

Implementation of Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development in Secondary Schools in Nandi North Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract

Original Research Article

The teacher performance appraisal and development tool was introduced by the Teachers Service Commission to promote teacher accountability, enhance instructional quality, identify areas where teachers need additional development and promote the overall academic outcomes of schools in Kenya. The response of teachers and school administrators to TPAD has been mixed, with some schools embracing it wholly while others rejected the idea. The purpose of the study was to investigate the state of implementation of teacher performance appraisal and development in public secondary schools in Nandi North Sub-County, Kenya. The study used ex-post facto research design. The target population was 417 teachers and 55 principals of the 55 public secondary schools in the Sub-County. Stratified random sampling was used to select 11 schools to take part in the study. Further, stratified random sampling was then deployed to select 125 teachers and 11 principals to take part in the study. Data was collected using a questionnaire for teachers and interview guide for school principals. Quantitative data was coded into SPSS version 20 and analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages. It was then presented using frequency distribution tables with explanations. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The findings of the study showed that teachers were subjected to the filling of the TPAD and that appraisal has improved their instructional performance. It was concluded that teacher evaluation is a critical and regular routine in most school calendars. It is a very valuable period for administrators to improve instruction and learning. Therefore, it was recommended that before setting foot in the classroom for a lesson observation, principals need to sit with the teacher to discuss the upcoming lesson that is to be observed and the expectations of the appraisal process.

Keywords: Secondary School Teachers, Performance Appraisal, Development, TPAD, Nandi.

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INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal is a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing staff performance in accordance with organizational strategic goals [1]. The process of appraisal normally involves formative aspects focusing on career development, feedback, performance and professional learning. In the education sector, teacher performance appraisal aims to enhance learning outcomes and ensure quality educational experience for students. Performance leads to improvement of teacher quality, which is the single most variable that influences student achievement in school [2]. Teacher quality and appraisal is key to improving the focus of teachers when teaching [3]. Considering that many reforms in the past have failed

(Danielson, 2011) [4], an understanding of the various aspects of successful performance appraisal is essential.

In Kenya, Ngeno, Bett and Cheruiyot [5] established that, like in many developing countries, teacher appraisal has numerous shortcomings hence is ineffective. The authors found that teacher appraisal was aimed merely at ensuring teachers' adherence to rules and regulations and loyalty to principals. Similarly, Omayo [6] argues that there are weaknesses in the rules and regulations of appraisal process that make the policies weak and ineffective in schools. The author suggests that teacher appraisal should be used to improve the quality of teaching and provision of education to learners. Further, the author is of the view that these changes should be deliberate and that the

appraisal process should be formalized to realize better outcomes in accountability and educational outcomes.

Implementation of Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development

In management, the process of evaluating performance involves the identification of common goals shared by the appraiser and the appraisee. These goals serve as a correlation in the overall organization. The productivity of an organization depends on effective appraisal [7]. Therefore, individual professional goals must correlate with the desired overall organizational goals. Performance appraisal, when done with accuracy and fairness, contributes to a proper measurement of employee performance, challenges hindering their productivity and the practical solutions to address those challenges [8]. A performance appraisal system helps the organization to achieve three major things, namely gauge the performance standards, determine the core competencies, and communicate the standards and competencies to employees.

Comparing different employees' performance obtained from performance appraisal should inform future organizational improvements [9]. Performance appraisal, as a managerial process, links organizational objectives, performance standards and evaluation, to which the performance review are often applied. In an organization, it is considered a key human resource management practice for measuring effectiveness and efficiency [10]. Studies on organizational fairness and justice indicate that employees create perceptions that affect their attitudes at work. For example, their perceptions may create attitudes towards employers, affect their job satisfaction, lead to turnover intentions, affect workers' commitment and may lead to absenteeism [11, 12]. All these affect the productivity of the organization.

