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Effectiveness of Performance Appraisal Systems on Teachers' **Professional Development and Growth**

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Abstract

Original Research Article

They are perceptions that performance appraisal systems are so efficient and effective in improving employees' performance and upholding accountability to such an extent that various developed countries are practicing them. However, some now question their success in improving employee performance arguing instead that they weigh heavily toward accountability rather than toward the growth and development of teachers and their teaching practices. This paper therefore explores the effectiveness of the performance appraisal systems on teachers' professional development and growth in ten selected primary schools in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe. The study employed a mixed method approach using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Data generation was through an interview guide and a questionnaire using purposive sampling. In all, 30 participants comprising 10 heads of schools and 20 teachers took part in the study. Findings from this study reveal that teachers resent their performance appraisal system because they do not get any value from it. They view it, as an instrument required more by their employer who uses it for accountability purposes in selecting eligible teachers for promotion to deputy head or headship posts. Findings also confirm how the performance appraisal system seemingly fails to contribute to the growth and development of teachers or their teaching practices. School heads are not effective and efficient in implementing the system. These findings suggest that the current performance appraisal system in primary schools is for accountability purposes on the part of the employer and does not in any way address the weaknesses noted on the part of the employee through training and development.

Keywords: Performance appraisal; Performance appraisal systems; Effectiveness, Professional development; Professional growth.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the effectiveness of the performance appraisal system on teachers' professional development and growth in schools. This is in view of the fact that there are perceptions that performance appraisal systems are so efficient and effective in improving employees' performance and upholding accountability such that various developed countries are using them. However, some now question their success in improving employee performance arguing instead that they weigh heavily toward accountability rather than toward the growth and development of teachers and their teaching practices. This paper explores these perceptions with a view of establishing the effectiveness of the Zimbabwean appraisal system on teachers' professional development and growth. However, the paper begins by looking at the guiding theory behind performance appraisals.

The theory behind performance appraisals

Performance management multidisciplinary, being informed by a varied group of complementary disciplines and corresponding theories which Strategic Management, Operations Management, Human Resources Management. Organisational Behaviour. Information Systems, Marketing, Management Accounting and Control all contributing to the field of performance measurement. Due to this multidisciplinary nature, the theories that inform performance appraisals are varied.

Firstly, there is a macro view, whose corresponding theme outlines a systemic approach to

organisational management. The systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1973), contingency theory (Donaldson, 2001) and the goal setting theory (Locke; 2004), as interrelated theories covering the structural aspects supporting the organisational performance aspect, support this view. Secondly, there is a micro view, whose corresponding theme is behavioural and methodologically individualistic. Two main theories for this micro view are the goal setting theory and the principal-agent theory (Laffont & Martimort, 2002).

Underlining the learning aspects of performance management is social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Ormrod (2012) says it focuses on learning in a social context, considering that people learn from each other and it proposes a list of concepts such as observational learning, imitation and modelling as enablers. Modelling in social learning uses either live models (an actual person demonstrating the behaviour) or a symbolic model. For training purposes, a symbolic model is more suitable in a performance management context due to privacy issues.

The main theory informing individual performance management is Locke & Latham's (2002) goal-setting theory, one of the most effective motivational theories. Empirical research conducted over nearly four decades inform this theory. Its roots are on the premise that conscious goals affect action (where goals are the object or aim or an action) (Locke & Latham, 2002). While goal-setting theory is generally analysed at individual level, its principles are relevant at organisational level, too. Locke (2004) further argues that goal setting is effective for any task where people have control over their performance. Research in this field currently explores goal-setting theory at both individual and organisational level. In organisational context, personal empirical observations highlight that the goals of individuals, teams and the entity as a whole can be in conflict. Goal conflict can motivate incompatible actions and this has the potential to impact performance. Thus, alignment between individual goals and group goals is important for maximising performance. This links goals setting theory to principal- agent theory, also called agency theory.

