ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FEEDBACK ON PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AMONG TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IGEMBE CENTRAL SUB-COUNTY, MERU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT
Performance appraisal provides a systematic means of establishing the proper grade classification of jobs within an organization with the aim of providing equitable compensation to employees. The purpose of the study was assessment of teacher performance appraisal feedbacks on professional growth among teachers in public secondary schools in Igembe Central Sub-County. The study was guided by the following objectives: To assess the level of teacher- appraiser engagement in the performance appraisal process among teachers in public secondary schools Igembe Central sub-County, to find out the influence of appraisal ratings on continuous professional development among teachers in public secondary schools in Igembe Central sub-County. The study was grounded on the Taylor's Performance Monitoring Theory and the cognitive theory of learning proposed by Jean Piaget and Vygotsky. The target population of the study was 720 persons comprising of 40 principals and 680 teachers and 1 ministry of education official in Igembe Central Sub-County. A sample size of 280 for the study was obtained using Morgan and Krejcie (1970) model. The study selected the respondents using stratified proportionate random sampling technique. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used semi structured questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25.0) and presented using Frequency tables and charts. Majority of teachers agree that they engage with the appraiser during the performance appraisal process and their engagement help them to identify their performance gaps, strengths and weaknesses. Also teachers argue that despite high rating in appraisal, there no rewards like further studies that would result in professional growth. The study recommends strengthening of communication channels during performance appraisal, provision of clear guidelines for career progression based on appraisal outcomes, promotion of teachers to focus more on evidence based appraisal score ratings and further training to promote the culture of professional growth among teachers.
Keywords: *Teacher-Appraiser Engagement, Appraisal Ratings, Continuous Professional Development, Performance Appraisal Process*

INTRODUCTION
In many countries, the role and functioning of schools are changing and so is what is expected of teachers (Loevenge, 2019).Teachers are asked to teach in increasingly multicultural classrooms; to place greater emphasis on integrating students with special

learning needs in their classrooms; to make more effective use of information and communication technologies for teaching; to engage more in planning within evaluative and accountability frameworks; and to do more to involve parents in schools,(Fatimata,2020). According to various sources, the earliest use of performance management dated back to the era of World War I when W D Scott first implemented the concept of performance appraisal (Griffin, 2019). However, WD Scott's system did not gain much momentum then and it was only during mid-1950s that business started implementing it (Authur, 2017). In 1960s performance management focusing more on self-appraisal systems. During this time, the performance appraisal systems monitored the performance of employees to achieve the company's goals and also helped them to excel in the future (Margur, 2018).Undoubtedly, the results were dynamic and in the next two decades, organizations began adopting a more holistic approach to employee performance appraisals and management.

Performance appraisal System in teaching profession originated in France in the late 1960Ss. It was later developed with great deal of elaboration in Germany and thereafter introduced to most of European nations (Danielson and McGraw 2019).In the USA where (PA) is well entrenched in the education system across the states, with school boards as the school management managers. The National Education Assessment by the US Department of Education (2019) indicates thirty-six states already provide some form of merit pay for teacher's PA programs (OED). The best practice for performance appraisal has been drawn from countries such as Korea, China, U.S.A, UK, Canada, Japan, South-Korea and Malaysia (Griffin, 2019). In Australia and New Zealand the driving force for performance appraisal originated from the perceptions that the performance of the public sector had been consistently falling below the expectations of the public. The decline was associated with excessive controls, multiplicity of principles, frequent political interference, poor management and outright mismanagement. The use of Staff appraisal has been acclaimed as an effective and promising means of improving the performance of public enterprises as well as government departments (Otton, 2019).

World over, performance appraisal systems for teachers is a critical undertaking; in the United States of America (USA),teacher appraisals focuses on three tiers of teachers: newly employed, experienced and those who require support. In Nigeria just like the world over, the system of educational is exam-oriented; therefore, student performance in secondary school national examinations administered by West African Examinations Council (Griffin, 2019). Most countries base evaluation of teacher performance on competencies, behavioral traits and their ability to improve. Countries such as Australia in 2011 focused on professional engagement, knowledge, and practice (AITSL 2019). A number of counties in USA adopt Danielson's framework focusing on parameters such as professional responsibilities, planning and preparation, classroom management and instructional strategy (Danielson,2017).(Mills2019) posits that success or failure among secondary school students relies on the quality of instruction obtained from professionally developed teachers as opposed to the lack of students' learning abilities. To spur better student examination scores through learning processes, teachers must have in-depth knowledge of pedagogy.

