

## **TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LIMURU DISTRICT**

**BY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Evaluation of Employees' current or past performance against standards set by organizations is essential to the realization of the organization's goals. The government of Kenya identified education as a key player to the realization of vision 2030; the core of which is access and quality education. Therefore the issue of teacher performance is paramount to quality education.

This research sought to establish teachers' perception of performance appraisal practices in public Secondary Schools in Limuru District. The study was guided by the following objectives: To establish the extent to which the head teachers and their deputies have been trained on administration of teacher appraisal in public secondary schools in Limuru District, establish the extent to which teacher appraisal reports were instrumental in identification of staff development needs and also establish the extent of teachers awareness on the significance of performance appraisals in the teaching profession in Limuru District. The study used the census survey design in carrying out the research.

All the eighteen public secondary schools in Limuru District were used; the 18 Head teachers and their Deputies were also used for the study. 155 Teachers were randomly sampled and used as respondents. The findings of the study indicated that most head teachers had no training on performance appraisal. Majority of teachers reported that appraisal reports are not used to identify their development needs. The study indicated that most teachers had limited knowledge on the significance of performance appraisals. The study recommends the Ministry of Education to train head teachers on administration of performance appraisals and train teachers on the significance of the same. The ministry should design teacher development courses based on the performance appraisals.

## INTRODUCTION

Education has been acknowledged at various fora as a cornerstone for economic and social development (Lockheed, Veerspoor and Associates, 1991). It is the main source of human capital, which is essential to sustained economic growth. Education contributes to reducing poverty and birth rates, increasing health, strengthening the institutions of civil society and national capacity building; and improving governance. Therefore, education is an indispensable and important actor in Kenya's realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year 2030 (UNESCO, 2008).

According to the United Nations Environmental and Social Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2008), quality of education is the heart of education. The teacher is a critical player in ensuring quality education. Teacher performance appraisals are a parameter used to evaluate teachers' performance against set standards (Dessler, 2003). Performance appraisal reports are used to design the in-service training courses for professional development, deployment of teachers and providing feedback to teachers on their actual work performance in relation to the set standards. It is also referred as merit rating especially when used to award salary or wage increments to teachers based on their performance (Graham, 1998).

Performance appraisal was introduced in the United States of America in the 1940s during the Second World War as a method of justifying employees' wages (Moorhead & Graffin, 1992). It was then known as merit rating. The merit rating was based on material outcome where higher output was rewarded with higher pay and vice-versa. By 1950s performance appraisal was recognized as a potential tool for managing employee rewards through pay increases. Based on its results, employees were also counseled, demoted or identified for lay off.

Today, performance appraisal is one of the key elements of any organizations drive towards competitive advantage through continues performance improvement (Bratton & Gold, 2003). A regular review of each individual employee's performance provides information about his or her competence and aspirations. This is essential for planning (Hacket, 1998). It can also serve a wide range of specific uses for the manager including identifying employees' training needs, potentials for higher responsibilities, determining pay and redeployment (Hacket, 1998).

However, performance appraisal has been operated frequently as a top-down and largely bureaucratic system owned by the Human Resource (HR) department rather than by line managers. It has been perceived by many as a means of exercising managerial control (Armstrong, 2006). performance appraisal tend to be backward looking, concentrating on what had gone wrong rather than looking forward to future development needs. Further, performance appraisals exist in isolation as there is little or no link between them and the needs of the organization. Line managers have frequently rejected performance appraisal schemes as being time consuming and irrelevant. Employees have resented the superficial nature with which appraisals have been conducted by managers who lack the required skills and tend to be biased. Armstrong (1998) asserts that performance appraisal too often degenerated into a dishonest annual ritual. The education sector has not been spared either. Hatie et al (1999) and Malongwe (2005) observes that performance appraisal especially in the Kenyan education system is not only an expensive exercise but also lack a clear purpose. According to Malongwe (2005) employees react more favorably to performance appraisal when it satisfies their needs and include an opportunity to state their position, when factors on which they are being evaluated are job related and the objectives and plans of the evaluation are discussed openly. School heads and teachers do not always agree on what constitutes an effective appraisal. If school heads and teachers can have a shared understanding of the purpose of the appraisal as well as each party's role in the appraisal, teachers' acceptance of the appraisal could be increased. Though both research and organizational practice suggest that supervisors appraisees

