

# Echoes from the Frontlines: The Perceptions of HRM Practitioners on the Implementation of Performance Management in the Tanzanian Public Service

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## Abstract

*This paper reports the perceptions of Human Resource Management practitioners within the Tanzanian Public Service regarding the performance management practices. The study employed a qualitative research design to explore the perceptions of human resource practitioners who attended proficiency examinations for Human Resource Officers review classes at the Tanzania Public Service College, Dar es Salaam Campus in August 2023. Through focus group interviews and thematic analysis, the study reveals several critical findings. The implementation of institutional performance contracts faces significant defies, with most public institutions not adhering to these contracts, leading to a lack of accountability. Furthermore, the study revealed that, individual performance contracts are often seen as bureaucratic requirements, detached from their potential to enhance employee development and achievement. Also, the implementation of individual performance contracts is associated with numerous challenges, which include employees' reluctance to complete performance contract forms, political interference and a lack of resources. In addition, the study identified that a one-size-fits-all approach to performance management is unrealistic. Public institutions should be allowed to design their performance management tools tailored to their specific needs. Finally, the study observed that performance appraisal data within the public service are underutilized for administrative decisions, primarily serving promotion purpose because of its legal requirement. Among other things, the study recommends Public Service Institutions in Tanzania to strengthen the adherence to individual and institutional performance contracts and to the regulations that require the use of performance data for various administrative decisions, thus fostering a more comprehensive approach to employee development and performance improvement.*

**Keywords:** Performance Management, Public Service, Human Resource Management and Human Resource Management Practitioners

## 1.0 Introduction

The improvement of government performance has been the primary goal of research, policy, and reform in the field of public administration and management for several decades. Governments across the globe are actively seeking to enhance their overall performance across multiple facets, including ensuring the careful use of public resources, the attainment of program objectives, and the advancement of transparency, accountability, citizen engagement, and public gratification (Ohemeng *et al.*, 2018; Gerrish, 2016; Ohemeng, 2011; Taylor, 2015). It is worth noting that performance management has gained significant

importance for government organizations due to enlarged expectations from political actors and citizens, who demand greater accountability and evidence of effectiveness in addressing complex societal problems (Alford, 2012; Boselie, 2010; de Waal, 2010; Godard, 2004; Jupp & Younger, 2004; Klijn, 2010; Thusi, 2023; Mohangi & Nyika, 2023).

In Tanzania, within the last two decades, the government has witnessed major reforms in the management of its public service. The reforms have been thought to transform Public Service Institutions from a predominantly input-process outlook to an output-and-outcome basis. This has been supported by the replacement of the former cost accounting framework with the growth accounting, government endorsement of the Public Service Reforms Program (PSRP), and the adaptation of Public Service Management and Employment Policy as a guiding framework in the management of public service (Bana, 2009; Sulle, 2014; Rugumyamheto, 2005).

The central emphasis of Tanzania's Public Service Reform Program (PSRP) is on performance management. The execution of the Public Service Reform Program (PSRP) in Tanzania reflects the government's attempt to enhance the quality of public service delivery and policy management. Thus, public organizations are mandated to implement a Performance Management System (PMS) in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their service delivery and to guarantee the realization of value for money (Bana, 2009).

Despite almost two decades of rhetoric on outputs and outcomes-related management principles advocated by New Public Management (NPM), the high levels of performance reporting in Tanzanian Public Service remain illusory. However, while the introduction of performance management systems in Tanzania's Public Service was initially met with optimism and high expectations, the implementation of such systems encountered a crowd of obstacles that have contributed to unsatisfactory outcomes.

A heuristic review of the literature indicates that most Tanzanian Public Service institutions are still struggling with performance management (Bana, 2009; Sulle, 2014; Mwita & Andrea, 2019; Nchimbi, 2019; Mbwambo & Ngowi, 2019). Recently, the unsatisfactory implementation of performance management has attracted the attention of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Her Excellence, Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, when addressing Ministers and Deputy Ministers at Dodoma's Treasury Square in January 2022. The President openly expressed her dissatisfaction with the implementation of performance management in the Tanzanian Public Service and instructed the Minister responsible for Public Service Management to take immediate action.

