



Original Article

The Efficacy of Open Performance Review and Appraisal System on Teachers' Work Performance in Tanzania. A Case of Selected schools of Vwawa, Iyula and Msangano Secondary Schools in Mbozi District

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This study mainly sought to determine the effectiveness of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) on Teachers' work performance in the selected secondary schools of Vwawa, Iyula and Msangano in Mbozi district council. The study was also driven by the following main objective, which includes; how the practice of OPRAS has improved the work performance of secondary school teachers in Mbozi district council. A mixed research approach both qualitative and quantitative approach with 93 respondents was employed. Questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain data. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics where inferences were presented in the form of frequencies and percentiles. Qualitative information was also analyzed through thematic and content analysis and presented in the form of concepts and narrations. Although Mbozi district has been effectively implementing OPRAS for the past 15 years, active data show that the district has a stable progression performance rate of 30.1 % since 2018 to date. The key variable that was tested was increased teacher commitment. Considerably, this has been established due to constant growth rates of indicators of performance against the performance of teachers from 2018 to 2023. The study recommended that the government should set and engage a realistic budget for training, and empowerment workshops and highly capacitate the Office of the public communications for the purpose of intensifying communication and feedback in public organizations including secondary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

The notion of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) stems from the branch of performance appraisal perspectives. Performance appraisal is the older performance management system that was typically subjective and confidential appraisal, based on the process of planning performance, appraising performance, giving feedback and counselling of employees to improve performance most importantly at workplaces (Prasad, 2014). PA generally, refers to a process of evaluating the performance and qualifications of the employees in terms of requirements of the employees in relation to the requirements of the job for which he/she is employed (Chwaya, 2013).

According to Gupta (2011), PA as a formal evaluation system of employees is believed to have its historical backdrop, where it was adopted for the first time shortly after the First World War (1914-1918) in which the industrial workers in the United States were evaluated. In this period the USA army under Walter Dill Scott, utilized the terminology in the form of merit rating, restricted to the hourly-paid workers. Basically, the PA system stems from the USA to Canada and later to Botswana (Matimbwa & Mwasimba, 2018). The aim of the appraisal system was to improve and motivate performance and encourage competition and possible rewards for good work performance. However, the older PA system including the confidential performance appraisal has changed over time significantly encountering several challenges including lack of transparency, failure to measure attainable goals and being biased characterized (Ahmad, 2022). Owing to managerial and global business transformations in organizations, the current performance management approaches inevitably embraced openness, formality and systematic procedure designed to assist both employers and employees in planning, managing,

evaluating and realizing performance improvement in the organization with the aim of achieving organizational goals in a smarter way (Johnson, 2000).

In Asia for example, Dauda (2018) attest that, currently almost all industries try to focus on workers' output of their staff by assessing the process done. Reflecting on the studies done in secondary schools in East Africa particularly in Kenya Demissie (2015), Gikungu, Karanja and Thinguri (2014), underline that, the performance appraisal system has features like openness, fairness, trust, and qualified staff to perform it as fundamental elements of its effectiveness and efficiency.

In Tanzania, the Performance Appraisal System (PAS) that has been adopted is currently identified as OPRAS which stands for Open Performance Review and Appraisal System. The Government officially endorsed the use of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) in July 2004, through Circular No.2 of 2004 where it is mandatory for all Ministries, Independent Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and Regions to introduce OPRAS and make it operational in the public service (URT, 2014). Basically, OPRAS replaced the Closed Annual Confidential Report System (CACRS) which was characterized by the absence of feedback and poor help to the employees (United Republic of Tanzania, 2013). Moreover, Taylor (2015) asserts that the Closed Annual Confidential Report System (CACRS) was highly confidential and bureaucratic in nature, hence failing to promote performance improvement and accountability in the public service. Being carried out through form number TFN, 832, the OPRAS system underlines performance agreement between the employee and the supervisor. The agreements show the performance objectives of an individual

employee's concerns as related to the organizational objectives, an element that is crucial in measuring performance.

