

EXPLORING FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ATTITUDE OF STAFF TOWARDS
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF CORE NETWORK FIELD
OPERATION SECTION IN TELKOM – EASTERN CAPE

by

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Summary

This study explored factors that influence attitudes towards performance management among staff in the Core Network Field Operation (CNFO) of Telkom Eastern Cape. Performance management concerns achieving organisational goals efficiently and effectively.

An observation by a manager that the staff were not performing optimally and were displaying a negative attitude towards performance management, necessitated an objective investigation into the reasons for such attitudes and also to be derivative of a corrective solution.

This qualitative study was done in the form of a descriptive open ended survey involving geographically dispersed employees.

Factual evidence gathered from the result of the study supports the literature that people have different views of performance management. A direct consequence of the different views could be in the inconsistent application of performance management.

Solutions and possible corrective actions to improve employee participation and perception as sought by this study are contained in detail in the report.

Title of thesis:

EXPLORING FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ATTITUDE OF STAFF TOWARDS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF CORE NETWORK FIELD OPERATION SECTION IN TELKOM-EASTERN CAPE.

Key terms:

Attitudes; Performance management; Achieving organisational goals; Cognitive; Responsibilities; Behaviour; Corrective action; Experiences; Trust; Engagement; Reward and recognition; Organisational justice.

ABSTRACT

This study explored factors that influence attitudes towards performance management among staff in the Core Network Field Operation (CNFO) of Telkom Eastern Cape. Performance management concerns achieving organisational goals efficiently and effectively. An attitude is an evaluation that predisposes one to behave in a particular way. This behaviour results from both the cognitive and affective components of a person's attitude to something, in this instance performance management in CNFO, and affects the performance of the organisation.

A manager's observation that staff were not discharging responsibilities optimally, (evidenced in carry-over faults, withdrawal behaviours and absenteeism) necessitated an objective investigation into whether this behaviour was influenced by attitudes towards performance management. Furthermore, uncovering the reasons for the behaviour was also important to understand the situation and assist management to institute corrective action.

This was a qualitative study with the aim to understand the world in which the researcher worked (i.e., the attitudes in CNFO towards performance management). The researcher and participants developed subjective meanings of their experiences of performance management. Hence, the views of employees were necessary to study the phenomenon. Because these employees were geographically dispersed, it was impractical to interview them. The most appropriate way to collect data was a descriptive survey with open-ended questions which allowed the participants to express their opinions freely. These views assisted in creating understanding.

All 135 employees were invited to participate on a voluntary and anonymous basis, and 88 responded. Participation was from all sections. The majority of participants were male, and most had held their current position for more than 16 years.

Participants indicated both positive and negative attitudes towards performance management with fewer positive than negative attitudes. Positive attitudes were influenced by trust and, to a limited extent, engagement. Negative attitudes were influenced mainly by reward and recognition and by "organizational justice". The reasons for these attitudes were also uncovered. Positive feelings towards performance management were ascribed to the perception that performance

management can help individuals understand how their behaviour affects organisational goal achievement, while negative feelings were ascribed to the view that performance management benefits the organisation more than the individual.

Given the length of time the majority of participants had been employed, usually in one position, one can understand the attitudes toward performance management. These attitudes are supported by the participants' perceptions of performance management, which seemed to be consistent with the manager's observation about employees' lack of responsibility.

The factual evidence supports the literature, specifically that different people have different views about performance management. A consequence of the differences could be the inconsistent application of performance management, as perceived by the participants. To ensure organisational performance, Telkom CNFO should endeavour to adopt a single definition, which is shared among all employees and consistently applied throughout the organisation. Furthermore, the staff should be given opportunities to participate by providing inputs during performance management. In so doing, Telkom CNFO could positively influence staff attitudes and behaviour to be conducive to organisational goal achievement. It could thus redress negative perceptions about recognition, reward and organisational justice.

DECLARATION

I, **Wonga Duke Mfundisi Mabona**, declare that this research report is my own work, except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Technologiae at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to this or any other university.

Wonga Duke Mfundisi Mabona

Signed at

On theday of 2013

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late father Hollick Themba Mabona and my mother Thelma Tozie Mabona, who set so much value on education even though they did not go far in their own education.

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I give thanks to You, O God! I give thanks for Your wondrous works, for You have completed what You appointed for me! By Your grace, You ensured that my efforts and those of the people who assisted in carrying out this study have been fruitful.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY.....	ii
TITLE OF THESIS.....	ii
KEY TERMS.....	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
DECLARATION	v
DEDICATION	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Purpose of the study	1
1.3 Context of the study	2
1.4 Problem statement	3
1.5 Significance of the study	4
1.6 Delimitations of the study	10
1.7 Definition of terms	10
1.8 Assumptions.....	11
1.9 Conclusion	12
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Evolution of performance management.....	14
2.3 Definition of performance management	15
2.4 Purpose of performance management.....	20
2.5 Performance management of CNFO.....	22
2.6 Typical performance management.....	28
2.7 The importance of performance management	30
2.8 Conclusion of literature review	31
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD	33
3.1 Introduction	33

3.2 Methodology.....	33
3.2.1 Research philosophy.....	33
3.2.2 Method	38
3.2.3 Instrument used to collect data.....	40
3.2.4 Population	42
3.2.5 Data analysis.....	44
3.2.6 Ensuring validity (trustworthiness).....	45
3.3 Limitations of the study.....	46
3.4 Conclusion	46
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	47
4.1. Introduction	47
4.2 Results - demographics of respondents	47
4.3 Findings – demographics	53
4.4 Responses to performance management	53
4.4.1 Results of cognitive components of attitudes to performance management ...	54
4.4.2 Findings of cognitive components of attitudes to performance management..	56
4.4.3 Results of affective components of performance management.....	58
4.4.4 Findings of affective components of performance management	59
4.4.5 Results other process - HR and business	73
4.4.6 Findings – other processes	74
4.4.7 Results - suggestions for improvement	75
4.4.8 Findings - suggestions for improvement.....	79
4.5 Conclusions.....	81
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	83
5.1. Introduction	83
5.2 Findings.....	83
5.2.1 What do you understand by the term "performance management"?	83
5.2.2 What actually happens under “performance management”?.....	83
5.2.3 How do you feel about the performance management system in CNFO?.....	83

5.2.4 Please explain in your own words why you feel this way	84
5.2.5 Reasons for participants' feelings about performance management.....	85
5.2.6 Links between performance management and other HR processes	86
5.2.7 Links between performance management and other business aspects	86
5.2.8 General comments	86
5.2.9 What changes would you like to see made in the performance management system of Telkom CNFO? Why?.....	87
5.3 Conclusions of the study	87
5.4. Recommendations	89
5.5 Suggestions for further research	92
5.6 Conclusion.....	92
References.....	93
APPENDIX A	98
The questionnaire	98
APPENDIX B	106
Invitation to participate.....	106
APPENDIX C	108
Summary: Understanding of performance management	108
APPENDIX D	112
Permission for research project	112

List of tables

Table 1.1: Factors affecting performance.....	7
Table 1.2: How clear people are about the organisation’s goals.....	8
Table 3.1: Profile of respondents	44
Table 4.1: Summary of participants.....	48
Table 4.2: Number per age group: All participants.....	51
Table 4.3: Years in the current position.....	52
Table 4.4: Years and number in current position per position	52
Table 4.5: Tenure in Telkom (in years).....	53
Table 4.6: Summary of the first five rankings	54
Table 4.7: What happens under performance management.	56
Table 4.8: Comparison of responses to Questions 2 and 3.....	57
Table 4.9: Words used to describe performance management in CNFO.....	58
Table 4.10: Positive and negative comments.....	59
Table 4.11: General comments.....	69
Table 4.12: Links between performance management and other HR processes.....	73
Table 4.13: Links between performance management and other business aspects	75
Table 4.14: Changes respondents would like to see.....	75
Table 4.15: Preferences regarding performance management statements.....	79

List of figures

Figure 2.1: CNFO performance and development management process.....	23
Figure 2.2: The performance management cycle.....	27
Figure 4.1: Number of respondents per gender and position.	49
Figure 4.2: Pie chart showing number of responses per position, race and gender.	50

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Organisations exist to deliver products and services needed and wanted by their customers. Therefore, one of the most important goals that organisations and their members try to achieve is high performance in delivering these products and services within set standards, rules, regulations and codes of practice (Meyer, Ashleigh, George & Jones 2007:3). For this to be possible, McAfee and Champagne (1993:24) advise that the way to improve employee productivity and job performance may be in the approach to managing known as performance management which incorporates specific goals jointly developed by managers and employees, the monitoring of performance in relation to those agreed goals, and feedback throughout and at the end of the appraisal period.

Performance management forms part of the general management task of control, that is, establishing accurate measuring and monitoring systems to evaluate how well the organisation has achieved its goals. Performance management contains elements of all types of control (output, behavioural and organisational culture control). Hence, according to Yuill (2006), when the question of what performance management is and what it entails is asked in any organisation, there are as many answers and perceptions as there are people in the organisation. The human resources department will say that performance management entails the training, mentoring and development of employees; the finance department will say that performance management is the measurement of a series of financial and non-financial indicators; the IT department will insist that performance management is the “system” used to manage performance in an organisation. It was thus important for a study to be done in Telkom asking the same question which might shed light upon the attitudes of the employees in the Core Network Field Operation (CNFO) section of Telkom Eastern Cape and the reasons for their attitudes.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to understand what factors influence staffs' attitudes towards performance management with a view to enhancing performance in Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape. The aim of the research was to discover whether the attitudes

were positive or negative and to investigate the reason staff feel and think the way they do towards the performance management system used in Telkom. The researcher set out to achieve this objective by establishing the way in which performance management is perceived by the employees and their attitude towards the performance management system.

