

## Managing high-performance work system (HPWS) for effective service delivery in tertiary educational institutions

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### Abstract

Managing employee and institutional performance encompasses numerous challenges, which requires management's diligence to unravel encircled difficulties. Determining staffs exhibited characteristics in different facets of organisations operations is another ambiguous endeavour tertiary institutions have been wrestling with. However, achieving exceptional performance necessitate the efficient management of universities human, material and financial resources for institutional growth. This study therefore assessed elements that constitute high-performance work system and its efficient management for effective service delivery predominantly in institutions of higher learning. In this regard, pieces of literature was reviewed from numerous publications, ranging from journal articles to management books, where several fissures were identified. This study employed descriptive quantitative and correlational methods, which enhanced the gathering, classification and presentation of data that led to descriptive analysis, discussion and objective conclusion. Primary data was obtained with the aid of questionnaires distributed to a selected sample size of 250 respondents from a sample frame that constitute three universities. Results showed that, an efficient performance management system facilitate effective staff capacity development, which increases employees' skills and competencies for effective service delivery. Further considerable facts disclosed; emphasised the significance of rewards and compensation as strategic motivating elements that reinforces employee performance. Analysed and discussed first-hand information obtained from respondents established that, developing staff capacity and rewarding them equitably, facilitate exceptional performance, which leads to effective service delivery, since such staff is empowered with the required competencies for competitive excellence. In relation to aforesaid, this study is significant to general management practitioners, university authorities, human capital specialists and business consultants.

**Keywords:** High-performance, work systems, effective service delivery, tertiary educational institutions

### 1. Introduction

Competitive dynamics have stimulated numerous enterprises and academic institutions to establish systems that ensures staff exceptional performance for competitive excellence. In this regard, managing such systems encompasses quantum of considerations for effective service delivery in universities operations. Universities in Sierra Leone have been working relentlessly towards developing, rewarding and encouraging staff commitment for outstanding performance. Though managing such system is engulfed with several challenges, the principal focus of these institutions is how to maintain a system that is consistent with operations leading to exceptional results. Numerous researchers have examined elements of high performance systems from wider spectrum of operations, focusing on large scale and multinational corporations. However, reviewed pieces of literature have not disclosed investigations concentrating on universities operations and research of such nature has never been conducted in the country, using universities as case studies. Therefore, it is upon this background that this study seeks to examine processes of managing high-performance work systems, which ensures effective delivery of services offered by universities in Sierra Leone.

Managing employee performance in educational establishments encompasses lots of challenges which requires careful examination of the elements that constitute the enhancement of exceptional performance in such

institutions. Executives in these institutions formulate objectives, emphasise their achievement, and yet fail to establish workforce accountability or provide the required motivation to achieve goals set by management (Rothwell 2002, Reynolds 2004, Sloman 2003, Risher 2003, Becker *et al* 1997 & Shih *et al* 2005) [56, 54, 59, 55, 9, 58]. Critical success factors indicate areas of corporate performance that are vital to the successful accomplishment of organizations mission but vary considerably from organization to organization. Top management establish a culture of outstanding performance, administer, articulate and communicate organizations mission, objectives and core values. It defines and develops the concept of high performance, by actively pursuing policies for continuous improvement and provide the technology, systems and resources required to achieve performance expectations (Godard 2004, Becker *et al* 1997, Bailey *et al* 2001 & Armstrong 2005) [25, 9, 7, 2].

Organisations high-performance work systems are extremely distinctive, which are connected prudently to each organisation's situation to achieve optimum results. A high-performance culture is one in which people are aware of the need to perform well, and behave accordingly in order to meet or exceed expectations. Such philosophy embraces a number of interrelated processes which together influence how organizational performance is enhanced through its people (Thompson and Heron 2005, Lawler and McDermott 2003, Latham and Locke 2006 & Lindbom 2007) [63, 37, 36, 39]. High-performance work systems is a coherent and

consistent human resource management system that is internally dedicated to addressing complicated issues and executing enterprises competitive strategy. Such a system is fundamental to the acquisition, motivation and growth of the essential components of intellectual resources which constitute continued business benefit (Michaels *et al* 2001, Gjerde and Hughes 2007 & Joelle *et al* 2006) <sup>[24, 45, 35]</sup>.