In Africa, drastic and fundamental changes are increasingly occurring in the environment in which organizations operate. An obvious manifestation of the responses towards this turbulent environment is the introduction of performance appraisal as part of the broader public sector reforms aimed at improving seminars in the management of the services. Performance appraisal has been adopted in developing countries in Africa including Nigeria, Gambia and Ghana (Odu, 2019). Similarly, in Tanzania from 2015, the Government accepted the recommendation to implement PA of head teachers and principals of secondary schools and tertiary institutions informed by the principles of RBM as outlined in the Government White Paper of 2010.

Continuous training on Performance appraisal on all cadres of members of staff is needed to help them understand and internalize Performance appraisal for easier implementation. This training is crucial in assisting staff in linking their duties with the bigger picture of the institution in form of strategic objectives. Knowledge of strategic planning, growth of work plans and monitoring capacities among the staff is central to the success of Performance appraisal and the teacher's attitude and their technical knowledge is essential (Wheelen & Hunger, 2018). According to Okumbe (2019),appraisal is viewed as a management strategy aimed at motivating teachers to improve their pedagogical effectiveness and productivity, however critics of performance appraisal namely Zhang and Ng (2018) and Halinger, Heck and Murphy(2019) regard it as a mechanical and meaningless exercise since as they say the he execution of such systems is not always easy and the appraisals frequently do not achieve their goals, with the result that both the employees and their supervisors are often dissatisfied with the system.

Statement of the problem

The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) carries out performance appraisal systems to enhance the quality of teaching and ultimately improve learning in primary, secondary schools and tertiary institutions (Kemunto, 2019). However, Odhiambo (2018) study that focused on the state of teacher appraisal in Kenyan secondary schools observed that there is need for an improved model of teacher appraisal and further indicated that teacher appraisal policies and practices in Kenyan secondary schools exhibit weaknesses, which need to be urgently addressed if teacher appraisal has to be used to improve teacher professional gaps.

According to Meru County TSC report of 2023 the teachers domiciled in this Igembe Central Sub-County has consistently been having challenges embracing teacher's performance appraisal as required by the Ministry of Education. There has been constant complains by teachers in this Sub-County of ever increasing conflict with their seniors. He cited that out of 10 disciplinary cases they were handling then at the county office, 8 cases were for teachers from Igembe central sub-county. He also reported that when it comes to academic performance out of 11 sub-counties Igembe Central sub-county is ranked the last. This problem may have resulted in teachers feeling victimized which can lead to low morale and impetus towards work. There has also been Mass exodus of teachers compounded with natural attrition which has led to greater turnover in the number of teachers within the County. This is posing danger to school administrators after the introduction of performance contracts that head teachers need to sign on behalf of the teachers in their institutions (Sub-county Education office, 2017).

Another noted problem in the Sub-county is serious career stagnation of teachers due to lack of professional development which can leads to low quality in teaching profession. Very few teachers have gone through courses that have enabled them gain new knowledge in the teaching field and hence improve learner's performance academically (Kuppet, 2023). Despite the fact that teachers are appraised every term, little has been achieved as far as professional growth among teachers is concerned. This research sought to assess the extent to which teacher performance appraisal feedback is related to profession growth or lack of it among teachers in public schools in Igembe Central Sub-County.

Objectives of the study

 i. To assess the level of teacher-appraiser engagement in the performance appraisal process among teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Igembe Central Sub-County
ii. To find out the influence of appraisal ratings on continuous professional development among teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Igembe Central Sub-County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical literature

Teacher-appraiser engagement in appraisal process and teachers professional growth

The establishment of reliable processes of evaluation according to Lawler (2018) thrives on two premises; the development of targets and the articulation of the standards of work performance. However, the overall rationale of this effectiveness depends on the extent of goal realization. A system of evaluation makes a key component in all performance appraisals in which the evaluators make inferences on the basis of their observations in the International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management, United Kingdom Licensed under Creative Common Page 509 measurement of the quality of the service of an individual. Evaluation provides a rationale to find out the extent to which an educator achieves a stipulated target(Lady and Farr,2018).Without a consensus concerning measurement of evaluation, setting parameters for performance will be in vain(Armstrong, 2019). Evaluation of performance paves way for the provisions of feedback to an appraisee and the institution of work (Guantai, 2019).

