

Performance Appraisal Systems and Employee Motivation in Selected Ministries in Delta and Rivers States, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of performance appraisal systems on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States, Nigeria. The research focused on five performance appraisal dimensions: Traditional Performance Appraisal Systems, 360-Degree Feedback Systems, Management by Objectives (MBO), the Critical Incident Method, and Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods. The study was motivated by the need to understand how different appraisal practices affect motivation and performance within the public sector, particularly in an environment where efficiency, accountability, and service delivery are critical. A cross-sectional research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 30,500 public service employees drawn from selected ministries in Delta and Rivers States. Using the Gill and Johnson (2010) sample size determination table, a sample size of 652 respondents was selected. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, of which 537 copies were correctly completed and deemed suitable for analysis. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Spearman's correlation, and multiple regression techniques to test the study's hypotheses at a 5% level of significance. The findings revealed that all five performance appraisal systems examined had positive and statistically significant relationships with employee motivation. Traditional performance appraisal systems were found to enhance motivation when appraisal processes were clear, fair, and consistently applied. The 360-degree feedback system showed a strong positive influence on motivation by promoting fairness, accountability, and comprehensive feedback. Management by Objectives emerged as the most influential appraisal method, significantly enhancing motivation through participatory goal-setting, clarity of expectations, and measurable performance tracking. The Critical Incident Method positively influenced motivation by focusing on key job-related behaviors and timely feedback. At the same time, the Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods also contributed positively by encouraging recognition and healthy competition among employees. The study concluded that effective performance appraisal systems are vital tools for enhancing employee motivation in the public sector. It recommended, among other things, adopting a balanced, integrated appraisal framework

that combines traditional and modern approaches to improve motivation, accountability, and overall organizational effectiveness in public service ministries.

Keywords: performance appraisal systems; employee motivation; 360-degree feedback; management by objectives (MBO); public sector efficiency

Contribution/Originality: This study provides empirical evidence on the impact of different performance appraisal systems on employee motivation within public sector ministries in Delta and Rivers States, Nigeria, a context that has been underexplored in existing literature. By comparing traditional and modern appraisal methods, including 360-degree feedback, Management by Objectives (MBO), the Critical Incident Method, and Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods, the research identifies which approaches most effectively enhance motivation, accountability, and organizational efficiency. The originality of this study lies in its integrated examination of multiple appraisal systems within the Nigerian public sector, offering practical insights for policymakers and human resource managers on designing balanced, effective, and contextually relevant performance appraisal frameworks.

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary organizational theory and human resource management, performance appraisal systems (PAS) are widely recognized as essential tools for enhancing employee motivation, productivity, and organizational performance. In Western countries such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, performance appraisals have evolved from basic rating exercises to more participatory systems that incorporate feedback, developmental planning, and alignment with organizational goals. These systems aim not only to evaluate past performance but also to guide future improvement, support reward mechanisms, and foster employee engagement (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017; Orhero & Okolie, 2020).

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), appraisal systems in the West are increasingly developmental, emphasizing employee growth, motivation, and alignment with strategic objectives. Popular approaches such as Management by Objectives (MBO), 360-degree feedback, and competency-based assessments have been shown to significantly enhance morale, trust, and motivation among employees (Pulakos, 2009). Research confirms that fairly implemented and well-structured appraisal systems can effectively motivate employees, improving satisfaction, commitment, and overall performance (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017).

The effectiveness of PAS, however, depends on organizational culture, leadership style, and employees' perceptions of fairness, transparency, and relevance. Kuvaas (2006) notes that employees' perception of appraisal fairness strongly influences their motivation and work outcomes. In Western contexts, where participatory management and employee rights are institutionalized, appraisal systems tend to produce more positive motivational effects.

In contrast, the Nigerian context reveals significant challenges. Although many public and private organizations have adopted performance appraisal systems, their implementation is often undermined by subjectivity, favoritism, political interference, poor feedback, and lack of transparency (Obisi, 2011; Eze, 2020; Nnamani, 2022; Odeyemi, 2024). These deficiencies demotivate employees and erode trust in the appraisal process.

Specifically, in Nigeria's public sector, including ministries and parastatals, appraisals are frequently treated as routine administrative exercises rather than strategic tools for human resource development. Empirical studies show that employees often

perceive appraisals as bureaucratic formalities disconnected from actual performance, promotions, training, or career advancement, which undermines morale and motivation (Okeke et al., 2016; Olajide, 2014).

