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Teachers and Principals' Views on Performance Appraisal in Public Primary Schools in Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana

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Abstract

Organizational performance and its resultant efficiency and effectiveness can only be achieved when individuals are continuously appraised and evaluated. The inability of organizations to institute an effective performance appraisal system has hindered them from achieving competitive advantage which they need more than ever before. The study examined the current teacher performance appraisal system in public Primary Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana. 18 principals and 72 teachers participated in the study. Both the principals and the teachers were purposively selected. The focus group interviews were used to collect data from the teachers while individual interviews were used to elicit information from the principals. The study revealed that though teachers welcome the performance appraisal system, they have their own reservations about the way it is conducted by the principals. It is recommended among others that principals should show transparency and confidentiality when they appraise their teachers. Teachers should also accept the appraisal system as being developmental and in the best interest of the school system.

Keywords: Appraisal, Performance, effective, development, compensation, promotion

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1. Introduction

The immense role of education in the socioeconomic and political development of countries have been reckoned since ages. There is no debate whatsoever about the potency of education in transforming economies. Schools have been established to train human resources for the economic transformation of nations as they perform various roles in the productive and service sectors of nations. Teacher who man the schools equip students with knowledge, skills, values and requisite competencies to help achieve societal goals. Thus, the teacher is a prominent and crucial member of the school organizational team. Castetter (1996) clearly stated that teachers constitute the most important resource in the education industry because they form the most crucial element in the educative process charged with the task of effecting desirable changes in children and the youth. Teachers are also the school's most expensive resource. Quality teachers are therefore important to any educational system as it is the quality of teachers that determines the quality of an educational system in a country. Evidence abounds to prove that teacher quality is the single most important factor which influences student success (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2005). It is

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imperative that the leadership of primary schools should among other things have efficient and effective teachers to affect the desirable changes needed in the children. Such teachers need to be constantly appraised and evaluated to determine their efficiency and effectiveness.

Teacher appraisal is receiving attention world-wide as governments become aware of the need to examine educational provision critically and holistically to ensure that it is adequate, relevant, and appropriate to the needs of children and the youth. It is an important vehicle for promoting educational quality (Zhang, 2017; Hallinger *et al.*, 2014) as it is believed to have the potential to facilitate professional development and improvement of instruction. It is also to underscore the often-stated maxim that the teacher is the most valuable input in the teaching and learning matrix. In the present highly competitive environment, organizations especially schools have to ensure continuous peak performance of their teachers so as to compete effectively at the market place. Teacher appraisal is of great importance since its main objective is to improve individual performance and motivation (Barlett, 2000; Danielson, 2001; Wanzare, 2002). In Ghana, the Ghana Education Service/Ministry of Education (GES/MoE) has put in place staff performance appraisal system as one of the means of maintaining an effective and efficient goal-oriented staff in order to reverse the downward trends of standard of education in the country especially in the primary schools. GES conceives performance appraisal as the bond that glues the human resource activities of the institution. It is the institution's belief that through performance appraisal each employee would contribute meaningfully to the attainment of the goals of the institution and also provides feedback in anticipation of improved future performance. Through appraisal, teachers are more likely to analyze and reflect on their own competencies. Evaluating the effectiveness of a system encompasses a wide scope, including the perception of those appraised and the appraisers. Performance appraisals are essential for the effective management and evaluation of staff. In fact, there is a great deal of evidence to indicate how useful and effective performance appraisal is.

Dulewicz (1989) claims that there is a basic human tendency to make judgments about those one is working with as well as about oneself. However, the human inclination to judge can create serious motivational, ethical and legal problems in the workplace. Without structured appraisal system, there is little chance of ensuring that the judgments made will be lawful, fair, defensible and accurate. It is an attempt to make lawful, fair, defensible and accurate judgments about work performance that organizations, corporations, industries, schools and the universities use performance appraisal system to evaluate the work performance of employees. The performance appraisal concept is central to effective management of an organization. In fact, there is a great deal of evidence to indicate how useful and effective performance appraisal is.

2. Literature Review

Performance appraisal is increasingly becoming a feature of teachers' professional life and a properly constructed and presented appraisal system can improve both the professional development of teachers and principals and the management of schools (Bollington *et al.*, 1990). The appraisal of human performance is an activity that is considered very important to the well-being of an organization (Castetter, 1996). Appraisal can help teachers and principals order their priorities, improve their planning and contribute to professional development and school improvement (Bollington *et al.*, 1990). Teachers, like other workers need and deserve support, reassurance and encouragement to go on extending their skills and exploring the frontiers of knowledge. Teachers need to be periodically appraised as a way of informing them whether they are doing their work well, whether they are improving in their work and whether they need further training in some particular aspects of their work. Appraisal is therefore conducted in the interest of enhancing the professional development of teachers and at the same time, to provide reassurance to the general public that measures are in hand to improve the quality of education (Bollington *et al.*, 1990).

