

**ASSESSMENT OF USE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL RESULTS IN  
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: A STUDY OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT  
SYSTEM IN TANZANIA PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS**

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**ABSTRACT:** *One of the central doctrines of performance management system (PMS) is the generation of performance appraisal results or information required for decision making in the organization. Based on the implementation of performance management system, it is expected that performance appraisal results in the organizations are categorically reported and critically analyzed making the management team better informed on its ultimate use for decisions making to improve performance and service delivery. The concern of this study is how performance appraisal results are used in the day to day management practices in public organizations. Do the top management officials in public organizations produce performance appraisal results, and at the time of decisions making use, for example in the resources allocations, appointment of employees to higher positions in the organizations and accountabilities? Using interview and questionnaires, a study was carried out in six public organizations. During the study process, top management officials responsible for PMS implementation and senior staff members were subjected to face-to-face interviews on generating and using performance appraisal results and its contribution to organizational performances. Additionally, self-administered questionnaires were given to 300 informants. The analysis of data reveals critical weakness in utilizing performance appraisal results for decision making. Moreover, the critical analysis confirms that public organizations are more inclined towards employing performance appraisal results or information for when there are promotions and other salary adjustments as compared to punitive measures for work underperformances. The study recommends that it is worthwhile for public organizations to pursue implementation of performance management system that generates performance appraisal results as contributes to improvement of performance and service delivery.*

**KEYWORDS:** performance appraisal results use, performance management system, public organizations and organizational performances.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This article focuses the problems of implementation of performance management system in the public organizations and explores if through such a system, the organizations generates

performance appraisal results important for decision making to improve performance and service delivery. In this regard, the supervisory role (Hutchinson, 2013, p. 74) argues that line directors, managers, and general supervisors have a great operational role to, among others, use performance management system to produce performance appraisal results or information to foster better decisions in the organizations. Performance appraisal results generated through implementation of performance management system is pivotal in improving performance and service delivery. It is stipulated by (Therkildsen & Tidemand, 2007, p. 2) and Biron et al, (2011, p. 1297) that performance management system is designed to provide, among others, valid performance appraisal results necessary for HR-related decisions embedding issues of salary adjustments, retention and terminations, promotions and other general merit increases or decreases for the employees. And also, in order to improve organization performances being it in public or private organizations, employees must be recruited, terminated, demoted, transferred and promoted based on merit principles. With such dimensions, it is argued by (Kohli & Deb, 2008, p. 93) that one of the characteristics of performance management system in organization is to generate and provide relevant performance appraisal information for both human resources and organizational decisions making. Further, it is well stipulated in the Tanzania public service regulation (2003:23&84) that performance appraisal results are important and should be used for preparing training programmes, salary adjustments, different appointments to higher positions in the organizations, demotions and termination of employees' appointments. In line to this study, however, literature show that implementation of performance management system has not yielded intended results to generate and use performance appraisal information to improve performance and service delivery. Therefore, it is appropriate and imperative for this study to investigate and answer the existing bottlenecks in order to improve performance in the public organizations.

### **Statement of the problem**

Use of performance management system to generate performance appraisal results or information for various decisions has been the issue of concern in public organizations. Within Tanzanian context, Issa (2010 p. 9) asserts that one of the critical components of performance management system which is Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) was made mandatory by the government to all public organizations and be used to identify and evaluate employees' performances. The critical component has to be used to generate relevant performance appraisal information for decision making. In the view, (Mutahaba, 2011, p. 41) argues in the process of implementation of performance management system, performance appraisal information is to be generated for interventions on achieving the indented results in the organizations. It is also emphasized in (URT, 2011, p. 10) that public organizations must use performance management system to produce performance appraisal information that are important to: show the performance trends, link with employees training programs, show evidence of rewards and sanctions measures to employees. Despite such efforts to establish systems for generating performance appraisal information for various decisions, there are many views that such information is not used in the public organizations. The views are further reflected in (Mahapa et al, 2015, p. 246) who found that there was negative perception among employees in health sector on performance management

system due to the fact that performance appraisal results or information were not connected to rewards and incentives. In the light of such controversies in generating and using appraisal information for decisions, this study sought to examine the extent to which top management officials use performance management system as a tool to produce various information in the public organizations.

