

Employees' Perceptions
On The Effect Of
Feedback Management
On Implementation Of
Performance Appraisal
System In Kenya's
Ministry Of Education In
Nairobi City County

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ABSTRACT

The vital tool used in many organisations focusing on results use Performance Appraisal System (PAS) to measure the attainment of the organizational goals. It serves as a foundation for subsequent planning for organizations since reflects on personal input and evaluates individual performance based on the set targets of the organization to inform decision making for subsequent developments. as it is used to track individual. This study determined the effects of employee attitude on the implementation of PAS among employees in the Ministry of Education's (MoE), State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education and Nairobi City County Education offices. This study adopted the concurrent mixed methods design where quantitative and qualitative methodologies were employed simultaneously. The researcher used interview guides and semi-structured questionnaires among the interviewees and respondents in data collection respectively. In the selection of the samples of the study, stratified sampling method was used by using categories of Education

officers and officers in charge of quality assurance and standards. The main findings on feedback management indicated an overall good mean rating of 63.4%. Appraisal training and Perceived organization support are critical factors to be addressed by MoE to improve employees' attitude from good to better or best. The anticipated users of the findings include human resources department at MoE, public service management, other institutions and future researchers.

Keywords: Performance Appraisal System (PAS), Quality Assurance and Standards officers (QASOs), Appraisal training, and Feedback management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal (PA) is a critical element in the evaluation work-performance management and a key in management of human resource in any organization. According to Rao (2005) performance appraisal is a way of evaluating work behaviour of employees at work, and usually involves quantitative and qualitative features of working. Performance Appraisal (PA) forms the core of performance management systems. According to Swanepoel *et al.* (2014) Performance Appraisal is a formal and systematic process of identifying, observing, measuring, recording and developing the job-relevant strengths and weaknesses of employees. Fletcher (2004) submits that the PA has a strategic approach and incorporates institutional activities and policies while Saari, & Judge, (2004) suggests that PA should be viewed as a system of highly collaborative processes involving staffs at all levels in a various levels to in defining their work expectations, analysis of their roles , identifying evaluating criteria, the level of their work input, designing of the evaluation tools, processes, monitoring and evaluation of work performance.

Some form of appraisal has existed since organizations emerged and has been the basis of selection of staff for promotion, increased reward or dismissal (Bratton & Gold, 2003). Merit rating was originally used, according to Griffin & Moorhead (2014), during the Second World War as a method of validating decisions on wages and salaries.

Ochot, Maronga, Muathe, Nyabwanga, & Ronoh, (2012), agree that training is important for raters and those involved, in view of designing an effective and efficient PAS an inefficient PAS can create a negative attitude and consequently attract lack of support among the employees. According to Segalla & DeNisi, (2014), institutions and individuals should perceived PAS in the a wider context of management of work performance Bertone *et al* (1998), advocates that involving employees at all the levels of PAS, will create understanding of the institutional objectives and the focus. This study endeavours to establish the effect of the employees' attitude on appraisal training on the execution of performance appraisal.

Globally, conducting employee performance appraisals has been very challenging for both the managers and employees Brewster & Suutari, (2005). Looking at the difference between Chinese and Western employee

performance appraisals, Shen (2004) found out that the Chinese appraisals are less transparent than the Western appraisals. The Chinese companies also do not provide training in order to improve appraisal skills and the appraisals are usually limited in feedback and communication (Shen, 2004). The organizational climate must be cooperative rather than competitive John, (2010), Bowling, Beehr, Wagner & Libkuman, (2005). Such impediments can complicate the process making it difficult to obtain true and fair feedback of the employee's performance, which can affect the attitudes and approach the raters will have towards the process which has been shown to affect the quality of the appraisals. Lack of proper training and feedback management is not only critical in influencing the attitude of the ratees' but also the raters towards the PAS (Brown *et al*, 2019). They may view the PAS as effort in futility.

