

## Readiness and Implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal in the Uganda Public Service

Hilda Musubira,

PhD Student at Uganda Management Institute and Deputy Head, Uganda Public Service Commission

### Abstract

*The Open Performance Appraisal (OPA) was introduced, among other performance*

*service delivery. OPA marked a shift from the closed performance appraisal system. Despite efforts to build capacity for its implementation, the OPA remains inappropriately implemented. Drawing from Weiner's theory of readiness for change, this article applies a descriptive analysis to explore readiness of the ministries and a regression model to determine its effect on implementation of the OPA. Evidence draws from data collected with a questionnaire from a representative sample of 57 staff, Heads of Human Resource*

*public service.*

**Key words:** Open Performance Appraisal, Implementation, Organizational Readiness

### Introduction

The Open Performance Appraisal (OPA) is among the performance management initiatives that were introduced during the reforms of Uganda's Public Service to build an efficient and effective human resource force capable of enhancing the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Other initiatives include: Results-Oriented Management, Rewards and Sanctions Framework, Output-Oriented Budgeting (OOB), Code of Conduct and Ethics for the Public Service, Clients Charter and Service Delivery Standards, National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (NIMES) and Performance Agreements, among others (Nicholas et al, 1990). Under the OPA, appraisees and their managers openly discuss an appraisee's performance against pre-determined tasks and goals. This form of appraisal replaced the closed performance appraisal that was discredited by the Public Service Review and Re-organization Commission of 1990. The Reform Programme re-introduced the emphasis on performance management which had been lost during the political instability and dictatorship that had characterized Uganda's political life during the 1962-1985 period (Olum, 2004). For successful implementation of the OPA, an appraisee is expected to develop a performance plan with clear goals and targets; and at the end of the year, fill performance appraisal forms as a matter of self-assessment. The form is expected to be shared with the supervisor for their assessment. The filled forms are expected to be submitted to the Human Resource Manager and feedback on the performance of the appraisee provided by the supervisor. Lastly,

the recommendations are expected to be implemented for the purpose of improving future performance of the appraisee. To fully harness its potential, implementation of the OPA is expected to meet these key milestones.

Following the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the 1980s, the New Public Management (NPM) model of public sector management was introduced as part of reforms in the Uganda Public Service. The NPM paradigm focuses on management of human resource to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. The NPM model borrowed principles of private sector management such as profitability, efficiency and effectiveness, replacing the traditional model of public administration which had minimal attachment to these attributes especially in the public sector. The NPM paradigm triggered the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) to build an efficient and effective human resource force capable of enhancing the quality of service delivery. The OPA was rolled out with capacity building measures such as training for OPA implementers and managers and provision of guidelines and procedures. In addition, it was integrated in the planning and budgeting framework for resource allocation as well as providing an internal monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the individual public institutions and the external monitoring and evaluation by the Ministry of Public Service. Notably, all these interventions were meant to improve the employees' knowledge, attitudes and overall capability for the implementation of Performance Appraisal. Drawing from Weiner's theory of readiness change (Weiner, 2009), such interventions reflect a move to create readiness, a sense of change efficacy and change commitment, towards successful implementation of the OPA system. As a matter of achievement, the OPA has been fully institutionalized and is being implemented in all Government institutions and agencies, although its achievement is yet to be documented because there has not been an evaluation to establish its effectiveness.

Despite these interventions, the implementation of Performance Appraisal in Uganda still faces challenges and presents critical gaps in public service delivery (MoPS, 2009; 2010; 2012; 2013). The Ministry of Public Service reports indicate that appraisals are rarely filled on time, with limited feedback to the employees. In addition, according to the Ministry of Public Service the recommendations, especially those for promotions and training, are rarely implemented. In actual practice, the Open Performance Appraisal forms in the Uganda Public Service are filled only when they are required especially for confirmation and promotional considerations. Performance Appraisal is regarded as an annual event and a mere formality. In this regard, there is no continuous monitoring of performance, hence performance gaps/constraints are not addressed on time. Rarely is the information that is generated from the Performance Appraisals used to inform the performance management functions, such as promotions, staff training and development, recruitment, rewards and sanctions. In addition, there are disjointed individual and organizational performance standards. Although the appraisal system provides for objectivity, in practice the system is still largely subjective as the managers tend to fear to tell the truth about the actual performance of the staff they supervise (MoPS, 2012; MoPS, 2013). Further, according to the Ministry of Public Service, it is not unusual that non-performers are promoted and retained in the public service while good performers are ignored; hence the performance appraisals are not providing incentives for improving performance (MoPS, 2012; 2013). These gaps potentially affect the effectiveness of the Open Performance Appraisals and can partly be held responsible for the prevailing ineffectiveness

and inefficiencies in public service delivery, as the public service is still criticized for being slow, corrupt, inaccessible, rigid and unresponsive to the needs of the people (MoPS, 2013).

Existing theoretical framework sand models the significance of competence, training, coaching, organizational leadership; capacity, cognitive funds, material resources, social roles and norms as well as capability, workability, integration, communication, coordination, and resources (May 2013; Bertram, 2013; Nuwagaba, 2014; Alexander, 2014; Holt, 2007; Helfrich, 2009). In some studies, for example in the context of the Rwanda Public Service, the implementation of Performance Appraisal has been linked with training, communication, and resources (Nuwagaba, 2014) while in Uganda Public Service, the gaps in the implementation of Performance Appraisal have been linked with organizational culture (Karyeija, 2010). The argument raised in this article is that these factors are necessary but may not be sufficient to foster the implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal. This argument is premised on the theoretical perspective of Weigner (2009) which significantly associates successful implementation with organizational readiness. Specifically, Weigner asserts that successful implementation necessitates a sense of belief that the change is useful/beneficial to the organization or the individuals in implementation (change efficacy). Considering this belief, the implementers are more likely to exert greater effort, exhibit greater persistence, and display more cooperative behaviour which overall results in more effective implementation of the proposed change (Weiner, 2009). Against this background, the article provides empirical evidence on the readiness of the public service and its effect on implementation of the OPA, and answers the research questions set out below.