Despite growing awareness of the link between motivation and performance, Nigerian public institutions continue to struggle with aligning appraisal systems with motivational objectives. This study, therefore, investigates the influence of performance appraisal systems on employee motivation in selected ministries in Delta and Rivers States, Nigeria, and identifies the contextual factors that facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of these appraisal practices.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In today's efficiency-driven public sector, employee motivation is critical for organizational success. Performance appraisal systems, when properly implemented, are meant to evaluate employee performance, provide constructive feedback, and incentivize workers to achieve both individual and organizational goals. However, in many Nigerian ministries, appraisal systems suffer from inconsistencies, subjectivity, poor implementation, and limited follow-through on outcomes.

Despite civil service reforms aimed at enhancing productivity and accountability, public servants frequently express dissatisfaction with the fairness, transparency, and relevance of performance appraisals. In ministries within Delta and Rivers States, appraisal results are rarely linked to promotions, rewards, training, or career development. Instead, employees often perceive the process as a bureaucratic routine influenced by favoritism, nepotism, or political interference rather than objective evaluation.

This gap between appraisal practice and employee motivation undermines public service delivery, leading to low morale, poor commitment, and reduced productivity. While some studies have examined PAS in Nigeria's private sector (Obisi, 2011; Onah, 2013; Olajide, 2014; Eze, 2020), there is limited empirical research on its effect on motivation in the South-South public sector. This study addresses this gap by examining the implementation, fairness, and impact of performance appraisal systems on employee motivation and performance in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between performance appraisal systems and employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States, Nigeria. While the specific objectives were to:

- i. examine the influence of traditional performance appraisal systems on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.
- ii. assess the effect of 360-degree feedback systems on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.
- iii. evaluate the impact of Management by Objectives (MBO) on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.
- iv. investigate the effect of the use of critical incident methods on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.
- v. analyze the effect of ranking and paired comparison methods on employee motivation in ministries of Delta and Rivers States.

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

To empirically test the presumed relationships between the various types of performance appraisal systems and employee motivation, the following hypotheses were formulated. These hypotheses were designed to guide the statistical analysis and validate the effects of traditional appraisal methods, 360-degree feedback, Management by Objectives (MBO), critical incident methods, and ranking and paired comparison systems on employee motivation in selected ministries in Delta and Rivers States:

- i. H_{01} : Traditional performance appraisal systems have no significant influence on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.
- ii. H_{02} : 360-degree feedback systems have no significant effect on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.
- iii. H_{03} : Management by Objectives (MBO) has no significant impact on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.
- iv. H_{04} : The use of critical incident methods has no significant effect on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.
- v. H_{05} : Ranking and paired comparison methods have no significant effect on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.

2. METHOD

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design to explore the relationships between different appraisal systems and employee motivation in state ministries. This approach allows for the collection of quantitative data from civil servants at a single point in time, enabling statistical examination of how appraisal practices relate to motivation outcomes. The cross-sectional survey design is appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to collect data from a large population at a single point in time. This design is particularly effective for examining the relationship between multiple variables, such as different types of performance appraisal systems (e.g., traditional, MBO, 360-degree feedback, critical incident, and ranking methods) and employee motivation in the natural setting of the selected ministries in Delta and Rivers States. In this study, the **target population** consists of approximately **30,500 civil servants** employed in three selected ministries: **the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Agriculture in Delta and Rivers States**. These ministries were purposively selected to reflect the diversity and complexity of the public sector workforce, as they encompass a broad spectrum of administrative roles and service delivery responsibilities. By focusing on these ministries, the study ensures a **comprehensive and representative analysis** of the public service sector, capturing varied organizational structures, work environments, and appraisal practices. This inclusive strategy enhances the **generalizability and applicability** of the research findings, enabling insights that are both theoretically sound and practically useful. The research was thus positioned to make a meaningful contribution to **policy formulation and administrative reforms** within the selected ministries and beyond.