High-performance work systems are also classified as high-performance work practice or high-performance work organizations that is dedicated to employees' skills development, design tasks to ensure collaboration among employees, proffer solution to challenging concerns and offer incentives which motivate workers to unleash creativity and accomplish goals (Jarvis 2004, Omeheng 2009 & Lutwama *et al* 2013) <sup>[33, 52, 41]</sup>. It is very difficult to manage human capital effectively without considering the structure that evaluates performance and performance capability. An effective performance structure serves as support mechanism for every institution's human capital management system as talents in organisations are endowed with unique attributes and capabilities that empower them to exhibit exceptional performance (Rothwell 2002, Sloman 2003 & Bailey *et al* 2001) <sup>[56, 59, 7]</sup>. It is significant to recognise the management of talents as a wide-ranging and incorporated bundle of activities. Talent management relies on performance management processes, which offer the chance of identifying and compensating talented people (Becker *et al* 1997 & Risher 2003) <sup>[9, 55]</sup>.

Performance management ensures that talents are developed through experience gained from learning and constructive feedback, coaching, design and application of personal development plans. Organizations achieve sustained high performance through the systems of work they adopt and such systems are managed and operated by people. Ultimately, therefore, high-performance working is about improving performance through people (Armstrong and Baron 2004, Reynolds 2004, Joelle *et al* 2006 & Baron and Armstrong 2004) <sup>[54, 1, 35]</sup>. Management standards are engulfed with performance management systems which are considered though theoretically dissimilar, they frequently overlap and facilitate their accompaniment in practice. Organising institution's workforce serves as a strategic decision taken by its leadership to communicate its vision and direction which includes, motivating, inspiring and connecting employees to organizations objectives (Omeheng 2009, Lindbom 2007 & Armstrong and Baron 2004) <sup>[7, 52, 39]</sup>.

Managers that are equipped with hard/operational skills provide technical support, in coaching and mentoring underperformers to address numerous fissures. Managers may escape having to demand better performance by convincing themselves that they have done all they can to establish expectations. They overlook the possibility of obtaining greater yields from available resources (Reynolds 2004, Schuler and Susan 2007 & Baron and Armstrong 2004) <sup>[54, 57]</sup>. Improving organisational performance requires executives at the management cadre to develop a culture of outstanding performance. The momentum for the creation of a high-performance culture has to be provided by top management. People exercising discretionary behaviour probably engage in making their jobs bigger by taking on more responsibility and doing extra things (Falcone 2002, Taylor 2002 & Armstrong 2006) <sup>[22, 62, 3]</sup>.

Employers may define the category of everyday behaviour

they want but rely on their employees to deliver. Managing performance through people means finding ways to induce employees to work better and more effectively by triggering their discretion to exhibit required behaviours (Ofori and Aryeetey 2011 & Falcone 2002) <sup>[51, 22]</sup>. Having laid the foundation upon which this construct will thrive, this study aims to critically assess the elements that constitute high-performance in organisations and how their efficient management can lead to effective service delivery in educational settings. The foregoing content has given an overview or broader spectrum of outstanding performance work machineries in tertiary educational institutions. Subsequent segments will proffer evidence on credible pieces of literature, describe appropriate methods of data collection, analyse facts obtained from participants, discuss and compare result with other published works, establish policy implications and suggest further investigation on the subject matter.

## 2. Review of Pieces of literature

### 2.1 Recruitment and selection for effective service delivery

One of the underlying suppositions of an effective staffing programme is the coherent and cohesive processes needed to drive the staffing strategies from requisition to hire. Recruiting and selection are two essential elements of an overall process that is viewed as a core competence, which helps the company, achieve its competitive advantage. Recruitment is the practice of determining prospective applicants for definite or expected institutional job opportunities (CFO 2003, Cooper 2000, Armstrong 2006 & Bohlander and Sherman 2001) <sup>[15, 16, 3, 17, 11]</sup>. The principal goal of staffing an organization is to acquire the number and quality of human capital required to satisfy the strategic purpose of such institution at minimal cost. Organizations recruit candidates using different sources based on job specific criteria, management required standards and human resources policy to accomplish institutions strategic objectives (Djabatey 2012, Schuler and Susan 2007 & Gamage 2014) <sup>[57, 18, 23]</sup>.

