**PERCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEMS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**

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**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by The Open University of Tanzania a dissertation titled; “Performance appraisal system in the public sector: Perceptions and challenges: A case study of Public Service Commission, Kenya”, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Human Resource Management of the Open University of Tanzania.

…………………………………

Dr. Proches Ngatuni

…………………………..

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I, Jethro Momanyi Mosoti, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and that it has not been presented to any other University for a similar or any other degree award.

………………………………

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Date

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my dear wife Beatrice and our children Philemon, Valerie and Zadok for their support and understanding throughout the period of research.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this dissertation is a result of efforts of several people who have assisted me in various ways. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of my supervisor Dr. Proches Ngatuni for his guidance, mentorship and understanding throughout the entire process of this dissertation. I also thank the Public Service Commission fraternity for their support, financial and moral in this endeavour. May God bless you all.

# ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the perceptions and challenges staff of the Public Service Commission (Kenya) have towards the existing performance appraisal system as implementation has not met the expectations so far. The study was a cross-sectional deductive research and targeted the entire secretariat staff of the Commission stratified into four levels of senior management, middle level management, upper subordinates and other subordinates. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents from the two upper levels of staff. All staff from the two lower levels were selected for the study. Data for the study was collected by administering a questionnaire to 141 members of staff. The researcher used descriptive statistics where frequencies and percentage of responses were obtained through the use of SPSS. The findings were presented in tables and figures. The study found that employees like being rated by their supervisors on their performance and that the process was educative, objective, provided feedback, and helpful in improving performance. Further employees dislike the attachment of a list of evidence, being rated poorly and delayed appraisals. The study found that performance appraisal was hampered by ad hoc assignments, busy schedules staff and delayed feedback. The root-causes of the challenges were apathy, attitudes, busy nature of the Commission, duplication of appraisal questions, inadequate training and lack of clear direction from management. The study recommends that the template for performance targets be modified to include outcomes and review of the ratings. It is recommended that the appraisal process should be made friendly, simple and be used to reward employees and so as to enable the Commission to achieve its goals.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CSRP Civil Service Reform Programme

HR Human Resource

PA Perform Appraisal

PAS Performance Appraisal System

PSC Public Service Commission

RBM Results Based Management

RRIs Rapid Results Initiatives

SMART Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realizable, and Time-bound

SPSS Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

**CHAPTER ONE**

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the Study

A lot of attention has been given to performance appraisal by academics and practitioners alike, with a number of researchers investigating various aspects of the performance appraisal process (Inderrieden, Keavany & Allen, 1988). Performance appraisal systems are generally regarded as one of the key human resource management interventions, especially if the employees perceive the appraisals as exhibiting fairness and accuracy, based on shared acceptable standards (Thurston & McNall, 2010).

According to Lienert (2003) as cited by Ochoti, Maronga, Muathe, Nyabwanga and Ronoh (2012), in the last two decades, there has been cognizance of the fact that there are many challenges that have greatly affected public service reforms in Africa. These ranged from lack of appropriate psychological dispositions of employees, shortages of the necessary material and financial resources for service delivery and the need for cost containment (Ochoti et al., 2012).

The Government of Kenya established a number of reform programmes with the aim of improving service delivery and contains costs (Opiyo, 2006). These reforms were initiated under the Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP) (Government of Kenya, 1993 as cited by Ochoti et al. (2012). Other reforms included Results-Based Management (RBM) and Rapid Results Initiatives (RRIs), all anchored in the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (Government of Kenya, 2003 as cited by Ochoti et al., 2012). One of the strategies to enhance the performance of public officers was the introduction of performance appraisals in the entire public sector (Ochoti et al., 2012). A performance appraisal system (PAS) was introduced to replace a *traditional* appraisal system that was considered a mere ritual in which the supervisors, year-in-year-out, secretly and single-handedly appraised employees and kept the results secret in the employees’ confidential files (Government of Kenya, 2008).

As a public organization, the Public Service Commission commenced implementation of the new PAS for its secretariat staff soon after its roll-out in 2006. The new appraisal system was a departure from the norm, in the sense that it now required staff to start participating insessions that involved establishment of work objectives and plans, conducting self-appraisals, and setting performance goals. The holding of discussions with their supervisors – the ‘bosses’ - face to face, as opposed to the previous system where employees were detached from the bosses and only took instructions as given by the bosses. The greatest challenge was fear of discussing openly with the bosses and became a recipe for conflicts and negative perceptions of the appraisal.

In the discussions, the appraisee has to set targets with the supervisor following the SMART criteria, that is to say that the targets have to be specific, measurable, agreed upon, realizable and time-bound. The appraisal process also provides for regular discussions between the supervisor and the appraisee, including during rating at the final appraisal. These kinds of discussions have been found to cause some kinds of conflicts between the appraisee and supervisors or even make the appraisees fear in ‘arguing’ with the bosses.

[Skarlicki and Folger (1997](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0268-3946&volume=25&issue=3&articleid=1852402&show=html#idb42)) as cited by Thurston and McNall (2010) states that the perceptions inherent in such an appraisal system and the appraisal outcomes could have significant influence on employees' perceptions toward their work, their supervisors, the appraisal system and their organization as a whole. The appraisal process could also become a source of frustration and extreme dissatisfaction if employees perceived that the appraisal system was biased, political or irrelevant. This then results in the greater challenge of making employees to come to the discussions table and objectively participating in the appraisal.

There is need for leaders of organizations to realize that employees may perceive their performance appraisal systems as unfair. The employees may lack a convenient way of expressing their displeasure with specific appraisal practices. The root causes of the dissatisfaction need to be established to rectify this situation and this can be done by providing leaders with the information necessary to make sensible decisions concerning their existing performance appraisal systems (Thurston & McNall, 2010).

This research sought to evaluate the perceptions of employees of Kenya’s Public Service Commission towards the appraisal system and establish the root causes of such perceptions. It also sought to establish challenges facing appraisees and appraisers in the appraisal process and where possible recommend areas of improvement.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Public Service Commission adopted the implementation of the Performance Appraisal System rolled out by the government for the public service in 2006. Since then, the appraisal system has been playing a crucial role in the management process of employees’ performance. By means of the appraisal system, the Commission’s strategic goals are translated to individual employee goals to be met in a given financial year (Okeyo, Mathooko & Sitati, 2011). The appraisal system also aims at establishing the capabilities and aptitudes, as well as skills developmental requirements of each employee that are necessary for achievement of the targets set in their work assignments.

Though the Commission adopted the appraisal system soon after roll out, its implementation has not met the expectations so far. A lot of bickering and apathy appear to exist among employees, from overtones and some verbal comments that have been received from employees. Some employees seem not to have embraced the system, and so are the supervisors, a fact which has made it to turn into a replica of the former *ritual* that appraisals were known to be. There may be, therefore, some perceptions and challenges inherent in the employees with regard to this appraisal system.

Considering that PAS was introduced in the Commission about ten years ago, there is no documented information on the perceptions of the employees on the whole process of appraisal. There is equally no documentation of challenges that emanate from and influence the implementation of PAS in the organization. Whereas such challenges may have been documented in the PAS progress reports of the then Ministry of State for Public Service (Okeyo et al., 2011), there have been no specific research findings relating to the Commission, and especially with regard to perceptions and challenges that it portends. With this kind of scenario, a detailed review of PAS with regard to perceptions and challenges that it attracts in the course of implementation was needful.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study sought to find out the perceptions and challenges that employees of the Public Service Commission have about the existing performance appraisal system in general, as implemented in the Commission.

The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Determine perceptions of the employees towards the performance appraisal system.
2. Assess the challenges faced in the implementation of PAS.
3. Establish the root-causes of these perceptions and challenges, and recommend areas of improvement of the appraisal process to make it more effective.

## 1.4 Research Questions

In undertaking the research, the following key questions formed the focus.

1. What are the perceptions of staff towards the implementation of the existing performance appraisal system?
2. What challenges are being experienced in the performance appraisal process?
3. What are the root-causes of the employee appraisal perceptions and/or challenges?

