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Impact of Reward Management Practices on Employee Performance in Tertiary Institutions, Kogi State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The education industry is acclaimed to be the engine-room of economic development of nations across the globe because of its multiplier effects but its performance largely depends on I the extent to which its employees are motivated towards rendering their services enthusiastically. This research on Impact of reward management practices on employee performance in tertiary institutions in Kogi State with a focus on the Federal Polytechnic Idah, in Kogi State is carried out to examine the extent to which reward management practices influences employee p in Kogi state. The study adopts a descriptive research survey design with a total population of 1326 who are employees of the study area but a sample of 384 was used using the Krajcie and Morgan sample size formular. However, out of the total sample size of 384 respondents reached only 277 completed and returned the questionnaire giving a retrieval rate of 77%. The study elicited data using 30 items structured questionnaire designed in a five points Likert scale. The formulated hypotheses were tested using simple linear regressions. The findings revealed that there is significant positive relationship between reward management practices and employee's performance in tertiary institutions in Kogi State. The study specifically revealed that there is significant positive relationship between career development and employee efficiency (r =.873, p-value <0.05, there is significant positive relationship between employees' engagement and quality of work (r =.794, p-value <0.05 and there is significant positive relationship between work-life balance and cooperativeness (r =.782, p-value <0.05. Based on the findings, this research therefore recommends that career development programmes should not only be sustained but be integrated so that employees be motivated towards enthusiastically contributing their best towards-the attainment of the organization objectives. Additionally, there should be an articulated blue-print targeted towards employee engagement: Finally, the institutions should provide a platform for evaluating employees activities through conscious and open communication where the employees will be willing to interact with the employers thereby creating a platform for career counselling where employees work would be adequately match with their personal lives.

Keywords: *Reward, employee, career, performance, Institutions*

Introduction

Employee performance is crucial for enhancing objectives, organizational citizenship, and reducing rate of turnover in tertiary institutions. Reward management include elements such as career development, employee engagement and work-life balance, are widely recognized as central to fostering employee performance (Abdul & Abdul, 2016). In tertiary institutions, employees' performance significantly affects the quality-of-service delivery, understanding how reward management practices influence satisfaction is critical. In tertiary institutions, employees often experience lower job satisfaction compared to those in the private sector, partially due to limited financial and non-financial rewards (Adams & Beechum, 2021). This research aims to explore the impact of reward management practices on employee performance.

Career development has long been considered one of the most influential factors in employee efficiency (Akubor Donker, 2012). Employees who feel their career aligns with their inputs tend to report higher satisfaction and performance (Chen et al., 2021). However, in several tertiary institutions, the standard compensation may not always reflect the economic reality especially in recent time, which can lead to dissatisfaction among employees if not properly and timely addressed. Again, such is not different in the case of employee engagement and work-life balance which tend to propel employee performance such as the quality of work and cooperativeness. Hence, concerns about reward structures and perceived inequality in pay distribution have surfaced thereby adversely influencing employee performance (Alam et al, 2016 & Alabi, 2012). It is thus pertinent to interrogate the extent to which reward management practices meets employee expectations and how it has been able to make employees to be enthusiastic towards carrying their tasks satisfactorily.

Employee engagement, which include efforts towards involving employees in the affairs of an organization is seen as a performance-based rewards, and other recognition schemes which are critical tools utilized to enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction (Acho et al. 2021; Akpan et al, 2019 &, 2021). Empirical studies have revealed that these reward management practices are directly linked to employee performance therefore can lead to higher levels of engagement and satisfaction, especially when employees perceive them as fair and equitable with their efforts (Zainuddin et al. 2021; Yu et al, 2017). However, in several tertiary institutions, the implementation of these programmes has been inconsistent, with some employees feeling overlooked or undervalued. The Federal Polytechnic Idah, like many other Institutions in Nigeria, has faced challenges in creating an equitable reward scheme that motivates employees across different departments (Umer et al, 2022 & Yuserrie; Ayesha, 2019).

