description		
SAFL2 - Claire	-The University HR officer makes her communication through the Faculty Dean for those whose contract is due to expire. -Pick the PA form from the Dean's office. -Fill part A and back the form to Dean -There is a chance to defend yourself -The panel agrees on the final score. -Ranking takes place and recommendations are sent to the HR	-PA parameters are the same every year -One's say is sometimes not heard in the panel -Bias by some appraisers -When there is no feedback, there is usually lack of contentment	-Annual basis appraisal is recommended -Panel appraisal overcomes bias -There must be feedback -PA yearly theme related to University strategic plan should be followed
HAML1 - Moses	-Dean picks PA forms from HR manager of RAU. -Dean sends them to HODs. -Appraisee picks PA form from HOD and fills section 1. -Appraisee hands it over to the HOD. -Both sit together and agree on the	-Appraiser misjudge without knowing the appraisee in totality. -Very difficult to score a colleague. This creates bias and conflict of interest. -PA form is not comprehensive enough	-Bench marking -Participatory setting of performance targets at the beginning of the academic year. -Giving a clear job description to staff -PA feedback must be done clearly without delay by appraisers -Good working -Students' input should be taken care of

ratings.

Recommendations
are made by the
appraiser

The form is taken
back to HR.

-I do not know
what takes place
thereafter.

HAML2 - Every end of academic year, Ezra -No feedback given -Conducting PA has no value. There is nothing to overcome

Faculty Dean gives
staff an appraisal
form to fill.

- if PA form is not
given to you, you
do not fill.

-A staff fills
section.

-Dean fills his part
in the absence of
the appraisee

-Dean takes it to
University
Secretary.

HAFL1 - Faculty Dean brings PA form for me to fill. Joyce -Appraisal process is invalid -Two way communication in meetings with the administrators

-After filling it,
Faculty Dean fills
and signs.

-Faculty Dean
takes the form
back to the
University HRM

-PA process not
participatory.

HAFL2 - PA form is picked it from the Faculty Dean Claire -In some cases, the dean comments in the appraisee's absence. -Giving more and regular feedback about appraisee performance.

-Appraisee fills the section1 -PA exercise is usually done for formality

-Appraisee hands

over the form
back.
-The completed
form is taken back
to either the
University HR
officer or to
someone else
-If there is
anything that I do
not agree on, I
cannot utter
anything.
-Other steps
thereafter I cannot
tell because I
know nothing
about them

Faculty dean participants

SAFFD1 - -Appraise of staff -PA is time consuming.
Julian is towards the end -Some PA panelists do not
of one's term of keep secretes.
office. Now -Some appraisees break down
appraisal is every while the PA panelists are
academic year. saying facts.
-The HR writes -Lack of participation in
Faculty Dean setting PA standards
showing names of Assuming that
the staff due for appraisees are aware of what
appraisal. the University is expectant of
-Dean gives the them.
appraisal form to
the identified staff
to fill their part
-The Dean
organises and
chairs a PA panel.
-The panel sits and
appraises the staff.
-The panel gives
opportunity to the
appraisee to
respond and we

have to understand and agree with one another.

-The whole exercise is based on clear facts.

-We all sign after the session.

-A copy is given to the appraisee, another is put in my PA file and the original is sent to the University Secretary and the HR Department.

- | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|
| SAMFD1 | -The Dean picks PA forms from the University HR manager and the HODs pick them from me. Appraisees pick the forms from their respective HODS and fill section 1 | -Contradicting comments are made | -A new PA form and system should be developed |
| - George | -The form is returned back to HODs who fill section 2. | -No opportunity is given to the appraiser to justify why ticks or no ticks. | -Bench marking PA system in terms of RAU's objectives |
| | -The appraiser and appraiser sit together and objectively agree on comments to make. | -The practice is unfair to RAU | |
| | -The document is taken back to the HR. | | |
| HAFFD1 | -PA exercise is one on one. | -Biased appraisers victimise appraisees | -Use PA panel |
| - Lydia | -The PA forms are | | |

picked from
Dean's office from
University HR or
the US.

-The appraisee fills
section1 of the
form before
handing it over to
the appraiser
(dean).

