



Implementation of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System in improving the performance of public service employees in selected Councils in Tanzania

Adella O. Nyello

University of Dodoma, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study examined the implementation of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) within local government authorities in Tanzania, focusing on its impact on employee promotion and demotion, as well as its role in service delivery in Arusha City Council and Dodoma City Council. Using the New Public Management (NPM) theory, the research evaluated the extent to which OPRAS has been implemented across these urban local authorities. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining a survey questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and a document review. Quantitative data were analysed with descriptive statistics, while qualitative data underwent content analysis. The findings showed a relatively high level of OPRAS implementation, indicating that the system significantly promotes high-performing employees, demotes those with consistently poor performance (when enforced strictly), and improves public service delivery in the studied councils. However, ongoing challenges related to training, resource allocation, and institutional support were identified as limiting factors. The study recommends that the government institutionalise regular, comprehensive training programmes for public employees on the objectives, processes, and benefits of OPRAS. Additionally, policymakers are urged to review and strengthen relevant policies and strategies to facilitate more effective implementation. Training for political leaders to enhance their awareness and commitment to performance management, coupled with timely and adequate budgetary disbursement specifically earmarked for OPRAS activities, is equally essential for sustaining and improving the system's effectiveness in Tanzanian local government authorities.

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Introduction

Globally, many countries have employed various methods to enhance the performance of public service employees. The performance management process usually starts with setting clear performance standards, followed by ongoing monitoring, feedback, and evaluation to align individual efforts with organisational goals. Various tools and frameworks have been adopted worldwide to assess and enhance employee performance. For example, European countries have widely adopted the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), a quality management model designed for public-sector organisations. Although it originates in Europe, CAF's principles of self-assessment, stakeholder involvement, and continuous improvement are adaptable to public organisations



worldwide. In Kenya, performance is measured through performance contracts, often supported by the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), which combines financial, customer, internal process, and learning and growth perspectives to foster strategic alignment and accountability (Mbukwin & Matoka, 2023).

In Tanzania, the evolution of employee performance assessment in the public service reflects both historical legacies and ongoing reforms. From colonial rule through independence on December 9, 1961, public service performance was managed through a confidential appraisal system inherited from the colonial administration. This closed system persisted until 2004 and was characterised by significant limitations (Sanga, 2025). Key challenges included reports based solely on the supervisor's subjective opinion, minimal or no consultation with the appraised employee to elicit agreement or disagreement, and the absence of transparent feedback and communication mechanisms. These deficiencies often led to perceptions of unfairness, demotivation, and limited opportunities for employee development. As a result, the government acknowledged these shortcomings and phased out the system (Tandika, 2024; Elitumaini, 2024).

In response to these persistent issues, Tanzania introduced the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) in 2004. OPRAS represented a major shift toward openness, emphasising employee participation in setting objectives, joint monitoring, regular feedback, and alignment with organisational goals (James & Ndunguru, 2023). The system aimed to foster transparency, accountability, and improved performance through participatory processes.

Despite these intentions, OPRAS encountered ongoing implementation challenges. Common problems included frequent employee underperformance, the routine, mechanical completion of forms without meaningful engagement, and frequent misalignment between completed forms and actual strategic plans or organisational priorities. These issues reduced OPRAS's effectiveness in driving genuine performance improvement and prompted further reflection on the need for more robust alternatives.

Recognising these limitations, the Government of Tanzania initiated reforms in response to concerns raised by President Samia Suluhu Hassan in May 2022 about the system's practicality. This led to the development and gradual rollout of the Public Employee Performance Management Information System (PEPMIS), introduced around 2023–2024 as a digital successor to OPRAS and related tools such as IPCS. PEPMIS, managed by the President's Office Public Service Management and Good Governance (PO-PSMG), integrates real-time monitoring, periodic evaluations (for example, quarterly and annual), centralised data management, and linkages to rewards and development. It aims to address OPRAS's shortcomings by enhancing efficiency, reducing subjectivity through digital tracking, and promoting greater accountability. Early implementation has shown promise in sectors such as the judiciary and higher learning institutions. Still, challenges persist, including technical issues (for example, system downtime, slow interfaces), inadequate training, poor internet connectivity in rural areas, and resistance due to digital divides (URT, 2024; Kweka & Kitua, 2026), Mtasigazy & Bandapile, (2026), Njunwa & Magoiga, (2026).