Over time, a notable trend in the realm of performance management research within the public service, particularly in Tanzania, has been predominantly concentrated on a single organization and focused on participants other than HRM practitioners, who are the key actors in the implementation of performance management within the public service. This pattern is evident in the works of scholars such as Mbwambo and Ngowi (2019), Mwita and Andrea (2019), Sulle (2014), Juma *et al.* (2021), and Nchimbi (2019). In the context of suggesting potential paths for further research, Nchimbi (2019) was of the view that, in order to accomplish a broader and more meaningful understanding of the implementation of performance management within the public sector, it is imperative to transcend the boundaries of a single organization. The focus should also shift towards an exploration of the perspectives and experiences of human resource practitioners themselves, who are the key players in the implementation of performance management within the public service.

In the light of the preceding observations, this study intended to explore the perceptions of human resource management practitioners on the implementation of performance management in the Tanzanian Public Service. The study is an attempt to provide a comprehensive understanding of the status of performance management implementation in the Tanzanian Public Service from the experiences of human resource management practitioners. The study was guided by three questions, (1) What are the experiences of human resource practitioners regarding the implementation of institutional performance contracts in the Tanzanian Public Service? (2) What are the experiences of human resource management professionals regarding the implementation of individual performance contracts in the Tanzanian Public Service? And (3), what are the experiences of human resource management professionals regarding the use of performance appraisal data in the Tanzanian Public Service?

The paper is organized into six sections: Section 1 provides introduction and background, Section 2 covers literature review and comprises a description of performance management practices based on the examination of various regulatory documents and previous research. Section Three presents the methodology. Section 4 presents the main results and discussions, and Section 5 presents the conclusion and recommendations.

## **2.0 Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Performance Management in Tanzania Public Service: Legal and Regulatory Framework**

The Public Service Management and Employment Policy (PSMEP) of 1998, as amended in 2008, is the main document that provides a foundation for performance management in the Tanzania Public Service. The Government of Tanzania adopted the policy in May 1998 with the primary goal of introducing principles, characters, and practices that shall guide the transformation of public service in Tanzania into a performing and dynamic meritocracy (Bana, 2009). The policy identified major weaknesses in the management system in public service institutions that hindered the performance and service improvement for the public. The policy calls for management systems that are efficient and effective and hold public service institutions and individual employees accountable for performance and results.

The second legal document regarding the implementation of performance management in Tanzanian Public Service is the Public Service Act, Cap. 365 R.E. 2019. The Act specifies that public service organizations shall manage performance in a consultative, supportive, and non-discriminatory manner to enhance organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability on the use of resources and the achievement of results. Performance management processes should link to broad and consistent plans for staff development and align with institutional strategic goals.

The Act also requires that every public service organization pursues results-oriented management and an open performance review and appraisal system. Regarding the use of performance management data, the Act stipulates that, among other things, every promotion in the public service shall be made by considering performance and efficiency of performing and executing duties by the employee.

Furthermore, the Act establishes the Public Service Commission, which, among other things, is mandated to facilitate, monitor, and evaluate the performance of officials in the service to secure results-oriented management and to call upon all executives in the service to account for their performance.

A detailed arrangement on the implementation of performance management in Tanzanian Public Service is provided in the Public Service Regulations 2022. According to the regulations, there must be a performance contract system as part of the Government's Performance Management System. This system is meant to help with the performance planning, strategy execution, and performance monitoring, reviews, assessments, and feedback during the implementation of annual goals and targets at the institution and individual public servant levels. Every organization within the public service shall operate performance contract systems, including institutional and individual performance contracts.

The regulations also specify that every Chief Executive Officer shall sign an institutional performance contract with his respective supervisor through the institutional performance contract system, and every public servant other than the Chief Executive Officer shall enter into a performance contract with their immediate supervisors through an Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS).

In institutional performance contracts, the regulations require every head of a public service institution to sign a performance contract with the government at the beginning of the financial year. At the end of the financial year, all public institutions shall conduct internal assessments, and the Permanent Secretary of Public Service Management (Utumishi) shall appoint an independent external panel to evaluate each public service institution on the implementation of the performance contract at the end of the financial year. The assessment shall include the level of implementation of annual objectives and targets using pre-determined performance metrics, determined issues, challenges, and success stories, and measures to be taken to address shortcomings.

