

**TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM AS A QUALITY CONTROL MEASURE IN
SCHOOLS: A CASE OF MASVINGO URBAN DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE.**

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ABSTRACT: *The study sought to establish the extent to which teachers perceive management by objectives (MBO) as a quality control measure. It attempted to find out whether performance appraisals were perceived as mere formality and a sheer waste of time and resources or otherwise. It also has the assessment of the whole process, whether it is a welcome ministerial requirement or not as its aim. The study was mainly qualitative in nature. Questionnaires, observations and semi-structured interviews were targeted at teachers and education officers. A total of sixty teachers from all secondary schools and three education officers were randomly sampled after stratification from a population of two hundred and seventy teachers and five education officers in Masvingo urban. After taking a pilot study at Chikato primary school, the selected respondents were interviewed with their views audio-taped while questionnaires were sent to a further thirty teachers. Data from both interviews and questionnaires were analyzed by categorizing them into emerging themes for presentation and discussion. The findings revealed that teachers perceived the whole process of appraisals as just but a disoriented ritual which has failed to accomplish intended objectives due to underfunding and lack of commitment by its very initiators. The researcher recommends that the employer, who happens to be the Public Service Commission set in mechanisms and instruments that police the whole process rigorously while facilitating workshops for new appraisees and appraisers as well as refresher courses for the old guard. The Commission could as well give impetus to the system through supporting its blue print by way of running a consistent but selective reward system that recognizes and rewards high flyers.*

Keywords: *Management by objectives (MBO), performance appraisal, line manager, SMART goals, appraiser, appraisee, rater.*

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The well documented economic meltdown and the attendant brain drain in Zimbabwe since the late nineties which has seen the exodus of highly qualified and competent teachers for greener pastures in the region and the private sector has left the government, through its arm, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, grappling with teacher commitment to the teaching cause as well as quality assurance in the education sector. This has seen the introduction of performance management in schools in a bid to create a system that provides employees with organizational direction and priorities as well as align employees' goals with the overall goals of the ministry, giving birth to what are now commonly referred to as 'KRAS' in schools, an acronym for Key Result Areas in performance appraisal. In the words of Bhatia (2010:235), performance management's "major focus is on development of the employee and his / her competencies for improving his / her performance and relationships" with the idea of "eliminating performance deficiencies", Dessler et al, (2011: 306). Bach (2005) alludes to the fact that the 1990s saw a shift from an almost exclusive emphasis on reward driven systems, based on individual performance related pay and quantifiable objectives, towards more rounded systems of performance management with a stronger developmental focus. IPD surveys by Bevan and Thompson 1992 and Armstrong and Baron 1998a suggest an emerging view of performance management which centers on dialogue, shared understanding, agreement and mutual commitment rather than rating for pay purposes.

However, in the Zimbabwean education front, performance management was adopted as a measure taken to bolster and boost teacher commitment in the provision of quality education in the country through identifying and rewarding exceptional performers and denying financial rewards and promotion to under performers, (Dessler, 2011). Ducharme (2005) concurs with this view when he shows how "most employers still base pay and promotional decisions on the employee's appraisal." This points out how central performance appraisals are to the life of an organization. Bhatia (2010: 236) asserts that performance management has the potential to transform "people who are not 'stars' into top performers." In an effort to eliminate the shortcomings of traditional performance appraisal, the parent ministry sought to strike a balance between being overtly reward to being development driven. Such attempts could have been necessitated by many authors who distinguish between developmental uses, which they identify as being fairly safe and other uses, such as to determine pay awards. More so, there seems to be an almost universal view that using these data for pay purposes is not advisable, and in the literature from the United States there is clearly a concern about the legal ramifications of doing this, Torrington et al(2008).Armstrong(2010) opines that if performance management is done properly such non financial rewards as recognition, creation of opportunities to achieve, the scope to develop skills and guidance on career path that not only encourage job and organizational engagement but make longer-lasting and more powerful impact than financial rewards could be fostered. It is on the basis of this background that the interest of this paper is narrowed on identifying school teachers' and education officers' views on the role and

effectiveness of performance appraisal as a yardstick to evaluating teacher effectiveness in the teaching profession. The central question that this study attempts to answer is whether education quality and teacher effectiveness have been enhanced or eroded by the introduction of performance appraisal.

