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# Factors affecting the effectiveness of performance appraisal in the Public Service in Kenya: A case of Kenya School of Government Mombasa Campus

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## Abstract

The research sought to identify factors that determine the effectiveness of performance appraisal exercises as practised in public service in Kenya. The study was guided by the goal-setting theory, expectancy theory, psychodynamic theory of personality and social cognitive theory. The study used the descriptive survey research design, which is exploratory. The participants of this study were the permanent and pensionable employees of Kenya School of Government-Mombasa as of September 2023. The study collected both data (primary and secondary) by distribution of semi-structured questionnaires. The study used correlation analysis techniques, T-test analysis, ANOVA and regression analysis using SPSS ver. 23. Findings showed that performance planning affects the implementation of performance appraisal with a mean of 4.19 and s.d 0.668, followed by reward through promotion, training, and recommendation influences the effectiveness of performance appraisal with a mean of 4.11 and s.d 0.950 and Supervisor communication was established to influence the effectiveness of performance appraisal system, generating a mean 4.0 and s.d 0.756. In general, the variables in the study, namely, performance planning, reward positively, and supervisor communication, were found to influence how effective performance appraisal was in public service in Kenya. The study recommended that the management should put up strategies to enhance supervisor communication by ensuring timely feedback to employees.

**Key words:** Performance appraisal, Kenya School of Government, public service.



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## INTRODUCTION

The performance of any organisation and employee must be assessed to determine the attainment of goals. This is the area of performance appraisal, which is very critical in any organisation. One of the main steps of the performance management system is to assess performance. Performance management has been defined by scholars as a "systematic process of improving individual, team and organisational performance" (Armstrong, 2012). Performance appraisal is defined as a means of assessing performance, highlighting performance deficiencies and development needs (Swart, 2018). It is largely a way of determining if personnel's productiveness is in step with set and agreed standards. Other scholars like Pinnington and Edwards (2000) see performance appraisal as a technique of placing, measuring and attaining overall performance expectancies in a business enterprise (Pinnington & Edwards, 2000). These requirements and strategies help the enterprise to reap typical purpose.

Overall, performance appraisal isn't a new practice. It has an extended history dating back to the 20th century. Fredrick W. Taylor, in 1940, advised the usage of a unique control process, which was supervisor assist in the success of organisational dreams (Boddy, 2002). He argued that manipulation multiplied if work is damaged down into small particular obligations. Henry Ford in 1914 changed into capable of gaining high productivity inside the assembly line by way of making use of control measures. This saw him reduce production time for one automobile from seven hundred hours to ninety-three hours (Boddy, 2002).

Several studies were carried out on the factors that affect the effectiveness of overall performance appraisal in an organisation and the impact on general organisational performance. The conclusions of those studies point to the want for additional research, especially in the public sector. Khanna (2016), in his study of Life Insurance companies in India, concluded that businesses must alternate their techniques to make overall performance appraisal the most effective machine in the corporation's performance. The changes

alluded to in his research aim at making performance appraisal undergo appropriate processes for maximum effects on the company's performance.

Other elements that have an effect on performance appraisal have been described by Mok & Yie (2021), who concluded in a study of private hospitals in Malaysia that there has been a need to enforce the interventions that performance appraisal recommends. One such conclusion was that there was a need to create a perception of fairness from the point of the supervisors. Fairness ensures that the right employees with the right level of appraisal will be able to get the right recognition and reward and ultimately become motivated to work even more for the organisation. Prasad et al. (2017) concluded that it was now not clear to understand if one-on-one appraisal interviews have been conducted in an organisation. One-on-one interviews are avenues to ensure fairness among employees during appraisal. This study sought to test whether these one-on-one interviews take place in the Kenyan public service.

Asian countries have adopted overall performance appraisal as a critical phase of overall performance control. Mok Kim and Yie (2021), in their study on performance appraisal in Malaysia, studied the role of the perception of fairness by the employees in determining the overall score in the appraisal process. They concluded that overall performance appraisal systems ought to create a belief of fairness relative to employee's efforts and expectancies (Mok, 2021). Public businesses in Canada additionally embrace overall performance appraisal as a way to improve public quarter overall performance. In analysing Ontario's teacher overall performance appraisal (Maharaj, 2014) concluded that in order for the performance appraisal system to be effective, there was need to allow instructors to acquire comments from the performance appraisal interviews. This, he referred to, will assist in supporting future productivity.

Pillah (2023), in his study on the performance management system in Nigeria, focused on the federal government civil service and made significant conclusions regarding performance appraisal. The results of the study indicated that

effective performance appraisal leads to positive results in improving the performance of the civil service in Nigeria. This study sought to establish whether the public service in Kenya can post similar results to the study in Nigeria so as to generalise the need to emphasise the importance of effective performance appraisal and performance management more successfully in the Kenyan public service. It also sought to establish if the Kenyan performance appraisal system can gain from the benefit highlighted in the Nigerian study.

During the year 2003, the Government of Kenya (G.O.K) developed a financial and recovery method which recognised the overall performance of the Kenyan civil provider then as characterised by wastefulness and inefficiency (G.O.K., 2003). To cope with those demanding situations, the government advanced and introduced institutionalised overall performance-based control practices within the public sector with an advanced performance appraisal tool named GP 247. G.O.K. (2021), in the policy report on overall performance control in the Kenyan public sector, mentioned how workers' overall performance appraisal system is a way to ensure responsibility for achievement results. The government indicated that such a measure would bring harmony of purpose. The G.O.K policy uses the ranking model and foresees the use of effective performance appraisal as a way to acquire employee needs through feedback and, therefore, being used in determining reward.

Boruett et al. (2021) studied feedback as a tool used in promoting the effectiveness of performance appraisal in the Ministry of Education in Kenya. The study concluded that prompt feedback by the supervisors motivated employees and had the potential to enhance performance at work. She opined that feedback must be considered as one of the priorities in PAS if organisations want to improve their overall performance. The study confirmed the results of other studies in Kenya, which reported that it was mandatory to conduct effective performance appraisals in order to enjoy the full benefits of the performance management system. This being the case. Therefore, this study sought to find out the factors that employers, including the government of Kenya, need to consider so as to make performance appraisal

fruitful. The literature reviewed was insufficient with regard to data and information from Kenyan parastatals. This study, therefore, sought to establish if the results of studies outside parastatals correlate with those from the area of study in the research, which is a parastatal. This will then make a good case for generalising the findings, conclusions and recommendations in the parastatals in Kenya, linking it to overall institutional performance as well as determining if factors identified by other researchers still affect this process despite being highlighted by the researchers.

The government of Kenya spends huge amounts of money on employee remuneration. This needs to be justified through the performance of the employees. One of the ways to realise value for huge wage bills in the public service is to ensure that the public servant delivers results. Performance appraisal, according to Mutsuddi (2012), entails procedures used to evaluate the personalities, contributions and potential of each employee. When the contribution of every employee is assessed and any gaps addressed, the employee will be able to perform better, and the employer will be able to achieve the targets set. Mondy (2002) outline the need to focus on the task outcomes of the employee as well as opportunities for potential improvements to enable the employee to perform better in subsequent performance periods.

G.O.K (2021) indicate that the performance of government ministries, parastatals and technical institutions in the attainment of their core mandate declined to 29.37 per cent from 51.75 per cent in the financial year 2020/2021. Such decline could be occasioned by the inability to meet objectives, and performance appraisal is one of the ways to boost performance. Despite numerous interventions and sensitisation, a decline in performance has been noted.

