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**TEACHER PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL :AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR TEACHER  
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

*It is an indisputable fact that no educational institution can rise above the level of performance of its teaching staff that serve and remain as the overall technocrats of the institution. To manage the teachers' performance effectively for the production of high-skilled technical manpower that would develop the nation in all facets of life, school managers must embrace Teacher Performance Appraisal system promptly. Teacher Performance Appraisal is a process that involves a systematic and periodic assessment of teacher's job performance and productivity in the school in relation to certain pre-established criteria and school's objectives. It is done with the aim of distinguishing more efficient teachers from the less efficient ones. It is also done in order to make decisions concerning the teachers' salary, their promotion, training and development as well as to discriminate among the strength and weaknesses that the teachers have across many teaching job elements. The main thrust of this paper is to make a vivid elaboration on the concept of Teacher Performance Appraisal, Performance Appraisal Process, Performance Appraisal Techniques and factors affecting effective Performance Appraisal of teachers such as use of varying standards, recency effects, primacy effects, and central tendency. To enhance effective teacher performance appraisal in a technology-driven educational institutions, the paper recommends that a rater must use the same standards and weights in assessing every teacher, a rater should ensure proper documentation of both positive and negative attitudes of the teacher, a rater should avoid bias when assessing any of the teachers, and that a rater needs to be well trained on how to carry out the appraisal system. If all these are effected staff performances would be effectively appraised and managed.*

***Keywords:*** *Teacher, Performance, Appraisal, Management, Education.*

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## **Introduction**

No educational institution can rise above the level of the performance of its teaching staff that serve and remain as the overall technocrats of the institution. To manage the teachers' performance for effective production of technical manpower, school managers must embrace Teacher Performance Appraisal which is part and parcel of performance management. Performance management is an integral part of school management that requires prominent attention of a school manager for better school productivity. Performance management is a systematic process for improving individual, team and organizational performance (Amstrong, 2009). In other words, it is a systematic process for improving organizational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams. It is the entire process of appraising performances, giving feedbacks to the employees and offering rewards or punishments to them.

In education, Performance Management involves all deliberate efforts that are made to improve the performance of schools by improving the performance of teachers, non teachers and students. It aims generally at developing the capacity of people to meet and exceed expectations and to achieve their full potential to the benefit of themselves and the schools (Amstrong, 2009). He further contended that Performance management aims at aligning individuals and organizational (schools) objectives, improving organizational (schools) performance, improving individuals' (staff and students) performances, providing the basis for personnel development, developing a performance culture and informing contributions/performance pay decisions in a school organization.

## **The Concept of Teacher Performance Appraisal**

Teacher Performance Management (TPM) is done through Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) system which is also known as a teacher performance review, teacher performance evaluation, teacher career development discussion, or teacher appraisal. It is also called teacher performance rating, teacher assessment, personnel appraisal, employee evaluation and merit rating (Aswathappa, 2013).

Teacher Performance Appraisal is a method by which the [job performance](#) of a teacher is documented and evaluated (Manasa, 2009 and Muchinsky, 2012). It is a systematic and periodic process that assesses an individual teacher's job performance and productivity in relation to certain pre-established criteria and school's objectives (Abu-Doleh & Weir, 2007 in Wikipedia). Jacobs et al. (1980) defines teacher performance appraisal as a systematic attempt to distinguish the

more efficient teachers from the less efficient ones and to discriminate among strength and weaknesses that an individual teacher has across many job elements. In short, teacher performance appraisal is evaluating a teacher's current and or past performance relative to his performance standard (Dessler, 2005).

