

Dynamics of Performance Appraisal among Staff in the Ministry Of Education and Training in Lesotho

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to determine whether employees are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho and also to establish whether performance appraisal brings about intended results in this ministry. This investigation adapted a mixed-methods approach. The population comprised 100 employees of the Ministry of Education and Training. A sample of 50 officers was selected from the population using proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected through a use of a questionnaire. The reliability of this instrument was ascertained through employing the split halves which consequently yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.82. Chi-square analysis revealed that employees are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho. On the other hand, chi-square analysis showed that performance appraisal does not bring about intended results in this ministry. On the basis of these results, it was concluded that performance appraisal is conducted in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho and also that performance appraisal does not bring about intended results in this Ministry.

Key words: Performance, appraisal, dynamics, ministry, training, staff.

Introduction

Performance appraisal is a management and human resource planning tool which addresses issues such as staff promotion, utilisation, placement, career planning and management as well as proper succession planning (Sefali, 2012; Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022). Performance appraisal is defined as a formal and systematic process through which relevant strengths and weaknesses of the employees are identified, measured, recorded and developed (Kumar, 2023). The purpose of performance appraisal as the most important component of human resources management is to assess and improve employees' performance (Lameque, Velez & Botelho, 2023). It is not only essential in gauging workers' progress but it is also critical in identifying areas for improvement (Kumar, 2023). The current system of performance appraisal as practised in the public service sector was introduced in 2001 (Ministry of Public Service, 2001). Before 2001, the Government of Lesotho had been using a performance management system called confidential reporting system (Sefali, 2012). According to Sefali (2012) this system lacked credibility because evaluation of employees' performance was done by one person, that is, it was only a responsibility of a supervisor. Therefore, his/her opinion could not be validated (Sefali, 2012). This system was too open to abuse by supervisors since no one could correct or give a different opinion from what they had reported (Sefali, 2012). As such, supervisors were players and referees at the same time (Sefali, 2012). In a nutshell, Sefali (2012) narrates the deficiencies of confidential reporting system as follows:

It was dependent on the likes, dislikes, wishes, whims and feelings of individual supervisors and as a result, the report was based on the personality of the supervisor. This means that a benign supervisor would reflect this trait in a report and a cruel or a bitter supervisor could also take out his/her feelings on his/her subordinate. It could not motivate nor improve the morale of the employees as

they never knew what level of performance would be attributed to them because they never knew and were never shown their performance ratings.

It was because of the above-stated reasons that the Government of Lesotho opted to the current performance appraisal system. According to Lesotho Government (2008) the following are the modes of appraising personnel in the public service sector:

- Officers below Grade H must be evaluated by their immediate supervisors twice a year.
- Officers at Grade H and above must be evaluated by their subordinates once a year.

This study endeavours to achieve the following objectives:

- Determine whether employees are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.
- Establish whether performance appraisal brings about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training.

Statement of the problem

There is a national concern that job performance of the employees in the public service sector is not satisfactory. In this regard, the Ministry of Education and Training is not an exception. Employees' poor performance in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho has a variety of undesirable results. For example, it has a negative and damaging effect across the whole Ministry. It decreases productivity and clients' satisfaction. This problem is one of the main reasons which urged the researcher to embark on this investigation. Performance appraisal is one of the most important tools which employers use to motivate workers to execute their tasks in a more efficiently manner. In this regard the public service regulations stipulate that for the purpose of enhancing public officers' performance and productivity, all employees in the public service sector shall be appraised every year (Lesotho Government, 2008). Therefore, this study intends to find out whether performance appraisal brings about the intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training.

Research hypotheses

The following statistical hypotheses were tested in this investigation:

- Employees are not appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.
- Performance appraisal does not bring about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.

Literature review

A review of literature addresses the following research questions:

- Are the employees appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho?
- Does performance appraisal bring about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho?

In this section, literature review deals with the first research question. That is, the aim of this review is to establish whether employees are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.

