Assessing Tutors’ and Principals’ Perceptions on the Work Performance Appraisal System: A Case of Private Dar Es Salaam Teachers’ Colleges, Tanzania

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Abstract

The study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. The study was conducted at Dar es Salaam Region. Purposive and convenient sampling strategies were used to sample the respondents. The study involved a total of 49 respondents including 7 principals and 42 tutors. The data were collected through interview, focus group discussion, observation and documentary review. The major findings revealed that principals perceived the appraisal as potential since helped them to monitor tutors, conversely, tutors perceived the appraisal as useless since they are practiced in a bias basis. Also, many tutors indicated unawareness about strategies used to appraise them. It was further found that the principals and tutors have never attended any training concerning performance appraisal. From the findings, the study recommended that the government through the ministry of education has to formulate a specific policy to govern and enforce the colleges’ directors and principals on appropriate proceedings to appraise tutors’ work performance in private teachers’ colleges.

Keywords: appraisal, tutors, private teachers’ college.


Introduction

Like other developing countries, Tanzania has never lagged behind in the pace of adopting appraisal systems in her public and private institutions. Research has indicated that the emergence of private educational institutions in Tanzania dates back to the colonial days. Such institutions were established basically by Christian missionaries for religious and educational reasons, among others. The system was linked to the formal education established by the missionaries in Tanganyika from 1860s (URT, 2000).
The first government school was officially opened in 1893 under the German rule and the numbers of schools were gradually increasing despite the fact that missionary voluntary agency schools out-numbered the government schools. Thus, when Tanganyika got her independence in 1961 these schools survived for very few years. In 1967 the government came with Arusha Declaration, the policy which nationalized all schools with exception to very few missionary schools. Equally the private education institutions were not allowed to operate. Since then (1967) all education institutions were supervised by the United Republic of Tanzania (URT, 2000).

In spite of the nationalizations, many Tanzania’s public sectors and agencies including education sector had been offering poor services. To secure the situation the government came out with another alternative focusing on the introduction of different reforms aiming at improving public service provision. The first one was the Civil Services Reform Programme (CSRP) which was introduced in 1991. It is worth noting that the reforms were followed by the Public Services Reform Programme (PSRP) in 2000 (URT, 2005).

The reforms were introduced and implemented in all public sectors and agencies, in central and local levels. It was implemented under the Public Services Management (PSM) and Employment Policy of 1999 and enforced by the Public Service Act No.8 of 2002. Under the same effort of revamping service provision, in the mid-1970s to early 1990s the government re-allowed the registration of private education institutions, private teachers’ colleges are inclusive. The registration was legalized by the National Education Act of 1978. To make these reforms productive, appraising workers were very important as it determines their performance hence in 2004 there was introduction of Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS). The system was enforced by Circular No.2 of 2004. Accordingly, OPRAS requires every employee to sign performance agreement with his/her manager which sets performance targets for the year and that agreement are the main criteria of staff appraisal. The agreement concentrated on objectives, targets, performance criteria and physical and human resources needed to facilitate the performance agreement (URT, 2005; Issa, 2010).

Generally, OPRAS is thus designed to manage individual performance in public service institutions. It was also intended to replace the Closed Annual Confidential Report System (CACRS), which was characterized by the absence of feedback, transparency and poor identification of training needs and made it impossible to promote performance and accountability to the employees; consequently, culminated to the nepotism and corruption. The CACRS was limited and to some extent resulted to one-sided information on the performance of subordinates in the public service. In public organizations both managers and civil servants under OPRAS were required to develop their personal objectives that echo organizations strategic planning process and targets. Normally appraisers and appraisees are having mutual understanding on the performance objectives, targets, criteria and required human and natural resources which would facilitate to achieve the set targets and objectives. In collaboration with managers, subordinates set targets which evaluated in every six or twelve months. Unlike in the CACRS, in OPRAS the staff appraisal process provides a room for discussion between the managers and subordinates (Songstad, Lindkvist, Moland, Chimhutu & Blystad, 2012).

The efficiency and effectiveness of private teachers’ colleges can only be achieved when tutors are continuously evaluated and appropriately appraised. It is worth noting that the failure of the private teachers’ colleges to apply an effective appraisal strategy
to tutors, there would be no possibility of these colleges to undergo their personal and organizational goals. Lawler (2003) maintains that an organization should treat its employees as its most important asset, and in turn it should have knowledge of what motivates employees to reach their full potential. In the past, some of the public and private institutions, appraisal system tended to deal mainly with personal characters (e.g. loyalty, initiative, etc.), an orientation which was superseded by a focus on the pattern of job performance behaviors (e.g. what an individual did, or was seen to do).