1.3 Context of the study

The researcher interacts daily with technicians from different sections in Telkom. Although they were seen moving around and doing their work, they did not seem to be totally committed and dedicated to their work, sacrificing Telkom's goal of achieving high performance. It seemed as if these technicians were doing the minimum required as if they thought that was what they were paid for.

In informal conversations with some of these technicians, it transpired that they were not entirely happy with many issues around performance management. Given the foregoing perceptions, the researcher, as a committed and caring employee and manager tasked with responsibility for high performance in the CNFO section of Telkom, considered it important to explore the factors influencing staff attitudes towards the performance system used in Telkom, specifically the CNFO section.

CNFO is a unit in the Network Core Operation section which has a key function to ensure an end-to-end transportation of telecommunication traffic (backbone transportation from town to town or country to country), providing a reliable and sustainable telecommunications network while at the same time having enough flexibility for the introduction of innovative, revenue-enhancing products and services. Customer centricity is at the heart of what Telkom does; using the skills and capabilities of the Network Core Operation staff, Telkom keeps a close eye on the network as a whole, but specifically on customer-specific solutions, providing near real-time response and resolution to network events such as optic fibre cable breaks that occur because of accidents along the roads and weather conditions. Optic fibre breaks need to be repaired immediately because they carry backbone traffic. The organisation ensures the maintenance, installation and improvement of the core complex and high speed network in Telkom. After any equipment has been installed, it has to be maintained according to its work instruction to be able to

provide the services it was installed for, for the duration of its lifespan, for example, Metro Ethernet which carries a large volume of traffic.

In Telkom, performance management is defined as determining, doing, evaluating and rewarding the right actions. Performance management is not a wand waved for instant performance improvement. It involves hard work and takes a long time (usually more than three years) to reap the benefits (Telefokus, 1993:23).

Armstrong (2008:8) argues that one of the most important, if not the most important, responsibilities of a manager is to ensure that the members of the team achieve high levels of performance. The organisation may well have a performance management system which provides guidance on how this should be done, but ultimately it is up to the manager to implement it. Performance management systems only work if managers want them to work and are capable of making them work and, of course, if they have the necessary cooperation and commitment of all staff. That implies that managers can also influence employees by transferring their feelings to them.

There is abundant literature on the topic of performance management, but the researcher will focus on how performance management affects and influences the attitude of staff.

1.4 Problem statement

Technicians are an important resource for Telkom's Core Network Field Operation section to achieve high performance. Although a formal performance management system is in place to ensure high performance, these technicians seem to be unhappy with its present state. To recommend actions to improve the performance management system, the underlying reasons for the problem should be explored to identify the factors contributing to this unhappiness. Only then can a remedy be proposed to ensure that Core Network Field Operation achieves the high performance which is the goal of Telkom.

An investigation into the factors influencing the attitude of staff towards the performance management system in the CNFO section in Telkom Eastern Cape was undertaken by conducting a survey targeting middle managers (M5), M6 managers under each M5 manager, specialists (S6) under each M5 manager, administrators

and operational level technicians under each M6 manager. The purpose of the survey was to understand which factors influence employees' attitudes with a view to enhancing performance and reducing staff turnover.

The main problem in Telkom is that service provisioning is compromised and service delivery is not at an acceptable standard. Most employees do not perform to their maximum potential. Problems include an unacceptable number of carried over faults, withdrawal behaviour and increased absenteeism. These incidents could be substantiated had Telkom been willing to release this information. This situation does not augur well for the section and the organisation as a whole. Employees in the section seem to put in minimum effort as they are taking more time than expected to complete any given task and are likely to leave Telkom. They neither go to great lengths, nor do they shirk their work, and they are neither fully engaged nor fully disengaged.

If the staff performance is less than optimal, the consequences are dire for the organisation as a whole inter alia in terms of competitive position. Hence, the research question was "What factors influence the attitudes of staff towards performance management in Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape?"

1.5 Significance of the study

Louw and Venter (2006:20) claim that the success of an organisation is mainly determined by the effectiveness and efficiency of its management. Performance management is concerned with achieving the goals of the organisation in an efficient and effective manner (Amos, Ristow, Ristow & Pearse 2008:285). Essentially, an attitude is an evaluation that predisposes an individual to act or behave in a particular way (Daft 2012:405). This behaviour comes about by both the cognitive (beliefs and opinions) and affective (emotions or feelings) components of the attitude the person has about an object (Robbins & Judge 2013:105), in this instance, performance management in Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape. This behaviour affects the performance of the organisation. The manager's observation of employees' behaviour (specifically carry-over faults, withdrawal behaviour and absenteeism) made it necessary to find out, in an objective manner, whether this observation was

accurate as these behaviours could affect organisational performance adversely, jeopardising organisational goal achievement.

The study could assist management in monitoring staff attitudes and in determining whether the performance management system is effectively managed. Recommendations and suggestions based on this study are expected to support the effectiveness of the technicians, leading to achieving the goal of Telkom's CNFO section to be a high performance organisation and as such realising one of Telkom's strategic goals. Where attitudes are found to be negative, given the observed behaviour, CNFO Eastern Cape can institute actions to influence attitudes positively to bring about change.

The aim of the study was to establish the factors which affect the attitudes of employees which may be the cause of the high staff turnover in CNFO. Establishing what factors affect the employees' attitudes will help management to neutralize negative attitudes and give the organisation a competitive edge in the market as Telkom has been competing with Neotel, MTN, Cell-C, Vodacom and others since the lifting of the monopoly in the telecommunication industry. As CNFO is a service provisioning section, customers demand excellent and high quality service. Quality is good for the organisation as it will reduce maintenance costs and turn the organisation into the service provider of choice for customers. With the Vodacom unbundling, it is important for Telkom to be more efficient and effective in managing performance to reduce operating expenses. The objectives of the study will have been achieved if the way in which performance management is perceived as well as the attitude of employees towards it is established.

Stiffler (2006) argues that the term "employee performance management" is widely used; however, it means many different things to different people. As cited by Stiffler (2006:18), Gartner describes employee performance management very broadly as including the processes listed below:

- Goal and objective setting for an individual employee
- Cascading of top-level objectives down through the organisation
- Aligning between top level corporate goals and individual goals
- Pay for performance

- Competency evaluations
- Rating scales for competency and weighing importance of competencies
- Appraisal of employee performance
- Manager support
- Mentoring
- Development planning
- Succession planning (for key positions)
- Compensation planning
- Position management
- Workflow
- Reporting and analysis

These processes should be accounted for in the performance management system because these processes may influence attitude. According to Boninelli and Meyer (2004:203), to enable people to perform effectively, organisations have to set the stage for this performance and then have to facilitate it in ways that the unique individuals find acceptable and appealing. This starts by taking into consideration the performance expectations of both employees and the organisation (Boninelli & Meyer 2004:216).

A number of factors are intertwined with the performance management processes described by Gartner (as cited in Stiffler 2006:18). Some of the more apparent factors are listed below:

- Job design
- Selection of the right people for the job
- Personality, abilities, skills, knowledge
- Being there (employees cannot perform if they are absent from the job)
- Leadership
- Organisational culture
- Systems and procedures
- Supporting technology
- The structure of the workgroup
- Enabling support offered by the organisation
- Empowerment

- The opportunity to perform
- Motivation/commitment levels of the employee
- Pay systems

Werner, Bagraim, Cunningham, Pieterse-Landman, Potgieter & Viedge (2011), like Boninelli and Meyer (2004:216), list some of the main factors that can affect performance as shown below in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Factors affecting performance

Relating to the individual	Relating to the organisation
Commitment to the organisation	Leadership
Selection	Structures of working units
Personality	Systems and procedures
Attitude	Enabling support
Skills	Empowerment
Ability	Opportunity to perform
Knowledge	Job design
Being there (not being absent)	Rewards (pay and benefits, etc.)
Motivation	
Energy level	

Source: Werner *et al.* (2011:118)

In congruence with Werner *et al.* (2011:118) and Boninelli and Meyer (2004:216), Fox (2006:94) adds seven variables found in effective performance management:

- Motivation (person's task-relevant incentives)
- Ability (knowledge and skills to perform a task successfully)
- Understanding (understanding and acceptance of what to do, when to do and how to do)
- Organisational support (assistance that persons need for effective task completion)
- Environmental fit (external factors that may influence performance)
- Feedback (informal day-to-day feedback and periodic reviews)

- Validity (appropriateness and legality of human resource decisions made by the manager)

This information indicates that performance management is complex. Furthermore, if the above factors are not taken into consideration in performance management, they could contribute to the underlying factors influencing an attitude of unhappiness regarding performance management. Thus Boninelli and Meyer (2004:217) advise managers to be mindful of these factors, so that when they do manage performance, they take into account that there may be barriers to performance which are outside of the control of the employee. Taking Stiffler (2006:18) and Boninelli and Meyer (2004:216) into consideration, the aspects in Table 1.2 below will also be covered in exploring the attitude of employees towards CNFO's performance management.

