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Examining the Effectiveness of the Annual Performance Appraisal System in Local Authorities of North Western Province

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Abstract

The Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS) serves as a critical tool for evaluating employee performance, enhancing accountability, and improving service delivery within public institutions. In Zambia, local authorities are mandated to conduct performance appraisals to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of their workforce in fulfilling institutional goals. However, the effectiveness of this system remains questionable due to persistent concerns about bias, inadequate feedback, and limited follow-up on appraisal outcomes. This study examines the effectiveness of the Annual Performance Appraisal System in local authorities of North Western Province, Zambia, with particular focus on how it influences employee motivation, performance, and institutional productivity. The study adopted a descriptive research design and utilized both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather comprehensive data. A sample of 120 respondents was selected from various local authorities in the province, including council secretaries, departmental heads, and general staff. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns and insights. Findings revealed that while the Annual Performance Appraisal System is widely implemented in all local authorities, its effectiveness is significantly constrained by several factors. These include lack of objectivity in evaluations, delays in conducting appraisals, inadequate feedback mechanisms, favoritism, and insufficient follow-up on appraisal results. Many employees reported that performance assessments were often subjective and influenced by personal relationships rather than measurable performance indicators. Additionally, the study found that most local authorities lacked adequate training for supervisors and managers responsible for conducting appraisals, leading to inconsistent and unreliable evaluations. Furthermore, the absence of a clear linkage between appraisal outcomes and rewards, promotions, or professional development opportunities reduced employees' motivation to perform better. Despite these challenges, the study noted that the APAS has the potential to contribute positively to organizational development when properly administered. Respondents emphasized that an effective appraisal system encourages accountability, enhances communication between supervisors and subordinates, identifies training needs, and promotes a culture of continuous improvement. To realize these benefits, the study recommends that local authorities strengthen the appraisal process by ensuring transparency, fairness, and consistency. Regular training for supervisors should be prioritized to enhance their understanding of performance management principles. Moreover, feedback sessions should be institutionalized to help employees understand their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that the effectiveness of the Annual Performance Appraisal System in local authorities of North Western Province is moderate but hindered by systemic weaknesses that reduce its intended impact on employee performance and institutional efficiency. Addressing these challenges through capacity building, standardized appraisal criteria, and performance-linked rewards can significantly improve the credibility and usefulness of the system. The findings contribute valuable insights to policymakers, administrators, and human resource practitioners seeking to enhance performance management practices within Zambia's public sector.

Keywords: Annual Performance Appraisal System, Local Authorities, Employee Motivation, Public Sector Performance, Zambia, Human Resource Management, North Western Province

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Performance appraisal systems are crucial for enhancing organizational effectiveness and ensuring public servants contribute meaningfully to institutional goals (OECD, 2019) [6]. Effective performance appraisal mechanisms align staff performance with broader policy objectives, provide data for decision-making, and foster a results-oriented culture (OECD, 2019) [6]. Developed countries like the UK, Canada, and Australia have successfully implemented performance-based management

systems emphasizing measurable outcomes, continuous feedback, and employee development, improving public service delivery and citizen trust (OECD, 2019) [6]. Performance evaluation frameworks are essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in public administration (UNDP, 2020) [8]. Digital technologies can automate appraisals, track performance indicators, and reduce bias (World Bank, 2021) [9]. African countries like Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, and South Africa have made progress in implementing performance-based appraisal systems, such as Results-Based Management (RBM) in Kenya (Muchelule & Okibo, 2020) [3], performance contracting in Ghana (Adu & Ohemeng, 2017) [1], and Imihigo performance contracts in Rwanda (Nsengimana & Uwizeyimana, 2018) [5]. However, challenges like limited financial resources, lack of training, and weak institutional oversight persist (Nabukeera, 2017) [4]. In Zambia, the Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS) has been introduced to evaluate public officers based on clear objectives linked to institutional goals, aiming to increase employee motivation, improve service delivery, and enhance overall performance (Public Service Management Division, 2019; Zulu & Chitundu, 2021) [7, 10].

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The introduction of the Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS) by the Government of the Republic of Zambia was a strategic move aimed at improving employee productivity and accountability in the public sector. This initiative formed part of the broader Performance Management Package (PMP), intended to replace the outdated and opaque Annual Confidential Report (ACR), which had long been criticized for its subjectivity and lack of feedback mechanisms (Public Service Management Division, 2019) [7]. APAS was envisioned to promote a performance-based culture by enabling fair and transparent evaluations, rewarding high-performing employees through promotions or salary increments, and identifying low performers for further training and development (Zulu & Chitundu, 2021) [10]. However, despite the annual implementation of APAS across various public institutions, there is a growing body of evidence suggesting that its intended impact has not been fully realized, particularly in local authorities. Many local authorities in Zambia continue to grapple with inefficiencies, poor service delivery, and weak employee accountability, which raises questions about whether the appraisal system is achieving its core objectives (Mufune & Chanda, 2020) [2]. In Zambia the persistence of poor performance among public servants despite the presence of APAS reflects a serious gap between policy intent and practical outcomes. This gap not only undermines public trust in local government institutions but also signals the need for an in-depth evaluation of the effectiveness of APAS in promoting productivity and accountability. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by critically assessing whether the APAS has indeed contributed to improved individual and institutional performance within selected local authorities in Zambia.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The main objective of this study will be to examine the effectiveness of Annual Performance Appraisal System in local authorities of north western province.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The following are the specific objectives of the study:

1. To establish types of Performance Appraisal in local authorities.
2. To assess the effectiveness of the Annual Performance Appraisal System in appraising performance of job holders in local authorities.
3. To assess the relationship between performance appraisal and work performance in local authorities.
4. To establish limitations of the Annual Performance Appraisal System in local authorities.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What types of performance appraisal systems are used in local authorities?
2. How effective is the Annual Performance Appraisal System in appraising the performance of job holders in local authorities?
3. What is the relationship between performance appraisal and work performance in local authorities?
4. What are the major limitations and challenges affecting the implementation of the APAS in local authorities?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The study used the Management Evaluation Model and the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) Model (Stufflebeam, 1971) [33] to evaluate the effectiveness of the Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS) in local authorities. The CIPP model assesses the APAS's context, inputs, processes, and products. Context evaluation: Examining the environment and conditions in which APAS operates (Stufflebeam, 1971) [33]. Input evaluation: Assessing resources and plans allocated for APAS implementation (Stufflebeam, 1997) [34]. Process evaluation: Examining how APAS is implemented, including appraisal activities and feedback mechanisms (Stufflebeam, 1997) [34]. Product evaluation: Assessing the outcomes and impacts of APAS, including employee performance improvement and organizational effectiveness (Stufflebeam, 1971) [33]. The study aims to identify factors facilitating or hindering APAS effectiveness and provide insights for policy adjustments, capacity building, and resource allocation. The CIPP model provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating APAS, ensuring that evaluation is not just retrospective but also formative, guiding continuous improvements (Smith, 1980). By applying the CIPP model, the study seeks to answer critical questions about APAS's effectiveness in improving employee performance and organizational outcomes.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study on APAS in Zambia's North-Western Province is significant as it addresses critical gaps in understanding performance appraisal effectiveness. It provides insights into APAS's strengths, weaknesses, and impact on employees and organizational outcomes. The study's findings will inform policy and practice, benefiting policymakers, managers, and employees. It contributes to the growing body of knowledge on performance management in the public sector, particularly in Africa. The study's recommendations can enhance employee morale, job satisfaction, and service delivery, ultimately leading to better governance and development outcomes. Its findings can also promote a more participatory and transparent approach to performance appraisals.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Types of Performance Appraisal in local authorities

Performance appraisal systems are an integral part of modern public administration, enabling organizations to systematically evaluate employee contributions and make informed human resource decisions. Across the globe, local authorities also referred to as municipalities or local government units have adopted a variety of performance appraisal methods to improve public service delivery, accountability, and transparency. The evolution in the use and design of appraisal systems reflects broader reforms aimed at making local governance more citizen-centered, performance-driven, and development-oriented (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020) [13].

One of the most prevalent global models is the Management by Objectives (MBO) approach. This method requires managers and employees to collaboratively set measurable goals and assess progress toward these goals over a specific period. MBO enhances employee accountability and engagement by aligning individual objectives with organizational priorities. Countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom have implemented MBO-based systems in their local authorities as part of New Public Management (NPM) reforms, emphasizing efficiency, results, and decentralization (Dessler, 2017) [19]. The participatory nature of MBO fosters clear communication between supervisors and subordinates, ensuring that expectations are mutually understood and that performance is objectively measured based on tangible outcomes.

