Research Article

Development, Effects and Challenges of Performance Management Appraisal Systems in African Public Services: A Literature Review

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Abstract:

Performance management appraisal systems are now prevalent in public services in Africa. A performance appraisal is a systematic evaluation of an employee's work. Performance management is a broader process of establishing performance standards, helping staff, monitoring progress, providing feedback, and rewarding outcomes. Their introduction was to enhance the quality of public services, increase the accountability of officials, and link day-to-day activities with government targets. This is a narrative review that examines the development, impact, and challenges associated with performance management appraisal systems in African public services. The review extracted practices of performance management appraisal systems from Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Tanzania. Through this review, it was found that the impacts of performance management appraisal systems are positive and significant in different aspects such as employee performance, service quality, employee motivation, and goal clarity. Other studies, however, have reported that appraisal systems are not effective or are perceived as unfair. Some issues are a lack of leadership, lack of training, lack of goals, insufficient feedback, political intrigue, excessive paperwork, and weak connections between appraisals and promotion/pay. Trust among employees as well is crucial. If workers are not part of the process of setting goals or designing the system, they may perceive the entire process as a form of control and not a means of improvement. Conclusively, it can be stated that appraisal is effective in enhancing public service performance when it is simple, well supported and fair and linked to staff development and organisations goals.

Keywords: Development, Effects, Challenges, Performance Management, Appraisal Systems, Public Service, Africa.

1. Introduction

Many of the functions of the state are carried out by state organisations to offer public services to citizens. Governments enforce laws, deliver services, administer public funds and implement government policies. Thus, civil service is a vital connection between government plans and people's daily life. Reduced public trust in the state emanate from a civil service that is unable to meet citizens expectations by providing services below standards (Mulikita, 2008). The reduced trust also has impacts on the perception of the legitimacy and responsiveness of government (Manyaka & Sebola, 2012). In this light, results-based management which is a reflection of performance management is significant as citizens demand public work that delivers clear and useful results (Kanneh & Haddud, 2016).

Weak service delivery, low productivity and limited accountability have been a concern in many African countries. This can be interrelated to political, social, economic and environmental conditions (Okeke-Uzodike & Chitakunye, 2014). They can also be attributed to inadequate skills, poor management and lack of organisational capacity (Owusu-Acheampong et al., 2026). This has led to public service reform as an emerging policy issue in Africa and pressure on governments to perform better (Marwa & Zairi, 2009).

In response to eminent challenges in public service regarding service delivery, performance management appraisal systems were introduced and implemented. Their core offering is to introduce systems within the public organisations where clear goals are set, workers are supported in reaching these goals, results are evaluated based on the predetermined set of standards and finally, use the evaluation outcomes to improve overall performance and ultimately desirable service delivery.

African countries have introduced, implemented and integrated performance management systems in different ways as per their specific needs. In Botswana, for example, the process of performance management has been part of a broader reform agenda and has been associated with the New Public Management (Dzimbiri, 2011). In Nigeria, performance appraisal especially in the education system has been shifted from the personal qualities of the pupil to the work he does and the competence achieved professionally (Ntekim, 2013). Public work reform in Ethiopia took a similar route, with the implementation of various models that seek to achieve greater results-driven working (Tesfaye, 2024).

The impact of performance management appraisal system is dependent on the proper use of the system. Performance can be enhanced with a well-designed system which is the desire of any robust systems; however, the system may cause fear, conflict and paperwork if it is not well implemented. According to an Africa-wide review, while performance management was designed to monitor, assess and recognise performance, the fact that many of the user organisations have not observed the desired productivity improvement (Fatile, 2014). Empirical studies conducted in Kenya and Nigeria, however, reveal positive associations between appraisal/performance management and employee performance (Elhadi, 2020; Ezenwakwelu & Etukokwu, 2020). This difference indicates that the design of a system is important, as is daily management practice.

