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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The Teachers' Perceptions Towards Performance Appraisal in Improving Teaching in Public Secondary Schools Misungwi District, Mwanza Region

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### Author's Contributions

*All authors contributed equally to this research.*

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of teachers' perceptions of performance appraisal on teaching improvement in public secondary schools in Misungwi District, Tanzania. The Tanzanian government introduced the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) in 2004 to replace the Closed Annual Confidential Report System (CACRS), with the aim of fostering transparency, accountability, and better communication between management and staff. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach with a convergent parallel design, the study gathered data from 102 participants, including teachers, TSC leaders, a District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO), and school heads, selected through stratified random and purposive sampling. The findings revealed that most teachers viewed performance appraisal positively, recognizing its potential for enhancing teaching practices and professional growth. However, a minority expressed concerns, highlighting the need for open communication and more inclusive participation in setting performance objectives. The study concludes that regular and participatory performance appraisals, incorporating student feedback, are essential for fostering professional development and improving teaching effectiveness. It recommends the use of appraisal results to tailor professional development programs that address specific teaching challenges while reinforcing strengths. Such practices will not only enhance teacher performance but also contribute to creating a more collaborative and effective teaching environment, ultimately leading to overall school improvement.

**Keywords:** Performance appraisal; teaching improvement; professional development; OPRAS; Tanzania; Feedback

### INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal within an organization is an essential process, as it serves as a key performance measurement tool. Performance measurement is crucial in determining employees' contributions to the organization (Armstrong, 2009; Chirchir & Letangule, 2021). According to Mani (2002), organizations are expected to accurately measure their members' performance and use this information objectively to

optimize their contributions as valuable resources. This is why performance appraisal is a widely used tool for assessing employees based on organizational standards and objectives (Ruddin, 2015). Several researchers have provided various interpretations of performance appraisal. For instance, Elliott (2015) describes performance appraisal as an ongoing process for identifying, measuring, and developing individual performance in line with an organization's

strategic goals. The Kenya Education Management Institute (2010) views it as a systematic, continuous review of employees' performance and potential, aimed at informing and designing programs to improve workplace outcomes.

Ruddin (2015) emphasizes the vital role of performance appraisal in enhancing both individual and organizational performance. It boosts productivity, improves quality, and aligns employee attitudes with organizational goals. Performance appraisal also functions as an information processing system that guides decision-making regarding performance improvements, identifies training needs, and determines rewards and sanctions. It has both formative and summative aspects: formative, which focuses on development through feedback and career growth, and summative, which evaluates career progression and informs decisions about promotions or terminations. Broadly, performance management involves planning, coordinating, and motivating human resources to achieve desired outcomes (Wilton, 2011), and performance appraisal is a key component of this process (Fletcher, 2011). Additionally, it can be termed performance and development management, as it aims to meet the expectations of various stakeholders, including employees and the public (Michael, 2006).

In different organizations, performance appraisal is often based on established directives. For example, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC, 2015) mandates that appraisal instruments be jointly discussed, completed, and signed by both the appraiser and the appraisee. If performance falls below expectations, appropriate actions can be recommended, and failure to submit appraisal reports can result in disciplinary action, which blends traditional and modern approaches (TSC, 2015). The traditional approach focuses on evaluating past performance relative to set goals using methods such as rating scales and checklists. However, it is often considered insufficient because it does not account for training and development needs. In contrast, the modern approach encourages open dialogue between employees and supervisors, utilizing methods such as 360-degree appraisals and management by objectives (Hezekiah, 2011). In schools, performance appraisals typically involve structured interactions between teachers and their immediate supervisors to evaluate performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, and facilitate professional development (Ruddin, 2015).

In Africa, performance appraisal systems initially served

as a method of justifying income (Ikemefuna & Chidi, 2012) but have since evolved to link employee performance outcomes to organizational success, directly affecting rewards such as merit-based increases and promotions. Stronge (2012) notes that these systems provide a tangible metric for assessing employee performance and identifying those requiring additional training. Performance appraisals not only motivate employees to meet their responsibilities, but also clarify roles and responsibilities, enhance job descriptions, and foster continuous learning and team building (Deep & Kupusamy, 2014). In South Africa, Maliehe (2011) found a correlation between frequent teacher evaluations and improved school performance. Similarly, Muli (2011) observed that Kenya's appraisal system was, until 2005, confidential and biased toward loyalty rather than performance. However, the TSC Code of Regulations for Teachers (2018) now mandates head teachers to evaluate and report on teacher performance, emphasizing transparency and accountability. Despite these changes, Wanzare (2015) and Odhiambo (2015) indicated that the prior confidential appraisal system was ineffective, highlighting the need for further studies, particularly in Tanzania, to explore teachers' attitudes towards their work and performance.

