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The Effect of Frequency of Teacher Performance Appraisal Activities on Teacher Progression in Bomet County, Kenya

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Performance appraisal is critical for evaluating teachers' job performance and providing feedback. This study explores the frequency and effectiveness of teacher performance appraisals in relation to teacher progression in secondary schools in Bomet County, Kenya. The research involved 423 participants, including teachers, principals, and education authorities. Random sampling was employed to select teachers in the different sub-county. School principals, TSC County, and Sub-County directors were proposed, selected, and interviewed during the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers. The study revealed that regular performance appraisals allow teachers to enhance their teaching skills and monitor their progress. Most respondents (67.54%) reported being appraised more than three times, emphasizing the importance of frequent assessments for professional development. Teachers informed in advance of their appraisals (88.39%) reported better preparation, leading to improved student outcomes. Performance appraisals were seen as a means to enhance professional progress, with 84.31% of teachers reporting an improvement in their career development. Most teachers (67.83%) also received feedback after appraisals, contributing to their professional growth. The study highlights the significance of regular, well-informed, and feedback-rich performance appraisals in improving teacher progression. It underscores the need for educators and education authorities to maintain a structured appraisal process to support teachers in their professional development and enhance student achievement.

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INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal is the process of evaluating how well employees perform their jobs when compared to certain standards and then communicating that information (Armstrong, 2009). Appraisal is an activity used in defining and retaining personnel after deployment (Nyongesa, 2007). However, critics of teacher appraisal regard it as a mechanical and meaningless exercise (Baker *et al.*, 2010; Darling Hammond *et al.*, 2012; Falk & Ort, 1998). According to Higgins *et al.* (2001), teacher evaluation is supposed to be undertaken regularly as an integral part of the work and duties of the teacher.

Teacher development strategies and performance appraisal practices should be congruent and consistent, yet, in practice, they are often divorced (Falk & Ort, 1998). There is an acceptance that professional development needs to be long-term, reflective, and site-embedded (Enz, 1996). However, performance appraisal strategies are frequently tied to contractual needs with constrained timelines (Acheson & Gall, 1992; Darling-Hammond, 2012). Performance appraisal is one approach that has been utilized for keeping track of performance in the workplace (Daniel, 2019). The requirement to accomplish the established organizational goals makes performance appraisal necessary (Ratri, 2020). This procedure typically entails appraising employees' performance and giving them feedback on the intensity and calibre of that performance (Chen and Eldridge, 2012). The Performance appraisal's primary objective is to raise employee performance, which is aimed at improving their progress. Ibrahim *et al.* (2022) assert three potential ways to accomplish this goal. First, administrative choices tying the appraised performance to organizational rewards

or punishments like a salary raise, promotion, or dismissal can be made using the information provided by the appraisal process. The second step in the appraisal process entails giving the appraised employee's performance feedback (i.e., details about their level of performance) so they can modify their performance plans to achieve the intended results (Aguinis *et al.*, 2011). Thirdly, performance reviews increase employee understanding of how they are being appraised. In Kenya, The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has reviewed the approach to teacher appraisal to improve the process and outcomes.

- Before 2005, teacher appraisal in Kenya assumed a confidential approach and was based on personality and the level of loyalty to the school head and significance to others (Muli, 2010). The teachers had no access to the head teacher's appraisal of their behaviour as the TSC Code of Regulation for Teachers (1968) gave the head teacher the mandate to supervise and assess the teacher's performance in his/her respective school. The revised TSC Code of Regulation of 1986 and 2005 (Cap 29.44) stipulates that the principal should appraise and send copies of appraisal reports of his/her teachers to the TSC and DEO within March every year. The desire by the Commission to improve the open teacher appraisal system and its outcome led to the introduction of an appraisal system known as Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) in 2014 (TSC/TPAD/01). Nowadays, teachers are evaluated by HODs and confirmed by the principals (TSC/QAS/TPAD- HPSS/03). However, data on how well teachers' performance is appraised in relation to teacher progression is still lacking. Additionally, the intended frequent evaluations often fall short of expectations (Isore, 2009). For this reason,

the study is geared to fill the gap by assessing the effect of the frequency of teachers' performance appraisal activities on teachers' progression in the study area. The guiding objective for the study were; To examine the frequency of secondary school teachers' appraisal activities in Bomet County of Kenya and to determine improvements Bomet County secondary school teachers' professional progression on the basis of performance appraisal.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in secondary schools in Bomet County, Kenya. Bomet County borders Nyamira County to the west, Kericho County to the North, Nakuru County to the East and Narok County to the South. The county noted development needs for quality education and also the need for capacity building of teaching staff (CIDP, 2018). This prompted this study in Bomet County to assess the effect of the frequency of teacher performance appraisal activities on teachers' progression in the county as one of the many ways to improve the quality of education. The study also is geared to help education policymakers in the county in developing guidelines for teachers' performance appraisals.