However, more recently the emphasis has been on job results (e.g. what an individual has achieved) (Beaumont, 1993). It is undeniable fact that the way employees are appraised in public and private organizations differ. Significantly, the most common system used by many African governments Tanzania is inclusive to appraise employees is performance appraisal system, which regulates and improves the job performance as well as identify the potential of employees for career development. The aim is to help workers where possible, through appropriate training. This is done by identifying training needs by exposing inadequacies and deficiencies that could be remedied through training (Gudyanga, Shumba & Wadesango, 2014).

While in public teachers’ colleges’ apply OPRAS to assess the performance of their tutors, there is little knowledge on the strategies used to appraise tutors’ in private teachers’ colleges. This scenario cemented by Akinyele (2010) that, in private organizations appraisal systems vary from institution to institution. Hence, this study aimed at assessing tutors’ perceptions towards work performance appraisal system in private teachers’ colleges in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

**Objective of the Study**

Specifically, this study explored tutors’ perceptions on the usefulness of work performance appraisal system in private teachers’ colleges.

**Materials and Methods**

**Study Area**

The study was conducted at Dar Es Salaam region in Tanzania. The selection of Dar es Salaam was justified by the following two major reasons: firstly, the region has a largest number of private teachers’ colleges totaling 18 than any other region in the country hence assures a researcher plentiful data (NACTE, 2016); and secondly the communication networks within the city is more defined hence easy movement to the colleges. This helped the accessibility of data to be obtained easily.

**Research Approach**

This study employed qualitative approach to get in-depth understanding of the problem under investigation. The use of qualitative perspectives allows the researcher to understand the individuals’ perceptions (Bell, 1993). Qualitative approach enabled the informants to provide data freely and the researcher had an opportunity to record what has been spoken. The approach was potentially useful for this study as it provided a room for the researcher to probe and inquire deep information on the strategies used to appraise tutors.

**Research Design**

The study employed case study design for the purpose of gathering in-depth information to suffice the problem under investigation. It allowed researchers to ask
participants “how and why” questions which helped to understand deeply on perceptions of tutors with respect to appraisal system used. Yin (2009) enlightens that the use of case study design would enable the researcher to collect deep information and would employ variety of instruments for data collection. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) maintain that the use of the case study design provides a room for to probe deeply and analyze intensively the problem under investigation. In this respect, the researchers used this design to gather information on the perceptions of tutors towards appraisal of work performance.

Target Population
In the context of this study, the targeted population was total group of subjects that met a designated set of criteria to the problem under investigation; and for this case, the targeted population was private teachers’ colleges’ principals and tutors.

Sampling Strategies
The researcher employed two categories of sampling techniques namely purposive sampling and convenience sampling. The purposive sampling technique was used to select participants in a deliberate manner. In this case, it was used to select seven private tutors in teachers’ colleges. Given (2008) argues that the purpose of selecting the specific study units is to get respondents who have rich information who can help to yield the most relevant and plentiful data regarding to the topic of study. Furthermore, purposive sampling was used to select seven principals as informants who met the features targeted by the researcher and able to provide relevant information to the problem under investigation. Also, the study employed convenience sampling. Using this technique, the study involved only tutors who were the readiest, willing, and able to participate in the study. Creswell (2012) coned that the use of convenience sampling is a good means of obtaining preliminary information about some research question, quickly and inexpensively. Hence, convenience sampling helped researchers to get general ideas about the phenomenon of interest.

Sample and Sample Size
The sample size in this study was determined by the saturation of the information collected. Therefore, the sample size of the study was 49 including 7 principals and 42 tutors. Table 1, indicates the summary of the sample characteristics.

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<th>Colleges</th>
<th>Principals</th>
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<td>College 1</td>
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<td>College 7</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
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Data Collection Instruments
The study used a combination of instruments to collect data. The use of the multiple instruments intended to enabled to ensure accuracy and trustworthiness of the data.
collected (Kothari, 2004). The instruments used were: focus group discussion, interviews, documentary review and observation.

**Focus Group Discussion**

The study employed focus group discussion for tutors because it promoted interaction among participants which stimulated them to freely express feelings, perception and beliefs that they would otherwise have not expressed if interviewed individually and if the researchers would be using any other instrument. The instrument also helped to avoid biasness and enabled to collect supplementary information.

**Interview**

The researchers employed in-depth interviews to principals of private teachers’ colleges. The instrument was useful as it provided detailed information than what could be generated through other data collection methods. Also interviews enabled to get the story behind the informants’ experiences, providing a room for probing, and provides a more relaxed atmosphere in data collection both to the researcher and informants. The instrument also allowed to decide when and how to ask questions using the interview questions guide to dig out what are in the informants’ minds. Yin (2009) insists that the respondents feel more comfortable having a conversation with the researcher about their problem.

