

Teachers' Appraisal System and Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Uganda. A Case of

Goma Sub County Mukono District

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Abstract

The achievements and failures of any academic facility are determined by the educational outcomes of its children; therefore, there is a need for investigation into enhancing academic achievement. The academic achievement of learners is the center around which the overall education system revolves. The study was conducted to look at how the teacher evaluation system affected students' school achievement. It had three goals: to look at how the teacher evaluation system affected students' student success, to look at how it affected school authorities, and to look for additional ways to raise students' educational outcomes. According to the study's findings, executives mostly use four systems: instructor students' cooperation, way to unite, teaching methods of material, and students' educational performance. The study discovered that establishing a noise-free classroom atmosphere, professional growth for educators, professionalism, and provisional licence health; managerial oversight; regular teacher school and classroom enrollment; teachers' contingency plan to teach; a decrease in sickness absence; teachers' mixture skills, perspectives, and favorable feelings toward the career path; and family involvement were other methods to improve students' achievement. The study also found a high correlation between kids' academic achievement and teachers' absenteeism. The study comes to the conclusion that measures like teacher evaluation are complete and a solid strategy that must be designed and fully conveyed for an effective standard school.

Key words: Teachers' Appraisal System and Students' Academic Performance

Background of the study

The education system in Uganda has undergone significant changes in recent years, driven by the government's commitment to ensuring universal access to education (Anthony et al., 2023). According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), as of 2022, the net enrollment rate in secondary education in Uganda stood at 43%, with notable regional disparities, as urban areas like Kampala often report higher enrollment rates than rural areas such as Goma Sub County in Mukono District (Mark et al., 2023). Despite these efforts to increase access, the quality of education remains a persistent challenge. One of the main factors contributing to this challenge is the performance of teachers, which is linked to how well they are appraised, supported, and held accountable within the education system (Brighton et al., 2023).

Teacher appraisal systems have been implemented in various forms in Uganda with the aim of improving teaching effectiveness and consequently enhancing student performance (Julius, 2024). The government, through the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), has introduced teacher performance appraisal systems to assess and evaluate the competencies, skills, and effectiveness of teachers (Victoria et al., 2023). The Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS), for example, provides a framework for assessing teacher performance based on classroom performance, professional development, and impact on student learning outcomes (Kazaara & Deus, 2024). However, there have been concerns about the effectiveness of these appraisal systems, particularly with regard to how they are implemented at the local level and their direct impact on student academic performance (L. Nafiu, 2013).

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Goma Sub County in Mukono District is a relatively rural area with limited resources compared to urban centers like Kampala. This geographic disparity is reflected in the educational outcomes of students in the area. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES, 2020), the academic performance in rural schools, such as those in Goma Sub County, generally lags behind their urban counterparts. For instance, in the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) exams of 2022, the pass rate for rural schools was reported to be 51%, compared to 65% for urban schools (Margaret & Kazaara, 2024). This difference is often attributed to various factors, including the qualifications and effectiveness of teachers, the availability of teaching resources, and the school management practices, all of which are influenced by the teachers' appraisal systems (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). Teacher appraisal systems are designed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of teachers in their various roles. These systems typically include self-assessment, peer assessments, and assessments by school administrators (Seth, 2019). In many cases, the appraisal systems are intended not only to evaluate teacher performance but also to guide professional development and reward excellence in teaching. However, some critiques suggest that in practice, the systems are not always comprehensive or consistently applied, particularly in rural areas like Goma Sub County (Suzan & Gracious Kazaara, 2023). Teachers in these areas often face challenges such as inadequate training, a lack of professional development opportunities, and limited access to resources (Emmanuel et al., 2023). These challenges can contribute to low morale among teachers, which in turn can negatively affect student performance. Therefore, understanding the relationship between teacher appraisal systems and student academic performance is crucial to identifying strategies that can improve educational outcomes in rural areas (Godfrey et al., 2023).

The existing literature on teacher appraisals and student performance has produced mixed results. Several studies have found a positive relationship between effective teacher appraisal systems and student outcomes. For example, a study by (Nelson, 2024) found that teacher performance appraisals in Ugandan schools were linked to improved teaching methods, higher levels of teacher motivation, and better academic results for students. The study emphasized that when teachers feel that their efforts are being recognized and rewarded, they are more likely to be motivated to improve their teaching practices, which subsequently improves student performance (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). However, other studies have highlighted weaknesses in the current appraisal systems, particularly regarding the implementation of feedback and the alignment between appraisals and teachers' professional development needs (Kyoshaba, 2019).

