

**PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS TOWARDS TEACHER PERFORMANCE
APPRAISAL AND ITS EFFECT ON SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN
TRANS-NZOIA COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the perception of teachers towards teacher performance appraisal and its effect on school academic performance. It is based on Duncan (1983) theory of management by objective (MBO). The study employed a descriptive survey design with a target population of all head and all teachers of the 83 public secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. The study used stratified sampling technique to sample 36 public secondary schools out of 83 in the whole district from boys, girls and mixed secondary schools. Finally, simple random sampling was used to select 36 head teachers and 4 teachers from each selected schools. This represented a sample of over 43% of the target population. However, only 30 schools returned the questionnaires which were used in data collection. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in form of tables, graphs and charts to answer the question of the study. A pilot study was carried out to test the reliability of the research instrument. Then study findings revealed that performance appraisal exists in schools and that it contributes to effective school management in achieving desired academic performance. The study findings would benefit educational planners, human resource officers, teachers, management and teachers service commission on how to manage performance appraisal effectively. The study recommends that performance appraisals ought to be professionalized, appraisers to be thoroughly inducted on appraisal techniques as well as returning performance appraisal feedback to appraises promptly.

Key words: Performance, appraisal, perception

Background to the Study

The underlying objective of all types of organizational control system is to increase the likelihood that individuals and groups will contribute to organizational goals. Performance appraisal is a type of organizational control tool. Staff appraisals are important motivational tools that all the managers must understand. There should be annual performance appraisals that give incentives to employees, recognize employees' achievement and give praise for exceptional achievement. Employees should know how they are performing their jobs or how they have performed by giving feedback on their performance and counsel them as appropriate (Maina & Kibanga, 2004).

Modern day management of schools emphasize on employee productivity. In Kenya, the government vests the management of public maintained schools and training institutions on Board of Management (BoM). The head teacher is the chief executive of a school and is responsible for the overall running and control of the school and maintenance of the tone of an all-round standard (Ministry of Education, 1979). Therefore, the use of competent heads of institutions is central to the successful management in these institutions, it involves the use of performance appraisal. The process operates with agreed frameworks of performance standards and targets in order to achieve the intended objectives and goals of an institution. Performance appraisal can be effective and satisfying if it is systematically done. However, due to lack of induction on the part of the head teachers on how to carry out performance appraisal, it has resulted in the use of trial and error method. The stiff competition in schools among teachers has becomes a treat to the head teachers in managerial positions, especially head teachers with lower academic qualifications than their teachers. Therefore, they carry out appraisals subjectively instead of being objective. As a result teachers stagnate in the same positions for a long period of time hence redirecting their energies to alternative sources of fulfillment. This has indirectly affected the performance in their work stations. In the study area (Trans-Nzoia District), the level of academic performance in many schools is still below average. The researcher hypothesized that perhaps one of the reasons behind this dismal performance is teachers' perception which is negative due to poorly managed performance appraisal. Thus, the study investigated the perception of teachers towards teacher performance appraisal and its effect on school academic performance.

The basic purpose of teacher performance appraisal system is to assess an officer as comprehensively and objectively as possible with the help of the job content and teacher's performance on the job (Tomlinson, 1993). Appropriate appraisal system, faithfully applied in a school can be a venue to greater clarity of role, better performance and all teachers are given an opportunity to tell "management" whether its system or lack of it hinders good school performance (Shubin, 1992).

Many teachers have become disillusioned with teaching, for example, Sparks (1979) reported that 46 % of the teachers he questioned were dissatisfied with their careers and would not choose to teach if they had to do it over again. Among the reasons of their dissatisfaction was lack of motivation. Consequently, performance in many schools dwindled.

Administrations are expected to be effective in a range of areas including planning decision making communication, controlling and managing conflict. One of the most important inputs to schools is dedicated teachers. The effort should be directed at ensuring that such people enter and stay in teaching. Attracting and retaining is however expensive and perhaps impossible (Hanushek, 1994).