A study by Folger, Konovsky and Cropanzano [13] found that a thorough and effective appraisal process in an organization has three main characteristics, namely adequate notice, fair hearing and feedback. Adequate notice means the ability of the management to provide timely information to employees. The organization should use its agents to distribute both verbal and written information to employees on impending appraisal, and that information must be provided in a timely manner. The organization should also explain the aims of the appraisal clearly to the employees. Adequate notice requires organizations and their agents to publish, distribute and explain performance standards to employees, discuss how and why such standards must be met, and provide for regular and timely feedback on performance. Fair hearing requires a formal review meeting in which an employee is informed of a tentative assessment of his or her performance and how it was derived by the manager, who should be familiar

with the employee's performance. Feedback involves the appraiser providing appraisees with information on the outcomes of their performance from time to time. Positive feedback refers to emphasis on work done well. Conversely, areas that need improvement are communicated to the employee through constructive criticism.

Employees and managers' reactions to appraisal systems are essential to attainment at least three purposes of appraisals: employee development, reward allocation and legal documentation [14]. Boswell and Boudreau [15] identifies the two functions of performance appraisals as evaluative and developmental. In other words, appraisal seeks to gauge performance and competences as well as determine areas on which employees need more support from the organization. Kovach [16] observes that employees seek achievement, responsibility and growth as the highest priority for incentives in their work. A reward and recognition system that addresses these areas should produce the desired outcomes, which are determined through appraisal. Therefore, performance appraisal does not make sense if there is no proper support for employees to deliver the expected outcomes in the first place. Joint goal setting with employees can better guarantee these outcomes as employees can envisage and negotiate realistic outcomes with management [17].

A study done by Skarlicki and Folger [18] revealed that the appraisal process can be a source of extreme dissatisfaction at work. This happens where employees feel dissatisfied with the appraisal process, especially if it is biased, irrelevant or political in nature. Poorly conducted performance appraisal makes it difficult to realize meaningful results since employees perceive such a process as being inaccurate and unfair [19]. Therefore, there is need for a critical criteria and proper monitoring for effective evaluation to be conducted. Ahmed [20] carried out a study on the measures of effective performance appraisal function in a state agency. The study found that employees understand the best criteria that can lead to a fair and accurate assessment of their performance. Their suggestions included employee satisfaction with the system, employee motivation, fairness of the appraisal system to employees, perception built on the appraisal process, objectivity of the process and extent to which feedback is provided to employees about the process.

Cole [21] argues that an effective performance appraisal commences at its very design stage. The preparatory stage should be followed by the process of interviewing in which the manager evaluates the progress of the appraisal with the staff. The results of the interview should be some form of agreed action, either by the staff member alone or jointly with the manager. This action generally materializes in the shape of a job improvement plan, promotion to another

job/level or to a salary increase. The result of the appraisal is communicated and discussed with the employees on a one-to-one basis. The focus of this discussion is on communication and listening. The results, the problems and the possible solutions are discussed with the aim of solving and reaching consensus. The feedback should be given with a positive attitude since the manner of delivery has an effect on the employees' future performance. The purpose of the appraisal meeting should be to solve problems faced and motivate the employees to perform better.

This paper discusses the extent to which the secondary school teachers are subjected to teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) in Nandi-North Sub-County, Kenya. TPAD is one of the elements in Kenya's schools that provide a link between the administrators and the teachers. The administrators are the appraisers. They are expected to provide timely reminders to the teachers to fill the TPAD forms. Such timely communication thus enables teachers to submit their performance records in time. The aim of TPAD is to ensure quality education and attainment of good academic performance. It is also designed to motivate teachers to work more for the betterment of the results of their respective schools. TPAD focuses on such indicators as lesson attendance to lessons, strict adherence to professional documents, like the school syllabus, a collaborative culture among teachers and student involvement.

Statement of the Problem

The Government of Kenya invests heavily towards the realization of the national educational goals. Various state educational policy documents emphasize the importance of providing quality education to learners in the country. For instance, the Teachers Service Commission Act of 2011 (revised 2012) gives the Commission the mandate to monitor the conduct and performance of teachers who are in service [22]. In order to comply with the Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation framework, the Commission was prompted to introduce the Performance Appraisal System for teachers. The stated aim of performance appraisal is to strengthen supervision and monitor teachers' instructional performance in schools. Despite government, through the Teachers' Service Commission, to ensure teachers deliver quality teaching services to learners, some teachers seem to resist the monitoring tool provided by the Commission. They claim that this tool, otherwise known as the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool, is not used appropriately.