Another globally used method is the 360-Degree Feedback Appraisal, which incorporates feedback from multiple stakeholders including supervisors, peers, subordinates, and sometimes the community or clients. This multi-source feedback model is particularly suited to local authorities, where collaboration, teamwork, and stakeholder engagement are critical for service delivery. According to Bracken and Rose (2021) [14], this method promotes greater self-awareness among employees and enhances fairness by reducing supervisor bias. It has been used effectively in Scandinavian countries and several U.S. cities, where citizen satisfaction is a key performance metric for public employees.

The Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) is also gaining popularity in public sector institutions globally. This method combines narrative examples of behavior with a quantitative rating scale to assess performance in a more objective and consistent manner. The method focuses on specific behaviors that exemplify various levels of job performance. According to Kondrasuk (2020) [24], BARS is especially useful in evaluating complex public service roles that require observable competencies rather than just output. Municipalities in Germany, New Zealand, and South Korea have adopted BARS to enhance fairness and reduce subjectivity in performance reviews, especially in service-based roles such as social work, inspection, and community engagement.

In Nigeria, local government councils use a combination of Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to appraise their staff. While ACRs remain common, they have been criticized for being outdated and lacking transparency (Ajayi & Olojede, 2016) [11]. In response, some states have introduced pilot systems that integrate KPIs and employee participation in target setting. These newer systems aim to improve fairness, reduce favoritism, and link appraisals to career development opportunities.

However, despite these innovations, performance appraisal systems in African local authorities continue to face several challenges. These include limited financial resources, lack of training for evaluators, political interference, and weak linkage between performance results and rewards or promotions (Amoako & Adomako, 2021) [12]. Furthermore, in many cases, performance data are not adequately used in planning or decision-making, undermining the credibility and impact of appraisal efforts.

Nevertheless, recent continental strategies such as the African Union's Agenda 2063 emphasize building strong institutions through performance-driven governance. As a result, many African countries are revisiting and reforming their public sector appraisal systems, including at the local authority level, to better serve communities and achieve inclusive development.

According to research by Mwansa and Chikwelete (2023) [29], most local authorities have not institutionalized rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems, which makes it difficult to verify the accuracy of appraisal results or use the data for institutional planning. The end result is an appraisal process that is often seen as a bureaucratic formality rather than a strategic management tool.

Furthermore, organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping how performance appraisals are perceived and implemented. In many types of council, particularly those with hierarchical and centralized management styles, junior officers feel intimidated during the appraisal process and are discouraged from giving honest feedback. This inhibits the development of a learning organization and stifles opportunities for performance improvement. Effective performance appraisal systems rely on mutual trust, constructive feedback, and open communication, yet these elements are often lacking in Zambian local authorities. Employees may feel that their input is not valued or that the appraisal process is a tool for punishment rather than development. Consequently, staff may become disengaged and less committed to organizational goals, which ultimately affects service delivery.

2.2 Effectiveness of the Annual Performance Appraisal System in appraising performance of job holders in local authorities

In the United States, municipalities have long used annual performance appraisals as a standard practice, but research reveals that the systems are often undermined by subjective assessments, lack of standardization, and inadequate evaluator training. According to Park and Rainey (2016) [31], many appraisals in U.S. local governments are viewed as procedural exercises rather than strategic tools, with employees receiving vague feedback and generic ratings that do little to guide improvement. Moreover, political interference, resistance to change, and a lack of accountability have further hindered the effectiveness of the APAS in many American cities, reducing its credibility in the eyes of public servants.

In many Asian countries, the challenges associated with APAS are often structural. For example, in India and Pakistan, performance appraisal in local authorities tends to be bureaucratic, top-down, and disconnected from actual job performance (Khan & Ahmad, 2018) [23]. These systems are

often perceived as punitive rather than developmental, and limited opportunities for employee participation and dialogue diminish their value. Furthermore, the hierarchical culture in many Asian public institutions often inhibits honest feedback between supervisors and subordinates, which weakens the effectiveness of performance reviews as learning and improvement tools.

In Southern Africa, particularly in Botswana and Namibia, local governments have taken steps to formalize annual performance appraisals through legal and institutional frameworks. In Botswana, for example, the performance management system for public servants includes measurable objectives, key performance indicators, and regular supervisor feedback. However, the implementation of the appraisal system has encountered issues related to capacity constraints and a lack of accountability mechanisms. Motlhanke (2017) [26] argues that the effectiveness of performance appraisal in local councils is often undermined by limited supervisor competence, unclear performance criteria, and insufficient integration with training and development programs.

According to Chikumbi and Mwanakatwe (2020) [18], most local authorities continue to use generic appraisal templates that fail to capture the nuanced expectations of technical or administrative roles, thereby making performance evaluation superficial and non-impactful.

Managerial capacity gaps have also proven to be a serious hindrance. Supervisors are expected to evaluate subordinates against set targets, provide constructive feedback, and use the appraisal results for professional development. However, many line managers have not received adequate training in performance management techniques. Musonda (2019) [28] notes that most appraisals conducted in rural district councils are completed with minimal interaction between the appraiser and the appraisee, sometimes just days before submission deadlines, which undermines the credibility of the entire process. Furthermore, managers sometimes lack the confidence or knowledge to give objective and critical evaluations, instead opting for general or inflated scores to avoid conflict.

Another critical issue is the limited follow-through on appraisal outcomes. Performance appraisals are supposed to feed into decision-making concerning promotions, staff development, and resource allocation. In practice, however, there is often no direct linkage between appraisal scores and personnel decisions. As a result, employees are not incentivized to take the process seriously. Many view it as a procedural exercise rather than an opportunity for growth or career advancement. This has created a culture where employees simply complete forms to fulfill requirements, with no expectation of constructive feedback or developmental outcomes.

2.3 Relationship between Performance Appraisal and work performance in local authorities

In highly developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, and Australia, local authorities have adopted robust performance management systems that integrate strategic planning, key performance indicators (KPIs), and outcome-based budgeting. These systems enable authorities to track service delivery targets, monitor staff performance, and enhance accountability through regular performance audits and citizen feedback mechanisms. Hood and Dixon (2016) [21] observed that in the United Kingdom, local authorities have shifted from traditional bureaucratic processes to a more results-oriented approach through the use of performance contracts and regular monitoring tools. Similarly, in Canada, municipalities utilize balanced scorecards to align municipal performance with community development goals, thereby ensuring a high level of coherence between policy and execution.

A key global trend that has positively influenced organizational performance is the growing adoption of e-governance. Many cities in Europe, North America, and parts of Asia have embraced digital platforms to improve the efficiency and accessibility of public services. This digital transformation has enhanced transparency, minimized bureaucratic delays, and empowered citizens to participate actively in decision-making processes. For instance, Chatwin and Arku (2020) [15] highlight how cities like Singapore and Tallinn (Estonia) have transformed their local authorities through smart city initiatives, integrating real-time data management systems that track waste collection, public transport, and utilities, thereby improving efficiency and public satisfaction. These cities demonstrate that strategic use of technology, when combined with good governance, leads to improved organizational outcomes and better service delivery.

Furthermore, the lack of skilled personnel and weak institutional frameworks contribute significantly to underperformance in local authorities. In several countries, including Malawi, Tanzania, and Nigeria, there is a shortage of trained administrative, financial, and technical staff to manage local-level projects. This has resulted in poor planning, inadequate implementation of development initiatives, and inefficiencies in service delivery. Olowu and Chanie (2018) [30] note that the professionalization of local government administration remains a major challenge across Africa, where local authorities often suffer from high turnover, limited training, and poor working conditions.

Despite these setbacks, there are notable regional efforts to improve the performance of local authorities. For example, Rwanda has been recognized for its structured decentralization policy and performance-based local government contracts known as Imihigo. These contracts require district authorities to set measurable targets that are evaluated annually by central government and the public. Research by Chemouni (2018) [16] highlights that Rwanda's model has improved accountability, planning, and service delivery in local authorities, although concerns about top-down control remain. Similarly, South Africa has adopted integrated development planning (IDP) as a framework for aligning municipal planning with national development goals. While this has had varying levels of success, it has strengthened strategic thinking and stakeholder involvement in local governance.

2.4 limitations of the Annual Performance Appraisal System in local authorities

According to Smither *et al*. (2016) [32], appraisal outcomes can be distorted by halo effects, leniency or severity bias, and recency effects, undermining their reliability and fairness. This problem is compounded in local authorities, where close-knit working environments and political influences may exacerbate partiality.