At the individual level, the regulations demand every public employee in the public service other than Chief Executive Officers to sign individual staff performance contracts with their respective supervisors every year through the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS). The regulations further outline that every public employee shall be given feedback by their immediate supervisors on a continuous basis on the progress of their performance against the objectives and targets and shall be given advice and support to improve their performance.

The regulation also stipulates that, upon the completion of performance assessment at the end of the performance year, the performance assessment information shall be used as a base for informing training programs, planning for job rotation, awarding the best performing staff, making appointments to the higher posts, withholding performance awards and increments, and demotion and termination of appointments to a particular staff. The regulations therefore encourage Accounting Officers to use performance management results as the basis for making various administrative decisions.

## 2.2 Previous Studies

Many scholarly works particularly in recent years have been carried out on performance management in the public service in Africa. Within the wider perspective of this research, it is clear that there is a shared pattern in that African public bureaucracies continue to face challenges in their effort to effectively implement performance management systems. This observation underlines the complex characteristics of the public sector environment on the African continent.

Thusi (2023) conducted a study to analyse the challenges facing the public service in South Africa in the operation of performance management systems and identify their potential remedies. The study adopted a qualitative approach to meet the planned objectives by sourcing rich literature that communicates the challenges affecting the implementation of performance management systems and the possible benefits of these systems. The study results revealed that the personnel responsible for the implementation of the performance management system lacks the necessary skills for its successful implementation. This phenomenon presents a significant impediment to the successful implementation of performance management within the South African Public Service. The study also recognized performance management systems as a viable tool that has the potential of improving employees' performance within the South African Public Service. However, this enthusiastic stance depends on the successful and skilful execution of the performance management system and on linking it to other human resource management components such as training and rewards management.

A study by Bigabwenkya (2020) in Uganda, brought insights into a perspective regarding the adoption and implementation of performance management in the civil service for the Central and Local Governments of Uganda. The study reviewed 13 unpublished master's degree dissertations with primary data on performance management systems and practices in the civil service of Uganda from 2010 to 2019. The data were collected by practitioners who, at the time, were also students of Master's Degree in Management at the Uganda Management Institute (UMI), Kampala. The study revealed that, while performance management has been extensively employed in governmental organizations, its acceptance and effectiveness remain a subject of scrutiny. The study further revealed that, even though a percentage of civil workers demonstrate a strong dedication to the full implementation of performance management systems, a distinguished proportion display opposition or, in certain instances, even a violation of their established principles. The study suggests that the existing resistance among many civil workers in Uganda toward the adoption of the newly developed performance management system can be attributed to various significant variables. Firstly, there is a prevailing perception that the system is complicated and burdened with administrative complexities that can be exhausting to navigate. In addition, there is a lack of understanding regarding the perceived importance of the system, resulting in scepticism among individuals concerning the concrete advantages it may provide. Finally, a significant portion of civil servants perceive performance management as an obligatory duty rather than a fundamental component of their professional conduct, leading to a deficiency in authentic involvement.

Mwita and Andrea (2019) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of performance management in Tanzanian public health facilities. The primary data were collected through

questioners and interviews with Health Secretaries, who, according to the study, were regarded as personnel responsible for human resource management in public health facilities on Tanzania Mainland. The study revealed that many health workers in Tanzania do not understand well how to use the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS), the tool which was adopted by the Government of Tanzania since 2004. Also, the majority of employees displayed a lack of confidence regarding the effectiveness and impartiality of OPRAS. Finally, the study revealed that the limitation of resources among health facilities on the Tanzanian Mainland impedes the effective execution of performance management.

Nchimbi, 2019 conducted a study to evaluate whether the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS), as was used at Iramba District Council (IDC), is adequate at improving employees' performance. The study employed a cross-sectional design, and a sample of 80 respondents participated in the study. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The findings suggest that the majority of participants were of the view that OPRAS, as currently used at IDC, is not adequate for improving employees' performance and is not linked with other human resource management components, specifically training, reward management, and promotion. It was also found that the implementation of performance management at IDC is obstructed by a number of challenges, which include budget deficits, the absence of regular feedback from supervisors, and low commitment from the top management.