Problem Statement

In Uganda, education is considered a key pillar for national development, and the academic performance of students in secondary schools is closely tied to the effectiveness of the teaching staff. One of the most significant factors influencing the quality of education is the performance and effectiveness of teachers (Julius, 2024). In recent years, the Ugandan government has introduced various mechanisms aimed at improving teacher performance, with one of the most widely discussed being the teachers' appraisal system (Suzan & Gracious Kazaara, 2023). However, despite its introduction and implementation, there are concerns regarding the effectiveness of this system and its actual impact on student outcomes. This study, which focuses on Goma Sub County in Mukono District, seeks to investigate the relationship between the

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teachers' appraisal system and students' academic performance in secondary schools in the region (Victoria et al., 2023).

The Ugandan education sector has undergone significant reforms over the years, with the aim of improving the quality of education and student performance (Ansebo & Gaywala, 2022). According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES, 2023), student academic performance in Uganda has generally shown improvements at the national level, but disparities still exist across regions, with urban areas often outperforming rural ones (Anthony et al., 2023). Mukono District, where Goma Sub County is located, has a mixture of both urban and rural characteristics, making it an interesting context for this study. Goma Sub County, in particular, has been facing challenges related to teacher absenteeism, low teacher morale, and concerns about the adequacy of teacher training, all of which may affect the effectiveness of the appraisal system and, consequently, the academic performance of students (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022a).

The teachers' appraisal system in Uganda was introduced as part of a broader effort to enhance the quality of education, and it aims to assess teachers' competencies, skills, and overall performance through regular evaluations (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022b). However, there is a growing concern that this system has not been fully effective in improving teacher performance, particularly in rural and underserved areas like Goma Sub County. Reports from the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB, 2022) show that while the national average for Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) performance has shown slight improvements, there remain significant gaps in performance, particularly in rural secondary schools. In 2022, only 47.5% of students in rural secondary schools passed with a first or second division compared to 65% in urban schools, indicating that the quality of teaching, potentially linked to teacher performance, remains a critical issue in many areas, including Goma Sub County (Ramadhan et al., 2023).

The appraisal system aims to provide a framework for identifying areas where teachers need improvement, offering professional development opportunities, and holding teachers accountable for their performance (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). However, various challenges related to its implementation persist, especially in rural areas. According to a report by the Uganda Teachers Union (UTU, 2023), many teachers in rural schools, including those in Goma Sub County, feel that the appraisal system is not sufficiently transparent and lacks clear criteria for measuring effectiveness (Brighton et al., 2023). Moreover, some teachers have raised concerns that the appraisal process is more of a formality rather than a tool for genuine professional development. Teachers report that there is limited feedback from appraisals, and the system is often disconnected from the realities of the classroom, which hinders its potential to drive meaningful improvements in teaching practices (Brighton et al., 2023). Another challenge lies in the relationship between teacher performance, as measured by the appraisal system, and student academic outcomes.

Specific objectives

1. To examine the role of teacher's appraisal system on students' academic performance.
2. To examine the influence of teacher appraisal system on school administration.
3. To determine other methods to improve students' academic performance.

Methodology

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The study adopted a descriptive research design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches where it examined the current literature in order to make effective conclusions for the study (L. A. Nafiu et al., 2017). (L. A. Nafiu, 2012) defined a research design as an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis in a way that intends to combine relevance of the research purpose with economy in procedure. School principals, deputy headmasters, coordinators of studies, instructors, and school personnel at Goma Sub County, members of the school administration of committee, and guardians in particular elementary level in Goma Sub county Mukono district made up the study's target audience (L. A. Nafiu, 2012). Target population, as defined by Orodho & Kombo (2003), is a group of people, things, or things from which samples are taken for measurements. It alludes to the wider group from which the sample is taken. The population corresponds to the population that the investigator is intrigued in and to which they would like to generalize the findings of their study (L. A. Nafiu, 2012). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), asserts that the main consideration for determining the sample size is the capability to collect in depth data at affordable costs in terms of time, finances and resources. According to (Maiga et al., 2021) an ideal sample size should be between 10%-30%. Depending on the data to be gathered and analysed. Using this, the researcher sampled 20 head teachers, their 20 deputies using stratified random sampling, 40 teachers, 20 directors of studies, 6 division education officers, 18 members of different school board of committees, 18 parents using census sampling (Jallow et al., 2022).