Performance appraisal has been described as the process of reviewing and evaluating how well employees are performing their tasks relative to the required performance standards (Khoury and Analoui, 2004), as identifying the barriers to performing at the optimal level and in providing feedback with the aim of eliminating performance deficiencies (Mondy *et al.*, 1999), and motivating employees to improve and develop their potential for the benefit of the organization (Wright, 2002). Performance appraisal is further seen as a means of articulating levels of individual performance and their own career path contribution so that strong performers are encouraged to maintain their high-performance levels and poor performers to do better (Scott, 2001), and a key mechanism by which an organization defends against individuals who legally challenge the validity of management decisions relating to promotions, transfers, salary changes and termination of appointments (Stone, 2002).

It is argued that staff appraisal is a key performance monitoring technique that provides feedback necessary for reviewing and directing activities towards the attainment of organizational goals. It focuses on the human element of

organizations with the view to monitoring, evaluating systematically the quality and quantity of output, the attitudes, behaviors and other factors for which acceptable standards can be established (Kinard, 1988). It aims at identifying weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for improvement and skills development; “the daily appraisals lay the groundwork for the formal ones, giving the appraisers, the knowledge they need to critique a subordinate’s or a team member’s performance, offering praise for work well done and suggestions for improvement” (Plunkett, 1994 p.449). It is the most powerful tool that managers have for improving productivity (Baker, 1988) and when performance appraisal is designed and used properly, it can assist organizational decisions on rewards and promotions, assist employees in their development and career planning and may even increase employees’ motivation, commitment and satisfaction especially if the performance appraisal system is aligned with the organization’s stated objectives (Wright, 2002). Fletcher (2001) defines performance appraisal as activities through which organizations seek to assess employees and develop their competence, enhance performance and distribute rewards. Shelley (1999) defines performance appraisal as the process of obtaining, analyzing, and recording information about the relative worth of an employee. The focus of the performance appraisal is measuring and improving the actual performance of the employee and also the future potential of the employee. She describes performance appraisal as a powerful tool to calibrate, refine and reward the performance of the employee. Kressler (2003) states that performance appraisal is a vital requirement for successful institutional and human resource policy. Among other, good performance appraisal system helps to hold employees accountable to their performance, address underperformance, and improve performance practice. Zbar *et al.* (2007) indicated that performance appraisal process and standards provide scope for school authorities to make informed decisions about teachers’ performance which may help to identify areas for growth and development.

From these definitions, it could be suggested that performance appraisal serves as a foundation for future decisions. Its focus is on the review of the past and the present, utilizing judging methods, ratings and descriptions established by the organizations. It is also clear that performance appraisal is both evaluative and developmental. That is, it evaluates the employee’s present performance, identifies his/her weaknesses and reduces the weaknesses.

Many researchers, management commentators and psychometricians have expressed doubts about the validity and reliability of performance appraisal. Researchers such as Derven (1990) have even stated that the performance appraisal process is so inherently flawed that it may be impossible to perfect it. Other advocates of performance appraisal such as Lawrie (1990) for instance view it as potentially the most crucial aspect of organizational life. This has also been attested to by Castetter (1996) who states that the appraisal of human performance is an activity that is so essential to the well-being of an organization or society. He states *inter alia* that performance appraisal is a process of arriving at judgments about an individual’s past or present performance against the backdrop of his/her work environment and about his/her future potential for an organization. Generally, ‘performance appraisal’ evaluates the employee’s performance, identifies his/her weaknesses and develops strategies for strengthening the strengths and reducing the weaknesses.