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

The main aim of this study was to establish the nature of perceptions of the staff of the Public Service Commission (Kenya) regarding the existing performance appraisal system and also to identify challenges that may be facing them in the implementation of this system. This shall enable making proposals of ways and means by which negative perceptions and existing challenges regarding the appraisal system may be addressed by management, while tapping into and strengthening the, hitherto, effective aspects of the system. The results of this study aim to benefit both the top management of the Public Service Commission and the staff in identifying the weaknesses and/or strengths of the appraisal system with the aim of determining ways of improvements. It provides insights into staff perceptions of the system that may be impacting negatively, not only on their individual performance but also that of the entire organization.

The study is useful to Human Resource (HR) practitioners, in general, as this is one of the significant areas in HR. It will also benefit citizens who may be interested to understand more about improvements and challenges that the public sector continues to encounter in a quest to provide better services. Furthermore, this study serves as a framework for further research of the same nature with regard to performance appraisals in both public and private organizations. Other researchers will in this regard benefit from the study as it will provide them with facts on which to base their future studies.

## 1.6 Organization of the Thesis

The rest of the dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter two presents the review of literature, both theoretical and empirical, as well as the conceptual definitions, an analysis of the research gap including conceptual and theoretical frameworks. The third chapter offers a descriptive overview of the research methodology, survey population, sampling design and procedure, variables and measurement procedures, as well as methods of data collection, processing and analysis. Chapter four of this dissertation presents the findings and discussions. Chapter five, on the other hand, presents conclusions and recommendations from the study, and suggestions for further research.

# CHAPTER TWO

# 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal can be viewed as “the process of assessing and recording staff performance for the purpose of making management decisions on staff” (Government of Kenya, 2008). The process involves identifying common goals, to be achieved between the appraiser and the appraisee, which must correlate with the overall goal of the organization and putting in place plans towards their accomplishment (Armstrong& Taylor, 2014; Government of Kenya, 2008; Ochoti et al. 2012).

Performance appraisal is largely a systematic evaluation of past and/or current job performance levels of employees against certain set standards (Dessler, 2008; Sababu, 2010). [Fletcher (2001](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0048-3486&volume=41&issue=6&articleid=17054815&show=html#idb17), p. 473), as quoted by Tuytens and Devos (2012), defines performance appraisal as “a variety of activities through which organizations seek to assess employees and develop their competence, enhance performance and distribute rewards”.

According to Armstrong (2007), the aims of performance appraisal are many. They include giving employees feedback on performance, identifying employee training needs, providing criteria for allocating rewards and a basis for virtually all personnel decisions. Dessler, (2008) adds that performance appraisals help to motivate employees through regular feedback on how well they are performing, encourages their growth and development, and instills a culture of performance in the organization.

### 2.1.1Perceptions

Mossholder, Giles, and Wesolowski (1991) describe perceptions as attitudes held by employees with regard to various components of a performance appraisal system and its application to their jobs. Perceptions vary from person to person. Different people perceive different things about the same situation and assign different meanings to what is perceived (Mossholder et al., 1991). Some employees may view the appraisal system as punitive and likely to increase conflict with their superiors, hence create a negative perception of such an appraisal system. Performance appraisal will be viewed positively to the extent that managers and subordinates share perceptions as to its purpose and the degree to which it meets the needs of both (Longenecker et al., 1988).

### 2.1.2Challenges

Challenges are dilemmas confronting managers (Longenecker & Ludwig, 1990; Mossholder et al., 1991) in the process of establishing and implementing performance appraisal systems in their organizations. In the process of appraising the performance of staff, a number of challenges may arise. The challenges could include disappointing outcomes (Coleman, 2009; Law & Tam, 2008), difficulties of involving appraisees throughout the appraisal in regular meetings (Ochoti et al., 2012), lack of process ownership by supervisors as well as lack of appropriate training (Law & Tam, 2008) relating to the understanding of the supervisors’ roles (Coleman, 2009).

Law and Tam (2008) further identify other challenges of PA as difficulties in understanding the appraisal form, lack of clear guidelines, ineffective communication between the parties, bias, lack of appeals mechanisms and unclear assessment criteria. These challenges portend lack of standards and thus render perception of the appraisal as unfair, aggravating defensive behavior among management and staff (Law & Tam, 2008). PA also poses the challenge of wasting valuable working time (Pretorious & Ngwenya, 2008) with regard to the lengthy discussions and documentations involved in the process.

### 2.2Theoretical Literature Review

The process of performance appraisal is more of a control measure that is used to identify deviations from expectations in the work tasks assigned for purposes of taking corrective action (Ochoti et al., 2012). The appraisal system may also be largely seen as a means of creating a balanced employee workload or overload. Therefore, conducting regular appraisals is hailed as very important. Goff and Longenecker (1990), as cited by Ochoti et al. (2012) state that performance appraisals are seen by management as a control measure and a source of information for decision making. They are also a means of setting performance standards and necessary in ensuring biases are eradicated among staff. Other purposes that the appraisal system may serve include motivation of staff and providing a basis for rewarding performance.

Three theories were identified for study with regard to control, motivation and reward perceptions of employees that may characterize performance appraisals in the public sector. These are MacGregor’s theory X and Theory Y, Hertzberg’s Two Factor Theory and Adam’s Equity Theory.

### 2.2.1 MacGregor’s Theories X and Y

The control nature of the appraisal system fits well with Douglas McGregor’s famous X-Y theory that he developed in his 1960 book 'The Human Side of Enterprise'. Though theory X and theory Y are still referred to commonly in the fields of management, McGregor's X-Y Theory remains central to organizational development, and to improving organizational culture and performance.

Theory X states that “the average person dislikes work and will avoid it if he/she can. It therefore provides that force must be applied to people or they be threatened with punishment to be able to work towards organizational objectives”. To him, a person falling in this category therefore prefers to be directed, avoids responsibility, is relatively unambitious and wants security above all else. However, it is worth noting that while it is true that all employees need job security, it is also true that they prefer more independence, responsibility, clear tasks and job descriptions as well as goals and targets.

Theory Y, according to MacGregor, is that “to some people effort in work is as natural as play. People will apply self-control and self-direction in the pursuit of organizational objectives, without external control or the threat of punishment and that commitment to objectives is a function of rewards associated with their achievement. People usually accept and often seek responsibility. The capacity to use a high degree of imagination, ingenuity and creativity in solving organizational problems is widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population. In industry, the intellectual potential of the average person is only partly utilized”.

With regard to performance appraisal and these theories, leadership tending towards theory X, will generally get poor results. This is because people will likely view appraisals as coercive and punitive in nature and often tend to resist. Enlightened managers should tend to theory Y, which produces better performance and results, and allows people to grow and develop.

### 2.2.2 Hertzberg’s Two Factor Theory

According to Hertzberg, there are two basic groups of factors that influence the motivation of employees. The first group of factors is what he referred to as hygiene factors. These consisted of working conditions, the quality of supervision, salary, status, safety, company policies and administration. These may strongly influence feeling of dissatisfaction among employees and hence affect their job performance (Weihrich and Koontz, 1993 as cited by Okeyo et al., 2011). To Hertzberg, the second group was motivating factors which included recognition, achievement, responsibility, interesting job, growth and advancement to higher level tasks. These factors, he noted, bring job satisfaction to employees and eventually, motivation.

Performance appraisal is about inducing both job satisfaction and motivation on the part of workers to enhance achievement of the overall organizational goals. If not properly used, appraisals could lead to dissatisfaction and demotivation. The end result will be unmet organizational goals. This calls upon managers and supervisors into a need to have an understanding of this theory to make performance appraisals have intrinsic motivation on employees for effective performance (Okeyo et al., 2011).

### 2.2.3 Adams’ Equity Theory

This theory is also known as Workplace Motivational Theory. It was developed by John Stacey Adams in 1963. The theory attempts to explain that satisfaction of employees depends on how they perceive fairness in the distribution of resources among them in an organization. Adams asserted that employees seek to maintain equity between the inputs that they bring to a job and the outcomes that they receive from it, that is, they strike a balance between the perceived inputs and outcomes of others (Adams, 1965). The belief is that people value fair treatment which causes them to be motivated to keep the [fairness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairness) maintained within the relationships of their co-workers and the organization. The structure of equity in the workplace is based on the ratio of inputs to outcomes. Inputs in this case are the contributions made by the employee to the organization.