This study will investigate how the existing promotion practices in this local government area affect employee satisfaction. Several studies have highlighted that a well-designed reward system can significantly enhance job satisfaction. For instance, Harris and Whitaker (2020) discovered that employees who receive adequate compensation, performance-based incentives, and career advancement opportunities are likely to record higher level of job satisfaction. Additionally, the findings by Murugesan et al (2016), Ngoc et al (2018) and Koo et al (2020) emphasized that employees' perceptions of fairness in reward distribution like career advancement, employee engagement and work-life balance are critical towards the attainment of employee performance. However, despite the well-established empirical and theoretical evidences of how reward management practices influence the performance of employees there seems to be situations where employees report dissatisfaction with reward structures, weak career development as well as lack of an effective work-life balance which no doubt leads to low performance. The thrust of this study is therefore to interrogate the impact of the reward management practices on employee performance in tertiary Institutions in Kogi State North-Central, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

Generally, the objective of the study is to examine the impact of reward management practices on employee's performance in Tertiary Institutions, in Kogi State.

Specifically, the study sought:

1. To determine the relationship between career development on employee efficiency in tertiary Institutions, Kogi State.
2. To ascertain the relationship between employee engagement on quality of work in tertiary Institutions, Kogi State.
3. To examine the relationship between relationship between work-life balance on cooperativeness in tertiary Institutions, Kogi State.

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated for this study in null forms:

H_1: There is no relationship between career development and employee efficiency in tertiary Institutions, Kogi State.
H_2: There is no relationship between employee engagement on quality of work in tertiary Institutions, Kogi State.
H_3: There is no relationship between work-life balance on cooperativeness in tertiary Institutions, Kogi State.

Literature Review

Reward Management

Reward is seen as anything offered or given out in return for employee effort or achievement, reward can also be in form of tangible or intangible rewards (Peltier et al 2020).

The tangible reward is called physical reward whereas the intangible reward is called the non-physical reward. Ogunyomi et al, (2022) noted that there are several types of rewards such as the monetary reward which could be in form of financial incentives, commissions and prices. Additionally, the non-monetary reward could be in form of career growth, praise, recognition and other forms of incentives. Again, the intrinsic reward is the form of employee reward like fulfillment or personal satisfaction being derived from an achievement. The extrinsic rewards are the external rewards like the external recognition of an employee.

Nnamani and Ajagu (2014) noted that employee rewards are targeted towards the attainment of organizations immediate and strategic objectives. Hence, rewards are generally offered to employees to encourage employees, give recognition, offer reinforcement and incentives.

Reward management is seen as the systematic process of initiating, designing, executing and assessing organizations reward strategies aimed at attracting, motivating and retaining employees (Nwafor & Onu, 2022). Reward management therefore involves creating a reward system to conform with institutional goals, culture and values. Nwachukwu (2018) revealed that reward management has six key components like communication which involves an effective communication of reward policies and strategies to the employees, reward design that is, creating a reward package to attract and retain the employees as well as performance management which is the process of linking rewards towards individual and team performance. Additionally, Nwachukwu (2018) noted that the components of reward involve market analysis, job evaluation and conscious specification of institutional reward philosophy. Nzewi et al, (2023) concluded that reward management is of utmost benefit to both the employees and the institutions because it lead to improved performance, increased employee retention, enhances employee brands as well as the capability of boosting employee job satisfaction (Noraani & Zaizura, 2013 & Peltier et al, 2020)..

Employees' Performance

Performance is seen as the cumulative ratio of output accomplished over a comprehensive input in an organization (Foad & Hassan, 2022; Daniel, 2019). To Fainshmidt et al (2016) performance can be seen as the aggregate behavioral pattern expected in accordance with the organizational objectives and with the sole objectives of guiding employees' attitude towards the achievement of these objectives. In addition, Daniel (2019) noted that employees' performance refers to the extent in which employee completes assigned tasks based of the quality of work, timeliness in completion of assigned tasks, efficiency as well as level of cooperation being exhibited in performing such a task.