have different needs and expectations regarding the appraisal exercise research strongly indicate that the supervisor's purpose, intentions and perceptions of the appraisal process may differ significantly from those of the appraisee (Malongwe, 2005). Teachers are also opposed to the use of the appraisal form and advocate for an evaluation mechanism that are more interactive, inclusive and emphasizing on teams, values, employees' job roles and customer needs (Maravec, 1996).

Odhambo (2003) carried out a study on the experience of teachers appraisal practices in public secondary schools in Nairobi. Richu (2007) studied the perceptions of teachers on performance appraisal in public secondary schools in Nakuru.

The study by Odhambo was undertaken in 2003 when performance appraisal was mainly conducted by the school inspectors and headteachers. The study findings revealed that teachers had a negative perception towards performance appraisal. The study covered six (6) secondary schools in the urban Nairobi. Richu's (2007) study was done in Nakuru district – rural/urban setting and the appraisers were the quality assurance officers. The results of the study reinforced Odhambo's findings that teachers still had a negative perception towards performance appraisal. No study has been conducted to investigate the teachers' perceptions of performance appraisal practices in a purely rural public secondary schools. These studies did not include the headteachers, their deputies and head of departments (HODS). It is therefore vital to conduct a study on the perception of teachers, including headteachers, their deputies and HODS in public secondary school in a rural set-up. Furthermore, perceptions keep changing with time, a gap that this study seeks to address.

### **Objectives of the study**

- i. To establish the extent to which the headteachers and their deputies have been trained on administration of teacher appraisals in public secondary schools in Limuru district.
- ii. To establish the extent to which teacher appraisal reports are used in the identification of staff development needs in public secondary schools in Limuru district.
- iii. Establish the extent of teacher awareness on the significance of performance appraisals in the teaching profession.

### **Research questions**

- i. To what extent are the headteachers and their deputies trained on the administration of teacher appraisals in the public secondary schools of Limuru district?
- ii. To what extent are teacher appraisal reports used in the identification of staff development needs in public secondary schools in Limuru district?
- iii. To what extent are teachers aware of the significance of performance appraisal in the teaching profession in public secondary schools in Limuru district?

### **Significance of the study**

The empirical evidence on teachers' perceptions may provide Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) a feedback of teachers' perceptions of performance appraisal and the specific practices among individual schools. They would be able to evaluate use of performance appraisals. The study would provide important information especially to government policy makers as to what need to be changed or enhanced for effective teacher performance appraisal.

The study could also assist interested stakeholders in evaluating schools to use best and acceptable practices to the teachers hence effectiveness in teacher performance appraisal. The study will

contribute to the wider knowledge, both in research and academics specifically on the area of performance appraisal.

### Research design

Research design is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions. The research design, therefore, provides a framework for planning and conducting a study. This study adopted a census survey. The census method was used because the number of public secondary schools in Limuru district is small. Census survey is feasible when the population is small and variable.

### Questionnaire return rate

A total of 155 questionnaires were administered to the teachers, including headteachers, deputies, HODs and teachers of which only 124 responded. This represents 80% of the total. Of the 18 deputies who received the questionnaires, only 10 and 15 responded representing 55% and 83% respectively.

The target population was all the eighteen (18) public secondary schools in the district. The respondents were the 18 headteachers, their deputies (18) and the 333 teachers in all the public secondary schools in Limuru district.

The sample consisted of all headteachers and their deputies, 36 heads of departments (HODs) and 83 teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires had both open-ended and close-ended questions and were in two sections; Section (A) and section (B). Section A focused on the general information of the respondents and the schools while section B focused on teachers' perceptions of performances appraisal practices.