Ling (2019) terms teaching and learning experience a complex undertaking in school evaluation techniques taking place in various methods and circumstances making its vital to use multiple tools in data collection for comparison. Different institutions (schools) use diverse evaluation methods in evaluating their teachers. Nonetheless, there is a postulation of seven techniques used widely by Darling – Hammond, Wise and Peace (2018) as follows: competency tests, ratings of students, test results of students, self-assessment, teacher's interviews, peer reviews, and classroom assessment. Australian educator assessment research by Jensen (2019) recommends an overall 360 degree evaluation review by parents. The 360 degrees technique requires response from several sources to increase the validity of the assessment. It should involve all stakeholders in the schools ranging from students and their parents, the educators, and senior administrative staff. Parent evaluation is external but plays an important role in expanding the view of evaluations. Parents hold key information about their children. Jensen suggests such information will be instrumental in boosting the evaluation and improvement of the performance of teachers. Omiya's (2018) research in Borabu district proposes repeated techniques for teacher evaluation that include a 7.89% examination of work records,10.52% ranking of individuals,21.05% essay writing, and 55.2% target setting.

Gichuhi (2019) points out that the kind of an evaluation method an institution settles for will determine the view of its staff on that appraisal method. According to Murton et al (2019), it is difficult finding a reliable evaluation structure that is free of biasness. This is one of the reasons that educators among other staff feel a difficult in trusting these evaluation mechanisms. Studies in schools reveal that using multiple instruments to collect performance data leads to the most efficient results when evaluating the performance of educators in their work environments. Jacob and Lefgren (2018) agree that collaborative efforts by teachers and principals can help to hand pick the best evaluation tools that can be effective in the determination of the weaknesses and strengths of teachers in their teaching experiences. It is possible to reinforce the performance of a teacher. Professional development is helpful in eradicating weaknesses among teachers.

Appraisal ratings and continuous professional development
A study by Golob,(2018) on the effect of teachers' professional improvement on the outcomes of pupils at the National evaluation of Knowledge in Slovenia optimizing data from a sample representing 5.3% of the population from 24 elementary schools based on consistency in mathematics and mother tongue performance in the past five years concluded that professional improvement of teachers impacted the examination scores of students. A study by Parish,(2019) on the impact of teacher professional development and student examination scores based on math and science curriculum-based assessments. Using a study sample of 260 teachers from public schools who teach third, fourth, and fifth-grade students' math and science. Through inferential and descriptive statistics, the study concluded that time

spent in the professional development of teachers was directly proportional to the examination scores of the students in CBAs.

Karamanos,(2020) undertaking a study on the influence of professional improvement approaches on student performance in mathematics elementary public schools in New Jersey utilizing an online survey to review the effect of content taught in professional development programs on students' performance established that content delivered in the development program influenced student academic performance.

Karamanos,(2020) studied the impact of teacher development programs on students' results in rural China. Study intended to assess the impact of the National Teacher Training Program (NTTP) on the academic performance of students in rural China. The study sampled 3,066 st6udents and 84 teachers from one Western province. A survey system was used to collect data, and it was in two phases: baseline and end-line survey. Regression analysis was used to analyze data. The findings indicated that the NTTP program did not influence the educational achievement of the students. Oluwole *et al.*, (2017) sought to find the effect of teachers' professional development on students' examination performance. The goal of the study was to establish the extent professional development of teachers affected the examination scores of students in Nigerian Benue and Nasiriya states. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population was 8,335 teachers from 709 secondary schools. From the population, a sample of 417 teachers was respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires. Analysis of data was done by employing inferential and descriptive statistics.

