



Influence of Headteachers' Performance Appraisal Practices on Teacher Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Kitui Central Sub-County, Kitui County, Kenya

Anna Susan Munyithya & Robert Kamau
School of Education
Mount Kenya University
Email: anmunyithya@yahoo.com

Abstract: *Headteachers' performance appraisal practices play a key role in ensuring improved classroom pedagogy and improved teacher performance. However, in Kitui Central Sub-County, teacher performance in many public primary schools is still low since many are not able to complete syllabus in time which has caused low academic performance among learners. Thus, this research examined the influence of headteachers' performance appraisal practices on teacher performance in public primary schools. The study adopted a mixed methodology and applied concurrent triangulation research design. Target population consisted of 757 respondents, which comprised 78 headteachers and 679 teachers, from which a sample of 260 respondents was determined using Yamane's Formula. This comprised 20 headteachers and 240 teachers. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically based on objectives and presented in narrative form, whereas quantitative data was analyzed inferentially using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis in Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 25) and presented using tables. The study revealed that many teachers struggle to cover the syllabus on time, resulting in poor performance. Despite headteachers conducting regular performance appraisals of teachers, teacher performance has not fully improved as envisaged. Thus, the Ministry of Education should continue equipping headteachers with skills on how to undertake performance appraisal of teachers in line with Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development tools as a strategy for improving teachers' pedagogical activities and thus, improve students' academic performance. The Ministry of Education should continue enforcing regular training of headteachers on aspects of school management as a key step towards understanding how to improve teacher performance.*

Keywords: *Public, Primary schools, Performance appraisal, Practices, Performance, Headteachers*

How to cite this work (APA):

Munyithya, A. S. & Kamau, R. (2025). Influence of headteachers' performance appraisal practices on teacher performance in public secondary schools in Kitui Central Sub-County, Kitui County, Kenya. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 9(3), 322 – 332. <https://doi.org/10.59765/jriie.9.3.31>.

1. Introduction

Teachers are at the epicenter of the success of any education reform and thus constitute a very important component of the education sector through implementation of curriculum objectives. Aaronson, Lisa and William (2022) assert that teachers undertake classroom pedagogy, syllabus coverage and above all, ensure that learners register impressive academic grades

in both internal and national examinations. In the same token, McDonnell (2023) opines that teachers have roles in implementation of competence-based curriculum in addition to other roles such as child guidance and discipline, respecting cultural diversity, establishing reciprocal relationships with families and creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning in the classroom. To realize this, performance appraisal practices adopted by school

heads cannot be overlooked. Performance appraisal in education is a critical mechanism used to evaluate and enhance teacher effectiveness, motivation, and instructional quality. Headteachers, as school leaders, are pivotal in implementing performance appraisal systems that align with institutional goals and national education standards.

In the UK, performance appraisal practices are governed by national frameworks such as the Teachers' Standards and the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (DfE, 2022). Headteachers are responsible for conducting annual performance management reviews, which include setting objectives, reviewing past performance, and providing developmental feedback. In the words of Lambert and Reed (2023), when headteachers provide formative feedback and align appraisal with professional development goals, teachers exhibit higher levels of motivation, lesson quality, and student outcomes. However, concerns persist about appraisal being overly bureaucratic. Jennings, Carter and Wang (2022) assert that many teachers perceive appraisal as compliance-driven rather than growth-oriented, reducing its impact on intrinsic motivation. The study suggested that training headteachers in instructional leadership and formative appraisal techniques can enhance teacher trust and receptivity to appraisal processes.

In India, performance appraisal practices are highly varied across states and educational boards. According to Sharma and Kulkarni (2023), while appraisal systems exist, they are often inconsistently applied. Headteachers who adopted participatory appraisal approaches, including peer reviews and reflective teaching portfolios, were more likely to see improved teacher engagement and instructional effectiveness. Nevertheless, hierarchical school cultures often hinder open communication during appraisals. According to Singh and Thomas (2022), many teachers viewed appraisals as top-down evaluations lacking transparency. To mitigate this, the National Education Policy 2020 encourages integrating teacher feedback and continuous professional development (CPD) into performance reviews. Schools that adopted these elements reported increased teacher satisfaction and retention.