Applying this theory when conducting a performance appraisal, one should be able to balance an employee’s contribution to his job with the compensation and other rewards associated with his success. In general, it is important to ensure that all employees are motivated so as to continue performing well. Appraisals should therefore be used carefully to ensure that employees are satisfied with the outcomes of their efforts and be able to perceive the system as fair and equitable. This could lead to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

It is, however, important to state that it is not easy to make equitable decisions while supporting performance improvement. Managers typically evaluate their employees, calibrate ratings and decide on rewards. These rewards include pay increases, promotions, flexible work schedules or stock options. Justifying these decisions more often becomes the focus, rather than relaying constructive feedback that can enhance performance and foster career development.

## 2.3Empirical Literature Review

In a study carried out by Martey (2002), it was found that some respondents felt that appraisals were not useful and therefore considered the appraisal procedure as “a waste of time and paper”. It was felt that those whose performance was being appraised might know why the system did not appear to provide adequate information for organizational control and for individual development (Martey, (2002). Some employees felt that appraisals were unfair and therefore caused some dissatisfaction with the assessments. Even little dissatisfaction in this regard can create problems for the organization. Perhaps the only way assessments can be considered fair is for the employees to understand and accept the basis of the assessments. An employee may grumble if he is scored low on any criterion, but he may take the matter further if he knows why he has been assessed that way. Serious problems may arise when a rater cannot defend, if challenged, a low rating he has made.

Bekele, Shigutu and Tensay (2014) in their study established that perceptions of accuracy, utility, fairness, satisfaction with the appraisal process and appraisal interview behavior exist among appraisees. Boachie-Mensah and Seidu (2012), in their study of an educational institution, established diverse opinions about PA. They noted a tendency of supervisors to view subordinates positively or negatively based on recent particular behavior – the halo effect and horn effect respectively. This resulted in leniency or strictness in appraisals.

In a research by Ikemefuna and Chidi (2012), perceptions of PA being a means for determining training and development needs of employees were established. They also found that leadership styles influence the fairness of PA. In their view, while many workers perceived PA negatively, some had an optimistic view for appraisal being a means of promoting, evaluating and equitably compensating employees. In a research on fairness perceptions; Ikramullah, Shah, Hassan, Zaman and Khan (2011) found that appraisees perceived appraisal ratings and treatment by their supervisors as fair, majorly due to generous ratings as per the existing civil service rating guidelines.

In a study carried out among library staff (Martey, 2002), it was found that the staff appreciated the importance of an effective appraisal procedure. Martey (2002) further indicates that the procedure would be more effective if it could accurately indicate how well the employees were performing. Individuals want, and seek, feedback on their performance as a number of social psychologists have indicated (Longenecker et al, 1988). Where the feedbacks lack, employees are likely to perceive the appraisal as needless, less appropriate and wasteful. This may result in challenges that may take long to reverse.

Research by Nzuve and Ng’ang’a (n.d.) shows one of the challenges of performance appraisal as fabrication of figures as most employees never considered PA as a core activity. Other challenges cited in various researches include difficulties in measurement of some values (Nzuve & Ng’ang’a, n.d.) such as integrity, patriotism and staff competency; unclear policies for PA (Ahmad & Bujang, 2013; Erdogan, 2002; Rop et al, 2013;); and subjectivity in appraisals (Ahmad & Bujang, 2013).

Law and Tam (2007) have also raised a number of challenges facing performance appraisals. These challenges include lack of openness, failure to involve employees at every stage of the appraisal and poor or lack of feedback (Ahmad & Bujang, 2013; Erdogan, 2002; Law & Tam, 2007). Ahmad and Bujang (2013) also cite challenges of unavailability of PA mentoring, difficulties in drawing a distinction between team and individual performance and poor leadership styles. Raters without the required knowledge and skills (Ahmad & Bujang, 2013) have also contributed to the challenges of performance appraisal systems. Bekele et al. (2014) have identified challenges relating to perceived unfairness, accuracy and unclear utility of the appraisal. Poorly designed appraisal tools (Rop et al., 2013) and unclear guidelines (Ahmad & Bujang, 2013) make employees resent the appraisals. According to Nzuve and Ng’ang’a (n.d.) sometimes there is no confidentiality of information obtained from ratees. Some employees also feel that no relationship exists between PA and rewards and/or sanctions.

Bekele et al. (2014) have also noted that employee understanding of PA is in most cases not taken into account right from the start. This creates conflict between the levels of employee expectations of the organization and the organization expectations from the employee. The end result of this situation is de-motivation and loss of interest in the appraisal process. Bekele et al. (2014) have also identified difficulties in minimizing supervisor biases resulting in intentional or unintentional errors in rating, unclear standards, lack of objectivity, leniency, strictness and central tendency as other challenges in Performance appraisal.

## 2.4 Research Gap

Emphasis on performance appraisals in public sector organizations in Kenya gained intensity with the government’s introduction of public sector reforms of the early 2000s. This created a widespread believe that implementation of performance appraisal will enhance achievement of employee targets and improve the delivery of services. This is more of a reinforcement of MacGregor’s Theory X which points out that performance appraisals are designed to ensure more control of employee.

A number of studies in the past two decades have reported findings that have elicited negative perceptions of performance appraisals. Martey (2002), for instance, found out that staff felt appraisals were both un-useful and time wasters. Boachie-Mensah and Seidu (2012), on the other hand, established contradictory views which provide both negative and positive perceptions of performance appraisal. Similar findings were made by Ikramullah et al. (2011), Ikemefuna and Chidi (2012) and Bekele et al. (2014).

Apart from perceptions themselves, researches have established that challenges of performance appraisal impact greatly on the employee perceptions of the system (Ahmad & Bujang, 2013; Erdogan, 2002; Nzuve & Ng’ang’a, n.d.; Rop et al., 2013). Law and Tam (2007) have raised a number of root-causes to the appraisal challenges and perceptions, including lack of openness, lack of feedback and failure to effectively involve employees, among other root-causes.

The conflicting findings from all these studies suggest that there is need for more research to either authenticate or challenge the findings. In particular, there have not been specific studies of PA perceptions and attendant challenges relating to Kenya’s Public Service Commission.

## 2.5Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

### 2.5.1 Conceptual Framework

The researcher has adopted a conceptual framework that outlines the main research variables as follows:

**Perceptions**

* Unclear purpose of PA
* Lack of objectivity
* Unfair evaluations
* Meant to intimidate

**Challenges**

* Appraisal knowledge
* Inadequate feedback
* Fear of supervisors
* Negative attitude
* Resistance to PA
* Low uptake
* Lack of training

**PA system**

* System design
* organizational culture and design
* Appraisal environment
* No linkage with rewards

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

### 2.5.2 Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework shows that performance appraisal challenges result in perceptions that impact on the performance appraisal system. These challenges include, but may not be limited to the level of appraisal knowledge, inadequate feedback, fear of supervisors, negative attitude, resistance to PA and low uptake of appraisal.

The raters need to be well versed in the purpose, and process of PAS. This will require appropriate training. If not properly trained, they may mismanage the process, thereby creating negative perceptions from staff. On the other hand, it is significant that the attitudes of the raters and the ratees towards the performance appraisal be properly oriented through sensitizations. This will reduce resistance to appraisals.

The culture of an organization may also influence perceptions and challenges concerning performance appraisals. A culture that has been embedded in an organization spanning many years may be difficult to break in the short-term. For instance it may be difficult to introduce performance appraisal in organizations that that have never had it in the past, as it may be perceived as a beginning of witch-hunting. This may pose a challenge that may not be easy to overcome. The perceptions and challenges may further be compounded by the elements contained in the appraisal system. This means that during the development of the appraisal elements, care should be taken to ensure that the elements selected for inclusion shall be positively construed by the staff so as to enhance support to the appraisals.