Table 1.2: How clear people are about the organisation's goals

Relating to the individual	Relating to the organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of emphasis on short-term goals • Organisational commitment • Perceived relationship between effort and reward • Sense of personal competence Perception of and attitudes towards reward • Organisational climate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Perceptions of openness/trust ○ Perceptions of fairness ○ Sense of empowerment ○ Sense of involvement ○ Perception of management/supervisory style ○ Perception of climate for learning development • Perceived relationship between effort and reward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of goal setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How involved staff feel in setting work goals ○ How clear and specific they consider goals to be • Job demands • Feedback on individual performance • Organisational communication regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mission ○ Business plan ○ Organisational performance • Job involvement/ownership • Job satisfaction

Source: Stiffler (2006:18) and Boninelli and Meyer (2004:216).

Overall goal objectives are set by top management and cascaded down, and individual employees' goals are derived from them. Performance management strategy concerns everyone in the business, not just managers. It rejects the cultural assumption that only managers are accountable for the performance of their teams and replaces it with the belief that responsibility is shared between managers and team members. In a sense, managers should regard the people who report to them as customers for the managerial contribution and services they can provide. Managers and their teams are jointly accountable for results and are jointly involved in agreeing on what they need to do and how they need to do it, in monitoring performance and in taking action.

Performance management in its fullest sense is based on the belief (it is more than a belief, it is reality, but if the reality is not experienced people cannot perform optimally) that everything that people do at work at any level contributes to achieving the overall purpose of the organisation. Armstrong (2006:144) notes that it is therefore concerned with what people do (their work), how they do it (their behaviour) and what they achieve (their results). Armstrong (2006:145) further cites Hartle (1995) as stating that performance management "should be integrated into the way the performance of the business is managed and it should link with other key processes such as business strategy, employee development, and total quality management."

Armstrong (2006:143) states that performance management strategy aims to provide the means through which better results can be obtained from the organisation, teams and individuals by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and competence requirements. It involves the development of processes for establishing shared understanding about what is to be achieved, and an approach to managing and developing people in a way that increases the probability that it will be achieved in the short and longer term as set out above (performance management processes and factors influencing performance). Tims (2007) affirms people are at the heart of executing business strategy, and most organisations have performance management systems and processes to define performance and to support the management of people and successful delivery of business objectives.

In harmony with other authors on performance management, Stiffler (2006:23) declares that the core concept is that for an organisation to manage the performance of individuals, it must do the following:

- *Align* individual goals with the strategic objectives of the organisation
- *Measure* individual performance
- *Reward* individuals for achieving goals
- *Report* individual performance
- *Analyse* what must change to optimize strategy and maintain alignment of individual goals with the organisational objectives.

Included in the steps above should be evaluating the employee's performance and recording the findings for decision making concerning training and future records.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

Organisational level and geographical delimitation – the study was done in the CNFO section of Telkom in the Eastern Cape.

Management level delimitation - the study focused on the middle management and supervisory level (junior managers) as performance management is owned and driven by them and, as such, their continuing responsibility.

Operational level delimitation – the study addressed the attitudes of specialists, technicians and administrators.

1.7 Definition of terms

Attitude – a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object or to relate to behaviour directed toward specific objects, persons, or situations. Attitude toward someone or something is a function of the combined influence of three components:

- Affective component – contains the feelings one has about a given object or situation.
- Cognitive component – reflects the beliefs or ideas one has about an object or situation.

- Behavioural component – refers to how one intends or expects to act toward someone or something (Kreitner & Kinicki 2013:158)

Core Network Field Operations (CNFO) – a section of Telkom whose *core purpose is to Create a High Performance Customer Centric Caring Culture Delivering Service*, in ensuring the maintenance, installation and improvement of the core, complex, high speed network in Telkom, including the maritime, undersea cable, radio and earth station divisions in the company (Core Network Field Operations).

Performance – the relationship between a person’s capabilities and what the person actually achieves, usually related to a person’s job (Banfield & Kay 2012:280).

Performance management – Banfield and Kay (2012:280) cited the following definitions: “A broad term that has come to stand for the set of practices through which work is defined and reviewed, capabilities are developed, and rewards are distributed” (Morhman & Morhman 1995); “A strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained success to organisations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of team and individual contributions (Armstrong & Baron 1998)”.

Performance management system – a system that establishes performance standards that are used to evaluate employee performance (Robbins, Decenzo & Coulter 2013:198).

1.8 Assumptions

It was assumed that the performance management system of Telkom in the end is going to continue and that employees will actively contribute to Telkom’s success as it was assumed that the respondents had enough knowledge about performance management. It was also assumed that recommendations from this study would be gladly accepted and implemented if they could have a positive influence on organisational performance.

Another assumption was that the attitude of the employees was affected by the way the performance management system was being applied and the level of each employee which determines the salary of each employee. It was also assumed that

the performance management system and performance management in use was being applied uniformly in Telkom's CNFO section.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the main problem that was addressed and outlined how the researcher intended to explore it. Chapter 2 is a literature review in which theories about and definitions of performance management are outlined in order to discover the factors affecting the attitude of CNFO staff towards performance management.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter gave the background and objectives of the study. It outlined the problem which centres on the factors influencing the attitudes of employees towards the performance management system in the CNFO section of Telkom in the Eastern Cape.

In Chapter 1, a number of performance management processes and factors influencing performance management were listed. This chapter will elaborate on these processes and factors in accordance with the definition of performance management and performance management systems and cover the literature pertaining to performance management. In doing so, the literature will be related to the current performance management system of Telkom's CNFO and the questions that were used to probe staff attitudes to performance management. Armstrong (2006:142) holds that performance management is based on the principle of management by agreement or contract rather than management by command. It emphasises the integration of individual and corporate objectives as well as the initiation of self-managed learning development plans.

The performance management roadmap of Mohanty (2006:227) stipulates that performance management is a strategic and integrated approach in delivering sustained success to organisations by improving the performance of people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of individual contributors. He defines performance management as the real concept of human relations management (HRM), which is associated with an approach to creating a shared vision of the purposes and aims of the organisation, helping each employee understand and recognise his or her part in contributing to the organisation, and, in so doing, managing and enhancing the performance of both individuals and organisation. He states that the essence of performance management is the development of individuals with competence and commitment, working towards the achievement of shared meaningful objectives within an organisation, which supports and encourages their achievement. He further suggests that every performance management system should have the following components:

- Clearly defined objectives
- Free and open dialogue
- Performance-based rewards

To be able to explore the factors affecting the attitude of employees towards the performance management system, performance management and the performance management system have to be defined and understood. The next section contains a literature review concerning performance management and performance management systems.

2.2 Evolution of performance management

Performance management has evolved over the decades since the 1970s, especially as knowledge workers, and knowledge work in itself, require new ways of directing performance. “The term performance management was first used in the 1970s but it did not become a recognized process until the latter half of the 1980s” (Armstrong 2009:11). Therefore, performance management is becoming entrenched into the strategy process of organisations, driving performance of the organisation in a visible way to individual employees who can appreciate their role in promoting high performance. The essence is that lately performance management has shifted to line management in ensuring that the organisational goals are achieved. As such, performance management is the primary management tool for managing the business, while playing a significant role in shaping individual behaviour in achieving high performance.

The different sources, stretching over time, indicate the evolution of performance management. The emphasis shifted from an HR function charged with performance appraisal to line management, translating organisational goals to individual and team objectives to ensure alignment and unity of direction or focus (Armstrong & Baron 2005:17). This trend to translate organisational goals to individual and team objectives is relatively new according to the dates of sources. According to Drucker (1977:225), “It takes decades to build the edifice on the foundation laid by the first thinkers in the field.” The main responsibility for performance management has thus shifted from being an HR activity to be the responsibility of line managers. Line managers give effect to “management” by using performance management as a tool

in translating organisational strategy into business results, while directing daily activities in a meaningful way.

Performance management as a discipline contains elements that closely link it to a multitude of other disciplines and organisational capabilities: strategy management, project management, human resource management, accounting and psychology, to name a few. It is used in almost all scientific disciplines, as it is a subset of almost all human activities. Traditionally, performance management in an organisational context has been divided into three levels: strategic, operational and individual performance management. The traditional level at which performance management is used in organisations is the individual level. Individual performance management is perhaps the level with the longest evolution in history, as it mirrors the level of organisational maturity. In earlier times, organisations were loosely defined, and their performance management focus was based on individuals performing tasks as part of a group (Brudal 2010:112).

The assumptions of performance management are as follows:

- Individual performance can be managed by focusing on setting goals and monitoring goal achievement and aligning development and rewards to individual aspirations and potential to grow and or develop new skills;
- If individual performance can be raised, organisational performance can be raised;
- HR practices alone are insufficient to drive organisational performance, though HR contributes to developing able, engaged staff who will perform above expectation when given the opportunity.

2.3 Definition of performance management

There are numerous definitions of performance management in the literature, but they correspond to a degree. Armstrong and Baron (2005:2) define performance management as a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance. Armstrong and Baron (2005:7) go on to stress that it is a strategy which relates to every activity of the organisation set in the context of its human resource policies, culture, style and communication systems. The nature of the strategy depends on

the organisational context and can vary from organisation to organisation. The definition of performance management by Armstrong and Baron (2005) was used in this research because it shows the three dimensions – effective, strategic and integrated – the aspects which are tested in the questionnaire in Appendix A.

Performance management is also a systematic process for improving organisational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams. It is a means of achieving better results by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and competency requirements. It is owned and driven by line management (Armstrong 2009:9) because line managers contract performance with employees (Armstrong 2006:142). Differently put, Armstrong (2009:55) defines performance management as a process for establishing shared understanding about what is to be achieved and how it is to be achieved, and an approach to managing and developing people that improves individual, team and organisational performance. Performance management can also be described as a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained success to organisations that focuses on performance improvement and employee development (Armstrong 2009:56). As such, there must be a kind of negotiation between the employee and his or her manager to find each other and come to an agreement to ensure a shared understanding. This should be a communication process which does not happen once but should be a continuous process taking place a number of times through the year.