**Documentary Review**

The documents accessed by the researcher were books, journals, articles, dissertations, tutors’ attendance books, confidential files, staff meeting minutes, colleges calendars and appraisal forms which used as secondary sources. The information was used to verify the information collected from focus group discussion and interview.

**Observation**

This study employed a non-participatory observation by actively involving in the research as the part of the discussants in order to get primary information. Therefore, the researchers explored information related to problem from the appraisers and appraisees.

**Data Analysis Plan**

The data collected from the principals and tutors were analyzed by using Miles and Huberman (1994) model of qualitative analysis. The model consists three steps: firstly, the data from the interview and focus group discussion were summarized by re-examining the verbatim transcriptions. The summarization was done without destroying the actual message. Secondly, the data display sheets were used to summarize and organize the data. By so doing, themes were identified and made possible to compare the responses of the same category of the respondents. Thirdly, the researcher drew conclusions and verified them through information from the documents. The data collected from the documents related to the study was analyzed through content analysis.

**Trustworthiness of the Research Findings**

The whole process of information gathering and analysis assured the accuracy of the findings and interpretations (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The researcher ensured the validity of data collection methods by using triangulation, peer review, respondent validation and pilot study. Thus, the researcher maintained the chain of evidence which played a big role to avoid biasness in the study. The researcher checked
and established validity by analyzing research questions whereby one instrument complemented another for the aim of ensuring the study findings are reliable (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2002). In this regard the researchers employed the following strategies: first, several methods in data collection were used; namely, interview, focus group discussion and documentary review. These instruments were used to reduce biasness. The use of triangulation helped a researcher to come out with valid and accurate report (Cohen et al., 2007).

Secondly, before going to the field work, the researchers shared and discussed the instruments with the members in the Department and colleagues. The recommendations obtained enabled the improvement of instruments. Thirdly, respondents were provided a room to read the verbatim transcribed information prepared by the researcher. This situation allowed the informants to add, reduce or correct the verbatim transcribed information so as to validate them. Thirdly, the pilot study was conducted to one principal and six tutors in one institution reflecting the criteria of the study. The findings obtained from the pilot study were used to reduce, add, correct or modify words in the questions targeting to omit ambiguity.

**Ethical Consideration**

The researcher considered ethical principles of conducting a social science research so as to ensure the rights of the participants involved in the study. Observing protocol, informed consents, privacy and confidentiality were highly considered in the study. Further, to ensure that the study is conducted in accordance with ethical standards, the researcher requested a permission from the Regional Administrative in Dar Es Salam for data collection in the region.

**Results**

The specific objective of this study was to explore tutors’ perceptions on the usefulness of work performance appraisal system in private teachers’ colleges. The data were collected through interviews and focus group discussion. In that regard, participants were asked about their involvement in the appraisal and knowledge about the criteria used in appraisal of work performance.

With respect to involvement in the appraisal of work performance which entailed provision of detailed information about the benefits of appraisal one respondent remarked:

*We get announcement about filling in appraisal forms and submit to the head of department, no background information is provided about filling in information (Interview-Tutor 1).*

Additionally, one tutor commented:

*I fill in the appraisal forms because it is an order from above. I fill in information which protect my job, not all the information reflects the reality of what I daily perform (Interview-Tutor 2).*

Similarly, the findings also showed that all the principals and tutors indicated that there was no involvement of tutors in setting the appraisal criteria. The researcher therefore was interested to know who was responsible in setting such a criterion for tutors. The researcher further wanted to inquire on the reasons for the process of not involving tutors. One respondent remarked that:

*You know tutors are troublesome and feel that they know everything. Therefore, if you involve them in everything you will start getting problem. That is why in the case of work performance appraisal we
give orders for them to obey and do. If we allow a lot of discussion and freedom, it is obviously they will not accept the exercise because it binds them to work hard (Interview-Principal 1).

The findings revealed that many principals fear tutors would suggest criteria that favour themselves hence can affect negatively the colleges’ performance appraisal exercise.

Similarly, the findings show that many principals claimed to know the criteria used to apprise tutors which mentioned as hard working, punctuality, obedience, cooperation, discipline and competences while few principals indicated that in their colleges there was no known criteria applied to appraise tutors. However, the responses from tutors showed that in the colleges there was no culture of appraising tutors therefore there was no need of having criteria. With regard to this findings one principal noted:

You know I was just given orders from College Board to conduct workers’ performance appraisal. In that case the college management team had to develop mechanisms of implementing the orders. We developed forms which tutors had to fill in. However, so far no policy is written about performance appraisal (Interview-Principal 2).