This transition reflects Tanzania's continued commitment to modernising public service performance management in line with broader public sector reforms, such as the Public Service Reform Programme and alignment with national development visions. While tools like CAF, BSC, OPRAS, and now PEPMIS demonstrate global and local efforts to enhance public employee performance, sustained success depends on addressing contextual barriers, including resource constraints, training needs, and institutional acquisition trends. This study, therefore, assessed the relationship between OPRAS implementation and the provision of social services as well as evaluated the influence of OPRAS on



human resource decisions, specifically the promotion and demotion of employees in local government authorities.

Methodology

Study Approach and Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach of both quantitative and qualitative data. This is essential for reducing sources of discrepancies for the two approaches. A cross-sectional explanatory survey design was adopted to make inferences at a single point in time.

Study Sites

This study was carried out in Arusha and Dodoma City Councils in Tanzania. The two city councils were selected out of 186 local government authorities in Tanzania. The cities were selected as representatives of other LGAs that have been implementing OPRAS since 2004, with the intent of improving the performance and the quality of service delivery. The selection was made because all local government authorities in the country have shared similar institutional and administrative characteristics in their establishment and management. Since there are about 186 LGAs in Tanzania, Tanzania's country covers about 945,000 square kilometres, and the study could not cover such a large geographical area due to limited time and resources. Therefore, the two LGAs were randomly selected to represent other councils in the country. The two selected LGAs have similar types and compositions of decision-making organs, such as councillors, ward development committees, and mitaa committees, which comprise both elected members and women representatives in special seats. Since the selected local government authorities have similar settings, they were expected to achieve similar results (Taherdoost, 2024). Therefore, including all LGAs could result in duplication, be time-consuming, and constitute a misuse of financial resources. Additionally, the selection of the two local government authorities was intended to increase the methodological rigour of the study by strengthening the precision, validity, and stability of the findings (Taherdoost, 2024). Figure 3.1 presents the map of Tanzania showing the two selected regions.