Of the different views of performance management, the researcher supports Armstrong and Baron's (2005) view which aligns individual objectives with organisational goals. Armstrong and Baron's view is broader in scope and conducive to organisational goal achievement, fostering high performance.

The researcher supports the definition of performance management by Lockett cited in Armstrong and Baron (2005:2) which defines performance management as the development of individuals with competence and commitment, working towards the achievement of shared meaningful objectives within an organisation that supports and encourages their achievement. The researcher supports this definition because of its all inclusiveness as it includes both the performer and the promoter.

Aguinis's (2013:2) definition of performance management is that "it is a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organisation." He further considers each of the definition's main components:

- Continuous process – performance management is ongoing. It involves a never-ending process of setting goals and objectives, observing performance, and giving and receiving ongoing coaching and feedback.
- Alignment with strategic goals - performance management requires that managers ensure that employees' activities and outputs are congruent with the organisation's goals and, consequently, help the organisation gain a competitive advantage. Performance management therefore creates a direct link between employee performance and organisational goals and makes the employees' contribution to the organisation explicit.

There is a narrow and broad definition of performance management – the former focusing on "appraisal" and the latter on organisational performance which is the focus of this study and is in line with the definition of Armstrong and Baron (2005).

Performance appraisal should be a subset of performance management (Werner *et al.* 2011:121). Aguinis (2013:3) supports this in that performance appraisal is the systematic description of an employee's strengths and weaknesses, thus, an important component of performance management which is much more than just performance management. Badenhorst-Weiss, Brevis, Cant, Davis, De Beer, De Jongh, Eccles, Ferreira, Nayager, Nicholls, Pellissier, Schenk, Steenkamp, Tshabalala, Van Buren-Schele, & Weitsz (2012:223) are also in agreement.

Performance management can be regarded as a proactive system of managing employee performance for motivating individuals and organisations towards desired performance and results. It involves striking a harmonious alignment between individual and organisational objectives for accomplishment of excellence in performance (Management Study Guide n.d.).

Performance management is a system monitoring achievement of objectives which requires certain behaviours (Van Rooyen 2006). Van Rooyen further states that if achieving an objective requires behaviours that are not sanctioned by the culture,

employees may experience personal dissonance which may lead to employees resisting the achievement of certain objectives if the required behaviours are seen as not supporting the culture. From the above, it can be seen that understanding the cultural perceptions of employees is critical when implementing performance management systems or optimising business functioning.

Another definition of performance management (Mullins 2010) says it is a process that brings together many aspects of people management. It concerns improvement at individual, team, department and organisational levels. It also involves staff development as a means of managing behaviour and attitudes. It logically follows that if there are good working relations, individuals and teams are more likely to perform well together than if poor relations exist.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) suggests that performance management is concerned with establishing a culture in which individuals and groups take responsibility for the continuous improvement of business processes and their own skills, behaviours and contributions. It is about sharing expectations. Managers can clarify what they expect individuals and teams to do; likewise, individuals and teams can communicate their expectations of how they should be managed and what they need to do their jobs. It follows that performance is about interrelationships and about improving the quality of relationships between managers and teams, between members of teams and so on, and is therefore a joint process (Mullins 2010:510).

Nelson and Quick (2008:157) see performance management as a process of defining, measuring, appraising, providing feedback on and improving performance.

Armstrong (2009:1) describes performance management as a system consisting of interlocking elements designed to achieve high performance. Within that system, performance management is carried out through the process of planning, goal setting, monitoring, providing feedback, analysing and assessing performance, reviewing, dealing with under-performance and coaching.

Werner *et al.* (2011:117) further state that Robert Bacal (2003:viii) presents a slightly different perspective. He describes performance management as follows:

- The employee's essential job functions
- How the employee's job contributes to the goals of the organisation
- What it means, in concrete terms, to do the job well
- How job performance will be measured
- What barriers hinder performance and how they can be minimised and eliminated
- How the employee and the supervisor will work together to improve the employee's performance.

Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2012:341) define performance management as a means through which managers ensure that employees' activities and outputs are congruent with the organisation's goals. Managers need to know whether their employees are performing their jobs efficiently and effectively. That is what a performance management system does; it establishes performance standards that are used to evaluate employee performance (Robbins & Coulter 2012:354).

All these definitions are essentially the same as they all emphasise the systematic nature of the process, its focus on the achievement of shared individual and organisational goals and the importance of the development of and support to the individual.

The aim of the study was to investigate the factors affecting the attitude of employees towards the performance management system of Telkom's CNFO. This stems from the way the employees behave and how that affects productivity. If the employees do not live the organisation's values and the positive behaviours coupled with them, productivity will be negatively affected as they will not be honest and accountable and will not work well. As such, productivity implies a concern both for effectiveness and for efficiency (Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt 2001:15).

From the statement by Butler and Rose (2011:409) that the alignment of the roles played by line and HR managers together with strategic objectives in relation to performance and organisational behaviour can be facilitated through the operation of an effective and internally consistent performance management system, it does appear that for performance management to succeed, a good and effective performance management system needs to be in place. Muchinsky, Kriel and

Schreuder (2005:240) confirm that fundamental to effective performance management is an integrated performance management system that provides a framework within which the entire performance management process can be managed and improved.

2.4 Purpose of performance management

Van Rooyen (2006) states that performance management is a process of tracking, recognising and correcting behaviour to ensure effectiveness within a specific social system. Successful performance management systems usually include aspects of individual recognition, development or training and correction or discipline.

Performance management has at least three purposes:

- Aligning individual, team and departmental “outcomes” to organisational objectives/goals;
- Ensuring that staff know what they are expected to do; have the knowledge, skills, experience, attitudes and behaviour to do it; do what is expected of them on time, meeting the required standard(s) in a given environment which places limitations on what can be achieved;
- Directing training and giving rewards to drive organisational performance. This requires the consistent application of performance management in which the line manager plays a crucial role.

These purposes are the link between individual performance and organisational performance – hence a shared understanding is required (the premise for the “interpretivistic” approach to research indicated in Chapter 3).

Cannell (as cited in CIPD 2012), advises that performance management should incorporate the following aspects:

- **Performance improvement** - throughout the organisation, for individual, team and organisational effectiveness.
- **Development** - unless there is continuous development of individuals and teams, performance will not improve.
- **Managing behaviour** - ensuring that individuals are encouraged to behave in a way that allows and fosters better working relationships.

Armstrong and Baron (2005) stress that at its best, performance management is a tool to ensure that managers manage effectively; this means that they ensure the people or teams they manage know and understand what is expected of them relative to organisational goal achievement, have the skills and ability to deliver on these expectations, are supported by the organisation to develop the capacity to meet these expectations, are given feedback on their performance and have the opportunity to discuss and contribute to individual and team aims and objectives.

Performance management also involves ensuring that managers themselves are aware of the effects of their own behaviour on the people they manage and are encouraged to identify and exhibit positive behaviours. So, performance management involves establishing a **culture** in which individuals and groups take responsibility for the continuous improvement of business processes and of their own skills, behaviour and contributions. It involves **sharing** expectations. Managers can clarify what they expect individuals and teams to do; likewise, individuals and teams can communicate their expectations of how they should be managed and what they need to do their jobs. It follows that performance management involves **interrelationships** and improving the quality of relationships between managers and individuals, between managers and teams, between members of teams and so on, and is therefore a **joint** process. It also involves **planning** - defining expectations expressed as objectives and in business plans - and **measurement**, remembering the old dictum "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it." It should apply to **all employees**, not just managers, and to **teams** as much as individuals. It is a **continuous** process, not a once-off event. Last, it is **holistic** and should pervade every aspect of running an organisation.

The overall purpose of performance management according to Armstrong and Baron (2005:2) is to contribute to the achievement of high performance by the organisation and its people. High performance, Armstrong and Baron (2005:2) say, means reaching and exceeding targets for the delivery of productivity, quality, customer service, growth, profits and shareholder value. Specifically, performance management aims to make the good better, share understanding about what is to be achieved, develop the capacity of people to achieve it, and provide the support and guidance people need to deliver high performance and achieve their full potential to

the benefit of themselves and the organisation. Performance management has the potential to improve the performance of organisations and act as a lever to achieve cultural change. A focus on performance can bring real rewards for organisations. Performance management can be the key or mechanism for dialogue in an organisation.

Performance is a factor of motivation and ability, that is, a person has to have a certain degree of willingness to do the job, have a clear understanding of what to do and how to do it, and should possess the necessary skills for task completion. Further, individuals will not be effective unless they receive organisational support and direction and unless their work fits the needs of their organisational environment. Finally, individuals need to know not only what to do but also how well they are doing it on an ongoing basis (feedback), and the decisions that affect their careers need to be validated continuously (Fox 2006:93).

The main performance management role players are the line managers and their staff. According to Armstrong (2009:270), performance management is what line managers do as they are there to achieve results through people and therefore have to manage the performance of their people. Line managers play a crucial role in each stage of the performance management cycle.