In Kenya, the performance appraisal system in use in the Civil Service was introduced in 2006 as a Government initiative. The aim of which was to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in public service delivery through review of systems, processes and structures in the government ministries and departments Guidelines on Deepening Rationalization, (2002). Kenya's Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) targets greater alignment of existing performance management tools GOK, (2010). It focuses on operational performance management, monitoring and reporting tools and instruments. This requires proper alignment of leadership competencies and a performance appraisal system, which deliver accurate results. Evaluation is not only a matter of using the right form or method, but it's rather dependent on the openness and willingness of the parties to do it rightly (Segalla & DeNisi, 2014).

Ministry of Education's State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education (MoE), which comprises Nairobi City County state education offices and the national headquarters, the observation is that PA is viewed by many as a bureaucratic process which has little relevance to improving performance and accountability GoK (2012). In a task force report that sought to align the activities of the Education sector in Kenya to the Kenya Constitution of 2010, it is further observed that the PA forms in MoE are filled as a matter of routine and not used as a means for enhancing staff development objective GOK, (2012). Perceptions of employees on the PAS affect the effectiveness of the system. Extreme dissatisfaction towards PAS by employees can lead to the failure of the system. Performance appraisals should help in determining how every employee fit into the organizational development and efficiency in performing all the assigned tasks and responsibilities. This study sought to understand the significance of employee attitude in the implementation of PAS.

Performance appraisal is a process for tracking contribution of individual work performance against organizational goals. Performance appraisal aims at enhancing public service efficiency and productivity in service delivery and providing the employee with feedback to encourage and enable self-development. Mullins (2006) supported the significance associated with work evaluation in regard to the impact it has on institutional effectiveness. It is implemented in the Ministry of Education as one of the requirements of all government ministries and agencies in Kenya. Hampel and Martinson, (2009) suggests that during the work planning

session, an institution should ensure to envisage the expected results work organization and performance strategies. The achievement of the documented objectives, goals and the expectations of the described roles should be considered and the evaluation result be continuously supplied throughout the evaluation period. Provision of assessment findings is profitable especially if the observed feedback is unprecedented. Further, providing reports on day-to-day accomplishments and contributions is also very valuable. Regrettably, this hardly happens to degree of satisfaction in organizations and Ministry of Education is not an exception. According to Madsen (2009), managers are unskilled in feedback provision and they do not know how to deliver it productively in ways that will minimize employee defensiveness.

In the past, the Government of Kenya has initiated and rolled out reforms aimed at improving the performance of public servants in service delivery. However, the envisioned results have not been realised. In the Ministry of Education, reports reveal that staff view PA as a bureaucratic process, which has little relevance on improving performance and accountability. Further, the appraisal forms are not viewed as means for enhancing staff development objectives, instead they are filled as a matter of routine. According to the Researcher's observations, (2019), there is room for improvement in the performance appraisal process in the Ministry of Education and this study intends to fill the knowledge gap on the effect of employee attitude towards the implementation of PAS in the Ministry of Education. Other related research on PA in Kenya focused on the effects of PA on service delivery, perceptions of employees on PAS and the effectiveness of PAS on performance in the public service and other organizations.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study pursued the following objectives:

- To determine the effect of the perception of feedback management by the staff at the Ministry of Education in Kenya on the implementation of performance appraisal system in the Ministry of Education in Nairobi City County.
- To examine the contribution of the perceptions of feedback management on performance appraisal on their work motivation by the Ministry of Education staff in Kenya.

The results of this study are expected to form a basis for the public service management in carrying out continuous follow up and appraisal of employee performance in all government ministries and other institutions. The findings will also be useful to universities, research institutions and practitioners in enhancing teaching, theories and practice of performance appraisal systems. The knowledge excavation by this study is a great benefit to future researchers, as it serves as their point of reference, while the gaps not addressed by this study will provide a ground for future research. The findings will also be availed to the MoE for future implementation.