### **Research questions**

The research question answered in this article is two-pronged:

- i) How ready was the Uganda Public Service to implement the OPA– was there a sense of efficacy and commitment towards successful implementation of the OPA?
- ii) What is the effect of such readiness on implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal in the Uganda Public Service?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Successful implementation: theoretical orientation of the study**

The implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal can be linked to a variety of implementation theoretical frameworks in the context of policy, programmes and initiatives. Most prominent in literature is the Organizational Theory (Klein and Sorra, 1996), the Change Management theories by Kubler (1960), Lewin (1947) and Kotter (1999), as well as the theory of Organizational Readiness for Change (Weiner, 2009).

Weiner's theory of Organizational Readiness for Change (Weiner, 2009) is premised on the assumption that attempts to implement new programmes, practices, or policies in organizations often fail because leaders do not establish sufficient organizational readiness for change (Koitter, 1996). The theory describes organizational readiness as the extent to which organizational members are psychologically prepared to implement organizational change

(Weiner, 2008). Organizational readiness for change is a multi-level and multifaceted construct. In the former, the concept can be applied in the analysis of the implementation process by all the stakeholders at all levels. In the latter, the theory identifies two dimensions of organizational readiness, i.e., change commitment and change efficacy (Weiner, 2009). Change efficacy reflects the extent to which organizational members share a collective belief or a sense of capability to implement a change (Weiner, 2009). Weiner further states that, hypothetically, this depends on the task knowledge, resource availability, situational factors; and that change efficacy is expected to be high when organizational members know what to do and how to do it; when they perceive they have the resources they need to implement change; and when they perceive situational factors such as timing to be favourable. The author adds that an immediate outcome of readiness is organizational members' change-related effort. Shea et al (2014) observe that the two dimensions (organizational commitment and change efficacy) have been used to operationalize readiness for change and have tested adequate in explaining the implementation of programme, policies and change innovations.

Overall, Weiner's theory assumes that when organizational readiness is high, members are more likely to initiate change, exert greater effort, exhibit greater persistence, and display more cooperative behaviour, which overall results in more effective implementation of the proposed change (Weiner, 2009). Conversely, when organizational readiness is low, members are more likely to view the change as undesirable and subsequently avoid, or even resist, planning for the effort and participating in the change process (Weiner, 2009).

The theoretical argument of Organizational Readiness for Change has been widely employed in the analysis of implementation factors in other service delivery programmes across sectors like healthcare settings (Alexander, 2014) and many others (Holt, 2007; Weiner, 2008; Helfrich, 2009). Weiner and Helfrich, however, state that most available instruments are not theory-based and exhibit limited reliability and validity (Weiner, 2008; Helfrich, 2009). Alexander states that those with desirable psychometric properties have too many items to be practical for use in busy healthcare settings (Alexander, 2014). The concept identifies multilevel constructs that can be assessed at the individual or supra-individual levels (e.g., team, department, or organization).

For this study, the application of the theory of Organizational Readiness for Change is premised on its ability to identify the two dimensions (change efficacy and change commitment) which are key measures of readiness and potential determinants for the successful implementation of performance appraisal. The analysis of readiness for change in the current study, therefore, focuses on the supra-individual level because the implementation of many activities within the Open Performance Appraisal process requires collective and coordinated actions by many organizational members (Weiner, 2009).

Literature from a theoretical (Bertram; 2013; Fixsen et al., 2008; May, 2013) and empirical orientation for example in Rwanda (Nuwagaba, 2014); Kenya (Mwirigi, 2013) and Malaysia (Aishya, 2010) has linked the implementation of Performance Appraisal with capacity factors. In Uganda, a study by Karyeiya (2010) associated implementation of Performance Appraisal with Organizational Culture. The argument raised in this article is that culture and capacity are necessary but not sufficient to foster the implementation of performance appraisal particularly



in the context of some of the Eastern Africa public services like that of Uganda which seems to have built capacity but is still grappling with the implementation of performance appraisal. This article also raises an argument that for Organizational Culture to spearhead successful implementation of Performance Appraisal, it could be influenced by the Readiness to Change theory. For example, building a supportive organizational culture may necessitate commitment of the managers and the leaders in an organization. Consequently, there is a need to explore the effect of Organizational Readiness for Change in the implementation of Performance Appraisal.

Drawing on the two tenets of the organizational readiness theory, i.e change commitment and change efficacy (Weiner, 2009), we argue, for example, that an organization with no readiness in terms of collective commitment for change by its leaders, managers and implementers, or organizational implementers who lack the shared belief of their capability to implement the performance appraisal are not likely to implement it successfully no matter the viability of its objectives, clear implementation standards, resource allocation and adequate institutional enforcement mechanisms.

### **Successful implementation: Linkage with the concept of Readiness**

Organizational readiness is a positive behaviour that has been widely associated with implementation success (Armenakis& Harris, 2002; Bernerth, 2004; Solinger et al, 2008). Notably, empirical evidence on the effect of readiness on implementation remains scarce particularly in the Public Sector. The literature available is mainly from a theoretical orientation in the Health Sector (Armenakis& Harris, 2002; Bernerth, 2004; Solinger et al, 2008).The opposite of this is referred to as resistance to change. Readiness for change has been defined at organizational and individual levels. The former concerns organizational adaptation while the latter addresses the mental, psychological or physical preparedness to implement the change (Ramnarayan and Rao, 2011). This mainly concerns the perceptions and beliefs among individuals that the change is beneficial to them as well as the organization. This has been identified as the strongest predictor of Commitment to Change and consequently implementation success. With readiness, the implementers will exhibit positive attitudes and exert efforts to support the change.