Another widespread limitation is the overemphasis on quantitative metrics and compliance rather than qualitative assessment and developmental feedback. Many appraisal

systems focus heavily on measurable targets such as service delivery statistics or attendance, neglecting critical competencies like teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving. As pointed out by Armstrong and Taylor (2017), this narrow focus restricts the appraisal system's ability to capture the full spectrum of employee contributions and can demotivate workers who feel their efforts in less tangible areas are undervalued.

In many local authorities globally, performance appraisals tend to be viewed as a bureaucratic exercise rather than a meaningful development tool. Annual appraisals often become a "tick-box" process where forms are completed perfunctorily without genuine engagement between supervisors and employees. This superficial approach limits the system's impact on improving performance and career growth. Research by Fletcher (2017) [20] notes that when appraisals are perceived as mere administrative formalities, employee trust and motivation decline, and opportunities for constructive dialogue are missed.

In Tanzania, budget shortfalls have been linked to superficial appraisal practices where the process becomes a mere formality devoid of meaningful impact on staff development (Mbilinyi & Mgaya, 2017) [25]. Such underfunding reduces appraisal exercises to bureaucratic rituals rather than effective performance management tools.

Poor integration between appraisal results and other human resource management functions such as training, promotions, rewards, or disciplinary measures is another persistent limitation. Performance appraisals are often conducted in isolation without subsequent action plans or development initiatives based on appraisal findings. This disconnect weakens the motivational impact of appraisals since employees see little tangible benefit from participating in the process. For example, research in Ugandan local councils found that appraisal outcomes rarely inform decisions on capacity building or career progression, leading to cynicism and disengagement among staff (Kamau & Were, 2020) [22]. Without integration, appraisals fail to contribute to building a high-performing workforce.

One of the primary limitations is the inadequate capacity of supervisors and appraisers to effectively administer the appraisal process. Many local authority managers lack formal training in performance management, which affects their ability to set clear performance standards, conduct objective assessments, and provide meaningful feedback. This shortfall results in appraisals that are often subjective, inconsistent, and sometimes influenced by personal biases, which diminish the trust and acceptance of the system among employees (Chikoti & Mwanza, 2019) [17]. The lack of standardization and professionalism in conducting appraisals compromises their reliability as a tool for measuring true performance.

Political interference remains a pervasive issue within Zambian local governments. Performance appraisals are at times manipulated to serve political interests, with ratings influenced by an employee's political affiliations or loyalty rather than merit or actual job performance. This undermines the principle of meritocracy and weakens employee morale, as staff members may perceive the appraisal process as unfair or biased. Such politicization also discourages honest communication between supervisors and subordinates, further impairing the developmental potential of appraisals (Mumba & Mwansa, 2021) [27].

Resource constraints are another significant barrier. Local authorities often operate under limited budgets that affect the scope and quality of performance management activities. The costs related to training supervisors, conducting thorough appraisals, and following up with capacity-building interventions are frequently overlooked or underfunded. Consequently, appraisals tend to be treated as procedural obligations rather than strategic tools for workforce development. This lack of resources leads to poor documentation, infrequent appraisals, and inadequate use of appraisal results for promotions or rewards (Tembo & Njekwa, 2020) [35].

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Sibwela (2017) described research design as a structural framework within which the study is to be implemented. This study will adopt a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The mixed-methods design allows for a holistic exploration of the research topic, enabling the collection and analysis of both numerical data and qualitative insights. Quantitative method will be used to gather numerical data, while qualitative method will facilitate the exploration of employees' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes towards effectiveness of the APAS in local authorities.

3.2 Target Population

A population can be defined as the universe of units from which the sample is selected (Bryman, 2004). The population of interest for this study will comprise of Head of Departments and some selected employees from the local authorities in North Western province that will be chosen from the eleven (11) councils in the province. This means that the sample size will be selected from this category of employees because it is very clear that employees in this category are likely to have valuable data required for this study.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

The study will sample eighty (80) employees to whom questionnaires will be administered out of the hundred (100) working in various departments in 5 councils that will be selected randomly from the 11 of north-western province. The sample size will be determined using the formula as follows;

$$n = N / 1+N (e)2$$

Where n = sample size, N = target population and e = margin of error.

$$n =?, N = 100, e = (0.05)2$$

Total selected sample:

$$n = N / 1+N(e)2 = 100 / 1+100 (0.05)2 = 100 / 1+100 \times 0.0025$$

$$n = 100 / 1+0.25 =100 / 1.25 = 80$$

Therefore, the sample size is 80 respondents.

This indicates that a total of 80 participants from the 11 local authorities will take part in the study.

3.3.1 Sampling Procedures

A combination of probability and non-probability sampling

techniques will be employed to select the study participants. From the eleven (11) councils in Northwestern province, the researcher will select 5 councils randomly that will take part in the study. Stratified random sampling will be used to ensure representation from different departments and levels within the 5 councils that will be selected to take part in the study. Additionally, purposive sampling will be used to ensure diversity in participant demographics and experiences. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, such as job role in the organization.

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

The study will employ two principles to collect data. These are primary method which involves the use of questionnaires to collect data and secondary method which involves soliciting data from academic books, Journals and other online publications. The researcher will use a questionnaire to collect data and will ensure that necessary procedures are followed to avoid going against ethical issues in research.

3.4.1 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments that the researcher will use are a questionnaire which will contain both open ended and closed ended questions.

The researcher will distribute the questionnaires to collect the data from respondents. The data collection instruments will be both face and content validated. The questionnaire will be submitted to the research supervisor for scrutiny and authentication. All recommendations from the supervisor will be effected before using it. Robson (2002) argues that prior to using the research instrument, the content validity of the instruments should be determined by the researcher discussing the items in the instrument with the supervisor and colleagues.

3.4.2 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher will request for permission from the organisation executives to conduct a study on the subject matter. Therefore, an introductory letter will be obtained from the school authorities and will be presented to the organisation executives before the researcher could proceed to collect data. The researcher will secure appointments with all stakeholders.

3.5 Data Analysis

In this study, both Qualitative and Quantitative methods of data analysis will be used. The process of data analysis will involve the use of manual and computer by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics where the responses from the questionnaires will be tallied, tabulated and analyzed using percentages, frequencies through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency tables and bar charts and graphs will be used to present the data for easy comparison. The qualitative data from open-ended questions in the questionnaire will be analyzed thematically using conceptual content analysis. The qualitative data analysis will include both content and thematic analysis. Themes and descriptive narratives will be used.

Observations made will be described in the form of text, written words, phrases, symbols describing or representing people, actions and events in social life. Collected data will be organized into categories based on themes, concepts or similar features. At various stages of analysis, thematic groups will be adjusted and refined in order to accurately capture the knowledge patterns most linked to the research questions.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

It is imperative for the researcher to observe ethical considerations when collecting data. Prior to data collection, ethical approval will be sought from the relevant institutional review board or ethics committee. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, and their anonymity and confidentiality will be assured throughout the study. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Additionally, data security measures will be put in place to safeguard the confidentiality and integrity of the collected data.

4. Results and Discussion

Section A: Demographic Information

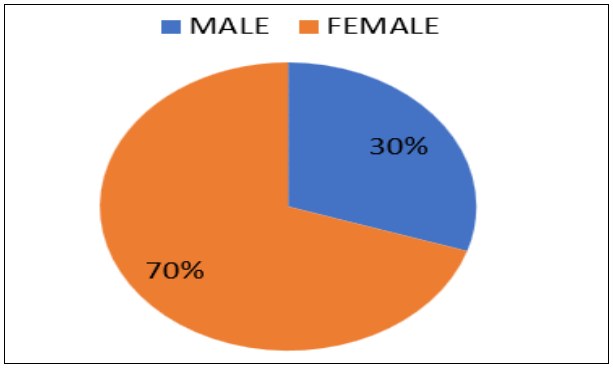


Fig 1.1: Sex of Respondents in Local Authorities

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 1.1, the majority of respondents, 70%, are female, while 30% are male. This indicates a predominance of female employees in the surveyed workforce, which may reflect broader trends in the composition of local authority staff or the specific departments surveyed. The higher representation of women suggests that gender considerations are important in evaluating organizational processes, including performance appraisal systems, as perceptions and experiences may vary by sex.

The presence of 30% male respondents ensures that both genders are represented, allowing for balanced insights into how the performance appraisal system operates and impacts staff motivation, development, and service delivery.

