A CROSS-SECTIONAL CASE STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REGULAR FEEDBACK AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AT EXCEL TRAINING INSTITUTE, NIMULE, SOUTH SUDAN.

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ABSTRACT.

Background.

The study aimed to determine the relationship between regular feedback and employee performance at Excel Training Institute Nimule South Sudan.

Methodology.

A cross-sectional case study research design was employed among the staff of Excel Training Institute. The study was conducted in Excel Training Institute Limited located in Nimule, Magwi sub-county at the border of Uganda and South Sudan. Simple random to give every employee an opportunity and a purposive sampling technique for respondents with in-depth information regarding the study variables were used to obtain 81 participants in the study. The researcher administered questionnaires and interview guides to get the information.

Results.

Out of the 81 participants, findings showed there was a fair positive significant correlation (r=0.569, sig=0.000) between feedback and employee performance at Excel Training Institute- South Sudan.

Conclusion.

The organization schedules regular one-on-one meetings with employees to discuss their performance, provide constructive feedback, and offer guidance on how to improve and implement a system where employees receive feedback from their managers, peers, and subordinates.

Recommendation.

The organization should embrace regular constructive feedback, criticism, regular performance evaluations, and one-on-one meeting between management and staff of the organization.

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BACKGROUND.

Excel Training Institute in South Sudan is facing challenges in terms of employee performance. The performance of permanent staff at the facility has been subpar (Excel Training Institute Annual Report, 2022). This has been evidenced by the absenteeism of staff, high employee turnover, delayed display of student results, and refusal to mark students' exams as well as numerous errors committed during mark sheeting of students' results (Excel Institute Academic Registrar Semester Report, 2022). At the start of the February 2023 semester, 65% of the student's examinations were not yet marked (Excel Training Institute Faculty of Business Exam Marking Report, March 2023). With such feedback, the management was uncertain of the real cause of low employee performance as some students have threatened not to leave the institute if their issues were not addressed (Excel Institute Guild Council Report, 2022). Hence the researcher sought to investigate the relationship between regular feedback and employee performance at Excel Training Institute Nimule South Sudan.

METHODOLOGY.

Research design.

A cross-sectional case study research design was employed. Kamuzora (2007) asserts that a case study entails the analysis of a specific circumstance. Therefore, respondents were drawn from a single case (Excel Training Institute) hence a case study design was adopted. Further, the study adopted a mixed approach. Therefore, both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected and analyzed to validate logical conclusions.

Area of the study.

The study area was Excel Training Institute Limited located in Nimule at the border of Uganda and South

Sudan. It's located in the Magwi sub-county, Eastern Equatorial State, just near the border of Uganda (Elegu).

Study population.

The study used the staff of Excel Training Institute as the population of the study. According to the Excel Human Resource Report (World Health Organisation Annual Report 2022), the Institution has 102 staff. These included 15 administrators and 87 staff working in various departments.

Sample size

The researcher used the Kreijcie & Morgan (1970) table in determining the sample size. Therefore 81 respondents were selected as respondents of the study as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Shows sample size determination.

Department	Population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Administrators/ management	15	13	Purposive sampling
Academics	62	51	Simple random sampling
Finance	06	05	Purposive sampling
Human resource	04	04	Purposive sampling
IT	05	03	Simple random sampling
Marketing	10	05	Simple random sampling
Total	102	81	

Source: *Excel Institute Human Resource Department (World Health Organisation Annual Report 2022)*

Sampling techniques.

The researcher used simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques to select the respondents of the study.
Simple random sampling was used to select employees in the academics department, IT, and marketing departments. The method was used to allow every employee to participate in the study and eliminate bias.
Purposive sampling was used to select senior managers, employees in the finance department, and the human resource department. The technique was used to specifically choose respondents with in-depth information regarding the study variables.

Sources of data.

The study used both primary and secondary data sources to obtain in-depth and accurate data. Several primary data collection methods were used in collecting data for the study. These are questionnaires and interviews. Secondary data was using a documentary review method gathered using the internet, reports, websites, and library searches of published publications.

Data collection methods.

The researcher collected data using the following extremely helpful first-hand and secondary information extraction techniques.

Questionnaire method.

The researcher used questionnaires to collect data from academic staff, finance staff, and marketing staff at the Institute. The method was used to gather a lot of information in a short period.

Interview method.