-The dean sits with
the appraisee and
rating is done in
the presence one
another.

-Comments are
made by the
appraiser and the
form is sent back.

-The rest is none
of my business

HAMFD1 -The immediate
- Samuel supervisor picks
PA forms from the
University
Secretary
-A couple of
questions related
to one's key
performance
indicators are
asked.
-The dean and or
the HOD s
decision and
recommendations
are drawn that are
forwarded to the
US for a way
forward.

-Inadequate information by
the supervisor related to
subordinate's performance
records.
-Appraiser's options
sometimes are based on bias

-As long as key targets are
met, there is no need for an
assessment
-Computerised filing system

Objective three

Participants	Describe the nature of interaction between you and your appraiser during PA?	What do you think about the appraiser-appraisee interaction during PA at this institution?
SAML1 - David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Positive interaction without any conflict -Sit together and identify areas of strengths and weaknesses. -Communication with lots of respect - We are colleagues. 	
SAML2 - Ronald	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Responding freely to whatever I feel about my appraisers. -Collegiality 	
SAFL1 - Beatrice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The interaction is okay. - Appraiser is polite -He chooses to own his appraisees challenges of PA together. -He is supportive even in the worst situations. -His interaction characters are common to every appraisee -Agreement of what to write and nothing is confidential. --Agreement of what to write and nothing is confidential. 	
SAFL2 - Claire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Bullying by the appraiser. - interaction depends on the sincerity of the panel -Appraisees sometimes not willing to listen to the truth. -Communication may be understood in different ways -Appraisees not involved in setting the PA parameters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The parameters for the PA should be set together -PA to be done annually -Students' opinions should be considered in PA exercise.
HAML1 - Moses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interaction with the supervisor is collegial and kind -There is a polite two- way communication. -PA rating is factual, evidence based without prejudice. -The working relationship with my boss determines the interaction. 	

-Appraiser PA training and skills and experience determine the interaction

HAML2 - -No problem with my interaction
Ezra with my appraiser
-Appraiser exalting himself
-However, I have a collegial relationship.
-Supervisor and I politely and kindly try to find out the way forward together.

HAFL1 - -Communication presently
Joyce concerning academic staff is much limited.
-Priority is given to other issues like sports.

HAFL2 - -No query with the interaction.
Lydia -However, communication is about the appraiser.
No much interaction because my appraiser fills his part by just ticking and commenting.

SAFFD1 - -PA panel and appraisee always
Julian reach a common understanding.
-Sharing and give feedback is based on facts.
-Appraisee's performance record of accomplishment is considered in PA.
-Appraisees first state the challenges they face.
-All done to ensure appraisee is satisfied with appraisal positive or negative comments.
-Communicate negative consequences candidly with facts and humane.
- The conviction within the appraisee enables them to open up and be true to themselves
-The interaction during PA is preceded by Christian principle of love.

SAMFD1 - .The interaction is restricted by the The appraisal should give room for

- George Likert scale interaction between the two parts involved
- .There is no way the appraiser can capture emerging strengths or weaknesses in the appraisal.
 - .The appraiser has limited chance to give the appraisees chance to defend themselves.
 - . No allowance is given for feedback or communication.
 - .The employees just work and want more marks.
 - The form is tick and go.
- HAFFD1 - Lydia -Either party may deny the PA outcomes.
- The appraiser does not know neither understands the appraisee in totality.
 - Communication to the appraiser and appreciating his or her weaknesses is very difficult.
 - Unkindness and rudeness may early set in for the staff that you are not familiar to.
- HAMFD1 - Samuel -No problem, the saying that ‘scratch my back I scratch yours too’ is true.
- We are friendly, polite and kind.