Carrel, et al (1995), advance the view that different performance appraisal methods can be used within organizations for different groups and these methods can be broken into traditional and modern categories based on the standards for success chosen. For instance, Mashavira (2011:19) identifies what he calls “comparative methods such as ranking or forced distribution which rate the overall performance of one employee directly against that of others.” In Zimbabwean schools, however, there is use of management by objectives (MBO) which is an absolute standard appraisal method where the employee’s performance is rated against some selected objectives and goals called key result areas (KRAs). Bhatia (2010:249) says that “MBO involves appraisal of performance against clear, time-bound and mutually agreed job goals.” In other words, the guideline for MBO performance appraisal is to set SMART goals where SMART is an acronym for goals which “are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely” and these serve as benchmarks against which an employee’s performance is measured Dessler et al, (2011:306). Although there is a uniform set of key result areas for all teachers, the standards of performance by each teacher are individually defined and agreed upon with the rater who normally is the Head of the school, without reference to other person(s). By broad definition, KRAs can be viewed as instruments designed to unlock each teacher’s commitment and re-direct their energies towards the realization of mutually agreed, predetermined goals as determined by their job description and overall education goals. Mashavira (2011:16) quoting Module Two of the Manpower Planning & Development Agency of the Public Service Commission entrenches our understanding of the role of performance appraisal in an organization when he defines it as a “systematic evaluation of individuals or teams with respect to their performance on the job and their potential for development [by providing] ... an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and the knowledge, skills and behaviors required to perform a given job.” In other words, the performance appraisal system is tailored to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery by making employees aware of their current performance levels and the need for improvement of their competencies. In the Zimbabwean education context, this involves individual teachers setting out a whole year’s SMART goals and objectives for themselves over which their evaluation and assessment by line managers, [heads of schools or departments], will be based.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The adoption of performance appraisal in the public service was intended to eliminate inefficiencies that dogged personnel in the bureaucratic institution. However, the very spirit that underlay its very inception has been greatly compromised since the manner in which the whole process is done has not only become chaotic but is fast degenerating into a lifeless form filling

ritual meant to please whoever still insists. Again, the spasmodic and inconsistent awarding of performance -driven rewards has failed to reinforce good behavior(high performance).As a result, negative perceptions that now short circuit the system began to breed in both appraisers and appraisees .It is because of this that this research seeks to examine such perceptions and explore their implications on implementation.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aim

This study is aimed at identifying both education officers' and school teachers' views on the role and effectiveness of performance appraisal as a way of channeling teacher energies towards quality teaching and evaluation in schools with a view to informing education policy makers on the efficacy of this traditional appraisal system used in schools as a performance management tool to enhance effective job delivery as seen through the eyes of teachers themselves

Objectives

The following study objectives guide discussions in this study:

- To examine and document teacher perceptions regarding the MBO performance appraisal system
- To examine the implications of these perceptions on effective implementation of the process.
- To generate recommendations to the Public Service Commission regarding effective management of the performance appraisal system.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Generally, performance management is premised on the view that performance is more than ability and motivation. Goals, despite enabling employees understand what is expected of them, also help provide motivation. The Goal Setting Theory developed by Locke in 1968 and further developed by Locke and Latham in 1990 forms the basis of performance management. Research to date suggests that for goals to be motivating, they must be sufficiently specific, challenging but not impossible and set participatively ,Torrington et al (2008).They proceed to add that the other theoretical base for performance management is the expectancy theory which states that individuals will be motivated to act provided they expect to be able to achieve the goals set, believe that achieving the goals will lead to other rewards and believe that the rewards on offer are valued,(Vroom1964) .An understanding of this study is better informed through the theoretical underpinnings of the appraisal concept of management by objectives (MBO). MBO predates human resource management and derives from a period when strategic thinking and the integration of organizational objectives were being emphasized by management writers, Price

(2001). The concept of MBO was developed by Drucker in 1954, and it is “a process whereby the superior and subordinate... jointly identify its [organization] common goals, define each individual’s major areas of responsibility in terms of results expected of him/ her and use these measures as guides for operating the unit and assessing the contributions of each of its members,” Bhatia (2010:248,249). The technique seeks to establish individual performance objectives which are tangible, measurable and verifiable while such objectives are derived or cascaded from organizational goals; Price (2001). This implies that individual teachers at each school have to come up with specific goals that reflect the overall objectives of the school and ministry at large. MBO therefore provides a platform for an employee to self-monitor one’s actual performance against predetermined performance standards.