Agency theory (Eisenhardt, 1985) explains how to organize relationships in which one party (the principal) determines the work, which another party (the agent) undertakes. The agency problem is to determine the optimal contract for the agent's service. The principal- agent relationships should reflect efficient organisation of information and risk-bearing costs. The human assumptions to consider are self-interest, bounded rationality and risk aversion, while at organisational level, the assumptions to be analysed are the goal conflict among participants and the information asymmetry. This links the agency theory to organisational theory, studying whole organisations,

how they adapt, and the strategies and structures that guide them. Eisenhardt (1985) further considers both agency and organisational theory to be rational, information based, efficiency oriented, concerned with determinants of control strategy and distinguish between two types of performance evaluation control: behaviour based and outcome based.

Overall, various versions of organisational theory emphasize the importance of task characteristics, especially task programmability, to the choice of control strategy. The existence of "people" or social control is as an alternative to control through performance evaluation. In contrast to the classical scholars, most theorists today believe that there is no one best way to organize. What is important is that there be a fit between the organisation's structure, its size, its technology, and the requirements of its environment. This perspective is the contingency theory (Fiedler, 1964) that contends that the optimal organisation / leadership style is contingent upon various internal and external constraints.

A subset of organisational theory is considered to be systems theory, which includes a series of variations such as von Bertalanffy (1956)'s General Systems Theory, Mulej's Dialectical Systems Theory, Flood and Jackson (1995)'s Critical Systems Thinking. Systems theory opposes reductionism and promotes holism. Rather than reducing an entity (e.g. the human body) to the properties of its parts or elements (e.g. organs or cells), systems theory focuses on the arrangement of and relations between the parts, which connect them into a whole. It emphasises interdependences, interconnectedness and openness as opposed to independence, isolation and closeness. This enables the discovery of emergence, as new attributes of interacting entities generated by their analysis as a whole that would not become evident if the parts would analysed independently. Systems acknowledges complexity as an attribute of reality and focuses on synergy and the combination analysis and synthesis. Systems theory considers organisations as systems with relative boundaries, which make exchanges with the environment and must adapt to environmental changes in order to survive. They are open systems, which interact directly with the environment through inputs and outputs.

The Rationale for Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is a human resources strategy used to evaluate performance on the job and their potential for development (Mashavira and Chidoko, 2012). Mathew and Johnson (2015) posit that the underlying objective of performance appraisal is to improve the performance of the individual employee, thereby leading to improvement of the organisation as a whole. Therefore, judgements about the performance of employees on the job have to determine the extent to

which employees perform their work effectively. Potential for employees' development is also an important aspect of any performance appraisal system. Hardeep *et al.*, (2015) assert that performance appraisal is essential in the planning of the employees' training and development needs and in assessing their relative strengths and weaknesses. Identified weaknesses enable employees to be more effective on their jobs. Thus, to redress shortcomings of teachers, in particular, the Public Service Commission of Zimbabwe adopted performance appraisal as a corrective human resource management strategy.

An effective performance appraisal system should identify an individual's current level of performance, enhance employees' performance, provide the basis for rewarding employees in relation to their contribution to organizational goals, motivate employees, identify training and development needs, identify potential performance and provide information for career progression (Dessler 2017, Elliot 2015). However, research by Hay Group (2012) indicates a focus on career development to be the most effective in improving classroom-teaching quality.

Performance systems weigh heavily toward accountability rather than toward the growth and development of teachers and their teaching practices. Barlett (2000) in (Elliott 2015) argues that such performance appraisal systems have often failed to inform teachers about what needs to be improved or supported their development.

Performance appraisals help supervisors to frame training policies and future programs at their organizations. Through performance appraisal, supervisors are able to analyze strengths and weaknesses of employees, so that new jobs and compensation packages are on their merit. Such packages include recommendation for bonus and promotion and those who need assistance to improve would have training programmes organized for them. Through performance appraisal, supervisors understand the validity and importance of their selection procedures and the strengths and weaknesses of their procedures and make changes in selection methods.

The Performance Appraisal Process

Performance appraisal is not something that most employees are always ready to accept and do well. Many employees have often displayed negative attitude towards implementation of performance appraisals for various reasons. The training of appraisers on appraisal methodology and skills of the appraisal interviewing is of paramount importance for effective appraisal. The process involves setting work standards, assessing employees' actual performance relative to those standards and providing feedback to the employees with the aim of helping them to eliminate performance

deficiencies or to continue to perform above par (Dessler 2017).