Schools have instituted new procedures to identify, evaluate and reward teachers according to teaching ability. Almost all schools have some sort of evaluation system for teachers in place, although weigh given to Actual performance in classroom varies. Performance appraisal as a tool of improved management aims at developing teachers through better training and induction courses. However, teachers have registered their dissatisfaction in the way performance appraisal has been mismanaged by those in authority (Tomlinson, 1993).

Head teachers are the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) agents who relay information about teacher's performance. The failure of the head teacher to recognize the achievement of teachers has resulted in teachers stagnating in the same positions for a long period of time. The head teachers also are subjective instead of being objective when carrying out appraisal process. As a result, the undeserving teachers are being promoted to the managerial posts while those who deserve never receive any promotion or even the performance feedback. The dissatisfied group will in turn undermine those in authority resulting in sabotage. This will indirectly affect the performance of learners since the teacher is not committed to deliver the services as required.

Fuller (1982) says teacher's motivation to perform well in the classroom is function of their commitment. These include among others, aspects of school structure, desirable working conditions, age and marital status. However, the main question is this study was: What was the perception of teachers towards teacher performance appraisal and its effect on school academic performance in Trans-Nzoia County?

Literature Review

Performance measures provide evidence of whether or not the intended results have been achieved and to what extent to which the job holder has produced that result. Managers are asked to give their staff results to achieve and not tasks to perform (Duncan, 1983). Employees in many organizations are asking for better and more direct feedback on their performance. It should be noted that the performance of the organization depends directly on

the performance of its employees. For improved performance in any organization will not just happen, it should be managed (Maina, & Kibanga, 2004).

A performance appraisal system allows an individual manager to achieve clarity with his/her employee about their precise job, and goals they should be achieving with it. Performance appraisal involves the review of performance, usually held annually or bi- annually. The process examines results achieved and skills demonstrated. It is an overall assessment including ratings. Everyone needs, values and is motivated by quality feedback on how they perform in their job. If performance cannot be measured, then it cannot be improved (Maina, & Kibanga, 2004).

Attitudes held by the teacher toward the appraiser, perceptions of the appraiser, the appraiser as a source for instructional improvement, the appraiser's ability to provide an unbiased response while maintaining objectivity in completing the appraisal were important determinants in how performance appraisal affecting teacher performance in any learning institution.

A common approach to assessing performance is to use a numerical or scalar rating system whereby managers are asked to score an individual against a number of objectives/attributes. In some companies, employees receive assessments from their managers, peers, subordinates and customers while also performing a self assessment. This is known as 360° appraisal.

The most popular methods that are being used as performance appraisal process are: management, 360 degree appraisal, behavioral observation scale and behaviorally anchored rating scale.

Trait based systems, which rely on factors such as integrity and conscientiousness, are also commonly used by businesses. The scientific literature on the subject provides evidence that assessing employees on factors such as these should be avoided. The reasons for this are twofold: firstly, because trait based systems are by definition based on personality traits, they make it difficult for a manager to provide feedback that can cause positive change in employee performance. This is caused by the fact that personality dimensions are the most part static, and while an employee can change a specific behavior they cannot change their personality. For example a person who lacks integrity may stop lying to a manager because

they have been caught, but they still have low integrity and are likely to lie again when the threat of being caught is gone.

Secondly, trait based systems, because they are vague, are more easily influenced by office politics, causing them to be less reliable as a source of information on an employee's true performance. The vagueness of these instruments allows managers to fill them out based on who they want to/feel should get a raise, rather than basing scores on specific behaviors employees should/should not be engaging in. these systems are also more likely to leave a company open to discrimination claims because a manger can make biased decisions without having to back them up with specific behavioral information (Koontz, 2005).

The performance appraisal process is a process that evaluates employee performance. Normally it compares quality, quantity, cost, and time. Some of the things that performance appraisal are used to do would be give something tangible to the employee regarding their work performance, shows what training employees need and determines what the employees raise might be. There are some procedures that you should put in work at your place. This will help the employees know what you are expecting of them, and also establish a standard within your work that everyone will be able to understand and follow. Some of these things would be listed here.

Staff appraisals are important motivational tools that all managers must understand. It complements the importance of telling employees to set their own work targets and eventually letting them measure their performance. There should be periodic performance appraisals that give incentives to employees recognize employees' achievement and give praise for exceptional achievement. Employees should know how they are performing their jobs or how they have performed by giving feedback on their performance and counsel them as appropriate (Maina, & Kibanga, 2004).