Table 1: Distribution of Civil Servants Across Selected Ministries in Delta State

S/N	Ministry	Estimated Number of Employees
1	Delta State Ministry of Education	6,500
2	Delta State Ministry of Health	4,800
3	Delta State Ministry of Agriculture	2,500

S/N	Ministry	Estimated Number of Employees
Total		13,800

Source: Adapted from Delta State Government Records (2025)

Table 3.2: Distribution of Civil Servants Across Selected Ministries in Rivers State

S/N	Ministry	Estimated Number of Employees
1	Delta State Ministry of Education	7,200
2	Delta State Ministry of Health	5,500
3	Delta State Ministry of Agriculture	4,000
Total		16,700

Source: Adapted from Rivers State Government Records (2025)

The total population for this study consists of approximately **30,500 civil servants**, with **13,800** drawn from selected ministries in **Delta State** and **16,700** from corresponding ministries in **Rivers State**. The **sample size** adopted for this study was **652 civil servants**, selected from the overall population of **30,500** employees across the Ministries of Education, Health, and Agriculture in **Delta and Rivers States**. This sample was systematically determined to ensure adequate representation and statistical reliability in the analysis of the research variables. The determination of the **652-sample size** was guided by the **sample size determination table** developed by **Gill and Johnson (2010)**. According to their guidelines, for a population of approximately **30,500**, a **minimum sample size of 652 respondents** is required when applying a **95% confidence level** and a **5% margin of error**. These parameters are commonly accepted in social and management sciences research as they strike a balance between statistical precision and practical feasibility (**Gill & Johnson, 2010**). Although the actual population in this study was 30,500, it falls within the broader category of populations **up to 50,000** as defined in the Gill and Johnson table. This categorization justifies the use of the recommended sample size of 652, which is to ensure that the data collected is both representative and generalizable. The choice of this sample size is to further enhance the reliability and validity of the study findings in order to offer a sound basis for drawing conclusions and making policy recommendations. A table illustrating the sample size determination by Gill and Johnson (2010) was presented below to support this methodological choice.

Table 2: Sample Size Determination Table

	Variance of the Population P=50%		
	Confidence Level=99% Margin of Error		
Population Size	5	3	1
50	46	49	50
75	67	72	75
100	87	95	99
150	122	139	149
200	154	180	198
250	181	220	246
300	206	258	295
400	249	328	391

500	285	393	485
600	314	452	597
700	340	507	672
800	362	557	763
1000	398	647	943
1500	459	825	1375
2000	497	957	1784
3000	541	1138	2539
5000	583	1342	3838
10000	620	1550	6228
25000	643	1709	9944
50000	652*	1770	12413
100000	656	1802	14172
250000	659	1821	15989 j
500000	660	1828	15984
1000000	660	1836	16244

Source: Gill and Johnson (2010)

To ensure comprehensive representation across various **job grades, departments, and directorates** within each selected ministry, the study utilized a combination of **purposive** and **simple random sampling techniques**. This mixed sampling strategy is designed to enhance the diversity and relevance of the sample, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the research findings. To analyze the data that were collected for this study, inferential statistical techniques were employed. Inferential statistics were applied to test the study's hypotheses and draw conclusions about the broader population from the sample data. Specifically, **Pearson's correlation** and multiple regression analysis were used to examine the individual and combined effects of different performance appraisal systems on employee motivation with the aid of the **Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23**. This technique allows for the assessment of the strength and direction of relationships between each independent variable and the dependent variable, while controlling for the influence of other factors. The use of regression analysis also enables the testing of the null hypotheses, which assume that each type of appraisal method has no significant effect on employee motivation. Statistical significance was evaluated at a 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$), providing empirical evidence to either accept or reject the stated hypotheses.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship between performance appraisal systems and employee motivation in selected ministries in Delta and Rivers States. In pursuit of this objective, a total of 652 questionnaires were administered across the two states, of which 537 were successfully retrieved and found to be valid for analysis, representing a response rate of 82.4%. The table below presents and analyzes the background characteristics of the respondents, covering variables such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, and work experience.

Table 3: Respondents’ Demographic Characteristics

S/N	Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender of Respondents	Male	279	52.0
		Female	258	48.0
		Total	537	100.0
2	Age of Respondents	18–30 years	164	30.5
		31–40 years	187	34.8
		41–50 years	121	22.5
		51 years and above	65	12.1
		Total	537	100.0
3	Marital Status of Respondents	Single	98	18.2
		Married	387	72.1
		Divorced	32	6.0
		Widowed	20	3.7
		Total	537	100.0
4	Educational Qualification of Respondents	SSCE	96	17.9
		OND/NCE	143	26.6
		HND/B.Sc.	219	40.8
		Masters/Ph.D.	79	14.7
		Total	537	100.0
6	Work Experience of Respondents	Less than 5 years	141	26.3
		5–10 years	182	33.9
		11–15 years	128	23.8
		More than 15 years	86	16.0
		Total	537	100.0

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork (2026)

Table 3 presents the demographic characteristics of the 537 respondents who participated in the study. The table shows the distribution of respondents by gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, and work experience. Gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 52% male and 48% female respondents. Most participants were in the economically active age groups, particularly 31–40 years (34.8%) and 18–30 years (30.5%). A majority were married (72.1%), indicating family responsibilities that may

influence perspectives. Educationally, most respondents held tertiary qualifications, with 40.8% having HND/B.Sc. degrees and 26.6% OND/NCE. Regarding work experience, 33.9% had 5–10 years, and 26.3% had less than 5 years, suggesting substantial professional experience. Overall, the sample was balanced, educated, and experienced, providing a credible and reliable basis for analyzing the study’s objectives.