This research, therefore, intended to identify those specific factors that affect the effectiveness of the performance appraisal and, thus, performance management in general in public service and suggest ways to make it better so that the financial commitment the government enters to compensate

the employees bears fruit for both the employer and the employee.

The research paper sought to achieve its general objective of identifying the factors that determine the effectiveness of performance appraisal in the Public Service in Kenya by focusing on the following specific objectives: to determine if communication during appraisal interviews influences the effectiveness of performance appraisal systems in performance management in the public service, to measure whether performance planning influence effectiveness of performance appraisal system in performance management in the public service and to evaluate whether the nature rewards system affect the effectiveness of performance appraisal in performance management in the public service.

The Kenya School of Government, as an organisation within the Government of Kenya, will be able to use the results of this study to identify the specific factors that affect the appraisal system within their organisation. The results will also be generalised and used to improve appraisal processes across the Kenyan public service. The study will shed light on the real situation with regard to appraisal exercise. It helps the School to modify their systems in a manner that will increase the effectiveness of the appraisal exercise. Managers in the public service, as well as the staff, will use the results of this study to increase their awareness levels as to the specific issues that determine the success of appraisal exercises. The results will be a mirror image of the organisational practice on appraisal and will enable each of the staff members to adjust their approaches to better practices.

This study was conducted among the employees of the Kenya School of Government-Mombasa as a representative population of the Kenyan public service. It was conducted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the financial year 2023/2024 at a cost of Ksh. 80,500.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Review

This section presents the theoretical foundations of performance appraisal strategies. Three theories will be considered in this study. They are the goal-

setting theory, expectancy theory, social cognitive theory and the psychodynamic theory of personality.

### The goal Setting Theory

Goal theory assumes that employees will be well motivated if they have challenging but agreed goals and also receive feedback (Armstrong, 2012). This theory influences performance appraisal because it lays the foundation for the need for managers to sit down with the employees under their supervision and agree on the goals they are expected to achieve in a given time period. Robbins (2000) went further to explain that employee performance will be even higher when goals are set specifically and with an optimal level of difficulty coupled with adequate and timely feedback. Thus, this theory is in line with the aspirations of management, where employees are evaluated based on set goals. It further underlines the importance of both the supervisor and the employee agreeing on the performance goals beforehand. It also underlines the importance of providing feedback to the employees so that the staff can use it to improve their performance in future appraisals and evaluations. Latham and Locke, in the goal theory, argued that the more challenging the goal, the more likely the employee will exert more effort to achieve the results.

In light of Locke's findings, this study seeks to advance the argument that performance appraisals in the public service will be better and have a higher chance of leading to higher employee and organisational performance if the goals are the result of proper consultation between the manager and employees. This agrees with the finding that employees are more committed to goals because they have been part of the goal-setting process (Robbins, 2000).

Goal-setting theory also emphasises the need for appropriate feedback. People will perform better when they receive feedback about how well they are progressing toward their goals (Robbins, 2000). Feedback has the potential to help employees identify any existing inconsistencies and work to eliminate them so that the end result of what they do reflects the organisation's expectations. It is important to know whether managers provide

feedback to the employees they are evaluating and whether the feedback they offer is acted upon to improve future performance. Performance appraisal is an engaging exercise, and providing feedback to the employee under review has the potential to increase corrective action and lead to better performance in the future.

This study seeks to determine the nature, level of discussion and involvement during goal setting in the public service in order to determine whether the final outcomes of evaluation could be linked to the goal-setting process. It also seeks to determine the extent to which the public service incorporates feedback as a mechanism to support the effectiveness of performance appraisal and its positive impact on the performance of the organisation.

### **Expectancy Theory**

Victor Vroom came up with the expectancy theory in 1964, where he assumed that an employee's effort at work depends on the likelihood that valuable rewards will follow. Vroom further theorises that individuals base decisions about their behaviour on the expectation that this or that alternative behaviour is more likely to lead to needed or desired outcomes (Armstrong, 2012). This theory captures the concept of reward as a result of the employee's activity. This study sought to evaluate the status of rewards that employees receive for achieving set goals as agreed upon during the performance goal setting and appraisal. The study aspired to find out whether the efforts of civil servants in working on the set goals are influenced by the employer's behaviour with regard to performance rewards. The primary concern will be to determine whether the status and nature of the reward expected by employees at the end of the evaluation period affects the effort they exert during the evaluation period.

Armstrong (2012) suggests that managers should be rewarded for performance. This study will test this link by establishing if employees perceive that the effort they put in will get them a reward commensurate to their performance.

### **Psychodynamic Theory of Personality**

Sigmund Freud developed the psychodynamic theory of personality, in which he identified three main factors that interact and influence a person's personality (Brion, 1989). These factors are id, ego and superego. This study will test whether a manager's personality when conducting appraisal interviews has an effect on the effectiveness of the performance appraisal process.

Since performance appraisal is an engagement between the appraiser and the appraisee, this study sought to determine whether the personality traits and character of both parties influence the trajectory and outcomes of the engagement. Communication between rater and ratee can be influenced by unconscious traits that the rater has. Brion, (1989) hypothesised that a person's unconscious mind can influence the conscious level of interaction. This, therefore, increases the likelihood that the manager's own experiences and personality dispositions can be reflected in how communication takes place during negotiations towards appraisal. This study aims to test whether the manager's attitude, management style and other similar factors influence the performance appraisal process and, thus, overall performance.

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Albert Bandura developed the social cognitive theory in 1986. This theory is based on the concept of self-efficacy (Armstrong, 2012). A central concept in this theory refers to the idea that employees are likely to perform higher and achieve higher results if they feel confident that they are capable of completing assigned duties. Therefore, the process of improving employee performance involves enabling them to learn so that they can achieve more at work. Behaviors learned during social gatherings help employees work better.

This study will try to find out whether engagement during performance appraisal enriches employees' self-esteem. Appropriate feedback has the potential to increase employee self-confidence. This study will further seek to establish a link between performance planning, performance appraisal and results attainment in the public service. When employees are assigned duties, they should be able to perform them due to their level of training.

However, if there is no discussion during planning, employees may be assigned tasks that are beyond their abilities, which is contrary to Bandura's social cognitive theory.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Performance appraisal**

Performance appraisal is a core feature of the performance management system. Pinnington (2000) clarified that PM is an approach used by institutions to try to achieve long-term goals consistently through better formal and informal motivation mechanisms. Boddy (2002) agreed with him, describing the purpose of PM evaluation as a means of guaranteeing the total growth of the employer as well as the maximum prosperity of each employee. The Government of Kenya has adopted the PM approach to public service management and developed principles to guide its implementation.

Performance appraisal is defined as a systematic process of improving individual, team and organisational performance (Armstrong, 2012). Mutsudi (2012) defined it as a formal, structured system of measuring and evaluating an employee's work-related behaviour and results with the goal of finding out how and why the employee is currently performing his job and how he can work more effectively in the future so that both the employee and the organisation can benefit. This definition implies a mutual benefit for both the employee and the organisation resulting from effective evaluation. Thus, effective performance appraisal can be summed up as an appraisal that enables the employee and the organisation to achieve improvement in performance outcomes.