Requirements for certain positions are developed as role profiles and employee specifications; which provide preliminary sources required to develop advertisements, brief agencies or employment specialists, and assess the suitability of candidates (Taylor 2002 & Henry and Temtime 2009) <sup>[62, 30]</sup>. Competencies, skills, academic and professional experience are listed in a role profile which produces the criteria for jobs in relation to candidates' assessment at job interviews by means of psychological tests. It is therefore essential to consider the significance of developing forecasts to prevent recruiting the wrong personnel which could be costly for institutions (Gamage 2014 <sup>[23]</sup>, Syed 2012 <sup>[61]</sup> & Rauf (2007) <sup>[61]</sup>). Fluctuations in hiring needs could serve as a recipe for employing underperformers. Therefore, engaging in effective human capital planning minimises the unforeseen consequences. It is noted by many practitioners that, viable advantage is built and sustained if an organisation employs proper staffing mechanisms which reduce the risk of competitive challenges (István 2010, Dwivedi 2001 & Reynolds 2004) <sup>[32, 54, 20, 3]</sup>. Staffing is indispensable in organizations since potential candidates must be attracted on the basis of time, in adequate quantities and with appropriate qualifications. Huge cost can be incurred when an enterprise recruits

incompetent personnel who cannot achieve its strategic objectives. Such action stifles institutions operations towards competitive advantage (Aswathappa 2000, Duberg and Mollen 2010 & Dwivedi 2001) <sup>[6, 19, 20]</sup>.

Selection is a later stage of recruitment which includes selecting new candidates and ensures that the process is managed to fascinate knowledgeable and experienced applicants to suit available jobs. Quantum pieces of literature have established a constructive and significant relationship between staffing and performance of institutions. Efficient staffing progression influences organisations performance; the use of appropriate selection methods increases the possibility of contracting the right applicant to fill a vacancy (Mumford and Gold 2004, Harrison 2005, Armstrong 2010 & Harrison (2000) <sup>[47, 28, 5, 29]</sup>.

## 2.2 Enhancing outstanding performance through training and development

Staff capacity building has been classified by many schools of thought as a mechanism for enhancing employees' capacity to attain institutional standards. Effective and efficient training programmes consequently leads to successful achievement of business goals. Even though numerous training divisions have factually focused on activities, concentrating on holistic human capital performance enhancement implicitly emphasises results-oriented (Armstrong 2009, Reynolds 2004, Armstrong 2006, e-reward 2005 & Lawler and McDermott 2003) <sup>[4, 3, 54, 37]</sup>. The objective of organisations human capital development focuses on capacitating the most talented workforce that enables the organisation to succeed; in its drive towards competitive advantage. Such endeavour can only be accomplished when institutions adopt appropriate staffing programmes and implement them effectively (IRS 2003, Lawler and McDermott 2003 & Nyandoro and Goremusandu 2016) <sup>[37, 50]</sup>. Training is a learning involvement which has the propensity to create progressive variations to achieve institutions strategic objectives. It improves the capability of the worker to execute his job professionally in an excellence manner (Armstrong 2006 & Reynolds 2004) <sup>[54, 3]</sup>.

The resource-based view of an organisation emphasises the significance of having a highly qualified workforce which is different from and better than rival institutions. It is therefore essential to establish a culture of employee development, which encourages individual and organizational learning that makes it easier to understand how to plan, implement and evaluate learning and development programmes (Bohlander *et al* 2001, Godard 2004, Walters 2005 & Longenecker *et al* 2014) <sup>[11, 25, 64, 40]</sup>. Training is the process to imparting knowledge and supporting individuals to acquire the capabilities necessary for satisfactory job performance. Development is concerned with ensuring that, a person's ability and potential grows through the facility of learning experiences or through self-directed learning (Armstrong 2006, Marchington and Wilkinson 2005, Walters 2005 & Bentley 2003) <sup>[3, 64]</sup>. Training should be planned systematically and designed specifically to address organisational and performance needs. This adventure is undertaken by a training and development specialists who administers training programmes and judiciously evaluate their impact (Longenecker *et al* 2014 & Levin 2003) <sup>[40, 38]</sup>.

Managing performance helps to recognise precise training requirements that can be fulfilled by prescribed courses on or off-the-job. Learning facilities offered in organisational performance administration are constructed in the early events of the planning and performance agreement. Performance management offers the growth of a climate for learning. Learning is inseparable from activity, and like performance management, it is an unceasing development activity (Bentley 2003, Nyandoro and Goremusandu 2016, Noe 2010 & Armstrong 2010) <sup>[5, 50]</sup>. Every task carried out by someone, presents a learning opportunity and is the responsibility of managers to help people become aware of this and support the day-to-day learning that takes place. Managers, team leaders and individuals need to learn about personal development planning and decide on how the planning process will work and what their roles will be (Gungor 2011, Nguwi 2013, Hammel 2007 & Wren 2005) <sup>[26, 48, 65]</sup>. Coaching plans are incorporated into the personal development plans set out in a performance agreement; and as coaches, managers believe that people can succeed, contribute to organisational development and identify required competences to improve performance. It is difficult to see how performance management can be improved as it is progressively embedded without evaluating its effectiveness (Cavico and Mujtaba 2009, Merchant 2007, Jaghult 2005, Svensson 2001 & Merchant, 2007) <sup>[14, 60, 34, 44]</sup>. Reviewed pieces of literature have disclosed the relationship between performance and training; however, challenges and gaps identified in the review process are the absence of an efficient performance management system, which enhances exceptional performance. Furthermore, emphasis are laid on activity training which limits an institutions human capital development capacity. In this regard, this study aims to fill in gaps identified and proffer better strategies towards developing organisations human resources.