Various schools of thought lie between these two extremes. While performance appraisal has been well endorsed, there are many different opinions on how and when to apply it. Scholars such as Gilley and Egglund (1993) believe that performance appraisal has many employee development uses but scorn any attempt to link the process to reward outcomes, such as pay rises and promotions. The belief is that such a linkage to reward outcomes reduces or eliminates the developmental value of performance appraisal. This group sees the reward-linked process as judgmental, punitive and harrowing rather than an opportunity for constructive review and encouragement. Shelley (1999) suggests that appraisal should be broadly categorized as developmental, thus, focusing on both training to address short-term issues and on long-term career needs and evaluative approach focusing on management control and judgment. Many appraisers feel uncomfortable with the combined role of judges and executioners. Appraisees often know their appraisers well, and are typically in a direct superior-subordinate relationship. They work together on daily basis and sometimes mix socially well. The appraisers therefore find it difficult, at times, to give a report that has a direct effect of negating a promotion or salary increase. The worst may be a situation where an employee’s appointment is terminated for being considered a hopelessly inadequate performer.

On the other hand, there is a strong counter argument which claims that performance appraisal must unequivocally be linked to reward outcomes. The advocates of this approach state that organizations must have a process by which rewards may be openly and fairly distributed to those most deserving it on the basis of merit, efforts and results. They continue that there is a critical need for remunerative justice in organizations. Performance appraisal therefore, is the only process available to help achieve fair, decent and consistent reward outcomes. In research conducted by Bannister and Balkin (1990), they reported that appraisees seem to have greater acceptance of the appraisal process and feel more satisfied with it when the process is directly linked to rewards.

Borich (1978) indicates that the objectives served by appraisal data fall into three broad categories; diagnostic, formative, and summative. The diagnostic decisions are made in the pre-operational stages of performance appraisal and are applied to diagnostic decisions prior to employment such as selection, placement and development. Formative objectives are related to decisions during initial and intermediate stages of employment and are aimed at personnel development. Summative purposes of appraisal systems are those focusing on decisions to implement personnel actions such as compensation, tenure, promotion and redeployment.

Bowles and Coates (1993)'s study found that the main use of the performance appraisal was to achieve work goals as well as accountable and control mechanism aimed at the individual employees and not as a training tool to benefit the employees. Taylor and O'Driscoll (1993) conducted a study to investigate how and why New Zealand organizations undertake appraisal process, and what difficulties they encounter during implementation. They found that the primary function of performance appraisal system is to provide performance feedback to employees, recognize good performance and identify strengths and weaknesses; to serve administrative and developmental purposes; to link it with pay; and to make decisions concerning termination, layoffs, transfers and new assignments. Boswell and Bondreau (2000) surveyed 128 manufacturing employees on the use of performance appraisal and found that employees were more likely to be satisfied with the performance appraisal process if it was for career advancement, training and development. They concluded that when performance is used for development, it is a way to support employee's growth as well as to indirectly influence employee's attitudes. These attitudes may in turn influence turnover, absenteeism and the performance of the organization.

In Ghana, teachers are periodically appraised as a way of informing them whether they are doing their work well, whether they are improving in their work, and whether they needed further training in some particular aspect of their work. They are also being held accountable to parents for the education of their children. It also affords parents a further assurance of the quality of teaching their children receive. It helps to re-direct teachers to be proficient in self-improvement and self-analysis.

3. Theoretical Framework

The study is based on Festinger's 1954 Social Comparison Theory. Festinger argues that people have an innate drive to evaluate themselves (skills and abilities) often in comparison to others. He emphasized that people rely on comparisons with other people to accurately assess their own skills, abilities, beliefs, and attitudes. He further stated that people engage in this comparison process as a way of establishing a benchmark by which we can make accurate evaluation of ourselves. This implies that in performance appraisal, there is a benchmark which should be used to compare performance of employees.

The study is also based on Adams' 1963 Equity Theory of motivation which states that when individuals perceive that they are not fairly rewarded for their contributions, they will feel a sense of distress. It is a theory of motivation that suggests that employee motivation at work is driven largely by their sense of fairness. This theory aims to strike a balance between an employee's input and output in a workplace. If the employee is able to find his/her right balance it would lead to a more productive relationship with management. It is about the balance between the effort an employee puts into their work (input) and the result he/she gets in return (output). Input includes hard work, skills, technical knowhow, experience, enthusiasm while output can be things like salary, bonus, recognition, and responsibility. Should an employee perceive an inequity then they will adjust their inputs to restore balance. Essentially individuals will always adjust their inputs so that the equation is always in balance. Dissatisfaction often leads the employee demotivated which will result in lower productivity and in some cases attrition.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study was to examine the usefulness of performance appraisal system of teachers at the Primary Education level and find out whether it is achieving that purpose. Specifically, it looks at the usefulness of the staff appraisal system as perceived by both teachers and principals within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

5. Significance of the Study

Information gathered from the Study will help the Ghana Education Service to develop and implement more effective performance appraisal system or review the current system to enable teachers perform better for the attainment of institutional goals. The findings of the Study will also enable the Ghana Education Service to focus on the developmental and accountability aspects of the appraisal system.