3. LIERATURE REVIEW

According to DeNisi & Murphy, (2017), performance appraisers and researchers in the field, generally concur on its importance, a view that informs the need to for this study. Additionally, Turgut & Sani (2014), emphasises the need for a fair and error free method for any organisation to attain meaningful performance appraisal feedback. The findings of the work evaluation should be communicated with a view to enhancing valuable work performance through motivating change in employee work attitude and habits. There is need for confidential interaction between a the rater and rate because feedback may strike at the core of a person's personal belief system it is crucial to set conditions of feedback so that the ratee is able to tolerate, hear, and own discrepant information (Toroitich, 2012). Roberts (2003) asserts that effective feedback is timely, specific and mental engaging and Tziner (2017), indicates that precise and timely feedback may result in behaviour change. . .To enhance perceived system fairness, system satisfaction, acceptance and supervisory support, sufficient time should be allocated to allow for in depth discussion and guidance at the interview stage of the appraisal (Roberts, 2003) The motivation of an employee towards behaviour change in regard to work performance is motivated when feedback is communicated provided in a suitable and acceptable manner. An appropriate environment should allow for rate to respond to the appraiser, leaving room for in-depth discussions and involving appraisee in giving opportunity to state their opinion. Goal-setting should be envisaged as part of feedback. The set goals should be clear to the concerned parties, relevant and specific.

4. DATA ANALYSIS/FINDINGS

4.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a Concurrent Mixed Method Design which mixes quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis in a single study. In this study, quantitative and qualitative data were collected independently and the final inferences are based on both data analysis results in a research process as advised by Creswell (2014).

Concurrent mixed methods design was adopted in this study because of its advantages over other mixed methods. The design was preferred since it is based on the understanding that in combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, better understanding of research problems is achieved (Creswell, 2011).

The adoption of this design allowed the researcher to collect a variety of data related to the effect of attitude of the employees towards the implementation of PAS in Nairobi City County of Quantitative data answered the questions how and why the various variables of the employees affect perception on the contribution of PAS on their career development. In the quantitative approach, the study used the cross-sectional survey to examine the characteristics of employees' demographic characteristics on the contribution of PAS on their career development in MoE, in Nairobi City County.

The qualitative data focused on investigating the effects of the employee attitude on implementation of the PAS from the County and sub county directors of education and the heads of directorates who are the supervisory staff in Nairobi City County and at the national headquarters. Interview guide was used to gather in-depth information and focused exploration on individual perceptions and feelings of the supervisory staff.

The study was carried in Nairobi City County, which encompasses Kenya's capital city. The study targeted the supervisory and non-supervisory employees of the Ministry of Education's State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education National office located in Jogoo House B, Nairobi City County office located in Nyayo House and Sub County offices located in the various sub counties in the county.

The targeted population for this study consisted of 255 officials of the State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education staff deployed within Nairobi City County. Eleven of the staff were in the supervisory level while the rest, 244, were non-supervisors.

Probability and non-probability sampling methods were adopted in this research. From the probability sampling methods, the researcher used a combination of stratified and simple random sampling. Purposive sampling, an aspect of a non-probability sampling, was used to pick all the 11 supervisory staff both at the National, County and Sub County offices. Supervisors were selected, using purposive sampling method due to their knowledge on the study topic and the role they play as supervisors in staff appraisal. According to Ilker *et. al* (2016), the idea behind purposive involves identification and selection of individuals or groups who are proficient and well informed with the situation of interest. Supervisory staff included heads of directorates, county director of education and sub-county directors of education. Non-supervisory staff consisted of technicians, clerks, secretaries, messengers and cleaners.

Since there were two categories of education professionals: general education officers and quality assurance officers, the study initially employed stratified sampling method. The staffs were stratified into two categories of Education officers and Quality Assurance officers. Stratifying was suitable in the selection of the education professional staff so as to give each one of them, as members of the population in the stratum, equal chances of being selected (Levy & Lemeshow, 2013).

In the selection of a total of 186 staff to participate in the study, simple random sampling was then used within each stratum. The employees participating in the study were professionals in education deployed in the State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education. According to Human Resource Payroll Database (2019), the Ministry of Education has deployed a total number of 244 nonsupervisory and 11 supervisory staff in Nairobi City County and the Ministry of Education headquarters. Using these sampling methods, respondents from the non-supervisory staff and supervisory staff interviewees were selected to participate in this study.

Questionnaires were used in the study to collect data from the sampled non-supervisory staff respondents, and data among the supervisory staff used interview guide.