Appendix F

Summary of Data from Documents Checked

Documents	Perception of PA outcomes	Perception of process	Perception of PA interactions
Minutes of the Faculty Appraisal Committee	Staff's contracts expired or needed promotion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Faculty appraisal committee (Dean – chairperson, departmental heads, faculty coordinators and the faculty administrative assistant. -Objective when scoring -Non-collegial recommendations -Reveal utmost impartiality 	
Minutes of HODs and coordinators' meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Expiry and renewal of contracts Proposed promotion of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Names of staff from the HRM office whose contracts had expired. -Non-collegial recommendations -utmost impartiality. -Objectively vet their performance 	
Faculty periodical status report	Staff's contract renewed.		
Human Resources Manual 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continue with contract. -Confirmed -Termination -Promotion -Unsatisfactory, the vacant position advertised. -Annual salary increment depends on PA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staff tasks, performance, general conduct, interpersonal skills are considered -Annually appraisal -Faculty appraisal committee -Self –appraisal first 	

Profile of Participants from HRM office

SAML1 - David	-Promoted to the position of lecturer -Contract renewed	
SAML2 - Ronald	-Other responsibilities given -Contract renewed	Faculty appraisal committee
SAFL1 - Beatrice	Promoted	
SAFL2 - Claire	-Promoted -Contract renewed -Supported for PhD	Faculty appraisal committee
HAML1 - Moses	-Promoted -More responsibility given -Training for a PhD	
HAML2 - Ezra	Support for further studies Promoted	
HAFL1 - Joyce	-Supported for studies -Promoted -Confirmed -Given responsibilities	
HAFL2 - Grace	-Promoted -Contract renewed	-Participatory exercise

Appendix G

Introductory Letter from Dean of East African School of Higher
Educational Studies and Development

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND EXTERNAL STUDIES
East African School of Higher Education Studies and Development
Office of the Dean

19th September, 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Kimanje Enoch - Reg. No. 2015/HD04/1726U is our PhD student who is collecting data for his dissertation titled: **"Academic Staff's Perceptions of Performance Appraisals at Ndejje University"**.

We shall be grateful if you could render assistance to his in collecting the necessary data for his dissertation.

The East African School of Higher Education Studies and Development thanks you in advance for your assistance.


Ronald Bisaso, PhD.
DEAN



Please note that permission has been granted to Mr Kimanje Enoch to carry out this research in the University. Kindly give him the necessary assistance. Thanks
Sandy 21/10/18

Appendix H

RAU Progressive Appraisal Form for Administrators/Academic Staff

University Secretary's Office
Personal Progress Appraisal for Administrators/Academic Staff

Preamble
Staff performance appraisal is a management tool used to establish the extent to which set targets within the overall University goals are being achieved. It helps in the identification of performance gaps and individual development needs. It calls for a participatory approach in the course of filling this form. Dialogue between the appraiser and appraisee is encouraged so as to obtain a feedback on performance.

Guidelines to Supervisors

1. The report should objectively and candidly appraise the members of staff, bringing out strengths and weaknesses that should be recognized by the University authority.
2. Recommendation on suitability for promotion or future training should be made even if such an opportunity may not immediately exist.
3. The preparation and transmission of the report should be done transparently.
4. A member of staff should be informed in writing of any faults and shortcomings, both professional and otherwise, which may result in an adverse report on him/her. The Deans and Heads of Department are responsible for carrying out this duty, either at the time of tendering the report or prior to it.

Section 1

A. Personal Data

1. Faculty _____
2. Name of Appraisee _____
3. Religious Affiliation _____
4. Date of birth _____
5. Marital status (*tick where applicable*)
 Married Separated Widowed Single
 Divorced
6. Position held _____

7. Date of present Appointment _____
 8. Qualifications and dates attained _____

9. Terms of employment
 a) Temporary b) Contract

B) Professional growth (please answer appropriately by ticking or writing). Note that each training, publication, or research project or research supervision activity conducted will be graded on a scale of 1-5 to get a final score of the respondent.

1. Have you developed yourself according to the following indicators in the previous academic year? Note: incomplete tasks within the last academic year should not be considered.

Indicator	Number	To ensure authenticity, please specify topic/area/task	Weighted Score	Final Score (for official use only)
Training(s)			2	
Publication(s)			4	
Research project(s)			5	

2. Research supervision completed during the previous academic year

Educational Level	Number of Students	Weighted Score	Final Score (for official use only)
PhD		5	
Masters/Postgraduate Diploma		5	
Undergraduates		5	

C) Contribution to the University and other stakeholders

Note that each contribution will be graded on a scale of 1-5 to get a final score of the respondent.