3.1 Bivariate Analysis (Test of Relationship)

The bivariate analysis investigates the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The criteria for interpreting the results are as follows: if the p-value is less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the variables. Conversely, if the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($P > 0.05$), the null hypothesis is not rejected, suggesting that there is no significant relationship between the variables.

H_{01} : Traditional performance appraisal systems have no significant influence on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.

Table 4: Traditional Performance Appraisal Systems and Employee Motivation in Selected Ministries of Delta and Rivers States

Variables		Traditional Performance Appraisal Systems	Employee Motivation
Spearman's rho	Traditional Performance Appraisal Systems	Correlation Coefficient	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.709**
		N	537
	Employee Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	.709**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1
		N	537

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 4 presents the results of a correlation analysis examining the relationship between traditional performance appraisal systems and employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States. The analysis shows a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between traditional performance appraisal systems and employee motivation, with a correlation coefficient of $\rho = .709$, $p < .001$. This indicates that as the effectiveness and clarity of traditional performance appraisal systems increase, employee motivation also tends to increase.

The significance level ($p = .000$) is below the 0.05 threshold, suggesting that the observed relationship is not due to chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no relationship between traditional performance appraisal systems and employee motivation, is rejected. In practical terms, this result implies that employees are more likely to be motivated when appraisal methods are clear, consistent, and perceived as fair. The strong correlation underscores the importance of maintaining and

improving traditional performance appraisal practices to enhance employee motivation in the ministries studied.

H₀₂: 360-degree feedback systems have no significant effect on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.

Table 5: 360-Degree Feedback Systems and Employee Motivation in Selected Ministries of Delta and Rivers States

Variables		360-Degree Feedback Systems	Employee Motivation	
Spearman's rho	360-Degree Feedback Systems	Correlation Coefficient	1	.852**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	537	537
	Employee Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	.852**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	537	537

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 5 presents the correlation between 360-degree feedback systems and employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States. The results indicate a very strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between 360-degree feedback systems and employee motivation, with a correlation coefficient of $\rho = .852$, $p < .001$. This suggests that as the use and effectiveness of 360-degree feedback systems increase, employee motivation also increases.

The significance value ($p = .000$) is well below the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant and not due to chance. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posits no relationship between 360-degree feedback systems and employee motivation, is rejected. This finding implies that employees tend to be highly motivated when they receive feedback from multiple sources, such as supervisors, peers, and subordinates, because this method is perceived as more objective, comprehensive, and fair. The very strong correlation underscores the critical role of 360-degree feedback in enhancing motivation and performance in the ministries studied.

H₀₃: Management by Objectives (MBO) has no significant impact on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.

Table 6: Management by Objectives (MBO) and Employee Motivation in Selected Ministries of Delta and Rivers States

Variables		Management by Objectives	Employee Motivation
Management by Objectives	Correlation Coefficient	1	.877**
			.000

Spearman's rho		Sig. (2-tailed)	537	537
		N		
Employee Motivation		Correlation Coefficient	.877**	1
			.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	537	537
		N		

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 6 presents the Spearman’s correlation between Management by Objectives (MBO) and employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States. The results show a very strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between MBO and employee motivation, with a correlation coefficient of $\rho = .877$, $p < .001$. This indicates that as the implementation and effectiveness of MBO practices increase, employee motivation also rises.

The significance value ($p = .000$) is below the 0.05 threshold, demonstrating that the relationship is statistically significant and unlikely to be due to chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no relationship between MBO and employee motivation, is rejected. This finding implies that employees are highly motivated when they are actively involved in setting their performance goals, clearly understand expectations, and can track progress objectively. The very strong correlation underscores that the MBO approach is a highly effective performance appraisal system for enhancing motivation and accountability in the ministries studied.

H₀₄: The use of critical incident methods has no significant effect on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.