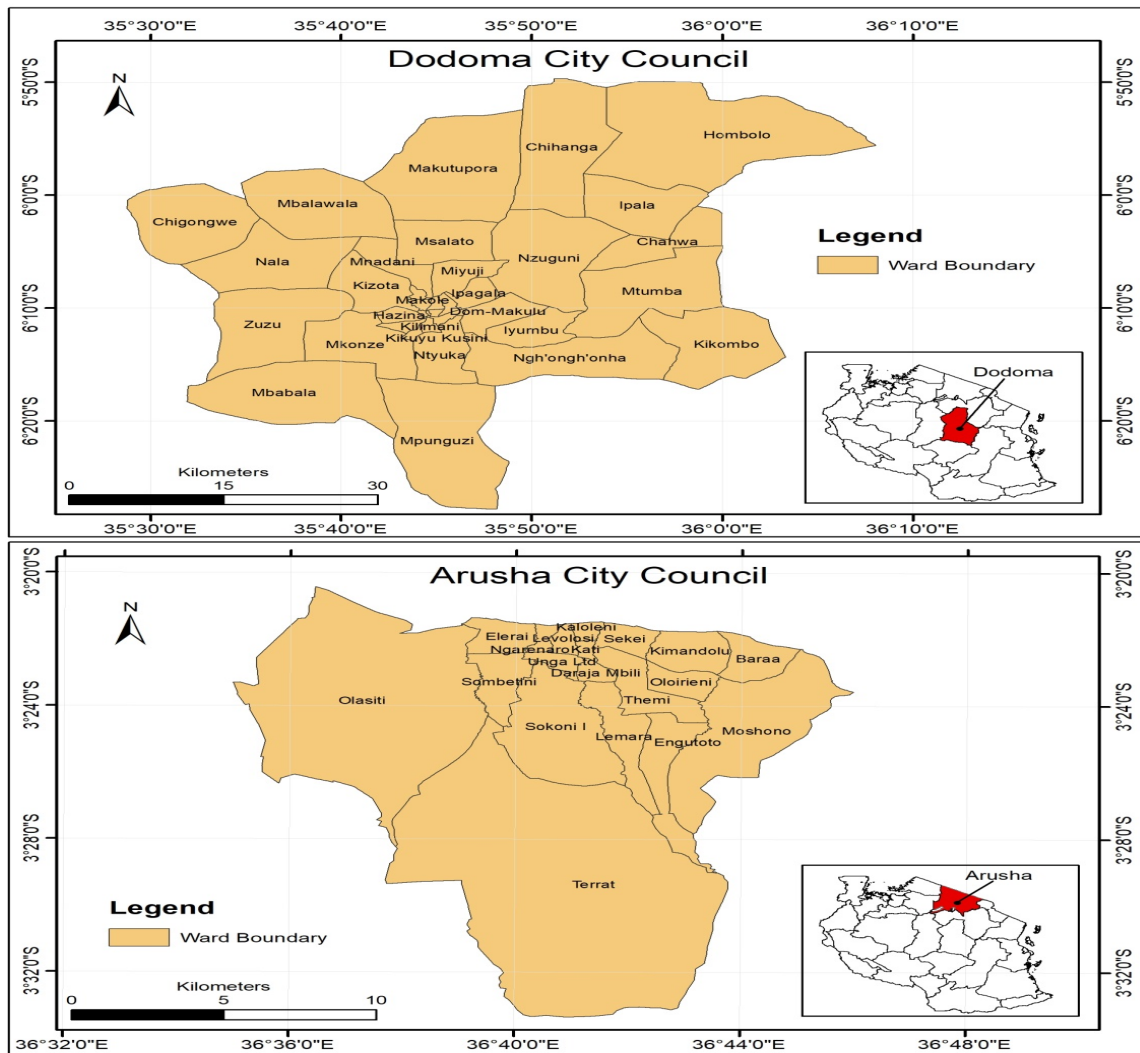


Figure 3.1: The Map of the Study Areas

Source: Prepared by the author, 2018

Study Population

The unit of analysis was an individual employee from a selected organisation who knew OPRAS. This is because they play a central role in the workplace use of OPRAS.

Sample size and Sampling

This study adopted the Yamane (1967) method to obtain the sample size. This formula was chosen because it enables the computation of sample size from the defined populations, i.e., DCC 3879 employees (PO-RALG, 2023) and ACC 4560 employees (PO-RALG, 2023), yielding a total of 8,439 employees. It also provides the level of precision needed to estimate the range of the true value in the target population. This formula uses the known population, but it estimates the true value of the dichotomous characteristic, which is unknown. The formula is indicated below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \dots\dots\dots 1$$



Where:

n = the sample size;

N = the population size (3879 + 4560); and

e = the level of precision (0.05)

$$\frac{8439}{1+8439(0.05)^2} = 381$$

Therefore, the sample size of 381 respondents was statistically sufficient to support generalisation to the population. Respondents were selected using simple random sampling, with 381 employees drawn from various government offices. Simple random sampling was used because it creates an equal chance for all units of analysis to be included in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select the key informants, regions, and documents to review.