Tanzania introduced the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) in July 2004, replacing the Closed Annual Confidential Report System (CACRS), which was criticized for its lack of transparency and its bureaucratic nature (URT, 2011). OPRAS aims to improve performance outcomes by encouraging employees to set, implement, and monitor objectives, fostering accountability, transparency, and better communication between management and staff (URT, 2011). The CACRS system had limitations, mainly due to its one-sided information flow and the lack of employee feedback, which hindered transparency and accountability. These changes are in line with the Public Service Employment Policy of 1999 and related regulations (URT, 2011). In addition, the Tanzanian government introduced the Public Employee Performance Management Information System (PEPMIS) and the Public Institution Performance Management Information System (PIPMIS) to further enhance performance appraisal processes. These systems are designed to assist in planning, managing, evaluating, and achieving performance improvements. Performance appraisal is recognized as a crucial tool for maximizing organizational effectiveness, especially

in educational settings (Kurt, 2004), where there is a strong correlation between teacher effectiveness and student performance (Sutton Trust, 2011). The objective of this study was to assess the influence of teachers' perceptions of performance appraisal in improving teaching in public secondary schools in Misungwi District. This research aims to provide insight into how teachers' views on performance appraisal can impact teaching effectiveness, school performance, and overall educational outcomes in the region.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance appraisal is widely used in identifying individual employees' strengths and weaknesses also for giving performance feedback (Mathias & Johnson, 2004). It can be a primary source of information and feedback for employees, which is the key to their future development. In the process of identifying employees' strengths and weaknesses, potential and training needs through performance appraisal feedback, supervisors can inform employees about their progress, discuss with them what areas they need to develop and identify development plans.

Mensah and Seidu (2012) focus on employees' perception on performance appraisal biases or errors by examining the implications for developing and implementing an effective appraisal system in the polytechnic in Ghana. Their study identified ways to ameliorate any appraisal biases that may be present in the institution's appraisal system. The study results indicated that the employees' institution perceive that the institutional performance appraisal system is affected by subjectivity and influenced by some major errors. However, the previous study did not show the managerial implications for training, motivation and provision of resources for effective performance appraisal.

Ikemefuna and Chidi (2012) examined workers' perception of performance appraisal in selected public and private organizations operating in Lagos metropolis. The study employed survey research design. The findings reveal that workers have an optimistic view of performance appraisal as a means of promoting, assessing and equitably compensating employees, and forming the basis for many employee training programmes as well as its motivational effect on workers' performance at workplace.

Balcioglu and Nihinlola (2014) discovered how employees of the institute feel about the whole process and practice of performance appraisal in Nigeria-

National Horticultural Research Institute. Using a quantitative approach, the study findings indicated that the respondents' perception showed the negative attitudes towards the practice, which indicated that the system was affected by subjectivity and influenced by major errors and bias. Therefore, there is a need to have a rather training, which must provide the knowledge, teach the skills and create the attitude necessary for effective programmes implementation. Without such mechanism, the institute appraisal rating will be based on subjectivity and various forms of bias which in turn will affect efficiency and productivity of the institution.

Moreover, Abulu et al., (2024) investigated Teacher's Perception of Performance Assessment System and Its Impacts on Productivity in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Delta State. This study adopted correlation design. Sample of 520 Teachers was drawn using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was titled: Teacher's Perception of Performance Assessment Questionnaire (TPPAQ) and Teaching Staff Productivity Scale (TSPS) all had 80 items. The findings among others are that performance appraisal (work prioritization, task management, time management, work collaboration, goal management and communication ability) jointly predicted teaching staff productivity by 25.4% and performance appraisal (work prioritization, task management, time management, work collaboration, goal management and communication ability) significantly jointly predicted teaching staff productivity in public senior secondary schools in Delta State. It was recommended among others that school Principals should improve on teachers work collaboration and that school management should improve on goal management for teaching staff productivity.