4.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this study, data was collected from of supervisory and non-supervisory staff of the Nairobi City Education offices and the Ministry of Education headquarters. The return rate of questionnaires was excellent at 86 %, while participation in interviews was 100%.

4.2.1 EFFECT OF PERCEPTIONS OF FEEDBACK MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The analysis in this section presents the results by the respondents on the effect of perceptions on feedback management on the implementation of the PAS. The data was derived from the respondents through the administration of interviews and questionnaires. The analysis focused on the feedback management and timeliness of the appraisal feedback to the employee by the supervisor.

4.2.1.1 FEEDBACK MANAGEMENT

Feedback on appraisal to the employee broadly targets to enhancing the performance efficacy through arousing change of work attitude. Therefore, the manner in which feedback on performance evaluation is communicated to the employees is pivotal in the determination of the effectiveness of PAS Harris, (1988). Receiving information directly about your inconsistencies is often difficult and painful. Hence, because feedback may attack a person convictions, conducive environment and sufficient time should be allocated to set conditions of feedback Toroitich, (2012). The set conditions should facilitate the acceptance of feedback information for effective attitude change. Based on the foregoing observations, this study examined how employees perceive feedback management at MoE and how it impacts on the implementation of PAS. Table 1 presents the analysis.

Regarding the appraisal feedback management, the analysis gave a modest, an overall percentage rating of 63.4% which is just around the minimum acceptable rating of 60% (cut-off point). The findings therefore indicate that employees disapproved of the current implementation of feedback management during PA at MoE. This disapproval is further augmented by the findings on the lowest rating (57.8%), on the factor on whether communication on Feedback on the results of the appraisal is done at the end of every evaluation period. This implies that feedback on appraisal results is not effectively communication to the employees. This therefore means that the feedback may fail to change the employees' work habits, hence not helpful in improving performance and motivation and may not serve as a guide for employee development, as observed by Keeping & Levy, (2020). MoE should, therefore, put more efforts to achieve regular and effective communication of feedback information to the staff.

The findings, as reflected in, Table 1, indicates that 42.2%, 41.2% and 39% of the staff were generally dissatisfied with the administration of PAS in MoE, specifically in relation to delayed feedback on the work evaluation findings, irregular evaluation of all employees, and feedback not reflecting employees actual work performance, respectively. Further the study findings show that in MoE, within Nairobi City County, the critical role of PAS in the attainment of the organizational goals had not been accorded the deserved focus. This will

compromise the purpose of PAS in measuring and evaluating the job performance of the employees, where the result of the performance evaluation, is used to define the nature of rewards, sanctions, detecting training needs and professional development opportunities. This agrees with the assertion by Jackson and Schuler (2003), that the performance appraisal targets to increase motivation and increase productivity while making strategic planning process easier. Further, as Roberts (2002) and Tziner (2017) concludes, an effective evaluation result should be stimulating behaviour change, timely and specific, Further, Additionally, the analysis further implies that, although the feedback management practice at MoE is in place, it is unlikely for it to sufficiently trigger behavioural change. These gaps should be be bridged by the supervisors and subordinates through effective communication of feedback of appraisal results. Thus, as Jawahar & Stone (2011) observes, it is how staff perceive the feedback of the evaluation results of their job performance and how it determines the level of attainment of its targets. The modest rating, as indicated by the study findings, is an indication that there is need for improvement at MoE in this Human resource management function.

In a research study on the reaction of staff to appraisal interviews to test effectiveness of feedback management and target setting, Ivancevich, (1982) compared the effectiveness of four appraisal interview with 60 research team leaders and 203 subordinates. The pre-training responses were factor analysed, and five appraisal interview reaction factors emerged: Equity, Accuracy, Clarity, Motivational Impact, and Anxiety. MANOVA, t-tests and the Scheffé test indicated that some of the training interventions were superior to the control group with regard to Equity, Accuracy, and Clarity. Subordinate anxiety was higher in the two groups in which the leaders used assigned goal setting. This finding showed that, the reaction is better and more positive when feedback and goal-setting techniques are involved. Furenes *et al* (2019) corroborated the finding in a field experiment study conducted to compare the effectiveness of two approaches to improving the way managers handle performance appraisal interviews with their subordinates. The results showed that the feedback plus goal-setting condition was superior to the feedback-only condition and the control group on several interview effectiveness criteria.