### Findings of the study

The first objective for the study was;

*i. To establish the extent to which the headteachers and deputies had been trained on administration of teacher appraisal in public secondary schools in Limuru district.*

In order to gauge their knowledge on performance appraisal, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they had undergone any specialized training on performance appraisal. Their responses were tallied and recorded as follows;

**Table 2: Extent to which headteachers and deputy headteachers had training in performance appraisal**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No training	10	40
Some training	9	36
Adequate training	6	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows that majority of the headteachers and their deputies 40% had no training on performance appraisal. Only 24% of them reported to have had adequate training on performance appraisal. According to Bloomer (1991), any attempt to spread decision making powers more widely in the system implies a need for increased training. Training equips school administrators with knowledge and skills of appraising teacher performance both qualitatively and quantitatively; the fact that majority of the headteachers and their deputies lacked adequate training on performance appraisal, raise questions on their competence hence effectiveness in appraising teachers in their schools.

The study sought to know the institution that had trained the few headteachers and deputies in table 2 above. The responses are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Institutions that had offered training**

<b>Institute</b>	<b>No. of heads</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
KSSHA	9	60
KEMI	5	33
KNUT	1	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

The Kenya secondary schools association (KSSHA) was reported to have trained majority of the headteachers and their deputies. KSSHA normally holds a one week annual conference for school heads or deputies who meet to not only share experiences on headship but learn contemporary issues in school administration. It offers short courses to her members hence improving their leadership skills. The Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) is the arm of the Ministry of Education responsible for training education managers and administrators. Table 3 indicates that only 5(33%) of trained headteachers/deputies have had an opportunity to be trained by KEMI – the most reliable trainer of education administrators.

Performance appraisal competencies could also be enhanced by education and experience of the school heads and their deputies. The study sought to know the education levels of the school heads and their deputies.

**Table 4: Level of education – school heads and their deputies**

<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Diploma	3	12
Bachelors degree	16	64
Post graduate diploma in education	2	8
Masters degree	4	16
PHD	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 indicates that majority of the headteachers and deputy headteachers (64%) had a bachelors' degree. University training equips school administrators with skills in management including performance appraisal. 8% of the respondents had a masters degree. These are well educated administrators, credible and reliable in administering teacher performance appraisal. However their competency could be enhanced by their experience in school administration. The study sought to know their experience and the results are shown in table 5.

**Table 5: Years of service and administration – headteachers and deputies**

<b>Experience in years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1-5	10	40
6-10	12	48
10 and over	3	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 shows that majority of the school heads and their deputies had served between 6-10 years. This period is considered adequate to equip one with necessary competencies in performance appraisal especially if trained on how to do it.

ii. *To establish the extent to which teacher appraisal reports are used in the identification of staff development needs of teachers.*

The study sought to establish the effectiveness of the appraisal system in identifying in service training needs of teachers, HODs, headteachers and their deputies. The responses are shown in table 6.

Table 6: in-service training needs of teachers, headteachers and deputy headteachers

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Ineffective	11	44
Less effective	7	28
No opinion	7	28
Effective	-	-
Very effective	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 shows clearly that no headteacher or deputy found performance appraisal results to be effective or very effective in identifying the training needs of teachers. Actually majority of them (44%) thought it was ineffective while (28%) thought it was less effective. The other 28% had no opinion. According to heads of schools the ministry hardly developed courses specifically targeting individuals. The study further sought the opinion of HODs and teachers on the effectiveness of performance appraisal in determining staff development needs. The responses are recorded in Table 7.

Table 7: In-service training needs of teachers – HODs and teachers

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Ineffective	69	69.69
Less effective	19	19.19
No opinion	10	10.1
Effective	1	1
Very effective	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

The results indicate that 69.69% of HODs and teachers consider the performance appraisal ineffective in determining the in-service training courses of teachers. 19.19% found performance appraisal results less effective while 10.1% had no opinion. Actually most teachers reported to have been in service for long but never attended an in-service training course yet they got appraised.

iii. *Establish the extent of teacher awareness on the significance of performance appraisals in the teaching profession.*

The study first sought to know the current appraisal practices in Limuru district. Respondents were required to tick the most commonly used practice in their school.