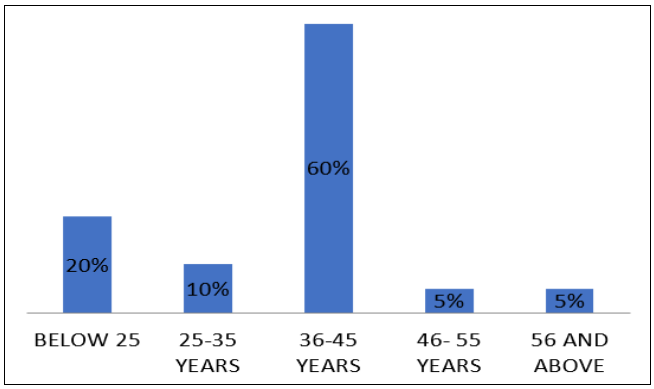


Fig 1.2: Age Distribution of Employees in Local Authorities

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 1.2, the majority of respondents, 60%, are aged 36–45 years. This suggests that most employees are in their mid-career stage, likely possessing substantial work experience and familiarity with organizational procedures, including performance appraisal systems. Employees in this age group are generally expected to be highly productive, assume significant responsibilities, and provide informed feedback on appraisal effectiveness.

20% of respondents are below 25 years, indicating a considerable presence of younger employees who may be relatively new to the organization. These employees might still be learning the organizational processes and may require guidance and training to fully understand and participate in appraisal systems.

10% of respondents are aged 25–35 years, representing early-career employees who have some organizational experience and are gradually assuming more responsibilities. Their perspectives are valuable for understanding how appraisal systems affect motivation, development, and career progression.

Smaller proportions of respondents fall within the 46–55 years (5%) and 56 years and above (5%) age brackets. These employees are typically more experienced and may hold senior or supervisory roles. They are likely to have extensive exposure to organizational practices and can provide insights into long-term trends, the effectiveness of appraisal systems over time, and potential areas for improvement.

Section B: Type of Perfomance Appraisal Local Authorities

Table 2.1: Types of Performance Appraisal Systems Used in Local Authorities

Type	Percentage (%)
Annual performance appraisal system (APAS)	60%
360 degree feedback	20%
Management by objectives (MBO)	15%
Rating scales	5%
Others, specific	

According to the data in Table 2.1, the majority of respondents (60%) reported that their organizations use the Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS). This indicates that traditional annual appraisals remain the predominant method, providing a structured, periodic evaluation of employee performance.

20% of respondents use 360-Degree Feedback, which involves evaluations from supervisors, peers, subordinates, and sometimes clients. This method provides a more comprehensive perspective on employee performance, encouraging self-awareness and accountability.

Meanwhile, 15% reported using Management by Objectives (MBO), which focuses on collaboratively setting measurable goals between employees and supervisors. MBO aligns individual objectives with organizational goals and promotes results-driven performance.

A small proportion, 5%, uses Rating Scales, where performance is assessed against predefined numerical criteria. While useful for comparison, rating scales may not capture qualitative aspects of performance fully.

No respondents reported using other types of appraisal systems, suggesting limited use of alternative or customized methods.

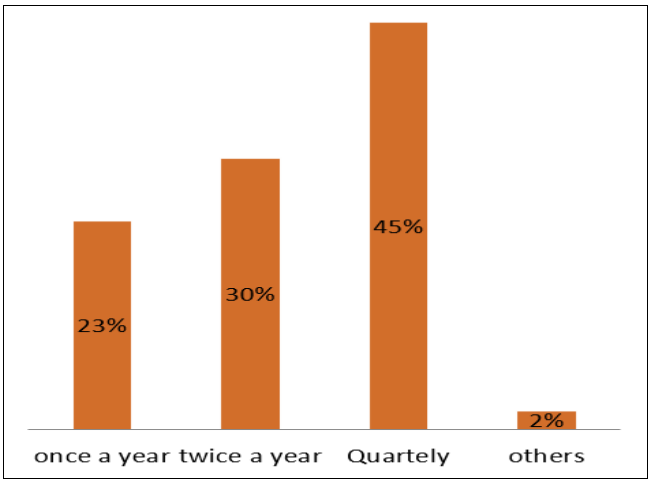


Fig 2.2: Frequency of Performance Appraisals in Local Authorities

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 2.2, 45% of respondents reported that appraisals are conducted quarterly, making it the most common frequency. Quarterly appraisals suggest a proactive approach to performance management, allowing employees to receive regular feedback, adjust their performance, and align with organizational goals more effectively.

30% of respondents indicated that appraisals are conducted twice a year, which allows for semi-annual monitoring of performance and provides moderate opportunities for feedback and development.

Meanwhile, 23% of respondents stated that appraisals are conducted once a year, indicating that annual appraisals are still practiced in some departments. Annual appraisals may be less effective in addressing performance issues promptly and may delay recognition or intervention for employees.

Only a small portion, 2% of respondents selected “others”, suggesting that alternative appraisal frequencies are rarely used.

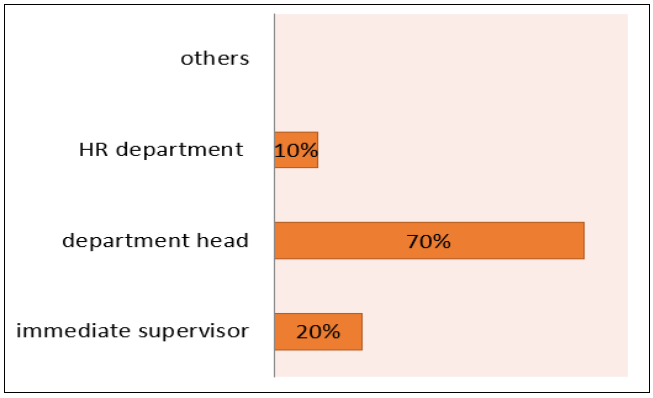


Fig 2.3: Personnel Responsible for Conducting Performance Appraisals in the Organization

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 2.3, a majority of respondents (70%) indicated that appraisals are usually conducted by the head of the department. This suggests that departmental heads play a central role in evaluating employee performance, likely due to their direct oversight of staff and familiarity with departmental tasks and objectives.

Meanwhile, 20% of respondents reported that their immediate supervisor conducts the appraisal, highlighting that direct line managers also play a significant role in evaluating performance. Appraisals conducted by immediate

supervisors can enhance relevance and accuracy, as these managers closely observe daily work and contributions.

Only 10% of respondents indicated that the HR department conducts appraisals, suggesting that HR's role is limited to administrative or oversight functions rather than direct evaluation of employee performance.

Interestingly, 0% of respondents selected "others", indicating that no alternative personnel or external evaluators are involved in the appraisal process.

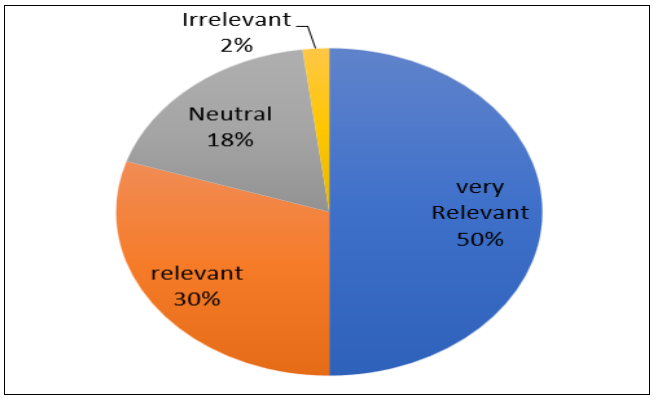


Fig 2.4: Employees' Rating of the Relevance of the Appraisal Method in Their Department

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 2.4, 50% of respondents rated the appraisal method as very relevant, indicating that half of the employees perceive the system as highly suitable and applicable to their roles. These respondents likely feel that the appraisal criteria and methods accurately capture performance expectations, provide useful feedback, and support personal and departmental objectives.

Additionally, 30% of respondents considered the appraisal method relevant, showing that a substantial portion of employees finds the system useful, though perhaps not optimally aligned with all performance dimensions.

18% of respondents remained neutral, suggesting uncertainty or mixed experiences regarding the appraisal method's applicability. This group may perceive that while some aspects of the appraisal system are useful, others are less aligned with job responsibilities or performance goals.

Only a small proportion, 2% of respondents, rated the method as irrelevant, indicating that very few employees find the appraisal system inappropriate or unhelpful for evaluating their performance.