The employees' response indicated dissatisfaction at MoE in regard to the nature of feedback given and the time taken to fill up the PA forms. The feedback the employees get for their appraisal evaluation is very important to them for their self-confidence and enthusiasm. In MoE, feedback management in the appraisal process is is used as an evaluation in the determination of rewards and sanctions, detect training needs and career progression opportunities. The nature of feedback given to the employees can affect their attitude towards the level and extent of their consumption of the feedback. If employees sense unfairness in the feedback, they are less likely to use the feedback from the appraisal to improve their performance. It also creates negative perception toward the PAS. The driving force should be that quality feedback improves performance (Marthouret *et al*, 2016).

Views by employees indicate that they need a PAS which is collaborative and where feedback is genuinely used to plan improvements, training and rewards. Omboi and Kamencu, (2011) reason that, , PAS is a useful management tool which helps to gain feedback, review and estimate whether the performance is Most importantly, for the employee, self-development is the most important benefit of PAS..

The data on the analysis of relationships between the independent and dependent variable (Feedback Management and Implementation of PAS) As shown in Table 2 shows that Feedback management had a strong relationship with the dependent variable (Implementation of PAS) which stood at 0.533. This finding implies that variations in Feedback management by MoE is associated with variations in Implementation of Performance Appraisal System at 53.3%, in the event that everything else remain the same. It also implies that an improvement in Feedback management by MoE is related to a positive change in Implementation of Performance Appraisal System. It further implies that deterioration in Feedback management by MoE will have a direct negative change in the Implementation of Performance Appraisal System.

Effective feedback management should encourage behavioural change in the delivery of service. If included in a managerial strategy, effective feedback management at MoE can reduce employee complacency and increase efficiency in service delivery, thus improving their work attitudes, thus effective implementation of PAS.

4.2.1.2 CONTRIBUTION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL TO EMPLOYEES' WORK MOTIVATION.

This section presents an analysis of the contribution of Feedback management in Performance Appraisal to work motivation. Performance appraisal has a vital importance both for employees' motivation and organizations' effectiveness and any insufficiency and/or inaccuracy in performance appraisal cause(s) a problem in two overarching goals of performance appraisals; To encourage high levels of employee motivation and to provide accurate information to be used in managerial decision making, (Fisher *et al.*, 1996).

During the interview, employees were asked to give their personal views on how their attitudes affect implementation of performance appraisal system in the Ministry of Education. In terms of attitudes, some employees concurred that, the level of motivation they experience in the organization influenced their attitudes towards the appraisal system, as an interviewee expressed the following:

“when an employee is not motivated, the performance is low, motivation in terms of environment, recognition and enumeration is low. At times the employee has a negative attitude towards performance appraisal hence seeing it as an unnecessary evil that is there to waste their time”

Another respondent indicated that:

“Employees lack of motivation affects the implementation of PAS. Employee must view it worthwhile to give accurate information. Therefore, a positive attitude allows adoption of the system while negative attitude provokes dismissal of the system among the staff”

These sentiments are pointers to the negative attitudes most employees harbour against performance appraisal at the MoE. As long as the equity perception of the performance appraisal is not high, their results tend to be

ineffective and unusable as well for the employees, and can cause undesired results instead of effectiveness. Instead, application of a PAS that is perceived as accurate and fair enhances their effectiveness and acceptance among employees Turgut & Sani, (2014). Equity theory implies that if the employees believe their performance is accurately evaluated, they will be motivated to perform more highly.

In terms of fairness in performance rating, one of a set of employees at the MoE explained that:

Because the rating is fair and without biasness, it helps to develop positive attitude. Because they do not get information concerning their performance. They are not rewarded even if they have surpassed the set targets. Depending on how it is communicated, it can demotivate or motivate an employee. Depending on how the appraisers have appraised one.

Employees at MoE provided a set of responses about how their attitudes affect implementation of performance appraisal system at the Ministry. One of them stated that:

For an employee who is not motivated, the performance is low: motivation is in terms of a conducive working environment, recognition and enumeration. Appraisal is not reflective of the actual work done. It is usually involving filing of papers with little evidence of work done.