### **The study objective**

The study aimed to examine if in the process of implementation of performance management system, the public organizations generate and make use of performance appraisal results in management practices to improve performance and service delivery.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Performance appraisal results in organizations*

Several scholars, for example, (Hammerschmid & Loffler, 2016, p. 60) have argued that in an organizational context, performance information is very important for reinforcing accountability and performance improvement. Ammons & Roenigk (2015) add that through using performance measurement system where performance information is generated, there is a need for organizations to incorporate it in the whole process and use it to influence or inform the public, track progress on the key target and objectives, management decisions and improve service quality and efficiency. On similar view, Goh (2012) argues that performance information is fundamental to the management process in which performance management system is effective to continuously improve both outcomes and service delivery.

It is stated that the use of performance information generated by performance measurement system has been emphasized by organizations due to its importance to control and improve performance in organizations. On the face of it, Dooren, et al, (2015, p. 7) state that performance information are very crucial in organizations and are used as follows: allocation of resources, responsibilities and competences; designing of policies; controlling and reshaping different implementations in the organizations; employees or organization self-evaluations; results and behavior assessments and accountability mechanisms in the organizations.

From the management perspective in organizations, it helps leaders in organizations to: make informed decisions; provide directions and control, in developing organizations' missions and visions and values; and connect management system with the public on performances of the organizations. Hvidman & Andersen, (2013, p. 38-39) argue that the major assumption of performance management system in organizations is performance information generation to be used in decision making. Furthermore, the use of such information will depend on three folds: incentives, goal clarity, and capacity. On this view, Hammerschmid & Loffler (2016, p. 61) argue that performance information can have several functions in organizations and therefore important to be collected, analyzed and used for various decisions as follows: sanctions, learning for future

goals improvements and control of various activities planned, motivations, control of budgets, rewarding good performances and improving service delivery processes. There are two factors which provoke the use of performance pre-formation in organizations: first, the long use of performance measurement systems which make more links of strategic plans and goals; and second, organization stakeholders creating pressure to managers or supervisors to understanding all matters on performances trend in the organizations.

Futher, Goh (2012 p 36) argues that performance information should be used for different purposes such as learning, change and planning strategies for future performance improvements and decision making in organizations. It is further argued that if the performance information is not used for such purposes of change and performance improvements, then it becomes meaningless developing measures for the performance of various activities in the organization. (Mughal & Akram, 2014, pp. 115-16) further explain that the use of performance information needs different supporting mechanisms such as well-established rewards and incentives systems that encourage and recognize learning and improvement of performances. Additionally, performance management system through performance measurement generates necessary performance information which can be used to improve not only employees' performances but also various important areas imperative for organization improved performances which are:

- i) aligning employees' goals with that of organizational for optimal achievements;
- ii) for administrative decisions which includes recognitions of employees performances, identification of poor performances and reward system, salary increments, retention of employees and terminations;
- iii) communication within the organization in which managers and other senior officials identify weakness and strength leading to necessary provision of trainings so that to meet the organizations expectations;
- iv) performance feedback on development purposes necessary for the employees select career paths and other performance challenges that require interventions;
- v) performance information can be used to identify necessary priorities such as allocation of human resources which makes organization competitive to provide quality services; and
- vi) for documentation objectives necessary for the future employees and organizational strategies and goals planning.