2.5 Performance management of CNFO

According to the Telkom performance and development management policy, the performance and development management system in Telkom has these aims:

- Supporting Telkom's vision, values and objectives
- Inspiring all employees to meet and exceed the expectations of customers and ensuring growth and competitiveness as a company
- Instilling and sustaining a performance culture, supported by continuous improvement
- Ensuring that every employee knows what is expected of him or her
- Building and enhancing the relationship between performer and promoter
- Enabling employees through coaching and development

These aims are congruent with those proposed by Armstrong (2009). The CNFO performance management requires that all employees must have a performance plan against which their job performance can be measured and assessed. Business plans must be used to determine objectives, measures and targets required of a performer. To do this, Telkom's business plan and objectives must be cascaded in a hierarchical manner. The promoter and performer are responsible for improving the performance and development of performers. Interim quarterly feedback or review sessions are held and used to track the individual's performance with a view to correct or improve performance.

Each assessment must be conducted on its own merits and not by any pre-determined outcomes. The planned objectives and progress with the development of competencies required in delivering the objectives must be assessed. The performer and promoter must compile a portfolio of evidence to ensure that assessment is based on facts and not perceptions. A formal assessment of performance must be conducted twice per annum at six monthly intervals and the final assessment will address the full year's performance. Figure 2.1 below details the performance management process of Telkom CNFO.



Figure 2.1: CNFO performance and development management process.

Both the performer and the promoter must take ownership of the process (and the performer's development plan) and actively pursue it in the following ways:

- The promoter and/or Human Resources Line Support representative facilitates the performers' understanding of their contribution to Telkom's business plan objectives and guides them in drafting individual output plans and development plans. It is imperative that targets must be SMART. "SMART is an acronym used to describe key characteristics of appraisal objectives. Each of the letters stands for the following;
S specific (one end result is clearly described);
M measurable outcome (the outcome can be measured);
A agreed (manager and report agree the outcome);
R realistic (i.e. 'what is the maximum we can realistically achieve including target and stretch?')
T timely (i.e. 'by when will it be achieved?') Banfield and Kay, 2012:300".
- Together they decide on the objectives (what) to be performed, the measures and targets to be achieved during the performance period using the business plan objectives as input.
- They identify development priorities.
 - A formal session between the promoter and performer must take place quarterly, where they share and discuss observed information. They review performance and development plans and agree upon follow-up and/or remedial steps. Promoters must fulfil their main purpose as enablers, that is, to remove stumbling blocks that prevent performers from performing optimally.
 - Developing employees, which involves giving feedback, coaching and training in order to improve performance.
 - A formal assessment must be conducted bi-annually.

Concurring with the above, Silverstein (2007:108) argues that most experts agree that a successful system of performance management involves four basic components:

- A clear organisational definition of performance
- A training and development program that focuses on improving performance

- An objective evaluation system to review employee performance
- A method of recognizing and rewarding performance.

The performance management system of Telkom CNFO seems to be in line with theory, as can be seen from what performance management is concerned with (Armstrong 2009:56), principles of effective performance management (Armstrong 2009:75), best practices in performance management (Armstrong 2009:76) and implementing strategic organisational performance management (Armstrong 2009:222).

Competitive advantage depends to a degree on human resources because of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours of staff. If employees are negative towards performance management, it may jeopardise competitive advantage and thus high performance. Competitive advantage is becoming increasingly important for Telkom as the company competes with other enterprises like Neotel, Vodacom, MTN, Cell-C, Eskom and Infraco. In the rural area of Transkei where the researcher is situated, CNFO loses a number of technicians every year to the competition (Vodacom, MTN, Cell-C, Eskom and Infraco).

In congruence with Armstrong and Baron (2005), Amos *et al.* (2008:285) describe performance management as an approach to managing people for goal achievement. Amos *et al.* further state that it comprises a set of practices used by managers to plan, direct, and improve the performance of employees in line with achieving the overall strategic objectives of the organisation. Again this description of performance management is in line with that of Armstrong (2009). Armstrong and Baron (2005) and Amos *et al.* (2008) further point out that the goal of a performance management system is to collaboratively determine individual work-related objectives in accordance with organisational objectives, review performance against the set objectives, and provide the employee with feedback as a means of motivating the employee to achieve his or her full potential, to experience satisfaction and commitment, and to contribute to organisational success.

To evaluate job performance effectively, Silverstein (2007:14) admits that a manager must know what is important to measure. According to Armstrong and Baron (2005:36), the assessment of performance starts with a retrospective analysis of

results and the reasons for the level of achievement reached. This provides the basis for two-way communication regarding goals.

Results are assessed against agreed objectives that are derived from the strategic objectives of the organisation and are in line with the strategy of the organisation. Performance management data are collected by means of a performance management system.

Because of the complexity of the system and the hostile feelings of the CNFO employees towards it, a question can be asked as to whether the current performance management empowers management and staff to attain sectional and individual goals.

The process of performance management in CNFO consists of the following four steps in accordance with the theory presented on previous pages:

1. Desired job performance is defined.
2. Specific challenging objectives in line with strategic goals are set as to what the person or team should start doing, stop doing or do differently.
3. The individual's performance on the job is observed and measured.
4. Feedback is provided and a decision is made about, training, transferring, promoting, demoting or terminating the contract of an individual.

As Wan (2010:128) puts it, performance management seeks to motivate people at all levels to be willing and committed to use their skills and knowledge to produce excellent results within their capabilities. This is important because to achieve improved performance is one of the reasons for performance management.

Verweire and Van den Berghe (2004:152) state that performance measurement and performance management are vivid themes in the literature on management control which comprises various tasks, including the following:

- Planning the future activities of the organisation
- Coordinating the activities of the various members of the organisation
- Communicating information
- Evaluating this information
- Deciding on the actions to be taken

- Influencing people to adapt their behaviour according to the company goals.

As shown in Figure 2.2, performance management has three basic components: performance planning, performance managing and performance appraisal.

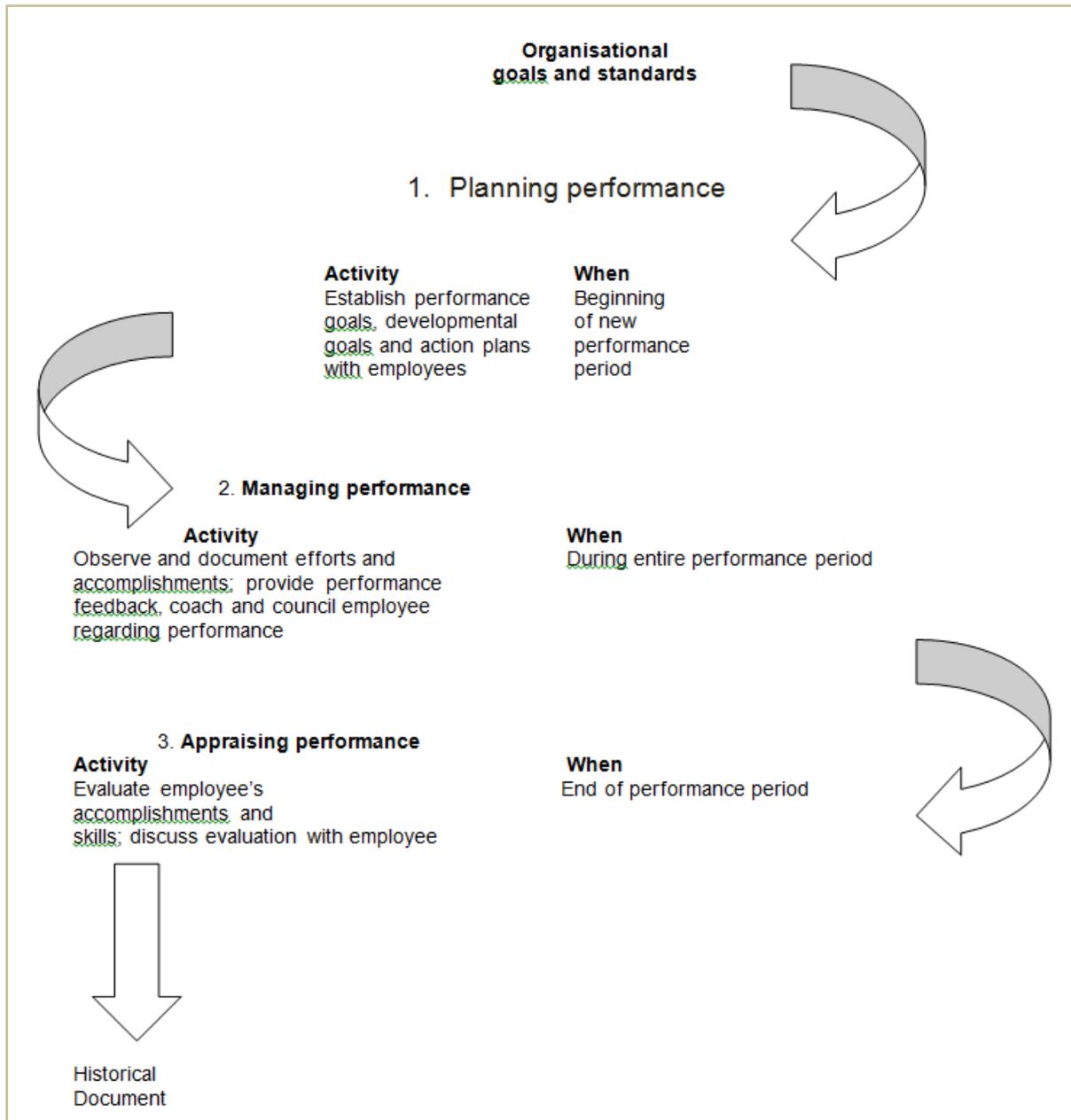


Figure 2.2: The performance management cycle

(Source: McAfee & Champagne 1993:24)

Performance planning is the process of specifying goals at the beginning of the new performance period, identifying the desired level of performance (standards) and gaining employee commitment to perform as expected. Performance managing is the daily process of working towards the performance expectations established in the planning phase. Together, the manager and employee review performance on a periodic basis. If everything seems to be on track or results are exceeding expectations, the manager uses positive reinforcement to maintain high levels of performance. If it is lacking, the manager might need to coach the employee on ways in which to correct the deficiencies.

