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**TEACHER PERCEPTION OF PERFORMANCE
APPRAISAL AND DEVELOPMENT TOOL IN PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MUMIAS EAST
SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

GENEVIEVE WANJALA, PhD

Professor, Educational Planning,
Department of Educational Administration & Planning
University of Nairobi, Kenya

LOLLY PATRICK OSENDO, MEd.

Head-teacher, Emusoma Primary School,
Shianda, Kakamega, Kenya

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses research on the recently introduced teacher performance appraisals in public schools. The objectives of this research study were to establish the demographic and work characteristics of teachers in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County and to assess the reaction of the said teachers to the use of the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool for all teachers. Using descriptive survey research design the target population consisted of 53 primary schools with 53 Head and Deputy Head teachers and 512 teachers, all employed by the Teachers' Service Commission. Stratified sampling was used to select 30% of schools that participated in the study yielding a total sample size of 17 deputy head-teachers and 154 teachers as actual respondents. Data were collected using questionnaires and observation. The study has established the relationships of both deputy head teachers and teachers' demographic characteristics on teachers' appraisal of job performance. Moreover, teachers are not opposed to the appraisal but the manner in which the appraisal tool is administered. Thus, the Teachers' Service Commission in conjunction with other education bodies ought to create awareness in public primary school deputy head teachers and teachers on the purpose of the appraisal tool in relation to teacher's job performance.

Keywords: *Public Primary Schools, Performance Management, Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development*

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Various experts have explained the concepts of performance management and performance appraisal in diverse ways. In some instances performance management is often mistaken for performance appraisal with the two concepts being used as if they are synonymous. Nevertheless, from a quick review of the literature one gets the impression that Performance Management (PM) is a concept in the field of human resource management which is goal-oriented directed toward ensuring that institutional processes are in place to maximize the productivity of employees, teams and ultimately, the institution. In fact, Aguinis, (2009:1) defines "Performance management as a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing the performance of individuals and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization". Performance management can also be defined as a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained success to organizations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributions (Armstrong & Baron, 1998). It therefore embraces both behaviour and outcomes. What then is performance appraisal?

Performance appraisal is an integral component of the overall performance management in an organization. Performance appraisal refers to the evaluation of employees, providing them with valuable feedback and creating a positive effect on future performance (Bohlander & Snell, 2010). Employee performance depends upon several factors such as; conducive work environment, work profile, compensation, bonus system, job satisfaction, organizational policies and technology. These factors play an important role in determining the employee productivity and hence the overall organizational development (Gomes & Romao, 2014).

The policy decision to introduce Performance Contracts in the management of the Public Service in Kenya was conveyed in the Economic Recovery Strategy for wealth and Employment Creation (ERS, 2003). Since then the public sector has been undertaking annual performance contracting. In the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) Annual Report 2015/2016, performance contracting and performance appraisal systems are seen as part of the broader Public-Sector Reforms aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness that leads to attainment of sector objectives. They create an understanding on how to improve performance, on what should be done and how achievements will be measured.

1.1.1 Teacher Performance Management and Appraisal

Literature in the field of teacher management seems to suggest that high quality teaching is essential to improving student outcomes and reducing gaps in student achievement. Thus, a Teacher Performance Appraisal System provides teachers with meaningful appraisals that encourage professional learning and growth which eventually leads to quality teaching.. The process is designed to foster teacher development and identify opportunities for additional support where required. Apparently, appraisal and feedback have a strong positive influence on teachers and their work because teachers report that it increases their job satisfaction and, to some degree, their job security. In addition, it significantly increases their development as teachers. According to (Pecheone & Chung, 2006) Performance evaluation is used as a valid measure and powerful instrument for determining the competence of teachers and improving education programmes.

From a reading of the literature, one begins to understand that teacher performance appraisal is a method of monitoring and evaluating a teacher's performance at the school level which involves; Setting of performance targets; Periodic assessment; Feedback on evaluation; Performance based consultations; Gathering evidence to demonstrate performance; Rating of the performance; Identification of performance gaps and Planning on teacher development and support measures (TSC, 2016) The Performance Appraisal

tool for teachers in Kenya is known as the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD). This is because it encompasses both evaluation of performance and mechanism to address performance gaps. Performance appraisal for teachers is expected to *inter alia* provide data for making crucial management decisions such as assignment of teachers, deployment and promotion. It also gives teachers opportunity to improve on their performance competencies and identify performance gaps in order to provide support for professional development.

In Kenya, performance management for teachers is provided for in Section 11(f) of the TSC Act which requires the commission “to monitor the conduct and performance of teachers in the teaching service and in Regulation 52 the Code of Regulations for Teachers (2015). It states that “the commission shall develop an open appraisal system for teachers to strengthen supervision and to continuously monitor the performance of teachers in curriculum implementation. According to its Annual Report of 2015/2016, the TSC further institutionalized and rolled out Performance Contracting (PC) and Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) systems for heads of institutions and teachers to enhance effectiveness in curriculum implementation for improved learning outcomes.