6. Methodology

The descriptive survey research design of qualitative paradigm was used. In this kind of study, the researcher is only interested in knowing what the current situation is with the view of making recommendations aimed at addressing issues and concerns.

6.1. Sample and Sampling

Eighteen principals and 72 teachers constituted the sample for the study. Both the principals and the teachers were purposively selected. Three principals represented each of the six circuits in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The criterion for the selection of these principals was that they either stayed in their circuits for more than ten years or are the longest serving principals in their circuits. The teachers were also purposively selected from each of the 72 public primary schools in the Metropolis. Again, the longest serving teacher in each school was selected.

6.2. Data Collection Procedure

Data were gathered from the principals through individual interviews while the focus group discussions were conducted to elicit information from the teachers. There were twelve groups and each group was made up of six members. Both the individual interviews and the focus group interactions were used in order to collect 'rich' information about the phenomenon at a reasonable cost and in less time. The interviews and the focus group discussions were carried out in a non-threatening environment.

7. Results and Discussion

Data had been coded and put into themes. The results clearly show that performance appraisal is very useful to educational institutions in many facets as it helps management and teachers to work collaboratively towards the achievement of the goals of the school.

8. Human Resources Planning

The principals were of strong view that performance appraisal of teachers is a crucial activity as the results are used for the allocation of duties and responsibilities, salary increases, promotion, delegation of duties, training and development, and termination of appointment. It also points out to Management the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers, and the opportunities and threats they present, so that these could be considered when developing future plans. Principals stated that appraisal of personnel performance contributes greatly in enhancing the quality of education in Ghana since it helps them to plan for the future of their schools.

Principal A remarked: *“Performance appraisal helps to plan for the number of teachers that need training, promotion, pay increments, re-assignment and transfer. It also helps in recruiting qualified and competent teachers into the Ghana Education Service”*.

Principal C commented: *“Performance appraisal has positive effect on both teacher and school performance as it helps in planning in-service training workshops directed towards helping the teachers to become as effective as possible in the teaching and learning process”*.

Principal D emphasized: *“Performance appraisal system is an important management tool which could be helpful in motivating and effectively utilizing human resources and is a key human resource management practice for measuring effectiveness and efficiency. It is also used for planning in-service training workshops”*.

The teachers hold the view that in respect of human resource planning, performance appraisal involves taking stock of the present workforce and associated skills available which enables management to plan for future requirements based on the goals of the school. Performance appraisals are essential in determining how well teachers are performing so that workshops can be organized for teachers who have challenges especially in instructional delivery.

Drucker (2004) holds the view that the purpose of appraisal is to arrive at an appraisal of a man before one has to decide whether he or she is the right person to fill a “bigger position”. He emphasizes that the fundamental aim of appraisal is to arrive at a situation where the most suitable people are in the right places/positions at the right time.

9. Training and Development

All the principals and most of the teachers agreed that in-service training is organized for teachers whose performance fall below expectation after an appraisal exercise has been carried out. Most of these training programs are carried out at

the school level and are led by the principals of individual schools or resource persons. Where the deficiencies detected cut across all the schools within a cluster, then cluster-based training workshop is organized and a resource person from the Metropolitan Education Directorate or from University of Cape Coast is invited to lead the discussion. Both the principals and teachers stated that the training program focuses on lesson preparation, preparation and use of teaching and learning materials, classroom management, assessment, discipline, questioning skills, communication skills, knowledge of subject matter and teacher-student relationship. They hold the view that training and development programs bring about improvement and growth to the individual who in turn helps the institution to achieve its vision and mission. Thus, the appraisal system increases the teachers' awareness and understanding of their roles, responsibilities and professional competence.

Principal E declared: *“Staff training and development in education is indispensable if the goals of the organization are to be realized and the need dispositions of the employees are to be met; and the need to conduct training is based on performance appraisal”*.

Principal F states: *“in the beginning, an employee is like a flower bud which has to be given proper care and support through developmental activities to enable him/her to blossom like a flower”*.

One of the teachers at the focus group discussion stated emphatically: *“Teachers enter the teaching profession with anxieties and feelings of inadequacies as they compare themselves with their more experienced colleagues. Proper orientation, induction and training, by getting them to familiarize themselves in their new environment, their new job and colleagues, make them feel confident and secure enough to perform effectively”*.