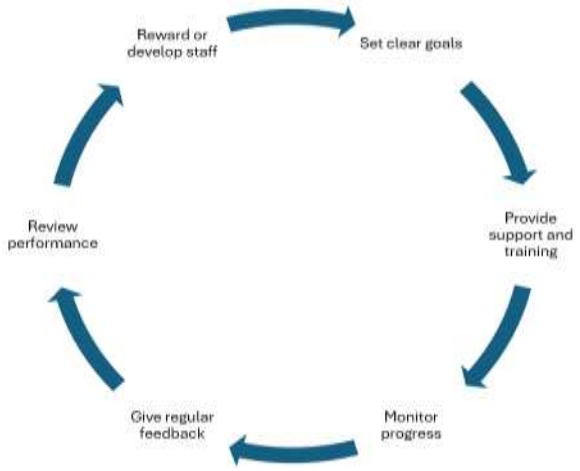
Another important aspect is the employees' perception of their work, which is influenced by performance appraisal. Having clear goals can make the worker understand the values and what is expected of their organisation. Feedback is essential to help them improve their skills and correct mistakes. However, these advantages could be lost if appraisals are not fair, transparent, or linked to training and incentives (Hirut, 2024). The system needs thus to be assessed not only based on the forms that are filled out, but also by how it supports employees and citizens.

This review is in the form of a narrative discussion of the available papers. Not all African countries are treated equally; rather, it documents general trends and the country cases chosen. It consolidates data from various public institutions, such as ministries, municipalities, police departments, universities and training centres (Sikira & Sharma, 2026). It also acknowledges that country cases might reveal different outcomes as the history, resources and management culture of public services vary across countries (Ahenkan et al., 2018). The question the review asks is thus a very simple one: when and how do performance management appraisal systems help African public services?

2. Performance Management and Appraisal Systems

Performance management is an ongoing process used to improve work through a systematic approach. It normally includes planning goals, supporting employees, monitoring progress, reviewing results and rewarding or developing staff (Elhadi, 2020; Ezenwakwelu & Etukokwu, 2020). Performance appraisal is one part of this process as it is the formal review of an employee's work against agreed standards or goals.

Figure 1: Performance Management Cycle



The cycle is supposed to be ongoing and the appraisal should not simply be a form that is completed annually. This should be linked to ongoing discussion, assistance and learning. The study of public institutions in Jimma, Ethiopia, analyzed the different components of performance management, namely planning, training, appraisal, rewards and feedback as interrelated aspects of performance management (Soressa & Zewdie, 2021). In the same vein, in Nigeria, Ezenwakwelu and Etukokwu (2020) studied planning and development, monitoring and review, and rewards as three phases of the system in the study of Federal public servants in Enugu.

2.1 New Public Management and Results-based Reform

NPM (New Public Management) has been the source of many African performance systems. NPM is a method that attempts to operate the government similar to the way a performance-oriented organization operates with a focus

on clear targets, measurement, managerial accountability and attention to results. Performance management is part of the broader public sector reforms which are integrated in NPM as can be seen in Botswana's experience (Dzimbiri, 2011).

Another key concept is “Results-Based Management” or RBM. RBM is a way of thinking and working in the public sector that is based on the outcomes achieved for the people being served, not just the work done. For instance, it not only has questions about whether a department provided training, but also whether training led to better service. RBM was attractive because of the increased demand from citizens for public institutions to deliver visible development outcomes (Mulikita, 2008).

These ideas were often adapted from reforms in other countries. They were not necessarily locally adapted. According to African literature, public services vary significantly across the history, culture, resources and political systems. Thus, a model which is effective in one context may require some tuning to be effective in a different context (Okeke-Uzodike & Chitakunye, 2014; Owusu-Acheampong et al., 2026).

3. Systems in Africa

3.1. Kenya

Kenya has been engaging in performance-based civil service reforms for over two decades. Its reform strategy has featured elements of performance measurement, performance contracts and a focus on linking resources to outcomes. Literature suggests that there is certain progress made in establishing a strong performance culture, yet there are continued challenges, as reported in the Kenyan literature (Marwa & Zairi, 2009).

Comparative work recently provides evidence of Kenya's formal mechanisms such as the Performance Contracting system and Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD). There are several performance instruments used in Kenya, and a more centralised approach has been adopted in Tanzania. The use of target setting, reviews and digital systems have been attempted by both countries, while training issues, administrative burden, trust and poorly connected linking to rewards pose difficulties (Sikira & Sharma, 2026).

The study on civil servants in Kenya showed that there was a positive relationship between performance appraisal and the achievement of civil servants' performance. It is claimed that good appraisal enables employees to know what their work entails and gain an appreciation of what their employer appreciates as well as creating a sense of personal value (Elhadi, 2020). This conclusion corroborates the theory that in the proper hands and interpretation, appraisal may improve performance.