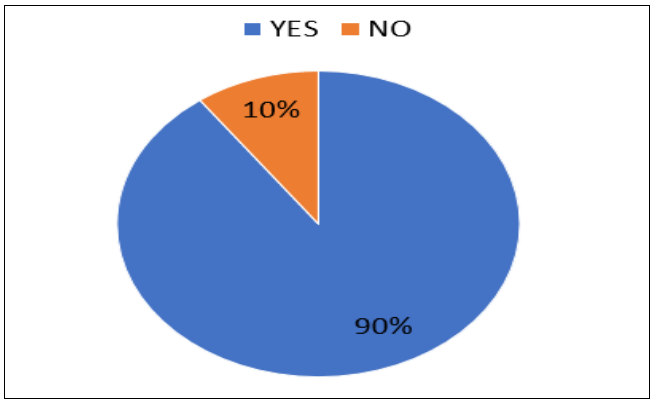


Fig 2.5: Are employees trained on how the performance appraisal process works

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 2.5, 90% of respondents indicated that they have been trained on the appraisal process. This high percentage demonstrates that the organization has made significant efforts to familiarize employees with the system, including its purpose, methodology, and expectations. Training likely equips employees with the knowledge needed to participate actively in appraisals, understand their performance feedback, and align their work with organizational goals.

Conversely, 10% of respondents reported that they have not received training on the appraisal process. This minority highlights a gap where some employees may not fully understand how appraisals are conducted, potentially leading to confusion, misperceptions, or disengagement. Ensuring that all employees receive comprehensive training would improve understanding, transparency, and the overall credibility of the performance appraisal system.

Section C: Effectiveness of Annual Perfomance Appraisal System

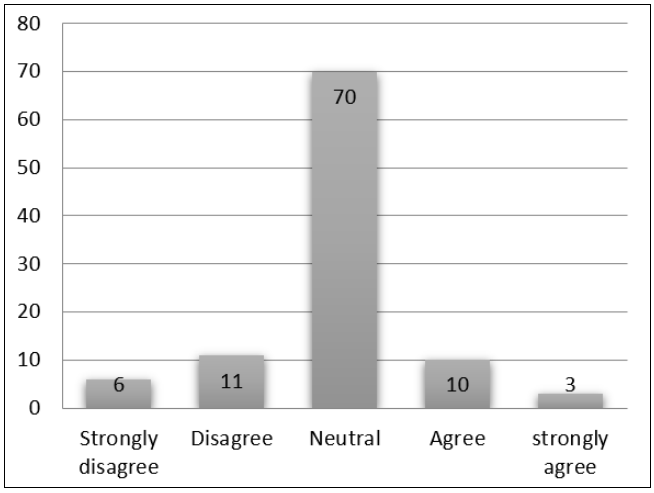


Fig 3.1: The Annual Performance Appraisal System Clearly Communicates Performance Expectations

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 3.1, the majority of respondents, 70%, were neutral, indicating uncertainty about whether performance expectations are clearly communicated. This suggests that a significant portion of employees may not fully understand the appraisal criteria or how their performance aligns with organizational objectives. The neutrality could stem from inconsistent communication from supervisors, lack of follow-up or limited involvement of employees in setting performance targets.

In contrast, 10% of respondents agreed and 3% strongly agreed that performance expectations are clearly communicated. These respondents likely have experienced clear guidance regarding their roles, goals, and the standards by which their performance is evaluated. Such clarity helps employees understand their responsibilities and focus their efforts on achieving set targets.

On the other hand, 11% of respondents disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed, suggesting that some employees perceive the system as failing to provide sufficient clarity on what is expected of them. This lack of communication may result in confusion, misalignment of individual and organizational objectives, and reduced performance.

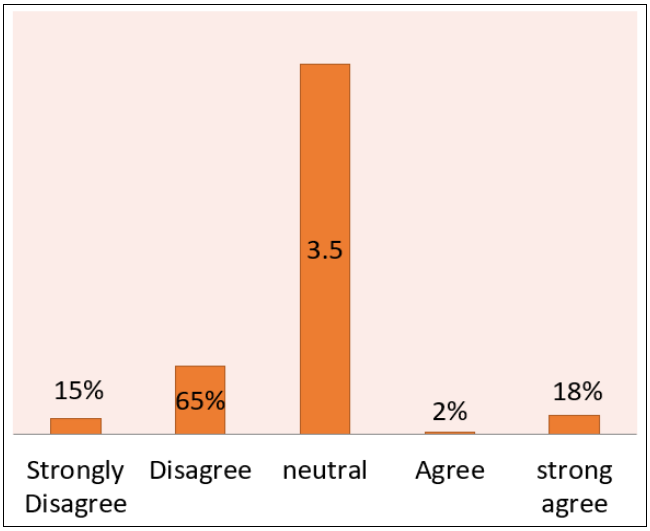


Fig 3.2: The Annual Performance Appraisal System is Conducted in a Fair and Transparent Manner

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 3.2, only 2% of respondents agreed and 18% strongly agreed that the appraisal system is conducted in a fair and transparent manner. This indicates that a relatively small portion of employees perceive the process as equitable and open. These respondents likely experience consistent evaluation practices, clear communication of performance criteria, and opportunities to provide input or appeal decisions.

However, a significant proportion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction: 65% disagreed and 15% strongly disagreed, suggesting that the majority of employees feel that the appraisal system lacks fairness and transparency. These perceptions could result from favoritism, bias, unclear evaluation criteria, or inconsistencies in how appraisals are conducted across departments. Such negative perceptions undermine employee confidence in the system, reduce trust in management, and can negatively affect motivation and morale.

Meanwhile, 3.5% of respondents were neutral, reflecting uncertainty or indifference about the fairness and transparency of the appraisal process. These respondents may have limited involvement in the appraisal process or have experienced mixed results that make it difficult to form a clear opinion.

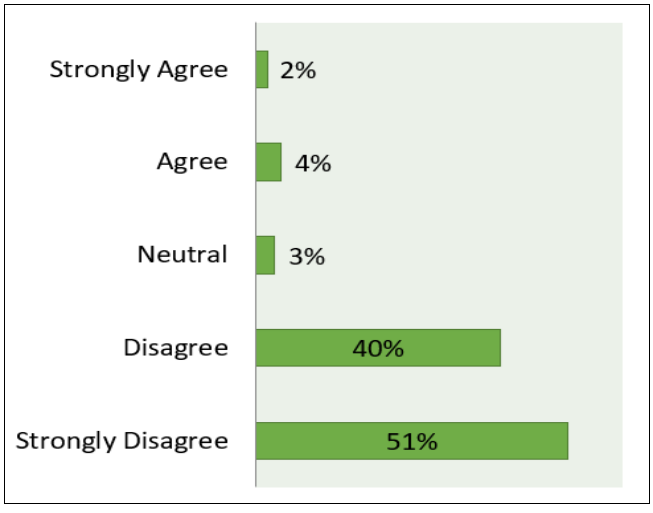


Fig 3.3: The Annual Performance Appraisal System Provides Feedback That Helps Improve Performance

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 3.3, only 2% of respondents strongly agreed and 4% agreed that the appraisal system provides feedback that helps improve performance. This indicates that a very small portion of employees find the feedback received from appraisals constructive or actionable.

Meanwhile, 3% of respondents were neutral, suggesting some uncertainty or limited engagement with the feedback process. This may indicate that these employees are either not actively involved in discussions following appraisal outcomes or do not observe tangible effects from feedback.

Conversely, a significant majority expressed dissatisfaction with the feedback process: 40% disagreed and 51% strongly disagreed that the appraisal system provides helpful feedback. The combined 91% strongly indicates that most employees perceive the system as ineffective in offering meaningful guidance to improve performance. Reasons for this perception may include delayed feedback, vague or non-specific comments, lack of follow-up, or a perception that feedback is influenced by bias or favoritism.