## 2.3 Performance appraisal as a measure for identifying and addressing fissures

Managing performance appraisal systems helps organisations to identify fissures created by underperformers, which prompt managers to take necessary actions to either design a training programme or employ other measures to address performance gaps. Organizations aims and objectives are embedded in the task implementation structures which are communicated through performance appraisal process (Jaghult 2005, Armstrong and Stephens 2005, Duberg and Mollen 2010 & Milkovich and Newman 2001) <sup>[34, 19, 46]</sup>. Although administering performance activities in organisations is a continuous process, it is still necessary to have a formal review once or twice annually which will provide an essential consideration of key performance and development issues (Wren 2005, Becker *et al* 1997 & Bailey *et al* 2001) <sup>[65, 9, 7]</sup>. Normally, performance appraisal is limited to a feedback process between supervisors and supervisees, which enable organizations to hold annual performance reviews with the supervisor providing comments on employee's performance (Buckley and Caple 2009 & Rothwell 2002) <sup>[12, 56]</sup>. The review is ingrained in the certainty of the worker's performance which permits executives and individuals to examine how value can be added to empower employees for exceptional future performance (Shih *et al* 2005 & Reynolds 2004) <sup>[58, 54]</sup>. The criteria for assessing performance should not be limited to a few quantified objectives, as has often

been the case in traditional appraisal schemes. Equal attention should be given to the behaviour that has produced the results themselves. Conducting performance appraisal requires managers to refer to agreed objectives and notes on employee activities during and after implementation (Callahan 2004, Sloman 2003, Godard 2004 & Risher 2003) [59, 55, 25].

Aforementioned facts about employee appraisal is limited to managers' assessment about employees' contributions towards institutions growth. However, benefits derived from the outcome of an appraisal process are not indicated by reviewed pieces of literatures and as such, this study identified them as gaps, which it determines to address using suitable methods of collecting primary data that will justify propositions of the subject matter.

#### 2.4 Rewards and Compensation for effective employee motivation

Performance is in most occasions expressively misconstrued, however, the harmonization of reward classifications reinforces the achievement of competitiveness. The best way to ensure the continued viability of universities amidst perplexing economic situation is to lay emphasis on reward management and institutional performance (Gjerde and Hughes 2007, Thompson and Heron 2005 & Omeheng 2009) [24, 52, 63]. Compensation structures consist of unified procedures and practices, combine to guarantee that rewards are managed efficiently to the advantage of an institution and the workforce (Lawler and McDermott 2003 & Lutwama *et al* 2013) [37, 41]. Suitable, efficient and appropriate remuneration increases employees' motivation. Executives ought to build a suitable value-based establishment and use it as a significant component for short and long term goal. If workers are offered suitable rewards for their ethical behaviours and a reasonable salary for their tasks executed, executives will have the opportunity to lead workers to correct actions (Latham and Locke 2006, Joelle *et al* 2006, Jarvis 2004, Lindbom 2007 & Michaels *et al* 2001) [36, 35, 33, 39, 45].

An appropriate incentive scheme can result to increasing competence and output at the workplace. For compensation to be an ideal motivation, the incentive ought to fulfil certain standards; have esteem, be sufficient enough to have effect, be reasonable and be timely (Rothwell 2002, Baron and Armstrong 2004 & Becker *et al* 1997) [56, 1, 9]. The financial aspect of rewards is classically a variable remuneration isolated from workers salary because of excellent performance or as encouragement and can either be individual or group based. Rewards are based on performance measures since employees welcome the likelihood of getting a reward for their performance (Reynolds 2004, Bailey *et al* 2001, Armstrong and Baron 2004 & Sloman 2003) [54, 59, 1, 7]. Increasing employees' responsibility is likely to increase motivation, which makes them feel more valued and skilful. Incentive and gratitude can encourage individuals to discover numerous techniques to execute their jobs; however, an alternative feeling absolutely discourage them. Universities frequently use rewards to stimulate knowledgeable and experienced employees, which encourage them to increase their performance through motivation machineries (Joelle *et al* 2006, Risher 2003 & Davenport 2002) [35, 55]. Rewards do not only compensate personnel for their contributions

towards organisational performance but also impact on the system of employment and retention of talents. It is therefore necessary for institutions to support their performance with compensation practice that enhances the achievement of organizational goals and competitive advantage (Dwivedi 2001, Mahapatro 2010 & Aswathappa 2000) [20, 6].