On the contrary, however, it is argued that multiplicity of goals; lack of autonomy for decisions among directors and managers or supervisors and lack of proper incentives hinder the usage of performance information in public organizations

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study relied on both qualitative and quantitates research approaches and, therefore, mixed method research design through case studies in the public organizations in Tanzania. Case studies according to (Brown & Hale, 2014, p. 110) involve detailed exploration of information about

observable facts which are suitable for addressing “how, what and why” questions. Moreover, the case studies allow analysis of information within and across different settings and broaden understanding and perspectives of a research problem. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods according to (Bainbridge & Lee, 2014, pp. 17-18) and (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016, p. 173) provides both deep and broad explanations of complex research problems which cut across cultural dimensions in the organizations. Also, diversity, greater views and in-depth understandings are reflected. The mixed sampling approach was found appropriate for this study. According to (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016, p. 275), the mixed sampling approach is probabilistic (involving random) and non-probabilistic (based on conveniences). In this case, purposive sampling was used for qualitative part and random sampling for quantitative method. Respondents with specialized knowledge, experiences and expertise for implementation of performance management system were purposely identified for interviews and other randomly selected in six public organizations for questionnaires. To test the practicability questionnaire as an instrument for data collection, efforts were made to pilot it in order to ascertain and detect problems. In one public organization that required implementing performance management system, 30 respondents having similar characteristics with target respondents were distributed with questionnaires. Basing on the piloting feedback, finally questions that were not understood were reconstructed. For this study, the sample size for quantitative study comprised 300 respondents from different departments and divisions and 18 top management officials and senior staff respondents for qualitative data in the six public organizations. The quantitative data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 22 where both descriptive and inferential statistics were generated

### **Research Results and discussions**

Out of 300 self-administered questionnaires distributed to employees of different ranks, professionals, and teams across different departments, sections and units in the selected public organizations, 215 questionnaires were returned; 201 were found useful for analysis. This means that the response rate of this study was 67 per cent. Regarding interviews, 18 respondents were purposively chosen involving, senior staffs; human resource management and administration directors and managers, line directors and managers. The major assumption of performance management system is to generate performance appraisal results necessary to inform decision-making process at different levels in the public organizations. Top management officials can use performance appraisal results for strategic related decisions such as tracking successes and clarifying objectives and other HR-related decision making processes, such as promotion and salary adjustments in the organizations. Therefore, this study through interviews and questionnaires sought views and experiences from respondents if such performance appraisal results are used for both HR and organization development decisions making across the selected public organizations.

The respondents were asked to rate the constructed management practices if their public organizations are very effective in utilizing performance appraisal results in both HR-practices and

other organization development matters. The respondents used a 4-point Likert scale which included (1=very effective); (2=effective); (3=No view); and (Not Effective). The notable results in the table1 below indicate that there is a discrepancy in respondents' views and experiences across the public organizations. For example, 41.8 per cent of the majority respondents view that their organizations are effective in using performance appraisal results in rectification of performance failures. On contradictory views, 23.9 percent felt that their public organizations are not effective on the practice. This indicates that top management officials are perceived to take an account of performance appraisal results into organization strategic decisions making important to improve performance and service delivery.

Table 1: Performance appraisal results use in decisions making

Management Practices	VE	E	NV	NE
Rectification of performance failures	16.4	41.8	17.9	23.9
Refining performance measures	14.9	50.2	11.9	22.9
Resetting organization objectives	21.9	44.3	9.0	24.9
Enhance customers satisfactions	11.9	37.3	11.9	38.8
Recruitment of employees	11.4	39.3	11.9	37.3
Salary increments	21.4	45.8	11.9	20.9
Training and development	25.4	48.8	8.5	17.4
Suspension of employees	3.5	18.9	15.4	62.2
Promotions of employees	10.9	49.8	4.5	34.8
Demotions of employees	3.5	20.9	16.4	59.2
Termination of employees	2.0	19.9	14.4	63.7

Additionally, the results depicted in table 1 indicate that vast respondents (59.2 per cent) view that the public organizations are not effective in using performance appraisal results to demote or punish employees for not meeting the desired performance standards. Also, the results indicate a significant number (63.68 per cent) of respondents in questionnaires view that their public organizations are not effective in using performance appraisal results for such management practice of terminating employees who fail to meet their objectives or persistently show unsatisfactory performances in the public organizations.