Agyael et al. (2016) investigated the impact of performance appraisal on the job satisfaction and commitment of employee in a Microfinance Institution in Ghana. Using a descriptive design, the findings of the study revealed that employees' job satisfaction is positively related to and impacted by fairness in the appraisal system, linking appraisal with promotion, clarity of roles and feedback about their performance. The study findings also revealed that employees' commitment is positively related to and impacted by the linkage of appraisals with salary, identification of training needs, clarity of performance appraisal purpose and employee involvement in the formulation of appraisal tools.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed research approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain comprehensive insights into the contribution of performance appraisal to teaching improvement in secondary schools in Misungwi District (Bhawna & Gobind, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Utilizing a convergent parallel design, the researcher collected data through questionnaires and interviews from various stakeholders, including TSC leaders, a District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO), heads of schools (HoSs), and teachers. The target population comprised 37 public secondary schools, with a sample size of 102 respondents selected via stratified random sampling for teachers and purposive sampling for other participants. Primary data was gathered through self-administered questionnaires and face-to-face interviews, while secondary data were sourced from relevant documents. Validity and reliability of the instruments were ensured through expert reviews and pilot testing, respectively. Data analysis included qualitative thematic analysis for interview responses and quantitative analysis using SPSS for survey data, applying statistical methods such as descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, tables and figure to interpret the findings effectively. The researcher adhered to ethical considerations by obtaining research permits, ensuring informed consent, and maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study sought to examine the perception of teachers towards performance appraisal on improving teaching among secondary schools. Thus, the researcher found it significant to examine how teachers perceive performance appraisal systems and their impact on the enhancement of teaching practices within secondary schools. Depending on the attitude perceived towards these reviews by the teachers, it could either motivate or bring a sense of readiness for a change to new instructional strategies, hence affecting student learning outcomes. Such perception is of importance to the schools because it may inform the practices that make the appraisals effective and supportive of teachers' professional growth. In soliciting the information, the researcher employed questionnaire to teachers and interview to head of schools, TSC and DSEO.

### Contribution of Performance Appraisal

The researcher intended to explore whether secondary

school teachers were filling the performance appraisal forms or not. The findings are explained in figure 1 below.

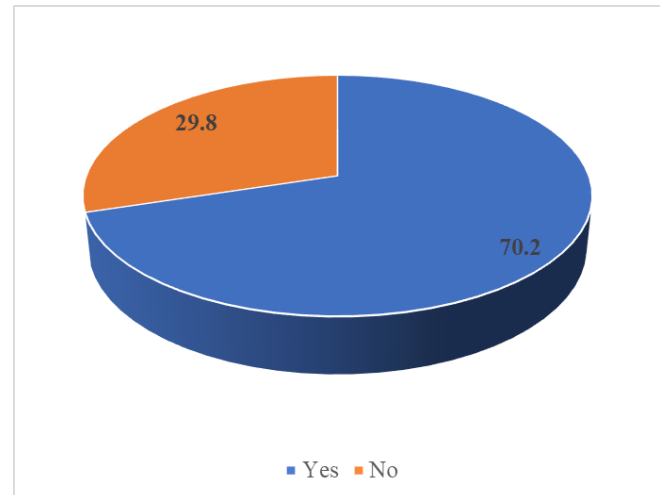


Figure 1. Performance Appraisal Forms.

**Source:** Field Data, (2024)

Figure 1 shows the responses to a question about performance appraisal's impact on improving teaching in secondary schools. The chart is divided into two segments: Yes and no. The majority of the respondents, 70.2%, believe that performance appraisal contributes to improving teaching. And the remaining 29.8% of the respondents do not believe it contributes. This indicates that a significant majority of respondents view performance appraisals positively.