Since 2005, the Zimbabwean education systems has been appraising teachers using the Results Based Management (RBM) approach, an approach which is basically result -oriented and an approach which stems from the philosophy of Management by Objectives by Peter Drucker. Such a process of appraisal is open and frank. It would be difficult and almost impossible to operate a result-oriented performance appraisal system without openness. The supervisor and the supervisee have to start by identifying and setting objectives that are realistic and achievable by both parties. Employee involvement is critical in performance appraisal processes (Elliott 2015; Robbins and Judge 2015). Robbins and Judge (2015) maintain that if employees are engaged in decisions that affect them and increase their autonomy and control over their work lives, they will become more motivated, more committed to the organisation, more productive and more satisfied with their jobs. Thus, evaluation decisions should lead to development of employees.

The performance appraisal process starts with the manager defining the employee's job and performance criteria. Key result areas come from the job description reached. Objectives are then set for each identified Key Result Area (KRA). The objectives have to be specific, measurable, achievable, and results-oriented and time- framed (SMART). The objectives should be acceptable and the exercise done in a climate characterized by open communication (McKenna and Beech 2014). Elliott (2015) asserts that one of the key elements in the development of an effective performance appraisal system is involvement in the process. This promotes greater ownership and encourages reflection and review among the teachers themselves.

An outline of the action plan of each key result area helps to achieve set objectives. The appraiser continuously monitors performance of the supervisee during the performance period, which is usually a year. It is a mistake to wait until the performance review time to let employees to know what they are doing wrong and doing right (Dessler 2017). In support of Dessler (2017), Mathew and Johnson (2015) assert that performance evaluation is an enduring developmental progression than as a prescribed once- a year- review. Aligning the employee's effort with the job standards should therefore be a continuous process, which allows for the identification and address of performance problems. Recognition, rewards and opportunity to take a more challenging work are results of high performance. Staff development workshops and counselling are products of low performance.

Both the appraiser and the supervisee prepare for the formal final review at the end of the review period. The supervisee carries out a self-assessment of his/ her performance in achieving objectives and considers issues he/she would want to raise about his/her performance carrier prospects. At the same time, the supervisor rates the supervisee, discusses ratings by the supervisee and his /her ratings, and determine the developmental needs of the supervisee. Both the supervisee and supervisor have to agree on the final ratings. The final performance review meeting is therefore a stocktaking exercise

Employee participation is one of the characteristics of an effective interview (Elliott, 2015). The more the employee participates in the appraisal interview, the greater the feelings on the part of the employee towards the interview and the interviewer. Appraisals may not be successful when done by someone on someone without agreeing on standards, criteria and process (Machingambi *et al.*, 2013). The supervisor should therefore appreciate the supervisee's point of view. Appraisal interviewing approaches may be used using problem-solving styles. For appraisal interviews to be effective, they should contain limited criticism.

Performance Appraisal and Motivation

The relationship between the organization and its members influences what motivates them to work and the rewards and fulfillment they derive from it (Mullins and Christy 2016). Thus, highly engaged and motivated teachers would stand a better chance to achieve their organizational goals.

The opportunity to continue to grow through training and development is among the most important factors in employee motivation in today's competitive environment (Sahoo and Mishra (2012). It is therefore essential to know the strengths of teachers and those aspects of their practice that need further development. Zbar et al., (2007) in Elliott (2013) maintain that an effective performance appraisal system should hold employees accountable, address underperformance and enhance performance and practice. Through performance appraisal evaluations, individuals should be able to identify their personal strengths and weaknesses. Such appraisals should provide feedback to teachers about their specific strengths and weaknesses in performing their jobs. Continuous feedback communicated in a good manner is always fertile ground for motivation. However, many performance appraisals have failed to inform teachers about what needs to be improved or supported their development to do so (Elliott 2013). They are often about judgement.