Theoretical framework

Taylor's performance monitoring theory

Taylor's performance monitoring theory of 2002 asserts that performance management provides the mechanism by which an organization can measure critical success factors. Successful business management requires the ongoing monitoring of performance in order to generate data by which to judge the success or otherwise of specific strategies. Improvement in performance can only be realistically achieved when management is properly informed about current performance. To this end it is important to identify key performance indicators (KPIs) that will enable management to evaluate progress of any activity. It should be noted that performance appraisal is a part of a performance management which includes activities to ensure that institutional goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner (McNamara, 2019). Performance management includes many other practices besides performance appraisal, like employee performance improvement, performance growth, training, cross-training, challenging assignments, career growth or coaching. The key performance indicators for teacher performance appraisal include teacher target setting, teacher documentation, and classroom observation which are the indicators of the independent variable of the study.

Cognitive theory proposed by Jean Piaget and Vygotsky

Cognitive theories of learning were proposed by scholars such as Jean Piaget (1896 – 1980) and Vygotsky (1896 – 1934). Cognitive theories of learning asserts that learning is a process of drawing connections between what is already known or understood and new information. Thus, prior knowledge is important to the learning process. Cognitive theories of learning proposes that people make connections and draw conclusions based on a sense of what they already know and have experienced. Learning can be viewed, in part, as a matter of encoding and storing information in memory, processing, categorizing and clustering material, and later retrieving this information to be applied at the appropriate times and situations. For learning to occur, facts, concepts and ideas must also be stored, connected to other facts, concepts, and ideas, and built upon. Knowing in advance what the big ideas are and how they relate to each other conceptually helps learners to make sense of information and to remember and use it more flexibly. Cognitivism, emphasizes the role that environmental

conditions play in facilitating learning. Instructional explanations, demonstrations, illustrative examples and matched non-examples are all considered to be instrumental in guiding student learning.

Similarly, emphasis is placed on the role of practice with corrective feedback. Teachers are responsible for assisting learners in organizing that information in some optimal way.

Teachers use techniques such as advance organizers, analogies, hierarchical relationships, and matrices to help learners relate new information to prior knowledge. Cognitivism imply that the major tasks of the teacher include; understanding that individuals bring various learning experiences to the learning situation which can impact learning outcomes; determining the most effective manner in which to organize and structure new information to tap the learners' previously acquired knowledge, abilities, and experiences; and arranging practice with feedback so that the new information is effectively and efficiently assimilated and/or accommodated within the learners' cognitive structure (Stepich & Newby, 2018). The cognitive theory of learning has helped the researcher conceptualize the dependent variable of the study. It encompasses various aspects of teaching, including instructional practices, classroom management, and professional conduct. Historically, teacher evaluation centered on accrediting qualifications (knowledge, credentials, experience).

Conceptual framework

The independent variable of the study is performance appraisal feedback of teachers. An effective performance appraisal feedback programme is expected to result to improvement in professional growth of teachers which can be seen through personal organizational decisions, proper training needs assessment and training, use of feedback to promote and reward, and improvement and innovations in their teaching activities. The outcome of such appraisal would be improvement in professional growth of teachers. If the performance appraisal is ineffective, the outcome would be lack of teachers' professional growth.