For the tutors, the findings show that majority of them denied to know the criteria used to judge their performance. During Focus Group Discussion (FGD one tutor noted: May be the principal knows, I don’t know which criteria used to measure my performance. (FGD-Tutor 3).

Very few tutors agreed to know the criteria used to evaluate their performance and they mentioned almost the same with those pointed by principals. The findings from few searched documents revealed those criteria. However most of colleges have no such documents showing criteria. This implies that the appraisal was not conducted in an appropriate manner.

Discussion of Findings

With regard to tutors’ perceptions on the usefulness of work performance appraisal system in private teachers’ colleges, the following findings were noted.

Firstly, it was reported that all principals indicated an understanding of tutors’ appraisal. On the other hand, more than a half of the tutors were not aware of the concept of tutors’ appraisal system. The findings revealed by the principals were contrary to those found by DelPo (2005) study who found that many appraisers knew little about appraisal. The findings regarding tutors lack of knowledge about appraisal are in line with various literatures that many of the employees are not aware about performance appraisal (Wragg et al., 1996; Bhatia & Jain, 2012; Bernard, 2013).

Secondly, although there was no any supporting document indicating when the appraisal was conducted, several principals and majority of the tutors noted that the appraisal was usually conducted at the end of the year. These responses concur with that of Bratton and Gold (2000); Sims (2000); and Middlewood and Cardno (2001) studies which revealed that in many institutions appraisal process takes place formally at predetermined time intervals, it could be either six or twelve months whereby an employees’ contribution to the institution is assessed. However, there was slightly difference, in some colleges, principals and tutors reported that the appraisal took place during the graduation ceremonies while in some other colleges it was noted that the appraisal took place at any time when the need arises. The variation of the responses implied that appraisal in private teachers’ colleges was not systematically conducted.
Thirdly, more than a half of the principals and tutors viewed the appraisal exercise was implemented by them with low understanding of the strategies used to appraise tutors. This finding concurs with Torrington et al., (2008) in their study which found that employers and employees lacked knowledge of the strategy used to appraise workers. Few principals and tutors opined that the national examination results were means of appraising tutors. In this regard, tutors whose students scored higher grades were regarded as good performers hence they were paid cash money as reward. These findings concur with various literatures reviewed which noted that tutors’ good performance was appraised by direct cash during graduation or after national examination results (Kamoche et al., 2003; Kirunda, 2004). However, the practice of acknowledging tutors’ good performance was conducted informally; there were no written document to guide the practices. This is due to the fact that the appraisals were regarded as reward driven and they were highly focused on material outcomes. The appraisal of tutors’ good performance normally tended to neglect other important aspects which were very important such as identification of areas of weakness of the employees and planning training to improve them, providing professional development, improving communication and feedback between the employers and employees to list but a few (Storey et al., 2009).

Fourthly, all principals and tutors opined that that training about appraisal system was important though they had never attended any training concerning tutors’ appraisal. Similarly, the findings from various literatures show that among the problems of appraisal was that managers lacked appraisal training therefore they lack required technical skills and people management skills to be in the position of conducting an effective appraisal. Lack of training among the principals and tutors led to poor understanding of the whole concept of appraisal, hence, the system in some colleges were conducted in accordance of principals and directors’ wishes (Beardwell et al. 2004; DelPo, 2005; Kumar, 2005).

Fifthly, all principals and tutors’ agreed that tutors were totally not involved in the process of setting appraisal criteria. In most cases the criteria are set by either directors, principals or both of them. These findings are in line with Obisi (2011) who presented that in informal appraisal system, employees were not involved in the appraisal process. For not being involved, the tutors reported to be unhappy with the system hence the system became less productive.

On the other hand, findings from the tutors, indicated that they did not know the criteria used to judge them. These findings are contrary to the findings of the research done by Kamoche et al., (2003) which revealed that employees were familiar with the criteria used to credit their performance. This implies that the appraisal system was not scientifically implemented in private teachers’ colleges.

Conclusion and Recommendation

On the basis of the study findings the following conclusions are drawn. First, despite of the fact that principals have an understanding concerning performance appraisal, it was clear that many tutors perceived unawareness about strategies used to appraise them. Tutors did not know the criteria and how their performance was evaluated. On the other hand, principals and tutors did not attend training concerning performance appraisal. The lack of enough knowledge among principals led to every college conduct appraisal in its own way, hence the exercise became ineffective.
It is thus recommended that the Ministry for Education provide guidelines and training to Principals and tutors in private colleges in order to enhance the effectiveness of work performance appraisal. The private colleges principals provide training to tutors to appreciate and value the importance of work performance appraisal system so that the results can enable them to improve performance. Further, it is recommended that the workers performance appraisal criteria should be transparently clarified so that tutors can be actively involved in appraisal.

References