**Table 8: Performance appraisal practices**

Appraisal practice	Frequency	Percentage
Student/customer appraisal	-	-
Peer appraisal	3	2.4
Assessment centres	3	2.4
Management by objectives	10	8.1
Immediate supervisor	66	53.2
Self rating	-	-
360 feedback upward appraisal essay appraisal	-	-
Balance score card	-	-
Critical incident technique	42	33.9

Table 8 indicates that most schools (53.2%) in Limuru district use the immediate supervisor performance appraisal practice. The critical incident technique is also used to a great extent (33.9%) management by objectives, assessment centres and peer appraisal are used to very small extent (8.2%, 2.4% and 2.4%) respectively.

The immediate supervisor performance appraisal gives the supervisor total responsibility over the employees work. He/she is supposed to know, observe and evaluate the subordinate's performance. An employee has no or little say in this performance appraisal. According to Farmham & Horton (2003), this method is likely to be subjective and liable to abuse. Employees on the 'right camp' will be highly appraised as opposed to those 'not towing the line' irrespective of their work performance.

Critical incident technique is a record of positive and negative behavior kept by the headteacher. Most teachers call it "teachers' black book because headteachers normally record only negative incidents of the teacher. The record can serve as a good performance appraisal tool especially when it reflects the strengths and weaknesses of a teacher objectively. However, it is also liable to subjectivity and abuse depending on the headteachers credibility.

It is important to note that the all-round performance appraisal practices that measure the qualitative and quantitative aspects of teacher performance e.g. the 360<sup>0</sup> feedback are not used in Limuru district. Other more democratic, participatory and inclusive performance appraisal practices like peer appraisal, balance score card and student/customer appraisal are either minimally used or not used at all.

The study sought to know the respondents' opinion over the role of performance appraisal in the enhancement of teacher's career prospect. The responses were tallied and recorded in table 9.

**Table 9: Role of performance appraisal in enhancement of teachers' career prospect – head teachers and deputy head teachers**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Ineffective	3	12
Less effective	5	20
No opinion	-	-
Effective	11	44
Very effective	6	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>



Table 9 shows that most headteachers and the deputies (44%) had the confidence that performance appraisal enhance teachers' career prospects. In Kenya, teachers get promoted upon attending a promotion interview. Headteachers are normally required to write a confidential report to the teacher employer (Teachers' Service Commission) particularly on the conduct and job performance of the interviewed teachers. The head teachers' report is instrumental in determining the teachers' promotion. Actually the head teacher is the TSC's agent on the ground.

The study further sought the opinion of HODs and teachers on the role of performance appraisal in the enhancement of teachers' career prospects (promotion). The responses are recorded in table 10.

**Table 10: Role of performance appraisal in the enhancement of teachers' career prospects – HODs and teachers**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Ineffective	41	41.41
Less effective	38	38.38
No opinion	9	9
Effective	11	11.11
Very effective	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 10 shows that HODs and teachers held the opinion that performance appraisals were either ineffective (41.41%) or less effective (38.38%). Contrary to the head teachers and deputies, opinion on the role played by performance appraisal in enhancing teachers' career prospects, HODs and teachers found the appraisal ineffective or less effective in enhancing their career prospects. This could partly be explained by results on Table 6 and Table 7 where both head teachers, deputies, HODs and teachers unanimously agree that performance appraisals are not effective in determining their in-service training courses (staff development) and by the fact that teachers are promoted upon passing an interview and getting a good appraisal report from the head teacher. TSC has lately pegged its promotions on individual career development and therefore encouraging teachers to seek further education especially on areas related to teaching. An appraisal report therefore may not guarantee teachers' promotion unless paired with other relevant factors.

Following the results on Table 10, the study found it prudent to establish whether teachers and HODs had any training on performance appraisal. The results are recorded on Table 11.