Findings from the Kenyan reform experience, however, demonstrate that formal policies are not sufficient. The reform literature lends support to the idea of motivating good performance and redirecting resources to maintain the gains to be gained from employees and public organisations (Marwa & Zairi, 2009).

3.2. South Africa

Since 1994 South Africa has put in place a robust legal and policy framework for performance management. The Public Service Act 103 of 1994, Public Service Regulations and other policies put performance management in place as part of the formal management of public employees (Manyaka & Sebola, 2012). The goal was to enable transformation, increase access to public services and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

The South African Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) aimed to integrate performance appraisal and employee development. An effective PMDS should be used by managers to establish expectations, check progress and determine learning gaps (Mello, 2015).

But the South African evidence is not all good. One public institution found employees had poor perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMS and fairness of the appraisals. They said that they had a low level of participation in the development of the system, low level of participation in an appraisal process, low level of feedback and little attention to employee development (Makhubela et al., 2016). Appraisal was also reported not to be done properly in a Gauteng municipality. They discovered that goals and criteria were not defined collaboratively and that linkage between appraisal and pay, promotion and workforce planning and career development was not in place (Radebe, 2015). This informs us of a policy-practice disconnect. In South Africa there are formal laws and systems, but the existence of a formal system does not mean that it is always well implemented and fair.

3.3. Ghana

Performance management has been applied in Central and Local government in Ghana. A study was conducted on the Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly and it was discovered that the local system was not effective. Through

interviews, it was found that communication was poor, commitment of top officials was weak, and training and capacity were inadequate to define clear targets and assessment criteria (Ahenkan et al., 2018).

The same study found that cultural issues, inadequate incentives, financial limits and bureaucratic administration were additional obstacles. These issues presented challenges in achieving alignment between performance management and actual performance improvement. The study suggests that supervisors need to be trained and that there should be a connection between the appraisal and reward and recognition (Ahenkan et al., 2018).

Another Ghanaian study was based on employee perceptions. It holds that the views of workers are vital to successful implementation. If employees don't understand or value and trust a system, they're not likely to support it. It is for this reason that the study makes employee perception the focus of institutionalizing performance management (Ohemeng et al., 2018).

3.4. Nigeria

Nigeria has a long experience of civil service reform. Target setting and a more objective appraisal was introduced in the 1988 Civil Service Reform. The objective of this was to measure job performance and professional competence and tie rewards and sanctions to outcome (Ntekim, 2013).

The reform was an alternative to an older system which focused on the more personal qualities like loyalty, honesty, initiative, and courage. This old method posed challenges with promotion, pay rise, selection of training, job placement and job descriptions as it was challenging to rate the personal qualities consistently (Ntekim, 2013).

In Nigeria, APER (Annual Performance Evaluation Report) was an important appraisal tool. Nigerian studies suggest that there is need to train reporting officers to ensure they fill APER forms accurately and fairly (Ntekim, 2013). Other analysis on Nigerian civil service reveals that the civil service is not having uniform appraisal instruments, there is weak knowledge among the supervisors and regular training is required (Okorie et al, n.d).

The study on federal public servants in Enugu revealed positive and significant effect of all the three components of performance management on employee performance, work quality, attendance and timely service delivery (Ezenwakwelu & Etukokwu, 2020). The Federal Civil Service and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation study also revealed that training and feedback significantly impact employees' performance, efficiency, job satisfaction, productivity and service quality (Bankole Ijewereme, 2023).

The same study in Nigeria, however, revealed that the weaknesses that were discovered from the appraisal were not linked to employee training and development (Bankole Ijewereme, 2023). This means that appraisal could be used to identify a problem, but not offer a practical solution to the problem.

3.5. Ethiopia

There are some reform models in Ethiopia which include strategic planning, management by objectives, total quality management, business process re-engineering, integrated performance management, the balanced scorecard, kaizen and the civil service change army. These are models that were launched at varying stages of public sector reform (Tesfaye, 2024).

Management by objectives involves setting goals in advance in a collaborative effort between the manager and employee and evaluating performance based on those goals. A balanced scorecard is a management tool that monitors the performance using multiple interrelated perspectives. Kaizen is a philosophy of continuous small improvement of work processes.

The Ethiopian experience is a tough and energetic one; whilst a lot of models of reform have been launched, the impact of these models has to be viewed as an integrated whole in a longer reform process and not as individual projects (Tesfaye, 2024).