Prescriptions of compensation management guarantees value for money, which means employees diligently unleash their creative acumen to ensure effective service delivery whilst organisations reward such commitment adequately. The foregoing pieces of literature reviewed about rewards and compensation emphasised the significance of reward in its entirety. However, specifications about the effects of financial and nonfinancial rewards are not discussed separately and this investigation though it fit that, the absence of such facts in the reviewed literatures requires further actions towards addressing specifications about compensation.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

In selecting the choice of method(s), researchers should be able to distinguish and understand the relationship between them for effective investigation. Quantitative research creates data through the practice of large-scale investigation, using techniques such as questionnaires or organised interviews (Shaheen *et al* 2013, Shamshina 2016 & Seyyed *et al* (2013). In traditional quantitative studies, researchers select cases in the context of statistical probability. Random sampling, stratified sampling, and other probability techniques are designed to ensure that cases studied are representative of a larger population wherein the investigator is interested (Shine 2015, Shurbagi 2014 & Silveira *et al* 2013). This study is reinforced by descriptive quantitative survey and correlational method, which includes gathering, classification and presentation of data that led to thorough analysis, discussion and conclusion of the subject matter. This method was discovered to be the most suitable for the conduct of assessing high performance work systems in universities.

#### 3.2 Research Area

This study was conducted within the periphery of the capital city of Sierra Leone (Freetown) which host headquarters or main campuses of the research frame. Assessment was done in three universities namely: University of Sierra Leone (USL), Njala University (NU) and Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology (EBKURST) at its Makeni and Portloko Campuses. The research area and sample frame produced sufficient data required for descriptive analysis and discussions.

#### 3.3 Sampling of Respondents

More time can be spent in designing and piloting data collection for small samples, which shows high level of accuracy than larger samples. Collecting data from a small sample is more detailed and interviewers engaged in such process can exhibit high quality and efficiency in the process of obtaining data (Yıldız *et al* 2014 & Zafar 2015). In probability sampling, the sampling frame enable researchers to describe and generalise the dictates of a particular population. This means that, if your sampling frame shows a list of technical staffs in a university, you can

only generalise your findings based on your sample selected for that organisation (Zhao and Liu 2015 & Zeffane *et al* 2017). This study used simple random sampling which enhanced the accurate selection of sample units from the sample frame. From the units selected, which is 250 respondents, 150 are male, which state 60% whereas 100 were classified as female with 40%. This disparity shows clearly that the universities recruits more male employees than their female counterparts.

**3.4 Research Instruments**

Primary research involves the study of a subject through first-hand observation and investigation. Primary enquiry might emanate from individual observations, involvement or information collected personally from several sources. Pre-notification was done by scholars to prevent rejection or ineffective participation in the research process (Basuil and Datta (2015) Swathi (2014) Tafesse and Skallerud (2017). Management research uses interviews only second in frequency of questionnaires for data collection. There are quantum of important issues we considered when choosing questionnaires as data collection techniques (Bauer and Matzler, 2014 Tan *et al* (2015). Survey-based data are collected by means of an investigation approach, typically by questionnaires that have been examined for their unique purpose (Vimala *et al* 2015). This study collected its primary data with the aid of questionnaires. It distributed 350 questionnaires to participants but retrieved 250 processed questionnaires which shows the following allocations: 150 male (60%) and 100 female (40%). The process never intended to experience gender disparity but such outcome is because of the limited female employed as academic and administrative staffs. Being a descriptive

quantitative research, questionnaires were design, which followed the Linkert scale system such as 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree. Considering elements described in the literature review section, those components emanated from the conduct of previous investigations and such are classified as follows: recruitment and selection was obtained from the works of Schuler and Susan 2007 [57], Djabatay 2012 [18] & Gamage 2014 [23], training and development was adopted from Reynolds 2004 [54], Armstrong 2009 [4], Lawler and McDermott 2003 [37] & Armstrong 2006 [3], performance appraisal stem from the discoveries of Armstrong and Stephens 2005 [2], Milkovich and Newman 2001 [46], Duberg and Mollen 2010 [19] & Jaghult 2005 [34] and finally, rewards and compensation emanated from Lindbom 2007 [39], Latham and Locke 2006 [36], Michaels *et al* 2001 [45] & Joelle *et al* 2006 [35]

**3.5 Measures**

Raw data was obtained from survey and processed, using descriptive statistics and correlation through SPSS. Analysed data disclosed participants' views and opinions about the significance of key elements that constitute high-performance work systems. However, results of the analysis emphasised the contributions of training and development as a performance element towards effective service delivery. Nevertheless, Performance appraisal, rewards, and compensation are also noted as strategic contributing components in enhancing exceptional performance in tertiary educational establishments.