One of the major objectives of MBO, like any other performance appraisal method, is the measurement and judgment of employee performance so that rewards can be decided on the basis of that performance. Mpofu (1997:112, 3), shows how in the teaching profession, “the very limited promotion and recognition opportunities provide a potentially frustrating work context for those teachers who need something to aspire for to energise their professional efforts.” This view casts the performance appraisal system as a built-in provision within the civil service for according deserving teachers promotional and financial rewards. The attendant benefit of such a system is its potential to motivate and retain staff by enhancing job identity and commitment. This would suggest that the benefits which accrue from the appraisal system can help guard the nation’s education system in the face of pressures from the economic meltdown.

Once the employee’s job and performance criteria are defined, frequent review meetings between the superior and the subordinate are necessary to help assess progress, reinforce strengths and stem out weaknesses and constraints. This view is projected by Dessler (2011:308), when he says that “an effective appraisal requires feedback session.” This tells us that without an in-built rater-ratee mechanism for feedback, then, the whole purpose of appraisal is defeated and doomed from the start. Joint employee\manager review not only ensures information sharing but keeps the manager up to date on employee progress while the employee needs to be kept up to date on organizational changes that have an impact on the agreed objectives, Torrington et al (2008). It is, however, important that this paper embraces Dessler (2011:308)’s assessment of the whole concept of performance management when he says that “appraising performance is both a difficult and an essential supervisory skill.” This seems to suggest that despite performance appraisal being an important organizational, goal-oriented task; it is not foolproof as it is littered with problems of its own. Mpofu (1997:115) advances a similar sentiment when he states that “research evidence... suggests that performance appraisal methods used by most organizations are neither reliable nor valid for the purpose.” MBO has gone out of fashion to a considerable extent and has been criticized for the paperwork involved, the administrative burden and the realization that goals set for individuals are actually dependent on a team, a department or even a substantial part of the organization, Armstrong and Baron (1998). What this indicates is that

performance appraisals, though noble, are fraught with controversies such as any mistrust in the system which can cloud the whole process. Harris(2009), admits that the problem with performance appraisal is not only that there are too many stakeholders who want it to do contradictory things but also that some might see performance management as a way of creating a false consciousness among staff, which blinds employees to the ways in which they are being manipulated and exploited ,Buglear (1986). Lawler (1983), further entrenches this argument when he argues that the measurement of performance in service professions such as teaching is problematic. However while the main purpose of performance appraisal has continued to oscillate between a concern with short-term performance as exemplified by MBO and a more developmental orientation, human resource specialists do welcome increased use of appraisal because the establishment of an appraisal system represents the systematic collection of information about employees which provides the bedrock of all HR practice, Bach (2005). It is with this theoretical framework in mind that this study seeks to investigate what perceptions teachers and education officers have concerning the role and effectiveness of the MBO performance appraisal system in the education sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Population and sample

In carrying out this study, the population comprised of all government,council and mission secondary schools in Masvingo urban district. Purposive sampling was used to ensure schools in these various categories were part of the sample. A total of two hundred and seventy teachers and five education officers manning the district offices comprised the population of the study. Of these, thirty teachers and three education officers were interviewed while questionnaires were administered to a further group of thirty more teachers. The diverse number of schools in the district provided suitable ground for the research so that the results of this study can be representative of views from the various categories of schools in Zimbabwe.