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. According to Kothari (2007), descriptive survey research design is a type of research used to obtain data that can help determine specific characteristics of a group. The study focused on 262 public secondary schools in Bomet County, Kenya (Bomet County CIDP 2018-2022). The

target population in these schools consisted of 1799 teachers, 262 principals, 5 sub-county directors of TSC and one county director of TSC. The target population was deemed fit because it provided an insight into the whole aspect surrounding performance appraisal and its influence on student's academic performance.

To improve data reliability, all the schools from the area under study were sampled. There were 5 sub-counties in Bomet County: Sotik, Konoin, Bomet East, Bomet Central and Chepalungu. A minimum of 20% of the target population is deemed adequate for academic research (Gay, 1992). Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) note that a sample size of 10-50% is acceptable for descriptive research. For this study, the researcher chose to use 20% of the target population of 1799 teachers, yielding a sample of 360 teachers, the principals of the 53 sampled schools, and 5 TSC Sub County directors of the five sub-counties, a total of 423 participants. A list of schools in the county was obtained from the TSC county director's office. Principals of the participating schools were requested through a letter to allow the researcher to collect the data. Simple random sampling was used to select individual respondents from each sub-county. This was done to ensure that each member of the stratum (sub-county) had an equal chance of being selected, thus promoting fairness and ensuring there was no bias during selection (Kothari, 2007).

The summary of respondents sampled and the different sampling techniques used is indicated in the table below.

Table 1: Sample frame

Category	Target population	%	Sample Technique	Sample Size
County Director	1	-	Purposive	1
Sub-county directors	5	-	Purposive	5
Principals	262	20	Purposive	53
Teachers	1799	20	Random	360
Total	2067			419

Structured questionnaires with both open and closed-ended questions were used to collect information among the teachers. Given the large number of teachers involved in the study,

questionnaires were used since they are effective in reaching a large number of respondents within a short period of time. A questionnaire is a fast way of obtaining data as compared to other

instruments (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Additionally, interviews were also used to collect data from the school principals, TSC County director and sub-county directors.

Data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics with the help of different functionalities available in SPSS software, which enabled the researcher to run various statistical analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics

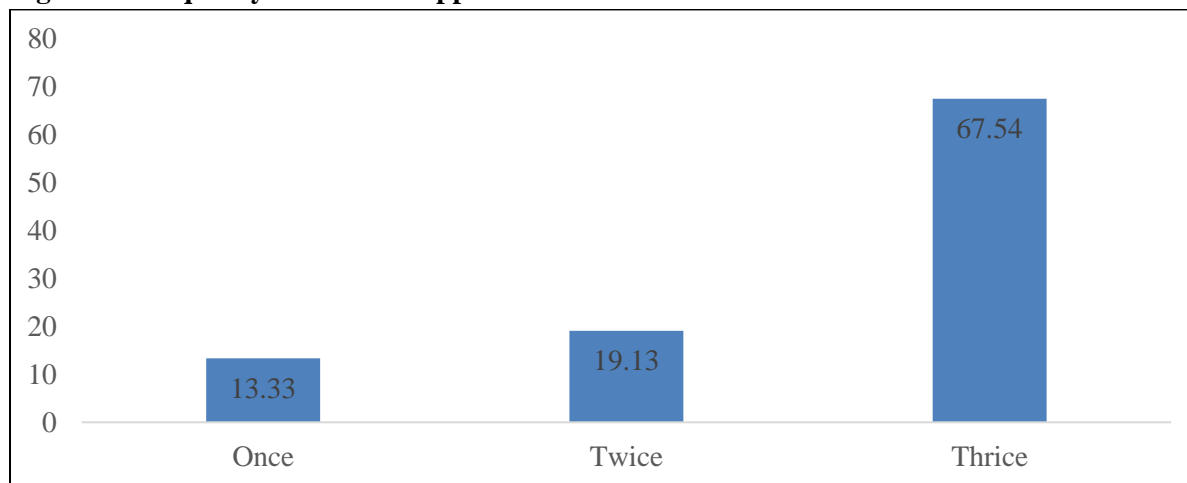
The response rate for the study was 96%; that is, out of the 360 teachers sampled, 346 successfully participated. Many of the respondents were male, 67.3 % (233), and female teachers were 32.7% (113). Age: The majority (65.99%) of the respondents were between 30-35 years, 27.69%