Performance appraisal is merely an opportunity to review the performance of the past year as agreed earlier by both the manager and the employee (McAfee & Champagne 1993:25). Performance management needs a system to be effectively carried out.

Performance management is concerned with organisational performance. In essence, organisational performance relates to the effective and efficient reaching of organisational goals. To deliver on its promise of success, performance management should be holistic, strategic and integrated. In addition it should be supported by an appropriate system to collect relevant data to facilitate performance management and, consequently, organisational performance.

2.6 Typical performance management

According to Brudal (2010:110), in the case of management, the term performance can be used at various levels (personal performance, individual performance, team performance, organisational performance) to express general performance or to reflect a benchmark against peers.

Brudal (2010) further states that in scientific management, performance is associated with two key processes: performance management and performance measurement. These two key processes cannot be separated from one another, and performance management both precedes and follows performance measurement. Performance management is the overarching process that deals with performance. It reflects the approach one entity has towards performance, and it includes sub processes such as strategy definition (planning/goal setting), strategy execution,

training and performance measurement. Thus, performance measurement is a sub process of performance management that focuses on the identification, tracking and communication of performance results by the use of performance indicators. Performance measurement deals with the evaluation of results, while performance management deals with taking action based on the results of the evaluation and ensuring the target results are achieved (Brudal 2010:111).

The knowledge age requires a new approach to performance management. Many organisations use old systems with contemporary add-ons like 360 degree feedback. People add value and ensure that organisational performance which requires high commitment, based on trust between manager and staff, is given. Performance management can play an important role in fostering trust between these parties and promoting understanding which is most important in this relationship. This will lead to mutual cooperation which, in turn, will nurture engagement. For all of this to happen, communication between management and staff must be the centrepiece.

Since the performance of every employee contributes to the realisation of the business's strategic goals, it follows that the performance of every employee should be managed. This is the primary responsibility of every employee's line manager, and the role of the HR department is to design, develop, implement and maintain the tools and practices that will assist line management to execute this task effectively.

The process of performance management essentially entails three elements:

- Defining performance by setting clear goals, deciding how to measure goal accomplishment and providing regular progress assessment. Performance appraisal is an integral part of this element.
- Facilitating performance by identifying and eliminating obstacles to good performance and by providing resources to accomplish objectives.
- Encouraging performance by providing sufficient rewards and recognition that employees really value, in a timely and fair manner (Badenhorst-Weiss *et al.* 2012:222; Van Zyl, Van Noordwyk & Du Toit 2012:120).

Performance management is different from performance appraisal which forms part of performance management. Performance management is much more than appraising individuals. It contributes to the achievement of culture change, and it is

integrated with other key HR activities, especially human capital management, talent management, learning and development and reward management (Armstrong 2009:10). According to Kozlowski (2012:285), performance management is a continuous process rather than a discrete event of performance appraisal.

This indicates that performance management is increasingly interlinked with other HR and organisational processes to ensure that performance management is embedded in the strategic management processes of the organisation.

The CIPD viewpoint (CIPD 2012) is that performance management has a significant role to play in enhancing organisational performance in the following ways:

- It ensures all employees understand their contribution to organisational goals and objectives.
- It ensures all employees understand what is expected of them and have the skills and support to achieve this.
- It drives engagement.
- It ensures effective communication throughout the organisation and the linking of objectives.
- It enhances the individual line manager relationship, encouraging line managers to build positive relationships with individuals based on trust and empowerment.

The keys to the successful introduction and application of performance management are being clear about what is meant by performance, understanding what the organisation is and needs to be in its performance culture, being focused on how individual employees will benefit and play their part in the process, and understanding that it is a tool for line managers and its success will depend on their ability to use it effectively.

2.7 The importance of performance management

Performance management is shaping what people say and do about the needs of the organisation (Werner *et al.* 2011:117). The appeal of performance management in its fully realised form is that it is holistic: it pervades every aspect of running the business and helps to give purpose and meaning to those involved in achieving organisational goals and performance (Armstrong 2009:25).

According to Mone and London (2010:2), performance management is not a fixed sequence of events but a continuous process that is constantly renewing itself as performance unfolds, especially as key events create opportunities to demonstrate expertise and contribute to organisational goals. They further state that, done well, performance management makes employees more competitive and engaged, enhances leadership development, supports transformational change and, in general, contributes to higher levels of organisation performance (Mone & London 2010:3).

2.8 Conclusion of literature review

From the literature review, it can be seen that performance management is highly important to both employer and employee. It is important for the employer to understand how the employees contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of the organisation. The performance management system enables the organisation to know how the employees perform, discovering those who add most and those who add least value to the organisation. It allows the organisation to undertake a thorough assessment of the training and development needs of its employees and set development plans and gives the opportunity of using the results of the performance management process to shape an individual's remuneration.

For the employee, the performance management process provides transparency over the performance, provides a background for documenting performance issues and can be used to consider future career development requirements. An organisation's choice of where to focus its attention in relation to performance management may, in part, determine its future and can certainly guide its culture (Armstrong 2009:2).

The following benefits of performance management could be identified:

- It aligns organisational activities and processes to the goals of the organisation.
- It focuses on results.
- It produces meaningful measurements.
- It promotes a system-wide, long-term view of the organisation.

Mullins (2010:515) states that performance management is how the various people management policies are integrated to support organisational performance. Performance review is one aspect of this, and an effective scheme, therefore, offers a number of potential benefits to both the individual and the organisation:

- It can identify an individual's strengths and areas of development and indicate how such strengths may best be utilised and weaknesses overcome.
- It can help to reveal problems that may be restricting progress and causing inefficient work practices.
- It can develop a greater degree of consistency through regular feedback on performance and discussion about potential. This encourages better performance from staff.
- It can provide information for human resource planning, to assist succession planning and talent management, and to determine suitability for promotion and for particular types of employment and training.
- It can improve communication by giving staff the opportunity to talk about their ideas and expectations and how well they are progressing.

Telkom CNFO's performance management system compares favourably with all literature consulted on this subject. The next chapter addresses how the research will be conducted to determine the factors that affect the attitudes of staff toward performance management in the Eastern Cape CNFO section of Telkom.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the research method. The purpose of the chapter is to describe the research method used to answer the research question. The chapter starts by revisiting the problem statement and research question and then looks at the method to solve the problem, the population and sample, data collection and the processing of the data.

3.2 Methodology

This section addresses methodology. Methodology covers the methods researchers use in research when trying to understand the world better. Methodology includes research philosophy, method and data analysis (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008:16).

3.2.1 Research philosophy

The problem investigated determines the research philosophy regulating the inquiry (Fisher 2010; Richards & Morse 2013). Hence, for ease of reference, the research question is restated here: "What factors influence the attitudes of staff towards performance management in Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape?" The primary and secondary objectives of the inquiry were to establish which factors have a positive and negative influence on employees' attitudes towards performance management and to make a contribution to knowledge in the field of performance management.

The purpose of this study was to discover understanding of the world in which the researcher worked and lived by exploring and describing the factors that influence the attitudes of the staff in question towards performance management. Understanding denotes an interpretivistic research philosophy, which holds that reality (knowledge) is socially constructed. This means that people's understanding of reality is not a simple account of what is, but rather something that people in societies and groups form from, among others, their interpretation of reality. Hence, reality is not objective, but how people make sense of the reality. Consequently the researcher studies the different accounts people give of a subject. Interpretive research does not accept the existence of a standard interpretation of any particular topic. Rather it emphasises plurality and relativism (Fisher 2010:22-23).

“Understanding” falls in the ambit of qualitative research (Richards & Morse 2013:27).

In the study, employees were probed as to their attitudes towards the current performance management on the following aspects found in the literature:

- **Goal setting** or the process of establishing desired results that guide and direct behaviour (Nelson & Quick 2006:151). Goal setting involves managers and subordinates in jointly establishing and clarifying employee goals and ensuring that these are aligned with the goals of the organisation. Goal setting can affect performance in several ways. It influences what people think and do by focusing their behaviour in the direction of the goals (Cummings & Worley 2005:368).
- **Job demands** or the pace and pressure of work tasks (Turner, Chmiel & Walls 2005). As an example, due to job demands, it would not be possible to grant anybody leave if the company has too many customer commitments.
- **Feedback on individual performance** or the process of telling someone else how one feels about and what one thinks of something that person did or said (Schermerhorn 2011:424). A technician in CNFO will have complied with and met his or her target if a Vodacom, MTN or Cell-C fault is repaired in 3.8 hours or less. During performance feedback which is given quarterly, the technician will be advised of the average time he or she takes to repair a fault, praised if the target is met or exceeded, and counselled and coached for non-compliance. The technician will also be given time to offer explanations and make barriers known so that they can be attended to by management.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2013:245) define feedback as the exchange of information about the status and quality of work products. It is used to motivate, support, direct, correct and regulate work efforts and outcomes. Feedback ensures that the manager and employees are in sync and agree on the standards and expectations of the work to be performed. It is objective information about individual or collective performance. Jones and George (2008:93) simplify it as the process through which managers share performance appraisal information with subordinates, give subordinates an opportunity to reflect on their own performance and develop, with subordinates, plans for the future. Employees

need continual feedback about goal achievement as well as necessary support and coaching to improve their performance (Cummings & Worley 2005:409).

