



ALKEBULAN

**A Journal of West and
East African Studies**

Volume 5, Issue 2

Alkebulan: A Journal of West and East African Studies

<http://gnosipublishers.com.ng/index.php/alkebulan>

[/index](#)

ISSN (Online): 2971-6187

Supervisors' Commitment and the Implementation of Open Performance Appraisal Systems in Public Health Institutions

Lilian Sanga, Chacha Matoka, Miraji Kitigwa
The Open University of Tanzania, Tanzania.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of supervisors' commitment on the implementation of Open Performance Appraisal Systems (OPAS) in Tanzanian public health institutions. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, the research employed an explanatory design. Data were collected via structured questionnaires from 310 employees across six national health institutions. Supervisors' commitment was measured through goal-setting (open and self-set), communication, self-drive, and follow-up activities. OPAS implementation was assessed based on the clarity of objectives, performance criteria, efficiency, data reliability, and feedback communication. Multiple regression analysis demonstrated that supervisors' commitment has a significant positive influence on OPAS implementation, accounting for 46.2% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.462$). Self-set goals and consistent follow-ups emerged as the strongest predictors. The findings indicate that active supervisory engagement—characterized by clear goal-setting, transparent communication, and ongoing monitoring—is crucial for fostering employee motivation, accountability, and alignment with organizational objectives. We recommend enhancing supervisory training in these specific areas and addressing structural barriers to maximize the effectiveness of performance appraisal systems.

***Corresponding author:**

Lilian Sanga

Received: 23 July 2024

Accepted: 22 July 2025

Published: 30 September 2025

This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License CC-BY-NC-4.0 ©2025 by author

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

Keywords: Supervisors' commitment; Open Performance; Appraisal Systems; Public health institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal systems for employees have evolved globally from opaque, closed models to open and participatory designs. Traditional confidential systems often fostered mistrust, provided little feedback, and excluded employee involvement (Lupenza, Kilima, & Kumburu, 2024). In response, organizations have adopted open appraisal systems that emphasize joint goal-setting, frequent feedback, and mutual accountability. The effectiveness of such systems, however, depends critically on supervisors' commitment to actively engaging in the appraisal process and promoting organizational alignment (Lupenza et al., 2024).

In sub-Saharan Africa, performance appraisal systems have become central to public sector governance and reform strategies, intended to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability. For instance, Tanzanian research links the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) to improved transparency and accountability in the government sector, particularly when supported by adequate political will, technical infrastructure, and a facilitative organizational culture (Michael, 2018). Similarly, studies in other African health facilities suggest that transparent appraisal practices, when supported by engaged supervisors, correlate with higher staff job satisfaction and organizational performance (Kawiti & Okello, 2023). Despite this potential, implementation challenges such as infrequent feedback, inadequate training, and low ownership persist, indicating that the mere existence of an open system does not guarantee its effectiveness (Owino, Oluoch, & Kimemia, 2019).

Tanzania introduced OPRAS in 2004 to replace confidential appraisal formats and foster employee engagement, transparency, and professional development within the civil service. Recent studies confirm its positive potential, reporting that OPRAS can enhance transparency and accountability where contextual factors are favorable (Anosisye & Nyoni, 2024). For example, a 2024 study in Mbeya's public healthcare facilities found that performance appraisals significantly improve staff productivity when mediated by favorable working conditions and inclusive supervisory styles (Lupenza *et al.*, 2024). However, significant implementation gaps remain, especially in Tanzania's public health sector. Evidence from the Shinyanga Region highlights OPRAS ineffectiveness, citing cumbersome procedures, insufficient funding, staff shortages, and a lack of supervisor enthusiasm as key barriers (Ndunguru et al., 2024). Furthermore, research on decentralized health services reports poor utilization of OPRAS due to high time demands and a lack of institutional commitment (Alman & Yusuph, 2020). Other studies note that health staff often lack a clear understanding of the system, struggle with participatory goal-setting, and face resource shortfalls, leading to poor implementation (Mwita & Andrea, 2019). These challenges collectively undermine OPRAS's potential as a tool for motivation and management.