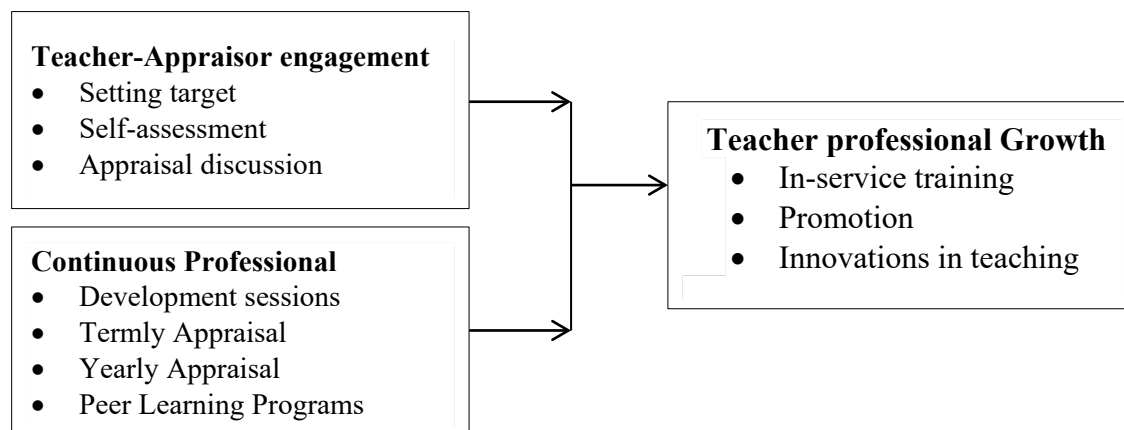**Independent Variable**   **Dependent Variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual framework: Source: Researcher (2023)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilized descriptive survey design. The study was conducted Igembe Central Sub-county in Meru County. The target population of this study population was teachers and principals of the public secondary schools in Igembe-central Sub-County, Meru County. The target population of the study was 720 persons comprising of 40 principals and 680 teachers teaching in 40 public secondary schools in Igembe-Central Sub-County, Meru, County.

Krejcie & Morgan (1970) came up with a table for determining sample size for a given population for easy reference at 95% level of confidence. According to the sampling table for a target population of 680 a minimum sample of 248 respondents was considered an acceptable representation of the target population while for target population of 40 then 36 would be ideal (

For this study stratified sampling was used to select 8 schools each stratum representing ward as follows: Akirang'ondu, Athiru Ruujine, Igembe East Njia and Kangeta. The principal of each of school in respective wards was purposively selected. At the same time, 49 teachers were randomly selected to represent each ward giving a total of 248 teachers. The TSC sub-county director was purposively selected given his role in teachers 'performance appraisal.

The research instruments employed in this study were questionnaires and an interview schedule. The researcher used questionnaires to collect information from teachers and school principals. Interview schedules were utilized to gather data from the Sub-County Director TSC to supplement the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics was used to compute the mean, frequencies and percentages along with the search for patterns of relationships that exists from the collected data. The descriptive statistics were presented using tables, graphs and charts. Statistical software package for social sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used to generate the required descriptive statistics.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Response Rate

A total of 248 questionnaires were distributed out of which 200 were successfully completed and returned thus giving a response rate of 80.6%.Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003 perceived that a 50% response rate is satisfactory, 60% good and above, while 70% rated very good. Based on this statement, the response rate of 80.6% in this case is therefore very good and is considered satisfactory to make conclusions for the study.

Descriptive Analysis Teacher-Appraiser engagement in the appraisal engagement

This section pertains to statements formulated to assess Teacher-Appraisal engagement in the performance appraisal process.

Table 1 Teacher appraiser engagement in Performance Appraisal process

Statement	Yes	No
Principal evaluates my lesson notes	30	70
Principal visits my class to observe my teaching	65	35
The Principal holds a discussion with me after lesson observation.	65	35
The Principal walks around the classes to ensure lessons are attended	67	23
The Principal compares my schemes of work with my records of work	50	50
Principal evaluates my performance in other out of class activities (like games, drama)	60	40
Principal evaluates my schemes of work	75	25
I usually participate in writing appraisal report to be sent to TSC regarding my performance	67	33
TSC sends me feedback on my annual appraisal report	71	29
I hold free discussion regarding my performance in the job with the principal.	60	40
Principals appraises my performance on career guidance on students	78	22

The mean rating for each statement is also provided regarding the first question sought to find opinion whether head concentrate on when he evaluates your performance in class and in your records? On whether Principal evaluates my lesson notes: Majority (No): 70% Minority (Yes): 30%. Interpretation: Most respondents (70%) believe that the principal does not evaluates their lesson notes. On whether Principal visits my class to observe my teaching: Majority (65% agreed): Minority (35%): Interpretation: The school principals appraise class room activities. On whether The Principal holds a discussion with me after lesson observation: Majority (Yes): 65% Minority (No): 35%Interpretation: A majority (65%) have a discussions after lesson observation with the principal. On whether, the Principal walks around the classes to ensure lessons are attended: Majority (Yes): 67% Minority (No): 23% Interpretation: Most respondents (67%) report that the principal ensures lesson attendance by walking around the classes. On whether the Principal compares my schemes of work with my