**4. Results and Discussion**

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics on the distribution of respondents on performance management systems

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
OEPMS	250	1	1	2	1.60	.031	.491	.241	-.411	.154	-1.846	.307
PAIOU	250	2	1	3	2.28	.049	.777	.604	-.533	.154	-1.154	.307
TSPCE	250	2	1	3	2.24	.048	.765	.585	-.437	.154	-1.169	.307
PACEEEL	250	2	1	3	2.36	.043	.687	.472	-.607	.154	-.741	.307
ARPCB	250	1	1	2	1.60	.031	.491	.241	-.411	.154	-1.846	.307
CPAP	250	2	1	3	2.20	.047	.750	.562	-.346	.154	-1.152	.307
SPESO	250	2	1	3	2.28	.046	.724	.524	-.481	.154	-.973	.307
CPAP	250	2	1	3	2.32	.046	.735	.540	-.584	.154	-.946	.307
ERPO	250	2	1	3	2.32	.046	.735	.540	-.584	.154	-.946	.307
EAME	250	2	1	3	2.28	.049	.777	.604	-.533	.154	-1.154	.307
Valid N (listwise)	250											

The conduct of this study encompasses respondents' gender, age groups and designations. Results disclosed that, among respondents that participated in the survey, 150 are male whereas female representative showed 100. Further indications disclosed that, the age range of respondents are classified as: 18-25, 26-35, 36-45 and 46+. Designations of respondents are outlined as Technical/clerical, Administrator, Junior Lecturer and Senior Lecturer. Facts derived from the reviewed pieces of literature did not disclose the relevance of a performance management system. However, respondents disclosed the existence and relevance of efficient performance management systems in the various universities. The aforementioned fact is

substantiated by the demonstration of 40% respondents who agreed and 60% who strongly agreed that such institutions operate efficient performance management systems. Additional facts presented by respondents through opinions expressed specified that, the conduct of performance appraisal helps to identify outstanding and underperformers, which warrants universities further actions to address performance fissures. Respondents alluded that, the various institutions provide counselling for employees in order to tackle unforeseen or expected future performance challenges. Regarding the relevance of the conduct of performance appraisal, respondents mentioned that, performance appraisal are conducted to determine staff

efficiency level which leads to promotion and recommendation for further capacity building. Concerning challenges staffs encounter in the execution of their assigned duties, some respondents registered that, authorities do not take prompt action to address performance challenges; whereas a greater percentage emphasised that, authorities do act promptly to address problems that leads to underperformance. Maintaining standards in all sectors of organisational performance and development has been a considerable factor since standards demonstrate the credibility of organisations existence. Nevertheless, respondents noted that performance standards are evident in all sectors of the universities and are maintained accordingly. As a result of consultations on the productiveness of staff appraisals, processed data disclosed

that management’s engagement with staff on appraisal issues are productive and such consultations have helped to address critical performance issues. In relation to the management of the process, respondents indicated that performance appraisals are managed efficiently which ensures objective ratings of staff performance through outcomes rather than supervisors individual opinions. This result has comparative significance to results obtained by Bailey *et at* (2001) [7], E-reward (2005) [21], Godard (2004) [25] & Gungor (2011) [26] in their investigations about performance management. However, facts derived from this study underscored the significance of institutions performance management system and its influence on organisational development, which previous studies did not emphasise.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics on the distribution of respondents regarding training and staff development

