

Role Of Performance
Appraisal On Teacher
Motivation In Public
Primary Schools In
Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Performance appraisal (P.A) has been vouched as one of the aspects that might promote quality education. Due to its importance, stakeholders involved in carrying out its implementation should understand its application and the motivational consequences on teachers. Even though the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and the Ministry of Education in Kenya have introduced performance appraisal in public primary schools, teachers seem to lack knowledge about the entire process and the aspects that the P.A tool addresses. Its application has been faced with many issues which hinder its effectiveness hence the declining performance of both the learners and the schools. Studies carried out globally indicate that P.A can be effective and efficient only if it is properly applied and owned by teachers (appraisees). This paper seeks to assess the role of P.A on teachers' motivation in public primary schools in Kenya.

Key words: Performance appraisal, performance evaluation, performance feedback, teacher motivation

1. INTRODUCTION

Aguinis (2009) defines Performance Appraisal (P.A.) as an ongoing process used for identifying, measuring and developing an individual's performance in accordance with an organization's strategic goal. Okumbe(2001) on the other hand defines performance appraisal as the process of arriving at a judgement about an individual's past or present performance against the background of their environment and their future potential for the organization. Birgen (2007) too defines P.A as a process of review of teachers by school head teachers, deputy head teachers and other senior teachers of individual competencies, performance and professional needs. Birgen summarizes the purpose of appraisal interviews as meant to plan, identify problems and examine possible opportunities related to the job, improve communication between the school management and the staff, identify potential possibilities for promotion or transfer, and lastly, identify training and development needs. Performance appraisal is also defined as a structural, formal interaction between a subordinate and superior that usually takes the form of a periodic interview (annual or semiannual) in which the work performance of the subordinate is examined and discussed, with a view to identifying weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for improvement and skills development (McNamara, 1999). From these definitions, performance appraisal can thus be said to be the process of evaluating an employee's performance with an intention of identifying and addressing any observed gaps systematically, through a negotiated platform.

Okumbe (1998) asserts that P.A helps in evaluating how a worker succeeds in his/her present job and this is important for estimating how well they will perform in the future. This will assist the employees in understanding what is expected of them by the employer. They can therefore use the P.A tool to carry out self assessment and evaluation and be able to improve on their weak areas. Kandie (2008) affirms that P.A is conducted for the purpose of obtaining information that would enable the management make personal decisions

such as identifying training needs, promotion, transfer, salary increments, motivation and counseling. Kandie (2010) also argues that for proper identification of weaknesses of a teacher, P.A process should be flexible, collaborative, consultative, participatory and periodical. It should be done frequently and on set period of time.

In Kenya, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) introduced an open performance appraisal system for teachers to strengthen supervision and to continuously monitor their performance in curriculum implementation at the institutional level. According to TSC (2016) the appraisal system is intended to provide feedback, improve communication, and clarify roles and responsibilities. This performance appraisal has been running since January 2016 and is implemented in all public schools through the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool. There are seven aspects or areas that the TPAD tool addresses which include:

- Professional knowledge and application
- Time management
- Innovation and creativity in teaching
- Learner protection, safety and discipline and teacher conduct
- Promotion of co-curricular activities
- Professional development
- Collaboration with parents and stakeholders

Each competency area has got marks accorded to it. The teacher thus is evaluated in all these aspects in order to realize behavioural change so as to achieve the set objectives hence high performance.

Performance appraisal system is meant to motivate teachers to perform highly because of the rewards attached to it like promotion, higher grade/high position of responsibility, salary increase and recognition by the employer. It is supposed to enhance both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in a teacher. Intrinsic motivation is enhanced by the setting of targets which teachers feel that they must achieve. Extrinsic motivation is enhanced by the rewards the teachers are likely to get after performing well. Okumbe (1998) defines motivation as a process that starts with physiological and psychological deficiency or need that activates behaviour or a drive that is aimed at a goal or incentive. Baterman and Snell (2004) describe motivation as forces that energize, direct and sustain a person's effort. P.A of teachers is thus intended to influence a drive in them that will enhance their performance and focus in promoting quality education in learners.

Motivation is important because it directs and regulates behaviour of people and also drives, energizes and sustains behaviour. Teachers' behaviour can only change, better performance, when they have proper knowledge about P.A process and understand it better. According to Fredrick Herzberg (1959) in his hygiene theory of motivation or dual theory factor; the things that motivate workers include, achievement, recognition and responsibility, growth and the work itself. Herzberg further notes that other factors that motivate workers

include; feeling of accomplishment of assigned tasks, regular feedback on their performance in form of recognition, conducive environment and even changing the nature of job.