Data Collection

The survey method was used to collect quantitative data using a structured questionnaire. The data were collected from 381 respondents, comprising 206 from Arusha and 175 from Dodoma City councils. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face by the researcher to 381 selected employees, using it as an appropriate tool for the survey method. The researcher prepared a draft of questionnaires in English. The designed questions were closed-ended, open-ended, and Likert-scale. The Likert scale had five points: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree. Respondents were required to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each question by selecting one of the five-point Likert categories, which was used to measure the implementation of OPRAS. The researcher used closed-ended questions to collect responses and generalise the ideas into percentages. Likewise, closed-ended questions were employed to ensure respondents answered them, thereby improving the validity of the data collected on OPRAS implementation. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews with 45 key informants were conducted. The number of interviewees was adequate for this study, as it adhered to the recommendation by qualitative researchers (Taherdoost, 202024; Setia, 2023) that the number of key informants should be sufficient to obtain saturated results. A semi-structured interview was employed due to its flexibility, focus, minimal restrictions, and time efficiency. A semi-structured interview was useful in adopting an open approach; hence, the researcher gained in-depth information and a complete understanding of the implementation of OPRAS (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Since the study focused on understanding the implementation of OPRAS, interviews were used to probe further and extract detailed information. Interviews are also time-efficient. This method allowed the researcher to decide how to ask questions using an interview guide to obtain detailed information on the implementation of OPRAS. A telephone interview was also conducted with five (5) officials who had travelled for official duties. The researcher recorded data using a voice recorder and took notes in a notebook, and later transcribed them during analysis. The average time for each interview session was 30-45 minutes, depending on the participants' schedules. The researcher's role during the interview session was to clarify the questions. Various documents were also reviewed. Such documents include OPRAS forms, strategic planning reports, and other sources of information, such as research papers. These documents were reviewed to assess the criteria used to promote workers. Central and local government reports, including strategic planning reports and budget books, were reviewed to examine the criteria used to train workers, the financial resources allocated for the implementation of OPRAS, and whether these resources were disbursed on time. The CAG's reports for the years 2023 and 2024 were also reviewed to obtain information on the allocated financial resources, whether they were disbursed on time for the implementation of OPRAS, and whether they were used for the



intended purpose. Reviewing relevant documents was essential in validating information obtained from other tools.

Data Analysis

The collected data were cleaned, coded, and exported to an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. The collected data were of two types: quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.00. The analysis of quantitative data was conducted descriptively. Cross-tabulation was performed, and frequencies and percentages were produced. The transformation of a 5-level Likert scale measurement was performed. The five Likert scale measurements were: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree; whereas the transformed three-level Likert scales were: 1 = Disagree, 2 = Neutral, and 3 = Agree. The five Likert scales were transformed to three levels: high, moderate, and low. The Likert scale was used, as Boone and Boone (202023) asserted, to obtain respondents' views on the implementation of OPRAS.

Qualitative data from field notes, reviewed documents, and key informant interviews were transcribed and analysed using content analysis (Larran & Hein, 2025; Taherdoost, 2024). The method involves developing ideas about the information found in various categories by seeking emerging patterns based on the meanings conveyed (Li et al., 2024). In this study, the researcher systematically worked through each transcript, assigning numbers and words that had specific characteristics and meanings within the text. These meanings helped in understanding the implementation of OPRAS based on promotion, demotion, and the quality of service delivery.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical standards were strictly maintained throughout this study. All legal, policy, and institutional documents related to (OPRAS) were obtained through official channels with the necessary permissions. To ensure accuracy, transparency, and academic integrity, citations were consistently applied to prevent distortion or plagiarism. Confidentiality was strictly observed by not attributing sensitive information to specific individuals, offices, or departments. Special care was taken when analysing OPRAS-related data on performance outcomes, as these directly influence critical human resource decisions, such as promotion and demotion, and have broader implications for public service delivery. The research recognised OPRAS as a key performance management tool designed to connect individual performance with organisational outcomes, including fairer promotion and demotion processes and improved efficiency in service delivery, while also protecting against potential biases or misuse that could undermine these benefits.

Results and Discussion

The results section presents the empirical findings from the study on the implementation of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) in Arusha and Dodoma City Councils. Data were derived from a sample of 381 respondents through structured questionnaires, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with key informants and documentary reviews. The analysis focused on three primary outcome indicators, employee promotion, demotion, and contributions to service delivery, to evaluate OPRAS's effectiveness in enhancing public employee performance and organisational outcomes.