Manyinsa [23] assessed the impact of the implementation of TPAD on the quality of teaching in Narok County in Kenya. The study found that there is fear among appraisees who are colleagues. Other challenges noted include variance in lesson observation

and school principals' hiring of technicians to conduct appraisal. In some cases, performing schools with their own targets have dumped TPAD tool and only fake figures at the end of the term among other challenges experienced by the implementation of TPAD. A study carried out in Nyandarua South found that teachers use TPAD tool extensively to improve their efficiency and delivery of learning to students [24]. However, he recommends that TPAD should be used in the monitoring of teachers on time management and should be borrowed and applied to other areas of school operations.

Tumusiime, Mwalw'a and Okemasisi [25] assessed principals' implementation of TPAD and performance of secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County. The findings showed that principals' implementation strategies of TPAD satisfactorily explained the performance of teachers in public secondary schools. The authors recommended that further research be conducted to evaluate how the implementation of TPAD has been done in other schools across Kenya. This paper, therefore, assesses the extent of implementation of TPAD in secondary schools in Nandi North Sub-County.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used ex-post facto research design. The target population comprised teachers and principals of public secondary schools in Nandi-North Sub-County. There were 55 public secondary schools in the Sub-County with a total of 417 teachers at the time of study. As such, the target population for the study was 417 teachers and 55 principals. Stratified random sampling was used to select 11 schools from the boarding and day-school categories. It was also used to select 125 teachers from the 11 schools. Every principal whose school was selected automatically became a respondent. As such, 11 principals took part in the study. Data was collected using a questionnaire for teachers and interview guide for the school principals. Quantitative data was checked to ensure completeness, consistency and accuracy. The data was then coded into the Statistical Package for Social Science (version 20) to facilitate data analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and means were generated and used to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data was analyzed and presented thematically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to determine the Extent to which secondary school teachers had been subjected to the teacher performance appraisal and development (TPAD) tool. To achieve this objective, the teachers were presented with statements on which to provide their rating using a 5-point Likert scale as follows: 1=Small Extent (SE); 2=Not Sure (NS); 3=Somehow Large Extent (SLE); 4=Large Extent (LE), and 5=Very Large Extent (VLE). Their responses were as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Frequency of Teachers' Subjection to TPAD

Statement	NS		SE		SLE		LE		VLE	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Teachers fill the TPAD regularly	16	12.8	26	20.8	1	0.8	51	40.8	31	24.8
Teachers take on the lesson observations on termly basis	3	2.4	10	8.0	9	7.2	58	46.4	45	36
Teachers have had to attend to co-curricular activities often	5	4.0	21	16.8	22	17.6	28	22.4	49	39.2
Teachers have improved on content delivery	8	6.0	20	16.0	3	2.4	82	65.6	12	9.6
TPAD is one of the tools used in teacher promotion	18	14.4	21	16.8	4	3.2	71	56.8	11	8.8

Data displayed in Table 1 shows that most, 51(40.8%), of the participants affirmed that teachers filled the TPAD. Another good number of the respondents, 31(24.8%), also agreed to a very large extent that teachers regularly filled the TPAD. This shows that majority of the teachers in the schools under study filled the TPAD, implying that performance appraisal was being implemented in the area. However, some, 16(12.8%), of the participants were not sure, others, 26(20.8%), agreed to small extent and only 1(0.8%) somehow agreed that teachers filled the TPAD. These findings suggest that a significant number of teachers did not regularly undergo performance appraisal.

On the statement that teachers took on lesson observations on termly basis, 3(20.4%) were not sure, 10(8%) agreed to a small extent, 9(7.2%) indicated to somehow large extent, 58(46.4%) agreed to large extent while 45(36%) agreed to a very large extent. These findings suggested that, in most of the schools, teachers took on lesson observations on termly basis.

The findings in Table 1 also show that 5(4%) were not sure if teachers attended co-curricular activities often, 21(16.8%) participants agree that teachers attended to a small extent, 22(17.6%) indicated to larger extent, 28(22.4%) marked to a large extent while 49(39.2%) agreed that teachers attended to very large extent. These findings show that in most of the schools, teachers attended co-curricular activities often. However, some schools did not take these activities seriously.