*Performance appraisal results use for organization development decisions*

Furthermore, in interviews, respondents were also asked if their public organizations use performance appraisal results for various decisions making. When asked whether during the performance management process, performance appraisal results are gathered and informs decision making process or not, one respondent in managerial positions stated: *Through performance reviews and appraisals, we are getting both internal and external information on our performances. The major challenge here is a lack of follow-ups and how to implement those views from the customers and other organization stakeholders which sometimes results from limited resources.*

The respondent further pointed out that during performance management process, performance appraisal results are collected for decision-making and communicated to employees and externally to the organization stakeholders. In this view, another respondent remarked: *In our organization, different performance reports from various sections are gathered and internally communicated through annual workers council meetings and workers representatives are given time to give views on how to improve performances in the organization.* The respondents across selected public organizations view that customarily the organizations have not been appropriately using performance management system to generate performance results important for implementation of management practices.

*Performance appraisal results for HR-Practices*

The study further sought to find views and experiences from respondents across the public organizations on how their organizations are effective or not in using performance appraisal results in HR-practices

*Promotions and salary adjustments*

Regarding the use of performance appraisal results in promoting employees to various job positions and other salary adjustments, respondents showed mixed findings. It has emerged from the findings that the majority of senior staffs' respondents viewed that there are many flaws on employees' promotion to different job positions in the public organizations. In particular, concerning promotions, one interviewee noted: *The use of performance appraisal results is very imprecise. For example, to be more specific on promotion, I have been working for nine years now without being considered for any salary adjustments. So, I think you can have a clear picture if really the organizations make use of such employee performance appraisal information.* What claimed by the senior staff interviewee was also reflected in an interview with one of the line managers in the public organizations. The top management officer doubted on the use of performance appraisal results for the promotions and said: *I think the current system does not really provide information for HR-decisions such as promotions. Look here, there was a time, as head of section, I was very shocked to find out one of my subordinates getting promoted to higher post without even being considered as supervisor. So, where are my views reflected in the whole*

*process of employees' performances and promotions?* A similar argument regarding the use of performance appraisal results for salary adjustments and promotions was remarked by one of the Human Resource Manager: *We have employees with their performances being annually evaluated. So, in the process, we have performance appraisal results related to the organization in general, promotions and other salary adjustments. In my view, the major drawback is on the ways to implement the results which sometimes become beyond public organizations' control.*

Further, in an interview, the majority of senior staffs expressed frustrations not only at the implementations of the performance appraisal results, but also at failure of the management to give more emphasis on issues relating to different merit salaries increases. An interviewee in one of the organizations, a senior staff noted: *I do not think if there is such emphasis on using performance appraisal results on employees' promotions. In my views, the results are not factored into merit salary adjustment and that is why the majority of employees do not take it even seriously when it comes to aspects of performance management system.* More respondents showed that there are great challenges on using performance appraisal results for HR-related practices such as promotions and general public servants' appointment to higher positions in the organizations. One respondent in managerial position pointed out: *To my views, promotions and salary adjustments are centralized system and according to our government policy, no matter how an employee has outstanding performance, such practices requires three consecutive years appraisal results and more availability of budget.* From the public organizations, the study evidenced that most of the decision making processes in the public organizations are not informed from the performance appraisal results. Lack of senior employees and management commitments to implement the system seriously has resulted into many cases; the performance appraisal results are manipulated and not reflect the reality for decisions making.

#### *Training and development*

According to Tanzania Training policy (URT, 2013:5), all public organizations are required to prepare training needs assessment, thus necessitating the importance of administered performance management system to be used as a tool to produce performance appraisal results related to training and development avenues for employees. In this regard, respondents were posed with questions to divulge their views on how their organizations are effective in using performance appraisal results for employees training and development. With respect to interview findings, a significant number of these respondents viewed training and development as an important aspect to improve performances in the public organizations.