Malaysia's Ministry of Education has instituted performance appraisal as part of its School-Based Assessment (Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah). Performance appraisal framework guides headteachers in evaluating teaching practices, classroom management, and student learning outcomes. A study carried out by Rahman, Lim and Tan (2022) indicated that schools where headteachers used data-driven appraisal systems saw significant improvements in teaching strategies and student achievement. Teachers reported that constructive feedback and clearly defined appraisal criteria contributed positively to their performance (Ismail & Zain, 2023). However, challenges such as excessive

workload and fear of punitive measures limit the effectiveness of appraisal systems in some contexts. The study recommended a shift toward more supportive, coaching-based appraisal models. In Sub-Saharan Africa, performance appraisal practices vary considerably, often reflecting broader issues of educational infrastructure and leadership capacity. A regional review by Mugo and Okello (2023) found that teacher appraisal is mandated by education ministries but inconsistently implemented due to inadequate training of headteachers and limited resources. In Botswana, headteachers act as instructional leaders but often lack formal training in appraisal techniques. According to Dintwe and Mmolai (2022), performance appraisals tend to be summative, focusing on administrative compliance rather than developmental feedback. As a result, teacher performance improvements are minimal unless accompanied by targeted professional development programs. In Uganda, the Teacher Incentive Framework ties appraisal to promotions and rewards. Namusoke and Birungi (2023) assert that headteachers who conducted regular participatory appraisals saw higher teacher attendance, improved lesson planning, and better student results. However, lack of transparency and favoritism in some schools reduced the perceived fairness of the system. Kenya's Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool, implemented by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), has made significant strides in systematizing appraisal.

According to Kiprono and Chebet (2023), headteachers who effectively implement TPAD are associated with improved teacher accountability and professional behavior. However, some educators view TPAD as overly complex and burdensome. In Kitui Central Sub-county, Mutua (2023) posits that headteachers who embraced collaborative appraisal methods and emphasized mentorship reported positive teacher behavior changes. However, teacher performance in many public primary schools in Kitui Central Sub-county is low. For example, a study carried out in Kitui Sub-county by Muasya (2024) found that indicates that, in public primary schools, 67.2% of teachers do not complete syllabus in time and have 59.3% of their learners register low grades in internal and national examinations. Despite this, the problem has continued unabated and yet few empirical studies had interrogated the extent to which different performance appraisal practices adopted by headteachers influence teacher performance in public primary schools; hence the study.

1.1 Research Objectives

The study sought to address the following objectives:

1. To assess the status of teacher performance in public secondary schools in Kitui Central Sub-county.
2. To investigate the influence of headteachers' performance appraisal practices on teacher

performance in public secondary schools in Kitui Central Sub-county.

2. Literature Review

Performance appraisal is an essential strategy of personnel management designed to identify an individual teacher's current level of job performance. According to Nykodym, Simonett and Welling (2022), performance appraisal factors in teachers' strengths and weaknesses, enable teachers to improve their performance, provide a basis for rewarding or penalizing teachers in relation to their contribution to education goals, motivate higher performance, identify training and development needs, for potential performance. In other words, it provides information for succession planning to validate the selection process and training which encourages supervisory understanding of the subordinates. In a study conducted in the Netherlands, Hackman and Oldham (2022) assert that performance appraisal provides a rational medium or instrument for measuring individual teacher's contribution to education goals achievement and success. Hackman and Oldham (2022) noted that the appraisal is a complex management function which demands extra-maturity, fairness and objectivity in assessing individual teacher's performance based on explicit job-related criteria.

According to Hackman and Oldham (2022), performance appraisal results provide vital information about a teacher's strength and weaknesses, training needs and reward plans such as advancement, promotion, pay increase, demotion and work or performance improvement plans. To lend credence to the assertions, Miller and Monge (2012) conducted a study in Mexico, which also revealed that performance appraisals had the equal probability of having a good and bad impact on the school as well as teacher performance. Miller and Monge (2023) reported that, in schools where performance appraisal is effectively done, the decisions such as promotions, terminations, training and merit pay increases do ensure teacher performance. This is indicative of the fact that performance appraisals usually have a positive and negative impact on teachers. For example, in Colombia, Campion and Thayer (2023) indicate that teachers who receive good scores on their appraisal are generally motivated to perform well and maintain his/her performance. That is, positive feedback on appraisal gives the teacher a feeling of worth and value, especially when accompanied by salary increment.