Various studies have identified readiness to be indicated by commitment to change whose effect on implementation success depends on change efficacy. The link between change efficacy, change commitment, organizational readiness and implementation is further explored hereunder with insights from literature with a theoretical and empirical orientation. For the purpose of creating a deeper understanding of change efficacy and enriching the conceptualization of this study, the literature further identifies the key predictors for change efficacy which have been explored in other studies mainly focusing on their link with commitment. These include the employees' knowledge about the change and the leadership support through empowering, monitoring and helping the individual to adapt the challenges that come with change.

Change commitment has been widely defined and operationalized as a force or mind-set that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of a change initiative (Herscovitch& Meyer, 2002). The mind-set is conceptualized in three dimensions thus:

- a) desire to provide support for the change based on a belief in its inherent benefits to change (affective commitment);
- (b) recognition that there are costs associated with failure to provide support for the change (continuance commitment to change);
- (c) and a sense of obligation to provide support for the change (normative commitment).

Change commitment has also been widely underscored as a key driver to effective implementation of performance management initiatives (Sillup et al, 2010; Wikina, 2008). Elzinga et al (2009) identifies the three Es through which senior managers can exhibit commitment that is crucial for the implementation process. These are Empowering, Enabling and Encouraging. In the view of Wikina (2008), the three Es can be exercised through the provision of leadership where senior management can build a positive work attitude among the staff as well as providing them with resources and tools to foster the implementation process.

Change efficacy is defined as the extent to which organizational members share a collective belief or a sense of benefit to implement a change (Weiner, 2009). It has been underscored in a variety of literature as a predictor of implementation success. It is assumed that readiness for change increases when employees feel that the change is needed, justified and appropriate (Steyn, 2011). The perception to benefit individual employees or the organization is what is referred to as 'personal valence' and 'organizational valence' respectively (Armenakis et al, 1999; Dirks, et al, 1996). Employees who believe that the change will benefit both themselves and the organization are more likely to support it and vice-versa (Jansen & Michael 2010). Change efficacy has also been observed to depend on knowledge of what to implement and how to implement the change, the attitudes towards the change as well as resource availability among employees. More broadly, this is what has been referred to as a sense of capability that is required for effective implementation (Weiner, 2009). The attitudes are classified as cognitive, affective and behavioural responses to change. Affective attitudes reflect on how employees feel about the change, while cognitive responses to change reflect on the employees' thoughts about the change. Behavioural or intentional responses to change result from the thoughts and judgements that the individuals have about the change and the feelings and emotions associated with the change. Notably, both knowledge and attitudes can be influenced by support interventions like training, sensitizations about the change, resource provision, monitoring and feedback, all of which depend on change leadership. Specifically, Herold (2008) observes that leadership is necessary to support and promote the change through monitoring and helping the individual to adapt the challenges.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted an explanatory and descriptive research design. According to Saunders et al(2012), an explanatory research design seeks to explore and explain the relationship between phenomena. In this study, we sought to explore and explain the relationship between organizational readiness and the implementation of Open Performance Appraisal. In terms of research methods, the study employed the multiple methods design which, according to Saunders et al(2012), combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. Drawing from Saunders et al, (2012) and Creswell (2008), such a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods

was deemed necessary to allow generalization of the effect of organizational readiness on the implementation of OPA as well as to create deeper understanding of the linkage between the two variables.

The study targeted a total population of 21 heads of human resource management departments, 20 senior human resource officers, 21 human resource officers and 21 permanent secretaries. Human resource management departments were targeted for two reasons. First, they are appraisers of all the lower-level staff in the department and thus would be in position to inform the study on issues under investigation from the perspective of appraisers. Secondly, by virtue of their position as managers of the appraisal function in the entire ministry, they would be in position to enrich the study with experience of the issues concerning implementation of performance appraisal that the study investigates. The inclusion of senior and mid-level human resource officers is premised on the need to draw experiences on performance appraisal implementation from the perspective of appraisers and appraisees.

To ensure generalization of the study findings on the study population, a representative sample size of 57 respondents was selected across the four categories of staff in the human resource departments using the sample size determination table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). In addition, eight key informants (KIs) who are permanent secretaries were selected purposively with no consideration of the size representation since interviews were to be conducted on this category. This is in agreement with Creswell (2008) who observes that use of interviews do not necessitate a representative sample size in terms of numbers.

The study mainly utilized qualitative and quantitative primary data using numeric codes. Firstly, the data captured the status of the implementation of OPA from the perspective of the readiness across the independent variables namely: change commitment, change efficacy and leadership.

A questionnaire with close-ended questions on a 5-point scale of agreement was used. The questionnaire ensured that a big sample is reached while close-ended questions standardized responses to allow quantitative analysis deemed appropriate to test the study hypotheses (Kothari, 2009). In addition, interviews were conducted with purposively selected permanent secretaries to triangulate data and enhance validity of the findings. The interviews were conducted using an interview guide designed with open-ended questions which, according to Creswell (2008), allow probing to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the issues under investigation.

Regarding data analysis, descriptive statistics particularly percentages of responses on agreement with constructs tested in readiness were obtained. The percentages were aggregated into two respondent levels, i.e., those who agree or disagree for each statement. The average percentage score was then generated across all statements for each variable which was used as a proxy for the variable. The scores indicated the state of readiness with regard to a specific aspect, e.g. change commitment. The scores were fitted in a linear regression model to determine the effect of readiness on implementation of the OPA. As recommended by Green (2000), a correlation between efficacy and commitment was first tested to avoid possible collinearity, a common problem with multivariate regressions and exists when there is a strong correlation

between two or more independent variables in the regression model. High multicollinearity results in large standard errors of the coefficients and in turn affects the statistical significance of the coefficients resulting in increased probability for type II errors, which means failing to reject the null hypothesis when it is actually wrong. This means one or more variables may appear insignificant when their effect is actually significant but the significance is surprised by the correlation with another variable. The linear regression model was finally fitted expressing implementation as a function of change commitment and change efficacy.