records of work: Majority (Equal split): 50% Yes, 50% No Interpretation: The data is evenly split on whether the principal compares schemes of work with records of work. On whether Principal evaluates my performance in other out-of-class activities (like games, drama): Majority (Yes):60% Minority (No): 40% Interpretation: A majority (60%) undergo performance evaluation for out-of-class activities. On whether Principal evaluates my schemes of work: Majority (Yes):75% Minority (No):25%Interpretation: Most respondents (75%) have their schemes of work evaluated by the principal. On whether teachers participate in writing appraisal reports to be sent to TSC regarding my performance: Majority (Yes): 67% Minority (No): 33%Interpretation: A majority (67%) actively participate in writing appraisal reports. On whether TSC sends me feedback on my annual appraisal report: Majority (Yes):71%Minority (No): 29% Interpretation: Most respondents (71%) receive feedback from TSC on their annual appraisal report. On whether teachers and principals hold free discussions regarding my performance in the appraisal with the principal: Majority (No):60% Minority (Yes): 40% Interpretation: A majority (60%) do not engage in free discussions about their appraisal performance with the principal. On whether Principals appraise my performance on career guidance for students: Majority (Yes):78% Minority (No):22% Interpretation: Principals predominantly appraise performance in career guidance (78%).Remember that these interpretations are based on the provided data.

Descriptive Analysis of Measures School principals take based on performance appraisal ratings.

This section pertains to statements formulated to assess the Measures school principals take based on performance appraisal ratings. The findings are contained in Table 2.

Table 2: Measures taken by the principal after appraisal of teachers

Measures	Respondents
Reprimand me	15
Guide and counsel me	60
Recommend further training	5
Provide necessary resources for improvement	10
Other measures	10
Total	**100**

After evaluations, there are several measures that can be taken based on the results. Let's explore each option. Reprimand: Percentage: 15% Meaning: If your performance falls short, the principal may reprimand you. This involves expressing disapproval or criticism for specific actions or outcomes. Guide and Counsel: Percentage: 60%Meaning: The principal provides guidance and counseling. This could involve discussing areas for improvement, addressing challenges, and offering advice on professional growth. Recommend Further Training: Percentage: 5%Meaning: If your evaluation reveals specific skill gaps, the principal may recommend additional training. This helps enhance your abilities and knowledge. Provide Necessary Resources for Improvement: Percentage 10% Meaning: The principal ensures you have the tools, materials, and support needed to improve. This could include access to training materials, mentorship, or other resources.

Other Measures (Specify): Percentage: 10%Meaning: The remaining 10% represents other actions not explicitly listed. These could vary based on individual circumstances and the principal's approach. Remember that effective follow-up after evaluations is crucial for professional development and growth.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Conclusion
On teacher appraiser engagement in the appraisal process, majority of teachers agree that they engage with the appraiser during the performance appraisal process and their engagement

help them to identify their performance gaps, strengths and weaknesses. This is crucial in their professional growth. When it comes to appraisal rating and its influence on professional growth, majority disagree especially in areas of promotions and further training. They argue that despite them scoring high in performance appraisal, they rarely get promotion because there are other factors like age and acting as deputy principal, though not part of performance appraisal, they are considered with a lot of weight though during interviews for promotions. Also teacher teachers argue that despite high rating in appraisal, there no rewards like further studies that would result in professional growth. On the other hand even those who have scored low in the appraisal rarely do they get remedial action like further training to facilitate there professional growth. In conclusion, a balanced approach to performance appraisal, evidence based score rating would create an avenue to professional growth among teachers in secondary schools.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations; Strengthening of communication channels during performance appraisal. Regular feedback sessions can enhance relationships and address any concerns. Provision of clear guidelines for career progression based on appraisal outcomes. Transparency can motivate teachers to actively engage in the process. Promotion of teachers to focus more on evidence based appraisal score ratings and further training to promote the culture of professional growth among teachers. Principals and deputy principals to be sensitized more on lesson observation to ensure that it is actually carried out objectively.

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