(Koontz, 1998) argued that it is important that appropriate performance review system for employees be in place, which is based on the institution's current objectives, as a management tool for monitoring, evaluating and redirecting the institutional objective. He further pointed that any performance management or staff appraisal system should work with the staff. Secondly it should emphasized the significance of staff participation, training needs, orientation, self reliance, consciousness-raising and bottom-up approach to self development and empowerment of staff members (Scriven, and Ingvarson, 1994).

Thirdly, the system should recognize that there potential in every staff member while addressing issues and challenges of performance. Fourthly, it should emphasize human centered strategy, in which the human being is at the center of organizational institutional development.

According to Duncan (1983), an effective and efficient performance management is the mechanism, which ensures that employees understand, own and deliver the organization's business objectives. It should enable each individual's abilities, ambitions and needs to be recognized and attended to or addressed. It is therefore a systematic approach to improving the individual or group or team performance. It is based on two simple propositions: people are most likely to perform well when they know and understand what is expected of them and have taken part in defining these expectations. The ability to meet these expectations depends on the levels of competence and motivation of individuals and the leadership and support they receive their managers.

According to Maina & Kibanga (2004), effective performance review evaluation is not only a critical managerial responsibility but also an inevitable one. Many managers do not know how to set measurable objectives nor do they know how to evaluate subordinates effectively and objectively. There is need, therefore, for organization to invest, not only in development of performance review manuals but also, in training staff, particularly managers, who have responsibilities for evaluating the performance of other people on performance management (Duncan, 1983).

The goals and purposes of professional appraisal may be summarized in two categories: evaluative and developmental. The evaluative purposes include decisions on pay, promotion, demotion, retrenchment and termination. The developmental purposes include research, feedback, management and career development, human resource planning, performance improvement and communication (Schuler et al, 1992, 207).

Productivity improvement is of concern to almost all organizations, and what employees do or do not do influence the productivity of the employing organization. Performance appraisal in industry is viewed as being important because "an effectively designed (appraisal) form serves as a contract between the organization and the employee, and helps act as a control and evaluation system enabling appraisal to better serve a multitude of purposes" (Schuler et al., 1992).

Methodology

The study employed descriptive survey design. Kothari (2004) pointed out that descriptive studies were concerned with describing the characteristic of the particular individual or a group. This was because surveys can provide both qualitative and quantitative information from subjects who are generally a representative sample from a defined population. Also survey is the systematic collection of data in a standardized form from an identified population or representative sample. This approach also sought to collect data without manipulating in an attempt to get the perception of the respondents towards teacher appraisal and its effect on effective school management. This design was adopted because it enables the researcher collect original data for the purpose of describing a population which is too large to observe directly (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999).

The target population was all the head teachers and teachers of eighty three (83) public secondary schools. The head teachers and teachers of the public secondary schools were the respondents who supplied primary data on performance appraisal of teachers in the district. The study sampled 36 public secondary schools out of which the head teacher and 4 teachers from each school were selected as respondents. The intended sample size was 36 head teachers and 144 teachers.

The researcher randomly sampled 36 public secondary schools out of eighty three (83) in the whole district. The researcher then stratified the schools into three strata namely boy schools (30), Girl schools (15) and mixed schools (38). Based on the sample size of 36 schools, proportional sampling yielded 13 boys schools, 7 girls’ schools and 16 mixed schools as the sampled respondents.

The table below shows the total number of schools in the district and the number chosen for the study.

Table 1 Sample Size Determination

School category	Total number	Sample size	Number
Boys schools	30	$\frac{30 \times 36}{83}$	13
Girls schools	15	$\frac{15 \times 36}{83}$	7
Mixed schools	38	$\frac{38 \times 36}{83}$	16
Total	83	36	36

Source: Researcher (2015)

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Questionnaires were the main research instruments used for the study to obtain the required data. There were two types of questionnaires: one for the head teachers and the other for the teachers. The questionnaires for head teachers mainly collected information on how often the appraisal was carried out and whether appraisal assisted in effective school management. The other questionnaire for teachers sought to know the opinions of teachers towards teacher performance appraisal.