Literature shows that employees are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho (Ministry of Public Service, 2001; Sefali, 2012; Lameque et. al., 2023). The following indicators may prove that issue:

- Before the appraisal process starts, the head of section and the appraisee meet to make decisions on each performance area which would be assessed (Ministry of Public Service, 2001; Tyagi, 2023).

- Performance appraisal provides an objective evaluation of an employee's performance and it helps to ensure that decisions are based on merit rather than favouritism or personal biases (Lameque et al., 2023).
- The main objective of performance appraisal as practised in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho, is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of employees, place right officers on the right positions, maintain and assess the potential in a worker for the purposes of growth and future training (Sefali, 2012).
- The purpose of appraising workers in the civil service in Lesotho is to provide feedback to employees regarding their performance and related status (Sefali, 2012).
- Both the appraiser and appraisee complete and sign the performance agreement form (Ministry of Public Service, 2001).
- The head of section appraises the officer's performance by rating each performance area based on the agreed performance indicators (Ministry of Public Service, 2001).

Khachane is one of the authors who has a belief that staff are appraised in an objective manner in the education sector in Lesotho (Khachane, 2005). This researcher postulates that performance appraisal is mainly concerned with individual's development, accountability and fair evaluation of officer's performance (Khachane, 2005). In this regard, Khachane sees performance appraisal as a process by which an employee and his/her supervisor meet to discuss the performance of the employee (Khachane, 2005).

A view that workers are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training is also supported by other researchers (Sefali, 2012; Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022). Various reasons are stated to support this argument. For example, employees are appraised on the clearly stated goals and roles of an organisation and performance appraisal enables officers to develop a better understanding of the roles of their organisation (Sefali, 2012:19). Performance evaluation outcomes are intended to inform the supervisors and employees about the important issues that are related to jobs (Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022). In most cases, appraisals are conducted in a fair and objective manner and are expected to result in both managers and employees reporting positive and relevant experiences (Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022). Appraisals are usually conducted to address current job-related issues and overcome obstacles (Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022).

In this section, the review addresses the second research question. Thus, it assesses whether performance appraisal brings about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.

Literature suggests that performance appraisal brings about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho (Ministry of Public Service, 2001; Ramataboe & Lues, 2018; Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022). In this particular regard, Ministry of Public Service (2001) postulates that performance appraisal enhances service delivery. Employees work hard when they are aware that their performance will be assessed at the end of the term (Ministry of Public Service, 2001). Equally, Ramataboe and Lues (2018) support a view that performance appraisal brings about intended results in this ministry. Performance appraisal as a management tool is designed to identify the ways to achieve organisational goals through constant assessment and feedback, leading to improvement of employee performance (Ramataboe & Lues, 2018). It is an ongoing assessment of employees' performance that is geared to match their goals to the organisational goals (Ramataboe & Lues, 2018). The aim of performance appraisal is to provide planning and change management framework that is linked to the national development plans and budgetary processes for the purpose of enhancing the capacity of the government to achieve the desired levels of socio-economic governance and improve the capacity of public officers in delivering appropriate services to the tax payers (Ramataboe and Lues, 2018). In a nutshell, governments are held accountable to deliver tangible quality services to their citizens and as such, performance evaluation enhances organisational effectiveness and efficiency. Correspondingly, Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf (2022) support the issue that performance appraisal brings about intended results in the organisations by arguing that this management system addresses current issues and overcomes obstacles by encouraging employees to concentrate on work objectives and activities that improve work performance and increase work satisfaction.