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
OEPMS	250	1	1	2	1.60	.031	.491	.241	-.411	.154	-1.846	.307
PAIOU	250	2	1	3	2.28	.049	.777	.604	-.533	.154	-1.154	.307
TSPCE	250	2	1	3	2.24	.048	.765	.585	-.437	.154	-1.169	.307
PACEEEL	250	2	1	3	2.36	.043	.687	.472	-.607	.154	-.741	.307
ARPCB	250	1	1	2	1.60	.031	.491	.241	-.411	.154	-1.846	.307
CPAP	250	2	1	3	2.20	.047	.750	.562	-.346	.154	-1.152	.307
SPESO	250	2	1	3	2.28	.046	.724	.524	-.481	.154	-.973	.307
CPAP	250	2	1	3	2.32	.046	.735	.540	-.584	.154	-.946	.307
ERPO	250	2	1	3	2.32	.046	.735	.540	-.584	.154	-.946	.307
EAME	250	2	1	3	2.28	.049	.777	.604	-.533	.154	-1.154	.307
Valid N (listwise)	250											

Training and staff development has been a great concern for the growth of many institutions, ranging from small and medium to large scale and multinational corporations. It has been established by numerous schools of thought and management consultancies that, developing employees’ capacity strengthens organisations operations in intense competitive landscape. Facts derived from this survey shows that, training is significant to staff efficiency and organisational development. Further highlights from respondents mentioned that, the conduct of induction or orientation training raises staffs awareness on universities operations and enable new recruits to grasp basic and vital information concerning university activities. Regarding motivational issues towards exceptional performance, respondents stated that, strategic training influences employees’ commitment level and serve as retention mechanism. Acquisition of knowledge in organisational operations is vital for effective job performance and achievement of results. However, respondents noted that, effective training programmes conducted periodically facilitate knowledge acquisition in the universities. The enhancement of exceptional performance is encircled with enormous challenges, which many universities have been struggling with, and as such, addressing such challenges requires extra efforts to achieve predetermined objectives. Nevertheless, respondents submitted that, staff development programme conducted by the universities enhances outstanding performance and quality service delivery. Developing institutions workforce follows expectations of knowledge transfer towards institutional growth. This shows that, when employees acquire the required knowledge, such

knowledge gained should be utilised to strengthen organisations operations. Processed data obtained from survey disclosed that, workforce development increases organisations productivity level. Harmonious working relationship facilitate the achievement of strategic objectives and maintain standards established to guide institutional activities. Nevertheless, respondents mentioned that, training and staff capacity building facilitate harmonious working relationship. Management practitioners noted that, exceptional performance transforms organisational activities and facilitate competitive advantage. However, respondents supported the aforementioned expression and emphatically stated that, training empowers employees for outstanding performance and increase their efficiency level to tackle critical performance challenges. Managing high performance work systems encompasses professionalism and career development which respondents emphasised that, effective training enhances professionalism and career development. Facts about staff capacity building dealt with in this survey is supported by studies conducted by Buckley and Caple (2009) [12], Davenport (2002), Harrison (2000) [28], Noe (2010) & Rothwell (2002) [56] in their investigations about employee development, institutional staff development, effects of training and development on organisational performance and the influence of training on staff performance. Even though our results is supported by previous studies, specific concerns raised by this study are not evident in previous studies about training and development and as such, this investigation demonstrate a unique achievement of its endeavour.

**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistics on the distribution of respondents concerning rewards and compensation management

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
TRMSEE	250	2	1	3	2.32	.046	.735	.540	-.584	.154	-.946	.307
TISGST	250	1	1	2	1.52	.032	.501	.251	-.081	.154	-2.010	.307
EPAMR	250	2	1	3	2.28	.046	.724	.524	-.481	.154	-.973	.307
EPTCR	250	2	1	3	2.24	.048	.765	.585	-.437	.154	-1.169	.307
CSPIC	250	2	1	3	2.28	.049	.777	.604	-.533	.154	-1.154	.307
ARROP	250	2	1	3	2.36	.047	.743	.553	-.693	.154	-.881	.307
MVETFR	250	2	1	3	2.24	.048	.765	.585	-.437	.154	-1.169	.307
ECBP	250	1	1	2	1.52	.032	.501	.251	-.081	.154	-2.010	.307
TPMTEPF	250	1	1	2	1.56	.031	.497	.247	-.243	.154	-1.957	.307
ERRET	250	1	1	2	1.52	.032	.501	.251	-.081	.154	-2.010	.307
EPIC	250	1	1	2	1.52	.032	.501	.251	-.081	.154	-2.010	.307
Valid N (listwise)	250											