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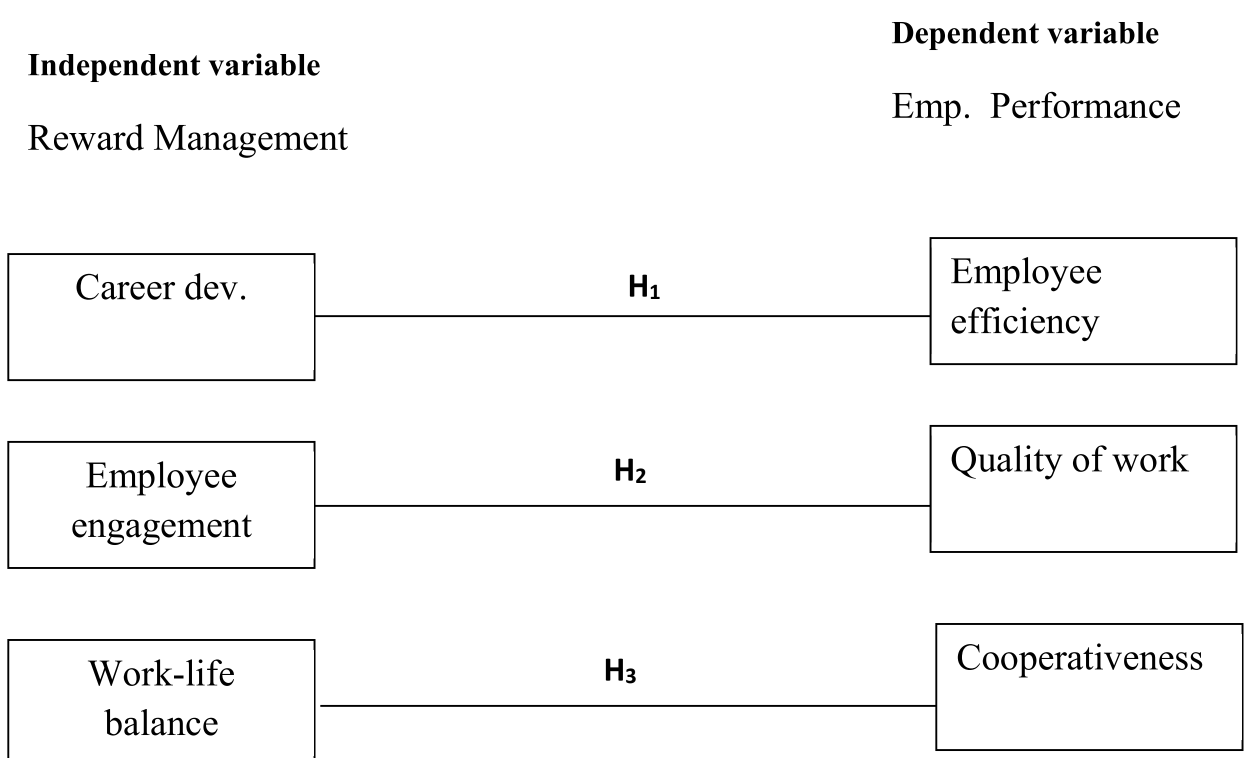
Andre and Paul (2014) described employees' performance as the measure of amount of output generated per unit of output. Employee performance is also described as the relationship that occurs between output created and its corresponding quantity or quantity of input factors accomplished by the system in order to create the desired result efficiently and effectively. In addition, employees' Performance as viewed by Berivan et al (2018) is principal in contributing to the nation's economic fortunes because its output is the major consolidated benefits that broadened the socio-economic potentials of the organizations on one hand and the nations well-being on the other hand. This according to Agba and Ocheni (2017) is capable of advancing economic growth, improving organization growth and thereby enhancing the living standard of the citizens. More so, there is need to place a perpetual emphasis on employees' performance in order to ensure that it is comprehensively accomplished since it is the only avenue through which the fortunes of the organization can be attained. Hence, Sikora et al (2020) posited that employees' performance is categorically what the workforce does or does not do. However, employees' performance could be attained with the aid of an effective management of reward.

More so, employees' performance is seen as the correlations that exists between output created and its corresponding quantity of input factors attained by the system to achieved the desired results efficiently and effectively. Employees perform better when given adequate reward. This according to Abdul et al (2014), Achimugu et al (2015) and Akinyele (2010) is due to the fact that the employees' economic and social livelihoods rely on the volume of their reward being obtained by their employers.