There are other ways in which performance appraisal brings about intended results in the achievement of organisational objectives in many institutions and the Ministry of Education and Training is not an exception

(Sefali & Bekker, 2012; Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022; Kuma, 2023; Lameque et. al., 2023). For example, in the case of the Ministry of Education and Training, workers are appraised for the purpose of identifying those who need training (Sefali & Bekker, 2012). Thus, in this ministry, workers are appraised to achieve this objective (Sefali & Bekker, 2012). Performance appraisal helps the government ministries to design more structured and focused training programmes based on actual needs of the ministries and personal development of individual employees (Sefali & Bekker, 2012; Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022). It enables the organisations to focus on the provision of upskilling, reskilling and access to a variety of learning resources to help employees to reach their full potential (Kuma, 2023; Lameque et. al., 2023).

In relation to rewarding the best performing employees, literature reveals that performance appraisal brings about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho (Ministry of Public Service, 2008; Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022; Kuma, 2023). It helps the employers to determine performance related pay to be awarded to public officers each year (Ministry of Public Service, 2008). Automatic annual increment is replaced by performance related pay (Ministry of Public Service, 2008). Performance appraisal allows organisations to reward employees for their efforts (Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022; Kuma, 2023).

Pertaining to an issue of promoting the best performing employees, literature reveals that performance appraisal brings about intended results in the government ministries in Lesotho (Sefali & Bekker, 2012; Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022). It addresses issues of staff promotions (Sefali & Bekker, 2012). It enables human resources managers to make promotion decisions (Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022).

Materials and methods

This section highlights the methodological issues which the researcher had adapted in this investigation. These issues are dealt with in detail in the subsequent sections.

Research approach

In this investigation, the researcher adopted a mixed-methods approach comprising quantitative and qualitative research representations. The mixed methods research approach was appropriate for this particular study because it enabled the researcher to integrate quantitative and qualitative research methods for a purpose of gaining a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem under investigation (Vivek & Chandrakumar, 2023).

Population and sample

The population for this study was made up of 100 employees of the Ministry of Education and Training. A sample of 50 officers was selected from the population using proportionate stratified random sampling. The sample comprised 30 females and 20 males. The researcher stratified the population into females and males because the population reflected a disequilibrium insofar as there were more females than males in the population. As a result, stratified random sampling provided me with a sample that was highly representative of the population which was under investigation (Sharma, 2023).

Data collection

Data were collected through a use of a questionnaire. This instrument had been developed by the researcher. The reliability of the tool was ascertained through employing the split halves, which is a procedure of correlating the scores of the odd items of a questionnaire (1, 3, 5 ...) against the even items of the same questionnaire (2, 4, 6 ...) (Sarkar, Srivastava, Pandurangan & Kumar, 2023). The split halves entail computation of the coefficient of reliability which is also known as r (Sarkar et. al., 2023). The following formula was used to calculate the coefficient of reliability (r):

$$r = \frac{2rh}{1 + rh}$$

Where:

2 is a factor by which the correlation coefficient (rh) is multiplied. rh is the correlation coefficient.
 r is the reliability coefficient.

For the purpose of ascertaining the reliability of this instrument, the following steps were observed:

- Administered the questionnaire to 50 employees in the Ministry of Education and Training.
- Split the questionnaire item scores into two equal halves using an odd-even approach (Sarkar et. al., 2023).
- Calculated the correlation coefficient (rh) for the two divided halves.
- Calculated the reliability coefficient (r) using Spearman-Brown formula as illustrated below.

$$r = \frac{2rh}{1 + rh}$$

$$r = .70$$

$$r = \frac{1.40}{1 + .70} = .82$$

Thus, the outcome of the calculation of the reliability coefficient (r) was 0.82. This value (r = .82) indicates a substantial correlation meaning that the data which were collected through the use of this questionnaire are authentic.

Data analysis and results

The aim of analysing data was to establish whether employees are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho and also to assess whether performance appraisal brings about intended results in this ministry. The following statistical hypotheses were tested:

- H_0 : Employees are not appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.
- H_0 : Performance appraisal does not bring about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.

Data were analysed using a chi-square test (χ^2). The following chi-square formula was used to test the two hypotheses mentioned above:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{n(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

For the purpose of data analysis using the chi-square, the researcher presented data in contingency tables where:

χ^2 was the chi-square statistic.