Goel (2008) explains that the objective of performance appraisal is to evaluate an employee's performance over a given period of time so as to assess performance. He argues that the aim is to build on the employee's strengths as well as identify needs and areas of difficulty and ways of mitigating any weaknesses. Performance appraisal is a very important step in the performance management framework designed by the Government of Kenya to enable the public service to achieve a describable or measurable change in status that is derived from a cause-and-effect

relationship between civil service, civil servants and ordinary Kenyans (G.O.K. 2021). This highlights the government's aspirations to use performance management in all its aspects for the benefit of the Kenyan population. This will only be successful if all steps in the cycle, including performance evaluation, are successfully completed. The Employee Performance Appraisal System (SPAS) is the government's intention to ensure accountability for the achievement of results by individual employees and unify the entire process within the continuum of performance management. This government objective can only be achieved if effective performance appraisal procedures are always in place and, therefore, the need to identify and mitigate any factors that may limit the effectiveness of SPAS.

Boddy (2002) further described the purpose of PAS as a way to better current employee ratings at work and ensure a sustained future performance of both the employee and the employer. This description agrees with Pennington (2000), who termed PAS as a method of setting, measuring and achieving performance expectations. He went further and suggested that adopting a 360-degree appraisal system provides a more complete picture of performance and reduces the risk of bias in using one's own perspective. However, traditional performance appraisal, as used by the Kenyan government, is an analysis of where those involved in the performance continuum are at a particular point in time and where they come from (Armstrong, 2012).

The government of Kenya SPAS uses a line manager approach to evaluate the performance of civil servants. When every employee is able to improve their performance, it will have a ripple effect throughout the organisation because the organisation works as a system. This study seeks to find out the factors at play in the public service that determine the effectiveness of the performance appraisal exercise and institutional overall performance in general.

#### **Communication and Performance Appraisal**

Communication is defined as giving, receiving, or exchanging information, opinions, or ideas through

written, spoken, or visual means, or any combination of the three so that the material communicated is fully understood by all concerned (Shirley, 2004). The purpose of communication is to create understanding between communicators and generate desired results. Communication is an essential tool in performance appraisal because it helps the appraiser and appraisee reach an agreement on goals and performance levels.

For communication to be effective, the entire communication cycle must be completed. This cycle begins with the sender or source of the message encoding the message in a way that the receiver is able to decode, derive the meaning, and send the desired feedback. It is, therefore, important that both parties participate in achieving the desired feedback. Desmond (1999) explained that there are factors that affect the effectiveness of communication. These factors include confidentiality, accuracy, desired impression, distance between communicators, and convenience. He noted that these factors must be taken into account for successful communication. Communication is important in performance appraisal, especially during the interview and feedback.

Feedback in communication is defined as the response, reaction, or response provided by the receiver of the message to the source of the message. It is a means by which the sender or receiver of a message can let the other party know how they did in the communication and what areas they need to improve. Robbins (2000) explained that employees perform better when they receive feedback that they are progressing towards set goals. He said the feedback helps in identifying any discrepancies in performance. Boruett (2021), in a study conducted among 255 employees of the Department of Education in Nairobi City County, noted that feedback should be an integral part of performance appraisal as it motivates employees to improve their work performance. This means that when an appraisal is done, and the appraiser lets the appraised employee know how they performed, there is a high probability that the employee will make a special effort to reduce the deficiencies that may have been noted in the appraisal and performance.

Armstrong (2012) further stressed the need for supervisors to give positive feedback on the things the employee did well as well as areas for improvement. He said that the employees need to be told how they are progressing. Of more importance was his suggestion that feedback should be based on factual evidence observed during the appraisal exercise to inform of results, events, critical incidences and significant behaviours that affect performance in specific ways. While providing this feedback, the supervisor needs to present it in a manner that enables the employees to recognise and accept its factual nature.

Maharaj (2014) examined teacher performance evaluations in Ontario conducted among teachers and stated that teachers should be allowed to receive post-evaluation feedback and support. This is in line with the findings of Boruetta et al. (2021), who, in their study of staff attitudes towards PA implementation in a sample of 255 employees of the Ministry of Education in Nairobi County, found that feedback was provided to staff, which enabled them to improve their performance. They suggested that feedback between managers and employees should be improved. This agrees with Nuwagaba (2015), who established that follow-up assessments were conducted among NDLG staff. He noted that this allowed staff to improve their performance where it was found to be lacking. This study sought to establish the level of communication and determine, based on the findings and conclusions of other researchers, whether it is helping in overall performance.

Another case where the link between communication and performance appraisal is essential is the appraisal interview. Pennington (2000) advocates holding an appraisal interview where employees can discuss their performance one-on-one with their line manager. This view is supported by Armstrong (2012), who suggests that a meeting should be held between the supervisor and the employee to consider key performance and development issues in the appraisal process. Armstrong (2012) recommends that supervisors conduct meetings based on a clear structure, the right atmosphere and timeliness, and most importantly, provide good feedback at the end of

the exercise. Furthermore, he believes that evaluation interviews should take the form of a dialogue that will bring a positive conclusion. He states that such an approach fosters understanding and trust and, thus, the effectiveness of the assessment process.

Nuwagaba (2015), in their evaluation of factors influencing PA in Nyamasheeke District Local Government (NDLG) Rwanda, found that staff were pre-informed about preparation for PA a month before the exercise. He also noted that communication was both verbal and formal. This, he described, allowed employees to prepare before the exercise date and increased the effectiveness of the exercise. The study concluded that due to the effectiveness of communication in the NDLG, all the stated evaluation objectives are usually met. This study sought to assess the level of employees of G.O.K receive timely and adequate communication regarding appraisal interviews and, based on the results, assess whether the preparedness or lack of it can affect the effectiveness of performance appraisal and overall results attainment.

Personality Trait theories posit that particular traits of an individual tend to be relatively consistent in their attitudes and behaviour or time across situations Robbins (2000). Attitudes and behaviors influence communication. The manager's personality can also affect communication. Brion (1989) suggested that the behaviour of human beings can be unconsciously influenced by past experiences. These experiences may be expressed during communication without the individual's awareness. Sigmund Freud's psychodynamic theory of personality plays a key role in explaining how the personal characteristics of some managers can affect their work. This study sought to find out whether employees have any concerns about the personality, attitudes, behaviour and character of managers to the extent that personality has affected performance appraisal performance.

Attitude is an individual's perception of a situation or event. The attitude of a manager or employee has an influence on the management of organisations, including communication. Mito (2021) found that teachers in Siaya County in

Kenya had a negative attitude towards teacher performance appraisal and development (TPAD). The study revealed that many teachers believed that TPAD did not add any value to their teaching process. The study concluded that teachers' attitudes had a great influence on the implementation of TPAD in Siaya County. This study aspires to find out how communication takes place in performance appraisals in the public service. Particular emphasis was placed on the presence, nature and structure of communication and feedback. The results will be compared with the findings of other researchers to help answer the research questions in this study.

### **Performance Planning and Performance Appraisal**

Planning is a defined management function of setting goals and strategising how goals will be achieved (Dessler, 2014). Planning is one of the key functions of management, which Henry Fayol identified as the main contributor to the successful management of organisations. In particular, performance planning involves an agreement between the manager and the employee about what the employee must do to achieve goals, raise standards, and improve performance (Armstrong, 2019). Planning will lead to the development of specific goals for each employee. Robbins (2000) noted that specific goals tend to produce higher levels of employee output than general goals. He further noted that specific goals allow employees to know what they need to do and how much effort they need to put in to achieve the desired results.