Data obtained from the questionnaires was organized, classified, coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics, which included frequency and percentages. This enabled the researcher to make interpretations on the perception of teachers towards teacher performance appraisal.

Results

The respondents who were headteachers and teachers were asked whether performance appraisal existed in their respective schools. The responses were as indicated in the table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Existence of Performance Appraisal

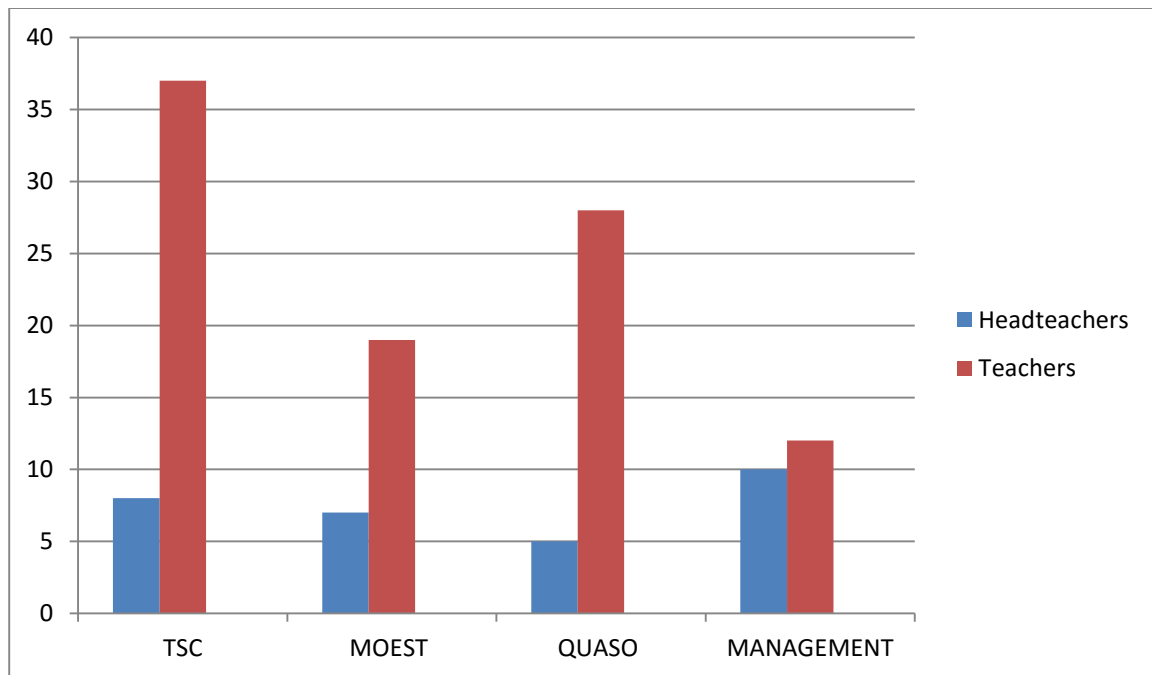
Respondents	Response		Total
	Yes	No	
Headteachers	30(100%)	0(0%)	30
Teachers	100(83.3%)	20(16.7%)	120

Source: Field Data (2015)

Data table 1.2 reveal that 30(100%) of the headteachers accepted that performance appraisal existed in their respective schools. Out of 120 teachers, 100(83.3%) also accepted that performance appraisal existed while 20(6.7%) noted that it did not exist. This showed that most of the respondents were in agreement that it existed. Those who disagreed were perhaps new teachers who were still young in the profession. This concurred with Duncan (1983) who noted that performance appraisal had been in existence in schools for quite some time, though its functions were rarely scrutinized.