Despite being in operation since 2004, OPRAS has yet to yield its intended benefits in Tanzanian public healthcare facilities. Although current research validates the system's promise where supported by effective supervision and favorable conditions, supervisor commitment remains a critical weakness. Supervisors often treat OPRAS as a bureaucratic formality rather than a strategic management instrument, leading to a significant gap between policy and practice (Ndunguru *et al.*, 2024; Alman & Yusuph, 2020; Mwita & Andrea, 2019). Consequently, OPRAS frequently fails to motivate staff, enhance accountability, or improve healthcare service delivery effectively.

This study, therefore, aims to bridge this gap by empirically examining the impact of supervisors' commitment on the implementation of open performance appraisal systems in Tanzania's public health sector. Investigating this relationship is vital for understanding the barriers to effective implementation and for harnessing the potential of OPRAS to improve performance in a critical sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspectives

This study is guided by Social Exchange Theory (SET), which provides a framework for understanding the relational dynamics between supervisors and employees. Initially formulated by Blau (1964), SET conceptualizes social interactions in organizations as a series of reciprocal exchanges. According to this theory, employees are likely to respond positively to supervisors who provide support, recognition, and fair treatment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The theory posits that individuals are driven by reciprocity, weighing the costs and benefits of relationships that are maintained through trust and mutual obligation (Emerson, 1976). In the context of performance appraisals, SET predicts that employees will increase their effort and commitment when they perceive their supervisors as supportive, fair, and invested in their professional growth (Hussain *et al.*, 2021).

Within Tanzanian public health institutions, SET underscores the critical role of supervisory commitment in securing employee buy-in for the appraisal system. When supervisors are actively involved—providing guidance, constructive feedback, and recognition—employees are more likely to view the appraisal process as valuable and respond with greater dedication and accountability (Lupenza *et al.*, 2024; Folger & Konovsky, 1989). Conversely, a lack of supervisory engagement disrupts this positive exchange, leading to employee disengagement, reduced effort, and a perception of the system as merely a ritual (Alman & Yusuph, 2020; Ndunguru *et al.*, 2024). The strength of SET lies in its emphasis on relational factors like trust and fairness, offering a behavioral explanation for why supervisory commitment is strategic for successful appraisal implementation (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano *et al.*, 2017).

However, SET has limitations. Its assumption of rational and consistent social exchange may not fully hold in contexts characterized by heavy workloads, resource constraints, and bureaucratic impediments, such as those found in Tanzanian public health institutions (Lupenza *et al.*, 2024; Ndunguru *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, while SET effectively explains the motivational aspect of supervisor-employee relations, it may need to be supplemented with theories that account for structural and contextual factors, such as Expectancy Theory or Goal-Setting Theory. Despite this limitation, SET offers a robust foundation for examining how supervisors' dedication influences the implementation of Open Performance Appraisal Systems (OPAS) by framing appraisal interactions as mutual exchanges dependent on fairness and trust.

Empirical Synthesis and Research Gap

Globally, research corroborates that open appraisal systems promote accountability and organizational performance when supervisors are actively involved. For example, a study in India by Sharma and Sharma (2022) found that supervisor support during performance appraisals increased healthcare staff compliance with institutional objectives. In the UK, Armstrong and Taylor (2023) demonstrated that open appraisals

build staff trust only when supervisors provide frequent and meaningful feedback. However, challenges persist; Hussain et al. (2021) noted that even advanced computerized appraisal systems failed when supervisors did not use them consistently, indicating that technology alone is not a panacea.

Across Africa, the adoption of open performance appraisals is widespread, yet implementation difficulties are common. In Kenya, Kawiti and Okello (2023) found that performance in NGO health-sector organizations was significantly enhanced through internal appraisal, but only when supervisors provided valuable feedback. Similarly, a study of Ugandan local governments by Nakibuuka (2022) reported that OPRAS-type frameworks increased transparency but were undermined when managers failed to conduct follow-ups. Conversely, research in Kenyan public institutions by Owino, Oluoch, and Kimemia (2019) identified supervisor bias and a lack of training as major hindrances to appraisal effectiveness. This pattern suggests that supervisory dedication is a consistent predictor of success.

In Tanzania, where OPRAS was institutionalized in 2004, the evidence is mixed. On one hand, Lupenza et al. (2024) showed that performance appraisal channels significantly increased staff productivity in Mbeya hospitals, a effect mediated by positive supervisory practices. On the other hand, studies focusing on local government authorities reveal significant implementation problems. Ndunguru et al. (2024) identified cumbersome procedures, insufficient funding, and low supervisor dedication as primary obstacles. Similarly, Alman and Yusuph (2023) found that supervisors in Shinyanga's health services lacked the time and training to monitor appraisals adequately.