Harackiewicz et al. (2002), however, cautioned that goals can only be effective if they are consistent with and responsive to the general context in which they are pursued. In order to address this problem, management must implement structured and organised performance planning to help better performance evaluation. The nature and results of the evaluation largely depend on the nature of performance planning. Swart (2000), in support of the importance of performance planning, said that goal setting and general evaluation are the core of PM. So this means that the wrong setting of goals and objectives leads to the wrong evaluation process. Okeyo (2014) studied the effects of PA in the Ministry of Public

Service (MSPS) and concluded that the planning process was objective as there was joint goal-setting between managers and employees. He further found that there is sufficient scope for discussion between the employee and supervisor, leading to a successful PA. The study concluded that performance targets were clearly defined and understood by employees.

This study sought to establish the nature of performance planning in the public service, which includes the setting of goals and preparation for appraisal in order to determine its impact on performance appraisal and attainment of organisational results.

### **Reward and Performance Appraisal Reward**

Reward is defined as compensation for desirable behavior and action. Compensation can be financial, such as bonuses, or non-financial, such as letters of recommendation and training opportunities. Training is defined as systematic learning that affects knowledge and skills. Training is a key management function that enables organisations to prepare their employees to meet all the demands of the work assigned to them. Training can be an answer to improving individual performance and, ultimately, organisational effectiveness. Routledge (2011) emphasised that it is important to consider team or group learning needs in a more holistic way to address assessment gaps. Fredrick Taylor assumed that managers should train, teach and develop employees to follow defined procedures. Training is critical to empowering employees, including the ability to effectively participate in performance appraisals.

In the experiments of reinforcement theorists such as Skinner and Pavlov, it was noted that individual behaviour must continue through reward (Schwab, 2013). They assume that rewards can be offered in the form of training, positive feedback and praise as they reinforce learning and correct responses. Thus, the findings of these theorists mean that employee performance appraisal behaviour can be reinforced by appropriate rewards. In his 1964 expectancy theory, Victor Vroom speculated that rewards must be commensurate with the level of performance and must be of sufficient value to warrant the repetition of the behaviour.

Performance appraisal should be seen as motivation. Individual employees should gain commitment and identification with the organised goals of the department and organisation. This, therefore, means that there must be an element of reward in performance appraisal. Kagema and Irungu (2018) concluded that a systematic procedure for redressal of performance appraisal complaints is needed. These complaints involved the reward systems associated with PA. Reward can take the form of interventions that result from the appraisal exercise. Examples of possible rewards include training opportunities to address gaps noted in appraisal, bonuses, promotions, pay rises and even punishment.

Training acts as a reward and motivation in the evaluation process because it is a means of solving the shortcomings that the employee may have shown in the evaluation process. This is consistent with Bandura's social cognitive theory, which is based on the central concept of self-efficacy (Armstrong, 2012). Self-efficacy is the belief in employees that they can effectively perform certain tasks. This belief is reinforced when training needs identified during the assessment are addressed. Kagema and Irungu (2018) conducted a study to review teacher performance appraisals in Kirinyaga and Muranga counties. The study used a sample size of 460 teachers, which was selected using a simple and stratified sampling technique. The study found that teachers overcomplicate PA and do not fully understand it. The study concluded that there is a need to link PA with training needs. This is in agreement with Ndirangu and Waiganjo (2014), whose study on factors influencing PA effectiveness among teachers in Kirinyaga Central Sub-county concluded that evaluator training had a major impact on PA implementation.

Nuwagaba (2021) conducted a study of training as a factor influencing the implementation of PA in Nyamasheeke District Local Government (NDLG), Rwanda. The study used a cross-sectional research design and purposively selected 122 respondents. The results of the study showed that the evaluators have a good knowledge of PA, which contributed to the successful implementation. The study further revealed that training is a crucial aspect of SPAS

implementation and that the effectiveness of PA always depended on training. Mito (2021) conducted a study on factors influencing the implementation of PA among teachers in Siaya County; 218 teachers were selected in 2021. Respondents in her study revealed that the Teachers Service Commission did not compensate them for the successful implementation of the Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPAD) and development program. Analysis of respondents showed that the rate of TPAD implementation increased with each unit of compensation. This agrees with the teachers' argument that implementation compensation would increase their effectiveness in the TPAD program. This study aimed to find out if the public service in Kenya attaches any reward to the PA results of the

employees and the perception of the employees on the reward and its impact on PA. It also seeks to establish how the employees' perception of the presence, absence or nature of rewards and its effect on their approach to the appraisal exercise.

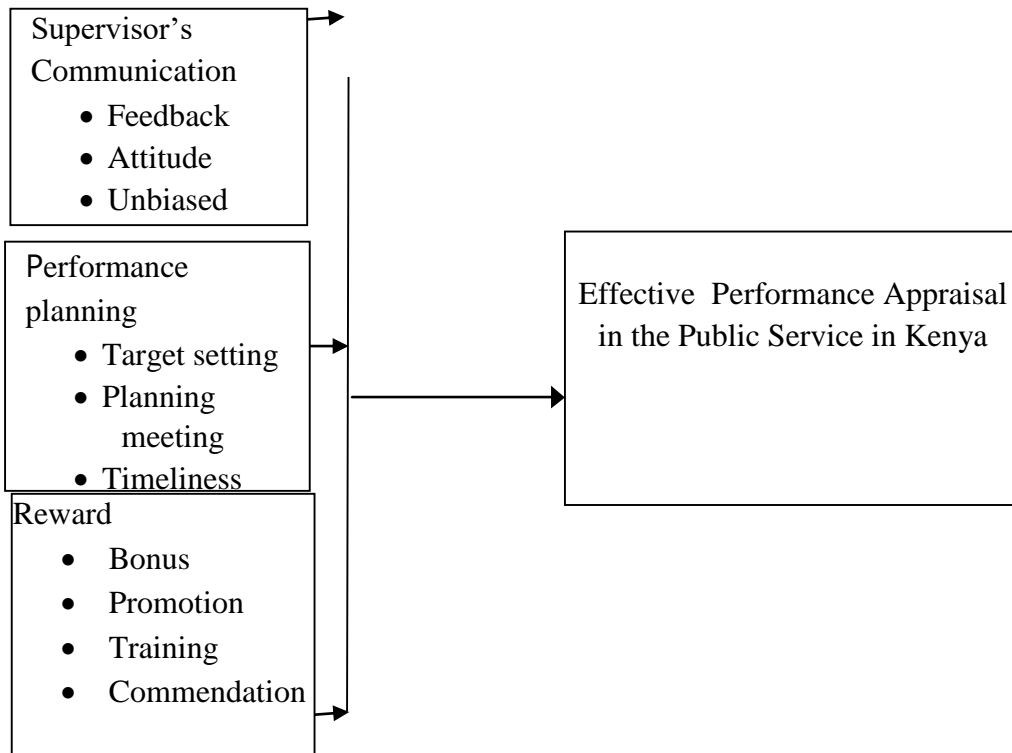
**Conceptual framework**

This section consists of a dramatic presentation of the relationship between the variables in this study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The dependent variable in this study is the effectiveness of performance appraisal in the public service in Kenya as a factor in performance management, while the dependent variables are the supervisor's communication, performance, and planning, as presented in Figure 1.