Meanwhile, while implementing OPRAS in public organizations, especially in secondary schools, several challenges have been noticed, including ineffectiveness in pursuing the OPRAS system (Marco, 2011). Specifically, studies in Tanzania showed that the ineffectiveness of OPRAS implementations has been due to biases, the system being carried out secretly by supervisors contrary to what is expected of the procedure for open performance appraisal (Mpululu, 2014). Also there has been a low level of understanding about OPRAS between supervisors and supervisees which was attributed to lack of adequate training and seminars on how OPRAS operates, inadequate resources and absence of feedback among others as a result, the relevance of OPRAS in becoming more result oriented is undermined (Chimazi, 2018). Furthermore, more recent studies in the area for instance the one that was conducted in Mvomero District by Mpululu (2014) delved into the management and supervision of the appraisal process. More closely, Chimazi (2018) and Mhando (2016) examined how the management of the appraisal process ensured the efficiency of the system for teachers' performance whereas results indicated that there is a non-existent relationship between the appraisal process and increased efficiency of teachers. When one looks at the recent studies in the area, it is recognized that the aspect of OPRAS implementations on how it improves secondary teachers' work performance has not been critically researched. Thus, this current study addresses this gap by underscoring the existing relationship on how OPRAS implementation contributes to the work performance of secondary school teachers at Mbozi District Council.

General Objective

The main objective of this study was to determine how the effectiveness of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) has increased the performance of Secondary Teachers in the Mbozi district council.

Key Research Question

The key research question is what is the impact of the practices of OPRAS on work performance improvement of secondary school teachers?

THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS

This study employed goal theory in explaining the effectiveness of OPRAS on teacher's performance.

Goal Setting Theory

The goal-setting theory is an approach that attempts to adjust behavioural patterns to clearly align with goal attainment. According to Locke and Latham, five goal-setting principles can improve our chances of success: Clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity. When your objectives are clear, you know what you're attempting to accomplish. You can also accurately measure results and know which actions to reward. Therefore, SMART is such an effective acronym. However, when a goal is unclear or expressed as a general guideline like "take initiative" it is difficult to measure and demotivate. People are typically driven by difficult goals, yet it is critical not to create a goal that is so difficult that it cannot be achieved. To be effective, your team must understand and agree on the goals; team members are more likely to "buy into" a goal if they helped set it.

Implications and Relevance of the Goal-Setting Theory

Looking from the implication perspective, Locke first established the goal of achieving a "better result" for drivers at the logging plant. This ambiguous order resulted in only a minor increase in burden. Goals must therefore be detailed for the employee to know exactly what he is looking for and to what extent he is succeeding. Secondly, there are difficult goals. The more difficult the goals, the more effort employees can put out and the higher their performance. The "targeting phenomenon" refers to a rise in productivity based on the difficulty of the goal that the employee is expected to attain. According to Locke and Latham (1990), challenging goals improve performance since they are related to higher degrees of self-sufficiency and boost a person's sense of self-satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the selected secondary schools of Vwawa, Msangano and Iyula. These schools are situated in the Mbozi district of the Songwe region. The participants in this study included the teachers as the key respondents, the heads of departments and schools. This study engaged a mixed research approach both qualitative and quantitative approach with 93 respondents. Questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain data. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics where inferences were presented in the form of frequencies and percentiles. Qualitative information was also analyzed through thematic and content analysis and presented in the form of concepts and narrations.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This part presents data related to OPRAS effectiveness and discusses its implication on the teacher's performance in the Mbozi district.