### **3.0 Methodology**

As mentioned in the previous section, the primary objective of this study was to explore the experiences of human resource management practitioners within the Tanzanian Public Service regarding performance management. Recognizing the complex and multifaceted nature of performance management, the study employed a qualitative research design to facilitate this investigation. This approach allowed the interpretation of the phenomena under examination through the meanings attributed to them by the participants.

This study involved 35 human resource management professionals from Tanzania Public Service who attended review classes for proficiency examinations for Human Resource Officers (PHR) at Tanzania Public Service College, Dar es Salaam Campus, in August 2023. Data were collected through focus group interviews, which allowed participants to comment, explain, and share their personal experiences regarding the implementation of performance management systems in their respective institutions. During focus group interviews, the researcher acted as a moderator, introduced questions to participants, and guided the discussions to ensure meaningful participation. Three focus group interviews were conducted, and each focus group interview lasted for approximately one and a half hours. Tables 1, 2, and 3 provide detailed information about participants' designation, organization, and years of experience.

At the end of the focus group interview sessions and careful transcription of the recorded discussions, the researcher got engaged with the initial phase of code generation. This process entailed the systematic creation of preliminary codes, which were subsequently cross-referenced and refined. This methodological approach closely matched with the framework established by Braun and Clarke (2006). For the analytical phase of this study,

the thematic analysis method was employed. The utilization of thematic analysis lends itself to a theoretically unbounded approach, affording a flexible and potent research tool. This method has the advantage of supplying a multifaceted and complex account of the collected data, thereby facilitating a comprehensive exploration of its diverse dimensions.

**Table 1: Demographic Information of Group 1 (A1–A12).**

ID Code	Designation	Organization	Years of Experience
A1	Human Resource Officer I	Kaliua District Council	7
A2	Human Resource Officer I	Immigration Office	8
A3	Human Resource Officer II	Kinondoni Municipal Council	8
A4	Human Resource Officer I	Lushoto District Council	5
A5	Human Resource Officer II	Kibaha Town Council	14
A6	Human Resource Officer I	Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS)	8
A7	Human Resource Officer I	Ministry Of Livestock and Fisheries	9
A8	Human Resource Officer I	Higher Education Student's Loans Board (HESLB)	9
A9	Human Resource Officer II	Kinondoni Municipal Council	10
A10	Senior Human Resource Officer II	Tanzania Posts Corporation	9
A11	Human Resource Officer II	Kilwa District Council	1
A12	Human Resource Officer II	Kilwa District Council	2

**Table 2: Demographic information of group 2 B1–B12).**

ID Code	Designation	Organization	Years of Experience
B1	Human Resource Officer II	The National Museum of Tanzania (NMT)	12
B2	Human Resource Officer I	National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA)	8
B3	Principal Human Resource Officer II	Kibaha Education Centre	20
B4	Principal Human Resource Officer I	Kibaha Education Centre	22
B5	Human Resource Officer I	Tanzania Airports Authority (TAA)	9
B6	Human Resource Officer I	Bunda Town Council	10
B7	Human Resource Officer II	National Institute of Transport (NIT)	10
B8	Human Resource Officer I	Rombo District Council	4
B9	Human Resource Officer I	Kinondoni Municipal Council	9
B10	Senior Human Resource Officer I	Business Registration and Licensing Agency	7

ID Code	Designation	Organization	Years of Experience
B11	Human Resource Officer I	Open University of Tanzania	6
B12	Human Resource Officer I	Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS)	9

**Table 3: Demographic information of group 3 (C1–C11)**

ID Code	Designation	Organization	Years of Experience
C1	Human Resource Officer I	Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS)	9
C2	Human Resource Officer I	Sugar Board of Tanzania	8
C3	Human Resource Officer I	Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy	6
C4	Human Resource Officer II	Njombe District Council	6
C5	Principal Human Resource Officer II	National Institute of Transport	18
C6	Human Resource Officer I	National Institute for Medical Research (NMR)	2
C7	Principal Human Resource Officer II	Tanzania Mining Commission	14
C8	Human Resource Officer I	Muhimbili Orthopaedic Institute	13
C9	Human Resource Officer II	Office of Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP)	13
C10	Human Resource Officer II	Dar es Salaam City Council	8
C11	Human Resource Officer II	Office of Regional Administrative Secretary -Kigoma	5