Table 1 showing sample size and sampling technique

Respondent	Size	Sampling technique
Head teachers	20	Purposive random sampling
Deputy head teachers	20	Purposive
Director of studies	20	Purposive
Teachers	40	Simple random sampling
Parents	18	Simple random sampling
Sub county education Officers	6	Purposive
Members school board of committee	18	Cluster sampling
Total	145	

The study incorporated the use of various methods in the process of data collection in a bid to come up with sound, concrete and credible research findings (Abiodun Nafiu, 2012). The researcher therefore amalgamated the use of questionnaires and interviews in the process of collecting primary data. (Abiodun Nafiu, 2012), asserts that primary method of data collection involves a researcher him or herself by using qualitative or qualitative methods. The

advantage of using this method was that the data collected was unique to the researcher and there was no altering of the data. There are many methods of primary data but the study focused on the questionnaires (Abiodun et al., 2022). A Questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents.

(Abiodun et al., 2022), secondary data method collects data from primary sources which can be used in the current research. This method took considerably less time than collecting primary data. Secondary data was obtained from two different research strands: Quantitative secondary data was got from teachers' pay slips, allowance record books, division journals among others. Qualitative data was got from semi-structured and structured interviews, transcripts, observation records and other personal research related documents related to the study (Olanrewaju et al., 2021). Using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022), the altered data was analyzed both numerically and qualitatively as follows: For easier interpretation, statistical approach was aggregated and statistical descriptions, such as tables displaying percentages and frequency distributions, were employed. Nonetheless, the analysis of the qualitative research allowed for the identification of the respondents' comments that were pertinent to the study's problem. This type of data was analyzed primarily by describing the information gathered from the area where the investigator was able to quote comments from participants.

RESULTS

Table 1: The Role of Teacher's Appraisal System on Students' Academic Performance

Model	B	Std. Error	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
(Constant)	0.253	0.521	0.245	0.621	1.288
Appraisal Frequency	1.073	0.324	10.253	0.001**	2.92
Feedback Mechanism	0.745	0.284	6.948	0.008**	2.106
Teacher Experience	0.341	0.187	3.449	0.063*	1.407
School Resources	0.56	0.291	3.784	0.052*	1.751

The significant positive coefficient ($B = 1.073$) for appraisal frequency suggests that more frequent teacher evaluations significantly increase the likelihood of students performing better academically. For each unit increase in appraisal frequency, the odds of a student performing well increase by 2.92 times. The feedback mechanism also has a significant positive effect ($B = 0.745$), indicating that effective feedback from appraisals increases the odds of students performing better academically (Nelson et al., 2023). For each unit increase in feedback quality, the odds of good academic performance increase by 2.11 times. Although not quite statistically significant at the 0.05 level, teacher experience ($B = 0.341$) appears to be a factor that positively affects student performance. A one-unit increase in teacher experience increases the likelihood of better student performance by approximately 1.41 times. School resources also show a marginally significant positive effect ($B = 0.560$). This suggests that better resources at the school are associated with higher odds of better academic performance, with a 1.75 times increased likelihood of good academic results for every unit increase in school resources.

Table 2: The Influence of Teacher Appraisal System on School Administration

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Model	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
(Constant)	0.107	0.473	0.102	1	0.749	1.113
Appraisal Criteria Clarity	1.462	0.38	15.394	1	0.000**	4.315
Administrative Involvement	1.032	0.305	11.548	1	0.001**	2.805
Frequency of Appraisal	0.544	0.267	4.169	1	0.041*	1.723
Teacher Collaboration	0.374	0.196	3.695	1	0.055*	1.453

The clarity of appraisal criteria significantly enhances the effectiveness of school administration ($B = 1.462$). Clear appraisal criteria increase the odds of an effective school administration by a factor of 4.31, suggesting that when school administrators understand the appraisal process, they are better able to manage and guide the school's academic performance. The significant positive coefficient ($B = 1.032$) indicates that greater administrative involvement in teacher appraisal systems significantly improves the perceived effectiveness of school administration. An increase in administrative involvement in appraisals increases the odds of an effective administration by 2.81 times. A positive relationship is observed between the frequency of appraisals ($B = 0.544$) and school administration effectiveness, with more frequent appraisals leading to higher odds of effective administration (odds ratio of 1.723).