1.1.2 Theoretical Framework

This research was based on Goal setting theory of performance, proposed by Edwin Locke in 1968. Locke found out that when individuals or organizations set more difficult goals, they perform better. On the other hand, if the goals set are easy, performance levels of an individual or organization decreases. Goal setting helps in developing action plan designed to guide people and organizations. According to Locke and Latham (1990), there are five basic principles that allow goal setting to perform better. They include: clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity. Let us explain this a bit more.

When the goals that one sets are clear, one knows what they are trying to achieve. The results can also be measured accurately and the behavior to reward is known. When a goal is vague, it is not easy to measure. In other words, challenging goals often motivate people. However, it is important to delineate a decent level of difficulty and not to set a goal that is impossible to achieve. When moving towards achieving one’s goals, securing team commitment is essential. Nevertheless, team members are likely to support if they have been involved in setting of the goals. Though not all goals are negotiated with the team the members are likely to commit to the goal as long as the goal is achievable, consistent with the ambitions of the institution and if the person assigning is credible. This brings to a key element in organizational communication; that is feedback. What is the role of feedback? What are the mechanisms of allowing a free flow of feedback?

Feedback provides information on the progress towards achieving goals. Individuals and organizations can adjust goal setting according to the feedbacks. In my understanding of performance management, I would like to posit that one effective mechanism of enhancing feedback in an institution is the performance appraisal. Considering task complexity makes the achieving of goals easier by laying down process and steps. Care should be taken, though to ensure that work doesn’t become overwhelming when goals are highly complex. People who work in complicated and demanding roles can often push themselves so hard, if they don’t take account of the complexity of the task.

The theory was applicable to this research study since the TPAD is a target oriented tool. According to the provisions in the TPAD, appraisal target setting meetings must be held before the beginning of each school term. During this meeting, the appraisee and appraiser are both required to create an understanding on performance targets as provided for in the tool. The targets should be set clearly so that the results can be measured accurately. Commitment to the targets is what the teacher is supposed to do to ensure that the set targets are met within the stipulated timelines. In the process of performing the tasks, it is expected that the teacher gives feedback to the appraiser for the clarification of his or her expectations. In this research we

wanted to determine how the set targets in the TPAD tool affect the performance of the teacher's job since the whole appraisal process is done based on goal setting and task accomplishment.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Government of Kenya introduced performance management in 2003 as part of its public-sector reform programme. This ensured that all public officers were put under performance management programmes. However, teachers of primary and secondary schools in Kenya were not put under performance contracting until January 2016, when the Teachers Service Commission rolled out Performance Contracting (PC) for Head of Institutions and Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) for all teachers. The PC and TPAD were viewed as performance management tools meant to enhance the quality of teaching and ultimately improve learning in basic education level institutions. The reforms were intended to build a performance-oriented culture and instill accountability in public learning institutions. Despite the effort by the government through the Teachers' Service Commission to ensure teachers deliver quality teaching services to the learners, some teachers seem to resist the monitoring tool provided by the commission. A Kenya National Union of Teachers' (KNUT) (2018) report in Mumias even claims that TPAD programme in schools is only subjecting teachers to clerical activities more than allowing them to carry out their core duty of teaching. In the same year, another report from the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards Office (DQASO) on assessment in the same region reveals that there is inadequate curriculum supervision, ineffective teaching, wastage of time, child unfriendly schools and inadequate utilization of teaching/learning resources. The areas mentioned are addressed in the TPAD, yet performance is low according to the DQASO report. Why is this? This research therefore, was carried out in order to establish the demographic characteristic of teachers in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County and to assess the reaction of the said teachers to the use of TPAD.

2.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 Research Design

This research study used descriptive survey research design. The focus was on gathering data from the respondents and then using it to describe opinion on the teachers' performance appraisal, in Mumias East Sub County in Kakamega County, Kenya. Descriptive survey design was considered most suitable since it made it easy for the researchers to collect information about the opinion, attitude and habits of the respondents without manipulating any variables

2.1.2 Target Population

The research was conducted in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County, Kakamega County, Kenya. The sub county has 3 administrative units; East Wang'a, Lubinu-Lusheya and Malaha-Isongo-Makunga Divisions. At the time of the study the region had 53 primary schools with 53 Head-teachers, 53 Deputy Head teachers and 512 teachers, all of whom were employed by the Teachers' Service Commission. The 512 teachers included 152 from East Wang'a, 173 from Lubinu-Lusheya and 187 from Malaha-Isongo-Makunga Divisions.