### **Teacher Performance Appraisal Processes**

There is a scenario of processes that are involved in teacher performance appraisal in the school system. These have been identified and explained by several scholars such as Jacobs et al. (1980), Dessler (2005), Abu-Doleh & Weir (2007), Manasa (2009), Muchinsky (2012), Aswathappa (2013) and Kawesi (2014) to include the following:

- i. **Identification of appraisal objectives:** This entails that performance appraisal system must start by developing performance appraisal objectives which in any case have to be related to the school's objectives. For instance, some schools' objective is to focus on staff development aspect while others focus on administrative aspects such as salary standardization etc.
- ii. **Developing performance standards:** After having set the objectives, standards of performance have to be set with the mission of making a comparison between the real work performance of the staff and the schools' expected work performance. Performance standards must be developed based on a particular work's requirements and those requirements result from the job analysis. A good performance standard must be able to translate the school's strategic objectives to a particular direction. Four important elements must be present when developing performance standard which include strategic relevance, criteria contamination, reliability, criterion deficiency. However, development of performance standard must take in to account all the responsibilities of the staff or employee. If the standard that is developed only takes one aspect of the job, then criterion deficiency would occur.
- iii. **Inducting new staff in the school's appraisal system:** This practice is all about introducing the new employees to the organisation's appraisal system so that they would come to know how the process of appraisal would be carried out and the key targets to be achieved so that can be able to rise to the challenge. Here, there must be adequate sensitization for all those involved in the appraisal process. This is an important stage in the

establishment of the psychological contract leaving the employees clear about what they want to do.

- iv. ***Communicating the appraisal objectives:*** Being the second most important stage in the appraisal practices, it entails settings of the specific objectives to which the employee have to put their efforts towards their attainment. This is because performance is appraised in light of how far goals have been achieved by individuals. This is the basis of performance appraisal. Aswathappa (2003) contends that the development of adequate measures for performance appraisal starts with setting objectives of appraisal. Performance appraisal may aim at promotion and transfers of staff, assessment of training needs, deciding upon pay rise, assessing current level of performance, estimating how far staff can progress in future and or developing the staff through feedback, critiquing and setting goals for improvement.
- v. ***Communicating the performance standards:*** Performance standards are conditions which exist when job is being performed effectively. They are standing or continuing objectives because their nature may not be changed significantly from one review period to another. They explain what the employee is expected to do or achieved in terms of behaviour and outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary to set those standards and communicate them to the employee for the better realisation of the desired outcomes.
- vi. ***Monitoring the staff work performance:*** This is monitoring the employee work performance demonstrated in line with the standards already set. If the real performance shown by the employee deviates from the set standards, then the standards developed must be re-analysed to ensure that it is clear, attainable, measurable and state the time period for it to be carried out. An unclear standard must be altered so that employee would be able to carry out their duties effectively.
- vii. ***Involving other stakeholders in the performance appraisal:*** It is very essential to include other stakeholders in the staff performance appraisal. Those could be like peers, superiors, subordinates, students and even self review. This is to negate the old method which only stresses that the school manager carries out the appraisal of the staff alone. This new method will enable the generation of performance information of an individual employee from different angle. This system is also called a 360 degree evaluation (Aswathappa, 2003).

- viii. ***Evaluating the staff performance.*** This is usually carried out at end of the year period so as to ensure that the school's strategic objectives are achieved. Here the real performance shown by the staff would be compared to the standards that have been developed.
- ix. ***Discussing the evaluation with teachers.*** This is a situation whereby a school head and teacher would discuss on the performance of the latter on the set standards. The discussion will determine how far the teacher has gone in achieving the school's objectives, identify the problems that deter the achievement and find alternative solutions to them. This discussion will also touch on developing objectives for the next year.
- x. ***Follow up action.*** The appraisal system needs to be supported by follow-up actions and work plans agreed by appraiser and appraisee needs to be mentored to ensure that they actually take place. Training needs should be identified and be met because, when just appraisal forms are just filed and forgotten, the whole process become an "empty ritual" merely instigated to satisfy teachers and development function of the school.