The implies that with the majority of respondents affirming that performance appraisals contribute to improving teaching, it suggests that such evaluations are generally perceived as beneficial tools for enhancing educational quality. This positive perception can encourage school administrators to continue or even expand the use of performance appraisals. Additionally, understanding the reasons behind the minority (29.8%) who responded No could provide valuable insights into potential areas for improvement in the appraisal process, making it more effective and widely accepted. Therefore, from this review, school administrators could build up more professional development opportunities related to the feedback from the evaluation and provide teachers with the feeling of being supported in their development. In addition, through open dialogue with the 29.8% who gave negative views, particular concerns can be exposed and help in making informed adjustments to the appraisal process. Finally, administrators can develop a

more transparent system of communication on the criteria and outcome of performance appraisal that might garner better acceptance and trust from all the teaching staff. Likewise, Ikemefuna and Chidi (2012) revealed that workers have a positive view of performance appraisal as a means of promoting, assessing, and equitably compensating employees and forming the basis for many employee training programs, as well as its motivational effect on workers' performance at the workplace. This shows that the majority of respondents view performance appraisals as beneficial for improving teaching, which encourages school administrators to enhance their use and effectiveness. Engaging with the minority who have negative perceptions can reveal concerns that, when addressed, may strengthen the appraisal process and foster a supportive environment for professional development among teachers.

#### Time for Performance Appraisal

Under this subsection, the researcher intended to assess the regularity of appraisal among teachers. Thus, the researcher asked the respondents how frequently they are per year, and their responses are illustrated in figure 2.

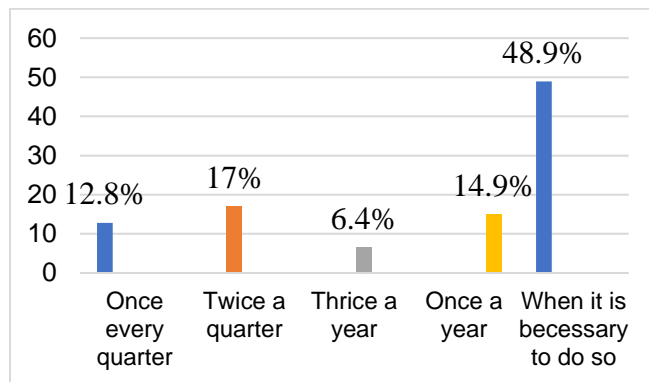


Figure 2. Time for Performance Appraisal.

Figure 2 illustrates the percent of performance appraisals per year for respondents. The largest response, nearly half of the respondents (48.9%), indicates that appraisals occur as needed rather than on a fixed schedule. This is followed by those who experience appraisals twice a quarter (17%), once a year (14.9%), once every quarter (12.8%), and thrice a year (6.4%).

The results show a high percentage of appraisals conducted when it is necessary. This suggests a flexible approach to performance evaluations, which may be tailored to address specific needs and circumstances.

This flexibility could enhance the relevance and effectiveness of appraisals, ensuring they are conducted when most impactful. However, the variation in frequency among other respondents highlights the lack of a standardised approach, which could lead to inconsistencies in the benefits derived from these appraisals. Establishing more consistent and structured appraisal schedules might help in uniformly enhancing teaching quality across the board. However, the variations in the frequency of appraisals by different respondents suggest a possible lack of standardisation, which might erode the general benefits of such appraisals. A more consistent and formalised approach to conducting appraisals may ensure at least that all teachers are regularly appraised, and this may standardise the quality of teaching improvement in secondary schools.

In addition to those responses, the TSC leader was asked during the interview process to identify how often the performance appraisal is conducted. The response revealed that:

The process of performance appraisal is conducted twice a year. This allows for a structured approach to evaluating staff, offering ample time for reflection and goal-setting between assessments. However, this semi-annual frequency limits the immediacy of feedback, making it challenging for educators to make timely adjustments to their teaching practices. Additionally, if issues arise between appraisal periods, there may be insufficient opportunities for intervention and support, which can hinder overall professional growth and development" (Interviewee, July 2024).

This implies that there is the need to extend time for conducting appraisals in order to provide more feedback to teachers since it would help teachers to improve teachers' performance. As supported by Balcioglu and Nihinlola (2014), training must be provided to teachers to improve their knowledge and teaching skills and create the attitude necessary for effective program implementation. This can help to improve efficiency and productivity in secondary schools.

#### Individual Performance Objectives with Supervisor

Furthermore, this subsection is expected to find out the discussions that teachers have with their supervisors concerning individual performance. The results are presented in figure 3 below.