\sum was the sum of all cells in the problem.

n was the number of total observations in the columns.

f_o was the proportion of observed frequencies in the cells.

f_e was the proportion of expected frequencies in the rows.

A chi-square test

First null hypothesis tested:

- H_0 : Employees are not appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.

A summary of the results of a chi-square analysis is presented in Table 1. In Table 1, 10.145 is a chi-square (χ^2) statistic. Chi-square (χ^2) statistic is a value which was calculated by using the data which were collected from 50 respondents. A chi-square (χ^2) statistic is a measure of a difference between the observed and expected frequencies of the outcomes of a set of events or variables (Hayes, 2022:1).

Table 1: Computation of a χ^2 value (chi-square statistic)

f_o	f_e	$(f_o - f_e)$	$(f_o - f_e)^2$	$(f_o - f_e)^2 \div f_e$
10	7	3	9	1.286
0	4	-4	16	4
2	1	1	1	1
10	13	-3	9	0.692
10	6	4	16	2.667
1	2	-1	1	0.5
10	10	0	0	0
5	5	0	0	0
2	2	0	0	0
Calculated value				10.145

Note: Table 1: is a simplified version of this formula: $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{n(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$

Referring to Table 1, the chi-square analysis yielded the chi-square (χ^2) statistic of 10.145. The chi-square statistic (10.145) was then used with the degree of freedom (df) in the research problem where $df = (\text{rows} - 1)(\text{columns} - 1)$, rows and columns being the number of categories in the frequency distribution. In this case, $df = (3-1)(3-1) = 4$. In testing the first statistical hypothesis, the researcher located the χ^2 critical value of 9.49, in the chi-square distribution table by using the $df = (3-1)(3-1) = 4$ and the p-value = 0.05. When the chi-square statistic (10.145) was compared with the χ^2 critical value (9.49), the results revealed that the chi-square statistic was greater than the χ^2 critical value (10.145 > 9.49). Since the chi-square statistic of 10.145 is greater than the χ^2 critical value of 9.49, it was concluded that employees are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho. Thus, the research hypothesis (H_1) was retained and the statistical hypothesis (H_0) which states that employees are not appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho was rejected. In a nutshell, this study reveals that employees are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho. This finding is consistent with the finding of the qualitative part of this study, presented below. An assertion justifying this consistency is made in the discussion section of this study.

Research findings on objectivity of performance appraisal

In support of the results of the chi-square analysis presented in Table 1, qualitatively analysed data, confirm that employees are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho. This fact is illustrated by the findings reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Objectivity of performance appraisal

				Total	
Yes	10	10	10	30	60
No	5	10	0	15	30
Undecided	2	1	2	5	10
Total	17	21	12	50	100

According to the responses in Table 2, the majority of the respondents (60%) agreed that employees are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho. They stated two reasons to support this point. First, they noted that before a process of appraisal, the appraiser and appraisee agree on the key objectives to be achieved. Finally, they reported that the head of a section appraises the officers' performance by rating each performance area based on the agreed performance indicators. On the one hand, 30% of the respondents pointed out that performance appraisal is not conducted in an objective manner in this ministry. Once more, two reasons were divulged to support this assertion. In this instance, they reiterated that some appraisers do not clearly understand the contents of the appraisees' job descriptions and also that some appraisers practise favouritism. On the contrary, 10% of the respondents were undecided on this issue.

A chi-square test

Second statistical hypothesis tested:

- H₀: Performance appraisal does not bring about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.

A summary of the results of a chi-square analysis is presented in Table 3. In this table, the results reflect 2.222 as a chi-square (x^2) statistic. This value was calculated by using the data which were collected from 50 employees in the Ministry of Education and Training.