Positive impact is reported in Addis Ababa and Jimma studies, whereas the relationship between performance management and performance of employees was positive and moderate in selected public sectors of Addis Ababa. In the study mentioned, that system accounted for 26.9% of the variance in employee performance. Planning, training, appraisal, rewards and feedback were all desirable related to performance of employees in Jimma. There was a significant relationship between training and feedback with performance (Soressa & Zewdie, 2021).

Additionally, a study conducted in Adigrat Town, Ethiopia, the study reported that the practice of modern appraisal is yet to be well developed and that it is found that there is a gap between the formal idea and actual practice (Balaraman et al., 2018).

3.6. Botswana

Botswana is a prime illustration of performance reform in Africa related to NPM. One of its experiences has been on the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a performance management system (Dzimbiri, 2011). The Botswana case is helpful in that it illustrates that performance management is not necessarily an appraisal

form. It forms part of an overall discussion on the organisation of work in the state, the measurement of results and the improvement of public administration.

Meanwhile, the Botswana study does not necessarily depict performance management as a 'given' and presents some challenges and lessons. Its primary benefit is to illustrate the significance of studying the processes of implementation, monitoring and adaptation of a system in a country's public service (Dzimbiri, 2011).

3.7. Namibia

Public service in Namibia has also implemented performance management, although this is challenging. Interviews with 42 participants revealed that there were a number of issues including lack of training and poor orientation (Kaupa & Atiku, 2020).

Weak monitoring and evaluation, less policy support, poor communication during planning and review processes, less feedback and involvement of employees were other challenges. Training, workshops and policies to clarify and strengthen implementation are recommended (Kaupa & Atiku, 2020).

3.8. Zambia

Trust of the employees among other things is a serious concern in Zambia public service in performance management process. Selected Public service workers in the ministries saw the PMS as ineffective. Very little feedback, unfair assessment, lack of transparency, lack of meaningful rewards, fear and mistrust (Phiri et al., 2026).

The Zambia Police Service study, on the other hand, showed a more balanced picture. Officers had a general awareness of the appraisal system and appraisals would be of benefit for guiding promotion and training. Some of these effects were, however, hampered by weak supervision in the system, politics, resource constraints, and challenges in accessing staff in rural areas (Muzyamba & Katongo, 2026). Pathfinder activities identified in the community as a means of enhancing the system included feedback, mentoring, and capacity building.

3.9. Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, managers identified that the process of providing services could be simplified, and that services could be designed with the community and decentralised (Kanneh & Haddud, 2016). Other supports for continuous improvement identified during the study were technology, stakeholder involvement, research and development and transparency boards.

Lack of commitment from leaders, failure in strategic planning, lack of performance measures, lack of management knowledge, weak communication, and lack of resources, however, made performance improvement difficult (Kanneh & Haddud, 2016).

3.10. Uganda

Performance management has posed some problems in public universities in Uganda. The study on these institutions was aimed at pinpointing the challenges that impact the implementation (Nambi Karuhanga & Werner, 2013). The results of the paper are not detailed in the paper summary, but it is indicative of a broader trend in the literature on African public organisations: the use of performance management is challenging when the organisation lacks systems, skills and support to use it well.

3.11. Tanzania Mainland and Tanzania - Zanzibar

In Tanzania, a formal government-wide framework is in place, called PEPMIS. A comparative study in performance management appraisal system between Kenya and Tanzania conducted by Sikira and Sharma (2026) revealed that the Kenyan system is more overlapping than the Tanzanian system which is more centralised. There is a lot of administrative burden, lack of training, low trust, and poor linkages between appraisal outcomes and tangible benefits in both countries (Sikira & Sharma, 2026).

In another study conducted in Zanzibar, there was a slight, but statistically positive correlation among effective appraisal and employee performance. Job satisfaction was found to positively correlate more with performance. This indicates that appraisal can do some of its jobs by enhancing employees' attitudes toward their jobs, specifically those that are fairly enacted, supportive, and related to career opportunities (Hamad Shehe et al., 2026).

4. Impacts of Performance Management on the Public Service

4.1. Improved Employee Performance

There are multiple studies that determine that performance management can enhance employee’s performance. In the Lagos State study, goal setting, training and development and appraisal were merged in a single study to measure performance management. Each of the three positively and significantly influenced the performance of the

employees. The most significant impact was found in the appraisal and goal setting and training (Ferdinand & Taiwo, 2023).