The researcher used an interview guide to collect data from head senior managers and employees in the human resource department. Face-to-face interviews were conducted and discussions were held with key informants.

Documentary review method.

According to Saunders and Thornhill (2009), a documentary review is the investigation of documents that provide details about the topic under investigation. The method was used to collect information from published articles and documents that were related to this study.

Data collection procedure.

- After approval of the proposal, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the School of graduate studies and Research of Team University introducing her to the authorities in charge at Excel Institute in South Sudan and sought permission and their approval to collect data.
- The researcher then directly issued the questionnaire to the target respondents and scheduled interviews with senior managers at the Institute.
- The researcher then ensured the confidentiality of collected information by destroying the instruments after analysis.

Reliability and validity of research instruments.

Validity of instruments.

The validity of an instrument refers to the appropriateness of the instrument to measure what it intends to measure (Mugenda, 2009). Validity refers to the truthfulness of findings or the extent to which the instrument is relevant in measuring what it is supposed to measure (Earl-Babbie, 2013).

To ensure greater chances of data validity, the questionnaires were reviewed with the research supervisor for expert input. A Content Validity Index (CVI) was determined by dividing the relevant questions by the total questions (CVI=n/N). Of the 20 questions in the questionnaire, 18 were declared by the supervisor as relevant for the study and only 2 were declared invalid but were re-corrected under the guidance of the supervisor. The Content Validity Index was 0.9(18/20). The researcher continued with the questionnaire since the Content Validity Index was greater than 0.7 as proposed by Amin (2005) to be a good measure of validity.

Reliability of instruments.

To test the reliability of the research instruments, the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's alpha is a way of assessing reliability by comparing the amount of shared variance, or covariance, among the items making up an instrument to the amount of overall variance. The idea is that if the instrument is reliable, there should be a great deal of covariance among the items relative to the variance.

In order to measure the consistency and reliability of the questionnaire the researcher used four respondents to pre-test the questionnaire using Cronbach alpha ($\alpha = \frac{Nc}{v+(N-1)c}$) in SPSS as follows.

Where

C is the average inter-response covariance; v is the average variance and N is the number of items in the questionnaire.

Table 2: showing reliability of Research Instrument

		R1	R2	R3	R4
R1	Covariance	**1.403**	0.675	0.689	0.722
R2	Covariance	0.675	**1.678**	0.724	0.737
R3	Covariance	0.689	0.724	**1.921**	0.803
R4	Covariance	0.722	0.737	0.803	**1.736**

V= (1.403+1.678+1.921+1.736)/4= 1.685

C= (0.675+0.689+0.722+0.724+0.737+0.803)/6= 0.725

$\alpha = \dfrac{4(0.725)}{1.685+(4-1)0.725} = 0.75$

According to Amin (2005) if the Cronbach Alpha is greater than 0.7, then it is a good measure of reliability. Thus, for this study, the research instruments were consistent and reliable in collecting data.

Data Analysis.

Before data was analyzed, it was carefully classified, edited, and coded based on clarity, completeness, accuracy, and consistency to ensure reliability. This was done using SPSS version 23 for analysis.
The researcher used the Likert 5-point scale to examine the non-numerical findings of the study using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation to examine the characteristics of study variables.
The researcher used Pearson correlation to examine the relationship between the study variables in line with the study objectives.
Multiple linear regressions were used to assess the relationship between motivation and employee performance at Excel Training Institute.

Ethical Consideration
- The researcher sought permission from the School of Graduate Studies and Research and obtained an introductory letter to go within the field.
- The researcher wrote a consent notice to the respondents requesting them to participate in the study by providing all the relevant information for the study. Further, the researcher informed the respondents about the purpose of the research project and the expected outcome of the study.
- The researcher assured the respondents that the information provided was treated with maximum confidentiality and was used for academic purposes only.
- Further, the researcher credited and extended his gratitude to all previous researchers whose literature has contributed to this study and did not take their work as his.

RESULTS.

Employee recognitions and employee performance at Excel Institute Nimule, South Sudan.