Even though the government and the Teachers Service Commission introduced P.A in Kenya's educational institutions with the intent of improving academic performance of learners through teachers improved performance, its uptake by teachers seems sluggish largely due to their lack of knowledge on P.As basic tenets and how it could eventually benefit them and their profession.

2. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND TEACHER MOTIVATION

Birgen (2007) notes that individual teachers are held accountable for the achievement of the targets so that appraisal evaluates how well the teacher has done his job when compared to set target. If this is the case then all teachers must be involved right from the beginning of the process since they cannot be accountable for what they have not participated in setting. Teachers should therefore be motivated in setting targets and standards, measuring performance and taking appropriate action to improve performance by using all the resources available collectively.

Kamuri (2012) suggests that P.A should be done in an environment where the teacher and the employer work together to determine measures for evaluating each of the objectives. On the same note, this strengthens the trust and the relationship between the two thus enhancing teacher motivation. During the appraisal process every teacher must be actively involved and be informed throughout the process. Teachers involvement in P.A process makes them own the process and be part of it therefore enhancing their intrinsic motivation that is to result into improved performance. If the aspects for performance appraisal are not available then the teacher is likely to be demotivated.

Importantly, increased teachers involvement in P.A process is positively related to appraisees' job satisfaction and their acceptance to the appraisal system (Cawley et al 1998, cited in Kelly et al 2008). Teachers who are involved in developing the appraisal system are more likely to be aware and accept performance expectations, better understand the appraisal process and outcome and are committed to the appraisal system (Cawley, Keeping and Levy 1998, cited in Kelly et al 2008). This is a fact that has been refuted by (Schultz and Schultz 2010) who asserts that performance appraisals have no positive rating from the employees and that they should not participate in them.

In addition, Mutua (2005) observes that although P.A influences employees' work output, it does not necessarily improve the quality of work. The questions that arise from this assertion then are, if performance appraisals do not improve quality of work by the employees, then why are stakeholders complying with them? Does complying with P.A have any influence on teacher motivation? This study aims to find answers to these

questions by determining whether or not complying with P.A process has influence on teacher motivation, which is the most important aspect for improvement of quality of education.

3. TEACHERS INVOLVEMENT IN SETTING OF TARGETS

Target setting is a process whereby the appraiser interacts with the appraisee through discussion in order to come up with what to be achieved (target) by the end of a given period of time, be it termly or annually while considering the working environment and other factors that influence performance. These other factors may include availability of resources, leadership styles, the nature of the learners and the teachers' experience.

Spillane (2006) describes the process of target setting in performance appraisal as interaction between the leader and his followers in the context of leadership. Spillane further describes it as a system of practice comprised of a collection of interacting component. Targets are expectations which are to be achieved and it is therefore the responsibility of each and every stakeholder to see into it that the set targets are realized. Expectations of school leaders therefore is to achieve change and play a key role in influencing the motivation and capacity of teachers thus appraising, monitoring and evaluating performance is indispensable (Pont, Nusche, and Moorman 2009). Even though they affirm this, the TSC has left the heads of institutions out of the process thus hindering them from performing their key roles of influencing the motivation and capacity of teachers since they do not appraise them.

It is therefore a realization by all institutional leaders and employers that without set targets then the workers (teachers) may not be able to know what is expected of them and therefore nothing to evaluate them on. According to Locke and Latham (2002), target or goal setting and reflection have been found to have a powerful impact on action. This is a fact that is reaffirmed by Timperley, (2011). He insists that target setting is central to the development of a self regulated learning, capacity and this assists teachers to identify what they need to do to improve their practices.

Setting targets and thriving to improve on the practices so as to achieve the set objectives is a sign of intrinsic motivation. The teachers are driven by the set targets and what is expected of them and not the incentives they may get after achievement of the set target. Target setting therefore should be an interactive activity between the teacher and the appraiser. This will bring harmony and a feeling of mutual involvement in the whole process of performance appraisal and in turn, educational performance will get a boost of goodwill from the teacher.

4. ROLE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL EVALUATION

Evaluation is the process of assessing habits and quality of workers. It involves critical and careful analysis of the person in all areas or aspects of concern. For a teacher, the aspects to be evaluated include lesson organization, class control, instructional and co-curricular activities, time management, resource management

and utilization, innovation and creativity, teachers' interpersonal relationship with the learners, parents and all the stakeholders and also the teachers' discipline. According to Aquinis (2009), performance appraisal evaluation may involve both formative and summative aspects. Formative aspects focus on developing performance such as career development, professional learning and feedback. Summative aspects on the other hand evaluate performance for career progression, possible promotion or demotion and termination purposes.