Promotions of Employees in Arusha and Dodoma City Councils

The study examined the perceived extent to which OPRAS facilitated employee promotions as an indicator of its implementation efficacy and capacity to incentivise performance. Responses revealed a predominantly positive assessment: 198 respondents (52%) rated OPRAS's contribution to



promotion as high, 102 (26.8%) as moderate, and 81 (21.3%) as low (Table 1). Disaggregation by council showed comparable patterns, with 51% high ratings in Arusha and 49% in Dodoma.

Table 1: Promotion of Employees in Arusha and Dodoma City Councils

Variable	Overall	Dodoma	Arusha
The extent to which OPRAS contributes to promotion in the council			
Low	81 (21%)	38 (22%)	45(22%)
Moderate	102 (27%)	51(29%)	54(26%)
High	198 (52%)	86 (49%)	107 (51%)
Total	381 (100%)	175(100%)	206(100%)

Source: Field Data, 2023

These results indicate that OPRAS was generally regarded as a functional mechanism for recognising and rewarding superior performance. Effective utilisation enabled the identification of high-performing employees (rated outstanding to average per URT, 2013 guidelines), thereby supporting promotion decisions, targeted training interventions, and enhanced motivation. Such outcomes align with core tenets of New Public Management (NPM) theory, which prioritise efficiency, effectiveness, and service quality through performance-linked incentives and career progression.

Supporting evidence from reviewed performance reports documented 78 promotions in Arusha City Council during the 2023/2024 financial year and 81 in Dodoma City Council in 2024, explicitly linked to satisfactory OPRAS assessments. Qualitative data from key informants further underscored the role of promotion in talent recognition, leadership development, morale enhancement, productivity gains, and improved public service delivery. One of the key informants in the Dodoma City Council emphasised:

“Actually, when employees are working hard, they provide an environment for increasing the chances of being considered for promotion and therefore increase competition among other employees, hence better service delivery” (December, 2023).

The aforementioned quotation shows that if OPRAS is effectively implemented, it is a better tool for improving employee performance in public institutions. This is because OPRAS emphasises the importance of involving employees in the processes of objective setting, implementation, monitoring, and review. Within this environment, OPRAS promotes accountability, improves transparency, and communication between management and employees, as explained in the New Public Management Theory. Thus, by setting individual goals, measuring goal achievement, and providing timely feedback on employees' performance, employee performance can be improved.

These findings resonate with prior research (Athuman, 2023; James, 2023; James & Ndunguru, 2023; Anosisye, 2024; Lucumay, 2025); Komungemwe & Marijani (2025), which highlights the motivational and developmental benefits of participatory appraisal systems when properly executed.

The study also revealed that when appraisals are conducted effectively, employees are trained on the training needs raised during the assessment through OPRAS. As a result, there was an increase in commitment and job satisfaction, as well as an improvement in the quality of work and employee performance. In a similar vein, Kapimpiti et al. (2024) showed that the standards set in the OPRAS help employees understand, achieve, and be motivated to meet objectives on time. This evaluation technique increases the chances of promotion for those whose performance is good, as indicated in the OPRAS forms, where targets were set. Essentially, OPRAS involves accountability, with an emphasis on participation, ownership, and transparency through objective setting, implementation,



performance monitoring, and process review. This was emphasised by one of the interviewed heads of section from Dodoma City Council, who pointed out:

“When the management decides to promote employees for their hard work, it is basically recognising talents and finding future leaders...the identification of future leaders enables the council to groom employees for the coming generation and makes them explore their skills and talent further for the benefits of the organisation and employees” (Interview in Dodoma City, October, 2023).