Performance appraisals should provide motivation to employees to improve the way they work individually for developmental purposes, which in turn will improve organizational productivity (Comighud et al., (2020). They should motivate employees to do better in their job by giving them the knowledge of results, recognition merits and the opportunity to discuss work with their managers. Herzberg's twofactor theory views the most attractive and potent motivators of performance as non-financial rewards dependent on performance such as advancement, responsibility, challenging work, autonomy and personal growth. Herzberg at al. (1959) distinguish two sets of work factors, one relating to the job content or the intrinsic aspects of work and another one relating extrinsic factors of work (hygiene factors). According to Herzberg and his associates, intrinsic factors (motivators or satisfiers), include achievement, responsibility recognition, and advancement possibilities. If the work is challenging and perceived to be manageable, people work to the limits of their potential. Objectives set by both the appraiser and the supervisee would motivate the later since he will perceive them to be manageable. Herzberg referred to the other factors as hygiene factors. These include supervision, interpersonal relationships, salaries and bonuses, status, fringe benefits and job security. Hygiene factors give rise to dissatisfaction among workers and tend to decrease productivity though they are not motivators themselves.

Abraham Maslow's Needs Hierarchy Theory originally published in 1943 asserts that people are motivated by needs such as physiological, security, social, esteem and self-actualization needs. According to the theory, a need is a potential motivator until it has been satisfied. Mullins and Christy (2016) maintain that Maslow's proposition is that human needs appear in a series of levels, a hierarchy of importance. According to the needs theory, people always want more and what they want is dependent upon what they already have. A satisfied lower need is no longer a strong motivator. The needs of the next higher level in the hierarchy demand satisfaction and become the motivating influence. Thus, according to Maslow's needs theory, only unsatisfied needs motivate people.

An increase in salary and/ or an annual bonus received in recognition of good performance at the end of the performance period will go a long way in motivating teachers. Money, undoubtedly motivates as it provides the carrot which most people want (Armstrong 2012). In this regard, performance related pay motivate teachers to work and improve productivity in the organization.

Empirical studies reviewed that although increased pay rates could motivate employees to improve their productivity, elements such as self-esteem and morale were also essential. Some authorities have however argued that the link of effective performance to money is not an effective way to

motivate workers. David McClelland in Goyal (2015) are of the view that external stimulation like provision of money is unnecessary. Herzberg (1959) share the same views when they argue that while the lack of money can cause dissatisfaction, its provision does not result in lasting satisfaction either. Thus, money has a short-term effect, described as movement rather than motivation. Although money is not a motivator, a perceived lack of monetary reward can be a dissatisfier. Employees who paid for repetitious boring work will be dissatisfied with lack of intrinsic rewards, just as employees paid poorly for interesting and challenging work may be dissatisfied with the lack of extrinsic rewards. Thus, the evidence seems clear that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are important. Badly conceived or administered payment systems can indeed dissatisfy workers and this result in inequitable rewards, which include failure to reward good performance accordingly.

Performance Appraisal and Mutual Understanding within the Organization

Long (1986) carried out a survey of American companies and observed that most organizations place more emphasis on direct relationships between the appraiser and the supervisee. The essence of any good appraisal system is to create an opportunity for frank, honest and open communication between supervisors and supervisees. Unless there is good mutual trust and understanding, the supervisee is likely to view the appraisal discussion with apprehension and suspicion. The fairness of a performance appraisal system has an important effect on the success of organisations (Long et al., 2013). Gary E. Roberts (2003) in Singh (2014) adds that participatory performance appraisal is an essential component of a fair and ethical evaluation of an employee's performance, which often leads to higher job satisfaction. Provision of feedback after supervision is significant as it solely involves both parties, sharing observations and experiences (Comighud et al., (2020). Results-oriented appraisal systems such as RBM encourage openness, participation and feedback as basis for development.