1. State whether or not you have contributed to the following in the previous year:

Area of contribution	Number of contributions	To ensure authenticity, please specify the nature of services or contribution	Weighted score	Final score (for official use only)
Community			2	
Organizations			2	
Professional bodies			2	
University committees			2	
University strategic plan			2	

D. Assessment of performance

1. Areas where you feel you need assistance to improve your performance

2. Other relevant information (*any special comments you feel are useful to the University*)

Section 2
Supervisors Assessment

A Professional performance and conduct of the member of staff should be assessed in his/her presence as **candidly** and as **objectively** as possible. *Tick as appropriate.*

		Outstanding 4	Very good 3	Good 2	Fair 1	Poor 0
1	Work habits: Has a lot of drive determination, observes priorities and schedules. Is dedicated to duty; Makes timely follow up.					
2	Communication: Actively listens and speaks respectfully. Sends clear oral and written messages; understands the impact of messages on the other person/people.					
3	Customer Care: Responds well and attends to clients, (students inclusive). Reflects a good image of the University to the Public.					
4	Initiative: Acts pro-actively, is open to new ideas, consults, curious about new possibilities. Identifies how to create new values for customers. Champions innovations.					
5	Obedience: Readiness to accept responsibilities.					
6	Team work: Works co-operatively and collaboratively; adheres to information and develops process to improve the efficiency of team work. Respects other people and their views.					
7	Relation with subordinates					
8	Relation with superiors					
9	Planning, organizing, co-ordination:					

	Able to develop and implement plan; builds group capacity for executing work, is organized.				
10	Ability to meet deadlines				
11	Reliability/professional ethics. Honesty and integrity				
12	Emotional maturity: Resilience, accepts constructive criticism.				
13	Ability to work Unsupervised				
14	Any Other Relevant Information				
15	Competence in his/her academic/professional field				
16	Overall Assessment				

B. Prospects for professional growth

Prospects and suitability for promotion/renewing the contract

Prospects and suitability for future training

C. Any other comments by the supervisor

Name

Name

Signature of the member of staff

Signature of the supervisor

Date: _____

Date: _____

Certificate of Presentation of a Paper in the Joint KESSA-AISD –CEDRED-
MMU Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference



Appendix J

Certificate of Presentation of a Paper Titled Academic Staff Perception of their Interactions with their Appraisers during Performance Appraisal”
During the Joint KESSA-AISA-MMU 10th Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference.



Appendix K

Certificate of Participation in the International Conference on Nurturing
Industrial Economy in Africa



Appendix L

Certificate of participation in the joint KESSA-AISA-Multimedia University of Kenya



Appendix M

Abstract of a Book Chapter Published by the Centre for Democracy,
Research and Development (CEDRED), Nairobi, Kenya. ISBN 978-9966-
116-69-7

Academic Staff Perception of their Interactions with their Appraisers During Performance
Appraisal

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Abstract

The importance of carrying out effective performance appraisals in any work organisation, world over, is no longer questionable. However, how favourably employees perceive their interactions with their appraisers during PA is equally very important. In this paper, while applying the interactional dimension of organisational justice theory, we examined the perception of the academic staff about their interactions with their appraisers during PA in a private university in Uganda. The paper arose from a study which was instigated by the persistent complaints from a section of staff over unfair treatment during PA in that University. In the study, we used the interpretive paradigm and the phenomenological research design to collect data through in-depth interviews from 12 purposively selected academic staff (four of whom were faculty deans) drawn from hard and soft-applied university disciplinary fields. Thereafter, we transcribed, coded, and analysed the data using the framework analysis technique and reported the study findings in a narrative-style of thick descriptions. The study findings showed, among others, that first; the academic staff generally had a positive perception of their interactions with their appraisers during PA exercise. Second, they preferred appraisal interactions with appraisers whose communications were clear and connected to the individual and institutional goals. Nonetheless, a silent voice emerged during data analysis that showed the existence of preferential treatments during PA; thus, contradicting the values of Christian faith upon which the University was founded. Therefore, we concluded that the members of academic staff perceived differently the appraiser-appraisee interactions in this University. We thus recommended that the managers of the University should design an appraisal programme that creates a perception of fairness among all the parties involved in the exercise and institute an appraisal exercise that befits its Christian belief.