The researcher used Likert 5-point scale for this particular section of the study where the responses were on a scale of 1-5. Where 1 = Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree and 5 = Strongly Disagree. The table below shows a summary of the participant's responses based on percentages (Guo et al, 2023) frequency (F), standard deviation (Std), and mean;

Table 3: Recognition and employee performance at Excel Training Institute

	Mean	Standard deviation
The organisation has "Employee of the Month" which motivates employees to be more productive	4.7	04
The Institute has both physical and digital recognition walls appreciating employees' achievements	4.2	0.7
Senior managers and team leaders send personalized notes or emails to employees acknowledging their hard work, positive attitude, and accomplishments.	2.4	0.6
Management at this institute publicly recognizes employees for their achievements that contribute to the organization's growth.	1.8	0.3
Management recognizes staff by providing them opportunities to enhance their skills and grow professionally	1.6	0.5
The institute has a peer-to-peer recognition program where employees nominate their colleagues for their exceptional work	4.6	0.2
The organization organizes team-building activities and outings to recognize and appreciate the efforts of employees as a team.	4.1	0.8

Source: *Primary data (2023)*

According to findings in Table 3, on the statement "The organization has "Employee of the Month" which motivates employees to be more productive", the average response was 4.7 with a standard deviation of 0.4. Therefore, Excel Training Institute does not have an "Employee of the Month" program that would motivate employees to be more productive

On the statement "The Institute has both physical and digital recognition walls appreciating employees' achievements", the average response was 4.2 with a standard deviation of 0.7. Therefore, Excel Training Institute has no physical or digital recognition walls appreciating employees' achievements

On the statement "Senior managers and team leaders send personalized notes or emails to employees acknowledging their hard work, positive attitude, and accomplishments", the average response was 2.4 with a standard deviation of 0.6. Therefore, Excel Training Institute through senior managers and team leaders sends personalized notes and emails to employees acknowledging their hard work, positive attitude, and accomplishments.

On the statement "Management at this institute publicly recognizes employees for their achievements that contribute to organizations growth", the average response was 1.8 with a standard deviation of 0.3. Therefore, respondents agree that management at this institute publicly recognizes employees for their achievements that contribute to the organization's growth.

On the statement "Management recognizes staff through providing them opportunities to enhance their skills and grow professionally", the average response was 1.6 with a standard deviation of 0.5. Therefore, respondents agree that management recognizes staff by providing them with opportunities to enhance their skills and grow professionally.

On the statement "The institute has a peer-to-peer recognition program where employees nominate their colleagues for their exceptional work", the average response was 4.6 with a standard deviation of 0.2. Therefore, the institute does not have a peer-to-peer recognition program where employees nominate their colleagues for their exceptional work

On the statement "The organization organizes team-building activities and outings to recognize and appreciate the efforts of employees as a team", the average response was 4.1 with a standard deviation of 0.8. Therefore, the organization does not organize team-building activities and outings to recognize and appreciate the efforts of employees as a team.

Generally, the institute does not have "Employee of the Month" programs, has no physical and digital recognition walls appreciating employees' achievements, has no peer-

to-peer recognition program where employees nominate their colleagues for their exceptional work, and does not organize team-building activities and outings to recognize and appreciate the efforts of employees as a team.

However, through its senior managers and team leaders, it sends personalized notes and emails to employees acknowledging their hard work, positive attitude, and accomplishments, publicly recognizes employees for their achievements, and recognizes staff by providing them opportunities to enhance their skills and grow professionally.

DISCUSSION

The study found that there are various criteria used by companies to motivate their employees. In addition, the study found that the majority of the respondents (39.3 percent) identified opportunities for professional development and career advancement for employees as a major criterion used by the company to motivate their employees. The study results comply with Charles and Marshall's (2012), results highlighting that the main driving force of empowerment is having larger control over 'how' jobs are done and carried for more growth and productivity towards company development.

Manzoor's (2012) study findings are in line with current study findings emphasizing that empowering makes employees feel that they are appreciated thus making it possible to appreciate continuous and positive feedback on their performance which is highly essential. For a victorious appliance of empowerment, an individual needs to make an effort and take action in an environment where they are responsible for what they are doing thus, employee contribution and energetic participation in configuring the organization are tremendously essential for success to be achieved (Manzoor, Q. A. 2012). Thus, study findings at the Excel training institute show that more methods must be applied to motivate their employees.

CONCLUSION

The organization schedules regular one-on-one meetings with employees to discuss their performance, provide constructive feedback, and offer guidance on how to improve and implement a system where employees receive feedback from their managers, peers, and subordinates.

RECOMMENDATION

The organization should embrace regular constructive feedback, criticism, regular performance evaluations, and one-on-one meetings between management and staff of the organization

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest

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