This review identifies several critical gaps in the existing literature. First, while many studies focus on the technical and procedural aspects of OPRAS, they often overlook the behavioral dimension of supervisor commitment. Second, although recent studies acknowledge the role of management style (Lupenza et al., 2024), they underinvestigate how specific supervisory attitudes and behaviors directly determine employee motivation within the appraisal process. Third, there is a scarcity of research focused specifically on public health institutions, which are critical for service delivery and face unique operational challenges. Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by examining the effect of supervisors' commitment on the implementation of OPRAS within Tanzanian public healthcare facilities.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Explanatory research design was implemented in this study to examine the relationship between supervisors' commitment and the implementation of Open Performance Appraisal Systems (OPAS) in the public healthcare facilities. Explanatory research design is appropriate in determining cause-and-effect relations among variables (Carter, Henderson, & Mills, 2023). It helped the study to examine the impact of supervisors' practice (goal-setting, communication, self-drive, and follow-ups) on OPA Implementation. Survey research method was adopted in collecting data from employees in various public health facilities. Surveys are ideal for collecting standardized data from a large population and performing quantitative data analysis using statistical procedures (Braun, Clarke, & Gray, 2021; Story & Tait, 2019). It was an appropriate method for the study as it allowed employees from different institutions to contribute their opinions regarding supervisors' commitment and OPA implementation. It was conducted in areas

of Dar es Salaam and Dodoma since they accommodate the head office addresses of major public health facilities falling under the Ministry of Health in Tanzania. Institutions chosen included the Medical Stores Department (MSD), National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF), Government Chemistry Laboratory Authority (GCLA), National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR), Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre (TFNC), and Tanzania Medicines and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA) were adopted for an in-depth representation of OPAs in Tanzania.

It was a target population of all the employees in the selected public healthcare facilities, with a total of 2,404 employees. Specifically, the Medical Stores Department had 592 employees, NHIF had 694 employees, GCLA had 287 employees, NIMR had 407 employees, TFNC had 120 employees, and TMDA had 304 employees (MSD, NHIF, GCLA, NIMR, TFNC, TMDA, 2023). A stratified random sampling method was applied to draw respondents in a proportionate manner from each institution. Yamane's formula (1967) was applied to calculate the minimum sample size for a 5% margin of error, resulting in a total of 342 participants. Proportional allocation ensured equal representation from each institution: MSD contributed 86 respondents, NHIF 99, GCLA 41, NIMR 58, TFNC 17, and TMDA 41. Stratified sampling ensured variation from each institution was recorded and the outcome was statistically representative of the population (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). A structured questionnaire was applied for data collection; it is efficient in collecting standardized data from a multitude of respondents (McLeod, 2019). It comprised three sections: demographic characteristics, supervisors' commitment, and OPA implementation. Supervisors' commitment was assessed through five indicators: open set objectives, communication, set objectives for oneself, self-drive, and follow-ups, on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). This measurement strategy was developed from Edwin (1968), Armstrong (2006), and Indeed (2021).

OPA Implementation was assessed through five indicators: clear objectives of appraisals, well-documented performance criteria, fewer time-consuming procedures, correct and dependable data, and communication of appraisals on a 5-point Likert scale (Kondrasuk, 2011; Mwaipungu, 2019). These measures ensured the survey recorded both the behavioral and procedure aspects of supervisors' impact on implementation of appraisals. Supervisors' commitment, the independent variable, was operationally defined through setting objectives, communication, self-drive, self-motivation, and follow-ups. OPA Implementation, the dependent variable, was operationally defined through clear objectives of appraisals, clear criteria for performance, efficient use of time, correct and dependable data, and communication of appraisals. Both were assessed on the Likert scale such that descriptive and inferential statistical methods could investigate associations between variables. Data were subjected to analysis at two stages. At the initial stage, descriptive statistics were utilized for aggregating the distribution of the responses on supervisors' commitment and OPA Implementation and the demographic profile of the respondents. Inferential statistical methods such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression were utilized on the second stage for the aim of determining the association between supervisors' commitment and OPA Implementation. Statistical significance was established on the 95% confidence level for determining the strength and direction of associations.