The aforementioned quotation implies that promoting employees increases credibility and creativity in their daily duties, thereby improving the services delivered to the public. The findings are congruent with Sanga (2025), who argues that promotion provides employees with needs satisfaction, enhances employee morale, increases productivity, and increases loyalty to the organisation. Furthermore, Sanga (2025) showed that promotion also provides an avenue for continuous learning and employee development, thereby increasing employees’ effectiveness and, in turn, improving service delivery. This means that the effective implementation of OPRAS helps management make accurate decisions regarding employee transfers, promotions, salary increments, and training to address identified needs within the local government authorities, in this case, the Arusha and Dodoma City Councils.

Nevertheless, a notable minority (21.3%) reported limited impact, attributing it to implementation deficiencies such as incomplete or impracticable form completion, misalignment between documented and actual performance, infrequent joint reviews, misplaced or lost forms (particularly in remote areas), and untimely supervisor input. Interviewed key informants noted that promotions were occasionally determined by seniority or mere formality rather than merit-based OPRAS scores, contravening official guidelines (URT, 2024). Frustrations included prolonged form-filling without corresponding rewards or training, prompting suggestions to adopt more advanced tools for improved data integrity and retrieval.

These findings therefore suggest that rigorous OPRAS implementation could substantially increase annual promotion rates and foster skill development through sustained stakeholder engagement, including training in SMART objective setting and political commitment, both of which are essential.

Demotion of Employees in Arusha and Dodoma City Councils

Assessment of OPRAS’s role in sanctioning underperformance revealed stronger perceived linkages to disciplinary measures. 249 respondents (65.4%) indicated a high contribution to demotion, 82 (21.5%) a moderate contribution, and 50 (13.1%) a low contribution (Table 2). Agreement was marginally higher in Arusha (68%) than in Dodoma (60%).

Table 2: Demotion of Employees in Arusha and Dodoma City Councils

Variable	Overall	Dodoma	Arusha
The Extent to which OPRAS contributes to the demotion of employees			
Low	50(13%)	23(13%)	21(10%)
Moderate	82(22%)	48(27%)	45(22%)
High	249(65%)	104(60%)	140(68%)
Total	381 (100%)	175 (100%)	206 (100%)

Source: Field Data, 2023

These results imply that, when effectively applied, OPRAS facilitates the identification of persistent substandard performance and supports progressive sanctions, including warnings, demotion, salary reduction, transfer, or dismissal, consistent with the Public Service Act (2002) and Public Service Regulations (2003). Guidelines stipulate supervisory counselling and remedial interventions before



demotion recommendations (URT, 2024). Documentary evidence corroborated this, identifying two demotions in the Arusha City Council (2023) and three in Dodoma (2023) attributable to unmet performance objectives.

Qualitative accounts described a range of demotion modalities, including positional downgrading with salary adjustments and, in some cases, relocation to alternative duty stations. These accounts affirmed the potential utility of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) as a formal mechanism to promote accountability and discourage sustained underperformance (Kweka & Kitua, 2026; Elitumaini, 2024). Some key informants who perceived OPRAS as effective emphasised its role in setting performance expectations and legitimising merit-based managerial decisions, as one of the following:

OPRAS gives management a clear framework to justify actions such as demotion, especially when performance has consistently fallen below expectations (Interview, July, 2023).

This suggests that OPRAS functions as an evidence-based tool instead of depending on subjective judgments. Recording performance targets, midyear reviews, annual assessments, and feedback over time creates a clear record of continuous underperformance. This record helps managers justify adverse actions (such as demotion, withholding increments, warnings, or reduced responsibilities) without being accused of bias, favouritism, or unfair treatment.

However, key informants who reported limited impact cited several systemic and operational barriers that undermined the system's credibility as a basis for sanctions. These included incomplete or perfunctory appraisals, the absence of regular performance reviews, resource constraints, and insufficient training for both appraisers and appraisees. Such shortcomings weakened confidence in the fairness and accuracy of OPRAS outcomes, thereby constraining its use for disciplinary actions. This was also postulated by one of the key informants, who said:

In practice, performance appraisals are often incomplete or not reviewed regularly, making it difficult to rely on OPRAS scores to enforce sanctions (Interview, July, 2023).