Research design and data collection procedure

The research design adopted was mainly qualitative with slight integration of quantitative analysis. Being a multi-method research; it had the added advantages of complementarity and increased the validity and reliability of results by reducing chances of systematic bias. Data was collected through questionnaires, observation and semi-structured interviews targeted at teachers and education officers.

Data analysis

The data from both interviews and questionnaires were analyzed qualitatively by categorizing them into emerging themes for presentation and discussion. Data was also manually analyzed.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Age-Sex of Respondents

The research drew respondents from all sexes with females comprising the modal group (70 % as compared to 30 %). Their ages ranged from below 30 years to 60 years. This shows that all respondents were in the productive range. Table 1 below summarizes the age-sex profile of respondent:

Table 1: Age-Sex of Respondents

Age group	Males	Females
Below 30 years	2	3
31-40	6	15
41-50	7	3
51-60	4	6
Total	19	44

Source: Survey 2012

Educational Qualifications

Respondents of varying educational backgrounds were drawn. They included those with teaching certificates, diplomas and degree holders. Only 5% had teaching certificates. This could be explained by the fact that, since the early nineties, most teacher training colleges began awarding teaching diplomas instead of certificates. 35% had diplomas and a further 45% had first degrees. The remaining 15% were second (masters) degree holders. It portrays a highly qualified staff compliment that has the potential to perform effectively, if proper appraisal systems are put in place.

EMERGING PROBLEMS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

There was overwhelming evidence from interviewees and respondents which reflected a rejection of the current MBO process of performance appraisal in education by teachers who felt that it was an imposed system that had failed to serve its purpose. The generally shared view of the whole process of performance appraisal by teachers as summed up by one teacher was that it was “a sheer waste of teaching time, money and resources in order to fulfill a ministerial requirement.” Such a perception reduces the performance appraisal system to a non beneficial and flawed system. Several reasons were cited to authenticate this position and these have been broken down into thematic arguments as given below:

Lack of coordination

Most participants castigated the haphazard nature in which the performance appraisals were conducted. For instance, they showed how the first discussion in all schools on work plans to be adopted for the year did not simultaneously take place at the beginning of each academic year but varied with some schools waiting up to September before the formulation and adoption of work plans. Below is a table summarizing the various months of the year that 30 participants in this study indicated as the times when their schools held the first discussion on work plans for the year:

Table 2: Months when work plans were first discussed (from 2008 to date)

Month	No. of respondents(teachers) discussing work plans
January	8
February	10
March	16
April	-
May	10
June	3
July	4
August	-
September	6
October	3
November	-
December	-

Source: Survey 2012

The table above shows how individual schools determine the appraisal program independent of other schools. One teacher summed up the information in the table when he said in a code mix of English and Shona languages,

“Ma KRA acho makasi nenjake njake because at one school tinodiscuser kutanga kwegore asi panext school they have their first discussion yemawork plans pamwe chete nemareview acho nefinal score zvose kungombunyakidzwa pamwe chete kana zvodiwa kumaoffice naE.O around September-October.” [There is no laid down regulatory framework to determine what happens in all schools because at one school the work plans are adopted at the beginning of the year, yet, at another school the first discussion, the reviews and the final ratings are all held simultaneously when the higher offices demand the completed forms which can be as late as September or October.]

What the comment and table above portray is lack of uniformity in the timing by supervisors at school level in the period when the first discussion on work plans is done. Such absence of coordination by education supervisors of what happens in different schools disorients an otherwise noble programme by reducing it to a mere formality.

Apart from that, teachers complained that the introduction of performance appraisal had doubled the work load demanded of teachers by adding secretarial duties to their already involving and demanding schedule.

Inadequate information

The majority of teachers who had joined the teaching service after 2000 bemoaned the dearth of workshops to educate them on the appraisal system. These appraisees pointed out that since joining the teaching service several years back, they had not been properly inducted to embrace the performance appraisal process but were often given copies of 'old' work plans with objectives they never crafted but were just expected to "copy and paste" what others before them had constructed. *"Information on how to complete the KRA forms is gathered from fellow teachers who have been in service for long, but normally what you get from one teacher differs from what you will get from the next. Alternatively, we are given old copies of work plans retrieved from the archives to copy, paste and adopt. What we need are workshops to train new staff and retrain the old guard,"* summed up one teacher who was eight years old in the teaching service. This observation portrays the whole performance process as a bureaucratic farce with minimal or no value addition in as far as enhancing performance at the work place is concerned.