Another teacher at the focus group discussion declared: *“A well-designed performance appraisal system helps determine the kinds of course and experiences that might help the individual teacher to overcome his/her weaknesses and enhance his/her potential. For example, if staff appraisal reveals the inadequacies of a teacher, the head has to see to it that the teacher updates his/her knowledge in identified areas”*.

Kellinger (1980) and Ahuja (1988) hold the view that if staff appraisal reveals poor performance on the part of teachers, it is due to lack of or inadequate preparation at college, and as such heads of institutions have to take orientation of newly employed teachers seriously. Coyle-Shapiro and Conway (2004), using social exchange lens, hold strong belief that employees who believe their organization is committed to providing them with developmental activities may feel an obligation to 'repay' the organization through high work performance.

9.1. Compensation and Promotion

It came out clearly during the interviews and focus group discussions that staff appraisal helps the head of a school to identify teachers who are performing to their expectation and towards the achievement of the objectives of the school and deserve merits or rewards. After the results of appraisal have indicated that a teacher has taught effectively and the students have achieved excellent results in their examinations the head/management commends such a teacher at a staff meeting or awards him a prize at the school's speech and prize-giving day or gives him an incentive package. This serves as a motivation for the school teacher to perform more effectively in the future to help the school/organization achieve its goals. All the principals and teachers strongly hold the view that it is through staff appraisal that the head of a school recommends an effective teacher for promotion to a higher rank or for headship position. When the teacher is promoted, his self-image is enhanced and this in turn motivates him/her to perform optimally towards effective realization of the objectives of the school.

Principal F commented: *“Performance appraisal enables management to substantiate decisions taken on pay increases and promotions, that is, it ascertains the credibility of pay increases, promotions and transfers”*.

Three heads who were interviewed stated that before they were promoted to their present positions they were appraised by their principals and officers from the Cape Coast Metropolitan Education Directorate.

A teacher during the focus group discussion stated that: *“I was denied promotion to a higher rank simply because I did not take the appraisal system seriously. I have therefore resolved to take the appraisal system seriously and to educate my colleagues on the need to pay great attention to their work else they would suffer the consequences of their negative attitude to work”*.

Sherman *et al.* (1996) state that staff appraisal contributes greatly to school effectiveness in the area of compensation and promotion.

9.2. Improved Teacher Performance

High quality teaching is essential to improving student outcomes and reducing gaps in student achievement. The principals were of strong belief that Teacher Performance Appraisal system provides teachers with meaningful appraisals

that encourage professional learning and growth. The process is designed to foster teacher development and identify opportunities for additional support. By helping teachers achieve their full potential, the performance appraisal is indirectly helping in achieving high levels of student performance.

The principals emphasized that an effective performance appraisal system ensures effective staff performance on the job. It helps individual teachers to understand more about their roles and become clearer about their functions. The shared setting of goals by the principal and teachers makes the teachers to know what is expected of them and to enable them perform effectively. Also, the mere knowledge that the teacher will be appraised on the job gingers him to work harder to meet the set standard of the institution. Competencies and improved performance lead to improved quality of teaching and learning. An organization that produces good quality goods or renders quality services satisfies its customers. Hence client satisfaction can result through effective performance appraisal.

Principal G declared: *“The ultimate goal of performance appraisal is to provide information that will best enable them to improve teachers’ performance; thus, ideally, the performance appraisal provides information to help principals manage the institutions in such a way that teacher performance improves and effective learning takes place”*.

Principal H indicated: *“Performance Appraisal monitors the process of teaching and learning, determines the teacher’s strengths and weaknesses, assesses the potentials in a person for further growth and development, and also serves the purposes of accountability by identifying teachers who are found wanting, reprimanding them, and where behavior persists are dealt with according to the rules and regulations of the Ghana Education Service”*.

Principal K stated: *“Performance Appraisal enables teachers to know their professional progress; whether they are doing well or not. It also equips teachers with relevant skills and knowledge in order to cope with instructional issues in the schools and not becoming stale and obsolete. It also encourages teachers to become reflective practitioners, and instils desired attitudes in teachers. When we continually up-dates training programs based on performance appraisal feedback, it boosts the workforce’s productivity and efficiency”*.