## 4.0 Results and Discussions

### 4.1 The Implementation of Institutional Performance Contracts

As previously highlighted, in accordance with the Public Service Regulations 2022, each public institution within the Tanzanian Public Service is mandated to sign an institutional performance contract with the government at the beginning of the fiscal year. Additionally, by the end of that same fiscal year, each institution is expected to undertake a self-assessment, while the Permanent Secretary of Public Service Management (Utumishi) appoints an external panel to evaluate the execution of the performance contract within every public service institution. The study wanted to understand the experiences of participants regarding the implementation of these regulations. The findings revealed a substantial discrepancy in adhering to these regulations. Participants were of the view that public service institutions do not engage in the signing of institutional performance contracts at the beginning of the fiscal year. Consequently, annual self-assessment



procedures are often not conducted, and the appointment of an independent panel by the Permanent Secretary of Public Service Management (Utumishi) to assess individual institutions is an uncommon event. Strangely, only two out of the 35 participants reported that their respective organizations engage in signing institutional performance contracts with the government.

This prevailing situation underscores a profound challenge in the effective execution of performance management within the Tanzanian Public Service. It is notably difficult to hold individual public servants accountable for their performance when the organizations themselves do not adhere to the foundational principles of accountability. The primary framework of Public Service Management and Employment Policy places an exceptional value on the management of public institutions guided by results-oriented principles. Accordingly, these anticipated outcomes should be outlined at the beginning of the fiscal year. The subsequent self-assessment and the appointment of an independent panel to investigate the achievements made by public organizations are pivotal steps in ensuring the effective delivery of public services. These findings highlight the pressing need for a reconsideration and enhancement of the implementation of performance management practices within the Tanzanian public service especially because studies (i.e., Simiyu, 2012; Ogugi, 2013) have confirmed that there is a strong relationship between effective implementation of institutional performance contracts and performance.

#### **4.2 The Implementation of Individual Performance Contracts**

The research also sought to explore the perspectives of human resource practitioners within the public service regarding the implementation of individual performance contracts in the Tanzanian Public Service. A specific question was posed to the participants,

*In accordance with public service regulations, every public service employee is obligated to enter into a performance contract with his or her superior at the beginning of the fiscal year and conduct mid-year and annual reviews at the end of the fiscal year. Could you please share your experiences regarding the implementation of this regulation within your institution?*

The study findings revealed a significant pattern. While public employees indeed engage in the formal act of signing performance contracts with their superiors, it became evident that these actions are often undertaken solely for the sake of compliance. Disappointingly, in many instances, the process appears detached from any genuine intent or expectation of improving employee performance, as perceived by participants. As one participant had this to say,

*The filling of OPRAS forms has become somewhat of a routine, especially when the Permanent Secretary of Public Service Management (Utumishi) issues guidelines for the promotion of public service employees, which require an employee to have filled out OPRAS forms for the past three years. Sometimes, you'll find employees being asked to fill out three-year ORAS forms all at once, which goes against the established procedures.*

The other participant made the following comment,

*OPRAS may or may not exist, and the employee may not see any consequences. There's no feedback, and there's no impact that the employee can feel from filling out OPRAS forms. It's as if, whether it exists or not, it doesn't make any sense in the way it's used.*

These results feature a broader issue in the implementation of performance management systems within the public service of Tanzania. They highlight the need for a more substantive and purpose-driven approach to the utilization of performance contracts, the one that actively fosters employee development and achievement rather than treating it merely as a bureaucratic formality. This critical insight emphasizes the importance of re-evaluating and reviving the role and impact of performance contracts in the context of human resource management within the Public Service of Tanzania.