The above findings were in agreement with those of Leithwood [26] who argues that performance appraisal is necessitated by the need to push for greater accountability and better outcomes in schools. Leithwood adds that for accountability to exist, school principals and administrators must set expectations and ensure support conditions are put in place to ensure professional growth of teachers. Indeed, since teacher evaluation is taken to be the school principals' responsibility, many authors [11, 12] agree that accountability is often avoided by workers hence low response or negative response towards appraisal process.

Responses to the statement that teachers have improved on content delivery show that 8(6%) respondents were not sure, 20(16%) participants indicated to a small extent and 3(2.4%) said teachers had improved on content delivery to somehow smaller extent. This findings show that some respondents did not believe that TPAD has added value to teachers' performance. However, some respondents were positive towards the role of TPAD in improving teachers' content delivery. This was evidenced by 82(65.6) of the respondents who indicated 'large extent' and 12(9.6%) who underlined 'very large extent' in their responses. This shows that majority of the respondents believed that TPAD has added great value to teachers' performance in content delivery.

This was in agreement with the finding by Yudithama, Nugraha and Pratami [27] that informal appraisal is a framework in which subordinates engage in informal discussions with their superordinate, the aim being to assess the habits and qualities of subordinates. They argue that, through appraisal, the employer is able to collect information that is useful in to decisions on advancement, promotion, transfers and termination of members of staff. Formal appraisal is, however, a system set up by an organization to regularly and systematically evaluate the performance of employees. Cole [21] states that this appraisal method involves assessment of employees' performance in a planned and systematic way. This helps determine how an employee is working and ways to improve on their performance. For formal appraisal to be effective, it must be followed by immediate feedback. In other words, the process does not end with the end of appraisal but getting of responses from appraisees, which forms the basis for further feedback. Feedback is provided to the teacher in the form of performance from colleagues, the principal and learners as in the case of their results. Moreover, regular feedback is important to the development and maintenance of a motivated workforce [8].

Lastly, 18(14.4%) of participants were unsure if TPAD was used for promotion of teachers. On their part, 21(16.8%) said it was used to small extent, 4(3.2%) indicated it was used to somehow large extent, 71(56.8%) said it was used to a large extent while 11(8.8%) said it was used to a very large extent. From these findings, it was deduced that, in majority of the

schools, TPAD was used as one of the tools for the promotion of teachers.

The results from the interviews indicated that performance appraisal was used to encourage teachers' accountability and promote academic outcomes. All the interviewees agreed that teachers were subjected to appraisal as required by the TSC. The principals indicated that the introduction of TPAD had impacted the school administration processes since administrators were required to constantly push teachers to make timely update of their respective TPAD accounts. The updating of these accounts was done regularly based on time intervals set by the school in the process of appraisal. Although TPAD had helped to bring about accountability among teachers, it had also caused some degree of tension between the teachers and the school administrators. However, the respondents thought TPAD was valuable as it had contributed to better academic outcomes. This finding was in agreement with the view that when performance appraisal is used both for accountability and instructional improvement, and in turn it helps to identify and enhance teaching quality, it may be considered the ideal quality assurance mechanism [28].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results of the study, it is deduced that teachers are subjected to the filling of the TPAD and that appraisal has improved the performance of the school administration. Teacher evaluation is a critical and regular routine in most school calendars. It is a very valuable period for administrators to improve instruction and learning. Therefore, it is recommended that before setting foot in the classroom for a lesson observation, principals need to sit with the teacher to discuss the upcoming lesson that is to be observed and the expectations of the appraisal process. School administrators should identify the strengths and weaknesses in the instructional methods used and the classroom management and provide the teacher with an early opportunity to arrange and make adjustments where possible. Feedback from the evaluator helps to calm the teacher's anxiety making them respond more positively to the evaluation process. Additionally, it is recommended that feedback from appraisal should be timely and not too frequent. It is noted that too frequent feedback can make teachers get defensive or make it hard for them to apply the lessons learned from the appraisal in a productive and meaningful way. As such, administrators should only identify one or few actionable items for improvement at any given time and help the teacher to prioritize on fixing those areas.

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