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

Source (Author, 2023)

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE**



**Figure 1. Independent and Dependent Variables**

**Critique of the Existing Literature Relevant To the Study**

Performance appraisal is a systematic process of improving individual, team and organisational

performance. It is a very important aspect of performance management, enabling a public service to achieve a describable or measurable change in service delivery. Communication is an

essential tool in a performance appraisal that helps the appraiser and appraisee reach an agreement on goals and performance levels. Feedback allows the sender or receivers of a message to know their performance status. Feedback allows appraisees to know how they performed, which areas need improvement, and identifies any discrepancies in performance. Managers and evaluators receive little information about their performance. Lack of proper communication prevents employees from knowing how they have been evaluated. No performance appraisal system can be very effective until appraisers know what is expected of them and the criteria against which they are being appraised. Performance appraisal interferes with the more constructive coaching relationship that should exist between the appraiser and the appraisee. Interviews tend to emphasise the managerial position of the evaluator by placing him or her in the role of judge, countering their (the evaluator's) equally important role as teacher and coach.

Performance appraisals require proper planning, especially to create agreement between manager and employee about what the employee needs to do to achieve goals, raise standards, and improve performance. Performance planning leads to the development of specific goals for each employee. Specific, clear goals tend to produce a higher level of employee output than general goals. A lack of clear goals causes confusion when employees do not see a clear link between individual workers and organisational performance. The assessment should focus on the question, "Have you achieved?"

Rewarding reinforces the learning and correct responses that are necessary to create effective performance appraisals. An employee's performance appraisal behaviour can be reinforced with an appropriate reward. Rewards can be either financial, such as bonuses, or non-financial, such as letters of recommendation and training opportunities. Assessment techniques for assessment tend to influence assessment results. If the manager/employee lacks basic skills or has not been trained, it is not reasonable to try to stimulate adequate performance through performance appraisals, nor is it fair to base pay, layoffs, or other negative decisions on such appraisals. Poor

performance may represent someone else's failure. Redressing grievances arising from performance appraisals requires a systematic process that includes a reward system. The studies reviewed that showed acceptable levels of reward were done outside the Kenyan public sector. The Mito (2021) study posted negative results regarding how teachers in Siaya County reported a lack of rewards as a constraint to the performance of their duties.

Hays and Kearny (2001) indicated that the importance of PA in the management of performance in the current workforce and into the future will continue to affect performance in the workplace. This study's target was to establish the factors influencing the effectiveness of performance appraisal as a tool in the public service in Kenya with respondents from the Kenya School of Government.

The literature reviewed suggests that factors affecting the effectiveness of performance appraisal in the public service in Kenya need to be analysed in order to establish a correlation with findings from other studies. The study focused on testing the effects of supervisor communication, performance planning, and reward as factors affecting the effectiveness of performance appraisals in the public sector. The study is based on three theories: the psychodynamic theory of personality, which identifies three major factors (id, ego, and superego) that interact and influence a person's personality; expectancy theory, which posits that the effort an employee exerts at work depends on the likelihood that valuable rewards will follow, and on goal theory, which assumes that employees will be well motivated if they have challenging but agreed goals and also receive feedback.

The literature reviewed suggests the need to implement an effective performance appraisal system in the Kenyan public service. This should be done with a view to improving the quality of employee performance. A research gap that emerged was the need to study parastatals, which have a different classification and administration approach from other public entities, to determine if findings by other researchers on other

classifications of the Kenyan public service correlate with parastatals. Another research gap is a focus on establishing the kind of rewards, communication and performance planning specific to public service as perceived as crucial by employees. This study examined reward, performance planning, and supervisor communication as factors to focus on to encourage desirable changes for effective performance appraisal and overall improvement in performance management.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

Research design provides a framework that determines appropriate methods of data collection, analysis, measurement, and synthesis to determine the coherence and logic that exists to address the research questions (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). According to Babbie (2001), research design is the master plan of the procedures and methods used to collect data to achieve the objectives of the research study. The study used a descriptive survey research design that is exploratory. Mathers et al. (2009) argue that descriptive research enables the study of the attitudes, values, beliefs, motives and opinions of a given community. The design choice for this study is to obtain an unbiased view of the effectiveness of performance appraisal in the public service in Kenya.

#### **Target Population**

A population is a group of people who meet certain requirements and are considered a suitable basis for research Schwab (2013). According to Stratton (2021), determining the research population is critical based on the fact that it supports the collection of valid data to test the research hypothesis and apply the research findings. The participants in this study are the permanent and pensionable staff of the Kenya School of Government-Mombasa as of January 2024. The population of the study is, therefore, 71 staff across the Mombasa campus.

#### **Sampling and Sample Size**

The sample size is the number of subjects or replicates obtained from the study population to be included in the study (Lakens, 2022). Sample surveys are best when collecting data from a wide

range of population members and making comparisons. Sample survey designs are most accurate in comparing and generalising results (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). As the target population was small, data were collected for each individual element of the population, and therefore, the census method was appropriate for the study. A census is a "complete enumeration of the population". Therefore, all seventy-one (71) employees were selected.

#### **Data Collection Instruments**

The study collected both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into six parts, namely: General information, communication, performance planning, rewards and performance evaluation. Secondary data will be obtained from Kenya School of Government reports and any other published reports. To improve the response rate and quality of data collected, the survey instrument will be personally administered via email and a drop-and-pick-up later method. An introductory letter explaining the purpose of the data and assuring the respondents of the confidentiality of the data was attached to the questionnaire. Following this, telephone calls and emails were sent to respondents to increase the response rate.

#### **Reliability and Validity Test**

Reliability of an instrument refers to the extent to which results are consistent over time. Balta (2008) argues that if the results of a study can be reproduced with a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered reliable. The reliability of the measurement will be evaluated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Sekaran, 2005) data tool. Dillman (2000) suggested that a pilot study be conducted to ensure the clarity and correct interpretation of the questionnaire by the expected respondents. For validity testing, the data collection tool was administered to a small sample of respondents of at least five respondents. Hair et al. (2003) claim that a preliminary test of five to ten representative respondents is sufficient to validate the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then modified based on the findings of the pilot test, and a final questionnaire was created.

**Data Analysis and Presentation**

Procedural data analysis was conducted using statistical and logical techniques to answer the research questions and test the research hypothesis (Wickham & Wickham, 2016). Descriptive statistics, which include measures of central tendency (such as mean, median, and mode) and measures of dispersion (such as variance, standard deviation, and range), were used to describe the characteristics of the data collected. The study used correlation analysis techniques to indicate the relationship between the independent variables (communication, performance planning and rewards) and the dependent variable (performance appraisal). T-test analysis was used to determine the significance of variables, and ANOVA was used to determine if there was any difference between variables. Regression analysis is another useful technique that was used in the study to measure the linear association between the dependent and independent variables in the study.

The SPSS version 23 package was used for data analysis.