McLaughlin (1986) emphasizes that teachers are far more likely to improve if they are provided with informed feedback and opportunities to communicate effectively about their work than if they are made to go through an “uneven, desultory ritual” or a “standard checklist” approach. He therefore advocates for a developmental approach to staff appraisal. Mathias and Jones (1989) point out that staff appraisal strengthens the management of schools, promotes the effective management of teaching and learning, improves the effectiveness of the teacher’s work in the classroom and enhances the teacher’s professional development. Bollington *et al.* (1990) emphasize that appraisal has the potential to strengthen and develop the quality of both teaching and learning which eventually lead to better education for pupils. Castetter (1996) states that performance appraisal in this way is instrumental in helping employees to better understand their strengths and weaknesses with respect to their roles and functions in the organization. When an employee’s performance improves, his/her morale is boosted and he feels recognized. Davis *et al.* (2002) argue that school level professionals use the appraisal system as a meaningful process that is viewed as a catalyst for improving teaching and learning in schools. Boswell and Boudreau (2001) hold the view that appraisal concerns itself with enriching attitudes, experiences and skills that improves the effectiveness of employees.

It is clear that as parents demand quality education for their children, teacher appraisal provides a way for the schools to be accountable for the quality of education in their classrooms and to address underperformance among teachers.

10. Identifying Potential Performers

All the principals and teachers were of strong view that appraisal is used as a yardstick to measure the potentials of an employee so as to enable him/her take up a particular position in the organization. These people could be earmarked for training or could be assigned new responsibilities where their expertise could be put to effective use. Principal L declared: *“Effective teacher appraisal helps schools to become sensitive to individual talent or performance by allowing teachers to progress in their career and take on new roles and responsibilities based on appraisal of their performance. This makes the teacher to be more loyal and may decide to work longer for the organization. It also helps in identifying potential performers”*.

Plunkett (1994) states that the search for people with potential to perform in certain areas can be identified through performance appraisal and this will eventually help in planning effectively in replacing future losses.

11. Changed Attitude of Workers

The principals and teachers emphasized that appraisal brings out the attitude and characteristics of workers. By appraisal, the supervisor gets to know (through record keeping) workers who absent themselves most of the time, those who are

not punctual and those who do not work to the fullest. In this way, corrective measures are put in place before they become ingrained. It helps teachers to maintain a positive attitude, and to be prepared all the time as they are fully aware that somebody is watching them. It also helps in monitoring the behavior of teachers and helps principals with information on each teacher with regard to communication and relationships. Performance appraisal, both formal and informal provides a good documentation to absolve principals when they are forced to the extreme to sanction a teacher. By performance appraisal, the principal also gets to know the individual teachers who show high level of commitment, dedication, resourcefulness, conscientiousness, honesty and trust; and had to be recommended for promotion. One grade five teacher talked about how she has changed his attitude towards work. She stated: *“Through appraisal and in-service training, I carefully organize and sequence topics that are taught in class, explains and illustrates what students are to learn, frequently asks specific and direct questions to monitor students’ progress and check their understanding”*. Another teacher who teaches grade three shared similar views and added: *“I provide students with ample opportunity to practice what they have learnt, give prompts and feedbacks, correct mistakes and allow students to practice a skill until it is overlearned”*. A grade four teacher also talked about how she now has strong sense of efficacy, high expectation for each student’s behavior and achievement, and taking responsibility for what happens in the classroom and for students’ learning.

Some teachers however, expressed disgust at the way appraisal is conducted. They indicated that although performance appraisal requires changes in the way teachers work and to improve upon their efficacy, it results in frustrations and challenges to the teacher. A fifth-grade female teacher, reflecting many teachers’ ambivalence about performance appraisal, said: *“I don’t really like it as I become apprehensive anytime the word ‘appraisal’ is mentioned. But I have to deal with it. I have actually learnt a lot about teaching”*. Another teacher who teaches grade four pupils remarked: *“I think performance appraisal is a necessary evil. I think there should be an informal sort of appraisal in addition to the formal one. Performance appraisal should be cumulative and not one shot in a year as being practiced in my school. It should be used to develop the teacher and not for victimization as it is in some cases”*. Beer (1986) states that appraisal is a major tool in changing individual’s behavior.

12. Decision-making

Performance appraisal is used broadly to take most of the organization’s decisions because it is through appraisal that management can determine whether the organization is achieving its goals or not. Performance appraisal helps in taking fruitful and well-informed decisions about the organization. All the principals asserted that performance appraisal is an integral part of a system of managing and the sooner principals know that activities for which they are responsible are not proceeding in accordance with plans, the faster they can take action to make corrections. For example, it helps the head of the school to identify those teachers whose poor performance and laziness have contributed to the poor results of students in an examination and counsel them or strongly warn them or give them in-service training for them to improve to contribute more effectively in the future towards the realization of the school’s objectives.