These views were reflected in one public organization where an interviewee in managerial position noted: *The organization has invested on employees' competences assessment. Therefore, there are training plans to make sure that employees are well trained. The organization also encourages employees to join their professional associations where there are also training opportunities. My views on performance appraisal results for training and development, of course, depend on the availability of funds.* The study revealed that in all public organizations, top management officials



subscribed to the views that the use of performance appraisal results in training and development avenues to employees mostly depends on the availability of funds.

In addition, the issue of using performance appraisal results on training and development to employees raised concern to the majority senior staffs in the public organizations. An interview with the group revealed that the majority of respondents commented it was important for employees to be vested with appropriate knowledge and skills in their specific jobs, but doubted if their public organizations had clear training and development programmes. In the interview, one respondent, a senior staff had these views: *I think everyone here needs training and development opportunities. Yes, our managers sometimes identify training and development needs for the employees in our department. To my views, however, the problem is, there are no clear training plans in place and favoritism to some of employees. Even if the public organization has funds, there is favoritism and training and development opportunities for the employees receive very low priority.* In most of the selected public organizations, senior staff respondents had almost similar views that performance management system should be administered well, objectively identifying training gaps among employees. It was further stated that directors and managers should periodically conduct training needs assessment to find out areas of weakness for further training and development in order to improve performances and service delivery. The findings evidence that the use of performance management system as a tool for evaluation continues to attract criticism among employees especially on its efficacy to generate performance appraisal results relevant for both human resources and organization development decisions making.

#### *Demotions and termination*

Demotion and termination of employment are disciplinary actions for less efforts or failure to perform according to the desired performance standards in the public organizations. As indicated in table 1, the questionnaire results indicate that top management officials in public organizations have difficult time in enforcing decisions on the use of performance appraisal results in withholding salary adjustments, demotions and terminations of different appointments. As these are aspects examined in interviews, majority of respondents across the organizations under the study reported that using performance appraisal results is a difficult management practice. For demotions, the findings were reflected in an interview like how one of the respondents, in managerial position, explained: *How comes as supervisor to recommend demotion to an employee? This is very hard as there are many procedures that must be followed and, as a leader, you may end up wasting time.* The respondents added that proper disciplinary procedures are needed to counteract employees' poor work performance and unacceptable behaviors. Also, it much depends on heads of the public organizations. With this view, one respondent in management position echoed in an interview: *Demoting an employee is really a confrontational issue. In my views, this depends on how the top management team is serious about it to improve performances in the organization. There are cases where employees have been demoted in this organization.* The study revealed that the interview findings support the descriptive analysis of questionnaire which

indicates 59.20 per cent had views that public organizations are not effective in using performance appraisal results on management practices such demotion of employees.

Furthermore, this study sought to understand from respondents if employees are terminated from employment based on specific performance appraisal results in the public organizations. In this context, it further indicates that questionnaires and interviews results concur with the majority of respondents viewing that termination of employees based on performance appraisal results is not a common management practice in the public organizations. In this case, questionnaire results indicate 63.68 per cent of respondents' view that the public organizations are not effective on using performance appraisal results for such practice. The finding on termination difficulty was expressed by the interviewee, a line manager: *You know termination is an extreme case in the public organization. We, as managers, sometimes recommend to the HR departments for further actions on poor work performances by the employees, but not to the extent of an employee to be terminated.* The respondent further commented that termination of employees happens when there is enough evidence on employees' persistent unsatisfactory performances. In another public organization, an interviewee, a line director, had similar viewed when remarked: *The issue of terminating employees in public organizations is very difficult. For example, if an employee gets poor performance rating or unsatisfactory performances, there might be many causes for it and therefore it is difficult to make conclusions.* The respondent further stated that such practice of termination requires undergoing several legal processes and other stakeholders such as trade unions in the organizations. In addition, an interviewee, a line director in another public organization, had views that: *Even if an employee repeatedly gets unsatisfactory performances, conforming to legal procedures, to my views, is a problem. Who needs such troubles in life? I think we also have problem on documentation, so the use of performance appraisal results on termination of employees for not meeting objectives cannot work.*

Despite such problems, however, the respondent concluded that stringent top management officials on such aspects of using performance appraisal results to deal with issues of performances remain important.