In the same vein, Elhadi (2020) discovered appraisal's significant positive effect on the performance of civil servants in Kenya's study. In Nigeria, the stages of the performance management process were found to be positively and significantly associated with Work quality, Attendance and Timely Service Delivery (Ezenwakwelu & Etukokwu, 2020). Hirut (2024) also in Addis Ababa provides an evidence of a positive relationship between performance management and employee performance.

However, the results of these studies cannot be used to conclude that all improvements are the direct result of appraisal as performance may be impacted by other factors. Scholars assert that, if combined with a broader process of setting goals, and providing support and review, then appraisal can be of value.

4.2. Greater Motivation and Job Satisfaction

Performance systems can be used to incentivise employees if there are clear goals and fair treatment and recognition. Results of the Zanzibar study indicated that there was a strong positive correlation between employee job satisfaction and their performance, while there was a moderate but significant positive correlation between effective appraisal and employee performance.

The Nigerian federal service study also revealed the connection between performance management and job satisfaction, efficiency and productivity with quality of services (Bankole Ijewereme, 2023). The Kenyan study proposes that appraisal can be used to educate employees of the importance of what is being valued by their employer and that it can enhance the feeling of self-worth (Elhadi, 2020).

But as with all benefits, these rely on trust and where an appraisal is unfair, this can reduce motivation instead of boosting it.

4.3. Clearer Goals and Accountability

Performance management can help clarify expectations in the workplace. Goal setting clarifies for workers what they must achieve and how their job is important to the goals of the organisation. Goal setting had a significant effect on employee performance as revealed by the study conducted by Ferdinand and Taiwo (2023) in Lagos State.

Based on mainly personal traits, target setting and measurable performance was introduced in Nigeria. Strategic planning and clear measurement were also mentioned as important conditions for enhancing performance in Sierra Leone (Kanneh & Haddud, 2016).

Accountability is the ability to provide an explanation of what is expected and what was accomplished. One of the reasons behind the introduction of RBM reforms was that the public services had to demonstrate results to the citizens (Mulikita, 2008). Performance systems can help to hold people accountable, provided targets are achievable, measures are clear and managers use them regularly.

4.4. Better Service Delivery

The aim of performance management is not just to raise staff scores. It is also to enhance services to citizens. In the South African policy arena, employee performance management is associated with good and effective service delivery and efficiency (Manyaka & Sebola, 2012). The Sierra Leone study links service improvement to less complex processes and decentralisation and community participation (Kanneh & Haddud, 2016).

Timely service delivery was found to be affected in the Nigeria Enugu study (Ezenwakwelu & Etukokwu, 2020). The Zambia Police study also indicates that when coupled with effective supervision, transparency, mentoring and community feedback, appraisal contributes to service delivery.

These results suggest a crucial lesson that appraisal is most effective when associated with the experiences of citizens in the work process, as completed forms are not improvements to a service.

5. Negative Effects of Performance Management on Public Service

5.1. Perceived Unfairness and Subjectivity

In South Africa, employees from a public institution found the PMS to be ineffective and the appraisals to be unfair. The fairness ratings of general employees were found to be less than that of managers and professionals (Makhubela et al., 2016).

Similarly, Zambian workers also expressed perception of unfairness and lack of transparency (Phiri et al., 2026). The lack of subjectivity or correlation between appraisal and reward was reported to have resulted in low trust in Tanzania and Kenya (Sikira & Sharma, 2026).

Subjectivity is the opinions of the individual involved with the assessment and not the good evidence. This can develop when objectives are ambiguous, supervisors are untrained or when various departments have different expectations. The incongruity of Appraisal instruments and improving knowledge of supervisors have also been identified as problem areas in appraisal in Nigeria analysis (Okorie et al., n.d.).

5.2. Fear, Mistrust and Resistance

If an employee thinks that the main reason for using an appraisal system is to punish him, then it can be a dreadful experience. The Zambia study also reveals that the poor implementation is associated with fear and mistrust (Phiri et al., 2026). The Sub-Saharan Africa scoping review also reports cultural resistance as a major factor that affects poor performance management (Owusu-Acheampong et al., 2026).

Labor opposition is not necessarily a sign of opposition to improvement. It may be because they do not believe in the technique or they do not understand why. The Ghana employee perception study stipulates that employees will not endorse and support a change they see no value in and one that is not created with their participation (Ohemeng et al., 2018).