The most fundamental point is that from the school’s point of view, the emphasis should be on student learning. Castetter (1996) states that, the basic mission of any educational system is to deliver effective services to clients in order to satisfy both the needs of the individuals and those of the society. Grace (1995) states that education is regarded as a commodity, the schools as a value adding production unit, the principal as chief executive and managing director, the parents as consumers, and the ultimate aim of the whole enterprise is to achieve a maximum value-added product. Contemporary principals are therefore expected to market the school, deliver the curriculum and to satisfy the customers. The No Child Left Behind Act of USA which was signed into law on January 8, 2002, also requests States to establish annual benchmarks for their schools. Schools were expected to make “adequate yearly progress” in achievement and sanctioned if they fail to do so.

13. Motivation

All the principals stated that teachers who are slated for training as a result of staff appraisal come back to the organization in a more rejuvenated and reinvigorated form to offer quality services and improve productivity. They see the organization as being responsible for their development and upward mobility and therefore are motivated to work hard and remain in it. Such motivated teachers are likely to stay for longer years and this may reduce the schools’ attrition rate. Again, rewards like promotions, increase in salary and awards linked to performance appraisal motivates workers to work hard/ or improve upon their performance to merit such rewards. The appraisee sees it as a way of preparing the way for his promotion and therefore does everything possible to put himself into his work and the challenges that go with it. Personal and professional recognition of achievement should not be under estimated in its motivating potential. The principals were also of firm belief that performance appraisal also provides each teacher with an opportunity for self-

reflection and individual goal setting, so that individually planned and monitored development takes place. Again, performance appraisal prepares employees for higher responsibilities by continually reinforcing the development of behavior and qualities required for higher level positions in the organization. A primary five teacher declared: *"I got motivated when I was told of my potentials which I was not aware of"*. This sentiment was supported by a teacher who stated: *"If you are told positive things about yourself, your morale gets boosted, you get inspired and motivated"*. Two principals stated that, before they were promoted to a higher rank and made principals of their present schools, they were intrinsically motivated. One teacher however, painted a very bleak picture of the appraisal process when he stated: *"I do not see anything beneficial about the appraisal process. It seems nothing is done after the appraisal and the recommendations. It rather demotivates me"*. Another teacher remarked: *"Appraisals may have a negative impact on motivation and satisfaction if they are poorly designed or administered. If appraisals are not perceived as being conducted fairly and consistently, we cannot expect to reach with high level of teacher satisfaction towards the performance appraisal system"*. It must be noted however that it is only in rare cases that hopelessly inadequate performers are eliminated. This is when they are a liability to the organization rather than being an asset. That is, when the needed improvements do not occur after giving them the necessary training.

Teacher motivation has been regarded as essential in achieving quality education in Ghana and the issue of linking performance appraisal with rewards is critical. Mamadou (1996) emphasizes that performance appraisal system should be conducted in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and never viewed as a mechanism for fault-finding or criticism of the teacher. It should be a means of building the teacher's positive self-image and motivation. Posner and Posner (1992), and Everard and Morris (1996), state that the main objective of teacher appraisal is to improve individual performance and motivation in order to enhance the learning opportunities for all students. This view is supported by Mullins (1996) who emphasizes that one of the purposes of an appraisal system is to motivate employees so that they learn and achieve more in their duties such as teaching and facilitating students' learning. West and Ainscow (1991) believe that appraisal gives teachers a clearer view of the job, their aims and what is expected of them and of the aims of the school.

From the above, it appears that many teachers believe that teacher appraisal can be beneficial in motivating teachers to improve their performance. However, few teachers appear to be either doubtful or negative about it.