Table 7: The use of Critical Incident Methods and Employee Motivation in Selected Ministries of Delta and Rivers States

Variables		The use of Critical Incident Methods	Employee Motivation
Spearman's rho	The use of Critical Incident Methods	Correlation Coefficient	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.713**
			.000
		N	537
Employee Motivation		Correlation Coefficient	.713**
			.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	537
		N	537

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 7 shows the results of a Spearman’s correlation analysis examining the relationship between the use of Critical Incident Methods (CIM) and employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States. The analysis reveals a **strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation** between the use of Critical Incident Methods and employee motivation, with a correlation coefficient of $\rho = .713$, $p < .001$. This indicates that as the use and effectiveness of the Critical Incident Method increase, employee motivation also tends to increase.

The significance value ($p = .000$) is below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant and not due to random chance. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which posits no relationship between the use of Critical Incident Methods and employee motivation, is rejected. This result suggests that employees are more motivated when their performance is evaluated based on key job-related events or incidents, particularly when feedback identifies both strengths and areas for improvement. The strong correlation highlights that the Critical Incident Method is an effective performance appraisal tool for enhancing employee accountability, guiding behavior improvement, and boosting morale in the ministries studied.

H₀₅: Ranking and paired comparison methods have no significant effect on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States.

Table 8: Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods and Employee Motivation in Selected Ministries of Delta and Rivers States

Variables			Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods	Employee Motivation
Spearman's rho	Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods	Correlation	1	.721**
		Coefficient		.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	537	537
	N			
	Employee Motivation	Correlation	.721**	1
		Coefficient	.000	
Sig. (2-tailed)		537	537	
N				

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 8 presents the results of a Spearman’s rank-order correlation analysis examining the relationship between Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods and employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States. The findings show a **strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation** between Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods and employee motivation, with a correlation coefficient of $\rho = .721$, $p < .001$. This indicates that as Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods are effectively implemented, employee motivation also increases.

The significance value ($p = .000$) is below the 0.05 threshold, suggesting that the relationship is statistically significant and unlikely to be due to chance. Therefore, the

null hypothesis, which states that there is no relationship between Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods and employee motivation, is rejected. This result implies that employees tend to be motivated when their performance is compared with peers and top performers are identified, as these methods can promote healthy competition and recognition. The strong correlation highlights the potential of Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods as tools for enhancing employee accountability, competitiveness, and overall motivation in the ministries studied.

Overall, all the performance appraisal systems studied demonstrated positive relationships with employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States. Participatory and multi-source approaches, such as MBO and 360-degree feedback, were the most effective in enhancing motivation, while traditional and ranking-based systems were also beneficial but to a slightly lesser degree. This underscores that the design and implementation of appraisal systems significantly influence employee motivation, with inclusive, objective, and goal-oriented methods producing higher motivational outcomes.

3.2 Influence of Performance Appraisal Systems on Employee Motivation in Selected Ministries of Delta and Rivers States.

Since correlation does not establish causation, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of performance appraisal systems on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States. This analysis examined the influence of five dimensions of performance appraisal systems (Traditional Performance Appraisal Systems, 360-Degree Feedback Systems, Management by Objectives (MBO), Critical Incident Method, and Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods) on employee motivation. The regression was performed at a 5% significance level to further test the study’s hypotheses. A summary of the regression results is presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variables	Unstandardized		Standardized	
	Coefficients		Coefficients	
	B	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Constant	-.715		-3.260	.030
Traditional Performance Appraisal Systems	.374	.309	3.312	.005
360-Degree Feedback Systems	.461	.340	3.425	.010
Management by Objectives (MBO)	.480	.359	3.437	.003
Critical Incident Method	.427	.313	3.319	.050
Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods	.443	.322	.2943	.000
R	.849			
R ²	.749			

Adjusted R ²	.651
F	75.708**

*Significant at 0.005 level

Dependent variable: Employee Motivation

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Table 9 presents the results of a multiple regression analysis examining the effect of various performance appraisal systems on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States. The independent variables included Traditional Performance Appraisal Systems, 360-Degree Feedback Systems, Management by Objectives (MBO), Critical Incident Method, and Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods, while the dependent variable was employee motivation. The model shows a strong overall fit, with $R = .849$, $R^2 = .749$, and **adjusted R² = .651**, indicating that approximately 65.1% of the variation in employee motivation can be explained by the combined effect of the five performance appraisal systems. The F-statistic ($F = 75.708$, $p < .005$) confirms that the model is statistically significant. Looking at individual predictors:

- i. **Traditional Performance Appraisal Systems** had a positive and significant impact on employee motivation, suggesting that clarity, fairness, and consistency in traditional appraisals enhance motivation.
- ii. **360-Degree Feedback Systems** also showed a positive and significant effect, indicating that feedback from multiple sources (peers, subordinates, and supervisors) increases employee motivation.
- iii. **Management by Objectives (MBO)** showed a positive and significant effect on employee motivation. **Management by Objectives (MBO)** was a strong positive predictor, meaning that participatory goal-setting, clear expectations, and measurable objectives significantly enhance motivation.
- iv. **Critical Incident Method** positively influenced motivation, showing that evaluating performance based on key incidents and recognizing critical contributions helps improve morale.
- v. **Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods** similarly had a positive and significant effect, highlighting that comparing performance among peers and identifying top performers can motivate employees.

All predictors were statistically significant at the 0.005 level (with t-values ranging from 3.26 to 3.437 and p-values ≤ 0.050), indicating that each appraisal method makes a meaningful contribution to explaining employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers. Thus, the regression results indicate that all five types of performance appraisal systems have a significant impact on employee motivation. Among them, participatory and multi-source approaches, such as Management by Objectives (MBO) and 360-degree feedback, exert the greatest influence, while traditional and ranking-based methods also show positive effects. These findings highlight the need for ministries to adopt comprehensive and inclusive appraisal systems to effectively boost employee motivation.

3.3 Discussion

This study investigated the influence of performance appraisal systems on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States. The study proposed five hypotheses, and findings from the first hypothesis revealed that traditional performance appraisal systems in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States have a

positive and statistically significant relationship with employee motivation. Employees reported higher motivation when appraisal methods were clear, fair, and consistently applied. Regression analysis confirmed that traditional appraisal systems significantly predict employee motivation, demonstrating that well-structured traditional methods can effectively enhance morale and performance in these ministries.

The findings **corroborate** the findings of Shivangi (2025), who emphasized that clearly structured and fair performance appraisals play a crucial role in enhancing employee engagement and driving motivation. According to Shivangi, when employees understand how their performance is assessed and perceive the process as impartial, they are more likely to invest effort, take ownership of their work, and exhibit higher levels of commitment. Similarly, the study **concurs** with Patel (2019), who argued that consistent and systematic appraisal processes contribute to higher morale and strengthen organizational commitment among employees. Patel highlighted that predictable and equitable appraisal practices reduce perceptions of bias and favoritism, thereby fostering a work environment that encourages dedication and goal-oriented behavior.

The findings are also **in line with** the observations of Okoth and Florah (2019), Aydın and Tiryaki (2018), and Okeke, Ezech, and Amah (2019), all of whom stressed that transparency, fairness, and clarity in performance evaluations are essential drivers of employee motivation and organizational performance. Okoth and Florah (2019) specifically noted that employees respond positively to appraisal systems that provide constructive feedback, acknowledge achievements, and identify areas for improvement. Similarly, Aydın and Tiryaki (2018) emphasized that when appraisal criteria are clearly communicated and consistently applied, employees are better able to align their efforts with organizational objectives. Okeke et al. (2019) further highlighted that recognition of individual contributions through fair appraisals reinforces motivation, morale, and overall productivity.

Overall, the findings suggest that the effective implementation of traditional performance appraisal systems significantly fosters a motivated and committed workforce in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States. The findings confirm that well-designed, transparent, and consistently applied appraisal methods remain a vital mechanism for enhancing employee morale, engagement, and productivity in public sector organizations. This underscores the importance of maintaining clarity, fairness, and structure in appraisal processes to achieve both individual and organizational performance objectives.

Regarding hypothesis two, the study found that 360-degree feedback systems in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States were strongly associated with increased employee motivation. Feedback from multiple sources, including supervisors, peers, and subordinates, was found to enhance perceptions of fairness and accountability. Regression results indicated that 360-degree feedback is one of the most influential appraisal methods in motivating employees, highlighting the importance of multi-source feedback for improving engagement and performance in these ministries.

The findings **are in line with** the study by Mehak and Kamaljit (2025), who highlighted that feedback obtained from multiple perspectives enhances employee confidence, strengthens commitment, and boosts motivation by providing a more holistic understanding of individual performance. The present findings show that when employees receive constructive input from supervisors, peers, and subordinates, they are better able to recognize their strengths and areas for improvement, which in turn encourages proactive engagement and goal-directed behavior.