In addition, the research revealed that the execution of individual performance contracts within the Tanzanian Public Service, as assisted by the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS), is tied to a myriad of challenges. Firstly, a substantial number of public personnel display reluctance in completing OPRAS forms, primarily due to their complicated nature, and others fail to perceive their significance in shaping their professional endeavours. Furthermore, it became known that a considerable number of public service personnel lack the requisite knowledge and understanding to effectively complete OPRAS forms. As one of the participants pointed out,

*"Many government employees do not know how to fill out OPRAS forms. Therefore, I urge the government, through the heads of public institutions, to provide comprehensive training on how to complete these forms."*

Secondly, the implementation of performance contracts heavily relies on the availability of adequate resources that empower employees to effectively achieve the objectives they have agreed upon in the performance contract. This research has highlighted that many public institutions lack the necessary resources to facilitate the successful execution of results-based contracts. The situation is even worse for Local Government Authorities, which sometimes lack the actual paper to fill out the OPRAS forms. Also, given that public institutions depend on government funding to carry out their duties, delays in funding have also become a significant challenge in the implementation of performance contracts. As one participant commented,

*On the side of local governments, the implementation of OPRAS has become very challenging, and I don't see the need for the government to continue using this system. Many councils lack the necessary resources. Sometimes you even find a shortage of the very paper needed to fill out those OPRAS forms. Therefore, the implementation of OPRAS is difficult. Perhaps we should start doing it online, although I still have doubts about rural area workers, especially teachers and healthcare workers.*

Also, it was revealed that top executives, department heads, and section leaders show limited commitment to the execution of OPRAS within their respective institutions. In terms of OPRAS implementation, the responsibility primarily lies within the purview of the Human Resource Management Departments. However, the successful performance

of individual performance contracts relies on collaborative efforts across all levels of the organization. This perspective was emphasized by one participant as follows,

*There has been a limited response from institution heads, department heads, and unit managers in emphasizing the implementation of OPRAS within the public service. This issue seems to have been left primarily to the Human Resource Management department. This is not proper because the effectiveness of OPRAS implementation requires collective efforts from leaders at all levels within the institution. Therefore, this matter should not be considered the responsibility of HR officers alone.'*

The problem of one size fits all was also a concern raised by human resource management practitioners in the focus group interviews. It was observed that the idea that OPRAS can work in all public institutions is an unrealistic aspiration; the increased complexity of both the environment and the government means that to move forward in designing more effective performance management approaches, we must dismiss the notion of a one-size-fits-all approach. Public institutions should be given a chance to design and implement their own performance management tools that are tailored to their specific needs.

The research findings also brought to light that the execution of individual performance contracts within the civil service is subject to political interference, particularly by political leaders, especially within Local Government Authorities. This interference occurs when political leaders introduce additional objectives that were not originally agreed upon in the performance contract at the beginning of the fiscal year. This observation was underscored by certain participants in the study. For example, one participant emphasized the following,

*In many local government authorities in the country, work is often carried out based on directives from political leaders. This can lead to a conflict in the midst of executing the goals you have set in your performance contract. You may find that a personnel officer is assigned to oversee the construction of a certain project, which is not aligned with your objectives.*

These findings regarding the implementation of individual performance contracts align with the important concern raised by the President of Tanzania, Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, when addressing Ministers and Deputy Ministers at Dodoma's Treasury Square in January 2022. The findings also relate to the previous studies conducted by other scholars (i.e., Bana, 2009; Sule, 2014; Mwita & Andrea, 2019; Nchimbi, 2019). It is surprising to see that, despite a lot of published works on this issue, serious efforts to address the problem have yet to be made.

### **4.3 The Use of Performance Appraisal Data**

The research also aimed to explore the experiences of human resource practitioners regarding the utilization of performance appraisal data within their respective institutions. The findings revealed that the data from performance appraisals are not effectively utilized for making various administrative decisions such as training, transfers, job rotations, and appointments to higher positions as required by the established regulations. Participants noted that OPRAS is predominantly employed for promotion purposes due to its mandatory nature. This observation was made by several participants in the study,

*“As for me, I see that OPRAS reports are only used for promotions because it’s a legal requirement; otherwise, they wouldn’t be used at all. Even the best-performing employees are not chosen based on their good OPRAS results but rather through majority voting”*

Another participant added,

*Since OPRAS is not conducted effectively, it is challenging to use its results as a basis for decision-making. For example, it once happened that the head of a department came to me to complain about one of his employees whom he suggested transfer to him because he was not performing his duties well. When I requested his OPRAS form, it surprised me because he had very good results. Now, the question arises: If you gave him a good rating in OPRAS, why are you complaining about his performance?*

This observation is in contrast to the requirements of OPRAS as stated in the regulations. The regulations require public service institutions to use performance assessment data to decide upon various issues, including planning for job rotation, awarding best-performing staff, making appointments to higher posts or withholding performance awards and increments, demotions, and termination of appointments to a particular post. These results align with the findings made by Nchimbi (2019), which revealed that OPRAS was not integrated with other HR systems, particularly training and development.