The respondents were asked to name the body that appraised them. The responses of the head teachers and teachers are presented in figure 1.1

Figure 1.1: Appraisal Body



From the figure 1.1 it is seen that 37(37.8%) of the teachers and 8(26.7%) of the headteachers felt that performance appraisal originated from the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) whilst 28(28.8%) of the teachers and 5(15.7%) of the head teachers thought that it originated from Quality Assurance and Standards Office (QUASO). The others were 19(19.5%) of teachers and 7(23.3%) of headteachers attributed the process to Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). From the research findings, it was seen that all the above bodies are partners in education sector and that they all play vital role in the management of performance appraisal. This is in line with literature on policy statement under teacher performance appraisal policy and procedure which states that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture is committed to performance management to develop all members of the teaching staff in order to improve the teaching learning processes and to raise the standard of achievement for all students (<http://www.edu.au/99398.htm>). The emphasis of the programme is developmental, aimed at assisting and motivating individuals to attain their maximum potential and ultimately increase efficacy of the education system.

The study found out from the respondents the perceptions of teachers towards teacher performance appraisal. The respondents were expected to use likert scale given to indicate the degree of management on the statement given on table 1.3.

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Table 1.3: Teachers Perception towards Performance Appraisal

Response Statement	HEADTEACHERS					TEACHERS				
	SA %	A %	NC %	D %	SD %	SA %	A %	NC %	D %	SD %
1. Teachers actively participate in performance appraisal	6.7	43.3	10.0	30.0	10.0	13.6	47.3	11.8	21.8	5.5
2. Teachers set unrealistic targets in their areas	56.7	23.3	3.3	16.7		6.5	22.2	13.0	37.0	21.3
3. Teacher prefer written performance appraisal than verbal	56.7	23.3	3.3	16.7		51.8	32.7	4.5	7.3	3.6
4. Teachers don't link performance appraisal to future promotion	3.3	30.0	13.3	30.0	23.3	10.1	21.1	11.1	28.4	29.4
5. Teachers think head teachers are subjective in their appraisals.	6.7	43.3	10.0	30.0	10.0	22.7	39.1	20.9	14.5	2.7
6. Teachers want immediate feedback on performance appraisal	43.3	30.0	20.0	6.7		61.5	32.1	3.7	1.7	0.8
7. Some teachers ignore summons for performance appraisal	6.7	30.0	36.7	20.0	6.7	10.1	32.1	22.0	24.8	11.0
8. Teachers respond positively to external	43.3	46.7	10.0			31.5	42.5	14.8	7.4	3.7

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appraisers.											
9. Teachers feel that headteachers are not competent	3.3	23.3	26.7	33.	13.3	19.1	20.9	22.7	24.5	12.7	
				3							
10. Lack of resources inhibits the effectiveness of performance appraisal	53.3	20.0	3.3	23.		46.4	35.5	4.5	4.5	9.1	
				3							

Source: Field Data (2015)

Using the five pointer scale, the scores used were as follows; SA-5, A-4, NC-3, D-2 and SD-1. Table 1.3 (2) sought to find out if teachers set unrealistic targets in their areas. The research findings revealed that the majority 56.7% of the headteachers involved in the study strongly agreed with the claim that teachers set unrealistic targets in their areas. In addition, 23.3% agreed with the statement. Cumulatively, therefore, 80% of the headteachers involved in the study acknowledged the assertion that teachers set unrealistic targets in their areas. This was attributed to the fact that each teacher was willing to excel in his area without considering other intervening variables like the students’ entry behavior, school factors and parental influence among others.

Whereas the study revealed that headteachers agreed that teachers set unrealistic targets, teachers claimed that they did set realistic targets as indicated by 58.3% of the teachers who refuted the claim by 37% disagreeing and 21.3% strongly disagreeing. The underlying reason could be that the teachers lack the requisite skills and knowledge on how to set realistic targets for the performance appraisal process.

As shown in table 1.3(3) headteachers and teachers prefer written appraisals than verbal appraisals. These were indicated by the 56.7% of headteachers strongly agreeing and 23.3% agreeing leading to a cumulative percentage of 80 as compared to 51.8% of teachers who strongly agreed with the assertion that teachers prefer written appraisal than verbal. In addition, 32.7% of the teachers agreed with the claim. Therefore, the study concludes that written appraisals are better and keep a performance record for every personnel.