MBOZI District Status of Implementation of OPRAS in Secondary Schools

In an effort to establish a relationship between OPRAS implementations and the work performance of secondary school teachers; it was paramount to first understand the extent to which Mbozi district council has managed to implement OPRAS at its secondary schools for the past six years. In this case, the researcher decided to assess the practice status of OPRAS by consulting available ground information regarding the rate of OPRAS practice at the district level. The findings in Table 1 below reveal the status of the implementation of OPRAS Mbozi district as follows: -

Table 1: District Records on OPRAS Implementation from 2018 to 2023

Number of Government Secondary Schools	Years (From 2018-2023)	% Rate of OPRAS practice
40	2018	24.2
40	2019	25.7
42	2020	28.4
43	2021	31.0
43	2022	32.3
43	2023	39.1
Total Average		30.1

(Source; RCO, District Secondary School Data, 2023)

Findings revealed that the Mbozi district has currently a total of 43 government secondary schools. Data also indicate that the district has been pursuing OPRAS implementation actively since 2010. Although the records on implementation rate are available between 2018 and 2023, the trend indicates that there has been a considerable progression of implementation of OPRAS each year. According to the regional commissioner's office (2023), Ground data indicate that the district's average rate of practising OPRAS since 2018 is 30.1%. Although the rate is significantly low, it can be determined with the level of teacher's performance by measuring its relationship with key variables such as teachers' improved performance,

teachers' instructional quality and students' achievement.

The Practice of OPRAS in Vwawa, Iyula & Msangano and Its Effects on Teachers Performance

One of the objectives highlighted in chapter one of the study is to find out how the practice of OPRAS has contributed to improving the effective work performance of secondary school teachers in the Mbozi district council. Given table 2 below findings reveals that, there was a close relationship between the increased rate of OPRAS practice and teacher's performance rate given increased teacher performance as an indicator.

Table 2: Increased Teachers Commitment Rate in Selected Secondary Schools

Years of Practice	Performance Indicators	Teachers Performance Rate in Vwawa, Iyula & Msangano Secondary School		
		Vwawa Secondary	Iyula Secondary	Msangano Secondary
2018	Increased Teachers Commitment	23.0	23.1	23.8
2019	Increased Teachers Commitment	23.9	24.4	24.7
2020	Increased Teachers Commitment	26.0	26.3	27.1
2021	Increased Teachers Commitment	26.8	27.0	28.1
2022	Increased Teachers Commitment	27.2	28.2	28.5

(Source; RCO, District Secondary School Data, 2023)

The findings from Table 2 above reveal that between the years 2018 and 2023, there were some significant OPRAS activities that were carried out in the selected wards of Vwawa, Iyula and Msangano. Records from the district reveal that, while the exercise was taking place there were notable indicators of improved performance of teachers in almost all selected secondary schools. For instance, looking at increased teachers' commitment level in 2018 shows that; while OPRAS practice was at the rate of 24.2 % in all public secondary schools in the Mbozi district, specifically Vwawa, Iyula and Msangano schools had an average rate of 23.3% in terms of teacher's performance. Findings revealed

that, gradually when the rate of OPRAS implementation was rising also the rate of teachers' commitment was increased. This is when one focuses on the average rate of 27.9% in 2022 as compared to 24.2% recorded in 2018 respectively.

This implies that, although the entire exercise of OPRAS was not at full capacity, some indicators of increased level of performance were noticed. Inputs by Armstrong (2009) can also be applied regarding his argument that performance goal setting and review should be continuous at the workplace so as to obtain immediate results of employee performance.

Table 3: Students' Achievement Rate in Selected Secondary Schools

Years of Practice	Performance Indicators	Teachers Performance Rate in Vwawa, Iyula & Msangano Secondary School		
		Vwawa Secondary	Iyula Secondary	Msangano Secondary
2018	Students Achievement/Pass mark Rate	45.1	43.0	39.9
2019	Students Achievement/Pass mark Rate	45.0	44.1	42.2
2020	Students Achievement/Pass mark Rate	46.4	50.1	47.2
2021	Students Achievement/Pass mark Rate	50.2	52.3	54.3
2022	Students Achievement/Pass mark Rate	52.5	52.7	54.6

(Source; RCO, District Secondary School Data, 2023)

Extending an understanding of the magnitude of the relationship between the practice of OPRAS and teachers' performance, it was also crucial to review

available data regarding student achievement trends. According to Springer (2012), Student achievement is the progress made towards the goal of acquiring

educational skills, materials, and knowledge, usually spanning a variety of disciplines. It refers to achievement in academic settings rather than the general acquisition of knowledge in non-academic settings. In this case, student achievement is equated to the aspect of a pass mark growth rate established by the Mbozi district for the past five years.