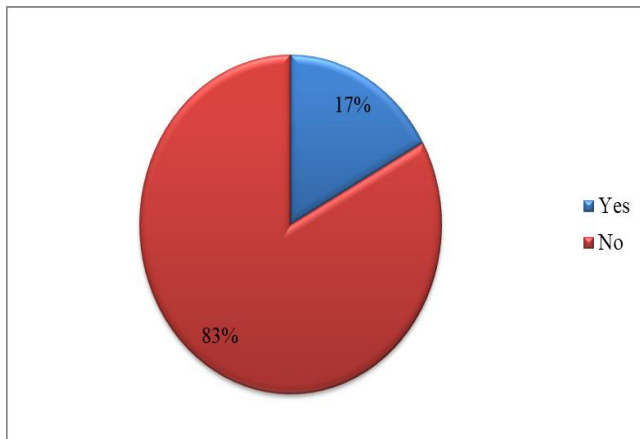


Figure 3. Individual Performance Objectives with the Supervisor.

Figure 3 depicts the responses to whether individuals are involved in discussing teachers' performance objectives with their supervisors. The chart shows that 83% of respondents answered NO, indicating that they are not involved in these discussions. Meanwhile, only 17% of respondents answered YES, signifying their involvement in such discussions. This demonstrates that the majority of individuals do not participate in discussing their performance objectives with their supervisors.

The implication of these findings in the study concerning the contribution of performance appraisal on improving teaching in secondary schools is significant. The fact that 83% of respondents are not involved in discussing their performance objectives suggests a lack of engagement and communication between teachers and their supervisors regarding performance expectations and goals. This lack of involvement can lead to misunderstandings about performance criteria, a lack of ownership over personal professional development, and potentially lower motivation and job satisfaction among teachers. Without regular and meaningful discussions about performance objectives, teachers may not have a clear understanding of what is expected of them or how they can improve, which can hinder their professional growth and the overall quality of teaching. Furthermore, the minorities (17%) of teachers who are involved in these discussions are likely benefit from clearer expectations, better alignment with school goals, and more targeted professional development opportunities. Their involvement can lead to improved teaching practices and better student outcomes. To enhance the effectiveness of performance appraisals, it is crucial for school administrators to increase the involvement of teachers in the appraisal process. This

can be achieved through regular performance discussions, setting collaborative goals, and providing continuous feedback. By fostering a more inclusive and participatory appraisal process, schools can ensure that performance evaluations are more effective in driving improvements in teaching quality.

Furthermore, one of the heads of school was asked concerning the involvement of teachers in the discussion concerning their performance appraisal. He said that.

It is evident that teacher involvement in performance appraisals is lacking, and this concerns me deeply. We know that meaningful dialogue about performance objectives can significantly enhance teaching quality, but many teachers feel disconnected from this process. They further noted,

We are committed to finding ways to encourage more participation, as I believe that when teachers engage in these discussions, they gain clarity and feel more invested in their professional development. The head concluded by stating, "Our goal is to create a supportive culture where teachers feel empowered to actively contribute to their evaluations, as this will ultimately lead to improved educational outcomes for our students (Interview, July 2024).

This implies that there is a need for school leadership to prioritise teacher engagement in performance appraisals. By actively addressing this issue, schools can foster a more collaborative environment, leading to enhanced teacher satisfaction and effectiveness. Additionally, increased participation can create a stronger link between appraisal processes and professional growth, ultimately benefiting student learning and performance. As supported by Manoharan et al. (2009), performance appraisal is an important management tool that provides communication between a superior/supervisor and employee on a regular basis to discuss job duties and issues with work performance. Therefore, it is important for schools to prioritise the implementation of regular performance appraisals that facilitate open communication between teachers and their supervisors. Such structured discussions not only clarify job expectations but also create an avenue for addressing any challenges teachers may face in their roles. By promoting a collaborative environment, schools can leverage performance appraisals not just as compliance exercises but as meaningful opportunities for

professional growth and development, ultimately enhancing both teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Engaging educators in these dialogues fosters a sense of ownership, allowing them to contribute to and take charge of their professional journeys, which aligns with best practices in education management.

**Teachers Perception Toward Performance Appraisal on Improving Teaching**

Under this subsection, the objective aimed to explore teachers' perceptions regarding the performance appraisals and their perceived impact on improving teaching practices in secondary schools. The respondents were grouped into five (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree). Table 4.3 presents teachers' responses.