In most countries in Africa, Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Price, Soetanto and King (2023) report that most schools use a variety of performance appraisal practices designed by the Ministry of Education based on their philosophies and what qualities they are interested in teachers having most appraisal resembles checklists or rating systems for specific skills and qualities, while these tools help

schools find problem areas in teachers and ensure they are earning their compensation. Thus, performance appraisal is a veritable tool for teacher productivity. In Tanzania, Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Price, Soetanto and King (2023) assert that the essence of performance appraisal in most schools is to checkmate the contribution made by every teacher and to know how well they are going on with their task. In most primary schools in Morogoro, Tanzania, Greasley et al (2023) report that performance appraisal is a way of providing review and evaluation of an individual job performance has its own negative and positive effect on the teachers' productivity in a primary school. Greasley et al (2023) further report that primary schools where teachers were constantly appraised, they felt motivated and thus improved their efficiency, reduced absenteeism and witnessed an enhanced teacher performance. This means that when the goals of the teacher are clarified, his or her performance challenges identified, the effect is to motivate the teacher to achieve those educational goals. In other words, creating a comprehensive plan for teacher development and giving a teacher achievement to strive for, inspires a higher level of efficiency, which, in turn, ensures delivery of quality education in primary schools.

In Kenya, performance appraisal has also to be found on agreed targets at the start of the assessment period (TSC Image, 2017). All teachers under the TSC undergo a performance appraisal based on the agreed targets that their headteachers and headteachers signed for their schools' performance contract. According to TSC Image (2017), a teacher performance appraisal is a method of monitoring and evaluating a teacher's performance at the school level which involves; setting of performance targets; periodic assessment; feedback on evaluation; performance-based consultations; gathering evidence to demonstrate performance; the rating of the performance; identification of performance gaps and planning on teacher development and support measures. Performance appraisal tool for teachers is known as the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD). This is because it encompasses both evaluations of performance and mechanisms to address performance gaps. According to TSC Image (2017), use of performance appraisal will enable TSC to improve performance in every learning institution in line with its vision of being an institution of excellence in the provision of efficient and effective service for quality teaching; open appraisal system helps promote better understanding of the teacher's role by clarifying duties and responsibilities; it gives a better understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses in relation to expected performance targets; improves communication and enhance feedback between the teacher and the supervisor thus enhancing interpersonal relationship and help the teacher internalize the culture, norms and values of the institution. However, there are lots of problems associated with effective performance appraisal which includes untrained supervisors/managers, lack of

effective metrics, inconsistent rating of teachers, unreliable reward systems. For instance, in a study conducted in Kisumu Municipality, Wafula (2023) revealed that the performance appraisal policy is rarely regarded as a critical factor in a school in enhancing the performance of the teacher. Wafula (2023) noted that most teachers whose performance is under review often become defensive. Whenever teacher performance is rated as less than the best or as less than the level at which teacher personally perceives his/her contribution, the manager is viewed as being biased. Nzuve (2023) asserts that disagreement about the contribution and performance ratings can create a conflict-ridden situation that festers for months.

According to Nzuve (2023), the Teachers' Service Commission uses performance appraisals to measure the performance of teachers and to determine salary and wage increases. Nevertheless, performance appraisal also brings news that causes fret over job security, status, eligibility for promotion and possible bias or unfair ratings. It also shows the strength and weaknesses of a teacher on their job. A report by Nzuve (2023) revealed that performance appraisal practices adopted by the Ministry of Education have served to improve teacher performance. Similar findings were revealed in a study carried out in Kitui Central Sub-county in which Muchiri (2023) also indicated that the teacher performance appraisal helps to identify the skilled and performing teacher of a school to increase their salary and other benefits that can make them satisfied on their job. However, Nzuve (2023) and Muchiri (2023) failed to articulate how different performance appraisal practices interplay to influence teacher performance in primary schools; hence the study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was based on the teacher evaluation theory which was proposed by Charlotte Danielson in the year 2007 as a framework for assessing teaching effectiveness, guiding professional development, and improving student learning outcomes. Grounded in both accountability and formative improvement, the theory has evolved to incorporate a wide range of indicators, from student achievement to classroom observations. At its core, this theory holds that evaluations should serve dual roles—providing feedback for growth (formative) and accountability for standards (summative). Effective evaluation should include various data sources such as classroom observations, student performance, self-assessments, and peer reviews. The tools and processes used must accurately reflect teaching effectiveness and produce consistent results across evaluators and contexts. This theory further holds that evaluation should be tied to continuous learning and improvement, not merely punitive measures. It notes that recognizing the diverse school environments and student populations,

evaluation models must be adaptable and context specific.