# CHAPTER THREE

# 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Overview

This Chapter discusses the methodology used to carry out the study so as to address the research objectives. It outlines the research design, survey population and area, and sampling design and procedure. The chapter also describes the methods of data collection used in the study and how data collected was processed and analyzed.

## 3.2 Research Design

In this case study, the study was conducted using descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey research obtains information that describes existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, behavior or values (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Descriptive survey suited this study because the population in question was large and it would be difficult to observe the characteristics of each individual. Descriptive survey design is one that allows a researcher to collect information through interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a representative sample drawn from the target population (Orodho, 2005). The design was chosen because through it, the researcher was able to collect and analyze data as it exists in the field without manipulating any variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The researcher was able to collect data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects of the study and assess attitudes and opinions about events, individuals or procedures (Gay, 1993).

Qualitative research techniques were employed in data collection. This involved collecting data in order to discover the hidden truths about the research problem and find answers to the research questions (Kothari, 2004). The case study strategy was employed in this survey so that the context of the research and the processes involved were made easier to understand (Morris &Wood, 1991 as cited in Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The case study strategy also presents an opportunity to generate answers to the research questions that are specific to the Public Service Commission. Qualitative research questionnaires containing both open-ended and closed-ended questions were used to gather data aimed at coming up with solutions to the research questions. The questionnaires were administered to employees of the Commission to solicit the desired information.

## 3.3SurveyPopulationand Study Area

The Commission is a relatively small organization with a total secretariat staff of one hundred and ninety eight (198) employees at the time of this study. The study targeted the total population of one hundred and ninety eight employees in the various cadres and levels of the Commission’s Secretariat staff. The study was conducted at the Commission offices which are located at Commission House, along Harambee Avenue, and Bruce House adjacent to City Hall Annex, Nairobi. The staff comprised of senior management, middle level management and lower cadres of employees as shown in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Target Population

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category of staff** | **Population** |
| Senior Management  | 40 |
| Middle Level Management | 54 |
| Upper Subordinate  | 66 |
| Other Subordinates | 38 |
| **Total** | **198** |

**Source:** Integrated Payroll and Personnel Database, PSC (November 2016)

## 3.4Sampling Design and Procedure

A sample is a portion, piece, or segment that is representative of a whole (Saunders et al, 2009). A sample is taken and studied because it is difficult to survey the entire population due to size and expenses involved (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Saunders et al, 2009). The sample is then used to draw conclusions that would be generalized on the whole population.

The target of this study was the whole population of one hundred and ninety eight employees of the Public Service Commission. However, it could not be possible to reach all of them for administration of questionnaires. It could be more difficult to access all the senior staff to administer questionnaires, whereas it could be easier to administer to lower cadres of staff.

The study, therefore, utilized stratified sampling technique entailing selection of a reasonable number of cases that represent the target population among senior and middle level management levels. In this case 25 percent of the Senior Management, 50 percent of the Middle level management and 100 percent of the rest of the staff were selected as the sample population to arrive at a sample of 141 respondents.

The researcher used simple random technique to select respondents from Senior Management and Middle level management strata while all thesubordinate level staffs were selected. Simple random sampling allows each member of the subset to have an equal probability of being chosen (Yates et al., 2008).Table 3.2 shows the sample size of the population selected for the study.

Table 3.2: Sample Size

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category of staff** | **Population** | **% age Sample Size of target population** | **No selected** | **Percentage (%) of target population** |
| Senior Management  | 40 | 25 | 10 | 5.05 |
| Middle Level Management | 54 | 50 | 27 | 13.64 |
| Upper Subordinates | 66 | 100 | 66 | 33.33 |
| Other Subordinates | 38 | 100 | 38 | 19.19 |
| **Total** | **198** |  | **141** | **71.21** |

**Source:** Integrated Payroll and Personnel Database (PSC), November 2016

## 3.5 Methods of Data Collection

The researcher prepared questionnaires containing both open and closed-ended questions, which he used to gather primary data directly from respondents. He administered the questionnaires for purposes of collecting the requisite data. Questionnaires were preferred because they could offer anonymity and foster confidentiality where necessary (O’Leary, 2010) to foster objectivity in responses. Where the method was likely to be prone to low response rates, it was reinforced by reaching out to the respondents and encouraging them to complete the questionnaires.

In the use of the questionnaires, respondents were asked questions relating to the performance appraisal exercise with regard to how they perceived it and any challenges experienced. Some questionnaire questions related to the possible causes of their perceptions and the challenges experienced. This method was deemed appropriate because it promoted ease of responses as the questionnaires could be administered and collected later to give employees time to make their responses. The time span within which the research was undertaken also required that a method that would yield information within that span of time be preferred.

The use of questionnaires was equally cheaper and time saving and most appropriate for this kind of cross-sectional study. The researcher was also able to monitor the progress of the responses and encourage more respondents to complete the questionnaires. The researcher collected the questionnaires personally from the respondents by reaching out to them individually. Though tedious, as some of the respondents could not be readily available, it was important as this could sometimes remind the respondent who had not completed the questionnaires to do so and some could fill them in in the presence of the researcher.

## 3.6 Data Processing and Analysis

The research was designed to take the dimension of a qualitative nature. Therefore, the processing of the data collected was packaged in such a way that the findings could be easily and effectively communicated (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). As known, data analysis may be a comprehensive and complex process (O’Leary, 2010) that requires one to manage and organize the raw data, systematically code and enter the data, interpret meaning, uncover and discover findings and finally draw relevant conclusions.

Therefore, data collected in this study was categorized in accordance to responses on the areas covered by the questionnaire. The raw data was then transferred to and processed by means of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, for final analysis into a form that is easy to understand, on the basis of which appropriate findings and conclusions have been drawn. Before processing the responses, the completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency.

Quantitative data collected was analysed by the use of descriptive statistics using SPSS (version 21) and presented through percentages and frequencies. The information was displayed by use of bar charts, graphs and pie charts and in prose-form. This was done by tallying up responses, computing percentages of variations in response as well as describing and interpreting the data in line with the study objectives to communicate research findings. Content analysis was used to test data that is qualitative in nature or aspects of the data collected from the open ended questions. It is hoped that the analysis of the data establishes the root-causes of the perceptions and challenges of the appraisal system and sets ground for recommendations aimed at addressing them.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# 4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings as per the study objectives which were to determine perceptions of the employees towards the performance appraisal system; to assess the challenges faced in the implementation of PAS; and to establish the root-causes of these perceptions and challenges and recommend areas of improvement of the appraisal process to make it more effective.

## 4.2 Response Rate

Table 4.1: Response Rate

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Duly filled Responses | 120 | 85.1 |
| Unclear Responses |  6 |  4.3 |
| Non-response | 15 | 10.6 |
| **Total** | **141** | **100** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study sampled and distributed questionnaires to 141 respondents. As shown in Table 4.1, of the 141 questionnaires,126 (89.4%) were returned. However, only 120 (85.1%) of the respondents duly filled the questionnaires and returned. Six of the questionnaires, making up 4.3% of the questionnaires distributed,were returned with unclear information and could not be used in the study.According to Kothari (2004) any response of 50% and above is adequate for analysis; hence 85.1% was considerable for the analysis.

## 4.3 Personal Information

**4.3.1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

Figure 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

From Figure 4.1the results indicate that there were almost twice more female respondents than male respondents. Female were about two-thirds and male were about a third.

**4.3.2 Age of the Respondents**

Figure 4.2: Age of the Respondents

The study requested the respondents to indicate their ages. From the findings in Figure 4.2, most of the respondents (49.2%) were aged 36-45%, 40.8% were aged 26-35 years, while 5% were aged below 25 years and above 46 years in each case. This implies that the study involved respondents of different ages, but the majority (90%) were in the 26-45 years category.

