Influence of appraisal systems that head teachers use on performance of secondary school teachers in Borabu District in Kenya

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Abstract:
Secondary schools form an important group of learning institutions in the Kenyan educational system. They are a crucial link between the primary cycle and the tertiary and post tertiary institutions of learning. They were established with the main objective of preparing learners for further careers along specific disciplines. Therefore, an effective performance appraisal system in secondary school will help improve individual job performance, promote employee training and development, focus on the school goals, encourage teamwork to promote co-operation, improve ability of schools to hire better qualified staff and enable the teachers to determine what it takes to achieve institutional goals Stoll (1996). In Borabu district in Kenya for instance, schools have not been doing very well in national examinations in the recent several years. The poor results are associated with decline of teachers' performance, mismanagement, demoralization of education and loss of confidence due to poor performance appraisal system used by Head Teachers, (ministry of education report 2004). It is in this view that the study was aimed at investigating the influence of appraisal systems that Head Teachers use on performance of secondary school teachers in Borabu District in Kenya. This study was out to establish the influence of appraisal systems that head teachers use on performance, of secondary school teachers in Borabu District in Kenya. Specifically the study sought; to identify the frequency of appraisal systems that head teachers used on performance of secondary school teachers in Borabu District, the common areas of appraisal, common systems of appraisal and the role of the results of appraisal on performance of secondary school teachers in Borabu District. The researcher hoped that the findings of this study would enable secondary school teachers to comprehend and appreciate the essential areas assessed by the performance appraisal system as this could make an integral part in improving the productivity of their work in the schools where they taught. The findings were also expected to contribute more knowledge to the existing literature. More so the findings could form the basis for policy formulation at the Teachers Service Commission and the Ministry of education at large. Descriptive survey design was adopted in carrying out this study. The study targeted all public secondary school principals, deputy principals, and heads of departments, subject heads and teachers in Borabu District. The researcher employed questionnaires to collect data. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Qualitative data were analyzed by use of frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data was analyzed in narrative form. The study established that performance appraisal was carried out by head teachers, the systems of appraisal used were graphic rating, ranking and having updated tools of work and that the results of appraisal were used to improve performance, to recommend one for promotion and for reward purposes. The study recommended that appraisals should be done fairly and often. The common areas of appraisal included: competence, quantity of work, work relationships; communication skills, general conduct, personal characteristics and
attainment of institution goals. The common systems used to carry out the appraisals included setting targets (55.26%), written essays (21.05%), individual ranking (10.52%) and examining records of work (7.89%). Concerning the effectiveness of appraisals systems, legitimacy was rated as the most effective (4.4) while fairness was most effective (2.4). Appraisal was mainly used in appreciation (3.5) Human resource planning (3.2), promotions (3.1) and in training opportunities (2.15). The study further concluded that all parties involved in the teacher appraisal process should know and understand its purposes, and should interpret and apply these in a uniform, professional way, if the whole process is to be effective and beneficial for whole-school development. The findings of the study further also showed that the current teacher appraisal system as practiced in Borabu District secondary schools requires further improvement to ensure that productivity is achieved. There was need for all head teachers, deputy head teachers and heads of departments to be regularly trained on performance appraisal processes so as to serve teachers working under them better. They should know and understand its purposes, and should interpret and apply these in a uniform, professional way, if the whole process is to be effective and beneficial for whole-school development. The frequency of appraisals should be related to the nature of the organization, the purpose and objectives of the scheme and the characteristics of the staff working in the organization. Existing schemes of performance appraisal be tailored to encourage contested upward mobility, staff development, determining training needs of workers and sewing as important tools for human resources planning in an organization. The current teacher appraisal system as practiced in schools requires further improvement to ensure general professional acceptance and implementation.