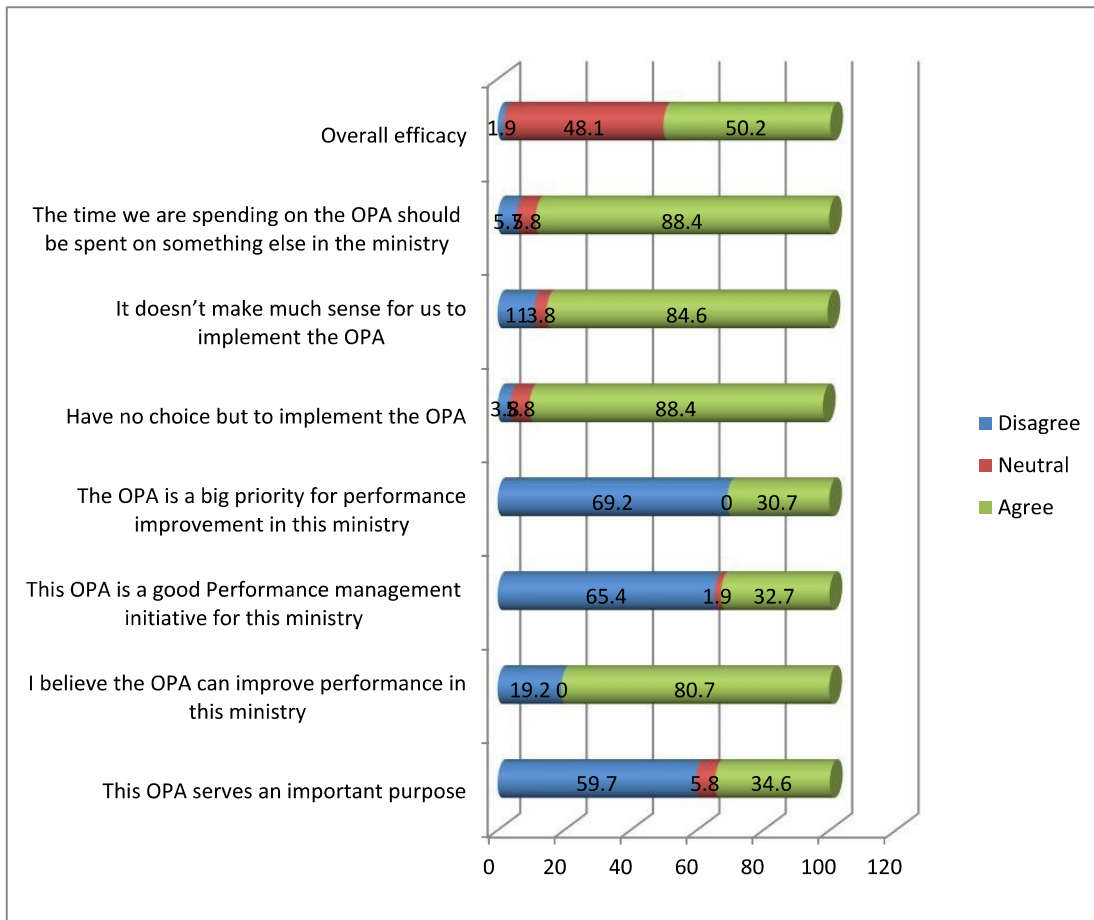
## **FINDINGS**

### **The readiness of appraiser and appraisee for OPA implementation**

The analysis attempted to elicit the readiness of the appraisers and appraisees to implement the OPA. This sub-section attempts to answer the pertinent question of whether the appraisers and appraisees are ready; and digs further to characterize the readiness. The readiness is analyzed from the three dimensions of change efficacy, change commitment and sense of capability among appraisers and appraisees. Evidence draws from both descriptive analysis of opinions shared by appraisers and appraisees. A triangulation of quantitative data with qualitative data from key informants is provided for a more valid description and characterization of the readiness.

### **Appraisers and appraisees' sense of efficacy towards the OPA**

The analysis sought to determine whether the appraisers and appraisees bear a sense of efficacy towards the Open Performance Appraisal. Efficacy is described in two dimensions, i.e. the thoughts and judgements that individuals have about the Open Performance Appraisal as well as the feelings that employees have towards the Open Performance Appraisal. Figure 1 presents the percentage distribution of respondents by their opinion on the efficacy of the Open Performance Appraisal.



Descriptive statistics in Figure 1 connote a missing sense of efficacy among appraisers and towards implementation of the OPA as evidenced from the majority of respondents' opinion on different aspects of efficacy. Specifically, the majority (69.2%) did not consider the Open Performance Appraisal as a big priority for performance improvement in the ministries. Over eighty-four per cent (84.4%) did not see any sense in implementing the OPA, while 88.6% indicated they had no choice but to implement the OPA. Implementation of the OPA was largely unappreciated and considered a waste of time. The qualitative views of permanent secretaries supported this finding and provided evidence of reasons why the appraisers and appraisees do not appreciate the OPA. Some permanent secretaries had the following to say:

*“From my experience of the OPA, the appraisers and appraisees don't seem to appreciate the OPA. Perhaps because they don't see its results. Many see the OPA as*  
**KI5)**



*“The OPA would be perceived useful if the appraisal information would be linked with performance incentives such as rewards and sanctions. But this is not the case. For example, during the annual assembly of all ministries, the best performing employees are just voted by the fellow employees. This is an event which would ideally utilize KI6).*

*“I believe performance appraisal bears potential to improve performance but the gaps in its implementation, renders it ineffective. When appraisees don’t see its results*

**KI5).**

*“Performance Appraisal is good by design on paper but there are no results to show*

**KI4).**

*“The fact is the appraisees don’t think that the appraisal information is used in any way. They believe completing the appraisal process is a matter of procedure and therefore remain reluctant to do so. Any slight interruption is an excuse for not paying KI5).*

Generally, the views of key informants point to the fact that employees in the ministries lack a sense of efficacy for successful implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal initiative. This is not to mean that the OPA initiative is not a good rather it leaves no results to show upon which employees would develop a positive attitude towards it. There is a general view that OPA implementation is not incentivized. More specifically, the OPA is not linked with Human Resource Development initiatives such as trainings and promotions. Besides, the OPA lacks linkage with rewards and recognitions and worst of all, there are no punitive actions for non-compliance. The key question which remains unanswered is whether the perceptions on ineffectiveness of the OPA are factual. To this end, the study could not trace evidence regarding effectiveness of the OPA. It could mean that limited effort has been dedicated towards popularizing and creating a positive attitude about the initiative through support interventions like training and communication which are considered best practices and vital for implementation success.