**4.3.3 Highest Educational Level**

Figure 4.3: Highest Educational Level

The study further sought the respondents’ levels of education. Figure 4.3 presents the study findings, indicating majority of the respondents (50.8%) held professional certificate, 24.4% had ‘O’ level, 28.3% had first degree while 6.7% had Masters Degree. This implies that the respondents were all educated and were in a position to understand and respond to the questions of the study.

**4.3.4 Work Experience**

Figure 4.4: Work Experience

The study sought to find out the respondents’ work experience. From the findings shown in Figure 4.4, majority of the respondents (51.7%) had experience of over 10 years, 34.2% had an experience of 6-10 years while 14.2% had an experience of less than 5years. This implies that the respondents had an adequate general experience on performance appraisal.

**4.3.5 Employment Category**

Figure 4.5: Employment Category

The study sought to find out respondents’ employment category. From the study findings in Figure 4.5, most of the respondents (46.7%) were upper subordinates, 27.5% were other subordinates, 19.2% were in middle level management while 6.7% were in senior management. This implies that the respondents were from different employment categories.

**4.3.6 Length of time served at the Public Service Commission**

Figure 4.6: Length of Time Served at the Public Service Commission

The study sought to find out the Length of time served at the Public Service Commission. From the study findings shown in Figure 4.6, majority of the respondents had served in the Public Service Commission for a period of 4-6 years, 22.5% had served for 0-3 years, 16.7% for 7-9 years, 5% for 13 years and above, 4.2% for 10-12 years. This implies that respondents had served in the commission for a period long enough to understand the performance appraisal in the Commission.

## 4.4 Perceptions of the Employees towards the Performance Appraisal System

Table 4. 2: Participation in Performance Appraisal in the Commission

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Yes | 119 | 99.2 |
| No | 1 | 0.8 |
| **Total** | **120** | **100.0** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study sought to find out whether respondents had participated in performance appraisal in the Commission. From the findings, as shown in Table 4.2, majority of the respondents (99%) indicated to have participated in performance appraisal in the Commission while 0.8% were of the contrary opinion. This implies that all but one of the respondents had participated in performance appraisal in the Commission. And therefore, they were in a position to give an assessment of their experience in undergoing performance appraisal.

Table 4.3: How Often Respondents Hold Formal Discussions on Their Performance with Their Supervisor

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No. of Times** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
|  | Once a year | 22 | 18.3 |
| Twice a year | 58 | 48.3 |
| Quarterly | 40 | 33.3 |
|  **Total**  | **120** | **100.0** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study further sought to find out how often respondents held formal discussions on their performance with their supervisor. From the study results, most respondents(48.3%) indicated twice a year, 33.3% indicated quarterly while 18.3% indicated once a year, as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.4: Extent to Which Respondents Like Being Rated by their Supervisor on their Performance

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Opinion** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| To a great extent | 61 | 50.8 |
| To an average extent | 34 | 28.3 |
| To a minimal extent | 13 | 10.8 |
| I don’t like at all | 12 | 10.0 |
| **Total** | **120** | **100.0** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study sought to find out the extent to which respondents liked being rated by their supervisor on their performance. From the study findings, as shown in Table 4.4, majority of the respondents (50.8%) indicated to a very great extent, 28.3% to an average extent, 10.8% to a minimal extent while 10% indicated not to like it at all. This implies that most of the respondents like being rated by their supervisors on their performance.

Table 4.5: Positive Reasons for the Choices Made on the Extent to Which Respondents like Being Rated by Their Supervisor on Their Performance

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Reason** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Agreeable and appreciative | 3 | 13.6 |
| Provides continuous assessment | 4 | 18.3 |
| Educative | 1 | 4.5 |
| Encourages performance improvement | 5 | 22.8 |
| Knows my performance | 1 | 4.5 |
| Not biased | 2 | 9.1 |
| Objective  | 2 | 9.1 |
| Provides feedback | 2 | 9.1 |
| Exercises fairness | 1 | 4.5 |
| A trainer | 1 | 4.5 |
| **Total** | **22** | **100** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study further sought to find out the reason for the choices made on the extent to which respondents like being rated by their supervisor on their performance. As shown in Table 4.5, from the study findings, 22.8% of the respondents liked being rated by their supervisors on their performance because the supervisors encouraged performance improvement, 18.3% of the respondents were of the opinion that supervisors provided continuous assessment, 13.6% indicated that supervisors were agreeable and appreciative of their work while 9.1% of the respondents, in each case, indicated that the supervisors were objective, not biased and provided feedback. Further, 4.5% of respondents in each case indicated the supervisors exercised fairness, were educative, were trainers and knew their performance.

Table 4.6: Positive Aspects Regarding Supervisor in Handling Performance

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aspects of Performance Appraisals** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Supportive | 76 | 32.2 |
| understanding and Caring | 36 | 15.3 |
| Experienced | 31 | 13.2 |
| Knowledgeable | 44 | 18.6 |
| Nondiscriminatory | 8 | 3.4 |
| Objective | 35 | 14.8 |
| Mindful | 6 | 2.5 |
| **Total** | **236** | **100** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study requested the respondents to indicate their positive description of their supervisor with regard to handling of performance appraisal, based on the areas listed. In this case the respondents could select multiple items from the list provided. From the study findings, 32.2% indicated supervisors were supportive, 18.6% indicated they were knowledgeable, 15.3% indicated they were understanding and caring, 14.8% indicated they were objective, 13.1% indicated they were experienced, 3.4% indicated they were non-discriminating while 2.5% indicated supervisors were mindful. This means that on the positive description of supervisors, majority of the respondents, representing 42.5% believed supervisors were supportive, while a small percentage of 2.5% indicated that their supervisors were mindful in handling staff performance as indicated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.7: Negative Aspects regarding Supervisors handling of Performance Appraisals

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aspects of Performance Appraisals** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Non-supportive | 14 | 7.8 |
| Less understanding and not cared | 35 | 19.4 |
| Inexperienced | 38 | 21.1 |
| Less Knowledgeable | 3 | 1.7 |
| Discriminatory | 38 | 21.1 |
| Subjective | 33 | 18.3 |
| Less Mindful | 19 | 10.6 |
| **Total** | **180** | **100** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study requested the respondents to indicate their negative description of their supervisors with regard to handling of performance appraisal, based on the areas listed. From the study findings, as shown in Table 4.7,21.1% indicated inexperienced, 21.1% indicated discriminatory, ,19.4% indicated less understanding and not cared, 18.3% indicated subjective, 10.6% indicated less mindful, 7.7% indicated non-supportive while 1.7% indicated that the supervisors were knowledgeable.

Table 4.8: Whether There is Need to Review the Performance Appraisal System from What It Is Currently

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Opinion** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Yes | 45.0% |
| No | 55.0% |

The study requested the respondents to indicate their opinion on whetherthere is need to review the performance appraisal system from what it is currently. From the results shown in Table 4.8, majority of the respondents (55%) indicated that there is no need to review the performance appraisal system from what is currently while 45% opined that there is need to review the performance appraisal system from what is currently.

Table 4.9: Whether There Were Areas They Could Wish to See Removed From The Appraisal

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Comments of the second supervisor | 2 | 10.5 |
| Values and core competences | 5 | 26.3 |
| General objectives of the department | 1 | 5.3 |
| Mid-year ratings | 2 | 10.5 |
| Previous yearratings | 1 | 5.3 |
| Rating scale | 4 | 21.1 |
| Reduce length of the tool | 1 | 5.3 |
| Training required | 3 | 15.7 |
| **Total** | **19** | **100** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study further requested the respondents to suggest three areas that they may wish to see removed from the appraisal process. Of the respondents who provided information in this area (Table 4.9), 26.3% indicated values and core competences, 21.1% cited rating scale, 15.7% indicated training required, 10.5% in each case indicated comments of the second supervisor and mid-year ratings, while 5.3% in each case cited general objectives of the department, previous year’s rating and the need to reduce the length of the tool.