The Education Officers (EOs) confirmed that nation-wide teacher training workshops on the performance appraisal were last held in schools in 1998 and this has given birth to a situation where new staff have been oriented and inducted by school heads and heads of departments in their schools. In other words, the education provincial personnel relied on the sole opinion of the supervisor at school level. The E.Os were unanimous that such a scenario meant that the purpose of performance management in education was poorly communicated thereby defeating the intended goal. They blamed this development on the unavailability of funds to conduct workshops. The interviewees commented that this sad development where there is no supportive organizational and administrative context for performance appraisal negates efforts towards quality assurance in education. This, in the view of appraisees, has reduced the performance appraisal system to a mere ritual with a lot of posturing.

65% of the teachers interviewed pointed out that the dearth of information on how to fill in the appraisal forms had been exacerbated by the fact that their 'supervisors' did not review their progress with them. They noted how subordinates were asked to review themselves or review each other with the supervisor writing sweeping statements in the affirmative at the end of each

review period for every appraisee. A summary of views raised by several teachers regarding the way performance of teachers at their schools is rated is given below:

- *Pedu hapana review inoitwa but iwewe sateacher ndiwe unonyora zvaunoda ndava Head havana nguva yacho. Head chavo kudhinda chete nokumaker sure kuti hapana unowana pasi pe 3 or above 4.[Our Head is too busy to attend to appraisals.Each individual has to appraise him/herself, but has to make sure they don't award themselves a score below 3 or above 4. The head only stamps on the completed forms.]*
- *Isu tinochinjana maKRA forms. Saka kana iwe ukandinyorera zvisingaiti nenivo ndotsiva so hapana unombonyora zvakaipa pamusoro peumwe.[We simply exchange the appraisal forms amongst ourselves. If one writes nasty comments about someone, that individual will simply retaliate. So no one will be that daring.]*
- *We only hold one review around September. It is at that time that the whole year's work plans and review are carried out and normally that takes a day or two. We sit in the staff room and the Head dictates how we are supposed to fill in the forms and that is the first and last day we ever talk of KRAs.*
- *Chero ukandirater 2 hazvishandi. Kungowanzirana basa kupera. [Even if you award me a rating of 2, it's of no significance. We will only be increasing each other's workloads.]*

The above picture reflects a system that has lost its thrust and meaning.

The Performance Gap

One of the reasons for performance appraisal is to bridge the gap between actual and desired performance, better known as the performance gap, Carrel et al (1995). Respondents however claim that work plans, reviews and ratings are often done the same time, towards year end, time when reports will be expected from higher offices. This makes the whole process lose meaning and the very weaknesses it was meant to address remain but just a pipe dream. 53% of the teachers interviewed admitted that the whole process was stage managed. Both appraisers and appraisees did concur that they have no option out since it is a necessary ministerial evil. 98% of the appraisers did admit that they held no discussions with subordinates on training needs identification. The section, upon which the whole system hinges, is at times left undone or as one respondent puts it;

'Tinongonyoravo chero zvatafunga kuti zvitibve' (we just write what comes to mind since every section has to be filled)

Once training needs are left unidentified, its purpose would become questionable. Since no performance gaps are identified, the corrective intentions of the whole process become null and void.

Public Service Ineptitude

Statutory instrument 1 of 2000, section 8, paragraph 3 of the Public Service Regulations gives the head of ministry or department the power to decide on appropriate action to be taken on the basis of appraisals. Such action may involve advancement or promotion, transfer of a member so as to keep in line with his/her competence, member participation in skills development courses, granting or withholding of any performance award and even demotion or discharge subject to and in accordance with the disciplinary procedures

Research findings confirm that while performance appraisal forms are required to inform any promotional decisions, such decisions will then be premised upon flawed tools. All respondents did concur that performance based bonuses were awarded inconsistently and spasmodically. Lack of reinforcement monetarily has not only undermined commitment but has also rendered the whole process ineffective. This could be as a result of the economic and political doldrums the country plunged into beginning the late nineties to year 2008 which resulted in the underfunding of the employing commission.