Table 1.3 (4) sought to know the views of the respondents on whether performance appraisal could be linked to future promotions. The study findings revealed that 53.3% of headteachers

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refuted the claim by 30% disagreeing and 23.3% strongly disagreeing. However, 28.4% of the teachers disagreed with the assertion as 29.4% strongly disagreed. This implied that head teachers do not link future promotions to performance appraisal process whilst teachers do attribute. The reason may be performance appraisal feedback is either lacking or too slow in reaching the intended target hence unable or able to link to promotions.

As shown on table 1.3(6) headteachers and teachers want immediate feedback on performance appraisal. This is indicated by 43.3% of the headteachers who strongly agreed and 30% who agreed with the statement. Regarding teachers, 61.5% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement as 32.1 agreed with it. From the research findings, the researcher concluded that performance feedback should be immediate so that areas which need improvement can be worked upon. Also performance appraisal is required for career guidance and counseling in the respective areas. Maina and Kibanga (2004) posited that employees in any organizations do ask for clear and more direct feedback on their performance. They further argued that the process examines results achieved and skills demonstrated hence keeping the employees motivated and consequently productive.

It also emerged in table 1.3(10) that lack of resources inhibit the effectiveness of performance appraisal in institutions. Based on the research findings the statement holds true as reflected by 53.3% of the headteachers who strongly agreed with the assertion as 20% agreed with it and 46.45 of the teachers strongly agreeing and 35.5% agreeing. This explains why performance appraisals have been poorly managed due to lack of necessary resources.

The study sought to find out the role played by the headteachers and teachers during performance appraisal. The responses are as indicated in table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Role of the Respondent during Performance Appraisal

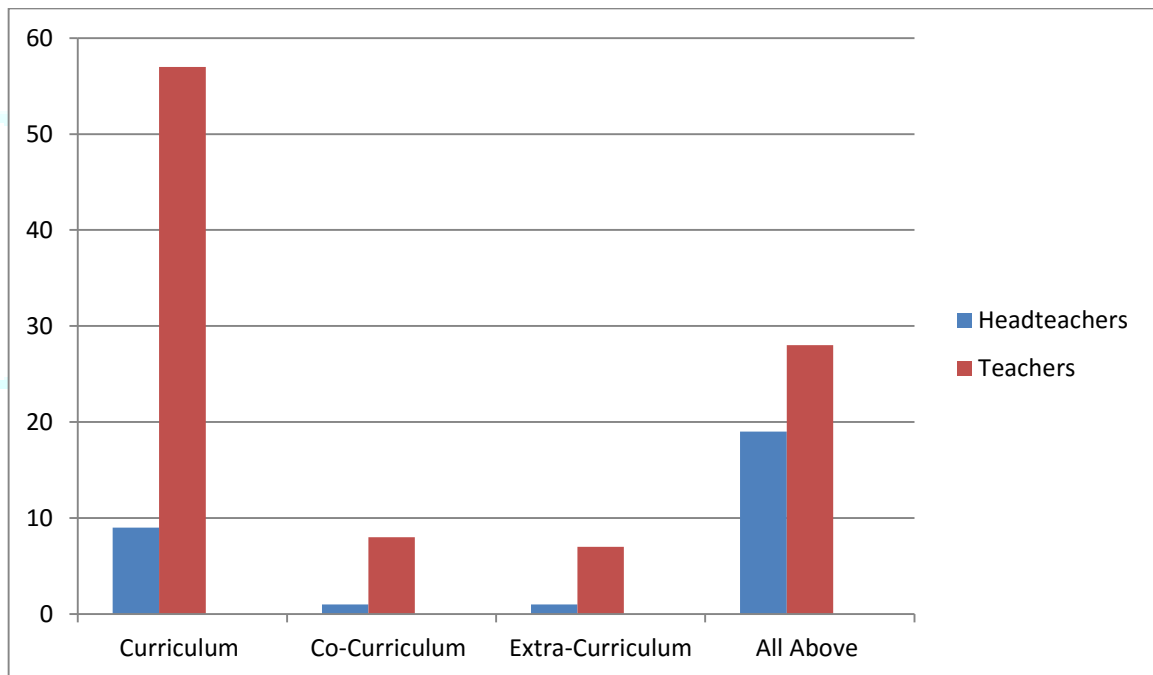
Respondent	Type			Total
	Appraiser	Appraisee	Both	
Headteachers	28(93.3%)	1(3.3%)	1(3.3%)	30
Teachers	0(0%)	100(100%)	0(0%)	100