### **Performance appraisal Results use and Organizational Performance: A Nexus**

In similar way, the study focused on uncovering the nexus between performance appraisal results use in decision making on management practices and organizational performances in public organizations. The study sought to analyze how performance appraisal use on management practices (independent variables) influence organizational performances in the public organization. Thus, in particular for this study, linear regression analysis was carried out to determine the effect of identified independent variables of performance appraisal results on organizational performances in public organizations. The results obtained are presented in table 2, 3 and 4

Table 2: Model Fitness

Indicator	Coefficient
R	0.341
R Square	0.116
Adjusted R Square	0.107
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.53841

The results presented in table 2 shows the fitness of a model used in the regression model in explaining the study phenomena. The use of performance appraisal results was found to be a satisfactory factor in explaining organizational performance in Tanzanian public organizations. This is supported by coefficient of determination, also known as the R square of 11.6 per cent. This means that the use of performance appraisal results explains 11.6 per cent of the variations in the dependent variable which is an organizational performance. The remaining are explained by other variations.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	7.546	2	3.773	13.016	.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	57.396	198	.290		
Total	64.942	200			

As depicted in table 3, the analysis indicates the model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that the independent variables, the use of performance appraisal results are good indicators of the organizational performance. The reported value of  $p=0.000$  which is less than conventional probability of 0.05 is significant, and F statistic of 13.016 supports the results.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

sub construct variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1 (Constant)	2.213	.204		10.838	.000
Performance Appraisal Results: Organization Level	.150	.056	.199	2.691	.008
Performance Appraisal Results: Human Resource Level	.209	.076	.204	2.760	.006

Table 4 shows that performance appraisal results (using levels) are positively and significantly related to the organizational performance with ( $r=0.209$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and ( $r=0.150$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) respectively.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The interviews and questionnaires investigated if performance appraisal results are generated in performance management processes and then used for various decision making practices, key to improved performance and service delivery in public organizations. From the perspective of tying performance appraisal results to issues of HR practices, the findings reveal that public organizations are moderately effective on using such information for employees promotion and other salary adjustments and less effective in demotions, withholding salary adjustments and terminations for employees poor work performance.

Further, despite these public organizations showing to be moderately effective in using appraisal results for employee promotions and salary adjustments, the findings showed considerable shortcomings that such practices are solely for compliances only, whereby they do not reflect a real employee's performance. On the basis of responses from the respondents, it shows that performance appraisal results are weakly tied to decision-making regarding to allocation of resources and rectification of performance failures, aspects important to improve performance and the general service delivery.

Further, the findings on regression analysis reveal that there is a positive relationship between performance appraisal results use and organizational performances. In this case, the findings point to the facts that public organizations need to take more emphasis on the use of performance appraisal results in different management practices to improve performance and service delivery. Based on the preceding findings of this study, it is recommended that the ministry responsible for public service management in Tanzania should increase a close support to the public organizations in terms of clear policy on the use of performance appraisal information for various decisions. The initiative will induce behavior skewed at using such information and reciprocate more pressure to employees in managerial positions to implement the performance management system in the public organizations. It is worthwhile for the policy-makers or the government to practically design vigilant approach for public organizations to adhere to formulated policies and regulations on tying performance appraisal results to issues such as workers' appointments to higher positions, sanctions for poor performance and other salary adjustments.

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