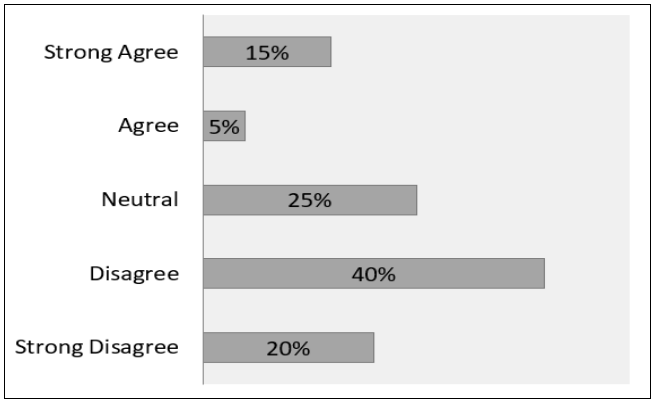


Fig 3.4: The Annual Performance Appraisal System and its Role in Identifying Training and Development Needs

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 3.4, 15% of respondents strongly agreed and 5% agreed that the appraisal system helps in identifying training and development needs. This indicates that only a small portion of employees perceive the system as effective in supporting skill enhancement and professional development. These respondents likely experienced meaningful evaluations where gaps in knowledge or competencies were clearly highlighted, followed by appropriate development plans.

However, a notable 25% of respondents were neutral, suggesting uncertainty or lack of awareness regarding the appraisal system's role in identifying training needs. This neutrality may indicate that employees are either not involved in follow-up processes after appraisal or have not received adequate communication on training opportunities based on their appraisal outcomes.

Conversely, a significant proportion of employees expressed dissatisfaction with the system: 40% disagreed and 20% strongly disagreed that the appraisal system assists in identifying training and development needs. This combined 60% indicates that the majority of respondents feel the system fails to serve this important function. Possible reasons could include inconsistent implementation of appraisal results, limited linkage between performance assessments and training programs, or a perception that appraisals are conducted mainly for administrative purposes rather than for employee development.

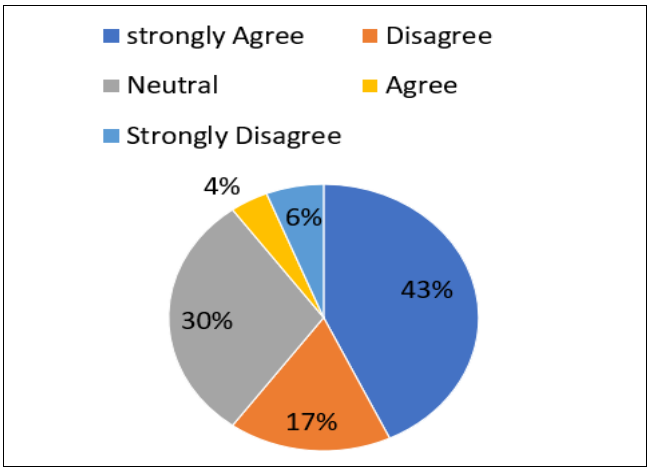


Fig 3.5: The Annual Performance Appraisal System and its Contribution to Staff Motivation and Morale

According to the data presented in Fig 3.5, 43% of respondents strongly agreed that the performance appraisal system contributes positively to motivation and morale. This indicates that nearly half of the workforce recognizes the appraisal process as a motivating factor, likely because it provides feedback, acknowledges achievements, and identifies areas for professional growth. Employees in this category may feel valued and supported, which can enhance engagement and commitment to their roles. Interestingly, only 4% of respondents agreed, which suggests that while some employees acknowledge a positive impact, the effect may not be as strong or consistent across the organization. A significant portion, 30% of respondents, was neutral, indicating uncertainty about the appraisal system's effect on motivation and morale. This could result from inconsistencies in implementation, inadequate feedback, or a perception that appraisal outcomes are not linked to tangible incentives or recognition. Neutral responses highlight the need for management to ensure that appraisal results are meaningful and effectively communicated to employees.
Meanwhile, 17% of respondents disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed, reflecting a notable proportion of employees who feel that the appraisal system does not enhance motivation or morale. These employees may perceive the process as biased, subjective, or primarily administrative, with limited practical impact on their job satisfaction or engagement.

Section D: Relationship between Performance Appraisal and Work Performance in Local Authourities

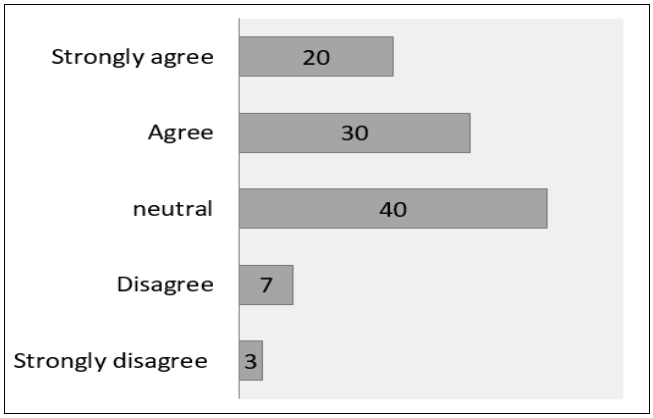


Fig 4.1: The Extent to which Performance Appraisal has Improved Service Delivery to the Public

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 4.1, 40% of respondents were neutral regarding the impact of performance appraisal on service delivery. This suggests that a significant portion of employees were either unsure or had not directly observed a clear improvement in public service outcomes as a result of the appraisal process. The neutral stance may reflect inconsistencies in how appraisals are implemented or a lack of clear communication about how individual performance influences service delivery.
Additionally, 30% of respondents agreed and 20% strongly agreed that performance appraisal has improved service delivery. This combined 50% indicates that half of the workforce perceives a positive link between appraisals and better public service outcomes. Employees in this group likely recognize that performance evaluations help identify gaps in skills, improve accountability, and motivate staff to deliver services efficiently and effectively.
On the other hand, 7% of respondents disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed, suggesting that a small minority do not perceive any meaningful impact of the appraisal system on service delivery. These respondents may consider appraisals to be largely administrative or symbolic, with little practical influence on daily operations or public service quality.

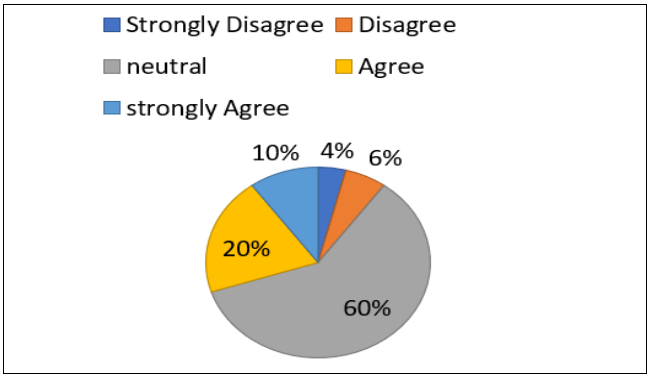


Fig 4.2: The Extent to which Performance Appraisal has Increased Employee Productivity

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 4.2, 60% of respondents were neutral on whether performance appraisal has led to improved productivity. This majority response suggests that many employees are uncertain about the real impact of the appraisal process on their work performance. The neutrality could be attributed to factors such as inadequate follow-up on appraisal results, limited communication of performance expectations, or the perception that appraisals are conducted mainly for administrative purposes rather than for actual performance improvement.
Furthermore, 20% of respondents agreed and 10% strongly agreed that performance appraisal has contributed to increased productivity. This 30% combined response indicates that a notable portion of employees have experienced positive effects from the appraisal system, such as better goal alignment, increased motivation, and improved clarity of job expectations. These employees may be benefiting from well-structured performance evaluations that provide constructive feedback and opportunities for professional development.
On the other hand, 6% of respondents disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed, suggesting that a small proportion of employees do not perceive any improvement in productivity

resulting from the appraisal process. Such perceptions could stem from concerns about bias, lack of objectivity, or the failure to link appraisal outcomes with tangible rewards or recognition.

Table 4.3: The Extent to which Performance Appraisal Promotes Accountability and Transparency in Operations

Responses	Percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	9%
Disagree	21%
Neutral	30%
Agree	50%
Strong agree	0%

According to the data presented in Table 4.3, 50% of respondents agreed that performance appraisal contributes to improved accountability and transparency in operations. This finding suggests that half of the workforce believes the appraisal system helps to establish clear performance expectations, enhances responsibility, and encourages ethical conduct. Employees who view the system positively may have experienced fair evaluations and constructive feedback that foster openness and trust between supervisors and subordinates.

However, 30% of respondents were neutral, indicating uncertainty or mixed experiences regarding the role of the appraisal process in ensuring transparency and accountability. This may reflect inconsistencies in the way appraisals are conducted across different departments or a lack of communication about how evaluation results are utilized. Some employees might also feel detached from the process if they are not actively involved in discussions or follow-ups after assessments.