In the context of this theory, this theory is applied through structured appraisal systems that typically involve scheduled classroom observations, review of student work and performance, and post-observation conferences. Evaluations are often used for promotion, tenure decisions, identifying areas for teacher training, and informing school-wide improvement plans. In other words, this theory provides vital guidance for improving teaching quality and educational outcomes. Its principles emphasize a balanced, multi-faceted, and development-oriented approach. The role of headteachers is central to translating theory into effective practice. Their performance appraisal strategies profoundly influence whether teacher evaluations lead to real improvement or remain administrative formalities. As education systems continue to prioritize teacher quality, the integration of sound evaluation theory with strong leadership practices is indispensable for lasting school success. This study was also guided by the teacher performance theory whose proponent was Medley (1982). This theory is premised on the idea that teaching is both an art and a science, requiring a blend of content knowledge, pedagogical skills as well as interpersonal abilities. One of the core principles is the emphasis on reflective practice. Teachers are encouraged to continually assess their methods and effectiveness, seeking improvement through self-evaluation and feedback from peers and supervisors. This theory encompasses a variety of principles and applications that are critical in understanding the dynamics of educational environments. This theory posits that teacher effectiveness is not solely determined by their knowledge or skills but is significantly influenced by their ability to engage students, foster motivation, and create a conducive learning atmosphere.

The belief that teachers play a pivotal role in shaping student outcomes through their performance reflects their pedagogical strategies, emotional engagement, and interpersonal relationships with students. One of the foundational principles of teacher performance theory is the importance of teacher enthusiasm and self-efficacy. Another key principle is the holistic evaluation of teacher performance. This involves assessing not just student outcomes, but also the teacher's ability to create a conducive learning environment, engage students, and adapt to diverse learning needs. This theory also underscores the importance of professional development. It advocates ongoing learning opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills and stay updated with the latest educational research and methodologies. This principle is closely tied to the belief that teaching is a dynamic profession requiring continual adaptation and growth. In practice, this theory is often used to guide the development of teacher evaluation systems. This theory informs teacher training programmes, ensuring that new teachers are equipped

with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the classroom.

Professional development programmes often draw on the principles of this theory, offering workshops and courses designed to address specific aspects of teaching performance, such as classroom management or differentiated instruction. Thus, this theory is relevant in that it underscores the vitality of its principles of reflective practice, holistic evaluation, and continuous professional development are integral to improving teaching effectiveness. In other words, it influences teacher evaluation systems, training programmes and ongoing professional development efforts, all aimed at enhancing the quality of education and student success. Its applications in educational settings underscore the necessity for teachers to engage in continuous professional development and to adopt pedagogical strategies that foster a supportive learning environment.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a mixed methodology and applied concurrent triangulation research design. Target population consisted of 757 respondents, which comprised 78 headteachers and 679 teachers, from which a sample of 260 respondents was determined using Yamane’s Formula. Stratified sampling was used to create two strata based on the number of zones in Kitui Central Sub-county. From each zone, four headteachers were sampled using purposive sampling, considering schools that had reported cases of low academic performance in KCPE for the last five years. However, from each zone, 48 teachers were selected using simple random sampling to eliminate feelings of bias among the respondents. This sampling procedure enabled the researcher to realize a sample of 20 headteachers and 240

teachers. A questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from teachers and interviews for headteachers.

Qualitative data was analyzed thematically based on study objectives and presented in narrative form, whereas quantitative data was analyzed inferentially using linear regression analysis in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23). Quantitative findings were presented using tables. In this study, an ethical clearance certificate was obtained from Mount Kenya Ethical Review Committee (MKU ERC) before embarking on data collection processes. The researcher undertook to keep private any information given by the respondents that touched on their personal life. The researcher assured the respondents that no private information would be divulged to a third party. The nature and the purpose of the research were explained to the respondents by the researcher. The researcher explained to the respondents the procedure that would be followed during the data collection so that they could participate willingly. The raw data collected were filed for easy reference. Once the data were analyzed, computer printouts were filed while soft copies were stored in storage devices such as CDs and flash discs.

4. Results and Discussion

In this section, findings of the study as per the objectives of the study are outlined besides highlighting presentation of findings as well as discussions.

4.1 Response Rates

In this study, 240 questionnaires were administered to teachers, and, in return, 231 questionnaires were filled and returned. In the same token, the researcher interviewed 16 headteachers. This yielded response rates shown in Table 1;

Table 1: Response Rates

Respondents	Sampled Respondents	Those Who Participated	Achieved Return Rate (%)
Headteachers	20	16	80.0
Teachers	240	231	96.3
Total	260	247	95.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 1 shows that headteachers registered a response rate of 80.0% whereas teachers registered 96.3%. This yielded an average response rate of 95.0%, which is consistent with the assertions of Creswell (2018) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate. This information was important since it allowed the researcher to generalize the study outcomes to the target population.