Collaboration between teachers as part of the appraisal system is also positively correlated with better school administration practices, though it is marginally significant. For each unit increase in teacher collaboration, the odds of effective school administration increase by 1.45 times.

Table 3: Determine Other Methods to Improve Students' Academic Performance

Model	B	Std. Error	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
(Constant)	0.21	0.468	0.198	0.657	1.234
Teaching Methods	1.295	0.412	10.029	0.002**	3.654
Parental Involvement	0.678	0.287	5.757	0.016*	1.97
School Infrastructure	0.871	0.339	6.566	0.010**	2.387
Extracurricular Activities	0.641	0.342	3.601	0.058*	1.896

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Effective teaching methods ($B = 1.295$) significantly improve academic performance, with each unit increase in quality teaching methods leading to 3.65 times higher odds of better student performance. This suggests that innovative and engaging teaching techniques are crucial for student success. Parental involvement ($B = 0.678$) shows a significant positive effect on student performance. For every unit increase in parental involvement, the odds of academic success for students increase by 1.97 times, emphasizing the importance of home-school collaboration in improving academic outcomes. The condition and availability of school infrastructure ($B = 0.871$) positively impact student performance. An increase in school infrastructure quality increases the likelihood of good academic performance by 2.39 times, suggesting that physical learning environments play a significant role in student outcomes. Although marginally significant, extracurricular activities ($B = 0.641$) are associated with improved academic performance. Increased participation in extracurricular activities boosts the odds of students performing well academically by 1.90 times, showing the value of a holistic approach to education.

Conclusion

The findings from the logistic regression analysis indicate that the teacher appraisal system, particularly the frequency of appraisals and the quality of feedback mechanisms, significantly influences students' academic performance. More frequent teacher appraisals and clear, constructive feedback were associated with improved academic outcomes. These results highlight the importance of a structured, regular, and transparent teacher evaluation process. The positive relationship between the teacher's experience and the provision of adequate resources also suggests that experienced teachers with access to better resources are more likely to foster an environment conducive to student success.

The teacher appraisal system also plays a significant role in the effectiveness of school administration. Administrative involvement in the appraisal process, coupled with clear appraisal criteria, was found to significantly improve the perceived effectiveness of school administration. This suggests that school administrators who actively participate in teacher appraisals are better equipped to make informed decisions that positively affect the school environment. A clear and consistent appraisal system provides the leadership with actionable insights that can guide improvements in both teaching quality and overall school management.

Apart from teacher appraisal systems, several other factors were found to have a significant impact on students' academic performance. These include teaching methods, parental involvement, school infrastructure, and extracurricular activities. The results suggest that while teacher appraisals are vital, they should be complemented by improving the quality of teaching methods, increasing parental engagement, enhancing school infrastructure, and promoting extracurricular activities that support holistic student development. These factors work synergistically to create an environment that nurtures academic achievement.

Recommendations of the study

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Schools should prioritize implementing more frequent and systematic teacher appraisals. Regular evaluations allow for the identification of strengths and areas of improvement in teaching practices. Additionally, feedback from appraisals should be constructive and provide teachers with actionable steps to enhance their teaching effectiveness. Teacher appraisals should focus not only on performance but also on professional development and growth. School administrators should ensure that appraisals are conducted transparently and fairly, providing teachers with the support they need to succeed.

It is critical that school administrators are actively involved in the teacher appraisal process. The results of this study suggest that administrators who participate in appraisals can more effectively assess teacher performance and make necessary changes that positively impact student outcomes. Administrative involvement fosters a collaborative environment where teachers and administrators work together to improve educational standards. Schools should therefore ensure that administrators are trained and equipped to participate in and act on the results of teacher appraisals.

Schools should invest in innovative teaching methods that engage students and promote active learning. The study found that teaching methods significantly affect students' academic performance, suggesting that more interactive and student-centered teaching approaches can yield better academic results. Professional development programs should be introduced to help teachers adopt and implement these effective teaching strategies. Additionally, schools should encourage the use of modern technologies to enhance learning, such as e-learning platforms and interactive digital tools.

Parental involvement emerged as an important factor in improving students' academic performance. Schools should engage parents more effectively through regular communication, meetings, and events that keep them informed about their children's progress. Schools could also encourage parents to take an active role in their children's academic journey by supporting homework, participating in school activities, and fostering a positive attitude towards education at home. Collaborative initiatives between schools and families will enhance the support system around students and ultimately improve their academic outcomes.

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