5.3. Weak Links to Rewards and Development

Good results with a performance system not accompanied by support or action are not credible. A Ghana local government study found that there were no incentives for achieving good performance (Ahenkan et al., 2018). Managers in Gauteng reported that appraisal was not associated with pay and promotion; nor was it associated with a workforce plan or career development (Radebe, 2015).

According to the identified weaknesses in the Nigerian federal bureaus studies, the weaknesses are not directly linked to training and development (Bankole Ijewereme, 2023). Furthermore, low level of association between appraisal and tangible rewards also resulted in lower trust levels in Kenya and Tanzania (Sikira & Sharma, 2026). This can create a big problem as employees may fill it out, but feel that it is not worth it.

5.4. Poor Feedback and Bureaucratic Forms

Feedback is the process of giving employees valuable information on what they did well, what they did wrong and how they can work towards it being a better outcome in the future. Some weak and intermittent feedback has been reported in South Africa, Namibia and Zambia (Kaupa & Atiku, 2020; Makhubela et al., 2016; Phiri et al., 2026).

Having an excessive number of forms can also be a distraction from actual management. The Tanzania–Kenya review indicates that forms need to be simplified because of the administrative load they constitute (Sikira & Sharma, 2026). In addition, the Africa-wide productivity review warns that the productivity system has often not been successful in increasing productivity (Fatile, 2014).

5.5. Political Interference and Weak Supervision

Appraisal can be undermined by political influence, weakening the fairness and credibility of appraisal. Politicisation of the culture, and lack of supervision and resources are barriers, according to Zambia Police study. The failure of governance and poor performance management also has a relationship with lack of leadership in the larger context of Africa (Owusu-Acheampong et al., 2026). The system may not be emphasized if not supported by senior leaders.

6. Implementation Often Struggles

The problems found across the studies are connected and can be understood as a chain:



Figure 2: Problems Found Across the Studies

6.1. Capacity Shortfalls

Capacity indicates the means, personnel, budgets, systems and organizational capacity to execute a task. A scoping review of literature about performance management in Sub-Saharan Africa revealed that a key factor in the poor performance of many systems is the lack of capacity (Owusu-Acheampong et al., 2026). It has been pointed out that training and orientation is lacking in Namibia (Kaupa & Atiku, 2020). In Sierra Leone, lack of sufficient knowledge about management and inadequate resources are the perceptions of those in the country (Kanneh & Haddud, 2016). Supervisors need to know how to establish goals, check on the work done and give feedback and evidence. Without these skills, there is the possibility of a random appraisal. One of the recommendations made by the Nigeria's APER literature is for the training of reporting officers (Ntekim, 2013).

6.2. Poor Leadership

Commitment of the leadership is mentioned repeatedly as important. Ahenkan et al., (2018) found low levels of commitment of key leaders in the Ghana local government study. The African scoping review attributes poor operational consistency and poor accountability to weak leadership, and Sierra Leone reported poor leadership commitment.

The system needs to be used by senior managers and they need to demonstrate it is important. If leaders do not follow the appraisal timetables, do not discuss the results of appraisals with staff, or do nothing as a result of the appraisal then staff receive the message that the system is not very important.

6.3. Cultural Resistance and Poor Communication

Implementing changes in performance that have not been locally explained and/or adapted may look foreign and/or inappropriate. The IGP problem mentioned in African literature is cultural resistance (Owusu-Acheampong et al., 2026). Communication problems are also highlighted in Ghana, Namibia and Sierra Leone (Ahenkan et al., 2018, Kanneh & Haddud, 2016, Kaupa & Atiku, 2020).

Information should include an explanation of why the system is in place, how decisions are made and how employees can raise an issue with a decision. It should also employ terminology which is understood by staff.

6.4. Lack of Employee Involvement

Involving employees raises the chances of gaining acceptance of a system. In South Africa employees felt that they were not engaged in the development of the PMS, nor did they participate in the goal setting and appraisal process (Makhubela et al., 2016). Likewise, Ghanaian studies emphasize employee perception and participation as essential in the studies (Ohemeng et al., 2018).

Without the participation of employees, they may think that goals are not achievable or relevant. One way to achieve shared responsibility is to set goals together.

6.5. Funding and Technology Constraints

There is a need for funds to ensure the performance systems are trained, monitored, information systems and rewards. In Ghana, financial constraints were identified as a constraint in local government research (Kanneh & Haddud, 2016) while in Sierra Leone, it was reported that lack of resources in building performance systems (Ahenkan et al., 2018).