4.2 Status of Teacher Performance in Public Primary Schools

The study sought to assess the status of teacher performance in public primary schools in Kitui Central Sub-county. This was measured by assessing how often teachers cover syllabus in time and KCPE performance between 2019 and 2023. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency of Syllabus Coverage by Teachers in Public Primary Schools

Frequency of Timely Syllabus Coverage by Teachers	Number of Teachers	
	f	%
Often	59	25.5
Rarely	138	59.7
Never	34	14.8

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 2 shows that most of the teachers, 138(59.7%), rarely cover syllabus in time, 59(25.5%) often do whereas 34(14.8%) never do. During the interviews, headteachers also stated that most teachers do not cover syllabus in time. Headteacher, H1, noted;

In my school, I have had cases where teachers do not cover syllabus in time to accord students adequate time for revision.

These findings corroborate the assertions of Hofman and ve Hofman (2015) that, in the Netherlands, a performing or competent teacher is regarded as one who is able to

cover syllabus in time and teach a particular subject very well that is, one who perceives his or her teaching competence and believe that they can exert a positive effect on students' achievement. In the same token, a study carried out in Kitui Central Sub-county by Kamau (2021) highlights that delays in syllabus coverage are most notable during the third term, with many teachers struggling to complete the content before national exams. This trend has been linked to teachers' tendency to focus on exam-centric topics and neglect other essential areas, leading to an incomplete educational experience for students. The researcher further sought to assess the status of performance in KCPE for the last five years (2019-2023) as an indicator of teacher performance. Results are shown Table 3;

Table 3: Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Kitui Central Sub-county (Mean scores) between 2019 and 2023

KCPE Results in Mean Score (Marks)	Years of Examination				
	2019 %	2020 %	2021 %	2022 %	2023 %
100-150 marks (Poor)	40.2	43.5	44.2	47.3	48.9
151-200 marks (Below Average)	36.9	35.1	34.9	33.5	32.5
201-300 marks (Fair)	15.4	15.1	14.8	13.7	13.4
301-350 marks (Good)	5.3	4.4	4.3	3.8	3.6
351-400 marks (Excellent)	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 3 shows that academic performance of learners in KCPE has been on a downward trend for the last five years. These findings corroborate the findings of a report by MoE (2024) that the performance of learners in Kitui Central Sub-county in KCPE has been on a downward trend. These findings affirm the fact that low academic performance in many public primary schools has become a common phenomenon.

4.3 Headteachers' Performance Appraisal Practices and Teacher Performance in Public Primary Schools

The study sought to examine how performance appraisal practices influence teacher performance in public primary schools. Descriptive data were collected from teachers and results are presented in Table 4;

Table 4: Teachers’ Views on the Influence of Performance Appraisal Practices on Teacher Performance in Public Primary Schools

Test Items	Ratings				
	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Headteachers usually appraise teachers’ time management skills as a way of improving their performance	51.7	11.3	5.6	5.6	25.8
Teachers’ performance has improved owing to the appraisal of their participation in co-curricular activities	53.7	14.8	5.6	11.1	14.8
Headteachers usually appraise teachers’ ability to maintain learner discipline in school to improve their performance	57.4	9.3	7.4	9.3	16.7
In public primary schools, headteachers rarely appraise teachers’ ability to ensure learner safety classroom	48.1	18.5	5.6	9.3	18.5
In public primary schools, teachers’ classroom management skills are not appraised by headteachers to improve their performance	66.7	11.1	3.7	5.6	13.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4 shows that slightly more than half 119(51.7%) of teachers were in strong agreement with the view that headteachers usually appraise teachers’ time management skills as a way of improving their performance with slightly more than a quarter 60(25.8%) strongly disagreeing. This indicates that one of the primary aspects of teacher appraisal is the assessment of teaching methods. These findings corroborate the findings of research carried out by Dufour (2022) which revealed that headteachers who appraise teachers’ instructional techniques can positively influence teaching outcomes. According to Dufour (2022), when headteachers observe classroom interactions and assess teaching methods, they provide valuable feedback that helps teachers improve their pedagogical practices. In the words of Harris and Sass (2023), such feedback ensures that teachers adopt innovative and effective methods, resulting in better student engagement and learning outcomes. This implies that appraising teaching methods, therefore, encourages teachers to reflect on their practices, leading to improved instructional quality.