She further said:

Although the system is designed to address both rewards and penalties, it is mostly associated with promotion, while demotion is rarely discussed or implemented (Interview, July, 2023).

Another key informant added:

There is concern that enforcing demotion based on OPRAS could lead to perceptions of unfairness, particularly when communication about performance expectations has been weak (Interview, July, 2023).

These findings imply that while OPRAS scores provide a structured and theoretically sound basis for merit-based sanctions, their consistent and equitable application remains limited by persistent implementation shortfalls. Thus, OPRAS was primarily viewed as a promotional instrument rather than a balanced performance management tool, with demotions rarely enforced due to communication gaps, fear of conflict, and perceived risks of unfair treatment or grievances (James, 2023). There is concern that enforcing demotion based on OPRAS could lead to perceptions of unfairness, particularly when communication about performance expectations has been weak.

Contributions of OPRAS in Service Delivery

The perceived influence of OPRAS on service delivery entails the provision of basic resources, such as water, hospitals, electricity, and the availability of strong infrastructure, in response to the demands



of citizens. The aspect of service delivery was assessed to determine whether the implementation of OPRAS in the studied areas translates into the provision of quality, reliable services in line with citizens' requirements. The contribution of OPRAS to service delivery was overwhelmingly positive, as 254 respondents (66.7%) rated its contribution as high (with an overall positive perception of approximately 75% when combining high and moderate responses; Table 3). Arusha exhibited greater optimism (70% high) compared to Dodoma (63%)

Table 3: Contribution of OPRAS to Improved Service Delivery

Variable	Overall	Dodoma	Arusha
The extent to which OPRAS contributes to improved service delivery in your Council			
Low	54 (14%)	24 (14%)	19 (9%)
Moderate	73 (19%)	41 (23%)	43 (21%)
High	254 (67%)	110 (63%)	144 (70%)
Total	381 (100%)	175 (100%)	206 (100%)

Source: Field Data, 2023

These findings imply that the effective implementation of OPRAS can improve service delivery. This was due to motivation stemming from promotion and salary increases contingent on employees' good performance. This enhances morale in performing daily activities. According to Msalangi (2024), OPRAS contributes to improving services offered to the community by enhancing employee performance and institutional performance. This study established that OPRAS encourages good employee performance, thereby inspiring the provision of quality services to citizens.

Additionally, the findings indicated that the majority of employees (75%) believed that OPRAS impacts citizens' well-being through motivated employees who work hard to achieve the best results, especially in the provision of quality services to the community. The findings revealed that employees who are motivated by promotion have high levels of morale and commitment to achieving organisational goals. According to Dominic & Retenge (2024), motivated employees can increase productivity and enable an organisation to achieve higher levels of output. This study argues that the effective implementation of OPRAS facilitates proper training in the identified areas of weakness and timely promotion, which, in turn, increases employees' hard work and customer satisfaction, as hypothesised in the New Public Management Theory. Key informants emphasised OPRAS's role in fostering supervisor-employee rapport, job satisfaction, loyalty, role clarity, and innovation via identified training needs and feedback loops. Such mechanisms link individual contributions to institutional success and citizen welfare (James, 2024; Sanga, 2025; Tandika, 2024; Elitumaini, 2024; Msalangi, 2024; Athuman, 2023). The interviewed key informants also believed that OPRAS contributes significantly to improved service delivery to the public. This was emphasised by one of them, who pointed out:

"OPRAS creates a link between individual employee expectations and how the employee's work contributes to the larger organisation's success by improving the performance of employees and institutions, which results in the provision of quality services to the citizens" (November 2023).

The findings suggest that when the implementation of OPRAS is taken very seriously, it improves service delivery in local government authorities, which are major entities that provide services for the government. This aligns with the principles of New Public Management Theory, which emphasises efficiency, effectiveness, and high-quality services (Osaki et al., 2024). The theory highlights the importance of meeting organisational and employee targets to enhance the quality of services provided to the community. This is consistent with Njunwa & Magoiga (2026), who state that the introduction of OPRAS is a key part of the Government's commitment to improving performance and service delivery.