### **Strategies for Effective Teacher Performance Appraisal**

There are certain strategies or techniques that could be employed in order to effectively conduct the performance appraisal of teachers in educational institutions. The strategies as outlined by Aswathappa (2013) and Kawesi (2014) are hereby explained thus:

- a) ***Graphic Rating Scale Strategy.*** This strategy has been the most popular technique for appraising performance of teachers. This approach involves the art of listing certain traits that are required from the teacher such as quality, reliability, and range of performance values from unsatisfactory to outstanding for each trait. Here, the assessor rates each teacher by circling or checking the score that best describes the teacher's performance in relation to each of the traits. The assigned values for the traits are then totaled. The assessor must also be able to identify the type of performance s/he wants to measure from the teacher. Is it about quantity and quality? Is it on job actual duties? Or is it a competency-based? In any case, an assessor must appraise the teacher based on the extent to which he or she is meeting his or her standards.
- b) ***Alternate Ranking Strategy.*** This strategy calls for the ranking of all teachers from best to worst on a particular trait, choosing highest then lowest, until they are all ranked in either in ascending or descending order. In other words, a school manager or a rater needs to list all the

teachers to be rated and indicate the teacher who is the highest on the characteristics being measured and also the one who is lowest. Then choose the next highest and lowest until all have been ranked.

- c) **Paired Comparison Strategy.** This strategy involves ranking the teachers by making a chart of all possible pairs of the teachers for each trait and indicating who the best teacher of the duo is. If for instance, one has five teachers to rate, using this method, one should make a chart of all teachers for each trait, then for each trait, indicate positive or negative signs to indicate the one who is better or worse teacher of the pair depending on who has more +s or -s.
- d) **Forced Distribution Strategy.** This strategy is similar to grading on a curve. Here, the predetermined percentages of teachers rated are placed in various categories of performances.
- e) **Critical Incident Strategy.** Here, the record of uncommonly good or bad work-related attitudes or behaviors of a teacher are being kept by an assessor or a school manager. This record is to be discussed or reviewed with a teacher in a predetermined time. Preferably, after every six months, a manager should meet with the employee to discuss using those incidents as examples.
- f) **Use of Narrative Form Strategy.** The final written appraisal is often in narrative form. The teacher's assessor or supervisor is responsible for providing his assessment of the teacher's past performance and required areas of improvement.
- g) **E-Performance Monitoring Strategy.** This strategy is all about an electronic method of assessing the performance of a teacher. This could be done by making a gradual monitoring of the entire efforts and amount of activities of the teacher on daily basis through computer driven machines or devices. This data would then be eventually gathered and recorded for use whenever it is demanded for consideration.
- h) **Field Review Strategy.** This strategy is all about appraising the teacher by an assessor who is outside teachers' own department. This is usually invited from a corporate or human resource department.
- i) **Performance Tests and Observations Strategy.** This strategy is based on testing the knowledge and skills of the teacher. The tests may be written or an actual presentation of skills. Tests must be reliable and validated to be useful.
- j) **Essay Writing Strategy.** In this method the rater writes down the teacher's description in details within a number of broad categories like overall

impression of performance, promotability of teacher, existing capabilities and qualifications of performing jobs, strengths and weaknesses and training needs of the teacher.

- k) **Psychological Appraisals Strategy.** These appraisals are more directed towards assessing teachers' potentials for future performance rather than the past one. It is done in the form of in-depth interviews, psychological tests, and discussion with supervisors and review of other evaluations. It is more focused on teachers' emotional, intellectual, and motivational and other personal characteristics affecting his performance.
- l) **360-Degree Feedback Strategy.** It is a form or technique which is a systematic collection of performance data of an individual teacher from a number of stakeholders like immediate supervisors, team members, students, parents of the students, customers, peers and self. In fact, anyone who has useful information on how a teacher does a job may be one of the appraisers.

### **Factors Affecting Effective Teacher Performance Appraisal**

The following are the some of the errors that commonly affect the Teacher Performance Appraisal. These mostly distort the final and true evaluation result of the staff as identified by Patricia (2014), Daniel (2013), Aswathappa (2013) and Armstrong (2009):

- i. **Varying standards factor.** This is when an assessor or school manager appraises (evaluates) his or her teachers using different standards and expectations from the teachers who perform similar job. If for example, a head teacher examined teachers performing the same job with different standards of tests, such would not yield a true result because all teachers of the same standards must be assessed through the same test standards. This could be in form of using hard test and soft test for the same category of teachers.
- ii. **Recency effect factor.** This error comes when a school manager accords grades or marks (Good or Poor) to the staff based on the effects of the recent performance portrayed by the staff while ignoring their previous performance effects.
- iii. **Primacy effect factor.** This error arises when an appraiser evaluates a teacher by giving more weight to the information of performance he has received first from the teacher. So this is like an opposite of the recency effect.