Basically, in 2018 in the Mbozi district while the rate of OPRAS practice was at a rate of 24.2% the total student pass mark for all three schools i.e. Vwawa, Iyula and Msangano was 42.7%. A different picture has been seen, while the practice of OPRAS had reached 32.3% in 2022 also the total average pass mark for all three selected schools was 53.2% respectively. Findings reveal that there is an increment growth margin of 10.5 % which is a substantial growth rate. In this aspect, the relationship between the practice of OPRAS and the increased teacher performance is seen when one looks at the student pass mark growth for the period of five years. Therefore, if the principle of setting a target of a number of objectives as an indicator for performing well was hence met, therefore, the students' increased performance has a close contribution to the increased teachers' performance (Songstad et al, 2012).

Conclusion of the Study

It can generally be concluded that; since the purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of OPRAS on teachers' work performance in the selected Mbozi district council, the findings of the study showed that, Mbozi district has been effectively implementing OPRAS for the past 15 years. Active data show that the district has a stable progression performance rate of 30.1 % from 2018 to date. This is by considering the key variables measurements that have been tested i.e. increased teacher **commitment**, **teachers' instructional quality** and **students' achievement**. Generally, it was shown that there is an existing relationship between the practice of OPRAS and the performance of teachers. Considerably, this has been established due to constant growth rates of indicators of performance against the performance of teachers from 2018 to 2023. However, the study concluded that teachers lack training on how to implement OPRAS effectively in public secondary schools. The

study also revealed that insufficient teaching and learning facilities and lack of feedback and motivation were the key aspects that hindered the effective implementation of OPRAS and in consequence, affected teacher's professional development practices.

Recommendations for Policy Reflection

Heads of schools should undergo OPRAS training for better implementation and human resource management. This will enable them to mentor teachers who have little or no knowledge of OPRAS and enhance the implementation process. Indeed, Performance planning should not be always the sole activity of supervisors and higher officials but include the active involvement of employees during the design and implementation of the plan as it is a crucial element of OPRAS success. In addition, public institutions have to create an environment where employees can prepare their own SMART goals, participate in the discussion and take ownership of the plan agreement. This can make employees feel that they own the process and are more committed to the goals of OPRAS forms. The councils also should create room for the practice of setting goals and standards of performance measures on the basis of mutual agreement between employees and supervisors and let employees agree on the goals they are expected to achieve and the standards on which they will be evaluated. The act of jointly setting goals and standards will provide a clear direction in the form of increasing effort, and persistence towards goal accomplishment and have some motivational benefits.

Recommendations for the District Leadership

The study recommends that, for the best practices for effective implementation of OPRAS in secondary schools' teachers, WEO and heads of schools the following are important to take care of;

- The provision of teachers' training and seminars on OPRAS forms will assist teachers to be more effective in the implementation process.
- Teacher's motivation and rewards in relation to OPRAS can inspire them to work hard and thus improve their professional practices.

- Sufficient teaching and learning materials are crucial elements in the effective planning and implementation of OPRAS in public secondary schools.
- The provision of a good conducive environment is necessary.
- Mutual cooperation between supervisors and supervisees may eliminate the biases and unfairness between the two.
- The construction of more classes to reduce student congestion in public secondary schools is important.
- The application of more than one instrument in the assessment process is better.
- Provision of feedback to teachers in a timely manner is important.

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