Ethical dilemmas were confronted through procedural ethics and ethics in research practice (Homan, 1991; Coady & Bloch, 1996). Procedural ethics involves seeking relevant approvals to conduct a study in a community or country, and for this study, approval was sought from the University and Kenya School of Government-Mombasa. Procedural ethics were observed by seeking informed consent, voluntary participation, right to privacy and confidentiality in the way research participants are involved in this study (Creswell, 2011).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Response Rate**

The investigator administered 71 questionnaires to the Kenya School of Government employees. The response rate is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

	<b>Number of informants</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Response	52	73.2
Non- Response	19	26.8
Total	71	100.0

The researcher collected 52 completely filled questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 73.2 per cent. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a 50 per cent response rate is adequate, 60 per cent good and above 70 per cent is rated very good. This implies that based on this assertion, the response rate (73.2%) in this case is very good and enables generalisation of the research findings.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's alpha index of reliability was used to establish the reliability of the data collection instrument. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each variable was computed, and the results are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Supervisor Communication	52	.892
Performance Planning	52	.906
Rewards	52	.872
Effective Performance	52	.826

The general rule of thumb is that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 and above is good, 0.80 and above is

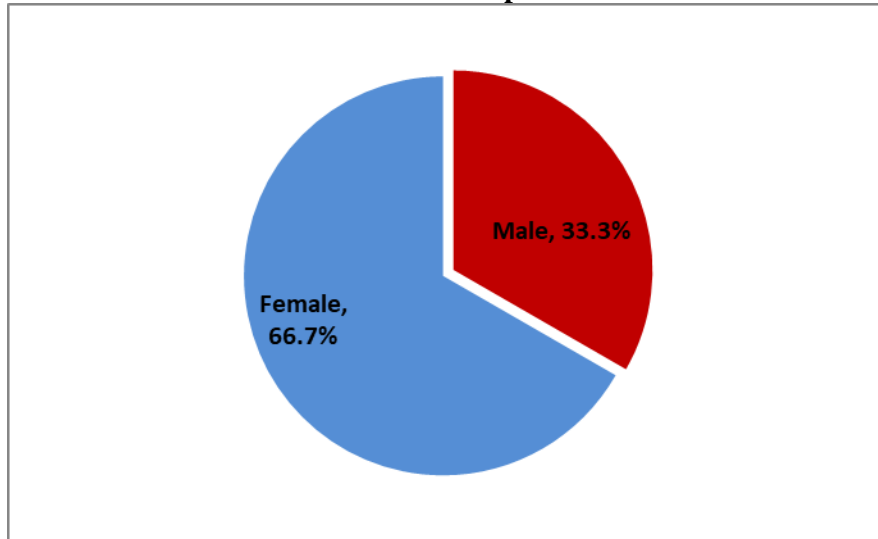
better, and 0.90 and above is best. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the variables under study are

0.8 and above, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency as a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher indicates "acceptable" internal consistency.

**Background Information of the Respondents**

The following demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in this section: gender, age, highest level of education, department and level of management.

**Gender of the Respondents**

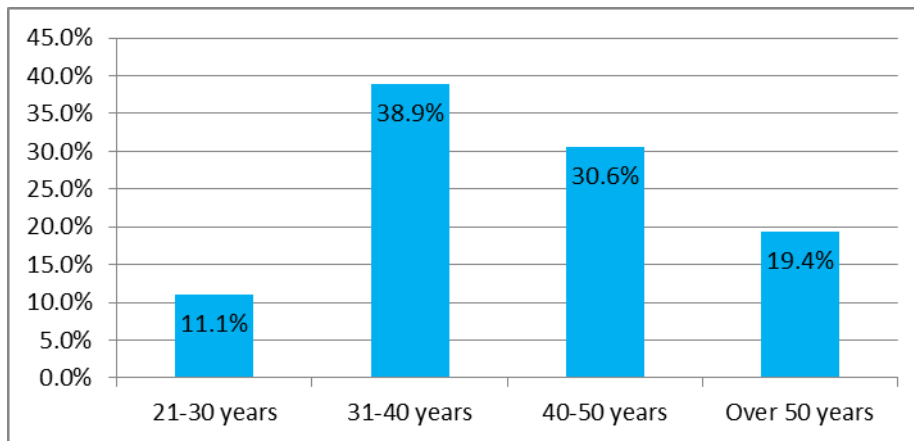


**Figure 2: Gender of the Respondents**

Figure 2 shows that 66.7 per cent of the respondents were female, and 33.3 per cent were male. These findings imply that the opinions of

both genders were well-represented in the study.

**Age of the Respondents**



**Figure 3: Age of the Respondents**

The age distribution was 38.9 per cent between 31-40 years, 30.6 per cent between 40-50 years, 19.4 per cent over 50 years and 11.1 per cent between 21-30 years. The majority of the respondents (88.9 per cent ) were aged above 31 years, implying a

high possibility of many years of practice, hence a good understanding of the problem under study.

**Highest Level of Education**

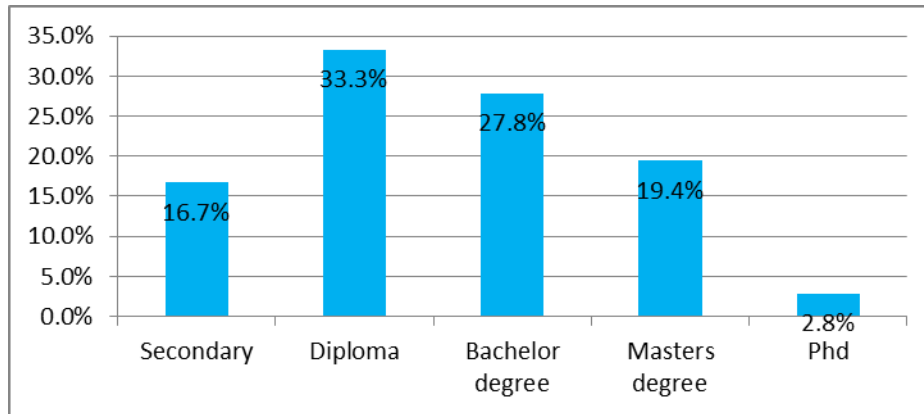


Figure 4: Highest Level of Education

The study sought to find out the respondents' level of education. 33.3 per cent had a diploma, 27.8 per cent a bachelor's degree, 19.4 per cent a master's degree, 16.7 per cent a secondary and 2.8 per cent had a PhD. The results imply that the majority of

the respondents (83.3%) had a diploma and above as the highest level of education.

**Department**

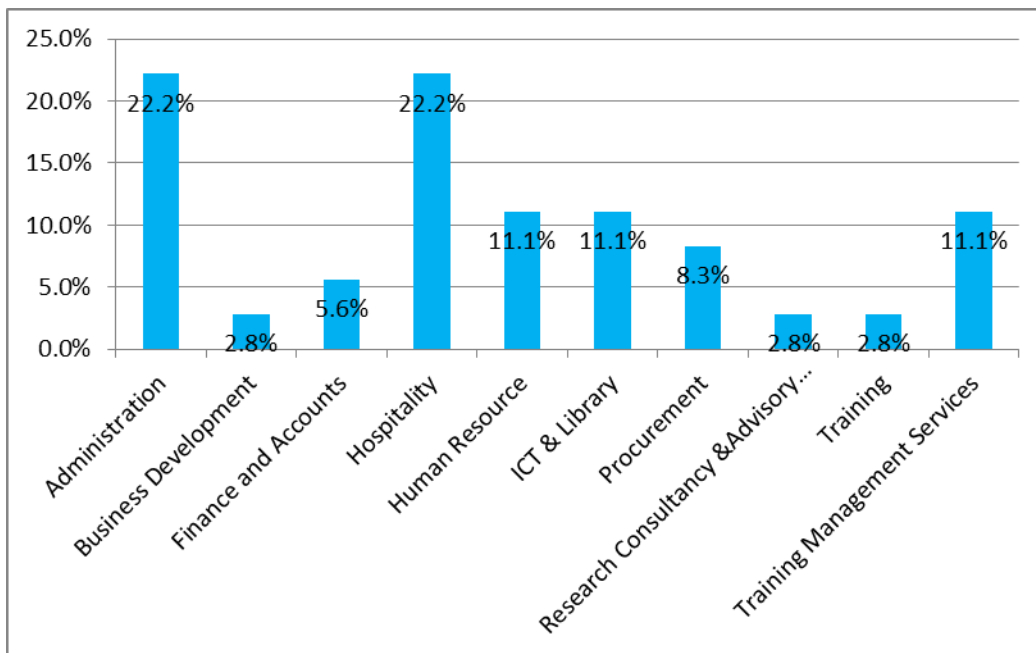


Figure 5: Department

Figure 5 shows most of the respondents were drawn from administration (22.2%), hospitality (22.2%), Training management services (11.1%), Human resources (11.1%), ICT & Library (11.1%) and the least from research, consultancy and advisory services (2.8%), training (2.8%) and business development (2.8%). This means that the