All the respondents agreed to the fact that no known cases of demotions, discharges or member transfers due to underperformance were on record. The same could be said of transferring members to posts more in keeping with their competencies. This suggests that the statutory instrument that enforces appraisals is not even adhered to.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research findings are quite overwhelming. The whole process of performance appraisal is now perceived as a sheer waste of teaching time and resources despite the employing commission's insistence that the process be upheld. As shown on table 2 above, 50% of work plans are discussed and agreed upon towards end of first term, a time when the first review would be due. Teachers even confirmed that they simply adopt photocopied work plans given to them by their line managers, thereby lacking ownership. Torrington et al (2008), underscore the importance of ownership. They proceed to opine that if paperwork has to be returned to the HR function it may well be seen as a form filling exercise for someone else's benefit with no practical value to performance within the job. Bohlander and Snell (2004), posit that before an appraisal is conducted, the standards by which performance is to be evaluated should be clearly defined and communicated to the employee. They proceed to maintain that when performance standards are properly established, they help translate organizational goals and objectives into job requirements that convey acceptable and unacceptable levels of performance to employees. Since this initial process is short circuited from the very beginning, the whole process will become none other than a mere ritual.

Responses from interviews do support the notion that the last induction programmes for new members were last done in 1998. This is in sharp contrast to Carrel et al (1995)'s assertion that

appraisers need training on the following topics; the purpose of performance appraisal, how to avoid rating biases, the ethics of appraisals, how to conduct effective interviews among others. They echo Dessler (2005)'s position that there is need for supervisors to be familiar with basic appraisal techniques, understand and avoid problems that can cripple appraisals, and know how to conduct appraisals fairly. However both new appraisers and appraisees in this study had to learn about the whole system through oral tradition. Such a lack of commitment from the employer has inadvertently cascaded to the implementing parties. As a result, inadequate information about the whole system could be partly blamed for the manner in which appraisals are being done.

Among the numerous reasons that Cole (1997) identified as justifying the adoption of performance appraisals is the need to identify an individual's current level of performance and to enable employees improve their performance. His stance is more development than reward driven. This can only be achieved if the performance gap defined as the gap between desired and actual performance is properly diagnosed. 30% of the respondents admitted that they convene in the staff room some time in September of each year. The head of the school would then 'dictate' how the forms are to be 'completed', marking the very first and last days appraisals are ever talked about. In other schools, teachers just exchange their forms and 'complete' the forms. The head is there to make sure that no one gets an overall rating below 3 or above 4, then stamps the forms for onward transmission. Such extreme ratings are avoided since they are often to be accompanied by written explanations. These findings somewhat resonate with those by Rowe (1964), of six British firms that established that:

1. Appraisers looked for ways to evade full completion of the appraisal forms
2. Appraisers were reluctant to carry out face to face interviews
3. There was inadequate follow up to the appraisals in terms of their effect on transfers

This may be due to the fact that most supervisors are hesitant to confront individuals in an authoritarian setting and administer a 'prescription and in such systems where appraisal results are somewhat linked to rewards the manager may deplore the idea of playing god. This therefore gives a strong impetus to the need for deliberate efforts to train appraisers by the employer or its supportive arms in government if this system is to produce desired results.

Again, it is not sufficient to review progress at the end of the MBO process. Individuals must be provided with an opportunity to check their performance at regular intervals so that obstacles can be identified, Price(2001). With 78% of the respondents admitting that no such reviews are ever done, it leaves the whole process in a quandary. Despite checking on progress, such meetings also enable the two parties decide what other objectives should be added, changed or deleted. There may well be unforeseen barriers to the agreed performance which the manager needs to deal with, and sometimes the situation will demand that the expected performance needs to be

revised, Torrington et al (2008). It is imperative that such ongoing reviews penciled towards the end of every term not only provides line management with the opportunity to confirm that the employee is on the right track but makes it possible for them to redirect where necessary.