- iv. **Central tendency factor.** This problem comes when a school manager evaluates every teacher within a narrow range, as average because he or she is dismissing the differences in the performance that employees have done. For instance, if the performance of the average teacher is quite high, the rater feels like evaluating the entire teachers more high. In the contrary, if the performance of the average teacher is low, he or she would appraise the remaining teachers low.
- v. **Leniency factor.** This arises when a manager or a rater rates all teachers at the high end of the scale. This is for the sake of their leniency or loyalty to him.
- vi. **Rater Bias factor.** This comes when a manager rates his teachers according to their values and prejudices to him. This distorts the rating. Those differentiations may be made due to the ethnic group, gender, age, religion, sex, etc.
- vii. **Halo effect factor.** This is when a school manager rates a teacher high on all items because of one characteristic that he or she likes from him. For instance, if a worker has few absence but the supervisor has a good relationship with that him, the supervisor might give to the employee a high rating in all other areas of work, in order to balance the rating.
- viii. **Horns effect factor.** This is the opposite of the halo effect. It occurs when a school manager rates a teacher low on all items because of one characteristic that he dislikes from him/her. Sometimes it happens when they do not have a close relationship and manager does not like the person him/herself.
- ix. **Contrast factor.** This is the tendency of rating the teacher relatively to other teachers rather than to the individual performance of the teacher.
- x. **Similar-to-me and different-from-me factor.** Sometimes, raters are being influenced by some of the characteristics portrayed by the teachers. So if those characteristics are similar or different to the rater's ones, they would be evaluated differently. For instance, a school manager with higher education degree might prefer to give teachers with higher education degree, a higher appraisal, than those with only bachelor's degrees.
- xi. **Sampling factor.** When a rater evaluates the performance of a teacher by relying only on a small percentage of the amount of work he/she did, then the rating could be said to have been affected by a sampling factor. For instance, a teacher has written hundred (100) reports, then, the manager takes five of them to check how the work has been made, and the manager



finds mistakes in those five reports; the manager will then appraise the work of the employee as "poor" one, without having into account the remaining 95 reports that he has not checked, which might have been made correctly.

- xii. **Spill over effect factor.** This refers to assessing the performance of a teacher by allowing the past performance appraisal ratings to influence the current ratings. Past ratings, good or bad, result in similar rating for the current period although the demonstrated behaviour does not deserve the rating, good or bad.
- xiii. **Status effect factor.** This refers to overrating of teachers in higher-level status and underrating employees in lower-level status.

### Conclusion

Having discussed the concept of performance appraisal and its step by step processes, performance appraisal techniques, and the factors affecting the effective performance appraisal, the paper concludes by stressing that, in order to bring about effective performance management through the teacher performance appraisal, the following recommendations need to be strictly embraced and followed by the school managers, evaluators, appraisers, or raters for the successful measurement of the teachers' performances with which the schools' performances would be improved.

### Recommendations:

1. In order to avoid the varying standard error, a rater must use the same standards and weight in assessing every teacher.
2. To avoid recency and primacy errors, a school manager should use some methods like documenting both the positive and negative aspects of the teacher and when he would make some decisions, he should not to do it based on what he remembers but based on real actions that happened and those that are recorded.
3. As for the halo and horn effect, raters need to be trained in such a way that they could recognize and differentiate the teachers on the ground of their performances.
4. As for the contrast error, the rater should capture the task requirement performances but not to reflect peoples' attitudes.
5. To get rid of the problem of similar-to-me / different-from-me factor, there is the need for a school manager to try to focus on the performance

the teacher is making regardless of whether the teacher is having some common characteristic with him or not.

6. As for sampling error, a rater should try to follow the entire track of the performance, not just a little part of it.

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