Keywords: Performance appraisal, Appraiser-appraisee interaction, Perception, University, Academic staff

Abstract of an Article Published in the Journal of Education Review (JER)
Academic Staff Perception of Performance Appraisal Process in a
Private University Setting

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Vol. 11.No. 2 April 2019

Abstract

This paper examines the perception of performance appraisal (PA) process held by the academic staff of a private university in Uganda. The study was instigated by the persistent criticisms from a section of employees over irregularities in the process of conducting PA at the University studied. Using a qualitative research methodology, data were collected through in-depth interviews from 12 purposively selected academic staff, four of whom were academic deans. The data were analysed with the use of the thematic content analysis technique and study findings were reported using a narrative-style of thick descriptions. The findings revealed that the academic staff held different perceptions of the PA process at the University which varied in terms methods, procedures, techniques and levels of participation. Overall, the staff did not perceive their PA process to be fair, accurate and a consistent measure of their actual performance partly because they were not fully involved in the entire process of PA. To build a positive perception of the PA process amongst academic staff, management should allow for full participation of the appraisers and appraisees in the entire process of conducting PA. Besides, the appraisers need to be trained in the conduct of PA.

Keywords: Performance appraisal, Process, Perception, Academic staff, University

Appendix O

Abstract of a Book Chapter Published by the Centre for Democracy, Research and Development (CEDRED), Nairobi, Kenya ISBN 978-9966-69-7
Academic Staff Perception of Performance Appraisal at a Chartered Private University in Uganda: An Empirical Study
Enoch Kimanje & David Onen

Abstract

Performance appraisal (PA) is an indispensable and fundamental part of every functional organization. In the case of higher education institutions (HEIs), like any other organization, PA helps the managers to know their employees' competency-levels as well as their requisite knowledge and skill-gaps. However, the efficacy of any PA programme depends on the perceptions of its key stakeholders, other factors notwithstanding. This issue is no exception in the scenario of Rock of Ages University (RAU). Therefore, in this study, academic staff perception of PA in RAU regarding PA outcomes was explored. This study is hoped to assist the managers of RAU with a better understanding of the perceptions their academic staff have towards PA regarding more just and acceptable PA outcomes. The results of this study are also hoped to give RAU managers impetus to improving their existing appraisal exercise in order for the University to carry out its core duties excellently. We adopted an interpretivism paradigm and used hermeneutic phenomenological research design because a profound understanding of individual academic staff experiences of PA outcomes was required. Thus, male and female members of academic staff and faculty deans were equally selected purposively to participate in the study to cater for gender diversity of perceptions. Meanwhile, the unit of analysis was the PA experiences the participants had rather than their numbers. To ensure holistic coverage of the entire University, we purposefully stratified its seven faculties and combined them into hard and soft-applied disciplinary fields. Primary data for the study was obtained from the unstructured interviews with the participants. A total of twelve participants' responses were captured as the data was found saturated. The secondary data was obtained from various document checks that included RAU's human resource management manuals, strategic plans, and participants own documents to enhance credibility. Their views were captured, transcribed, coded, and carefully analysed using qualitative techniques. A narrative-style of thick descriptions was used to report the study findings. The study revealed that the nature of perception of PA outcomes held by academic staff was diverse (ranging from positive to negative) depending on how each member understood the practice. However, a silent voice of unfair distribution of PA outcomes generally emerged concerning staff contract renewal, promotion, and training among other human resource practices especially in the hard-applied disciplinary field. As long as academic staff sense unfairness of some sort in the practice of PA, they will continue to perceive it as a formality and an unhelpful practice subjected to them to benefit those particular academic staff favoured by their supervisors. We recommended promotion of fairness at all levels in the implementation of PA in order for the academic staff to have the right perception of this indispensable human resource practice.

Keywords: Performance appraisal, Academic staff, Perception, University