Table 1. Teachers Perception towards Performance Appraisal on Improving Teaching (n=47).

Description	SD F (%)	D F (%)	N F (%)	A F (%)	SA F (%)
The appraiser knows enough about my work to give me a fair performance appraisal result	12.8 (9)	19.1 (9)	19.1 (16)	34 (7)	14.9 (6)
The current performance appraisal is fair and unbiased	4.3 (10)	21.3 (7)	14.9 (23)	48.9 (5)	10.6 (2)
My leader takes my performance appraisal review discussion seriously	4.3 (5)	10.6 (9)	19.1 (24)	51.1 (7)	14.9 (2)
The performance appraisal process helps me to find out about my level of performance	4.3 (3)	6.4 (7)	14.9 (25)	53.2 (10)	21.3 (2)
The feedback I receive agree with what I have actually achieved	10.6 (8)	17 (9)	19.1 (8)	38.3 (7)	14.9 (5)
I think that my school attempts to conduct performance appraisal the best possible way	6.4 (6)	12.8 (8)	17 (20)	42.6 (10)	21.3 (3)
I am very optimistic towards performance appraisal as means of equitably compensating employees, and forming the basis for many employee training programmes	8.5 (5)	10.6 (7)	14.9 (22)	46.8 (9)	19.1 (4)

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 1 presents the data regarding teachers' perceptions of the performance appraisal process, categorised under five response categories: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. Each statement rates different factors in the appraisal process with regard to whether the appraisal was fair, the seriousness of taking the discussions, and how effective the feedback was. The percentage therefore shows the distribution of these answers, which gives insight into the general sentiment among teachers concerning their performance appraisals. Regarding the appraiser knowing enough about my work to give me a fair performance appraisal result, 12.8% strongly disagreed, and 19.1% disagreed. Surprisingly, the number of teachers who agreed with

the statement was 34%, with 14.9% strongly agreeing. What that means is that there is a division among the teachers, as nearly half of the teachers were positive about their appraiser's knowledge, though a fair minority remains pessimistic about its fairness. Similarly, Abulu et al. (2024) found out that performance appraisal jointly predicted teaching staff productivity by 25.4%, and performance appraisal (work prioritisation, task management, time management, work collaboration, goal management, and communication ability) significantly jointly predicted teaching staff productivity in public senior secondary schools. This emphasises the critical role that effective evaluation systems play in enhancing educational outcomes. Through focussing on key areas such as work

prioritisation, task management, and communication skills, schools can develop targeted strategies to improve teacher performance and overall productivity. This underscores the importance of refining appraisal processes to align with the specific factors that contribute to successful teaching practices, ultimately benefiting both educators and students.

Concerning the current performance appraisal is fair and unbiased, it expresses stronger concern over fairness. Only 4.3% strongly disagreed, but 21.3% disagreed, which reflects doubt among some of the teachers. By contrast, nearly half thought that the system is fair, with 10.6% strongly agreeing. There appears to be a double-headed perception here: on one hand, there is a pronounced belief in the system's non-discriminatory nature; on the other, an almost equally strong minority believes the opposite.

In terms of "My leader takes my performance appraisal review discussion seriously," only 4.3% strongly disagreed, and 10.6% disagreed. A majority of the teachers, 51.1%, agreed that leaders take these discussions seriously, while 14.9% said they strongly agreed. This means generally a positive feeling in that direction, seriousness attached to performance discussion, an indication that many teachers feel valued and well-heard in the appraisal process.

With regard to "The performance appraisal process helps me to find out about my level of performance," only 4.3% strongly disagreed, while only 6.4% felt it was not useful. As a matter of fact, a clear majority of 53.2% found the process helpful, with 21.3% strongly agreeing to its usefulness. This indicates that among teachers, the appraisal process serves as a useful tool for self-evaluation and therefore is relevant and contributes toward professional development.

Moreover, the interview was carried out with the head of school and said that:

Many teachers expressed that it plays an essential role in promoting self-awareness of their performance levels. A significant number highlighted that the feedback received through appraisals enables them to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement, thereby fostering their professional growth. Teachers noted that the process not only validates their efforts but also provides direction for further development and learning. Overall, they strongly support the appraisal system as a vital component of their on-going professional development (Interview, July 2024).