Fig 1: Conceptual model



Source: Researchers compilation, 2025

The model as shown in figure 1 illustrates the research model showing the independent variable as reward management practices and proxies with career development, employee engagement and work-life balance. The dependent variable is employee performance and proxies with employee efficiency, quality of work and cooperativeness. The model describes the relationship between the proxies of each independent and dependent variables. Thus, showing the relationship between career development and employee efficiency, employee engagement and quality of work as well as work-life balance and cooperativeness.

Theoretical Framework

For research to advance there must be underlying theoretical postulation. This study explores three theories and thereafter anchors the research on one particular theory. The theories Reward system include Structural functionalism theory, Principal - agent theory and the Adams equity theory.

Structural Functionalism Theory

The theory of Structural functionalism posited that organization is rather viewed as a social organization and the failure of one structure definitely affects the entire organization (Alan,2016). Thus, structure which could be seen as an analytical departments or agencies relied heavily on the group and inter – group dynamics to function effectively towards improved performance. Therefore, structural functionalism theory searchlights on the social diversity and naturalistic tendencies that emerges through realistic structural dynamics and how such largely affects employee's performance. Furtherance to this, the theory noted that individual employee needs to be thoroughly studied, understand and strategies to get the best out of them hence, there is need to thoroughly understands the peculiarities of individual employees as well as the group phenomenon that transpired between and among them. This is because the organic analogy of individual employee would greatly affect overall organizational productivity. Additionally, the epistemological dimension of this theory believes that internal and external rationality of employees greatly affects their performance.

Principal-agent Theory

The model of principal – agent theory postulated the theoretical dimension which stipulates the contractual agreement that exists between the employer and the agent who are the employees. This theory as noted by Akinyele (2007) posited that the employer who serves as principal employs the services of employees that are agents who provide their services for their principal for a fee. The employees are therefore agents of employer (Principal) and would want to put in their best in pursuance of organizational productivity as long as there is adequate rewards and provision of conducive atmosphere to strive effectively. Therefore, this contractual relationship is sacrosanct in enhancing organizational performance. However, any attempt to deviate from the contractual agreement leads to organizational rancor, mistrust, sanction and strike. Therefore, Uchenna et al (2022) argued that such negates employees and organizational productivity. Thus, the principal (employer) is required to consciously and consistently provide adequate reward systems and incentives that would spur their agents (employees) to be enthusiastic, focused and determined in the pursuance of the organizational goal through improved performance.

Adams Equity Theory of Motivation

The Adams (1964) equity theory of motivation according to Akpan et al (2019) and Abdul (2015) posited that employees expect perceived fairness when they are rewarded for their tasks and becomes dissatisfied with their job when their input is not being fairly compensated. This theory also posited that employees tend to evaluate and compare their input to the organization with what they are given as reward. This is the premise to which they are enthusiastic about their job which leads to improved performance. The input of employees in relation to their rewards are based on efforts, Skills, time, education, experience and other social investment which according to them should be quantified in terms of monetary and non-monetary values and be rewarded adequately. This theory according to Akpan (2019) is predicated on the principles that positively seek to improve employee's performance in line with their reward system. Therefore, employee evaluates their efforts and considers whether the organization has fairly reward them.

This study is anchored on the Adams Equity theory of motivation because of its practical application on effect of reward on employees' performance and most suitable to this theory. This theory is also fundamental to the study because of its pursuance of equitable, fair and adequate reward system by employers through the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Therefore, the quest for fair reward satisfies the psychological, social, economic and political dimensions that are capable of promoting sound and motivated employees to accomplish an egalitarian and productive workforce.

Research Methodology

The Researchers adopt the descriptive research survey technique. This technique is adopted as a survey research technique in which the responses were collected and specifically analyzed by relying on empirical data. Again, this study which examines Reward management practices and employee's performance in tertiary institutions in Kogi State involved collecting data through primary sources. The primary data obtained is through thirty (30) items structured questionnaire. The population of this study comprised the staff of the Federal Polytechnic Idah Kogi State numbering 1326. However, considering the fact that the entire population may not be reached effective, the Researchers reached a sample of 384 respondents determined using the Krajcie and Morgan formular.