2.1.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) recommend that a sample between 10 to 30 percent is adequate enough for a study. Stratified sampling was used to select 30% of schools that participated in the study on the basis of the divisions, within Mumias East Sub County. All deputy head teachers from the sampled schools were considered. As for the teachers, simple random sampling was ideal for selecting 30% from every division. Table 1 shows a summary of sample size.

Table 1: Summary of sample size

Division	No. of schools	Sampled schools	Sampled D/Head teachers	Total No. of teachers	Sampled teachers
East Wanga	16	5	5	152	46
Lubinu-Lusheya	18	6	6	173	52
Malaha-Isongo-Makunga	19	6	6	187	56
Total	53	17	17	512	154

2.1.4 Research Instruments

Questionnaires were used to obtain data from the respondents. The questionnaires were designed and issued basing on the categories of the respondents; Deputy Head teachers and teachers. The design had two sections. In section A, demographic information was captured. Section B included part 1; the teacher job performance, part 2; teacher professional knowledge, part 3; teacher professional development, part4; teacher collaboration with the parents/ guardians and part 5; the teacher creativity in teaching.

In addition observation schedule was used to collect data on the availability and use of certain records and programmes in the sampled schools.

2.1.5 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The objectives of this research study were:

1. To establish the demographic and work characteristics of teachers in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County.
2. To assess the reaction of the said teachers to the use of TPAD in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County

To achieve the said objectives, the research was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the average profile of teachers in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County?
2. What is the relationship between teacher demographic characteristics and TPAD in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County

3.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Out of the 17 questionnaires administered to the deputy head-teachers, 15 of them were duly completed and returned giving a questionnaire return rate of 88% In addition, 150 questionnaires were presented to teachers and 140 of them were duly completed and returned demonstrating a 93% response rate This return rate was considered representative enough and adequate for analyzing and reporting results.

3.1.1 Research Question 1: What is the average profile of teachers in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County?

The answer to this question consisted of documenting the demographic characteristics for both deputy head teachers and the teachers. The characteristics include gender composition, age, teaching experience and professional qualification. These aspects were deemed important in this study because they have a direct or indirect influence on the teacher's job attitude and may influence job performance.

3.1.1.1 Distribution of deputy head teachers and teachers by Gender

To determine the gender of the respondents, they were asked to indicate their gender in the bio-data section of the questionnaire which data was corroborated by direct observation. The gender profile is as recorded in Table 2.

Table 2: Gender of head teachers and teachers

Gender	Deputy head teachers		Teachers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Male	13	93	57	43
Female	1	7	76	57
Total	14	100	133	100

The table 2 shows that there is only one (1) female deputy head teacher against 13 males in primary schools in Mumias East sub County. This in a region where the number of female teachers is much higher than that of male teachers! Further probing revealed that the male gender is most preferred when it comes to leadership positions in schools. For instance, it still is difficult for female gender to deputize the head of a school. Could this be a factor when it comes to teacher performance appraisal? What is the perception of the male deputy head-teacher who has to appraise female teachers in their job performance?

An observation of the teachers' roll showed that the gender composition in the staff establishment was skewed towards females. A frequency count of the teacher position indicates that the females are leading by 57% and male teachers are second with 43%. Thus, female teachers dominate in teacher positions than their male counterparts yet there were fewer of them represented in the administrative positions. A majority of them tend to remain in the lowest job cadre. On the other hand, male teachers strive to be promoted and often view lowest positions as a preserve of the female counterparts. This gender disparity affects their job performance negatively with some teachers citing lack of appraisals in most schools thus most of teachers end up performing dismally.

3.1.1.2 Distribution of deputy head teachers and teachers by Age

Respondents were asked to indicate their age in the bio-data section of the questionnaire which data was corroborated by direct observation as reported in is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Age distribution of teachers and head teachers

Age in years	Deputy Headteachers		Teachers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
20-30	-	-	17	12.8
31-40	4	28.6	68	51.1
41-50	4	28.6	34	28.6
51-60	6	42.9	15	11.3
Total	14	100.0	133	100.0

Table 3 demonstrates that the majority of deputy head teachers are between the ages of 51 and 60 years marked by 42.9%. This implies that age becomes a determining factor for one to qualify or to be trusted in a leadership role such as being a deputy as it is attributed to sense of responsibility and maturity. When it comes to higher positions, younger teachers are deemed not qualified.

