

Teachers' Participation in Their Performance Appraisal in Delivery of Education in Mixed Day Secondary Schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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Abstract

The main purpose of this paper was to make an assessment of and to determine the level of Teachers' involvement and participation in their Performance Appraisal Practices in mixed day public and private secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County-Kenya. The author used the cross sectional research design and naturalistic (phenomenological) designs to collect quantitative and qualitative information from the study participants. The sample size was 228 teachers, 21 school principals and 3 Quality Assurance and Standard Officers in the County. Simple random sampling and purposeful sampling were used. The questionnaires were used to collect data from the teachers while interview guides were used to collect data from the school principals and the DQASOs. The instruments for data collection were validated by peer review and the pilot study. Test-retest was used to establish the reliability of the instruments with the help of the SPSS using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 17. The study found out that most of the teachers were not fully involved in the entire appraisal process. The benefits of involving the teachers would include; making them own the appraisal system, and discover weaknesses among others. Majority of the teachers perceived and rated the appraisal practices as not helpful towards their professional growth. Based on the findings, the study therefore recommended that principals diversify appraisal practices and increase the frequency in order to produce the desired results. There should also be full involvement of teachers in appraisal process. The Ministry of Education Science and Technology and the Teachers Service Commission should conduct a nationwide study and develop appropriate and effective appraisal tools to achieve the desired results.

Key Words: Teacher, Performance, Appraisal, Practices, Involvement

INTRODUCTION

Performance Appraisal is the process of obtaining, analyzing and recording information about the relative productive worth of an employee (Amanuel, 2009). It measures the employee's performance and provides the motivation to assign the most accurate ratings. A comprehensive appraisal system may provide a basis for key managerial decisions relating to allocation of duties and responsibility. In education, performance appraisal refers to the process of observing and evaluating the teacher's performance in order to help them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and assess the potential for promotion, career development and professional growth for better output.

Currently, teacher appraisal is receiving attention world wide as governments become aware of the need to examine educational provision critically to ensure that it is relevant and appropriate to the needs of the youth. Wangare and Ward (2010), in their research on *Rethinking Staff Development in Kenya's Agenda for the Twenty First Century* observe that quality of teaching depends on quality of teachers. Fitzgerald *et al.* (2003), assert that schools are expected to be accountable to appraise how well teachers are performing. Teachers engaged in the delivery of such education should themselves be knowledgeable, creative and innovative to effectively impart quality and relevant education for competitiveness. Stronge (1997) explains that appraisal criteria embraced by teachers increase the likelihood that teachers will be satisfied with the appraisal system, experience less stress with performance appraisal and enjoy higher level of job satisfaction and motivation. Increased participation in the appraisal process is positively related to satisfaction with and the acceptance of the appraisal system. Research reveals that involvement of members of staff leads to increased commitment and greater productivity while lack of it and exclusion from in decision making discourages and demotivates workers.

The appraisal of the teacher and head teacher performance play an increasingly important part in accountability, teacher needs and management efficiency (Cohen, Manion & Marrison 2000). Schools are expected to be accountable to appraise how well teachers are performing (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2003). Teacher performance appraisal can significantly help schools in retaining excellent and productive educators who strive for continuous improvement. These innovative and productive teachers in turn

benefit the students with far-reaching ramifications for society. The correct and effective methods for teacher performance appraisal are therefore critical for both student character formation and excellent academic performance since quality of teachers depend to some extent on the quality of their professional development. Fairness of the appraisal system and the clarity of appraisal criteria are important for increasing the job satisfaction. An effective system and mechanism to assure quality and relevance in education and training should be established and maintained. It is through an effective performance appraisal system that the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers can be discovered and necessary guidance and support given to bring about efficiency and effectiveness (Bunnell, 1987).

The desire to provide quality education for all Kenyan children was one of the major objectives of the struggle for independence in Kenya. Colonial education in Kenya was basically intended to create a cadre of labourers proficient in literacy and numeracy. As the country has progressed, there is need not only to increase access to education but also ensure its quality and relevance to the changing social and market demands. Quality can be assured if adequate and appropriate tools for teacher appraisal are in place and maintained.