Table 3: Computation of a x^2 value (chi-square statistic)

f_o	f_e	$(f_o - f_e)$	$(f_o - f_e)^2$	$(f_o - f_e)^2 \div f_e$
10	10	0	0	0
6	7	-1	1	0.143
1	0	1	1	0
10	9	1	1	0.111
5	7	-2	4	0.571
1	0	0	0	0
8	9	-1	1	0.111
10	7	3	9	1.286
0	0	0	0	0
Calculated value				2.222

Note: Table 3: is a simplified version of this formula: $x^2 = \sum \frac{n(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$

Referring to Table 3, the chi-square analysis yielded the chi-square (χ^2) statistic of 2.222. The chi-square statistic was then used with the degree of freedom (df) in the research problem where $df = (\text{rows} - 1)(\text{columns} - 1)$, rows and columns being the number of categories in the frequency distribution. In this case, $df = (3-1)(3-1) = 4$. In testing the second statistical hypothesis, the researcher located the χ^2 critical value of 9.49, in the chi-square distribution table by using the $df = (3-1)(3-1) = 4$ and the p-value = 0.05. When the chi-square statistic (2.222) was compared with the χ^2 critical value (9.49), the results revealed that the chi-square statistic was less than the χ^2 critical value ($2.222 < 9.49$). Since the chi-square statistic of 2.222 is less than the χ^2 critical value of 9.49, it was concluded that performance appraisal does not bring about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho. Thus, the statistical hypothesis (H_0) was retained and the research hypothesis (H_1) which states that performance appraisal brings about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho was rejected. This finding is inconsistent with the finding of the qualitative part of this study, presented in Table 4. An assertion justifying this inconsistency is made in the discussion section of this study.

Research findings on effectiveness of performance appraisal

Contrary to the results of the chi-square analysis presented in Table 3, qualitatively analysed data, show that performance appraisal brings about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.

Table 4: Effectiveness of performance appraisal

				Total	
Yes	8	10	10	28	56
No	10	5	6	21	42
Undecided	0	1	0	1	2
Total	18	16	16	50	100

As reflected in Table 4, the majority of the respondents (56%) reported that performance appraisal brings about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho. In support of this issue, they noted that performance appraisal is a tool which assists the employer to identify officers who are eligible for promotions. 42% of the respondents noted that performance appraisal does not bring about intended results in this ministry because the results of performance appraisal are not used to improve the performance of workers and to select officers who are eligible for training. Furthermore, they postulated that performance appraisal is not useful because nepotism and favouritism are rife in this ministry. The minority of the respondents (2%) were not sure about the effectiveness of performance appraisal. This reason can be attributed to an issue that this group has indicated that they had never been appraised since they were employed in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.

Discussions and conclusions

This investigation adapted a mixed-methods research approach comprising quantitative and qualitative research representations. In the first instance, as reflected in Tables 1 and 2, both the findings of the quantitative ($10.145 > 9.49$ as depicted in Table 1) and qualitative (60% of the respondents as shown in Table 2) studies show that employees are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho. On the basis of these results, it is evident that performance appraisal is conducted in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho. Another issue which confirms this argument is the fact that both the findings of the empirical and literature studies are consistent. That is, both the findings of the empirical and literature studies illustrate that officers are appraised in an objective manner in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.

In the second instance, there is a disparity between the results of the quantitative ($2.222 < 9.49$, refer to Table 3) and qualitative (56% refer to Table 4) studies. The result of the quantitative study depicts that performance appraisal does not bring about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in

Lesotho while the finding of the qualitative study illustrates that performance appraisal brings about intended results in this Ministry.

Despite the disparity between the findings of the quantitative and qualitative investigations, I suggest that for this particular study, performance appraisal does not bring about intended results in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho. My argument is based on Ghanad's observation that quantitative research is preferred over qualitative research because it is more scientific and objective due to its reliance on the use of numbers (Ghanad, 2023). On this matter, Ahmad (2023) argues as follows:

Quantitative research provides an unbiased study report by utilising standard frameworks and assessment standards while remaining impartial and unbiased.

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