Table 4.10: Whether There Were Areas They Could Wish to See Added to The Appraisal

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Actual performance ratings | 1 | 7.6 |
| Rating of ad hoc assignments | 2 | 15.7 |
| Appraisal be done annually | 1 | 7.6 |
| Guide on attachment of evidence | 1 | 7.6 |
| Brief on how employee has improved | 1 | 7.6 |
| Challenges and constraints | 2 | 15.7 |
| Innovation and creativity  | 1 | 7.6 |
| Clear rating | 3 | 23.0 |
| Make the tool friendly | 1 | 7.6 |
| **Total** | **13** | **100** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study further requested the respondents to suggest three areas that they may wish to have added to the appraisal process. 23% of respondents indicated clear rating, 15.7% in each case indicated rating of ad hoc assignments and challenges and constraints while 7.6% each cited actual performance ratings, appraisal be done annually, a need for a guide on attachment of evidence, brief on how the employee has improved, innovation and creativity and make the tool more friendly as shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.11: Things Disliked Most about Performance Appraisal in the Commission

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| Annual ritual | 8 | 18.2 |
| Attachment of long list of evidence | 1 | 2.3 |
| Being rated poorly | 2 | 4.5 |
| Delayed appraisal | 3 | 6.8 |
| Forced on staff | 1 | 2.3 |
| Frequent deployments that disorient staff | 1 | 2.3 |
| No benefit or rewards | 7 | 15.9 |
| No feedback on team activities | 1 | 2.3 |
| No mentoring and coaching | 1 | 2.3 |
| Not taken seriously | 4 | 9.0 |
| Poor performers not reprimanded | 1 | 2.3 |
| Rude supervisors | 1 | 2.3 |
| Subjective | 2 | 4.5 |
| Time consuming | 7 | 15.9 |
| Low knowledge of supervisors | 1 | 2.3 |
| Unavailability of supervisors | 2 | 4.5 |
| No clear duties | 1 | 2.3 |
| **Total** | **44** | **100** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study sought to find out things that respondents dislike most about performance appraisal in the Commission. From the study findings, as shown in Table 4.11, 18.2% of respondents dislike it being an annual ritual, 15.9% in each case cited no benefits or rewards and time consuming while 9.0% disliked that appraisals are not taken seriously. 6.8% cited delayed appraisals, 4.5% in each case indicated they disliked being rated poorly, subjectivity and unavailability of supervisors. On the other hand, 2.3% in each case cited the appraisal is forced on staff, frequent staff deployments that disorient them, lack of feedback on team activities, no mentoring and coaching, poor performers not reprimanded, rude supervisors, low knowledge by supervisors and no clear duties.

## 4.5 Challenges Faced in the Implementation of Performance Appraisal System

Table 4.12: Whether Respondents Supervise Other Staff

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Items**  | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| Yes | 27 | 22.5 |
| No | 93 | 77.5 |
| **Total** | **120** | **100.0** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study sought to find out whether there are staffs in the organization that they supervise. From the findings in Table 4.12, majority of the respondents (77.5%) indicated that there are no staffs in the organization that they supervise while 22.5% indicated that there are staffs in the organization that they supervise. This implies that most of the staffs in the Commission are supervisees answerable to a few supervisors.

Table 4.13: Number of Staff Supervised by the Respondents

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No of Staff** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
|  | 1-5 | 8 | 6.7 |
| 6-10 | 23 | 19.2 |
|  | Non Responses | 89 | 74.1 |
|  | **Total** | **120** | **100** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study further sought to find out the number of staff in the organization that the respondents supervise. Majority of the respondents (74.2%) as shown in Table 4.13, did not respond, 19.2% indicated 6-10 staff while 6.7% indicated 1-5 staff. This implies that majority of the respondents were being supervised.

Table 4.14: Training on How to Undertake Performance Appraisal

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Feedback** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 34 | 28.3 |
| No | 86 | 71.7 |
| **Total** | **120** | **100.0** |

The study sought to find out whether respondents had been trained on how to undertake performance appraisal. From the findings, majority of the respondents (71.7%) had not been trained on how to undertake performance appraisal, while 28.3% indicated to have been trained on how to undertake performance appraisal, as seen in Table 4.14.

Table 4.15: Self Rating in Terms of Level of Knowledge Regarding Performance Appraisal

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rating** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| High | 32 | 26.7 |
| Moderate | 62 | 51.7 |
| Low | 26 | 21.7 |
| **Total** | **120** | **100.0** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study further requested the respondents to rate themselves in terms of the level of knowledge regarding performance appraisal. From the findings shown in Table 4.15, majority of the respondents (51.7%) rated their level of knowledge as moderate, 26.7% rated their level of knowledge as high while 21.7% as low. This implies that respondents’ level of knowledge regarding performance appraisal was moderate.

**4.6 Challenges Experienced in Performance Appraisal at the Commission**

Table 4.16: Challenges Experienced in Performance Appraisal at the Commission

| **Challenge** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Many ad hoc assignments that are not planned for | 4 | 6.2 |
| Monotony of ‘annual ritual’ | 6 | 9.5 |
| Lots of evidence required | 2 | 3.2 |
| Busy schedules | 5 | 7.9 |
| Delayed feedback | 1 | 1.6 |
| Done hurriedly to beat deadlines | 2 | 3.2 |
| Lack of seriousness | 11 | 17.5 |
| Lack of training | 5 | 7.9 |
| Length process | 2 | 3.2 |
| Negative attitude | 1 | 1.6 |
| Not carried out in all departments | 2 | 3.2 |
| Misused | 1 | 1.6 |
| No clear roles and duties | 2 | 3.2 |
| Lack of finances to support set targets | 1 | 1.6 |
| No cascading of strategic plan | 1 | 1.6 |
| No rewards or promotion | 3 | 4.8 |
| Supervisor bias | 7 | 11.0 |
| Tools not user friendly | 2 | 3.2 |
| Seen as not helpful | 1 | 1.6 |
| Uncooperativeness | 1 | 1.6 |
| Unnecessary questions | 1 | 1.6 |
| Unplanned  | 1 | 1.6 |
| Wrong filling  | 1 | 1.6 |
| **Total** | **63** | **100** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study sought to find out challenges that respondents experience in performance appraisal at the Commission. Table 4.16 shows the study findingsin which 17.5% of the respondents indicated lack of seriousness, 11.1% indicated supervisor bias, 9.5% indicated monotony of ‘annual ritual’, while 7.9% in each case cited busy schedules and lack of training. Further, 6.2% opined many ad hoc assignments that are not planned for, 4.8% cited no rewards or promotion, 3.2% in each case indicated tools are not user friendly, no clear roles and duties, not carried out in all departments, lengthy process, done hurriedly to beat deadlines, and lots of evidence required. 1.6% in each case cited delayed feedback, negative attitude, misused, lack of finances to support set targets, no cascading of strategic plan, seen as not helpful, uncooperativeness, unnecessary questions, unplanned and wrong filling of appraisal.

**4.6 The Root-Causes of the Perceptions and Challenges**

Table 4.17: Root-Causes of the Perceptions and Challenges

| **Root-cause** | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ad hoc nature of assignments | 1 | 1.7 |
| All staff not involved in strategic planning | 1 | 1.7 |
| Attitude | 4 | 6.8 |
| Busy work schedules | 5 | 8.6 |
| Culture | 1 | 1.7 |
| Duplication of work | 2 | 3.2 |
| Ethnicity | 1 | 1.7 |
| Factors beyond the control of the Commission | 1 | 1.7 |
| Inadequate or lack of training | 11 | 18.6 |
| Inequitable distribution of performance champions | 1 | 1.7 |
| Lack of clear direction and leadership | 6 | 10.3 |
| Lack of commitment | 5 | 8.6 |
| Lack of professionalism | 1 | 1.7 |
| Lack of rewards and/or sanctions | 5 | 8.6 |
| Lack of feedback | 1 | 1.7 |
| No regular review of appraisal | 1 | 1.7 |
| Subjectivity | 1 | 1.7 |
| Poor planning and target setting | 2 | 3.2 |
| Time wasting | 2 | 3.2 |
| Unclear activities | 4 | 6.8 |
| Underperforming staff rewarded | 1 | 1.7 |
| Unwillingness to share work | 1 | 1.7 |
| Weak guidelines on job description | 1 | 1.7 |
| **Total** | **59** | **100** |

**Source:** researcher, 2017

The study sought to find out the things respondents would consider to be the root causes of the challenges mentioned. In the findings shown in Table 4.17, 18.6% of respondents indicated that the challenges were caused by inadequate or lack of training, 10.3% indicated lack of clear direction and leadership while 8.6% in each case indicated lack of commitment and lack of rewards and/sanctions. Another 6.8% in each case cited unclear activities and attitude, 3.2% in each case indicated poor planning and target setting, time wasting and duplication of work, while 1.7% in each case cited weak guidelines on job description, unwillingness to share work, underperforming staff rewarded, no regular review of appraisal, subjectivity, lack of feedback, lack of professionalism, inequitable distribution of performance champions, factors beyond the control of the Commission, culture, ad hoc nature of assignments and all staff not involved in strategic planning.