The Krajcie and Morgan formula denoted as.:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 (P)(1-P)}{E^2}$$

Where n = Sample size

Z = Confidence level 5 % = 1.96

P = Percentage of population (0.5%)

E= Error margin = 5 % (0.05)

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 (0.5)(1- 0.5)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 (0.5)(1-0.5)}{0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025}$$

$$n = 384$$

However, out of the total of 384 questionnaires distributed only 277 were duly completed and retrieved giving a response rate of 77%. The Researchers adopts the systematic sampling technique so that every respondent could be given equal chances of representation.

The questionnaire contained research questions bordering on both independent variable (reward management practices) and dependent variable (employee performance). The questionnaire designed in a five- point Likert-scale responses of strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) were used. The Researchers employed the services of two trained Research Assistants who assisted in the administration of the research questionnaire. In addition, the research questions were analyzed using a five - point's Likert-scale with the decision rule of accepting any mean value with 3.00 and above. Finally, the inferential or parametric statistics adopted in testing the three formulated hypotheses is the simple linear regression analysis which is an inferential technique of examining the strength of relationship between the independent variable (reward management practices) and dependent variable (employee performance). This process was aided with the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability of the research instrument used for this study was carried out to determine the internal consistency of the research instrument. Therefore, Edna et al (2021) argued that an instrument is reliable if it gives similar outcomes under consistent circumstances. Uchenna et al (2021) further noted that any coefficient of reliability that is up to 0.70 and above is considered reliable. To this end, in testing the reliability of the research instrument, the Researchers conducted a pilot study by distributing questionnaires numbering twenty-five (25) to the target respondents through the help of the trained Research Assistants; the Cronbach Alpha coefficient measure of internal consistency was utilized. The reliability of the research instrument using Cronbach alpha reliability test with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) yielded the result of 0.89 for items on independent variable, 0.77 for items on dependent variable thus giving the average reliability result of 0.83. The reliability result is showed in table 1.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Proxies/ Independent Variable	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Independent variable	15	0.89
Dependent Variable	15	0.77

Source: SPSS statistical analysis

The table revealed that all the variables have Alpha Values above 0.70. Thus, in line with the submission of Edna et al (2021) and Uchenna et al (2021) the instrument is deemed reliable.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on Reward management practices

Indices	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
CD	3.59	1.13	277
EE	3.66	1.24	277
WLB	3.37	1.23	277

The table shows the selected scale mean lies within the accepted range; therefore, they are of high extent and the research can conclude that data obtained and analyzed is significant and reliable. Additionally, in order to ascertain the variability of the data the standard deviations of both variables were examined. The mean for career development (CD) is 3.59 and the standard deviation is 1.13, the mean for employee engagement (EE) is 3.66 and the standard deviation is 1.24 and the mean for work-life balance (WLB) is 3.37 and the standard deviation is 1.23, hence all variables lie within the value of high extent as indicated by their corresponding means and standard deviations which are closely related.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics on Employee Performance

Indices	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
EE	3.78	1.01	277
QW	3.34	121	277
C	3.22	1.10	277

The table shows the selected scale mean lies within the accepted range; therefore, they are of high extent and the research can conclude that data obtained and analyzed is significant and reliable. More so, in order to ascertain the variability of the data the standard deviations of both variables were examined. The mean for employee efficiency (EE) is 3.78 and the standard deviation is 1.01, the mean for quality of work (QW) is 3.34 and the standard deviation is 1.21, the mean for cooperativeness is (C) is 3.22 and the standard deviation is 1.10, hence all variables lie within the value of high extent as indicated by their corresponding means and standard deviations which are closely related.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H_0: There is no significant relationship between career development and employee efficiency.