Organisations workforce depends on satisfactory rewards to enhance exceptional performance in reaching standards established, which guide the operations of such organisations. Compensations plays a pivotal role towards influencing universities human capital for effective job performance and organisational sustainability. Information obtained from this survey disclosed that, the various universities have efficient reward management systems that influences workforce performance. and also maintain traditional salary grade system. Even though there are initial allocations to each grade level, respondents emphatically stated that, exceptional performance attracts more rewards. Exceeding performance target has been the desires of many employees in order to gain extra compensation and recognition. However, respondents’ opinions registered that, employees whose performance level exceeds target are compensated accordingly. Creativity and innovation is the thrust of many institutions to enhance strategic level in the competitive landscape. In this regard, respondents noted that, staffs whose creative suggestions improves performance are recognised and commended for their creative acumen. Although there are benchmarks for each staff performance, respondents mentioned that, university authorities recognise and reward staffs for outstanding performance. Commitment in organisational activities hinge on effective motivational values, which influences

performance. As a result, staffs can easily be influenced to achieve strategic objectives for competitive advantage. Analysed data obtained from this survey shows that, motivational values are enhanced through formal recognition events held annually. Respondents further disclosed that, employees are given comprehensive benefit package to ensure satisfactory commitment level and desire to stay longer in the universities. Amongst the motivational elements assessed by employees, respondents disclosed that financial compensation serves as the principal motivator towards enhancing staff performance. Concerning talents exhibition in the various universities, respondents indicated that, staffs are recognised and rewarded for exhibiting their talents. Since rewards and compensation serves as vital tools towards enhancing outstanding performance, organisations should do their best to ensure equitable distribution. Results of this survey is reinforced by studies conducted by Duberg and Mollen (2010)<sup>[19]</sup>, Gungor (2011)<sup>[26]</sup>, Jaghult (2005)<sup>[34]</sup> & Nyandoro and Goremusandu (2016)<sup>[50]</sup> in their assessment on the influence of rewards on staff performance, the contribution of compensation towards organisational development and managing institutional rewards for organisational sustainability. In consideration towards previous studies contributions, this study distinctly analyse the values rewards bestowed on staff performance that enhances exceptional results.

**Table 4:** Correlations between training-performance and rewards and performance

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OEPMS	1.000									
PAIOU	.821	1.000								
CPAP	.802	.968	1.000							
ERPO	.802	.968	1.000	1.000						
OPEED	.850	.863	.856	.856	1.000					
WDIOPL	.850	.863	.856	.856	1.000	1.000				
TEEEP	.850	.863	.856	.856	1.000	1.000	1.000			
EPAMR	.769	.931	.964	.964	.816	.816	.816	1.000		
CSPIC	.821	1.000	.968	.968	.863	.863	.863	.931	1.000	
EPIC	.850	.863	.856	.856	1.000	1.000	1.000	.816	.863	1.000

Elements examined in this study demonstrate positive correlation, which shows satisfactory outcome of this endeavour. This study shows that, with efficient performance management systems in the various universities, effective service delivery will definitely be achieved; since appraisal process can easily identify

exceptional performance and address challenges encountered in tackling critical competitive performance issues. An objective performance management system rate employee based on outcomes rather than on opinions or presumptions. It is noted that, a structured performance system considers training as a capacity tool, which enhances

staff skills and competences for exceptional job performance. With preference given to staff capacity building, such employee development strides will definitely increase staff performance and organisations productivity level. Such exceptional performance attracts further compensation, which influences commitment and retention of high-class performers; that stimulate creative suggestions and innovations for transformative operations. With the foregoing facts established, it is evident that managing training and staff development and rewarding employees satisfactorily will enhance outstanding performance that leads to effective service delivery in academic institutions. The matrix shows that, when staffs are well trained and compensated accordingly, the result will be exceptional performance.

## 5. Conclusion

Conducting an assessment on the elements that constitute high-performance work system have set the pace for reference towards organisational performance. Effective service can be delivered if institutions human capital efficiency level is satisfactory and match up with standards set by such institutions. This study however, assessed components of performance from a wider spectrum of organisations operations for effective service delivery, specifically in academic institutions. In this regard, it reviewed pieces of literature published on the subject matter, identified gaps and address such gaps with first-hand information obtained from survey through questionnaires distributed to the various universities. Descriptive quantitative and correlational methods were employed, which facilitated the gathering, classification and presentation of data that led to analysis, discussion and objective conclusion. Results obtained showed that, an efficient performance management system encompasses staff capacity building programmes, which facilitate the acquisition of skills and competencies required for effective service delivery. Further highlights emphasised that, a well-capacitated workforce with satisfactory compensation instils high commitment level towards task, adaptive and contextual performance. This study is noteworthy to universities in Sierra Leone and beyond; and is also of paramount importance to management practitioners, human capital development specialists, business institutions, non-governmental organisations and government establishments. However, further undertakings on this study could be done in examining specific elements, increasing the sample size and/or frame or probably employed different methods.

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