## **5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations**

As noted earlier, this study aimed to explore the perceptions of human resource management professionals in the Tanzanian Public Service regarding the implementation of performance management systems. These professionals are considered the frontiers in the implementation of performance management; therefore, their voices are very central in understanding this multifaceted issue. Though it has been about two decades now since the introduction of results-based management approach in Tanzanian public service, the approach is still facing myriad challenges.

To begin with, public service organizations do not engage in signing institutional performance contracts at the beginning of the financial year, and consequently, the annual performance evaluations are not conducted. This is contrary to public service regulations, which require all public service institutions to sign institutional performance contracts with the government. This lack of adherence to these regulations presents a profound challenge to effective performance management within the Tanzanian Public Service.

Likewise, the implementation of individual performance contracts lacks genuine commitment to improving employees’ performance. Individual performance contracts are seen as merely compliance with bureaucratic requirements, detached from their potential to enhance employees’ development and achievement. Again, the implementation of individual performance contracts is associated with many challenges, which include reluctance among employees of filling out OPRAS forms, limited resources, and a lack of support and commitment from top management and line managers.

Finally, the performance appraisal data are not utilized to make administrative decisions as required by public service regulations. According to public service regulations, performance appraisal data should be used to make decisions about training, transfers, job rotation, and appointments to higher positions, withholding performance awards and increments, or the demotion and termination of appointments to a particular staff. The participants were of the view that performance appraisal data are solely used for promotions because they meet the requirements of the guidelines regarding promotion in the Tanzanian Public Service.

Based on these conclusions, in order to improve the implementation of performance management within the Tanzanian Public Service, the study recommends the following to heads of public service institutions, policymakers, and the government in general:

1. The Government of Tanzania should try to make sure that all public service institutions comply with the public service regulations by signing and assessing institutional performance contracts. To make public service deliver its mandates, it is critical to enforce compliance with the Public Service Regulations, 2022, which require all government institutions to sign institutional performance contracts with the government at the beginning of the financial year, conduct an annual self-assessment, and conduct an external performance evaluation conducted by the external panel appointed by the Permanent Secretary, Public Service Management, and Good Governance. This will ensure accountability for public service institutions.
2. Public service institutions should re-evaluate and revitalize the role and purpose of individual performance contracts. These contracts should not be viewed as merely bureaucratic formalities but rather as a tool capable of fostering employees' development and achievement. Among other things, this can be done by providing comprehensive training to public service employees regarding individual performance contracts to understand their purposes and potential benefits. This will lead to more meaningful engagement.
3. The government should ensure adequate resources are made available to public institutions. This is because the effective implementation of performance contracts depends on the availability of resources. The timely and adequate provision of resources to public service institutions will facilitate the effective implementation of performance contracts.
4. The effective implementation of performance management systems requires the commitment of the top executives of public service institutions, Heads of Department, and Line Managers. The top management at all levels should be committed to the implementation of performance management and should not be seen as a responsibility vested only in human resource management personnel, as currently practiced.
5. Because public institutions are vast and complex in their objectives, responsibilities, and environment, the idea of a one-size-fits-all for all approach regarding performance management is unrealistic. Therefore, the government should allow public service institutions to develop their own performance management tools within a general framework tailored to their specific needs. This approach will enhance the effectiveness of performance management within the Tanzanian Public Service.

6. To attain meaningful implementation of performance management within the Public Service of Tanzania, public service institutions must ensure the utilization of performance appraisal data in making various administrative decisions as required by the public service regulations. These decisions include training, transfers, job rotations, awarding best-performing staff, making appointments to higher posts, withholding performance awards and increments, or demotion and termination of appointments to a particular staff.

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