study sampled respondents across all the departments in the School.

Level of Management

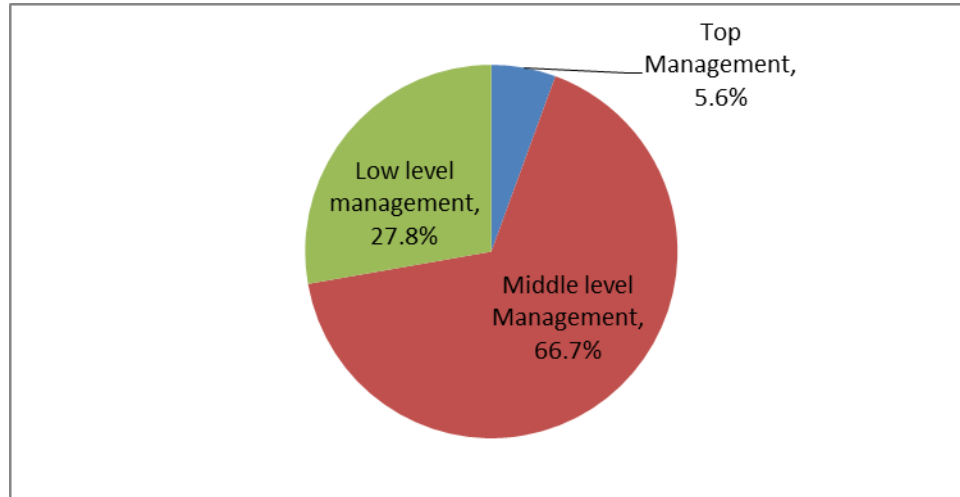


Figure 6: Level of Management

Figure 6 above indicates that respondents who were in middle-level management formed 66.7 per cent of the respondents. The findings also indicate that 27.8 per cent of the respondents were at a lower management level, while 5.6 per cent were

at a top-level management level. This implies the opinions of the respondents were captured across the management levels.

Supervisor Communication

Table 3: Supervisor Communication

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am timely given feedback on my performance through the information generated in the Performance Appraisal.	3.89	.785
The information generated through Performance appraisal is used to diagnose both organisational and individual problems	3.36	1.073
There is good communication between myself and my supervisor as a result of the performance appraisal process	3.81	.822
The performance appraisal process results in a clear and unbiased appraisal	3.64	.833
My supervisor assesses my performance objectively and without bias	3.69	.856

From the findings in Table 3, the analysis shows that the mean scores on Supervisor Communication were high on being given timely feedback on performance through the information generated in the Performance appraisal, with a mean of 3.89 and s.d 0.785. This was followed by the response that there was good communication between myself and my supervisor as a result of the performance appraisal process, with a mean of 3.81 and s.d 0.822. when asked if the supervisor's assessment was objective and free from bias, the mean was 3.69 and s.d 0.856, while responses on

whether the performance appraisal process resulted in a clear and unbiased appraisal scored a mean of 3.64 and s.d 0.833. The lowest score was on the question of whether information generated through Performance appraisal was used to diagnose both organisational and individual problems, with the mean being 3.36 and s.d 1.073. Additionally, the qualitative data emphasised the need for the promotion of a culture of open communication in the appraisal process, continuous communication throughout the appraisal period and regular meetings. The overall score from the study implies

that there is positive above-average supervisor communication in the Kenya School of Government Mombasa.

**Performance Planning**

**Table 4: Performance Planning**

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
My supervisor takes time to develop meaningful goals for my performance period	3.72	.882
My supervisor clearly explains the goals and what is expected of me.	3.81	.856
The standards used to evaluate my performance are clear and well explained to me.	3.69	.786
Adequate time is created to adequately prepare me for performance appraisal	3.67	1.069
My supervisor fully supports me to achieve my goals	3.89	.887

On performance planning, the supervisor fully supports staff to achieve goals, which had a mean of 3.89 and s.d 0.887. The supervisor clearly explains the goals and what is expected of me, with a mean of 3.81 and s.d 0.856; the supervisor takes time to develop meaningful goals for my performance period, with a mean of 3.72 and s.d 0.882; the standards used to evaluate my performance are clear and well explained with mean 3.69 and s.d 0.786 and adequate time is created to adequately prepare me for performance appraisal with mean 3.67 and s.d 1.067. In addition

to these quantitative findings, qualitative data underscored the need for the performance planning process to be cascaded in good time after successful assessment, deliberations and negotiation, as well as the need for supervisors and supervisees to stick to the time scheduled for performance planning and appraisal interview so that to avoid inconveniences. These results mean that there is positive above-average performance planning in the institution.

**Rewards**

**Table 3: Rewards**

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am sufficiently trained in all skills needed in the performance appraisal process	3.33	1.042
I am able to use the appraisal instrument as intended	3.75	.732
My appraisal skills are regularly refreshed and updated through training	3.19	1.215
My supervisor possesses adequate knowledge and training to properly implement my performance evaluation	3.56	.969
Information generated through Performance appraisal is used to motivate staff through recognition and support	2.69	1.238
Feedback from performance appraisal is used to motivate staff through promotion.	2.78	1.355

On rewards, the highest rate was using the appraisal instrument as intended, with a mean of 3.75 and s.d 0.732. The results on the question of whether the supervisor possesses adequate knowledge and training to properly returned a mean of 3.56 and s.d 0.969, and the lowest rated was feedback from performance appraisal is used

to motivate staff through promotion with a mean of 2.78 and s.d 1.355 and information generated through Performance appraisal is used to motivate staff through recognition and support with mean 2.69 and s.d 1.238. Even though the findings show a positive relationship between reward and performance appraisal, qualitative data emphasised



more incentives to motivate staff and the linking of rewards with individual performance.

**Performance Appraisal**

**Table 4: Performance Appraisal**

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Supervisor communication influences the effectiveness of performance appraisal.	4.00	.756
Performance planning affects the implementation of performance appraisal.	4.19	.668
Reward through promotion, training, and recommendation influences the effectiveness of performance appraisal.	4.11	.950

Table 6 shows that performance planning affects the implementation of performance appraisal was highly rated with a mean of 4.19 and s.d 0.668, followed by reward through promotion, training, and recommendation influences the effectiveness of performance appraisal with a mean of 4.11, and s.d 0.950 and Supervisor communication influences the effectiveness of performance appraisal with mean 4.0 and s.d 0.756.

feedback should be an integral part of performance appraisal because it motivates employees to improve their job performance. The findings are in congruence with Robbins (2000), who indicated that planning leads to the development of specific goals for each employee, which in turn tends to produce a higher level of output. Further training opportunities as a reward are viewed as an answer to improving individual performance and, ultimately, organisational effectiveness (Swart, 2000).