### **Appraisers and appraisees’ commitment to the OPA**

Change commitment was in this study operationalized as a force or mind-set that binds appraisers and appraisees to successfully implement performance appraisal. Commitment was analyzed in three dimensions: a desire to support OPA based on the belief in its inherent benefits (affective commitment); recognition that there are costs associated with failure to implement OPA appropriately; and a sense of obligation to provide support towards implementation of the OPA. Figure 2 presents the percentage distribution of respondents who agreed or disagreed with specific statements testing the commitment of appraisers and appraisees to successful implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal.

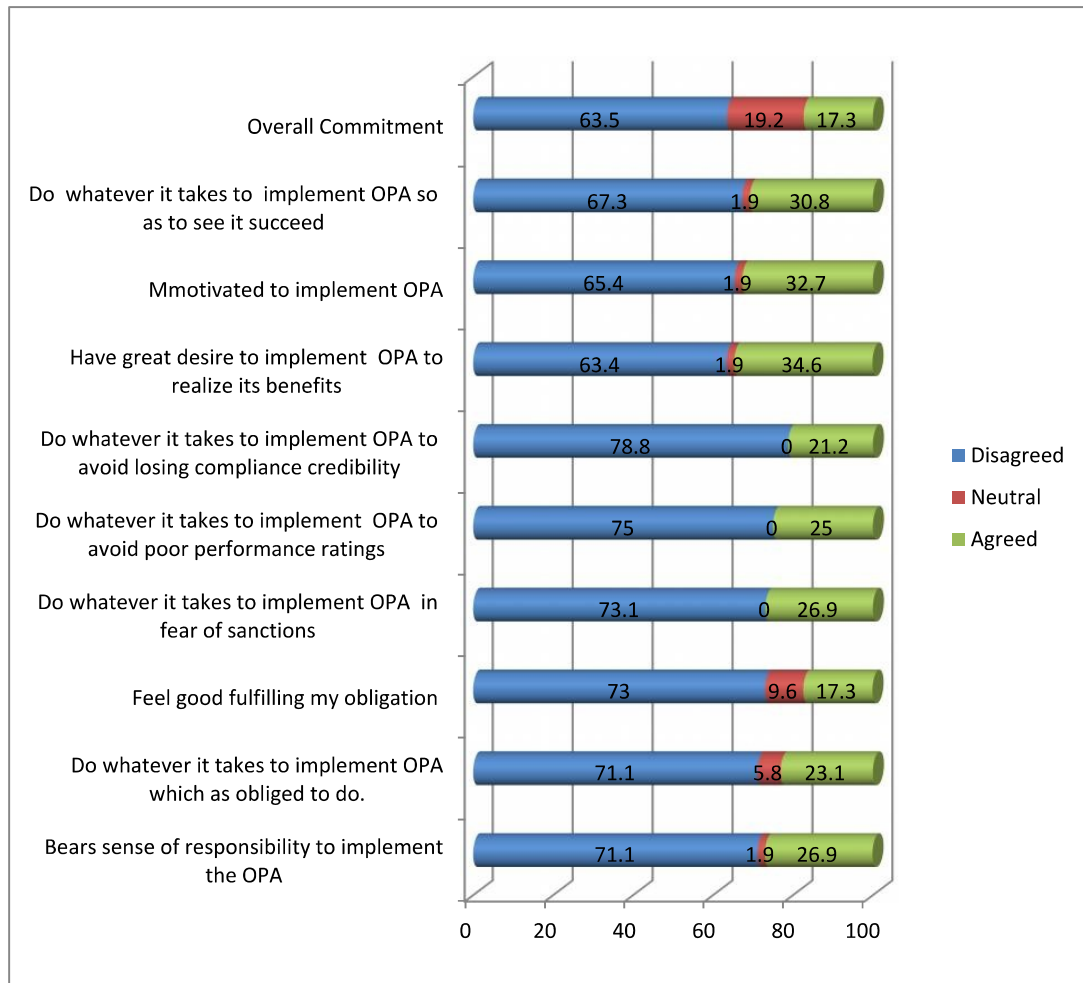


Figure 2: Respondents’ position on commitment to successful implementation of the OPA

Descriptive statistics in Figure 2 point to limited commitment of appraisers and appraisees to successful implementation of OPA as attested by the majority (over 63%) of respondents’ opinion. Limited commitment can be logically observed to manifest in several ways. The majority (63.4%) of the appraisers and appraisees had limited desire and motivation to implement the OPA to realize its benefits. Secondly, the majority (75-78%) did not feel that they should implement OPA because they feared poor performance ratings and associated impact such as losing performance credibility. In addition, 71% did not feel obliged to and therefore did not feel like doing whatever possible to successfully implement OPA. Further evidence of limited commitment is drawn from the qualitative interviews with permanent secretaries who bear overall accountability for performance of the ministries’ initiatives including OPA.