14. Communication

All the principals and most of the teachers were of the belief that performance appraisal provides an opportunity for formal communication between principals and the teachers concerning the performance of individuals and the achievement of the goals of the organization. A primary six teacher remarked: *"The principal can prevent or remedy the majority of performance problems by ensuring that there is effective conversation between him and the teacher, resulting in a complete understanding of what is required, when it is required and how the teacher's contribution measures up to the required standard. It also enables the teacher to bring to the fore factors that inhibit his ability to successfully perform his tasks. The principal, on the other hand will also provide information as to whether the job is being done well or not"*. A Grade four teacher stated: *"If the communication component of performance appraisal does not allow for this two-way communication, principals may not know the obstacles that the teachers have to overcome with the view of fixing them"*. All the teachers agree that two-way communication is a critical component of performance appraisal as it helps both the teachers and the principals towards the achievement of organizational goals. All the principals talked about how information from annual performance appraisal helps them in making evaluative decisions concerning increases in salaries, promotions, demotions, training and development and termination of appointment. Principal M remarked: *"When we have valid and reliable information, then we can make fair, accurate and decisive decisions on personnel that work with us"*. A teacher declared: *"Sometimes we face problem with the principals who lack communication skills and consequently are not able to conduct an effective performance feedback; this is the reason why in most cases teachers are not encouraged to be forthright and frank"*. Torrington and Weightman (1989) state that performance appraisal contributes to the enhancement of the quality of education in the sense that it can improve communications by giving staff the opportunity to talk about their ideals and expectations and how well they are progressing. Once this is done consistently with regular feedback on performance, reassurance, praise where necessary and discussions about potentials, staff members are encouraged to perform better.

14.1. Criticism of Performance Appraisal

The teachers expressed disgust at the way some principals conduct performance appraisal in their schools as some of them simply give satisfactory or unsatisfactory appraisal reports to individuals who do not deserve them. To these teachers, subjectivity and favoritism play a major role in these undeserved appraisals. When a principal appraises someone who he likes, he may be more apt to give him a superior evaluation than someone he does not like. In a similar

way, he may tend to be lenient to an appraisee that he finds difficult dealing with in order to avoid the wrath of this teacher. One teacher remarked: “A principal’s propensity to allow personal bias into the process of performance appraisal will create problems in the effectiveness of the system”. Generally, few teachers considered appraisal as a source of quarrels, sanctions, ridicule and victimization rather than developing individuals. To these teachers, appraisal is used to suppress and intimidate teachers. It is threatening to teachers in order to make them obey principals and in few cases, it is a fault-finding mission on teachers’ performance. It is a witch-hunting exercise because the appraiser concentrates in the areas where one is weak rather than looking at the person’s strengths. Neck *et al.* (1995) and Fletcher (2001) strongly hold the view that leadership styles, personality, mood characteristics and personal disposition can cause fluctuations in the effectiveness of performance appraisals.

15. Conclusion

Evaluating the work of a teacher is particularly difficult if teaching is linked to desired learning outcomes, and rewards are based on target achievement as teachers do not have full control over the children’s learning especially at home. Should teachers be held accountable for students’ learning? In the school situation, specific targets/goals should be set and the teacher should work progressively towards the achievement of such target/goals. It could be argued that the school exists to develop the child to fit into the society; that is, to develop the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains and that emphasis should be laid not only on the cognitive domain but also on the others. Though this is true, we cannot gloss over the fact that schools in Ghana are classified according to their academic performance and parents are anxious to have their wards educated in schools where there is consistent excellent academic achievement, hence the need to link teacher performance appraisal to student’s achievement. Thus, performance appraisal should not be used solely as a means of promotions, transfers, wages increases and termination of appointments. It must be a means of motivation, commitment, communication, and development of employees in the organization and strengthening supervisor-subordinate relations.

Performance appraisal is not seen as a series of perfunctory periodic events, but as a continuous and systematic process intended to help individual teachers with their professional development which will in turn result in improved pupils’ learning. It is also to ensure that the in-service training and development of teachers matches the complementary needs of individual teachers and the school. It is an important means of improving individual teachers with feedback, reassurance and motivation. Individuals emerge from the process with a clearer sense of purpose and direction and there was evidence in some of the schools that suggest that it has led to improvement in the performance of both teachers and their pupils. Indeed, it needs to be emphasized that performance appraisal is and must be a continuous process in an organization that seeks to secure information necessary for making correct and objective decisions on employees that relate to performance, in order to measure the worth of different employees to the organization, which invariably may be used as a basis of personnel policies as regards developments, transfers and perhaps promotions.

Recommendations

1. Principals should show transparency, fairness and confidentiality when they appraise their teachers as this will enable them to have confidence in whatever they do or tell them in form of feedback.
2. Teachers should accept the appraisal system as being developmental and in the best interest of the school as it aims at improving performance and competence of the teachers. Teachers should not consider it as witch-hunting or fault-finding or an act to victimize them.
3. Principals should engage in a two-way communication system. This will improve communication between the appraiser and the appraisee concerning work expectations. It will also help increase teachers’ and managements’ understanding of issues confronting each other.
4. School Management should see to it that all members of staff are adequately provided with financial resources, motivation and special training packages to sustain the appraisal system.

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