FINDINGS

Respondents` Profile

The survey collected demographic data from 310 respondents to establish a comprehensive profile of the personnel involved in assessing supervisory impact on the effectiveness of Organizational Performance Appraisal (OPA) systems within government health facilities. Regarding gender distribution, the sample consisted of 185 males (59.7%) and 125 females (40.3%), indicating a moderate male predominance. However, gender is generally considered to have a minimal influence on perceptions of performance appraisal systems, particularly when such systems are transparent, equitable, and objective.

The age distribution revealed that the majority of respondents fell within the 28–37 and 38–47 age brackets, each constituting 37.4% (n=116) of the sample. This suggests that the participant pool was primarily composed of mid-career professionals with substantial experience. Younger employees (18–27 years) represented a smaller cohort at 7.4% (n=23), while those aged 48 and above accounted for 17.7% (n=55). This distribution reflects a workforce combining emerging professionals with seasoned staff. An analysis of educational attainment indicated a strong tendency toward higher education, with 70.6% of respondents holding a Bachelor's degree or higher. Diplomas were held by 20.6%, certificates by 5.8%, and 2.9% had attained a secondary-level education. This educational profile suggests that the workforce is generally well-qualified and likely to provide informed perspectives on organizational practices.

Professional experience among respondents was also varied. Nearly half (47.1%, n=146) reported over seven years of experience, 27.7% (n=86) had four to six years, 14.2% (n=44) had one to three years, and 11.0% (n=34) had less than one year. This mix of experienced and newer employees ensures a diversity of viewpoints, encompassing established perspectives on supervisory efficacy as well as initial impressions of the OPA system.

In summary, the demographic profile of the respondents demonstrates a balanced representation across gender, age, education, and professional experience. This diversity provides a robust foundation for analyzing the impact of supervisory practices on the proficiency of OPA schemes. The results are presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Respondents` Profile

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 185 | 59.7 |
| | Female | 125 | 40.3 |
| Age | 18 – 27 Years | 23 | 7.4 |
| | 28 – 37 Years | 116 | 37.4 |
| | 38 – 47 Years | 116 | 37.4 |
| | 48 Years and Above | 55 | 17.7 |
| Education Level | Secondary Education | 9 | 2.9 |
| | Certificate Level | 18 | 5.8 |
| | Diploma Level | 64 | 20.6 |
| | Bachelor's Degree and Above | 219 | 70.6 |
| Work Experience | Less than a Year | 34 | 11.0 |
| | 1 – 3 Years | 44 | 14.2 |

| | | |
|-------------------|-----|------|
| 4 – 6 Years | 86 | 27.7 |
| 7 Years and above | 146 | 47.1 |

Source: Study Findings (2025)

Multiple Regressions Assumptions Test

Normality of Residuals

The output from the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests indicated that each of the variables under study, including Open set goals, Communication, Self-set goals, Self-drive, Follow-ups, and OPAS, had p-values above 0.05. Such a conclusion indicates that the null hypothesis of normal distribution was not disproved, thereby establishing that the data were close to normal distribution. Further, the figures from the tests were close to 0 for both the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and close to 1 for the Shapiro–Wilk, thereby justifying the assumption of normality. According to Field (2018), values of significance above 0.05 in such tests indicate that distribution for the data from the sample does not significantly depart from normality. Similarly, Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012) place much focus on the element of satisfying normality assumption in parametric tests such as regression analysis in a quest to provide valid inference. Therefore, the output establishes that normality assumption was satisfied in each of the variables under study, thereby allowing valid use of parametric statistical methods. Table 2 displays the output;

Table 2: Normality Test

| Variable | Kolmogorov-Smirnov (Statistic) | df | Sig. | Shapiro-Wilk (Statistic) | df | Sig. |
|----------------|--------------------------------|-----|-------|--------------------------|-----|-------|
| Open set goals | 0.042 | 310 | 0.084 | 0.987 | 310 | 0.157 |
| Communication | 0.038 | 310 | 0.120 | 0.983 | 310 | 0.092 |
| Self-set goals | 0.045 | 310 | 0.067 | 0.985 | 310 | 0.126 |
| Self-drive | 0.041 | 310 | 0.092 | 0.981 | 310 | 0.073 |
| Follow-ups | 0.039 | 310 | 0.110 | 0.986 | 310 | 0.138 |
| OPA | 0.044 | 310 | 0.076 | 0.989 | 310 | 0.182 |