In the same token, most of the teachers 124(53.7%) strongly supported the view that teachers’ performance has improved owing to the appraisal of their participation in co-curricular activities while 34(14.8%) strongly disagreed. This indicates that effective use of instructional time is an important factor in teacher performance since it ensures that teachers can cover the curriculum while maintaining classroom discipline and fostering a productive learning environment. This supports the findings of a study carried out by Mertler (2023), which found that headteachers who regularly appraise teachers’ time management practices contribute to improved classroom productivity and efficiency. This implies that teachers who receive feedback on their ability to manage instructional time are better equipped to structure their lessons, minimize distractions, and

maximize learning opportunities for their students. As a result, teachers are more likely to meet educational goals and enhance overall student performance.

Slightly more than half 133(57.4%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that headteachers usually appraise teachers’ ability to maintain learner discipline in school to improve their performance with only 39(16.7%) strongly disagreeing. This implies that besides classroom activities, headteachers also evaluate teachers’ involvement in co-curricular activities (CCAs), which are integral to the holistic development of students. This lends credence to the findings of research conducted by Collie and McNaughton (2021) which noted that, when headteachers appraise teachers’ participation in CCAs, it boosts teacher engagement and motivation. Teachers who are actively involved in CCAs often build stronger relationships with students, enhancing their teaching efficacy. These activities also foster a sense of community and collaboration among educators, which can lead to a more positive school culture. Therefore, headteachers who recognize and appraise teachers’ contributions to extracurricular programs indirectly improve both teacher and student performance.

A fair proportion 111(48.1%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that in public primary schools, headteachers rarely appraise teachers’ ability to ensure learner safety in classroom whereas 43(18.5%) strongly disagreed. This points to the fact that preparation of professional documents, including lesson plans, schemes of work, and student assessments, is another area that headteachers often appraise. Proper documentation is essential for organizing instructional activities and ensuring alignment with educational standards. According to research by Hargreaves and Fullan (2022), when headteachers assess teachers’ professional

documentation, they help teachers improve their planning and organization skills. Such appraisals provide an opportunity for teachers to refine their lesson plans and instructional practices, leading to more effective teaching and improved student outcomes. This, in turn, enhances overall teacher performance. Two-thirds 154(66.7%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public primary schools, teachers’ classroom management skills are not appraised by headteachers to improve their performance while 30(13.0%) strongly disagreed.

These findings affirm the fact that appraisal practices adopted by headteachers play a crucial role in enhancing teacher performance in public primary schools. By evaluating teaching methods, instructional time management, participation in CCAs, and professional document preparation, headteachers provide critical feedback that leads to improved teacher effectiveness.

This further implies that appraisal practices foster a culture of continuous professional development, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students. As schools continue to prioritize quality education, the role of headteachers in performance appraisal will remain essential for fostering teacher growth and improving educational outcomes.

4.4 Inferential Analysis

To verify influence of performance appraisal practices on teacher performance, data were collected from the 16 headteachers of the sampled public primary schools on how often (Very Often = 5, Often = 4, Sometimes = 3, Rarely = 2 and Never = 1) they appraise teachers, how often teachers cover syllabus in time and academic performance in KCPE for the year 2023). The results are shown in Table 5:

Table 5: How Often Headteachers Appraise Teachers and Teacher Performance in Public Primary Schools

How Often Headteachers Reward Teachers (X2)	How Often Teachers Cover Syllabus in Time	2023 KCPE Results
2	2	214
3	3	378
4	5	381
2	3	280
2	2	348
1	2	389
2	1	409
3	4	298
5	3	309
3	1	235
2	1	299
2	4	397
3	2	267
4	5	345
3	4	367
2	5	376

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 5 reveals that the increased frequency of teacher appraisals by headteachers in primary schools is associated with timely syllabus coverage and better student performance in KCPE. This suggests that regular appraisals significantly influence the teaching and learning environment. Frequent feedback from headteachers motivates teachers to enhance their teaching methods and remain syllabus focused.