*“The truth is the staffs are not committed to implement performance appraisal. Whether they implement it or not it does not make a difference to one’s performance. I*

**KI7).**

*don't think management relies on one's performance gaps to provide funds for training or further education. Staff gets support to pursue Master's because they want to apply for higher level position. I see staff travel for training, I doubt whether such decisions **KI8).***

*staff to comply with OPA. Consider, there is a big pool of staff who are not working for promotion. They are comfortable in the positions they are serving in Promotion may **KI4).***

*"We do not have provision for any penalties for failure in one way or the other to comply with the OPA requirements. We just keep encouraging and reminding staff **KI8).***

*"I don't think the staff feel obliged to implement Performance appraisal. Otherwise if they did, we would not be wasting a lot of time pushing them to do so. They are more concerned about their daily routines upon which their performance is measured. Most likely they see it as a bother particularly those who don't even appreciate the **KI6).***

The views of key informants generally attest to appraisers and appraisees' inadequate commitment to implementation of OPA. Drawing insights from the theoretical tenets of the readiness for change theory adopted in this study, such commitment could be attributed to the feelings and perceptions about the OPA. Consequently, the subsequent sub-section establishes the appraisers and appraisees' perspective on efficacy of the OPA.

### **Capability for implementation of the OPA: Appraisers and appraisees perspective**

The analysis of opinion shared by appraisers and appraisees bears a sense of capability towards implementation of the OPA. Figure 3 presents the percentage distribution of respondents by their opinion on capability for implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal.

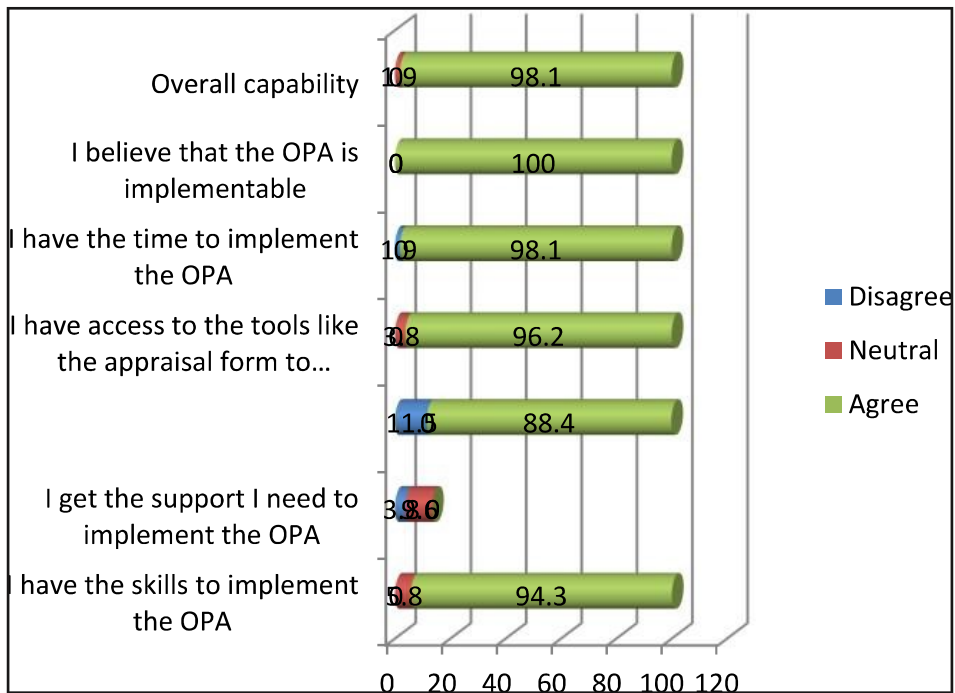


Figure 3: Respondents’ position on Appraisers and Appraisees’ sense of capability towards implementation of the OPA

Results in Figure 3 indicate a strong sense of capability towards implementation of the OPA among appraisers and appraisees as the majority (over 88%) of respondents attest. One hundred per cent of the appraisers and appraisees believed that the OPA is implementable; the majority (98.1%) had the time, 94.3% had the skills and 96.2% had access to the necessary tools like appraisal forms. Where they needed support, it was always available. Consistently, qualitative views of permanent secretaries supported this sense of capability. Putting this into perspective, some Appraisers and Appraisees had the following to say;

*“Capacity is key to successful implementation of any initiative. I feel we are adequately capacitated to implement the Open Performance Appraisal. We have access to forms*

**Appraiser**

1).

*“Completing OPA forms should be a simple task to appraisers and appraisees. The*

*report on what they have been doing, what they are lacking and what they would need to perform better. These are simple issues which I feel we are skilled enough to report*

**Appraiser 2).**

*“I believe the ministry has adequate capacity at individual and institutional level to conduct performance appraisals. I consider the fact that most of us have served in for years meaning we have gained experience in conducting appraisal. I have a feeling*

**(Appraiser 3)**

*“As Human Resource staff we are experienced to handle performance appraisals. We facilitated through the budget and should therefore be able to manage the process (Appraiser 4).*

*“The Human Resource staffs are skilled and facilitated to manage the OPA. This is critical in as far as implementation is concerned. Time is important but I don’t think*

#### **Appraiser 5).**

The general perspectives of key informants point to the fact that the ministry is adequately capacitated to successfully implement the OPA. Capacity is evidenced at individual and organizational levels. At individual level, the staff are experienced and skilled enough to successfully conduct appraisals. Institutional wise, they are adequately facilitated with financial resources through their budgets.

The findings indicate a state of limited readiness of the ministries to implement the Open Performance Appraisal. The readiness manifests in many ways and as earlier conceptualized in the introduction to the study; it evidences both limited commitment and efficacy for implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal among the appraisers and appraisees. In a nutshell, the appraisers and appraisees have limited desire and motivation to implement the OPA to realize its benefits; they do not feel like they should do whatever it takes to implement OPA in fear of poor performance ratings and the associated impact such as losing performance credibility. In addition, they do not feel obliged to successfully implement OPA. Regarding efficacy, they do not believe that the OPA can improve performance in the ministry; they lack a sense of duty to work towards implementation of the OPA. The subsequent sub-section teases out the implication of this state of readiness on implementation of the OPA.