This study further argues that OPRAS creates an environment in which social service delivery can be reliable and efficient for all people. This is similar to LGRP, which aimed at enhancing effective and efficient service delivery at the lower levels of the country. A study by Anosisye (2024), a critical analysis of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) in the Commission for Mediation and Arbitration, Arusha, supported that quality service delivery to the public from local government staff increases a good image of the government among its citizens.

However, those who believed that OPRAS's contribution to improved service delivery was low cited a lack of seriousness in its implementation by supervisors and their employees, which hindered it from achieving its intended goals in public institutions. It was also learnt that employees were not involved effectively in the implementation process of OPRAS due to low knowledge of it by supervisors in the studied councils. Consequently, this contributed to its ineffectiveness, resulting in poor employee performance and poor service delivery to customers and the community at large (Dominic & Rutenge, 2024). This is contrary to the emphasis placed in New Public Management Theory on effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of services.

The findings from the interview indicated that OPRAS had not achieved its intended goals because it was not well communicated to employees, and workers were just filling out the OPRAS forms out of fear of punishment rather than because it improved their performance. Theoretically, this contradicts the assumptions of New Public Management Theory, which advocates a shift away from bureaucratic administration toward a more customer-oriented, flexible management style based on private-sector approaches to service delivery and administration (James, 2023).

Furthermore, the interview noted that the OPRAS forms were not communicated clearly to employees regarding how to fill them, when, and why. This remained a challenge for many employees in the studied areas, and most forms were not completed. This makes it difficult for supervisors and top managers to compare employee performance across different financial years. This experience was also similar to what was observed by Lucumay (2025) regarding the factors affecting the implementation of the performance appraisal in Uganda: the appraisal forms were not duly completed by employees, thus creating difficulties in the appraisal process. As a result, management failed to properly decide on the best rewards for employees based on their performance.

The experience of the interviewed councillors from Arusha City Councils revealed that they were not informed of their role as the key political decision-making body in their councils, which contributed to their ineffectiveness. The councillor felt that councillors need to be educated on the importance of OPRAS first and its importance in service delivery to gain their support, as one of them said:

“OPRAS might have good intentions to improve the performance of the institution for quality service delivery, but its goals are not communicated to us clearly in our councils, which hinders its effective implementation” (December 2023).

These findings imply that OPRAS has not attained its goals due to low provision of education to the councillors who, in one way or another, may contribute to its effectiveness in improving the performance of employees and institutions, and provision of quality services to the public, as emphasised in New Public Management Theory. That is why the study by Mtasigazya & Bandapile (2026) in India emphasised the significant involvement of councillors in implementing various projects to achieve better results. Based on the findings, the study established that training not only serves as an avenue for personal growth and career advancement within local government authorities but also acts as a means towards high-quality service delivery.



Conclusions

In conclusion, the findings affirm OPRAS's moderate-strong implementation across the studied councils, with demonstrable contributions to promotion, demotion, and service delivery when effectively executed. Supervisors leverage OPRAS evaluations to make merit-based decisions, while assessments foster motivation and hard work among high performers, ultimately benefiting public service delivery. However, persistent challenges, including communication deficits, training gaps, and resource limitations, prevent full realisation of its potential, contrary to NPM expectations for enhanced institutional performance and operational efficiency. These 2023 findings predate Tanzania's transition to the Public Employees Performance Management Information System (PEPMIS), which was rolled out progressively from 2023–2024 onward as a digital successor to OPRAS. PEPMIS integrates real-time monitoring, centralised data, and periodic evaluations to mitigate the earlier limitations of manual, subjective processes. Recent studies (2024–2025) document ongoing implementation challenges (digital access inequities, training deficiencies, system reliability issues) alongside incremental gains in transparency and accountability, particularly in urban and institutional settings. Updated empirical research on comparable councils would be valuable for assessing post-transition outcomes.

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