- **Organisational communication** directly relates to the goals, functions and structure of human organisations (Certo & Certo 2006:337) regarding
 - **Mission** – an organisation’s mission is made up of the following four elements which will be cascaded down to the operational level by being included in the individual performance management contract:
 - **Core purpose** is an understanding of why an organisation exists (Louw & Venter 2006:57). In CNFO, the core purpose is to create a high performance customer-centric caring culture, in ensuring the maintenance, installation and improvement of the core, complex, high speed network in the maritime, undersea cable, radio and earth station divisions of Telkom.
 - **Core strategies** are ways and means of fulfilling the core purpose (Louw & Venter 2006:62).
 - **Core values** are a smaller set of enduring principles that guide and influence employees’ behaviour (Louw & Venter 2006:64). Telkom’s acronym for its core values which every employee is expected to live by is **CHART**:
 - **Continuous Performance Improvement** – we seek continuous improvement and do things quickly, effectively and innovatively. We learn from our mistakes to ensure our performance and become more responsive to customer needs.
 - **Honesty** – we keep our promises and commitments. We always tell the truth and are open and transparent in all our dealings with each other, our customers, our stakeholders and the broader community.
 - **Accountability** – we take full ownership of our actions and deliverables. We do not blame others and always give our best. We are passionate and walk the extra mile for our customers.
 - **Respect** – we treat everyone with courtesy, politeness and kindness, and actively listen to others. We value diversity and always seek first to understand.

- **Teamwork** – we are team players with a common goal and shared vision. We deliver business results through cooperation and share our knowledge and resources to the benefit of the business (Telkom Culture Transformation).
- **Core behaviour standards** refer to the behaviour expected of employees if the organisation is going to implement its core strategies efficiently and effectively and if it is also going to adhere to its core values (Louw & Venter 2006:66).
- **Business plans** develop if performance management serves its intended purpose and if it is linked to the strategic objectives of the organisation. Employees across the organisation need to be familiar with the strategy or performance targets of the organisation and how that translates into a business plan or performance plans (Muchinsky *et al.* 2005:240). Usually, employees are briefed on the business plan but should be part of their performance plans.
- **Organisational performance** is the product of many factors such as organisational structure, knowledge, nonhuman resources, strategic positioning and human process which contribute to performance defined as “achieving or surpassing business and social objectives and responsibilities from the perspective of the judging party” (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson 1996:383). All organisations are in business to provide goods and services for a price and realise a profit at the end of the financial year; thus, when organisational performance is evaluated, both financial and non-financial performance is considered.

As stated by Werner *et al.* (2011:218), communication, according to Sanchez (2005:8), is the only organisational process that has the power to inform, educate and bring about the cooperation needed for culture change. Corporate communication (organisational communication) is the internal and external communication between members of an organisation at all levels in order to achieve a mutual goal or goals (Le Roux, De Beer, Ferreira, Hubner, Jacobs, Kritzing, Labuschagne, Stapelberg, & Venter, 1999:286).

- **Organisational climate** refers to the collective current impressions, expectations, and sentiments of a work unit. It includes those aspects of the

environment of an organisation that are consciously perceived by organisational members. It affects the relationship of the members with supervisors, with each other, and with the members of other units (Fox 2006:42). In an atmosphere of trust, people feel safe to express their ideas, feelings, frustrations and perceptions freely, and they will be willing to take calculated risks.

- **Job involvement or ownership** refers to the extent to which a person identifies psychologically with his or her job and considers his or her performance level as a reflection of self-worth. A person with a high level of job involvement will have a strong sense of “belonging” in the specific job and will want to perform well (Werner *et al.* 2011:74).
- **Organisational commitment** is the degree to which a person identifies with a specific organisation and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organisation. A person can experience high job involvement but low organisational commitment, or vice versa (Werner *et al.* 2011:74).
- **Job satisfaction** refers to a person’s general attitude toward his or her job. Job satisfaction is influenced by many factors. If a person is satisfied with most of the factors that he or she considers relevant, the person will experience job satisfaction (Werner *et al.* 2011:74). Ghillyer (2009:288) concurs with Werner *et al.* and adds that the five major components of job satisfaction are
 - Attitude toward work group,
 - General working conditions,
 - Attitude towards company,
 - Monetary benefits, and
 - Attitude toward supervisor.
- **Perceived relationship between effort and reward** is important because rewards should be contingent on performance, and employees must perceive a clear linkage. If individuals perceive this relationship to be low, the results will be low performance, a decrease in job satisfaction, and an increase in turnover and absenteeism statistics (Robbins *et al.* 2001:165).
- **Employees’ sense of personal competence** is a key ingredient in performance. A person must do more than learn about something; a person must be able to do it. As Hersey *et al.* (1996:387) say, the important question to

ask would be “Do I have the competence that will permit me to perform the job-related tasks required to achieve the goal?”

- **Perception of and attitude towards reward** is affected by individual factors. When an individual looks at a target and attempts to interpret what he or she sees, that interpretation is heavily influenced by personal characteristics of the individual perceiver. Among the more relevant personal characteristics affecting perception are attitudes, motives, interests, past experiences and expectations (Robbins *et al.* 2001:108).

Literature was used to get aspects which employees were probed on to understand their attitudes towards the current performance management in Telkom CNFO. Literature also assisted in deciding to use the questionnaire, the type of questionnaire (self or interviewer administered) and also the choice of questionnaire, e.g. email.

3.2.2 Method

Qualitative research presents a specific way of thinking about data and using techniques as tools to manipulate data to achieve a goal (Richards & Morse 2013:34).

Brynard and Hanekom (2006:37) suggest that the fundamental theme of qualitative research is a phenomenological one, where the actor's perspective is the empirical point of departure and is a focus upon the real-life experience of people. Generally, qualitative studies utilize interviews and descriptive surveys. An interview method might have been the best way of conducting the research, but due to problems like distance, time, money and workforce, it was not feasible to conduct interviews. The next best way of conducting the research was descriptive surveys. In this case study, this method was feasible because surveys are relatively inexpensive, they can be administered from remote locations using mail, email or telephone and they are a relatively quick way of obtaining the required data; hence, the descriptive survey was the most appropriate method of addressing the problem.

The method falls within the interpretivist paradigm which means a position that tends to focus on the meanings people attribute to phenomena and actions (Mukherji & Albon 2010:31). Mukherji and Albon (2010) further state that the interpretivist

position lends itself to qualitative research approaches and methods, which tend to focus on gaining a detailed understanding of a small sample or case and it often emphasises the need to carry out research in naturalistic settings. The overall purpose of qualitative research is to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives and describe how people interpret what they experience (Merriam 2009:14).

According to Merriam (2009:15), a second characteristic of all forms of qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection through interviews and analysis. In this study, a descriptive survey was conducted among management and operational employees within CNFO in the Eastern Cape using a Web questionnaire with the aim of obtaining an understanding of the research participants' attitudes towards performance management and to explore the factors influencing their attitudes. The questionnaire used to explore the attitude of employees towards performance management is reproduced in Appendix A.

The study is situated in an interpretive research philosophy with its emphasis on experience and interpretation. Interpretive research is concerned with meaning and seeks to understand people's meaning-making, among others, of a social reality, in this case, the attitude of staff towards performance management in CNFO Eastern Cape. The interpretive philosophy is congruent with the purpose of this study, namely, exploring factors influencing the attitude of staff towards performance management in the Core Network Field Operation section of Telkom in the Eastern Cape.

The aim was to find out not only what happens but also how it happens and, importantly, why it happens the way it does and how employees represent their feelings and thoughts in their actions (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit 2004:3).

The above explanation of the interpretivist philosophy alludes to the application of a qualitative research approach in collecting and analysing data for this study. In this instance, using a qualitative research approach was appropriate to the purpose of the inquiry conducted. Furthermore, the qualitative approach is in line with the predominant research approach within the interpretivist philosophy (Creswell 2009:8; Henning *et al.* 2004:16).

The problem was studied by way of a survey which was deemed appropriate for this study as it explored the attitude and behaviour of the sample. Empirical data were obtained via questionnaires, and questionnaires were deemed to yield rich data because they were not subject to interviewer bias.

A pilot study was carried out to explore potential issues pertinent to the study before a questionnaire was administered. Ideally, the pilot study is for checking that the questionnaire is well phrased and easy to understand and for establishing how long it will take to complete and if the respondents would be willing to participate. The same questionnaire which was to be used for the study was used for the pilot study. Patria de Lancer (2009:80) states the aims of a pilot study are to find out the following:

- How long it will take to complete the survey
- Whether there are any difficulties in answering the questions and if anything needs to be explained
- Whether any of the questions are unclear, ambiguous, or redundant and if any, to identify them
- Whether the answer choices are appropriate
- Whether any questions need to be deleted
- Whether any questions need to be added
- What the participants think of the overall format of the survey.

Purposive sampling was used to select nine employees from three other sections in Telkom Eastern Cape who were asked to complete the pilot questionnaire. All the respondents who participated completed the pilot questionnaire and did not suggest any changes be made. No major difficulties were reported, and no changes to the survey were deemed necessary.

3.2.3 Instrument used to collect data

Because the Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape staff members were geographically dispersed, it was impractical to interview them to obtain relevant data for the study. The most appropriate way to collect data in this instance was a descriptive survey, utilising a questionnaire. The use of a questionnaire to collect data for a qualitative study is not uncommon (Fisher 2010). The survey contained a number of open-

ended questions (Fisher 2010) which allowed the participants to express their views and opinions freely. These views and opinions assisted in creating understanding.