Source: Study Findings (2025)

Multicollinearity

The results of the multicollinearity diagnostic revealed that all independent variables, including Open set goals, Communication, Self-set goals, Self-drive, and Follow-ups, had tolerance values greater than 0.1 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 10. According to Hair et al. (2019), tolerance values lower than 0.1 or VIF values greater than 10 indicate a serious multicollinearity problem, which can distort regression estimates. Since all predictors in this study fell within the acceptable thresholds (Tolerance = 0.446–0.684; VIF = 1.463–2.244), it can be concluded that there was no evidence of multicollinearity among the independent variables. This implies that each predictor contributed unique information to the model and the regression coefficients were stable and interpretable (Kutner et al., 2005). Results are displayed in Table 3:

Table 3 Multicollinearity Test

| Variable | Tolerance | VIF |
|----------------|-----------|-------|
| Open set goals | 0.468 | 2.138 |
| Communication | 0.446 | 2.244 |
| Self-set goals | 0.506 | 1.978 |
| Self-drive | 0.684 | 1.463 |
| Follow-ups | 0.582 | 1.718 |

Source: Study Findings (2025)

Linearity

Scatterplot of standardized residual against predicted values reveals a linear relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable (OPA). Data points are very close to each other in a diagonal cluster, implying a good match of the predicted values against the observed values and a detection of the inherent trend in the data without much curvature in the data. A few data points are seen at both ends, slightly separated from the major cluster, and these are potential minor outliers or leverage points. Otherwise, the scatterplot does confirm the assumption of linear regression in the sense that the linear portrayal of the relationship is a valid one for examination of the predictors against the dependent variable. Figure 1 presents the linearity output;