This implies that effective performance appraisal systems are crucial for enhancing teacher competencies and fostering a culture of continuous improvement within educational institutions. By utilising feedback mechanisms that teachers find valuable, schools can create a more motivated and capable teaching workforce, leading to improved student outcomes. In line with Agyael et al. (2016), employees' commitment is positively related to and impacted by the linkage of appraisals with salary, identification of training needs, clarity of performance appraisal purpose, and employee involvement in the formulation of appraisal tools. Thus, the majority of teachers recognise the performance appraisal process as a valuable tool for self-evaluation, suggesting that it plays a significant role in their professional development and awareness of performance levels. Furthermore, establishing a clear connection between appraisals and factors such as salary, training needs, and employee involvement can enhance commitment and engagement among educators, making the appraisal process more effective and beneficial.

Concerning "The feedback I receive agrees with what I have actually achieved," shows some perception misalignments. To this item, 10.6% strongly disagreed, and 17% disagreed, showing that nearly 27.6% of teachers found there was a lack of alignment between their performance and the feedback received. On the other side, 38.3% agreed that the feedback is aligned with achievements; out of those, 14.9% strongly agreed, hence it has been proved that although many find the feedback to be credible, there is also a big proportion that needs better alignment.

In the case of "I think that my school attempts to conduct performance appraisal the best possible way," there is a smaller percentage that comes across as less convinced. The percentage strongly disagreeing was 6.4%, while 12.8% merely disagreed. On the other hand, 42.6% agreed that schools do try, and 21.3% strongly agreed, which demonstrates an ambivalence in view concerning schools' commitment to improving the appraisal process.

Finally, turning to statement seven, "I am very optimistic towards performance appraisal as being a means of equitably compensating employees and forming the basis for many employee training programs," it should be noted that 8.5% strongly disagreed and another 10.6% just plain disagreed. On the other hand, a full 46.8% agreed, with 19.1% strongly agreeing, a number that clearly denotes some real faith in the potential

performance appraisals could have for providing support to both equitable compensation and professional development. This optimism perhaps reflects that while at present the system may not be working in the best possible manner; most teachers do recognise its potential for good.

Furthermore, TSC leaders provided that:

While there are challenges in the current performance appraisal system, they appreciate the optimism expressed by teachers regarding its potential impact on equitable compensation and training programs. They acknowledged that on-going improvements and adjustments to the appraisal process could help better align it with teachers' expectations and needs, ultimately enhancing its effectiveness. The Commission remains committed to refining the system to ensure that it maximally supports teacher development and fair compensation (Interview, July 2024).

This shows that, despite current shortcomings, there is a shared interest between educational authorities and teachers in collaborating on optimizing the performance appraisal process. This partnership could lead to a more equitable and supportive environment for professional growth, benefiting both educators and the broader educational system. Likewise, Mensah and Seidu (2012) indicated that the employees perceive that the institutional performance appraisal system is affected by subjectivity and influenced by some major errors. This underscores the necessity for school administrators to address these biases and improve the appraisal process to build trust and acceptance. Despite some negative views, the significant percentage of teachers expressing optimism about performance appraisals indicates their belief in the potential for these evaluations to enhance equitable compensation and professional development, suggesting that targeted reforms could maximize their effectiveness.

The data obtained from the performance appraisal review demonstrates a strong element of division among the teachers regarding their experiences with the appraisal system. While percentage figures indicate a high number of satisfied teachers about the knowledge of appraisers and fairness of the process, still there exists a considerable minority that is doubtful about the same. This division perhaps suggests that schools should make a conscious attempt to fill the gap that exists between the good experiences of some, and

the concerns expressed by others. Addressing these imbalances is therefore incumbent upon them in building a more inclusive and equitable appraisal system that would be responsive to diverse needs and expectations from all teachers.

Moreover, the findings emphasise the value of the appraisal process as a means of professional development and self-evaluation. Most of the teachers appreciate the process of being able to assist them in learning their levels of performance; this is a clear illustration that performance appraisal can be an excellent mechanism for growth and development if carried out correctly. It therefore creates an avenue for the school heads to enhance the appraisal process by ensuring that constructive feedback remains in tandem with actual performance. More frequent training for appraisers and involving teachers in the development of appraisal criteria would strengthen the link between evaluation and professional growth. Likewise, Ikemefuna and Chidi (2012) stated that performance appraisal is the means of promoting, assessing, and equitably compensating employees. This shows that these appraisals can lead to professional development among teachers.