**Table 11: HODs and teachers training on performance appraisal**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No training	63	63.63
Some training	34	34.34
Adequate training	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

Majority (63.63%) of the HODs and teachers had no training on performance appraisal. Only (2%) of all teachers and HODs had adequate knowledge on performance appraisal.

Monappa and Saiyadan (1996) defines training as the teaching/learning activities carried on for the purpose of helping members of an organization to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes needed by that organization.



Teachers and HODs are the primary implementers of school and educational objectives. They are the foundation of any education system. Therefore its extremely important that they be informed/trained on performance appraisal practices, their use and purpose. Otherwise if appraisal instruments are used on them without much information, then they are likely to rebel and perceive not only the appraisers but also the process negatively. By so doing, the objectives of performance appraisal could not have been achieved.

### **Conclusion**

Teachers in public secondary schools in Limuru district have a negative attitude towards performance appraisal practices used to appraise them. This is owed to lack of training on performance appraisal, ineffectiveness of performance appraisal reports to determine their staff development needs and career prospects and use of supervisor -centered performance appraisal practices which are often abused hence intimidating the teachers.

### **Recommendations**

The ministry of basic education through Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) needs to develop courses on performance appraisal for both head teachers, deputies, HODs and teachers. These will inform the teaching fraternity on the purpose of performance appraisal, its role and significance to the teachers. The teachers will also own it and not see it as an instrument of control in the hands of school administrators. The school head teachers and deputies will gain skills of appraising teachers objectively while maximizing on their input and job performance.

The TSC should use performance appraisal reports to promote, salary increase and recognition of the performing teachers.

Headteachers should integrate supervisor based, employee based and peer praise practices of performance appraisal. This will give an objective judgement on work performance of both the school administrators and teachers hence help determination of right corrective measures towards attainment of set goals.

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## Appendix A: Questionnaire

### Section A; 1. General Information

- |                               |                     |                          |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Gender                     | Male                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | Female              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Age                        | 25 yrs and below    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | 26 – 34             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | 35 – 44             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | 45 and above        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Highest qualification      | Certificate         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | Diploma             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | BA                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | BEd                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | BSc                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | PGDE                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | MA/MEd              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | Others              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Teaching experience        | 2 years and below   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | 3 – 5 years         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | 6 – 9 years         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | 10 – 15 years       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | 16 – 20 years       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | 21 years and above  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Position of responsibility | Teacher             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | HOD                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | Deputy Head Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                               | Head of School      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Section B.2**

Kindly tick the level that best describes the performance Appraisal practice used in your school. Please use this as a guide (1-5) to answer question 1 below.

**Key**

- 1. Not at all
- 2. Little extent
- 3. Moderate extent
- 4. Great extent
- 5. Very Large extent.

1. To what extent does your school use the following practices to performance appraisal?

Practice	1	2	3	4	5
Peer Appraisal					
Assessment centre					
Essay Appraisal					
Management By Objective Appraisal					
Balance Score Card Appraisal					
Upward Appraisal					
Customer/student appraisal					
Immediate Supervisor					
Self Rating					
360 <sup>0</sup> feedback					
Ranking method approach					

Any other (please specify)

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**2. Current Practice**

Indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements. Write the appropriate number in the relevant box against each statement.

**Key**

- 1. Strongly disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neither agrees nor disagrees
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly agree

S/N	Current Practices	1	2	3	4	5
a)	The appraisal system is taken seriously in my school					
b)	Performance appraisal is used in my school to identify training needs					
c)	Current performance appraisal process is abused by schools management teams to oppress teachers					
d)	Current appraisal process in Secondary schools is only concerned with teachers' annual increment					
e)	In my school, the work environment is conducive to the appraisal system					
f)	In my school the appraisal process supports school's development planning					
g)	There is need to review the current appraisal process in my school					

3) Indicate the number of times appraised in the last one year. Please tick against the answer.

None	
One	
Two	
Three	
Four	
Five	
More than five	

4) Did you receive any training in appraisal?

No Training	
Some Training	
Adequate Training	