On the other hand, 21% of respondents disagreed and 9% strongly disagreed with the statement, showing that a significant minority do not perceive the appraisal system as promoting transparency and accountability. These respondents may believe that the system is influenced by favoritism, lacks objectivity, or fails to provide clear and timely feedback. Such perceptions point to weaknesses in implementation and highlight the need for improved fairness and openness in the evaluation process.

It is notable that none of the respondents (0%) strongly agreed that performance appraisal enhances accountability and transparency, implying that even those who view it favorably believe there is still room for improvement.

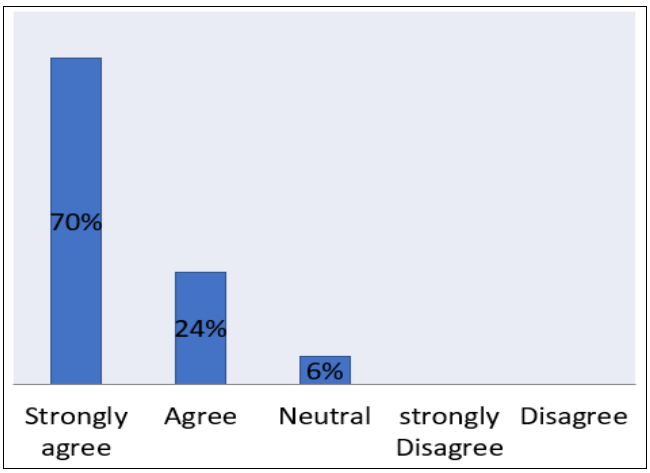


Fig 4.4: The Extent to which Performance Appraisal Contributes to Improved Service Quality

According to the findings presented in Fig 4.4, a significant majority of respondents, 70%, indicated that they strongly agree that performance appraisal contributes to improved service quality. This overwhelming response demonstrates that most employees recognize the value of the appraisal system as a mechanism for identifying strengths and weaknesses, promoting accountability, and motivating staff to perform better. Employees who are regularly evaluated and provided with constructive feedback tend to align their work output with institutional goals, leading to improved efficiency and higher service standards.

A further 24% of respondents agreed with the statement, reinforcing the positive perception that performance appraisals play a vital role in enhancing service delivery. This group may have observed that the appraisal process helps improve communication between supervisors and subordinates, clarifies expectations, and encourages a sense of responsibility and commitment to excellence.

Meanwhile, 5% of respondents remained neutral, possibly reflecting a lack of clear understanding or limited personal experience with the direct impact of appraisals on service delivery. These respondents might not have seen tangible changes resulting from appraisal outcomes or may not be fully engaged in the performance review process.

Notably, none of the respondents (0%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, which indicates a strong consensus among employees that performance appraisals have a positive influence on service quality within local authorities. This unanimity underscores the importance of maintaining and continually improving the appraisal system as a strategic management tool for fostering better performance and accountability.

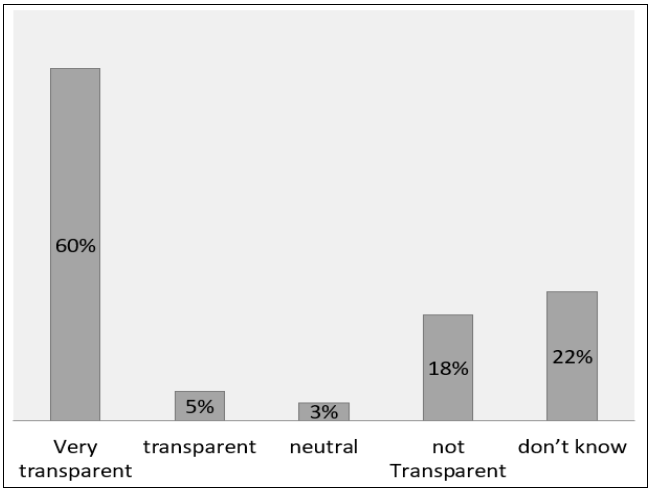


Fig 4.5: Transparency of the Appraisal Process

According to the findings illustrated in Fig 4.5, 60% of the respondents indicated that the appraisal process is very transparent; suggesting that a majority of employees believe the system is conducted openly and fairly. These respondents reported that they are well-informed about the appraisal criteria, evaluation procedures, and performance expectations. They also noted that their supervisors provide adequate feedback and involve them in discussions regarding their performance outcomes. This demonstrates that, in most cases, management has made efforts to foster openness and accountability in the appraisal process, which is essential for promoting trust and motivation among employees.

However, 5% of the respondents described the process as only transparent, implying that while certain elements of the process are clear, there remains room for improvement. These respondents may experience occasional inconsistencies or communication gaps, where appraisal discussions are not as detailed or participatory as expected.
Meanwhile, 3% of respondents remained neutral, indicating that they were either uncertain or indifferent about the level of transparency. This may suggest that some employees have limited exposure to the appraisal process or have not received sufficient information to form an opinion.
On the other hand, 18% of respondents believed that the appraisal process is not transparent. These employees expressed concerns about unclear performance standards, insufficient communication of results, and perceived favoritism in rating and evaluation. Such perceptions of bias and lack of clarity can undermine employee morale and confidence in the appraisal system.
Additionally, 22% of respondents stated that they do not know whether the appraisal process is transparent or not. This high percentage reflects a gap in communication and awareness, where employees are either not fully involved in the appraisal activities or lack access to the procedures and outcomes. It highlights the need for management to sensitize staff on the importance of the appraisal system and ensure that all employees are adequately informed about how assessments are conducted and used.

Section E: Limitation of the Annual Performance Apraisal System

1.) Challenges or Limitations Faced with the Current Appraisal System

Challenges or Limitations	Percentage (%)
Lack of Objectivity	**40%**
Delay in conducting appraisal	**17%%**
Inadequate feedback	**2%**
Bias and favoritism	**40%**
Lack of follow up on results	**1%**

The findings of the study revealed several challenges and limitations associated with the current performance appraisal system. A significant portion of respondents (40%) cited lack of objectivity as a major concern. Many employees felt that appraisals are often influenced by personal opinions rather than factual performance indicators. This lack of objectivity undermines the fairness and credibility of the entire system, leading to dissatisfaction and demotivation among staff. When appraisals are not grounded in measurable performance data, employees may perceive favoritism or bias, which can reduce trust in management and weaken overall organizational morale.
Another 17% of respondents highlighted delays in conducting appraisals as a persistent issue. These delays result in outdated performance reviews that fail to reflect current employee efforts or challenges. Timely appraisals are crucial for providing relevant feedback, aligning employee goals with organizational objectives, and identifying areas for professional development. When the process is delayed, opportunities for timely intervention and performance improvement are lost, reducing the effectiveness of the appraisal system.
A smaller percentage (2%) pointed to inadequate feedback as a limitation. In many cases, feedback provided after appraisals is either too general or insufficiently detailed to guide employee improvement. Effective performance appraisal systems should include constructive and continuous feedback mechanisms that help employees understand their strengths and weaknesses and outline actionable steps for growth. The absence of comprehensive feedback diminishes the learning potential of the process and limits employee development.
Similarly, bias and favoritism, cited by another 40% of respondents, was identified as one of the most serious challenges. Employees expressed concern that some supervisors tend to rate individuals based on personal relationships rather than actual job performance. This practice not only demoralizes hardworking staff but also creates divisions within teams. It also discourages a culture of meritocracy, as employees may feel that their efforts will not be fairly recognized regardless of performance quality.
Lastly, lack of follow-up on appraisal results, noted by 1% of respondents, presents another weakness in the system. In most cases, performance reviews are conducted and documented, but little is done to implement recommendations or monitor progress. Without proper follow-up, the appraisal process becomes a mere formality rather than a strategic tool for performance enhancement. Regular monitoring and follow-up are essential to ensure that identified weaknesses are addressed and that both employees and supervisors remain accountable for agreed-upon performance goals.

2.) What suggestions do you have for have for improving the annual performance appraisal system?