According to Danielson and Greal (2009), when performance appraisal evaluation is used both for accountability and instructional improvement, and in turn it identifies and enhances teaching quality, it may therefore be considered the ideal quality assurance mechanism. Additionally, research carried by O.E.C.D (2009b) in Australia acknowledges that: Raising teaching performance is perhaps the policy direction most likely to lead to substantial gain in student learning. Therefore, it is essential to know the strengths of the teacher and those aspects of their practice which could be further developed. From this perspective, the institution of teacher evaluation is a vital step in the drive to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning and raises educational standards. Moreover, according to Zbar, Marshall and Power (2007) an effective performance appraisal evaluation assists in meeting the set objectives by holding the teachers accountable, addressing underperformance and enhancing performance and practice.

It is important to note that performance appraisal evaluation process provides scope for teachers and school heads to make informed decisions about teaching performance and may assist in identifying future areas for growth and development of the learners, the teachers and the institution. Proper or informed decision making if properly or not properly managed may result to teacher motivation or demotivation respectively. More importantly, performance appraisal evaluation may also help the teachers to evaluate themselves and be able to identify their shortfalls and factors leading to the shortfalls and improve on them. This can only happen if the teachers know what is expected of them and how to improve their performance for their own good and that of the institution (Danielson &Greal, 2009 and Zbar et al., 2007).

Stronge and Tuckers (2003) contend that teachers have confidence in the performance appraisal evaluation and that the involvement of multiple evaluators and sources of evidence is essential to appraisal systems credibility. In relation to their findings, it is clear that a lot and diverse range of evaluations is required so as to ensure the effectiveness of performance appraisal and to determine its credibility and its motivational consequences on the teachers.

On the strength of Stonge and Tuckers findings, the MoEST (2009) advises that during performance appraisal, the teacher should be treated as a stakeholder who works in a collaborative way and becomes as good as possible. Therefore the process must be conducted in a professional way and by people who are respected for their competence and good relations. The findings and comments must be communicated in a kind and respectful manner that can have positive impact on teacher motivation.

Even if there is evidence from researchers that teachers have confidence in the performance appraisal, other researchers have also found out that the process of performance appraisal evaluation does not motivate teachers. Darling Hammond (2013) asserts that teacher evaluation and appraisal systems do little to help teachers improve. This may indicate that performance appraisal evaluation does not influence teacher motivation so as to enhance quality of teaching or lead to long lasting change (Kamener, 2012).

5. ROLE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FEEDBACK

Performance appraisal feedback involves a teacher being given or provided with written feedback against their goals since the scores are indicated in the TPAD and new objectives set for the next review. Reasonable time and a relaxed environment should be set to discuss the performance appraisal feedback. Wango (2010) asserts that during performance appraisal feedback, the appraisers must be clear in explaining their judgements concerning the strengths and weaknesses so that teachers identify how to improve their work.

Improved work or good performance makes the teacher confident and have a feeling of being worth thus becoming motivated and able to realize the set objectives. According to OECD (2009), performance appraisal feedback has a strong influence on teachers increasing job satisfaction and improving teaching practice. Performance appraisal needs to provide feedback to teachers about their professional practice and offer opportunities for improvement. When the feedback is constructive and objective, the teacher takes it positively and is able to correct the shortfalls found during the evaluation session. A positive teacher will always strive to perform, achieve and also be readily willing to correct the shortfalls noted.

Many performance appraisal systems have failed to inform teachers of what needs to be improved on. A study by Welsberg, Sexton, Mulhern and Keeling (2009) found out that P.A makes the teachers to lack what to improve on due to unawareness caused by lack of feedback. Donalson and Donalson (2012) report that teachers need constructive feedback from skilled practitioners in order to improve their teaching. Research also revealed that feedback is often not a common occurrence in schools (OECD, 2009a and Zatyński, 2012). This therefore means that there is no frequent, active teacher involvement on performance appraisal, an area that this study is also interested in establishing.

Robins (2006), notes that managers are often uncomfortable discussing performance weaknesses directly with employees. Given that almost every employee could stand to improve in some areas, managers fear a confrontation when presenting negative feedback. Robbins adds that many employees tend to become defensive when their weaknesses are pointed out instead of accepting the feedbacks constructively and as a basis for correction. The current study will seek to establish the role of performance appraisal feedback on teachers' motivation.

6. CONCLUSION

Literature shows that performance appraisal can be effective if properly introduced leading to teacher motivation. It can also be ineffective if improperly applied into the education system which may lead to teacher demotivation. For Kenyan education sector to benefit from performance appraisal that leverages teacher performance management, the gaps about its role on teacher motivation must be addressed appropriately.

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