However, Kay Rowe (1964) observed that most managers find open appraisals very threatening and where they appraise subordinates, their comments are often generalized and evasive. Since managers find open appraisal threatening, there is a tendency of withholding negative comments. The major problem with performance appraisal is the inability of supervisors to provide negative feedback in a constructive manner (Northcraft and Neale 2002). Supervisors who must convey negative performance information to teachers are often vague and indirect in conveying this information to the teachers. Comighud *et al.*, (2020) maintain that improving employees' performance largely depends on balanced and considerate feedback that provides information on

progress towards accomplishment of goals or data indicating where the shortfall occurs.

Confrontation, conflict- strained relationships and frustration are part of the history of appraisal (Peel 1993). Supervisees fear unfair assessments, confrontations and criticisms. Because performance appraisal involves supervisors judging the quality and quantity of job performance of other supervisees, the process is often emotional. On the other hand, the appraiser is likely to view appraisal review period as an experience where teacher hostility and resistance are likely to emerge. Since appraisers are aware of the effects of an adverse assessment on the relationship with the supervisee, the option is often to water down the assessment to avoid conflict with the supervisee. Some appraisals are affected by the central tendency effect of maintaining relationships. Supervisors stick to the middle when filling rating scales. The rating scale in the Zimbabwean context ranges from 1 to 5. Such supervisors tent to avoid the highs (4 and 5) and lows (1 and 2) and rate most of their people 3. Such evaluations are distorted, biased and not useful for promotions, transfers, provision of feedback on actual performance, salary or counselling purposes and cannot sow the seeds for personal development and growth (Long et al., 2013). Long et al., (2013) argue that when the appraising process causes dissatisfaction to the employees, it will eventually affect the organization's performance.

Lawyer (2016) argues that linking performance to pay and reward decisions adds extra pressures, anxiety and stresses to an appraisal system. Employees may adopt to target on receiving good ratings rather than genuinely improve their overall performance. Thus, such appraisals lose focus from being performance measurement and performance improvement tools to financial advancement tools.

The Context of Zimbabwe

Various developed countries practice performance appraisal as a way of improving employees' performance and upholding accountability. Zimbabwe and other developing countries had to adopt the system when they realized that it had been quite efficient and effective in the countries (Madhekeni, 2012). By 1994, Zimbabwean teachers were using the ED94 system. Through the system, well performing teachers received one or two notches from their heads. The system did not spell out where exactly the teachers excelled. The overall rating of the teacher depended on the supervisor who would have determined standards for the supervisee. Teachers considered the rating process as unfair and not motivational. Such traditional performance appraisals based on the appraiser's perceptions of the employee's performance evaluated employees subjectively rather than objectively as supervisors could rate their employees either too high or low. Effective implementation of the ED94 appraisal system suffered from the "halo effect", that is, the influence of a rater's general impression on ratings of specific rate qualities (Dessler 2017). The supervisor could rate unfriendly employees lower on all traits rather than just on one trait. In support of Dessler (2017), Lira et al., (2016) argue that a performance appraisal system will only be an effective motivational tool if the appraised perceive their appraisals as accurate and fair, and are satisfied with them. The Zimbabwean ED94 performance appraisal system could not satisfy reasons for any performance appraisal. These included motivating employees, providing the basis for rewarding employees, identifying current levels of performance, identifying training and development needs, providing information for succession planning and identifying potential performance. This led to the adoption of a new performance appraisal system in 1996, by the Public Service Commission of Zimbabwe, with the aim of redressing shortcomings of the ED94. The aim was to improve the caliber of the teachers and improving the performance of those not doing well. Under this new system, there was rewarding of highflyers while those who performed below par would benefit from training programmes.

It would appear the appraisal system of 1996/1997 came in a hasty manner. There was inadequate training of all the public servants. There was inadequate consultation of and commitment by stakeholders and hence no ownership of the system by the affected parties (Zigora and Chigwamba 2000).