The findings also **corroborate** the work of Eze (2020), which demonstrated that multi-source feedback minimizes subjectivity and bias in performance evaluations, thereby promoting accountability, fairness, and transparency in organizational processes. Similarly, the findings **concur** with Eke and Osagie (2023), who observed that employees respond more positively to appraisal systems that integrate input from colleagues across different levels of the organization, leading to higher morale and increased motivation to perform effectively.

Moreover, the findings **further support the work** of Khan (2013), who emphasized that 360-degree feedback systems enhance employee engagement, foster self-awareness, and contribute to sustained improvements in individual and organizational performance. The findings also **confirmed** the observations of Keerthivasan and Meera (2025), who noted that organizations that implement multi-source appraisal approaches benefit from higher levels of motivation, stronger teamwork, and improved alignment between personal and organizational goals. This suggests that participatory evaluation mechanisms not only strengthen individual accountability but also promote collaboration, knowledge sharing, and a sense of shared responsibility within teams.

Overall, the findings suggest that in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States, 360-degree feedback systems are highly effective tools for enhancing employee motivation. By providing comprehensive, multi-perspective evaluations, these systems create a transparent and fair environment that encourages continuous performance improvement. They also reinforce the importance of participatory and inclusive appraisal approaches, showing that involving multiple stakeholders in the evaluation process can lead to greater engagement, higher morale, and better organizational outcomes.

With respect to hypothesis three, the study found that Management by Objectives (MBO) in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States was found to have a very strong positive relationship with employee motivation. Employees involved in goal-setting, who clearly understood expectations and could track their performance, reported higher motivation. Regression results confirmed MBO as the most impactful predictor of employee motivation, emphasizing that participatory, goal-oriented approaches are highly effective in fostering employee engagement and accountability in these ministries.

The findings **corroborate** the findings of Karahan and Kurtulmuş (2017), who emphasized that involving employees in setting clear, specific, and measurable objectives significantly enhances their motivation, performance, and organizational commitment. The present study demonstrates that when employees participate in defining their own targets and are aware of the criteria for success, they become more engaged and committed to achieving desired outcomes.

Similarly, the findings **align with those of Kamphorst and Swank (2018), who argued that MBO frameworks provide clarity of expectations and foster** a sense of ownership over work. By understanding their responsibilities and seeing how their contributions directly impact organizational goals, employees are more likely to be proactive, focused, and motivated in their roles. The findings also **concur with** Idowu (2017), who noted that goal-oriented appraisal systems direct employee attention toward tangible, achievable results, thereby fostering a culture of accountability, continuous improvement, and goal attainment.

Moreover, the study's findings **further support the work** of Gupta and Sharma (2016), who highlighted that participatory goal-setting, combined with systematic performance tracking and feedback, strengthens employees' self-efficacy, satisfaction,

and overall commitment to the organization. The findings also **confirmed** the observations of Shivangi (2025) that MBO encourages collaboration between employees and supervisors, creating an environment in which expectations are mutually understood, progress is measurable, and individual accomplishments are formally recognized. This participatory approach not only motivates employees but also builds trust, enhances communication, and fosters a shared sense of responsibility within the ministries.

Overall, the findings suggest that in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States, the implementation of MBO significantly enhances employee motivation. By promoting clarity, participation, accountability, and measurable performance outcomes, MBO serves as an effective tool for aligning individual efforts with organizational goals. The findings **underscore** the critical role of goal-oriented, participatory appraisal methods in cultivating a motivated, engaged, and productive workforce within the public sector. Furthermore, the findings highlight that organizations that prioritize employee involvement in goal-setting and performance tracking are better positioned to achieve sustainable performance improvements and long-term organizational success.

The findings from hypothesis four revealed that the Critical Incident Method in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States has a significant positive relationship with employee motivation. Employees reported higher motivation when their performance was evaluated based on key job-related events, coupled with timely feedback and recognition of important contributions. Regression analysis further **confirmed** that the Critical Incident Method significantly influences employee motivation, indicating that emphasizing critical behaviors and outcomes is effective in improving morale and overall performance in these ministries.

The findings **corroborate** the findings of Gupta and Sharma (2016), who emphasized that evaluating employees based on significant performance events increases focus, accountability, and motivation by identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. Similarly, the findings **is in line with** Farhad and Nazrul (2023), who argued that timely feedback after critical incidents enhances employee engagement, self-awareness, and commitment to achieving organizational objectives. The findings also **concur with** Devisri and Sheeba (2025), who observed that recognizing key contributions and critical performance moments encourages employees to maintain high standards and strive for excellence.