Table 5: Teaching experience of teachers and deputy head teachers

Teaching experience	Deputy Head teachers		Teachers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
0-10 years	1	6.7	77	57.5
11-20 years	3	20.0	35	26.1
21-30 years	8	53.3	16	11.9
30 & above years	3	20	6	4.3
Total	15	100.0	134	100.0

Table 5 shows that majority of deputy head teachers have teaching experience of thirty (30) years and above as indicated by 73.3% while most ordinary teachers have teaching experience of thirty (30) years and below. This implies that teachers who have stayed for longer years in teaching profession are promoted or rewarded on basis of their experience in schools; as such the majority are appointed to the deputy head teacher docket. On the contrary, a majority of ordinary teachers are below 30 years an indicator that a good number of them are new to their professional engagements. Thus, they may have to stay for over thirty 30 years before being recognized into higher levels such as into office of deputy head teacher. The study underscore that more experienced in teaching profession enhances transparency and accountability that leads to effective and efficient service delivery. It also creates positive relationships among stakeholders. Additionally, the study illustrates that teaching experience is an appraisal to teachers as it influence teacher's job performance. For example, teaching experience determines whether a teacher will remain in one position based on their field experiences or a teacher is appointed to higher responsibility in a school.

3.1.2 Research Question 2: What is the relationship between teacher demographic characteristics and TPAD in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County?

The second objective was aimed at establishing the relationships of both deputy head teachers and teachers demographic characteristics on teachers' appraisal of job performance using the TPAD tool. Therefore questionnaires were administered to collect teachers' opinions on the level of teacher's job performance in relations to appraisal systems in their schools within Mumias East Sub County. During the coding of data the scale used was as follows; S.A -strongly agree was presented by value five (5), A- Agree coded as four (4), U- Undecided coded as three (3), D-Disagree coded as two (2) and SD- strongly Disagree coded as one (1) Analysis of the data was done using inferential statistics. Finally, data was computed and presented in various forms.

3.1.2.1 Deputy Head teacher opinions on Teacher's Job Performance

The deputy head teachers' opinions were sought in relation to the guidelines of the teachers performance and appraisal tool. They were requested to give their views on their role such as in ensuring if teachers achieve the appraisal targets, checking on teachers' arrival attendances, on testing policy and whether their school had seen an improvement in KCPE performance since the year 2015 and other examinations. The data was analyzed and recorded as discussed.

The results indicate that a majority of the deputy head teachers agreed on most statements in the questionnaire. For instance, responses to whether deputy head teachers appraise teachers in line with the guidelines of TPAD were marked by 100% agreement. In other words, 35.7% strongly agreed and 64.3% of deputy head teachers agreed with the statement. This implies that teachers observe the appraisal tool on performance in line with the guidelines that are outlined. The statement on whether head teachers ensure that

teachers always come to school on time was illustrated by 100% agreement summed up by 35.7% strongly agreed and 64.3% of them agreed that they keep teachers under their watch.

These findings also indicate that performance appraisals have varied influences on teacher performance. The statement on whether testing is done according to the school testing policy was marked by 50% of teachers strongly agreed and 50% of deputy head teachers in agreement. This demonstrates that the school evaluations are approved prior to the learners attempting them, thus encouraging hard work and transparency in teacher performance. There was a question as to whether the KCPE performance had steadily improved since the inception of TPAD. The deputy head teachers' responses as indicated by 71.5% confirmed and agreed that the KCPE performance has been on a positive trend for primary schools in Mumias East Sub County since the year 2015. As stated elsewhere in this document, the Teacher service commission (TSC, 2015) emphasized that the appraisal tool was established to help improvement on teacher's performance. This research study concludes that there was relationship between appraisal systems and the teacher's job performance.

3.1.2.2 Teachers' responses on Teacher's Job Performance

Questionnaires were administered to teachers in order to collect their views in the relationship between TPAD and teacher's job performance. The data was computed and recorded as discussed.

The results show that teachers' appraisals have an influence on the teacher's performance. Let us take a few examples. The results show that on statements such as *I set and work to achieve my performance targets* 50.2% of teachers confirmed they agreed with it. Additionally, 58.2% of teachers agreed with the statement *... I adhere to the school programmes rules, and regulations ...* This implies teachers are working so hard to achieve their targets as well as ensuring they are working within the confines of the law and school policy. So, to some extent, these performance appraisals tool motivates teachers to foster positive performance. This study, however, concludes that there is a room for improvement for teachers in relation with the appraisal systems or appraisal tool and teachers job performance for schools within Mumias East Sub County.

4.1 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1.1 Conclusion

Demographic information plays an important role in performance evaluations and appraisals. The data from this study shows that although female teachers were predominant in the teaching profession in the area of study, the female gender was underestimated when it comes to assigning bigger responsibilities and accountability such as deputizing the head of school. The study has also established that, contrary to popular belief, teachers are not opposed to the TPAD exercise; they dislike the manner in which it is administered.

4.1.2 Recommendations

The Teacher Service Commission in conjunction with other educational bodies ought to create awareness to public primary deputy head teachers and teachers on the purpose for appraisal tool in relation to teacher's job performance. This study suggests that other studies be done to establish what factors hinder the implementation of appraisal tool and performance appraisals in public schools in relation to teacher's job performance.

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