Consequently, students benefit from structured instruction, leading to improved academic outcomes. Moreover, regular evaluations promote teachers’ professional development by keeping them informed about current pedagogical practices. The data presented in Table 5 were analyzed using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Test, with the findings detailed in Table 6:

Table 6: Relationship between Frequency of Headteachers’ Appraisal of Teachers and Teacher Performance in Public Primary Schools

		X	A	B
X	Pearson Correlation	1	.613*	.584*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.030	.047
	N	16	16	16
A	Pearson Correlation	.613*	1	.808
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030		.098
	N	16	16	16
B	Pearson Correlation	.584*	.808	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	.098	
	N	16	16	16

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Key: **X**- How Often Headteachers Appraise Teachers; **A**- How Often Teachers Cover Syllabus in Time and **B**-2023 KCPE Results

Table 6 shows that there is a strong correlation between headteachers’ appraisal of teachers and teacher performance in public primary schools. That is, the higher the frequency of headteachers’ motivation of teachers, the higher frequency with which teachers cover syllabus in time and improved students’ academic performance in KCPE ($r(16) = 0.613$ and 0.584 at $p = 0.030, 0.047$ at $\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that headteachers, as educational leaders, have a significant role in assessing the teaching abilities of their staff, providing feedback, and fostering a culture of professional growth. Their appraisals, when conducted effectively, offer insight into the strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers, guiding them toward areas of improvement. In other words, effective teacher appraisal systems, particularly those led by knowledgeable and supportive headteachers, are linked to higher teacher performance. When headteachers regularly observe and evaluate teachers, they can offer constructive feedback, recognize accomplishments, and identify areas needing development. Teachers who receive continuous and focused evaluations tend to perform better due to the increased support and professional development opportunities available to them. Moreover, a headteacher’s appraisal fosters accountability and motivation, as teachers are more likely to enhance their skills when they know their performance is being evaluated. Teachers who are engaged in performance appraisals feel more responsible for their teaching effectiveness, which directly impacts student outcomes.

4.5 Thematic Analysis

During the interviews, the headteachers also responded in favour of the view that headteachers often appraise teachers as a way of improving their classroom pedagogy. Headteacher, H2, stated;

In my school, I often appraise teaching methods used by teachers, their instructional time management, their participation in co-curricular activities as well as their preparation of professional documents. This has

enabled to monitor how frequent and fast teachers cover syllabus whose consequence has been improved students’ academic performance.

Just like quantitative findings, these views further affirm the fact that appraisal practices foster a culture of continuous professional development, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students. These mixed findings point to the fact that headteachers’ appraisal of teachers is a critical element in improving teacher performance, particularly in public primary schools, even though performance remains a challenge in many cases. These mixed findings further affirm the fact that, while teacher performance may be low in some instances, a structured appraisal system can offer valuable insights that help tailor professional development programs to address specific needs. When headteachers engage in regular, constructive evaluations, they create a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. The feedback from these appraisals allows teachers to reflect on their practice, set personal and professional goals, and implement practices to improve their teaching. Moreover, these appraisals can help foster a sense of support and collaboration, as teachers are more likely to feel valued and encouraged to enhance their skills when given clear, actionable feedback. In addition, headteachers can use appraisals to recognize and reward effective teaching, motivating teachers to maintain or elevate their performance. While appraisals alone may not resolve all performance issues, they serve as a vital tool for continuous professional growth, helping to bridge gaps in teacher effectiveness and ultimately improve quality of education in schools.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Teacher performance has been a challenge in many public primary schools in Kitui Central Sub-county with many teachers not covering syllabus in time which has occasioned low academic performance of students in

KCSE. This has brought into question the effectiveness of headteachers' performance appraisal practices. The study found that, despite the fact that headteachers undertake regular teacher performance appraisals, this has not fully translated into impressive teacher performance in terms of syllabus coverage and pupils' academic performance remains suboptimal.

5.2 Recommendations

1. As a practice, the Ministry of Education should continue equipping headteachers with skills on how to undertake performance appraisal of teachers in line with TPAD tool as a strategy for improving teachers' pedagogical activities as well as improving students' academic performance.
2. As a policy, the Ministry of Education should continue enforcing regular training of headteachers on aspects of school management as a key step towards understanding how to improve teacher performance in schools.