The success story of the Results Based Management (RBM) system in developed countries such as Britain, Canada and Australia led to developing countries such as Zimbabwe to adopt another appraisal system, Results Based Management (RBM). The government of Zimbabwe embarked on an integrated RBM programme across government in 2005. The purpose of the programme was to help the government in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the government activities (Madhekeni 2012). In the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, in particular, information from the programme would for accountability, reporting, communication, giving teachers' feedback about their work, motivating and rewarding teachers, coaching and developing teachers, resourcing and operational activities. performance appraisal information, teachers' progress would be determined as well as areas where they needed assistance. The new system adopted was to bring about the desired changes in the Public Service of Zimbabwe, which many viewed as lazy and wasteful concerning how they used resources. Zimbabwean civil servants were process- focused rather than being results- focused (Mashavira and Chidoko 2012).

The new performance appraisal system was Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) funded (SIDA, 1998). SIDA produced training manuals for use by trainers. Training of officers was for three days at national level. They in turn trained other officers for three days at provincial level. These carried out one-day workshops with teachers in various districts. There were no pilot studies carried out. Training of officers was not continuously due to financial constraints.

At the commencement of each performance period, the supervisee identified key result areas related to his/her job description. From the key result areas, the supervisee formulated objectives that were (SMART). A performance management system that employs the goal-setting theory and Management by Objectives (MBO) views employees as striving towards goal attainment. Workers set targets for themselves and strived to achieve them. The assumption was that the individuals understood and accepted the goals and wanted to arrive at the targets. During the performance period, reviews took place and adjustments made. At the end of the performance period, final performance ratings took place with both the supervisor and the supervisee giving their input. Discussions centered on areas where the teachers needed assistance for their professional growth and development.

The study therefore sought to explore the effectiveness of the performance appraisal systems on teachers' professional development and growth in selected schools in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed design that involved the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods complementing each other. The use of qualitative design helped the researcher to understand individuals and events in their natural settings while the use of quantitative design offered the greatest prospect of valid results, as they are excellent for the measurement of attitudes and orientations prevalent in a large population (Tuckman, 2012). The main concerns of the quantitative paradigm were to ensure that measurement was valid, reliable and generalizable in its prediction of cause and effect.

Sampling

The population of the present study were the 132 primary schools in Masvingo District. The study used Convenience sampling (also known as availability sampling), to select a cluster of ten schools that formed the sample. Convenience sampling is a specific type of non-probability sampling procedure that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in the study (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2015). Thus, ten schools selected based on being close to the researcher's place of residence formed the sample. This

was in order to cut on travelling costs. All the heads of the ten (10) schools and twenty (20) teachers randomly selected from the ten schools (two from each school) became the sample of participants. A sample of 30 participants comprising 10 heads of schools (4 females and 6 males) and 20 teachers (8 females and 12 males) all in the age range of 25 to 55 years.

Data Collection

A semi-structured questionnaire, the Performance Appraisal Questionnaire (PAQ), and an interview guide were the instruments used for data collection. The following research questions guided this study.

- How do heads and teachers understand performance appraisals?
- To what extent and depth are they implementing performance appraisals in their schools?

Of the 132 primary schools in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe, only 10 purposively selected took part in the study. This was because they were within the reach of the researcher. Heads from the 10 schools took part in the recorded interviews. Using the PAQ, information was solicited from 20 teachers (2 from each school) randomly selected from the 10 schools. Thus, the researcher was able to collect the questionnaires from the teachers as soon as he completed interviewing each of the heads at their schools.

Data Analysis

Collected data were organised and presented in a meaningful way to provide insight into relationships that existed. Data analysis involved reducing accumulated data to a manageable size developing summaries, looking for patterns and applying statistical techniques. Data presented in graph and table form enabled the researcher to check for uniformity, consistency and accuracy while narrative reports brought out findings more clearly in a qualitative way.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Description of participants

Of the 10 school heads interviewed, 4 were females while 6 were males. This reveals that women are under- represented as heads in Masvingo. Their leadership potential remains unfulfilled and their contribution to schools as organisations is lost. In view of this, Woods and West (2010) posit that in every country in the world, there is a widespread discrimination against women at senior levels of leadership in organisations. The 20 teachers (10 females and 10 males) who responded to the PAQ were within the age range of 25 to 55 years. They were mature enough to understand the performance appraisal process. Therefore, neither gender nor age could be an excuse for not implementing performance appraisal in Masvingo effectively.