Analysis revealed that all teachers (100%) assumed the role of an appraisee as indicated by 3.3% of the headteachers. It also emerged that 28(93.3%) of the headteachers saw themselves as appraisers and only 1(3.3%) indicated that they assumed both roles as an

appraisee and an appraiser. This is supported by literature on performance evaluation model whereby all levels of teachers in given school will be involved in the programme (<http://www.edu.auu/99pap/cre99398.htm>). Depending on the size of the school, the headteachers can delegate some of this responsibility to members of the senior management team under whose portfolio the teacher falls. Typically, the team is comprised of the headteacher, the head of the department and professional within the school chosen by the teacher.

The researcher wanted to find out from the respondents, areas they were being appraised on. Both headteachers and teachers who were the respondents gave the following responses as indicated in figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Areas which the respondents were appraised on

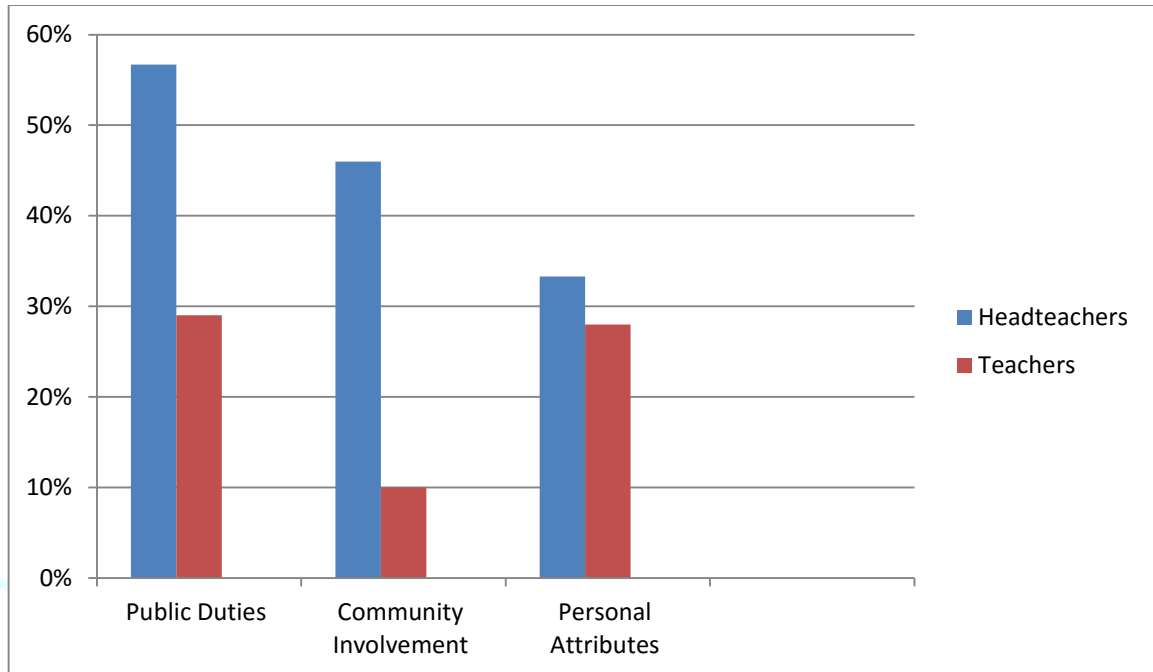


According to study findings, 57(57%) of the teachers and 9(30%) of the headteachers indicated that it did cover issues related to curriculum. Equally, 8(8%) of the teachers and 1(3.3%) of the headteachers cited co-curriculum whereas 7(7%) of the teachers and 1(3.3%) of the headteachers cited extra-curriculum. The rest, 28(28%) of the teachers and 19(63.3%) of the headteachers said that all the earlier mentioned areas were all appraised. This was in line with Okumbe (1998) who posited that an effective performance appraisal should be all-rounded and multi-sectoral in nature.

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The study further found out from the respondents whether there were other areas for appraisal. Both headteachers and teachers responded as shown in figure 1.3.