According to the findings of the study, respondents offered several insightful suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS). A significant portion of the participants, accounting for 30%, proposed that the system should prioritize the development of job descriptions that are well-aligned with the SMART principles—ensuring that employee performance objectives are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. They emphasized that when performance expectations are clearly defined using the SMART framework, employees are more likely to understand what is expected of them, while supervisors can evaluate performance more objectively. This would in turn foster transparency, accountability, and consistency in the appraisal process across all departments. Clear and measurable performance standards help eliminate ambiguity and make it easier to assess the actual contribution of each employee to organizational goals.
Another 25% of the respondents underscored the need to develop and disseminate clear APAS guidelines. They noted that one of the major weaknesses in the current system is the lack of standardized and well-understood procedures guiding the appraisal process. Many employees and supervisors reportedly lack adequate knowledge about how appraisals are conducted, the criteria used, and the implications of the results. By providing comprehensive and accessible APAS guidelines, management can enhance fairness and ensure that all staff members are well-informed about the process from the beginning to the end. The availability of such guidelines would also minimize inconsistencies in appraisal practices and promote uniformity across different departments and levels within the organization.

Furthermore, 20% of the respondents suggested that regular training should be provided for raters or supervisors who are directly responsible for conducting performance appraisals. They argued that the quality and credibility of performance evaluations largely depend on the competence of the supervisors. Without proper training, raters may rely on personal biases, subjective judgments, or inconsistent standards when evaluating employees. Therefore, continuous capacity-building programs can equip supervisors with the necessary knowledge, skills, and ethical principles to conduct appraisals effectively and fairly. Training would also ensure that the appraisal process is used not just as a tool for evaluation, but also as a mechanism for employee development, coaching, and motivation.

Another 20% of respondents highlighted the importance of securing top management buy-in and accountability in the performance appraisal system. They explained that when top leadership actively supports and participates in the process, it sets the tone for the rest of the organization and underscores the seriousness of performance management. Leadership commitment ensures that the results of appraisals are acted upon, whether it involves rewarding high performers, addressing performance gaps, or implementing recommendations for improvement. Moreover, management accountability helps build trust among employees and strengthens the credibility of the entire performance management framework.

In addition, 10% of the respondents proposed enhancing collaborative target setting and promoting regular feedback throughout the appraisal period. They observed that in many cases, performance goals are imposed by supervisors without sufficient input from employees, which can lead to low ownership and poor motivation. By encouraging joint goal setting, employees become more engaged and committed to achieving the targets they helped to define. Moreover, introducing regular feedback sessions allows employees to monitor their progress, make adjustments where necessary, and improve continuously rather than waiting until the end of the appraisal cycle. Regular performance discussions also create an open communication culture between supervisors and subordinates, which is essential for continuous improvement and team cohesion.

A smaller percentage of respondents, representing 3%, suggested instituting a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for the APAS. They argued that such a mechanism would make it easier to assess whether the appraisal system is being implemented as intended and whether it is achieving its objectives. Continuous monitoring helps identify challenges early and allows management to make timely improvements. Similarly, evaluation provides valuable insights into the impact of the appraisal system on employee productivity, motivation, and overall organizational performance. Meanwhile, 2% of the respondents called for the establishment of a transparent reward and sanction framework linked directly to appraisal outcomes. They noted that employees are more likely to take performance evaluations seriously if they see a clear connection between appraisal results and tangible consequences, such as recognition, promotions, or corrective measures. A transparent and equitable reward system enhances motivation and fairness, which in turn boosts overall productivity.

4.1 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide critical insights into the effectiveness, challenges, and employee perceptions of the Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS) in local authorities. The discussion is structured around key themes derived from the study objectives, including demographic influences, appraisal system characteristics, effectiveness, impact on employee performance and motivation, and limitations of the system.

4.1.1 Types and Frequency of Appraisal Systems

The study revealed that the Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS) is the most commonly used method (60%), followed by 360-degree feedback (20%) and Management by Objectives (15%). The prevalence of APAS reflects the traditional reliance on structured, periodic evaluations in public institutions. While APAS provides formal assessment opportunities, its effectiveness may be limited by delayed feedback and rigid structures, as highlighted by the respondents' dissatisfaction with transparency and communication. The use of 360-degree feedback in some departments indicates a shift toward more holistic evaluation approaches that promote self-awareness, accountability, and multidimensional performance assessment (Pulakos, 2017).

Appraisals are conducted most frequently on a quarterly basis (45%), while annual (23%) and semi-annual (30%) appraisals are also practiced. Quarterly appraisals are consistent with best practices in performance management, allowing for timely feedback and continuous improvement. However, the variation in frequency across departments suggests inconsistencies that may affect the perceived fairness and effectiveness of the system.

The responsibility for conducting appraisals primarily rests with departmental heads (70%) and immediate supervisors (20%), with limited involvement from HR (10%). While departmental heads are familiar with staff performance, over-reliance on supervisors can introduce subjectivity, bias, and inconsistency, particularly if raters lack sufficient training.

4.1.2 Effectiveness of the Appraisal System

Clarity of Performance Expectations: The majority of respondents (70%) were neutral regarding whether performance expectations were clearly communicated, suggesting uncertainty and inconsistent guidance from supervisors. Effective performance management requires clearly defined expectations and goals to align individual efforts with organizational objectives (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020) [13]. The lack of clarity may contribute to employees' low understanding of appraisal outcomes and reduce overall motivation.

Fairness and Transparency: Only 20% of respondents perceived the system as fair and transparent, whereas 80% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates that perceived bias, favoritism, or unclear criteria undermine trust in the appraisal system. Literature suggests that fairness and transparency are crucial in fostering employee engagement, commitment, and acceptance of appraisal outcomes (Adler & Borys, 2017).

Feedback Mechanisms: A significant proportion of employees (91%) reported that the system does not provide useful feedback for improving performance. Feedback is central to employee development, as it identifies gaps, reinforces strengths, and encourages continuous learning.

The findings indicate that APAS is failing to serve this key function, likely due to delayed appraisals, vague feedback, and limited follow-up on developmental needs.

Identification of Training Needs: Only 20% of respondents agreed that the appraisal system helps identify training and development needs, while 60% disagreed. This highlights a disconnect between evaluation outcomes and employee development initiatives, reducing the system's ability to enhance skills and improve organizational performance (Pulakos, 2017).

Motivation and Morale: Despite several shortcomings, 47% of respondents indicated that appraisals contribute to staff motivation and morale. This suggests that while the system has some positive influence, its impact is limited by perceived unfairness, lack of constructive feedback, and poor follow-up. Motivation is closely tied to the perceived usefulness and fairness of performance evaluations, as supported by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which emphasizes recognition and achievement as key motivators.

4.1.3 Relationship Between Appraisal and Performance

Service Delivery: Half of the respondents (50%) acknowledged that appraisals have improved service delivery, while 40% remained neutral. This indicates a moderate positive effect of appraisals on performance outcomes, with a notable proportion of employees uncertain about the link between evaluation and service quality. Improved service delivery is likely observed where appraisals are better implemented and linked to actionable performance goals.

Productivity: Sixty percent of respondents were neutral regarding increased productivity, suggesting that APAS may not consistently translate into improved work performance. This supports prior findings that performance appraisals in public sector organizations often fail to impact productivity unless tied to tangible rewards, training, and ongoing feedback (Dessler, 2019).

Accountability and Transparency: Half of the respondents agreed that appraisals promote accountability and transparency, though no one strongly agreed. While the system contributes to some degree of operational oversight, perceptions of bias and inconsistency limit its effectiveness in establishing full accountability.

Service Quality: A majority (94%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that appraisals contribute to improved service quality. This indicates that when implemented effectively, performance evaluations are perceived as instrumental in aligning employee efforts with organizational objectives and promoting high standards of public service.

4.1.4 Limitations of the Appraisal System

The study highlighted several critical challenges affecting APAS. Lack of objectivity (40%) and bias/favoritism (40%) were the most cited issues, reflecting concerns over fairness and credibility. Delays in conducting appraisals (17%) and inadequate feedback (2%) further limit the system's effectiveness. The minimal follow-up on appraisal results (1%) points to rthe systemic weakness of using APAS primarily as an administrative tool rather than as a mechanism for employee development and organizational improvement. These findings are consistent with other studies in the public sector, which note that appraisal systems often fail to achieve their intended outcomes due to implementation gaps, managerial incompetence, and limited linkages to employee development and incentives (Pulakos, 2017; Dessler, 2019).

5. Conclusions

The study on the Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS) reveals significant challenges, with 60% of respondents using APAS, but 80% disagreeing that it's fair and transparent. Additionally, 91% report that the system doesn't provide useful feedback, and only 20% agree that it helps identify training needs. Lack of objectivity (40%) and bias/favoritism (40%) are the most cited limitations. Despite this, 47% of respondents indicate that appraisals contribute to staff motivation and morale, and 50% acknowledge improved service delivery. The study concludes that APAS has inconsistencies and challenges affecting its effectiveness in improving employee performance and accountability.

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