All 10 school heads who participated during this study were graduates. Ten (10) of the teachers were graduates as well, while 10 had either teaching diplomas or teaching certificates from educational institutions. The fact that all the heads in the 10 selected schools were graduates reveals that selection of heads to headship posts depends on the trait theory of leadership where one's qualification is considered. Heads with high qualifications had the needed knowledge to be able to implement education policies such as performance appraisal and effectively supervise their subordinates as they implemented the policies. All the 20 teachers had attained some teaching qualification. However, Cassidy and Kreitner (2013) argue that regardless of how carefully screened employees are and selected in any organisation, a gap remains between what they actually know and what they should know. Thus, although heads and teachers in the study had attained some teaching qualifications, there was need to conduct proper training to fill their knowledge gap on performance appraisal before implementation of the policy.

All the 10 heads had been in the teaching service for a period ranging from 15 years or more. This therefore suggests that they were familiar with the ED94, the 1996/7 performance appraisal and the 2005 RBM approaches of appraising teachers.

Twelve (12) teachers had been in the teaching service for a period ranging from 15 years and more. They had used the ED94, the 1996/7 performance appraisal and the 2005 RBM. Four (4) teachers had been in the service for less than 10 years while the other four (4) had been in the service for less than 5 years. Thus, 12 of the participants were familiar with all the three systems of performance appraisal while four (4) were familiar with Two (2). Four (4) were familiar with only one (1). However, Zigora and Chimbwanda (2000) and Mashavira and Chidoko (2012) concur that both the 1996/7 performance appraisal and the 2005 RBM were hastily introduced without adequate training of all public servants and without consultation of the stakeholders. Therefore, their exposure did not mean that they knew much about performance appraisal.

Participants' understanding of Performance Appraisals

From what the participants were saying, there is evidence to suggest that both heads and teachers are not so knowledgeable of what performance appraisal is all about. Long *et al.*, (2013) cautioned that errors by supervisors during evaluation cause dissatisfaction among employees as such errors result in inaccurate employees' results. Twenty-three (23) participants noted that two (2) reviews during the performance year, one during planning and the final one when rating of supervisees, were not adequate to equip them with relevant competences to implement performance appraisals. Seventeen (17) teachers concurred that they

did not get any assistance from their supervisors during the performance year until when they met for final rating. All the 20 teachers revealed that the training needs section of the form was completed but workshops and training programmes were never scheduled to address the needs. Thus, the performance appraisal process remains uncompleted. From the above discussion, the conclusion is that the participants in this study do not understand what performance appraisal is all about.

The extent and depth to which performance appraisals are prevalent in schools

The study revealed that sixteen (80%) of the teachers had had a one day training workshop on performance appraisal while four (20%) had never attended any performance appraisal workshop either at cluster or district level. The four teachers had been in the teaching service for less than five years and therefore were relatively new in the system. They got assistance from their supervisors to ensure the implementation of Ministry policy on performance appraisal. Cassidy and Kreitner (2013) maintain that in small organisations such as schools, the immediate supervisor has the responsibility of assessing training needs and conducting training. Heads of schools and heads of departments could assist those relatively new in the system.

Four of the ten heads in the study (40%) had had an opportunity to train for at least three days while six trained for one day. In this regard, the study revealed that both the supervisors and the supervisees were not adequately prepared to execute the performance appraisal programme effectively and efficiently. The risk of inadequately trained employees was real but not envisaged. The training programme had to be continuous, to help supervisors and supervisees to understand the essence of performance appraisal and the process involved. Carrel et al (2018) argue that appraisers also need training on appraising subordinates. The need for supervisors to be familiar with basic appraisal techniques, understand and avoid problems that cripple appraisals and know how to conduct appraisals fairly was emphasized by Dessler (2017) while Long et al., (2013) emphasized on the need to have an effective employee performance evaluation that helps leaders make right decisions for the employees' success and development.

The study revealed that no pilot study took place when RBM started in 2005. Implementation of RBM in Zimbabwe was a rushed effort as adequate training of all the public servants and adequate consultation of commitment by stakeholders had not taken place. There was therefore no ownership of the system by the affected parties.