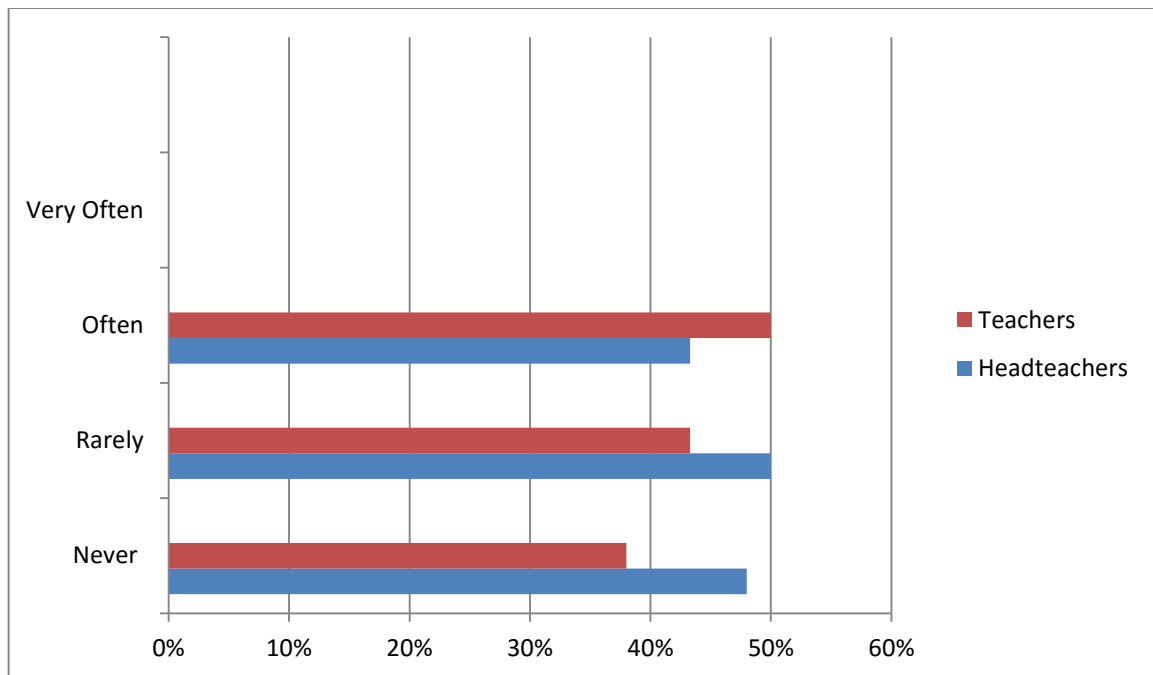
Figure 4.3: Other Areas for Appraisal



The research findings revealed that 43% of the teachers and 10% of the headteachers pointed out at community involvement as one of the areas appraised whilst 28% of the teachers and 33.3% of headteachers cited personal attributes. Only 29% of the teachers and 56.7% of the headteachers felt that it also capture public duties. From the research findings, the researcher concluded that performance appraisal also deals with other issues other than curriculum related content.

The study also sought opinions of the headteachers and teachers on the frequency to which the performance appraisal is undertaken. The responses are as indicated in the figure 1.4.

Figure 4.4: Frequency of Undertaking Performance Appraisal



On the frequency of carrying out performance appraisal, 48% and 38% of the teacher respondents said it was done rarely and often respectively. For the head teachers, 50% and 43.3% cited rarely and often respectively. The rest thought it was never done or done very frequently. The research findings reveal that majority of the respondents said that performance was rarely done.

Conclusion

The study found out that performance appraisal existed and was an effective tool for school academic performance. The study also confirmed that teachers valued their involvement in the appraisal process. However, majority of the respondents registered their dissatisfaction on the delay in appraisal feedback. The study concludes that there is need to improve on the communication of appraisal results. Appraisers were subjective while carrying out appraisals.

Recommendations

- i) There is need for more workshops and seminars to be convened in order to induct them so as have a positive perception towards performance appraisal and its effect on school academic performance.
- ii) There is need for schools to embrace performance appraisal process to reap its accruing benefits and contributions to the school system.

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