The modern world requires a rich, highly qualified and educated human resource (Nyakwana, 2008). The Constitution of Kenya (2010) articles 43. 1f, 53.1b makes education a right of every Kenyan while the Vision 2030 underscore the importance of education in ensuring relevant human and social capital for sustainable development.

In Kenya, impressive exam results, sending a reasonable number of students to universities and shunning examination malpractices is a sure measure of schools' success. The results link students' performance to teacher capacity. School principals and teachers are the primary agents in improving students' outcomes. They also play a big role in steering their schools' success (Yassin, 2010).

Statistics available in the District Education Offices in Uasin Gishu County show that more than 50% of secondary schools in the County are mixed day. They also show that the majority of these schools return a mean average score of 5 out of 12 points. On the other hand, the single sex boarding schools post a mean score of 8 out of 12. This low performance by students in mixed day public and private secondary schools in Uasin Gishu calls for a study to determine whether, how and the extent to which the teacher performance appraisal practices and methods may have been a contributory factor to the low performance in mixed day secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County.

This study sought to find out the practices of appraisal that are on the ground and extent to which the teachers in the County are involved in the appraisal process. The study offers recommendations on what should be done to enhance teacher involvement and effectiveness for both the Kenyan teacher and learner. The study provides the necessary information needed for policy makers in the Ministry of Education and the DQASOs to come up with policies governing the practices of appraisal. The policy makers will use the information from this study to improve the current appraisal practices and consequently address the challenges that face teacher professional growth and development in secondary school.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Management by Objectives Theory as advanced by Peter Drucker in 1954 in his book; *The Practice of Management*. Management by Objectives is a process of defining objectives within an organization so that management and employee agree to the objectives. It is a systematic and organized approach that allows management to focus on achievable goals and attain the best possible results from available resources. The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher education, Science Technology Sessional Paper (2012) point out that an appropriate education and training system of a country is found on a philosophy, vision and mission which target goals pursued through clearly stated objectives. Management by Objectives defines responsibilities and expectations between parties in order to achieve mutually agreed results. Just as a performance contract is a useful tool for articulating the objectives and supporting innovative management monitoring and control methods, MBO is a management tool to ensure accountability for results achieved.

In the school situation, the head teachers are the managers in the schools that they run and therefore MBO was very relevant to this study since it calls for mutual agreement between the school principals and the

teachers on the goal setting and the working towards the achievement of these goals within the agreed time in the school. MBO aims at increasing organizational performance by aligning goals and subordinate objectives throughout the organization/institution. It includes ongoing tracking and feedback in the process to reach objectives. The head teachers who are the managers in their various schools have to keep the track on the performance of the teachers and to ensure that the set objectives are achieved.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researcher used both the cross-sectional survey and naturalistic (phenomenology) designs to collect quantitative and qualitative information from the study participants. The cross-sectional survey fitted the study because it is usually administered to a population once and the researcher in this study administered the questionnaires to the teachers once so it was a very appropriate design. Besides, it has also the advantage of providing data relatively quickly from a much larger sample than an interview or personally administered questionnaires (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). The target population was all the mixed day public and private secondary school teachers, principals and the DQASOs within Uasin Gishu County.

The sample of the study consisted of 254 participants who included 228 teachers from the population of about 2280 teachers, 23 principals and 3 DQASOs from Uasin Gishu County. The schools and the teachers that participated in the study were randomly selected using simple random sampling. The study used Questionnaires with open and closed-ended questions for the teachers and interview guides for the principals and the three DQASOs. The interview guides on the other hand were used for the principals and the DQASOs because of their smaller population in the study. The researcher used a test-retest to establish the reliability of the instrument twice in a span of two weeks. The correlation coefficient was 0.83 for the teachers and 0.75 for the school principals. The high coefficient meant that the instruments were reliable to be used in the actual study. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in frequency tables. Qualitative information obtained from the interviews was reported in narrative forms. In some instances, the responses from the interviews were coded and categorized into themes and presented in frequencies and tables using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teacher Involvement in the Appraisal Process