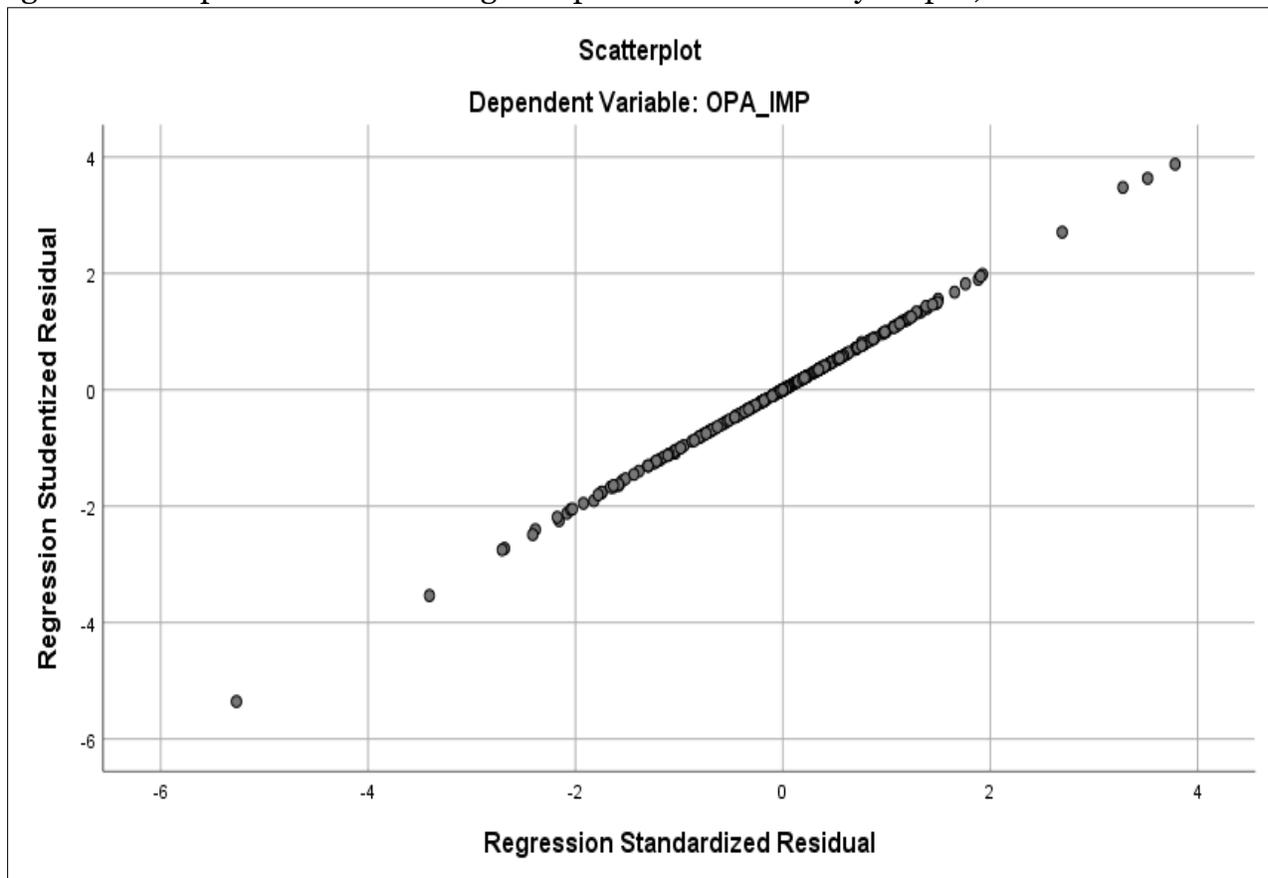


Figure 1: Linearity Test

Source: Study Findings (2025)

Heteroscedasticity Test

For the Breusch–Pagan test for heteroscedasticity, the resulting Chi-Square was 5.83 with 5 degrees of freedom, and the corresponding significance level was $p = 0.322$. Because the p-value was higher than the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis of homoscedasticity was not rejected. As a result, the variance of the residuals was constant throughout the fitted values, implying that the assumption of homoscedasticity held. Fulfilling this assumption means the regression estimates were efficient and also the standard errors were not biased, hence the validity of hypothesis testing in the regression model (Breusch & Pagan, 1979; Wooldridge, 2013). Results for heteroscedasticity are seen in Table 4:

Table 4: Heteroscedasticity Test

| Test | Chi-Square | df | Sig. |
|---------------------------|------------|----|-------|
| Breusch–Pagan Test | 5.83 | 5 | 0.322 |

Source: Study Findings (2025)

Multiple Regressions Analysis

Overall, the model had a good fit in explaining the dependent variable. The correlation coefficient, R , was 0.680, indicating a very strong positive relationship between the combined independent variables and the outcome. A higher R^2 of 0.462 means that up to around 46.2% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the predictors, and the adjusted R^2 of 0.451 assures us such descriptive power remains high even after adjustment for the number of predictors. These figures indicate that the model is very well-fitting and provides a substantial account for the variation in the outcome variable. If we consider the predictors individually, then all variables were positively related with the dependent variable. Self-set goals became the strongest predictor, having a Beta of 0.287, suggesting higher scores for self-set goals are very much related to increases in the outcome. Follow-ups also had a significant positive effect (Beta = 0.258), and such monitoring and follow-up activity are very much useful towards affecting the dependent variable in a positive way. Communication too was a significant predictor (Beta = 0.229), and communication was a very significant feature in explaining improvements in the outcome variables. Open set goals had a moderate but significant positive effect (Beta = 0.201), suggesting setting of clear goals was also very much important. Self-drive, although positive, had the lowest impact (Beta = 0.134) and was marginally significant, suggesting intrinsic motivation does affect the outcome but much less than the remaining variables. Table 5 reports the measure of the fitness tests of the model and the coefficients of the multiple regression;

Table 5: Multiple Regression Coefficients and Model Fitness Test

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients (B) | Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients (Beta) | t | Sig. |
|----------------|---------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Constant | 0.410 | 0.137 | | 2.993 | 0.003 |
| Open set goals | 0.182 | 0.059 | 0.201 | 3.085 | 0.002 |
| Communication | 0.214 | 0.071 | 0.229 | 3.014 | 0.003 |
| Self-set goals | 0.268 | 0.054 | 0.287 | 4.963 | 0.000 |
| Self-drive | 0.121 | 0.061 | 0.134 | 1.984 | 0.049 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Follow-ups | 0.237 | 0.052 | 0.258 | 4.558 | 0.000 |
| Model Summary | | | | | |
| R | 0.680 | | | | |
| R-Square | 0.462 | | | | |
| Adjusted R-Square | 0.451 | | | | |

Source: Study Findings (2025)

DISCUSSION

This study found that supervisors' commitment—manifested through open and self-set goals, communication, follow-ups, and self-drive—has a significant positive impact on the implementation of Open Performance Appraisal Systems (OPRAS) in Tanzanian public health institutions. The regression model explained a substantial portion of the variance (46.2%), underscoring the critical role of supervisory behavior. Among the predictors, self-set goals and follow-ups were the strongest, indicating that employees are most responsive to supervisors who facilitate personal goal ownership and provide consistent monitoring and feedback.