Moreover, the findings **further support the work** of Okoth and Florah (2019), who noted that performance appraisal methods that highlight critical behaviors and outcomes help employees understand their impact on organizational goals, thereby boosting motivation and satisfaction. The study's findings also **confirmed** the observations of Aydın and Tiryaki (2018), who highlighted that critical incident approaches provide specific, actionable feedback that guides employee development, reinforces desired behaviors, and enhances overall performance.

Overall, the findings suggest that in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States, the use of the Critical Incident Method is highly effective in motivating employees. By focusing on significant job-related events, providing timely feedback, and recognizing key contributions, this appraisal method fosters a performance-oriented culture, strengthens accountability, and enhances morale. The findings **underscore** the value of implementing targeted and behavior-focused evaluation methods to drive employee motivation and improve organizational outcomes in the public sector.

Regarding hypothesis five, the study found that Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States were positively related to

employee motivation. Employees reported higher motivation when their performance was compared with peers, top performers were recognized, and healthy competition was promoted. Regression results showed this appraisal method significantly influences motivation, though its effect was slightly less pronounced compared to MBO and 360-degree feedback in these ministries.

The findings **corroborate** the study of Dangol (2021), who emphasized that comparative evaluation methods can stimulate employees to improve performance by providing benchmarks and fostering recognition for high achievers. Similarly, the finding **is in line with** Chaitanya et al. (2025), who observed that ranking and paired comparison appraisal systems promote accountability and competitive drive among employees, thereby enhancing motivation and engagement. The findings also **concur with** Biswakarma and Kadayat (2023), who noted that appraisal methods that identify top performers encourage employees to adopt goal-oriented behaviors and improve performance standards.

Moreover, the findings **further support the work** of Karahan and Kurtulmuş (2017), who highlighted that ranking-based evaluation methods can enhance motivation by providing employees with a clear understanding of where they stand relative to their peers, encouraging continuous improvement and performance excellence. These findings also **confirmed** that while ranking and paired comparison approaches foster competitiveness and recognition, they are most effective when complemented by inclusive and participatory appraisal methods that emphasize development and multi-source feedback.

Overall, the study indicates that in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States, the use of Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods positively contributes to employee motivation. By promoting healthy competition, recognizing high achievers, and providing performance benchmarks, these methods can motivate employees to enhance productivity. The findings **underscore** that comparative appraisal approaches, when carefully implemented, serve as a useful tool for motivating staff, though they are most effective when integrated with participatory and objective appraisal systems.

4. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the impact of performance appraisal systems on employee motivation in selected ministries of Delta and Rivers States, focusing on five key methods: Traditional Performance Appraisal Systems, 360-Degree Feedback, Management by Objectives (MBO), the Critical Incident Method, and Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods. The findings show that all five appraisal approaches positively influence employee motivation, though the strength of their effects varies. Traditional systems enhance motivation when they are clear, fair, and consistently applied. 360-degree feedback promotes trust, accountability, and engagement through inclusive, multi-source evaluations. MBO strongly motivates employees by involving them in goal-setting and aligning individual objectives with organizational targets. The Critical Incident Method improves motivation by focusing on key behaviors, providing timely feedback, and recognizing significant contributions. Ranking and Paired Comparison Methods encourage healthy competition and recognition, though their impact is less pronounced than participatory approaches. Overall, the study highlights that employee motivation is closely linked to fairness, transparency, participation, and goal orientation in appraisal practices. A combination of traditional and modern

appraisal methods, tailored to the organizational context, is recommended to maximize motivation, performance, and public sector effectiveness. Based on the study's findings, the researcher made the following recommendations:

- i. Delta and Rivers States ministries should strengthen traditional performance appraisal systems by ensuring that appraisal criteria are clear, objective, and consistently applied to enhance fairness, transparency, and employee motivation.
- ii. Ministries in Delta and Rivers States, in particular, and other related organizations should adopt and institutionalize 360-degree feedback systems where feasible, to promote inclusive evaluation, reduce bias, and improve employee engagement through feedback from supervisors, peers, and subordinates.
- iii. Management by Objectives (MBO) should be comprehensively embedded within performance management systems in Delta and Rivers States ministries to enable employees to take part in setting goals, gain a clear understanding of performance expectations, and regularly monitor their progress toward agreed objectives.
- iv. Supervisors in the Delta and Rivers States ministries should apply the Critical Incident Method more systematically by documenting job-related behaviors and providing timely feedback and recognition, thereby reinforcing positive performance and improving employee morale.

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