

Teacher Appraisal: the Experiences of Kenyan Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract

This paper seeks to report the findings of a study focusing on the state of teacher appraisal in Kenyan secondary schools and to argue for an improved (facilitating) model of teacher appraisal. The study adopted a qualitatively-oriented case study using multiple cases and drawing on multiple methods of data collection. The findings indicate that teacher appraisal policies and practices in Kenyan secondary schools exhibit weaknesses, which need to be urgently addressed if teacher appraisal is to be used to improve the quality of teaching and education in Kenya. Of the eight administrative regions in Kenya, only one region was selected for data gathering. The reason for restricting the scope of the study related to availability of time in the first instance and the need for in-depth investigation. The research was also limited to a study of six secondary schools. While including more schools in the sample would have widened the focus of the study, limited time and funding made such a wider study prohibitive. Moreover, the six schools, consisting of two private schools, and four public schools of various sizes, provided the opportunity to study Kenyan secondary schools in a variety of contexts. There is a dearth of research-based information on teacher appraisal in third world countries – especially Kenya – and this paper will therefore in itself be beneficial to education policy makers. This paper offers a more sophisticated conceptualization of teacher appraisal, thereby laying a foundation for subsequent investigations. Such a conceptualization should serve as a basis, not only for evaluating the existing teacher appraisal system in Kenya, but also for offering guidance for future practice and policy.

Keywords: Teachers, Performance appraisal, Quality assurance, Management accountability, Professional education, Kenya

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