Finally, while there are many adverse comments about the appraisal system and the way it has been implemented, a significant number of teachers remain optimistic about its potential role in equitable compensation and training. That is to say, the belief in the potential capacity of performance appraisal is there among educators, even though there is room for improvement. It implies that schools and administrators can cash in on this optimism by engaging teachers in discussion about ways of fine-tuning the appraisal process and engaging their input in shaping future evaluation criteria and methods. Such would go a long way in making the school appraisal system more responsive and effective for the betterment of the teaching profession and the overall quality of education. In the same vein, Mensah and Seidu (2012) indicated that the employees' institution perceives that the institutional performance appraisal system is affected by subjectivity and influenced by some major errors. This shows that performance appraisal contributed to the improvement of teaching in secondary schools. Thus, while there are notable criticisms surrounding the implementation of performance appraisals, many educators still recognize their potential benefits for equitable compensation and professional development. This optimism presents an opportunity for school

administrators to involve teachers in refining the appraisal process, fostering collaboration and trust. By addressing concerns and incorporating valuable feedback, the appraisal system can be transformed into a more effective tool for enhancing educational quality. Ultimately, a responsive performance appraisal system not only supports teachers' growth but also contributes to the overall advancement of the teaching profession and student outcomes.

Additionally, the head of school responded that.

As the head of the school, I recognize that teacher perceptions towards performance appraisal are crucial in shaping a positive educational environment. Many teachers have indicated that they see performance appraisals not just as evaluative tools but as opportunities for meaningful feedback and personal growth. We are committed to refining the appraisal process to ensure it provides clear, constructive guidance that aligns with teachers' professional development aspirations. Ultimately, we believe that by fostering an open dialogue about appraisals, we can enhance both teacher morale and student outcomes (Interview, July 2024).

This response highlights the importance of school leadership in actively listening to teachers and addressing their concerns about the appraisal process. By prioritizing constructive feedback and facilitating an environment of collaboration, schools can enhance teacher engagement and performance, leading to improved educational outcomes.

Moreover, the TSC leader added:

We understand that performance appraisals are viewed by many teachers as critical mechanisms for growth and development. Our team recognizes the expressed optimism among teachers regarding the potential of appraisals in providing equitable compensation and supporting professional training. We are committed to incorporating teacher feedback into the continuous improvement of the appraisal process, ensuring it effectively meets the needs of educators. Together, we can develop a system that not only holds teachers accountable but also champions their professional journeys (Interview, July 2024).

This underscores the TSC's recognition of the significance of teacher input in shaping appraisal systems. By prioritizing feedback and demonstrating a

commitment to improvement, the Commission can foster trust with educators, leading to more effective performance management practices that ultimately benefit the educational community as a whole. As supported by the goal-setting theory, the clear establishment of performance appraisals as a mechanism for growth aligns with the idea that specific and challenging goals drive higher performance and motivation among individuals. By incorporating teacher feedback into the appraisal process, the Teachers Service Commission not only sets informed targets but also empowers teachers to take ownership of their professional development. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of accountability and commitment, which is essential for achieving meaningful outcomes in the educational environment.

## CONCLUSION

The examination of teachers' perceptions towards performance appraisal in secondary schools reveals a predominantly positive outlook. Most educators recognize the potential of performance evaluations to enhance their teaching practices and contribute to their professional growth. However, the presence of a minority who view the process unfavorably highlights the need to address their concerns. By fostering open communication and involving teachers in setting performance objectives, school administrators can create an inclusive environment that improves the acceptance of the appraisal process. This approach not only empowers educators in their professional development but also promotes a more collaborative and supportive atmosphere within schools.

The study recommends the implementation of regular performance appraisals for teachers as a vital tool for providing constructive feedback and fostering continuous professional growth. By utilizing the results of these appraisals, schools can identify targeted professional development opportunities that address specific weaknesses while enhancing teachers' strengths. Furthermore, incorporating student feedback into the appraisal process can offer valuable insights into teaching effectiveness, helping to identify areas for improvement in instructional methods and engagement strategies. Ultimately, this approach will contribute to a more effective learning environment, benefiting both teachers and students and promoting overall school improvement.

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