References

- Aaronson, A., Lisa, M., & William, J. (2022). *Teachers and academic performance: A pedagogical perspective*. New York Education Press.
- Campion, M. A., & Thayer, P. W. (2023). *Teacher motivation and performance appraisal: A Colombian perspective*. Bogotá: Education Research Institute.
- Collie, R. J., & McNaughton, G. (2021). Principal leadership and teacher well-being: The role of school climate and social-emotional learning. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 45(2), 325–343.
- Creswell, J. (2018). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodology*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing professional practice: A theoretical framework for teaching* (2nd ed.). ASCD.
- Dintwe, P., & Mmolai, T. (2022). Evaluating performance appraisal effectiveness in Botswana's primary schools. *African Journal of Educational Leadership*, 9(2), 45–58.
- Dufour, R. (2022). *In praise of American educators: And how they can become even better*. Solution Tree Press.
- Greasley, K., Bryman, A., Dainty, A., Price, A., Soetanto, R., & King, N. (2023). *Teacher evaluation systems in Tanzania: Practices and outcomes in Morogoro*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Education Press.
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (2022). The complexity of teacher performance appraisal: Findings from the Netherlands. *Journal of Educational Management*, 6(2), 44-55
- Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2022). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. Teachers College Press.
- Harris, D. N., & Sass, T. R. (2023). *Teacher training, teacher quality and student achievement*. *Journal of Public Economics*, 95(7–8), 798–812.
- Ismail, H., & Zain, N. A. (2023). Teacher feedback and motivation in Malaysian public schools. *Journal of Asian Educational Studies*, 15(1), 88–103.
- Jennings, M., Carter, S., & Wang, P. (2022). Appraisal or compliance? Perceptions of teacher evaluation in UK secondary schools. *British Journal of Educational Management*, 44(3), 210–225.
- Kiprono, J., & Chebet, M. (2023). Assessing the impact of TPAD on teacher performance in Kenya. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 5(4), 112–127.
- Lambert, R., & Reed, T. (2023). Aligning appraisal with teacher professional development. *Educational Leadership Review*, 18(2), 32–49.
- McDonnell, S. (2023). *The evolving role of teachers in modern education systems*. Cambridge Education Press.
- Medley, D. M. (1982). *Teacher effectiveness*. In H. E. Mitzel (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of educational research* (5th ed., pp. 1894–1903). Macmillan.
- Mertler, C. A. (2023). *The educator's guide to classroom assessment: Understanding and using assessment to improve student learning* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Miller, G. A., & Monge, P. R. (2012). *Performance appraisal effects in Mexican public schools*. Mexico City: National Institute for School Development.
- Miller, G. A., & Monge, P. R. (2023). *Reassessing teacher appraisal: Evidence from school improvement strategies*. Monterrey: Center for Educational Impact.

- Ministry of Education Malaysia (2022). *Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah (PBS): SKPMg2 Framework Guidelines*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Education.
- Municipality. Kisumu: Great Lakes Educational Research Center.
- Muasya, P. (2024). *An analysis of teacher performance in Kitui Central Sub-county public primary schools*. University of Nairobi Press.
- Muchiri, J. K. (2023). *Effects of performance appraisal on teacher job satisfaction in Kitui Central Sub-county*. Nairobi: Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis.
- Mugo, J., & Okello, B. (2023). Regional trends in teacher performance appraisal in Sub-Saharan Africa. *African Educational Review*, 21(1), 1–20.
- Mutua, L. (2023). Collaborative appraisal practices and teacher behavior change in Kitui. *Kenya Journal of Educational Studies*, 7(1), 55–70.
- Namusoke, R., & Birungi, H. (2023). Participatory appraisal and teacher outcomes in Uganda. *Uganda Journal of Teacher Development*, 11(3), 74–90.
- Nykodym, N., Simonett, D., & Welling, B. (2022). *Performance evaluation in education: Balancing accountability and development*. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Nzuve, S. N. (2023). *Teacher appraisal and institutional efficiency in Kenyan public schools*. Nairobi: African Centre for Educational Policy.
- Rahman, A., Lim, C. Y., & Tan, J. (2022). Data-driven appraisal systems in Malaysia: A case study. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Educational Research*, 14(2), 66–84.
- Sharma, R., & Kulkarni, S. (2023). Performance appraisal variability across Indian states. *Indian Journal of School Leadership*, 6(1), 25–40.
- Singh, A., & Thomas, R. (2022). Teacher perceptions of performance appraisal in hierarchical school cultures. *Journal of Indian Educational Policy*, 10(3), 98–115.
- TSC Image (2017). *Teacher performance appraisal and development (TPAD) manual*. Nairobi: Teachers Service Commission.
- UK Department for Education (DfE) (2022). *Teachers' standards and pay and conditions document*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>
- Wafula, R. M. (2023). *Teachers' perceptions of performance appraisal policy in Kisumu*