## 4.7 Discussion

### 4.7.1 Perceptions of the Employees towards the Performance Appraisal System

The study established that almost all the respondents had participated in performance appraisal in the Commission and like being rated by their supervisors on their performance for reasons such as the supervisor being agreeable, appreciative, rating appraisees based on targets, educative, helpful in performance, provides feedback, objective, provides continuous assessment and encourages performance improvement.

The study revealed that some of the supervisors were supportive, knowledgeable, understanding and caring and objective, with regard to handling of performance appraisal. However others were inexperienced and discriminatory, less understanding and not caring, subjective and less mindful. Martey, (2002) observed that some employees felt that some supervisors were supportive, knowledgeable, while others were inexperienced and discriminatory and therefore caused some dissatisfaction with the assessments.

From the study, respondents dislike the following with regard to the commission’s performance appraisal; it is more of an annual ritual, need to attach long list of performance evidence, being rated poorly, delayed appraisal, low knowledge of supervisors, lack of objective measurability, lack feedback on team performance, lack of mentoring and coaching on performance, rude supervisors, unavailability of supervisors to conduct appraisals, unclear duties, lack rewards for performance, subjectivity and that the performance appraisals were not used for rewards hence were not necessary. Similarly Martey (2002) found that some respondents felt that appraisals were not useful and therefore considered the appraisal procedure as a waste of time. Concurrently Bekele, Shigutu and Tensay (2014) in their study established that employees possess perceptions regarding accuracy, utility, fairness and satisfaction with the appraisal process.

### 4.7.2 Challenges faced in the implementation of Performance Appraisal System

The study established that major challenges experienced in performance appraisal at the Commission were; prevalence of ad hoc assignments, busy schedules that limit time for appraisals, busy supervisors, delayed feedback, disruptions of scheduled meetings with the appraiser, failure to identify the immediate supervisor, lack of seriousness with appraisals, monotony of the appraisal activity, no cascading or organization strategic plan down, not given the prominence deserved, not user friendly, rating not based on set performance targets and redeployment of staff during the appraisal period. Similarly Bekele et al. (2014) identified challenges relating to perceived unfairness, delayed feedback, inaccuracy and unclear utility of the appraisal.

The study also established other challenges as; annual ritual, subjective supervisors, long process, uncooperativeness, undertaken hurriedly in the last minute, incompetent supervisors, lack of appraisee training, lack of finances to support meeting of targets, low knowledge, negative attitude, no clear duties, no dedication by supervisors, no rewards for performance, unclear duties, unplanned processes and wrong filling of information. The findings concurs with those of Rop et al, (2013) who found poorly designed appraisal tools and lack of training as challenges affecting performance appraisal. Similarly Ahmad & Bujang (2013) found unclear guidelines and duties as challenges facing performance appraisal. According Ahmad & Bujang, (2013) lack of required knowledge and skills have also contributed to the challenges of performance appraisal systems.

### 4.7.3 The Root-Causes of the Perceptions and Challenges

The study revealed that the root causes of perceptions and challenges were; inadequate or lack of training, lack of clear direction and leadership, lack of commitment, lack of rewards and/sanctions, unclear activities attitude, poor planning and target setting, time wasting and duplication of work, weak guidelines on job description, unwillingness to share work, underperforming staff rewarded, no regular review of appraisal, subjectivity, lack of feedback, lack of professionalism, inequitable distribution of performance champions, factors beyond the control of the Commission, culture, ad hoc nature of assignments and all staff not involved in strategic planning.

Similarly Bekele et al (2014) found that employee knowledge and understanding of PA is in most cases not taken into account right from the start which creates conflict between the levels of employee expectations of the organization and the organization expectations from the employee. The findings also concur with Law and Tam (2007) who identified a number of root-causes to the appraisal challenges and perceptions, including lack of openness, poor planning, lack of feedback and failure to effectively involve employees.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

This study sought to find out the perceptions and challenges that employees of the Public Service Commission had about the existing performance appraisal system in general, as well as establish the root-causes of these perceptions and challenges, and recommend areas of improvement of the appraisal process to make it more effective. To address these objectives, the researcher used descriptive survey design, employed qualitative research techniques in data collection and a case study strategy.

Qualitative research questionnaires containing both open-ended and closed-ended questions were used to gather data aimed at coming up with solutions to the research questions. The questionnaires were administered to employees of the Commission to solicit the desired information. This chapter therefore summarizes the key findings of the study, draws conclusions and presents recommendations as well as suggested areas for further research.

## 5.2 Summary of the Findings

### 5.2.1Perceptions of the Employees towards the Performance Appraisal System

The study revealed that all but one of the respondents had participated in performance appraisal in the Commission. Most of the respondents like being rated by their supervisor on their performance because the supervisors were agreeable and appreciative. Respondents were of the opinion that the ratings are based on targets, they were educative, and provide feedback.

The study further found that core competences appraisal, general objectives of the organization, mid-year ratings and mid-year review need to be reviewed. Respondents were of the opinion that the template for performance targets need to be modified to include outcomes and the rating scale need to be modified to use 360 degree appraisal rating scale. The study also found that actual performance ratings should be added. The appraisal to be done annually and employees briefed on their improvement. From the study findings, there is need to add innovation and creativity in carrying out duties, make clear rating, make it more friendly, undertake quarterly reviews and include rewards for performance.

The respondents dislike the appraisal process as an annual ritual, the attachment of long list of evidence, being rated poorly and delayed appraisal. There is no feedback from the supervisor on team performance, there is no mentoring and coaching on performance, the appraisal is observed only in some departments, and there is no structured way of conducting the appraisals. More so respondents dislike the unavailability of supervisors, lack of clear duties and the fact that the performance appraisal system is not used for promotion.

### 5.2.2 Challenges Experienced in Performance Appraisal at the Commission

The study found that performance appraisal in the Commission had ad hoc assignments, busy schedules that limit time for appraisals, busy supervisors, delayed feedback and disruptions of scheduled meetings with the appraiser. Some of the respondents were not able to identify the immediate supervisor, the appraisal process lacked seriousness and was monotonous as well.

The appraisal process was notcarried out in all departments and was not user friendly. The rating was not based on set performance targets, and staffs were redeployed during the appraisal period. The process was ritualistic, lacked smart targets, and some supervisors were subjective. The process is long and undertaken hurriedly in the last minute. Some of the supervisors are incompetent since they are not trained. There is limited time that subordinates meet with their supervisors.

### 5.2.3 The Root-Causes of the Perceptions and Challenges

The challenges were caused by the ad hoc nature of some assignments, apathy, attitudes, , busy schedules, culture, duplication of questions and inadequate training. Respondents further revealed that the challenges were caused by lack of clear direction and leadership from management, lack of commitment, lack of professionalism, lack of seriousness by supervisors, and unclear activities.

The respondents also revealed that there were weak guidelines on job description, strategic planning only involved a few employees, and there was ethnicity and low knowledge of performance appraisal that caused challenges in the appraisal process.

 The study further found that low morale due to lack of incentives for good performance, ineffective feedback, irregular review of appraisal and unfair rewarding also caused challenges in the appraisal process.