As a matter of emphasis, the qualitative views of key informants underscore the fact that the appraisers and appraisees remain uncommitted to successful implementation of the OPA because they do not perceive or see its immediate benefits. Qualitative data indicates that there is no evidence to effectiveness of OPA. Appraisees and appraisers are generally not given feedback and the OPA is not linked with performance incentives such as rewards and recognitions. Similarly, capacity building decisions such as funding for pursuit of trainings and upgrading education qualifications for career development are rarely based on performance gaps. These are issues which have come out boldly from the qualitative views.

#### **The effect of Readiness and OPA implementation**

The analysis of the effect of readiness on implementation of the OPA first presents correlation results to indicate the degree of relationship between readiness and implementation of the OPA. Later, regression results are presented to indicate the magnitude of effect of efficacy and commitment on implementation of the OPA. Tables 1 and 2 present the correlation and regression results respectively.



Variable		Sig.
Normative commitment	0.713**	0.001
Continuance commitment	0.671**	0.001
Affective commitment	0.472**	0.001
Overall commitment	0.650**	0.001
	0.481**	0.001

Variable	Statistics				
	R-square	Std. error	T	Sig	
	.106	.794	.326	2.436	0.018
Commitment	.422	.780	.129	6.046	0.001

### **Efficacy and implementation of the OPA**

The p-values in respect to the correlation coefficient for commitment and implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal was 0.650 positive and statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) indicating a significant relationship between these variables (Table 1). This was true for all the three dimensions of commitment, i.e. normative, continuance and affective commitment with correlation coefficients of 0.713, 0.671 and 0.472 respectively and p-values less than 5%. This implied that commitment of appraisers and appraisees to the OPA significantly affects its implementation. However, as observed in the previous chapter, the appraisers and appraisees exhibit limited commitment which explains the inappropriate implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal earlier mentioned in the findings of this study.

The significance of commitment to implementation of the OPA was further evidenced by the regression results (Table 2). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.442 which indicated that overall, commitment explained 44.2% of the variation in implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal. The p-value (0.001) in respect to the regression coefficient for commitment was less than 5% significance level, indicating that commitment had a positive significant influence on implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal. Consistently, the regression coefficient was 0.780 and statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that feeling a sense of efficacy towards the OPA improved chances of its implementation by 78%.

The significant effect of commitment on implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal observed in this study is consistent with wide literature which underscores the relevance of commitment to effective implementation of performance management initiatives. Sillup et al (2010), Finn (2007) and Wikina (2008) consider commitment as the first step in the foundations for successful performance management. Similarly, Parish et al (2008) identifies a highly positive correlation between commitment and successful change implementation. Further evidence to the significance of commitment on implementation draws from a study by IRS (2005) which identifies that if managers are not adequately committed to the appraisal system, the performance review becomes just a paperwork exercise.

### ***Efficacy and implementation of the OPA***

The correlation coefficient for the relationship between commitment and implementation of the OPA was 0.481 and its respective p-value was 0.01 less than 5% significant level (Table). This result indicated a positive significant relationship between efficacy and implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal. It suggests that where employees exhibit a sense of efficacy towards the OPA, they are likely to implement it appropriately. Notably, however, the descriptive analysis presented in the previous chapter identified appraisers and appraisees with a missing sense of efficacy, which in addition to commitment can partly be held responsible for the inappropriate implementation of the OPA initiative in the ministries.

The significance of efficacy was further emphasized by the regression results (Table 2) for which the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.106 indicating that efficacy explained 10.6% of the variation in implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal. The p-value (0.018) in respect to the regression coefficient for efficacy was less than 5% significance level, indicating that efficacy had a positive significant influence on implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal. Consistently, the regression coefficient was 0.794 and statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that feeling a sense of efficacy towards the OPA improved chances of its implementation by 79%. The significant influence of efficacy on implementation of the OPA is consistent with the findings by Jansen and Michael (2010) that employees who believe that the change will benefit both themselves and the organization are more likely to support it. The findings affirm the theory of Readiness for Change by Weiner (2008).

### **Implication of the Study on the Implementation of Reforms in the Public Service**

**Shifting the thinking to Readiness towards successful implementation:** Findings of the study have affirmed a significant association between readiness and implementation of the Open Performance Appraisal. It calls for a need to shift the thinking towards creating building a sense of efficacy, a positive mindset, to realize commitment which is quite paramount for successful implementation. Despite its significance, Uganda's Public Service has been found to lack the requisite readiness to foster successful implementation of the OPA. Characteristically, the ministries' staff lack a sense of efficacy and exhibit limited commitment to implement the OPA. This finding puts readiness at the centre stage of efforts to ensure successful implementation of the OPA. To realize this, there is need to recall that commitment depends on the implementers' sense of efficacy towards the initiative which is OPA in this context. Logically, this calls for the need to build and sustain a sense of efficacy among the implementers towards realization of the requisite commitment. Sense of efficacy should be built by tracing results from implementation of the OPA and continuous sensitization of the implementers on the benefits of OPA.

**Building implementation capacity with emphasis on creating a sense of efficacy among implementers:** The initiation process of management reform interventions can pay attention to sensitization and training of implementers and managers of the reform focusing on creating a sense of efficacy alongside implementation capability. This is necessary to secure the buy-in of such key stakeholders in the implementation process. The buy-in arises from stakeholders' understanding and appreciation of the potential benefits. Such understanding

builds towards a sense of efficacy regarding the initiative that eventually fosters successful implementation. This draws from the fact that implementation of the OPA in the Uganda Public Service remains wanting despite the substantive capacity and capability. To sustainably build a sense of efficacy, this study has majorly demonstrated the need for showing up implementation results which partly energizes and incentivizes the implementation process. This can be supplemented with rewarding implementation success and sanctioning poor implementation performance at individual and ministry levels. Rewards could be in form of gifts given annually to the best implementing departments and individuals. On the other hand, sanctions could be in form of withholding promotional opportunities and suspension from duty for specified periods for individuals who do not implement the OPA appropriately.