These findings align with international evidence demonstrating that proactive supervisory involvement is crucial for effective performance management. Studies in India (Sharma & Sharma, 2022) and the UK (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023) similarly found that supervisor support and regular feedback are vital for employee compliance and trust in appraisal systems. The results are also consistent with the African context, where research in Kenya (Kawiti & Okello, 2023) and Uganda (Nakibuuka, 2022) highlights that appraisal systems fail without active supervisory engagement, particularly in follow-up activities. Within Tanzania, this study corroborates the positive findings of Lupenza et al. (2024) on supervisory practice while directly addressing the implementation gaps attributed to low supervisor dedication identified by Ndunguru et al. (2024) and Alman and Yusuph (2023). This consistent pattern across contexts confirms that supervisory commitment is a fundamental driver of appraisal success.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides a robust framework for interpreting these results. The theory posits that employees reciprocate fair and supportive treatment from supervisors with increased effort and commitment (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The significant positive effects of communication, follow-ups, and goal-setting can be viewed as tangible forms of supervisory support. Employees likely perceive these actions as indicators of fairness and investment in their growth, thereby motivating them to engage more sincerely with the OPRAS process (Hussain et al., 2021; Folger & Konovsky, 1989). The potency of self-set goals and follow-ups suggests that employees value autonomy and ongoing dialogue, which strengthen the reciprocal relationship central to SET. However, the marginal significance of self-drive suggests that intrinsic motivation alone is insufficient without external, supervisory reinforcement. This nuance points to a limitation of SET, which assumes a rational and consistent exchange process. The Tanzanian public health context, characterized by heavy workloads, resource constraints, and bureaucratic challenges (Lupenza et al., 2024; Ndunguru et al., 2024), can disrupt this ideal exchange. In such an environment, deliberate supervisory actions like follow-ups may become even more critical to compensate for structural inadequacies. Therefore, while SET effectively explains the behavioral dynamics of the supervisor-employee relationship, a complete understanding requires integrating contextual factors,

potentially through complementary theories like Goal-Setting Theory, which would emphasize the mechanism by which "self-set goals" influence performance.

The empirical patterns observed are consistent with SET, reinforcing that supervisory actions fostering fairness, trust, and recognition are key to unlocking employee motivation. The findings highlight that in a challenging operational environment, structured supervisory commitment is not merely beneficial but essential for translating performance appraisal policy into meaningful practice.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that supervisors' commitment is a pivotal factor influencing the successful implementation of Open Performance Appraisal Systems (OPRAS) in Tanzanian public health institutions. The findings demonstrate that specific supervisory behaviors—particularly enabling self-set goals and conducting consistent follow-ups—significantly enhance employees' engagement with the appraisal system. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, the study affirms that the reciprocal relationships built on supervisory support, fairness, and recognition are fundamental to fostering the employee motivation and accountability that OPRAS is designed to achieve. Ultimately, effective performance management in this context depends less on the system's technical design and more on the active and committed involvement of supervisors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **For Supervisors:** Supervisors should move beyond treating OPRAS as a bureaucratic exercise. They should prioritize collaborative goal-setting (especially self-set goals) with employees and establish a rigorous schedule for follow-up meetings to provide continuous feedback and support.
2. **For Health Institutions and the Ministry of Health:** Organizations should invest in targeted training programs for supervisors. These programs must focus on developing practical skills in performance coaching, constructive feedback, and effective follow-up techniques, rather than just administrative compliance with OPRAS.
3. **For Policy and Resource Allocation:** To enable supervisory commitment, institutional leaders must address the structural barriers identified, such as excessive workload and resource shortages. This could include reviewing staffing levels and streamlining bureaucratic procedures to allow supervisors adequate time for meaningful appraisal activities.
4. **For Future Practice:** Institutions should implement simple monitoring mechanisms to track supervisory engagement in key behaviors like follow-up rates and the quality of goal-setting. Recognizing and rewarding supervisors who effectively implement OPRAS could reinforce these critical behaviors.