Appraisal process involves the activities that are considered in order to achieve the desired appraisal results. Information on whether the teachers were involved in the appraisal process in schools within their various districts was sought. Out of the study participants, 58 % of the teachers responded in the negative to the question as to whether or not they were involved in the teacher performance appraisal exercises conducted by their principals. To the same question, 35% of the principals in the private secondary schools admitted that their teachers were not involved in the appraisal development even if in the end they complied with the process. The principals in these schools argued that they follow the directives of the sponsors who make decisions that have to be adhered to. These decisions also include the designing of teachers' performance appraisals. Involving teachers in appraisal development is understood by sponsors as one of the ways of putting pressure on the management as was revealed in the utterance of one of the principals as follows : *"Teachers in this school are employed on contract and they are free to quit at the expiry of the contract instead of putting pressure to the administration "*

Similarly, the majority of the DQASOs (67%) also admitted that they did not directly involve the teachers explaining that that responsibility fell on the head teachers since they were the primary supervisors as indicated in the TSC code of Regulations. On the contrary, 65% of the principals in public secondary schools interviewed contended that the teachers were involved in the exercise since the same teachers were the implementers of the appraisal targets.

The study disclosed that even where the teachers were involved and participated they had different reasons and perceptions for their involvement which often were at variance with those of the appraisers as shown in Tables 1 and 2. Likewise, the teachers and their appraisers had different perceptions as to the purposes and needs of the appraisal exercises as shown in Table 3.

Table 1. Reasons given by teachers who responded that they were involved

Reasons	F	%
Helps to identify strengths and weakness	88	44
Improves teachers' efficiency	72	36.
Leads to positive competition	21	11
Maintains the standard	17	9
Total	198	100

Table 2. Benefits of involving the teachers in the design and development of the appraisal system N=224

Benefits	Teachers		principals		DQASOs		Average	
	f	%	f	%	F	%	F	%
To own the system	160	80	8	38	3	100	171	76.3
To help teachers to satisfy their needs	110	55	5	23	-	-	115	51
To get teachers' cooperation	80	40	15	71	3	100	98	43.7
To enhance team spirit	52	26	7	33.3	1	33.3	60	26.7
To lead to open discussion	40	20	-	-	-	-	40	17.8
To come up with methods that suit the schools	32	16	-	-	-	-	32	14.2

Table 3. Perceptions of teachers on why principals administer performance appraisal (N=200)

Reason	f	%
In order to meet the TSC requirement	120	60
To improve performance in school	89	44.5
To provide guiding and counselling	29	14.5
To facilitate teachers transfer	29	14.5
To put the teachers performance categories	18	9
To punish the teachers	11	5.5

The majority of the teachers (60%) perceived the main reason for administering teacher's performance appraisal as a procedural duty to meet the TSC requirement. On the other hand, 71% of the principals saw cooperation with the teachers as the main reason. This difference in perceptions between the principals and the teachers as to the purpose for the administration of teacher performance appraisal leads to lack of harmony in unity of purpose and effectiveness. It calls for appraisal that aims at improving performance with a view to compete globally and not simply to fulfil the TSC requirements or get the teachers cooperation.

The teachers were further asked to indicate whether appraisals helped in improving their performance as teachers. A big percentage (55%) did not perceive appraisal as helping them to improve performance. This is a point of concern given that many mixed day secondary schools in this County perform poorly in national examinations. Given that a high (80%) frequency of the teachers in the study are willing to participate in and own the appraisal system as shown in Table 2, the principals should give guidance to the teachers and get them involved in setting and achieving their own targets in order to improve performance.

On the question of whether or not appraisals help the teachers in their career development and professional growth, the responses elicited are in Table 4. The researcher was interested in finding out how the teachers perceived the appraisal practices to benefit them in their professional growth. 37% of the teachers indicated that the appraisal did not help them to identify their strengths and weaknesses to bring about efficiency and effectiveness in their profession.