Continuous capacity building could have taken place so that implementation of the programme was efficient. However, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was not able to continue financing the programme as was expected (Madhekeni 2012). Hyperinflation from 2005 to 2008 and from 2017 to 2020 further worsened the situation. Despite the challenges, the Zimbabwean government continued to implement RBM in schools without offering rewards for good performance. There was a freeze in posts, as government had no money to promote civil servants during the recession. The reason why there was continuous implementation of the policy was for accountability's sake. Issues of professional growth and development did not feature prominently.

Both supervisors and supervisees agreed upon kRAs and standards. Performance reviews took place twice during the performance period, during the first review and during the final review. Both the supervisor and the supervisee agreed on work plans and the training needs of the supervisee. All the 20 respondents to the PAQ agreed that supervisors lacked commitment to get feedback about the performance of the supervisee during the performance period. Hughes, an Executive Director of Office Team in Price (2011) maintains that it is important for managers to provide ongoing feedback to their staff to foster greater productivity and reduce the potential for miscommunication. Hughes further advises that supervisors should not wait until the final review to recognize excellent work or raise concerns about weak performance. Instead, they should address these situations when they arise and use the review to address an employee's overall progress toward established goals.

Cassidy and Kreitner (2013) maintain that the primary role of a supervisor is to assess employees' training needs and take measures to meet them. The study revealed that the training needs section of the appraisal instrument was completed but workshops or training programmes to address those needs were never organized. Thus, the opportunity to continue to grow through training and development regarded by Sahoo and Mishra (2012) as one of the most important factors in employee motivation was not considered a priority. The process of performance appraisal was therefore not completed and the aspect of professional growth and development not seriously considered by supervisors. Both the supervisor and the supervisee did rating of the supervisee's performance. However, the study revealed that in most cases, supervisors rated supervisees high to avoid conflicts. Dessler (2017) asserts that one who rates his/her employees too high or too low is doing a disservice to them, to the organization and to him/herself.

The aspect of rewards was not always resultsbased in most cases. Participants revealed that teachers always received their annual bonuses regardless of their performance in their KRAs. The Ministry of Education always seriously considered performance appraisal when it came to promotions either to headship or to deputy headship. Advertisement of such posts often took place after quite a substantial period and were available to a limited number of people. The Ministry has therefore not been able to consider the fact that not all people need the same things and the fact that one person may need different things at different times. In this regard, lack of commitment by the Ministry to reward good achievement by teachers could demotivate teachers resulting in failure to accomplish established organizational goals.

CONCLUSION

Basing on the results of the study, the Zimbabwean appraisal system was a rushed effort not well understood by both supervisors and supervisees. Both supervisors and financiers of the programme, the Ministry, lacked commitment for the programme to be effectively and efficiently implemented. The Ministry, which should have taken the leading role of financing the programme, delegated its responsibility to some organisations, the UNDP, who in turn abruptly stopped financing the programme resulting in its purpose not being realised.

Secondly, it was observed that training programmes to address training needs identified were not organized so that professional growth and development could be realized. The training of both supervisors and supervisees was not enough for them to implement **RBM** effectively and efficiently. Supervisees did not attribute their academic results and even their commitment to work to the performance appraisal process, as rewards were not results - based in most cases. Only when headship and deputy headship posts became available, that performance appraisals became necessary. School heads and District Education Officers wanted the policy on RBM implemented but lacked commitment as evidenced by their lack of support for its implementation. In this regard, teachers now perceive the performance appraisal process as heavily skewed toward accountability rather than toward the growth and development of their teaching practices.

LIMITATIONS

The study confined itself to only 10 primary schools in Masvingo District where there were 132 primary schools. Six other districts in Masvingo Province did not take part. Secondary schools in the same district did not take part in this study. The use of convenience sampling procedure meant that the researcher carried out the study with schools within his vicinity. Therefore, the sample used may not be

representative enough for the Zimbabwean schools. Nevertheless, findings from the study provide some insights for researchers to interrogate the effectiveness of appraisal systems on teachers' professional development and growth further.

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