were in the age bracket of 36-45 years, (5.01%) were those aged 46 to 55 years, and 0.58 % were 56 years and above. This depicts that most teachers in the county are middle-aged. The study also sought to find out the teaching experience of teachers, and from the results, the majority (69.38%) had the experience of below five years, followed by those with 6-10 years of teaching experience (25.08%), the least 5.53% had an experience of above 10 years. This shows that most of the teaching staff in the county were recently employed by TSC.

Frequency of Teacher Appraisal

The results indicated that the majority (67.54%) of the respondents had been appraised more than thrice, 19.13% had been appraised twice, while a few (13.33%) responded had been appraised once.

Figure 1: Frequency of Teacher Appraisal



The frequency at which the teachers are appraised plays a crucial role in that it facilitates the identification of areas where teachers need support to improve their teaching, to make decisions about promotion and tenure, and to ensure that teachers are meeting the expectations of the school and the district. This was strongly noted during the interviews when the directors strongly agreed to the need for regular appraisal of teachers. TSC County directors noted during the interviews that the regular appraisal of teachers has been a useful tool in strengthening teachers' capacity and setting promotion for teachers in school; hence, professional progress is achieved. Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2010)

found that regular teacher performance appraisals can help teachers identify their strengths and weaknesses. This information can be used to develop professional development plans and set goals for improvement.

Frequency of Being Informed of Performance Appraisal

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they were informed in advance before being appraised. 88.39% noted that they were informed of performance appraisal, while 11.61% responded not to be informed of the performance appraisal, and many times, they were appraised when they were not prepared. From the results,

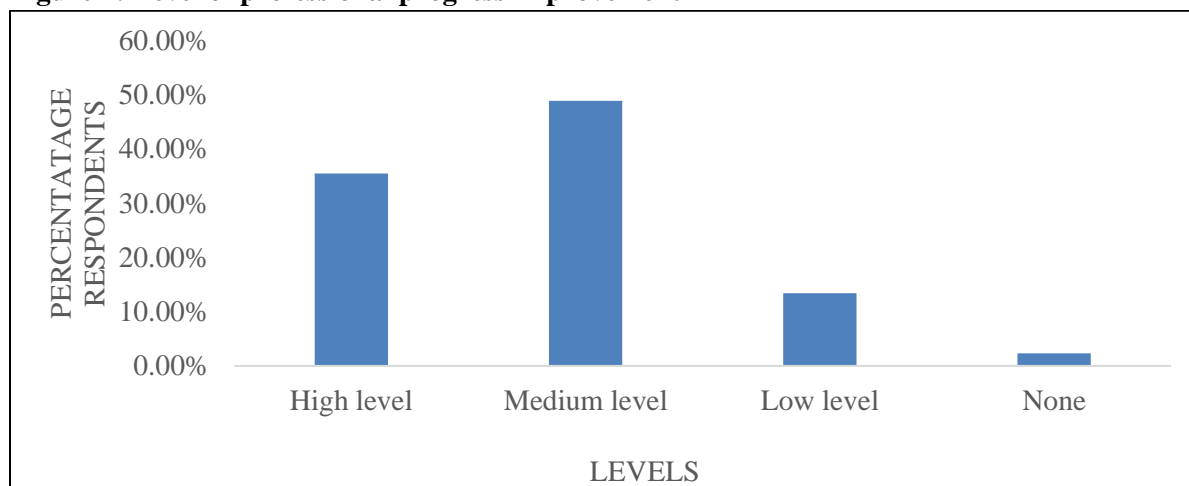
most teachers were informed, which enhanced their preparation, hence improving the learner achievements and, therefore, improving teacher progression. The findings are in agreement with those of Kleinhen and Ingvarson (2002), who were categorical about the need for a clear understanding of the purposes of teacher evaluation and the importance of being notified before it is implemented. They all asserted that awareness programs should be continuous because teachers, like any other human beings, tend to forget, and so they need to be reminded.