Table 4. Teachers perception on appraisal practices in Uasin Gishu County (N=200)

Statement	SA	A	UN	D	SD
Appraisal of my performance helps me to identify my strengths and weaknesses	51(25.5%)	45(22.5%)	4(2%)	74(37%)	-
Appraisal of my performance helps me improve my teaching	50(25%)	60(30%)	2(1%)	65(32.5%)	-
Appraisal helps me to improve my communication with the Head teacher and colleagues	37(19%)	109(33%)	21(11%)	-	4(2%)
Appraisal has helped to increase my satisfaction in the teaching Profession	32(16%)	79(40%)	43(22%)	21(11%)	11(5%)
Appraisal has facilitated my Promotion	10(5%)	25(22.5%)	36(18%)	20(10%)	85(42.5%)
I am provided with all my instructional materials needed to improve my teaching after the appraisal	13(7%)	71(54%)	19(9%)	27(14%)	27(14%)
Appraisal is highly regarded in this school	16(8%)	54(27%)	56(28.0%)	77(40%)	20(10%)

The results in Table 4 shows that only a third of the teachers thought that appraisal helped them to improve their teaching. Interestingly, the results reveal that 56% of teachers agreed that appraisal helped them to increase their job satisfaction. On whether appraisals facilitated teachers' promotion, 55% of the teacher respondents said that it did not.

The author further wanted to know the stage and depth of involvement and participation by the teacher in teacher performance appraisal. The responses to this are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Stages at which the teachers are involved in the appraisal process

Stages	F	%
At the end of appraisal system	40	20
At the development stage	23	11.5
At the designing of appraisal system	9	4.5
At every step of the appraisal	8	4
Total	80	40

Only about 4% of the teachers reported to be involved at every step of the appraisal. Failure to involve the teachers in the entire appraisal process is a sign of weakness in the administration of teacher performance appraisal. Involvement of teachers in the entire development of appraisal system increases their commitment to the appraisal system (Lewis, 1973). School principals as appraisers should build confidence and trust of the teachers so that teachers can effectively participate in the appraisal process not only to help them to contribute in their own performance but also of their institutions (Graton, 2004).

The teachers were also asked to give a general rating of the appraisal practices within their schools and their responses are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Teachers' rating on the appraisal practices in school

Rating	f	%
Poor	100	50
Good	61	30.5
Very Poor	35	17.5
Very good	4	2.0
Total	200	100

From table 6, it is clear that the teachers generally have a negative rating towards the practices of teacher performance appraisal. Majority of them indicated that appraisal practices were poor with a 2% rating the practice as very good. This is because the teachers are not involved in the entire appraisal processes and they don't own the system. The appraisal reports are not discussed with them and they lack proper guidance on the practices. In a similar study by Pedzan *et al.* (2006) in Botswana secondary schools, teachers viewed the appraisal practices in that country as demoralizing and even threatening since they were largely non-participatory.

Datche (2007) found out that performance appraisal in Mombasa District was affected by lack of involvement of teachers in setting targets, lack of feedback at the end of appraisal process as well as no follow up to reward performing employees or train non performers to improve performance index. UNESCO (1996) further affirms that measuring educational quality in Africa as elsewhere is problematic. The tools used are inadequate. Amanuel (2009) however concludes that team work helps to avoid contradictions of some norms. It allows forums for checks and balances for maximizing organizational performance improvement.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of an appraisal is to improve performance for high productivity and, in the case of a teacher; it is to make the teacher more effective in the delivery of education for global competitiveness. On the contrary, this study confirms previous studies that, at present, teacher performance appraisal practices in Kenya are weak, ineffective and incapable of contributing significantly to improved global competitiveness for both the learner and the teacher. Teachers are not actively involved in the appraisal of their performance yet they are critical players in the maintenance of standards in education and teacher professional development and growth. Where they are involved, they mostly come in at the tail end of the process. The benefits of involving teachers included; making them to own the appraisal system in order to commit themselves to the process and be held accountable for their performance. In conclusion, teachers have the potential to bring about improved performance with proper guidance and involvement. Empowerment will help the staff to discharge their duties well and effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study therefore recommends active involvement of teachers in the entire appraisal system. Teachers should be given opportunity to determine the goals and objectives of their staff development programmes. School principals should strengthen the practices of teacher performance and pay attention to the significant aspects of the appraisal practices that can help bring about better performance and improved results in the County.

It was also recommended that modern technology be utilized in the process of teacher performance appraisal to stimulate and promote research and innovation by both teachers and learners. The Ministry of Education Science and Technology and the Teachers Service Commission should conduct a nationwide study and develop appropriate appraisal tools to achieve this purpose. Self evaluation by individual teachers, peer review through discussion should be encouraged. Bench marking be incorporated in and considered a critical aspect in the process of teacher performances appraisal.

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BIO-DATA

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