This employee's view is contrary to the expectations in the organization, where performance appraisal provides feedback, which will be useful in supporting the employee to do their best in their work obligations. Motivation is indicated here as a critical factor. Organizations need to inculcate trust and a sense of belonging among employees.

Two employees expressed reservations about the use of appraisal results. The concern here is that, sometimes the supervisors abuse the good intention of performance appraisal. Instead they use appraisals to settle scores. One mentioned that:

Appraisal should be seen as a way to gauge one's performance rather than witch-hunt. At times the employee has a negative attitude towards performance appraisal hence see it as a necessary evil that is there to waste their time. After having filled the appraisal, there is no feedback.

The foregoing views expressed by employees are indicators of the importance of performance appraisal as a necessary feedback mechanism for them to recognise and appreciate their current status in the organization. This, in turn, provides them with the impetus to do better in the future. As Adofo (2011) explains, performance appraisals improve work performance of employees by motivating and helping them realise their full potentials. Besides, Idowu (2017), in his study sought to investigate effectiveness of performance appraisal systems and its effect on employee motivation. The main objectives of the study pertained to establishing the moderating role of performance appraisal as a motivation tool. The study findings show the presence of significant positive outcomes when the organization uses performance appraisal as a motivation tool. The specific aspects of performance appraisal systems (PAS) that help improve motivation include the linking of performance to rewards; using the PAS to help set objectives and benchmarks; as well as the use of PA to help identify employee strength and weaknesses.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicates that the PA practices at the MoE should focus on strengthening productivity and efficiency in work performance by the employees (Kuvaas, 2011). They show that a well-designed PA system should also encourage commitment, positive attitude of the employees and may stimulate a behaviour change among the employees. Empirically supported, there is a significant relationship between PA practices and organizational commitment and employee attitudes. Further, employee's commitment and attitude towards PAS and to the organizational goals may affect the realization of the organizational goals. In a nutshell, effective implementation of PA system is imperative to the employee professional development, organizational productivity and efficiency.

Further, feedback motivates employees to improve their job performance by enhancing ability, encouraging effort, and acknowledging results. If included in a managerial strategy and given consistently, effective feedback management at MoE can reduce employee mistakes, enhance performance and increase efficiency within the workplace, thus improving their attitudes toward performance appraisal system. In this case PA, in itself a feedback tool to the employee on the level of performance.

Feedback to the employee focuses on improving performance effectiveness through stimulating behavioural change. The manner in which feedback on job performance is relayed to the employees is a crucial ingredient in deciding the winner in PAS. Discovering information about the self-discrepant from one's self-image is often hard and sore. Therefore, because the feedback may affect an individual's persuasion, belief system, it is essential to determine feedback environment which can enable open and confidential discussions between the appraiser and appraisee. This will facilitate acceptance of feedback information resulting in behaviour change and motivation to work.

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7. TABLES

Table 1: Effect of appraisal feedback management on employee attitude

	Mean Rating	Percent Rating	Standard Deviation
Every employee performance is evaluated regularly	2.92	58.4	1.184
The rating is fair and without bias	3.24	64.8	1,124
The ratings are objective and agreeable by employees	3.32	66.4	1.061
I am happy with my PAS evaluation	3.40	68	1.121
The ratings given are used to improve employees work performance	3.08	61.6	1.184
Feedback on the results of the appraisal are communicated at the end of every evaluation period	2.89	57.8	1.291
Feedback reflect my actual work performance	3.05	61	1.200
The appraisers have no bad intentions in rating	3.46	69.2	1.038
Overall Mean	3.17	63.4	

Source: Field data, 2019

Table 2: Relationship between Employee Attitude and PAS Implementation

Pearson Correlation			
Implementation of Performance Appraisal System(Dependent Variable)	Coefficient of Correlation	Sig. (1-tailed)	N
Feedback management by MoE	.533	.000	175

Source: Field data, 2019 Tziner, A. (2017). Examination of Performance Appraisal Behavior Structure. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 1 - 7. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.02075>