By focusing on these specific areas, public health institutions can bridge the gap between OPRAS policy and practice, leveraging it as a genuine tool for improving employee performance and healthcare service delivery.

REFERENCES

Alman, K. L., & Yusuph, M. L. (2020). Performance appraisal experiences and its implications on human resource decisions in decentralized health services in

- Shinyanga Region, Tanzania. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 10(2), 181193.
- Anosisye, A. K., & Nyoni, N. P. (2024). Challenges facing sustainability of performance management system in public sector in Tanzania: A critical analysis of Open Performance Review and Appraisal System in the Commission for Mediation and Arbitration—Arusha. *The Accountancy and Business Review*, 16(2), 1–18.
- Armstrong, M. (2006). *A handbook of human resource management practice* (10th ed.). Kogan Page.
- Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2023). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (16th ed.). Kogan Page.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Gray, D. (2021). *Collecting qualitative data: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Breusch, T. S., & Pagan, A. R. (1979). A simple test for heteroscedasticity and random coefficient variation. *Econometrica*, 47(5), 1287–1294.
- Carter, S., Henderson, K., & Mills, J. (2023). *Research design for social sciences*. Routledge.
- Edwin, A. (1968). *Commitment and motivation in organizational settings*. Academic Press.
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Ghasemi, A., & Zahediasl, S. (2012). Normality tests for statistical analysis: A guide for non-statisticians. *International Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 10(2), 486–489.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate data analysis* (8th ed.). Cengage.
- Hussain, T., Abbas, J., & Ali, R. (2021). Performance appraisal systems and employee outcomes: The mediating role of supervisor support. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 11(1), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijhrs.v11i1.18015>
- Indeed. (2021). *Measuring employee commitment: Best practices*. Indeed, Human Resources Reports.
- Kawiti, M. N., & Okello, G. (2023). Internal appraisal and performance of national non-governmental organizations in the health sector in Kenya. *The University Journal*, 4(2), 149–161.
- Kondrasuk, J. N. (2011). Employee performance appraisal: Methods and effectiveness. *International Journal of Management & Information Systems*, 15(2), 45–54.
- Kutner, M. H., Nachtsheim, C. J., Neter, J., & Li, W. (2005). *Applied linear statistical models* (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill Irwin.
- Lupenza, E. J., Kilima, F. T., & Kumburu, N. P. (2024). Performance appraisal mechanism and employee productivity in public hospitals in Mbeya – Tanzania: The mediating roles of working environment and management style. *LBS Journal of Management & Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/lbsjmr-04-2024-0026>
- McLeod, S. (2019). Questionnaires. *Simply Psychology*.
- Michael, F. K. (2018). Employee performance measurement: A reform tool for public sector governance in Tanzania. *Pan-African Journal of Business Management*, 2(2), 593–602.
- Mwaipungu, S. (2019). Open performance appraisal systems in Tanzanian public sector institutions. *Journal of Public Administration Research*, 11(1), 33–48.

- Mwita, K. M., & Andrea, P. T. (2019). Assessment of employee performance management in Tanzania public health facilities. *Journal of Management Research and Analysis*, 6(4), 1–8.
- Nakibuuka, C. (2022). Implementation of performance appraisal systems in Uganda's local government: Opportunities and challenges. *African Journal of Public Administration and Management*, 33(1), 89–104.
- Ndunguru, G., James, N. M., & Gration, J. M. (2024). Two decades of the application of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System in Tanzanian Local Government Authorities: A synopsis of predicaments and the way forward. *Local Administration Journal*, 17(2), 155–169. <https://doi.org/10.14456/laj.2024.12>
- Owino, M., Oluoch, O., & Kimemia, G. (2019). Performance appraisal and employee productivity in public institutions in Kenya. *African Journal of Public Administration*, 4(1), 23–38.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Sharma, P., & Sharma, R. (2022). Supervisor support and performance appraisal fairness in Indian healthcare institutions. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 60(4), 789–806. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1744-7941.12333>
- Story, J., & Tait, M. (2019). Survey research: Concepts, methods, and applications. *Journal of Organizational Research*, 12(3), 45–61.
- Wooldridge, J. M. (2013). *Introductory econometrics: A modern approach* (5th ed.). South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis* (2nd ed.). Harper and Row.