**Invest in periodic review of the OPA to unveil and show off results towards efficacy building:** Regarding management of the OPA, efforts have not been committed to periodic evaluation of the Open Performance Appraisal. This draws from the finding that at, initiation, the OPA can secure buy-in of the implementers which is however likely to erode if the initiative cannot show results. With no results, appraisers and appraisees lack a sense of efficacy which is vital to foster commitment towards successful implementation. To this end, periodic evaluation of the OPA or other performance management reform initiative is paramount. This study established that the proposed evaluation of the OPA is vital but yet to be conducted. The ministerial reviews which are conducted annually focus on performance initiatives in general which include but are not limited to: Results Oriented Management, OPA, the Code of Conduct for Public Servants and Performance Agreements. The reviews, however, do not specifically analyze the OPA implementation at individual level.

## REFERENCES

- Aishya, S.A. (2010). *Factors affecting performance appraisal effectiveness*. University of Malaysia, Sarawak
- Armenakis, A., Harris, S. G. & Field, H.S. (1999). Making Change Permanent: A Model for institutionalizing change interventions. *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, 12, 97- 128.
- Alexander, J.A. and Hearld, L. R. (2012). Methods and metrics challenges of delivery system research. *Implementation Science* 2012, 7:15
- Bernerth, J. (2004). Expanding our understanding of the change message. *Human Resource Development Review*, 3(1): 36–52.
- Bertram, R.M., Blase, K., Shern, D., Shea, P. and Fixsen, D. (2011). Implementation opportunities and challenges for prevention and health promotion initiatives. National Association of State Mental Health Directors, Alexandria, VA.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Elzinga, T, Albronda, B., Kluijtmans, F. (2009). Behavioural factors influencing performance management systems' use. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 58, No. 6.

- Fixsen, D.L., Blase, K.A., Naoom, S.F. & Wallace, F. (2009). Core implementation components. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 19 (5), 531-540.
- Helfrich C.D. (2009). Organizational readiness to change assessment (ORCA): development of an instrument based on the promoting action on research in health services (PARIHS) framework. *Imp Science*, 4:38.
- Herold, D.M., Fedor, D.B. & Liu, Yi. (2008). The Effects of Transformational and Change Leadership Employees' Commitment to a Change: A multilevel Study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Vol. 93, (2), 346-357.
- Herscovitch, L., Meyer, J.P. (2002). Commitment to organizational change: Extension of a three-component model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87, 474-487.
- Holt, D.T. (2007). Readiness for organizational change: the systematic development of a scale. *Journal of Appl. Behavioural Science*, 43(2):232–255
- Jansen, K.J. & Michael, J.H. 2010. Antecedents and consequences of change-based momentum: A longitudinal study, University of Virginia: Darden School of Business. Available at: [www.darden.virginia.edu/.../Antecedents%20and%20consequences%20of%20change%20AMJ.doc](http://www.darden.virginia.edu/.../Antecedents%20and%20consequences%20of%20change%20AMJ.doc). Accessed: 23 February 2010
- Karyeija, G.K. (2010). Performance appraisal in Uganda's civil service: Does administrative culture matter? PhD Dissertation, University of Bergen.
- Kotter, J. P. (1996). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, 73, 59–67.
- May, C. (2008). A rational model for assessing and evaluating complex interventions in health care. *BMC Health Serv Res* 2006, 6(86):1–11. 39.
- Ministry of Public Service.(2013). Annual Performance Report.
- Ministry of Public Service (2012). Strategic Plan 2012/2013-2016/2017 "Accountable Service Delivery".
- Ministry of Public Service. (2010). Public Service Reform Program. Annual report for the financial year 2009/2010, Kampala, Uganda
- Ministry of Public Service. (2009). Report for the 5<sup>TH</sup> Annual Review Workshop of the Public Service Reform Programme, Kampala, Uganda
- Nicholas, T.C., Kitariko, R. K., Muhika, S.T., Coke, I. D. Udoji, J. C. Bigirwenkya, Z.H.K.
- Musisu, J. S. and Sentongo, C. (1990) Public Service Review and Re-organization Weiner J. B. (2009). A theory of organizational readiness for change. *Implementation Science*. 4(67); BioMed Central Ltd.
- Mwirigi, A. K. and Namusonge, G. S. (2013). Factors Affecting Implementation of Employee Performance Appraisals. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Nuwagaba, F. Mbabazi, M. and Jaya, S. (2015). An assessment of factors affecting the implementation of the performance appraisal system in Rwanda: A case of Nyamashekedistrict local government. *International Journal of Business and Management Review* Vol.3, No.4, pp.1-35.
- Olum, Yasin. 2004. Public Service Reform in Uganda: A Critical Review. *Africa Journal of Public Administration* xv (1).

- Ramnarayan, S. & Rao, T.V. (2011). *Organization Development: Accelerating Learning and Transformation*. Sage Publications.
- Saunders, M. Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research Methods for Business Students*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Sillup, G. P., Klimberg, R. (2010). Assessing the ethics of implementing performance appraisal systems. *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 29 No. 1.
- Solinger, O. N., Olffen, v., W., & Roe, R. A. (2008). Beyond the Three-Component Model of organizational commitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(1), 70-83.
- Steyn, C. & Visagie, C.M. ( 2011). Organisational commitment and responses to planned organisational change: An exploratory study. *Southern African Business Review*, Volume 15 (3).
- Weiner, B.J., Lewis, M.A., Linnan, L.A. (2009). Using organization theory to understand the determinants of effective implementation of work-site health promotion programs. *Journal of Health Education Research*. Vol. 24(2):292 Commission, Volume 1