This means that Supervisor communication, Performance planning and reward positively influence the effectiveness of performance appraisal in public service. These findings are in agreement with Boruett (2021), who noted that

**Levels of Variance in Effectiveness of Performance Appraisal Explained By Predictors**

**Table 5: The Levels of Variance in Effectiveness of Performance Appraisal Explained By Predictors Shown Below**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.762 <sup>a</sup>	.601	.549	.4101

The results showed that 60.1 per cent of the variance in performance appraisal was explained by the variables: supervisor communication, performance planning and reward.

**Significance of performance Appraisal Elements**

**Table 6: Significance of Performance Appraisal Elements**

	t	df	p
Supervisor communication	35.708	50	< .001
Performance planning	5.781	50	< .001
Reward	3.616	50	< .002

The study sought to ascertain the significance of the three performance appraisal elements used in the study. The respondents t-test results showed that Supervisor

communication ( $p(0.001) < 0.05$ ), Performance planning ( $p(0.001) < 0.05$ ) and reward ( $p(0.002) < 0.05$ ) were significant. This, therefore, indicates that all three performance

appraisal elements used in the study can correctly be used to determine the effectiveness of performance appraisal and directly affect overall organisational performance.

**Significance of the Linear Regression Model**

**Table 7: Significance of the Linear Regression Model**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
H <sub>1</sub>	Regression	9.244	3	3.081	.702	< .001
	Residual	140.395	48	4.387		
	Total	149.639	51			

The study sought to determine the significance of the simple linear regression. The ANOVA results show that ( $p(0.001) < 0.05$ ), indicating that the regression model is significant. This implies that the regression model can be used to show whether changes observed in the effectiveness of performance appraisal in public service are

associated with changes in one or more of the performance appraisal variables: supervisor communication, performance planning and reward.

**Regression Model showing Relationship between PMS elements and Organizational Performance**

**Table 8: Regression Model**

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	12.306	.345		35.708	.001
	Supervisor communication	.097	.157	.172	.615	.036
	Performance planning	.143	.172	.266	.832	.024
	Reward	.091	.092	.029	1.273	.022

The simple linear regression analysis results were conducted to determine the extent to which the effectiveness of performance appraisal elements could predict organisational performance. The results, based on the study, were a regression equation.

$$Y = 12.306 + 0.97 X_1 + 0.143X_2 + 0.91X_3$$

Where

$Y = \text{effectiveness of performance appraisal}$

$X_1 = \text{Supervisor communication,}$

$X_2 = \text{Performance planning and } X_3 = \text{Reward.}$

The results imply that for each one-point increase in Supervisor communication, Performance planning, and reward, the predicted effectiveness of performance appraisal and results attainment increased by approximately 0.143, 0.277 and 0.91 percentage points, respectively.

**Summary of Findings**

**Supervisor Communication**

The findings on supervisor communication in relation to effective performance appraisal showed that the mean scores were high on being given timely feedback of performance through the information generated in the Performance appraisal with mean 3.89 and s.d 0.785, followed by there is good communication between me and my supervisor as a result of the performance appraisal process with mean 3.81 and s.d 0.822, supervisor assess my performance objectively, and without bias with mean 3.69, and s.d 0.856, performance appraisal process results in a clear and unbiased appraisal with mean 3.64 and s.d 0.833 and lowest on information generated through Performance appraisal is used to diagnose both organisational and individual problems with mean 3.36 and s.d



1.073. The overall score showed above-average supervisor communication, which in turn influences performance appraisal and management positively.

### **Performance Planning**

On performance planning, the supervisor fully supports staff to achieve goals had a mean of 3.89 and s.d 0.887; the supervisor clearly explains the goals and what is expected of me with a mean of 3.81 and s.d 0.856; the supervisor takes time to develop meaningful goals for my performance period with mean 3.72 and s.d 0.882, the standards used to evaluation my performance are clear and well explained with mean 3.69 and s.d 0.786 and adequate time is created to adequately prepare me for performance appraisal with mean 3.67 and s.d 1.067. Cumulatively, these results indicated above-average performance planning, which influences performance appraisal and results attainment positively.

### **Rewards**

On rewards, the highest rate was using the appraisal instrument as intended, with a mean of 3.75 and s.d 0.732, followed by supervisor possesses adequate knowledge and training to properly with a mean of 3.56 and s.d 0.969, and the lowest rate was feedback from performance appraisal used to motivate staff through promotion with mean 2.78 and s.d 1.355 and information generated through Performance appraisal is used to motivate staff through recognition and support with mean 2.69 and s.d 1.238. These findings imply that there is an average agreement with the reward system, which in turn influences performance appraisal and management of the public sector positively.

### **Performance Appraisal**

The findings showed that performance planning largely affects the implementation of performance appraisal at the workplace highly rated with a mean of 4.19 and s.d 0.668, followed by reward through promotion, reward through training, and commendations influence the effectiveness of performance appraisal with a mean of 4.11 and s.d 0.950 and supervisor communication influences the effectiveness of performance appraisal with mean 4.0 and s.d 0.756. Overall, supervisor

communication, performance planning and reward positively influence the effectiveness of performance appraisal in public service and, ultimately, the general performance of the public sector.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that there is an above-average level of supervisor communication, which in turn influences performance appraisal positively. This is due to the above-average ratings of feedback on performance through the information generated in the Performance appraisal and communication between staff and supervisors. On performance planning, the rating was average, with a positive influence on performance appraisal. This is due to the supervisor fully supporting staff to achieve goals, the supervisor clearly explaining the goals and what is expected of staff, and the supervisor taking time to develop meaningful goals for employee performance. Rewards have average ratings, which in turn influences performance appraisal positively. This is because supervisors possess adequate knowledge and training, and feedback from performance appraisal is used to motivate staff through promotion, and performance appraisal is used to motivate staff through recognition and support.

**Recommendations:** The study made the following recommendations for the Kenya public service so as to ensure effective performance appraisal and ultimately great performance: The management of Kenya School of Government and the Kenyan public service, in general, should develop a mechanism for the use of feedback generated from performance appraisal as a measure of determining their reward system through providing training opportunities, motivating staff through recognition, support and promotion. The Ministry of Public Service, Performance and Delivery Management should enhance mechanisms across the Kenyan Public Service to ensure reward is linked to performance appraisal results. The management of the Kenya School of Government and the Kenyan public service, in general, should put up more strategies to enhance supervisor communication by

ensuring regular and continuous performance appraisal meetings, timely feedback to employees, fostering a culture of open communication between staff and supervisors, and ensure supervisors assess employee's performance objectively and without bias. The management of Kenya School of Government and the Kenyan public service, in general, should enhance proper performance planning by putting up mechanisms to ensure that

supervisors prepare well for appraisal exercises and cascade the performance planning processes in good time. The management of the Kenya School of Government and the public service, in general, should also ensure that supervisors and supervisees stick to scheduled performance appraisal timelines, ensure supervisors clearly explain the goals to employees and enhance supervisors' support to enable staff to achieve their goals.

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