Teachers, line managers and district education officers did concur that though the system is linked to some form of performance related pay, some difficulties are however incurred. Despite being erratic, the element of pay was considered too small to motivate and often viewed as an insult. Other forms of reward than money could be more satisfying. Although the Public Service Regulations Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000, section 8, paragraph 3 insists that promotions, transfers, demotions or discharges be effected on the basis of appraisals, respondents unanimously admitted that no such actions are ever done. Education officers and headmasters further clarified issues by adding that appraisal forms are considered a prerequisite when employees are applying for higher posts and that no promotional decisions are based entirely on high performance during appraisal periods. Such glaring failures by the employer to stick to the blueprint led to frustration and fatigue by the implementing parties. While it was noble on the part of the employing organization to rope in other forms of reward than monetary, the implementation aspect shot down such intentions.

It can also be observed that the implementing parties do lack ownership of the whole process. Not only is it designed but is also imposed by the Public Service Commission. Line managers in this case do consider the whole process as a form filling exercise which has nothing to do with enhancing job performance.

Of the 27% who confirmed that their line managers religiously implemented the system, it was noted that much still needs to be done in terms of ratings and the identification of training needs. Bach (2005) posits that the most common response to problems of subjectivity and rater bias is to redouble training efforts to ensure that managers are trained in conducting appraisals, to recognize good and bad performance, and be aware of the sources of potential bias. Although appraisals can never totally be rid of a subjective element, problems that arise are remedial by effective training and underscoring the importance of the process.

Carrel et al (1995) posit that deliberate programs should be designed to bridge the identified performance gaps. The same position is taken by Gerber, Nel and Van Dyk (1996), who proceed to insist that employees must be given a realistic overview of their job performance. While they should be positively informed about where their performance falls short, it is particularly important to correct the unsatisfactory part of the work performance through training and guidance. Since the section on training needs is given little regard and is often times left unattended, the very bedrock upon which development driven appraisals are premised is but compromised. Respondents confirmed that none of their training needs are provided for or funded by the employing organization. These findings concur with Strebler (2004)'s observation cited in Harris(2009), that dealing with poor performance is low on the agenda of many

organizations and failure to do so often has negative impact on the motivation of other staff and may contribute to higher labour turnover, Harris (2009). Whether a counseling approach that encourages appraisees to recognize and articulate their own problems and to identify their own solutions or the clinical psychology technique of behavior modification that places the responsibility for change on the appraiser is adopted, it is imperative that employee training needs should be met, Harris(2009).

CONCLUSION

While the adoption of performance appraisal in the public service was noble and a welcome move to arrest employee inefficiencies in the bureaucratic institution, teachers regard the system in very negative ways. The process has been short circuited and is rather taken as a form filling ritual to appease whoever in the ministry that still insists. The very spirit that underlay its very inception has been compromised and what is obtaining on the ground is but chaotic and no meaningful and serious promotional, demotional or transferring decisions could be based on the appraisal reports. Failure by the parent ministry to fund continual training of both appraisers and appraisees has been interpreted as lack of commitment by the implementers. The liquidity crunches dogging the employing ministry ever since the economic meltdown manifested itself coupled with the much publicized illegal sanctions imposed on the nation, greatly compromised the reward component of the whole process. Employees saw no valence in the rewards attached to appraisal reports. Also, the inconsistent and spasmodic nature with which rewards based on appraisals were proffered made employees consider it a mockery and sheer waste of valuable teaching time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above findings the researchers would like to suggest the following recommendations:

- The Public service commission should put serious mechanisms in place be it at district or cluster levels to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the whole appraisal process.
- Heads of schools, in consultation with education officers should collate information on performance gaps and make sure that such development needs are met by way of funding either on- or off-the job training schemes
- The employing ministry should also consider the aggressive funding of workshops to train and or refresh both appraisers and appraisees.
- Rewards attached to the whole process should be consistent and significant enough to reinforce good behaviors.
- The commission should enforce its blueprint pertaining to the prescribed actions (transfers, promotions, withdrawals, or demotions) to be taken on the basis of appraisal reports.

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