Digital platforms can help to reduce paper usage and enable tracking, but they need to have a proper infrastructure and staff skills. Digital infrastructure is crucial for e-performance systems (Sikira & Sharma, 2026) as noted in the Tanzania – Kenya review.

7. Best Practices

7.1. Train Supervisors and Employees

Goal setting, evidence-based assessment, feedback and development planning are issues that need to be addressed in training. It shouldn't only occur upon the arrival of a new form. Namibia (Kaupa & Atiku, 2020) recommends training and workshops to understand and comply with the regulation. The researcher, Ahenkan et al. (2018) recommend training supervisors as recommended in Ghana. There is also the recommendation by Ntekim (2013) for the training of the reporting officers on how to use APER for Nigeria.

7.2. Link Appraisal to Rewards and Development

The outcomes of appraisal should result in action that is beneficial. It's good performance that can be rewarded by promotion, awards, increased responsibility or other fair rewards. Support, coach/train where appropriate as a first step to weak performance are appropriate. In the reform literature in Kenya, reward for good performance and ensure that resources are channeled towards desired change is recommended (Marwa & Zairi, 2009).

This means training needs that are identified as part of the appraisal should be put into staff development plans. Appraisal weaknesses that are not associated with training as pointed out by Bankole Ijewereme (2023) in the Nigeria federal bureaus' study, cause damage.

7.3. Make the Process Transparent and Fair

Staff should know what assessment is and what evidence is needed, as well as the process of assessment. Supervisors should give an explanation of the rating and give employees an opportunity to respond. The rules should not be hidden or inconsistent amongst different groups and departments. All three of the South Africa, Zambia and Zanzibar studies conclude that more fairness, transparency and constructive feedback is needed (Hamad Shehe et al., 2026; Makhubela et al., 2016; Phiri et al., 2026).

7.4. Use Regular Feedback, Not Only Annual Reviews

Feedback should be timely and helpful. They waited 11 months for a score once a year. Workers can be engaged in communication to make changes to fit work before problems get out of hand. There is a significant gap in the studies in South Africa, Namibia and Zambia (Kaupa & Atiku, 2020; Makhubela et al., 2016; Phiri et al., 2026) with the presence of weak feedback.

7.5. Involve Employees in Setting Goals

Goals should be negotiated with employees, to the extent possible. These should be clearly defined, be quantifiable and be achievable. This can be done by involving staff in coming up with "real work' measures. The Gauteng municipality study revealed that with no mutual goal setting system, the appraisal system was weak (Radebe, 2015).

7.6. Keep Systems Simple and Context-Sensitive

One of the types of system which solve real life problems of a particular country or organisation is called the context sensitive system. Considerate differences in resources, type of work, culture and service users. The call to action in the African scoping review is to have models that are attuned to African realities (Owusu-Acheampong et al., 2026). Forms must be kept short so that they are used correctly, and measures should demonstrate positive public service outcomes; not just how many activities were done. There is role of digital systems, but only in the presence of Infrastructure and Training (Sikira & Sharma, 2026).

7.7. Protect the Process from Political Interference

Professional standards, clear evidence and independent oversight where required must be used to guarantee fair appraisal. In fact, the Zambia Police evidence (Muzyamba & Katongo, 2026) shows that political culture can be a constraint on the impact of appraisal. Clear complaints and rules, with robust leadership, can help to protect the system.

8. Future Research

There is the need for additional research in digital PM as digital platforms can enhance records and monitoring, but they can also involve more surveillance or leave out staff who are not yet able to access or aren't skilled at using them. The comparative work of Tanzania and Kenya, under study, indicates that the digital infrastructure is also a key concern for the future (Sikira & Sharma, 2026).

Finally, further studies are required to distinguish the two meanings of appraisal and the whole range of the performance management system. Low training, feedback, leadership and rewards can result in a good appraisal score when training is low. Research needs to be undertaken in order to see how the entire circle of the process works.

9. Conclusion

The PMAPS is an integral part of the process of public service reform, particularly in Africa. The development of these partly stemmed from New Public Management (NPM) and the results-based reform. Studies in Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Tanzania show positive and sometimes significant impacts on the performance, motivation, job satisfaction and service delivery of employees. The more likely these benefits will occur, the clearer the goals, the more support that is given, and the more consistent the feedback. Conclusively, the appraising form is not enough

to improve public services. The secret to performance management is to think of it as an on-going management process.

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