Level of Professional Progress Improvement

The study also investigated whether the appraisal done to teachers improved the level of professional progress in their career; *Figure 2* shows the findings: 35.47% of the respondents

argued that it improved their professional progress by a large level, 48.84% argued that it has improved the professional by a medium level, 13.37% argued that it has improved by a small level lastly, 2.33% claimed that it has not improved the professional progress. The findings depict that the majority of teachers in Bomet County have improved their professional progress and performance, which is attributed to a regular appraisal of teachers in the county. A similar deduction was made by Hallinger et al. (2019) that regular teacher performance appraisal is important in the identification of strengths and weaknesses of teachers; thus, the authorities are able to use the information for improvement, develop plans and set goals for progress development of teachers.

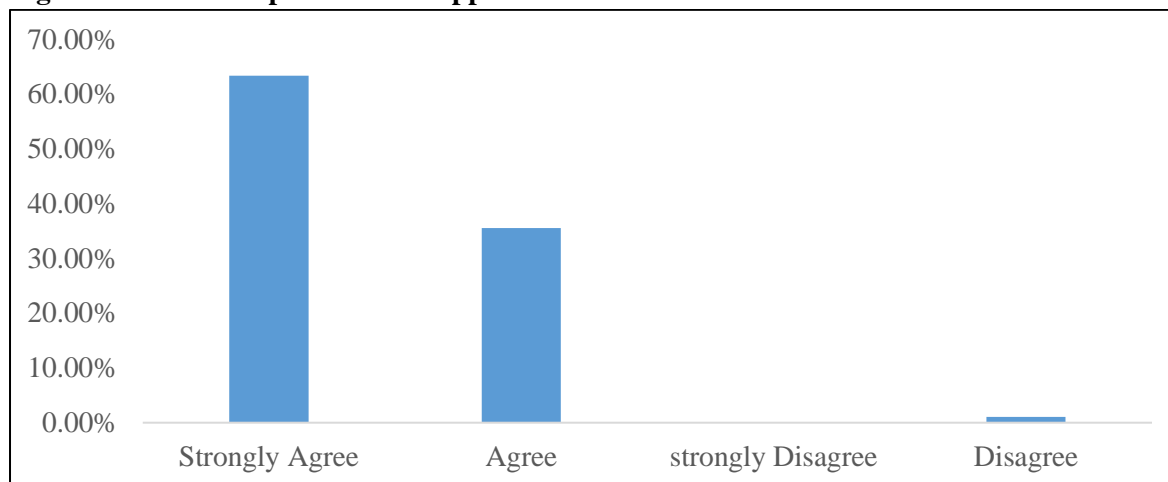
Figure 2: Level of professional progress improvement



There is a need for TSC to allocate funds for promotion to ensure teacher's progress from one job group to another. This will, in turn, motivate the teacher, who will post improved learner achievement and hence improve their professional progression.

During the interviews, the majority of school heads strongly agreed that performance appraisals

have been used to appoint leaders for different departments and committees in their respective schools. TSC directors also noted that one of the parameters they use in the promotion and appointing of school heads is the feedback they get from teachers' appraisals. *Figure 3* shows the response of school heads on the use of performance appraisal for teacher professional progress and appointments.

Figure 3: The use of performance appraisals

Feedback after Appraisals

On whether the respondents get feedback after appraisal, the majority (67.83%) reported that they always get feedback after appraisal, 23.19% sometimes get feedback after appraisal, and 8.99% do not get feedback after appraisal. Teachers get feedback after appraisal; hence, they should improve their efficiency, which improves professional progression. This is in accordance with the TSC Act of 2012, which stipulates that the appraisal system shall be used to provide feedback, improve communication, and clarify roles and responsibilities for teachers. Similarly, William and Hays (2011) noted that the feedback obtained are used to improve teaching practice which can be reflected in student performance outcome. The study also articulated that when teachers receive timely and constructive feedback, they are more likely to make progress towards their professional goals.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The regularity of teacher performance appraisals presents teachers with valuable opportunities to enhance their teaching abilities. The frequency of performance evaluations holds significance because it allows teachers to monitor their progress and subsequently make improvements in their teaching. The study suggests that given the substantial impact of appraisal activities on teachers' professional development, it is crucial for these assessments to be conducted frequently,

offering timely feedback to the individuals being appraised. The manner in which performance feedback is delivered has a profound influence on teacher performance. Therefore, it is recommended that appraisers ensure that feedback is free from errors arising from personal biases, like stereotyping. Effective feedback should accurately reflect each teacher's genuine contributions to their own success, fostering an environment where educators can thrive and continuously enhance their teaching skills.

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