Table 4. Summary of Regression Results and other Statistics

Regression		Career development	Df	F
Coefficient	0.023	0.008	1	8732.121
P. value	0.000	0.000	276	
R	0.87		277	
R^2	0.76			

Source: Research Data analysis, 2025

The *F*-ratio in the table 4 shows that the variables of career development statistically significantly predict employee efficiency, F (1, 277) = 8732.121, $p< .0005$ (this means that the regression model is a good fit of the data). Again, summary of regression equation (model formulated) and the result shows that R is 0.87 which is close to 1.00 meaning that it is useful for making prediction. The goodness of fit revealed that it has a good fit of R with 87% and R^2 of 76% meaning that total variations in career development is explained by variations in employee efficiency. Thus, all the estimated parameters predicting the value of employee efficiency outside career development is 13% (i,e, 100- 87 which is statistically insignificant. Therefore, this implies that the independent variable (career development) contributes to the prediction of the dependent variable (employee efficiency) of about 87% with p- value of 0.000 which is less than 0, 05 affirming that there is a significant positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Hypothesis 2
H_0: There is no significant relationship between internet banking and competitive advantage.

Table 5 Summary of Regression Results and other Statistics

Regression		Employee engagement	Df	F
Coefficient	0.023	0.09	1	10445.131
P. value	0.000	0.000	276	
R	0.79		277	
R^2	0.63			

Source: Research Data analysis, 2025

The *F*-ratio in the table 5 shows that the variables of employee engagement statistically significantly predict quality of work F (1, 277) = 10445.131, $p< .0005$ (this means that the regression model is a good fit of the data). Again, summary of regression equation (model formulated) and the result shows that R is 0.79 which is close to 1.00 meaning that it is useful for making prediction. The goodness of fit revealed that it has a good fit of R with 79% and R^2 of 63% meaning that total variations in employee engagement is explained by variations in quality of work. Thus, all the estimated parameters predicting the value of quality of work outside employee engagement is 21% (i,e, 100- 79) which is statistically insignificant. Therefore, this implies that the independent variable (employee engagement) contributes to the prediction of the dependent variable (quality of work) of about 79% with p- value of 0.000 which is less than 0, 05 affirming that there is a significant positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Hypothesis 3
H_0: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and cooperativeness.

Table 6. Summary of Regression Results and other Statistics

Regression		Work-life balance	Df	F
Coefficient	0.002	0.06	1	23211.22
P. value	0.000	0.000	276	
R	0.91		277	
R^2	0.83			

Source: Research Data analysis, 2025

The *F*-ratio in the table 6 shows that the variables of work-life balance statistically significantly predict cooperativeness, $F(1, 277) = 23211.22$, $p < .0005$ (this means that the regression model is a good fit of the data). Again, summary of regression equation (model formulated) and the result shows that R is 0.91 which is close to 1.00 meaning that it is useful for making prediction. The goodness of fit revealed that it has a good fit of R with 91% and R^2 of 83% meaning that total variations in work-life balance is explained by variations in cooperativeness. Thus, all the estimated parameters predicting the value of work-life balance outside cooperativeness is 9% (i,e, 100- 91) which is statistically insignificant. Therefore, this implies that the independent variable (work-life balance) contributes to the prediction of the dependent variable (cooperativeness) of about 91% with p- value of 0.000 which is less than 0, 05 affirming that there is a significant positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the reward management practices statistically influence employee's performance in tertiary institutions in Kogi State. The reward management practices that are being practiced in these institutions among others include career development, employee engagement and work-life balance scheme. Again, the data analysis revealed that employees who perceived their reward as adequate are motivated and propelled to be more efficient, render quality of work as well as have high level of colleague cooperation which by extension reduces organizational conflict. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining a fair and efficient reward management practices to lead to an improved work environment, improve employee morale, and enhance organizational performance.

Recommendations

Premised on the findings and conclusions from this study the Researchers recommends that career development programmes should not only be sustained but be integrated so that employees be motivated towards enthusiastically contributing their best towards-the attainment of the organization objectives. Additionally, there should be an articulated blue-print targeted towards employee engagement: Finally, the institutions should provide a platform for evaluating employees activities through conscious and open communication where the employees will be willing to interact with the employers thereby creating a platform for career counselling where employees work would be adequately match with their personal lives. Through this measure, there will be a balance thereby attaining the employee's socioeconomic wellbeing and by extension organizational performance.

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