## 5.3 Conclusions

### 5.3.1Employees Perceptions towards the Performance Appraisal System

The study concludes that the employees have perceptions towards the performance appraisal system. Some employees like being rated by their supervisor on their performance for reasons such as supervisors being agreeable, appreciative, basing appraisals on set targets, educative, helpful in performance, providing feedback, objective, carrying out continuous assessment and helpful in performance improvement. The study revealed that some of the supervisors were supportive, knowledgeable, understanding while others were inexperienced, discriminatory, were less understanding and subjective. Employees dislike the ‘annual ritual’ nature of the appraisal, attachment of long lists of evidence, being rated poorly, delayed appraisals, low knowledge of supervisors, lack of feedback on team performance, lack of mentoring and coaching on performance and lack of training on the Commission’s performance appraisal system.

### 5.3.2 Challenges Experienced in Performance Appraisal at the Commission

The major challenges experienced in performance appraisal at the Commission were; prevalence of many ad hoc assignments, busy schedules that limit time for appraisals, busy supervisors, delayed feedback, disruptions of scheduled meetings with the appraisee, failure to identify the immediate supervisor, lack of seriousness with appraisals, monotony of the appraisal activity, , no cascading of organization strategic plan down, not user friendly, rating not based on set performance targets, redeployment of staff during the appraisal period and poorly designed appraisal tools.

### 5.3.3 Root Causes of the Challenges and Perceptions

The root causes of the challenges and perceptions were; ad hoc nature of some assignments, attitude, busy nature of the commission, busy schedules, culture, duplication of questions, inadequate training, lack of clear direction from management, , lack of commitment, lack of knowledge, lack of professionalism, lack of seriousness by supervisors, lack of support from leadership, supervisors unavailable for appraisal, unclear activities, unwilling to share work, weak guidelines on job description and lack incentives for good performance.

## 5.4 Recommendations

### 5.4.1Employees Perceptions towards the Performance Appraisal System

The study revealed that the performance appraisal tool is too rigid and poorly structured, and need to be reviewed, the template for performance targets be modified to include outcomes, and the rating to be as well reviewed. The study further recommends that appraisal be done annually and employees be trained on rating skills and to be briefed on how their performance has improved. The appraisal process should be made more friendly and simplified.

### 5.4.2 Challenges being Experienced in the Performance Appraisal Process

The study found that performance appraisal in the Commission had ad hoc assignments, busy schedules that limit time for appraisals, busy supervisors, delayed feedback and disruptions of scheduled meetings with the appraiser. The study recommends that the Commission allocates specific time for undertaking appraisals, during which other assignments are set aside, to ensure that the objectives of the appraisal process are effectively addressed.

The study also found out that the appraisal process was not carried out in all departments and was not user friendly, the rating was not based on set performance targets, and staffs were redeployed during the appraisal period. To address these shortcomings, the study recommends that the management reins on all departmental heads to ensure that staff appraisal is embraced, taken seriously, supervisors are trained in undertaking objective appraisals and staff deployment is properly managed to avoid disruption of appraisals.

### 5.4.3 The Root-Causes of the Perceptions and Challenges

The study finally recommends that performance appraisal system in the Commission be used adequately to value employees, reward performing employees and identify training needs so as to motivate staff to embrace it and to improve the overall productivity of the employees to the Commission to achieve its goals.

## 5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study sought to find out the perceptions and challenges that employees of the Public Service Commission have about the existing performance appraisal system in general, as implemented in the Commission. The findings of the study may only be suitable for the public sector. This study therefore suggests that a similar study be conducted on perceptions and challenges that employees have about the existing performance appraisal system but based on the private sector.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix I – Questionnaire

I am a student pursing a Masters in Human Resource Management (MHRM) degree at the Open University of Tanzania. In this regard, I am carrying out a research entitled**Performance Appraisal in the Public Sector: Perceptions and Challenges: A case study of the Public Service Commission,** as part of the requirements for the award of the degree.

I am therefore seeking your contributions to this study by means of this questionnaire. Your responses and views shall be highly appreciated and kept strictly confidential and used for academic purposes only.

**SECTION 1: Perceptions of staff regarding performance appraisal**

***This section seeks your viewsconcerning performance appraisal***

*(Tick (√) where appropriate)*

1.1 Have you participated in performance appraisal in the Commission?

(a) Yes ( )(b) No ( )

1.2 If yes, how often do you hold formal discussions on your performance with your supervisor?

(a) Once a year (b) Twice a year (c) Quarterly (d) Never

1.3 To what extent do you like being rated by your supervisor on your performance?

(a) To a great extent ( ) (b) To an average extent ( )

(c) To a minimal extent ( )

(c) don’t like ( )

1.4 Kindly state any three reasons for the choice you have made in 1.3 above

(i)………………………………………………………………………………

(ii)……………………………………………………………………………

(iii)……………………………………………………………………………

1.5 (i) What can be your positive description of your supervisor with regard to handling of performance appraisal, based on the areas listed below? **(***You may tick more than one).*

 (a) Supportive ( ) (b) Understanding and caring ( ) (c) Experienced ( )

(d) Knowledgeable ( ) (e) Nondiscriminatory ( ) (f) Objective ( )

(g) Mindful ( )

(ii) What is your negative description of your supervisor with regard to handling of performance appraisal, based on the areas listed below? (*You may tick more than one).*

(a) Non-supportive ( ) (b) Less understanding and caring ( ) (c) Inexperienced ( ) (d) Less Knowledgeable ( ) (e) Discriminatory ( ) (f) Subjective ( ) (g) Less mindful ( )

1.6 (i) Do you think there is need to review the performance appraisal

system from what itis currently?

 (a) Yes ( ) (b) No ( )

(ii) If yes:

(a) Suggest three areas that you may wish to see removed from the appraisal process.

1. .……………………………………………………………………………
2. ……………………………………………………………………………
3. ……………………………………………………………………………
4. Suggest three areas that you may wish to have added to the appraisal process.
5. .……………………………………………………………………………
6. ……………………………………………………………………………
7. ……………………………………………………………………………

1.7 List three things that you dislike most about performance appraisal in the Commission?

1. ……………………………………………………………………………
2. ……………………………………………………………………………
3. ……………………………………………………………………………

**SECTION 2: Challenges faced in the process of performance appraisal**

This section seeks to find out challenges that are faced with the performance appraisal.

2.1 (i) Are there staff in your organization that you supervise?

(a) Yes ( ) b) No ( )

(ii) If yes, how many?

(a) 1 – 5 (b) 6 – 10 (c) above 10

(iii) Have you ever been trained on how to undertake performance appraisal?

(a) Yes ( ) b) No ( )

(iv) If yes, where do you rate yourself in terms of the level of knowledge regarding performance appraisal? *(Select one)*(a) High ( ) (b) Moderate ( ) (c) Low

2.2 List three major challenges that you experience in performance appraisal at the Commission.

1. ……………………………………………………………………………
2. ……………………………………………………………………………
3. ……………………………………………………………………………

2.3 What three things will you consider to be the root causes of the challenges you have listed in 2.2 above?

1. ……………………………………………………………………………
2. ……………………………………………………………………………
3. ……………………………………………………………………………

**SECTION 3: Personal Information**

Kindly provide your personal information as below *(tick (√) where appropriate)*

1. Gender

Female ( ) Male ( )

1. Age

 Below 25 ( ) 26-35 ( ) 36-45 ( ) Above 46 ( )

1. Highest Educational level

(a) ‘O’ level ( ) (b) ‘A’ level ( ) (c) Professional certificate ( ) (d) Degree ( )

(d) Masters ( ) (e) PhD. ( )

4. Work experience

 (a) Less than 5 years ( ) (b) 6- 10 years ( ) (c) Over 10 years ( )

5. Employment category

(a) Senior Management ( ) (b) Middle level management ( ) (c) Upper subordinate ( ) (d) Other subordinate

6. Length of time served at the Public Service Commission

(a) 0- 3 years ( ) b) 4- 6 years ( ) (c) 7 - 9 years ( ) (d) 10 - 12 years ( ) (e)13 years and above ( )