Data were collected by means of a web survey with a purposive sample in the CNFO section of Telkom Eastern Cape as shown in Table 3.1. A Lime survey was deemed appropriate where a link to access the questionnaire was emailed to the participants. It should be noted that this study also complied with ethical requirements as participants were assured that their participation was voluntary and that their responses would be treated as strictly confidential. They would remain anonymous because their names would not be mentioned anywhere in the study. A letter of invitation (see Appendix B) explaining the process and assuring them of anonymity was emailed to all participants.

Patria de Lancer (2009:82) noted the following advantages of using a questionnaire to collect data:

- Many individuals may be contacted at the same time.
- A questionnaire is less expensive to administer than is using an interview technique.
- Each selected respondent receives identical questions.
- A written questionnaire provides a vehicle for expression without fear of embarrassment to the respondent.
- Responses are easily tabulated (depending on design of instrument).
- Respondents may answer at their own convenience.
- There is no need to select and train interviewers.
- Persons in remote or distant areas are reached.
- Interviewer biases are avoided.
- Uniform data are gathered that allow for long-range research implications.

However, Patria de Lancer (2009:83) also mentioned the following disadvantages:

- The investigator is prevented from learning the respondents' motivation for answering questions.
- Respondents may be limited from providing free expression of opinions due to instrument design.

- The collection of data from individuals who cannot read, write, or see is prevented.
- The return of all questionnaires is difficult to achieve.
- Complex designs cause poor responses or none.
- The investigator is prevented from learning what causes poor returns.
- The names and current addresses of the target population are often not available.
- A questionnaire may have different meanings to different people.
- There is no assurance that the intended respondent actually completed the instrument.
- Selections of the sample, per se, may cause biased results: i.e., the sample is not representative of the universe.

A questionnaire with different types of questions based on the theory presented in the previous chapter was used. The questionnaire is included as Appendix A. Question 1 covered demographics, while the other questions solicited the opinions of staff by asking their views on a series of statements about their understanding of performance management, what happens in performance management, who benefits most by performance management, what it achieves, HR processes linked to performance management, and what should be evaluated for effective performance management. Questions 2 and 3 were close-ended questions which covered the participants' understanding of performance management. Questions 4 to 9 addressed and explored the attitude of participants to performance management where questions 4 to 7 were close-ended questions and 8 and 9 open-ended.

3.2.4 Population

The views of staff employed by Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape were necessary to study the phenomenon in question; hence, all 135 employees across all sections of Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape were invited to participate. The population was approached and a sample is not applicable. This was driven by the desire to learn in detail and in depth about experiences of individuals. Generally qualitative studies use small samples (Fisher 2010; Richards & Morse 2013). The norms for a qualitative study rely on small numbers with the aim of studying in depth and detail

(Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 1990 in Tucket 2004) and vary between five and 20 (Crabtree & Miller 1999). Hence, the population of 135 is in accordance with the norm.

The accuracy of the data can only be judged in terms of the accuracy of the participants' recall of how they felt or experienced or perceived the event at the time (Richards & Morse 2013:134), in this instance, the perceptions and experience of the staff of Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape of performance management. Hence, the data must be collected at the level needed to answer the questions (Richards & Morse 2013:135), in this instance, staff of Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape.

The problem was studied by means of a case study, which was deemed appropriate to this inquiry because it explored a contemporary phenomenon (i.e. performance management) in its real life context (Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape). A case is seen as a study of a particular social unit or system (in this instance, Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape) which is "bounded" and studied in its natural setting as a whole, for example, a geographical area, an institution or a unit (Richards & Morse 2013:76;78); data are collected from a small number of cases selected to inform a particular issue and that are thoroughly described; coding and summarising data are focussed by prior questions or theory to inform detailed understanding and comparison by contextual analysis of factors, events or conditions of interest (Richards & Morse 2013:33). The case study uses different sources of data (e.g., company records/documents), observation (manager) and data collected via interviews or a survey (Richards & Morse 2013). In-depth data are gathered, focussing on the particular problem (in this instance, factors influencing staff attitudes towards performance management in Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape) and analysing all data obtained from that particular case in context, within the identified boundaries (Richards & Morse 2013:78). The presentation of the results offers intensive, detailed descriptions of the case and a sense that the case is thoroughly understood (Richards & Morse 2013:78). Richards and Morse (2013:79) point out that investigations using case study methods are highly diverse.

For this study, the population consisted of 4 M5 managers, 13 M6 managers, 17 specialists (S6), 6 administrators and 95 operational technicians who made up a total of 135 persons, a number which is in line with the guidelines for qualitative studies (Morse 1994, as cited in Guest, Bunce & Johnson 2006:61). A link to access the

questionnaire was emailed to all the 135 persons invited. Table 3.1 summarises the profile of the potential respondents.

Table 3.1: Profile of respondents

Respondent type	Number of staff members invited
Middle Manager (M5)	4
Specialist (S6)	17
Supervisor (M6)	13
Technician (OP1)	95
Administrator	6

3.2.5 Data analysis

Data collected were descriptively analysed. Descriptive analyses include numeric descriptions (Richards & Morse 2013). Texts were analysed using qualitative coding (Saldaña 2013). A code in qualitative research is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based data (Saldaña 2013:3).

Coding is the critical link between data collection and their explanation of meaning (Saldaña 2013:3). In qualitative research, a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorisation, theory building and other processes (Saldaña 2013:4). The code serves the same purpose as the title of a book, poem, or film and represents and captures a datum's primary content and essence (Saldaña 2013:4). Coding is essentially an interpretive act, summarising, distilling and condensing data (Saldaña 2013:4).

Several or many of the same codes will be used repeatedly throughout larger data sets, indicating repetitive patterns, consistent with human affairs. The goal of coding is to uncover these repetitive patterns (Saldaña 2013:5). A pattern can be characterised by similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence or causation (Saldaña 2013:7). When codes are clustered together according to a pattern, they actively facilitate the development of categories and thus analysis of

their connections (Saldaña 2013:8). Coding thus organises and groups similarly coded data into categories because they share some characteristic (Saldaña 2013:9).

Classification reasoning used together with the researcher's tacit knowledge as well as intuitive senses determines categories (Lincoln & Guba 1985 in Saldaña 2013:9). When categories are compared to each other and consolidated, the researcher transcends the reality of the data and progress toward the thematic, conceptual and theoretical (Saldaña 2013:12). Showing how these themes and concepts systematically interrelate leads towards theory development (Corbin & Strauss in Saldaña 2013:13). However, it is acknowledged that pre-existing theories may drive the research enterprise, whether or not the researcher is aware of them or not (Mason in Saldaña 2013:13). Different coding – in this instance structural coding – applies to content-based and conceptual phrases (Saldaña 2013:84).

This type of coding is appropriate particularly in studies employing multiple participants and using semi-structured data-gathering protocols (Saldaña 2013:84). During analysis, quantitative applications are also possible, for example, determining frequencies on the basis of the number of individual participants who mentioned a particular theme, rather than the number of times a theme appears in a text (Saldaña 2013:86).

3.2.6 Ensuring validity (trustworthiness)

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013:89), the validity of a measurement instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure, in this instance, attitudes. Leedy and Ormrod (2013:104) state that Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Creswell (2007) have suggested that, for qualitative research, such words as credibility, trustworthiness, confirmability and validation be used instead of the term validity. Credibility and trustworthiness refer to the extent to which others perceive the study's findings to be convincing and worth taking seriously (Leedy & Ormrod 2013:262). There will be no reason for anyone to doubt the findings as the sample of the study was composed of participants from different levels, age groups and races. Verification is allowing a researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories or generalizations within real-world contexts (Leedy &

Ormrod 2013:140). A further study may have to be undertaken to verify certain assumptions, claims, theories and generalizations made by respondents. Ensuring validity involves checking the interpretation, validity, truth and meaningfulness of the study and checking that conclusions are logically derived from findings and that appropriate techniques are used.

3.3 Limitations of the study

As the study was not done in all the sections in Telkom, the results cannot be generalized. The study was limited to exploring the factors that influence attitudes of employees towards the performance management in CNFO. The main limitation of this study could be that the views of the respondents do not represent the views of the organisation.

3.4 Conclusion

Qualitative research was the most appropriate method for the study because it concerns how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. This chapter described the methodology that was followed to investigate the experience of employees in the CNFO section of Telkom and the factors that affect their attitudes. The next chapter will present and describe the results of the survey questionnaire.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter reports the results of the Lime survey which are based on the responses of the participants. The purpose of the study was to explore the factors influencing the attitudes of employees towards the performance management of Telkom's CNFO unit in the Eastern Cape region.

In line with the purpose of the study, the questionnaire used to obtain data was divided into specific sections covering the various beliefs about performance management. The results are reported following the structure of the questionnaire. The first section of the questionnaire covered demographics such as gender, marital status, race, highest qualification, age group, years in the current position, tenure of service in Telkom (in years) and job category. The section covering the demographics was used to establish the reliability of the data gathered which, in turn, might affect the validity of the research findings.

Questions 1.1 to 1.8 related to demographic information used mainly to determine the reliability of the data collected. Questions 2 to 9 tested definitions and participants' definition, understanding and perception of performance management.

An invitation to respond to a questionnaire was mailed to 135 potential participants of whom 88 (65%) responded. Details of the participants are illustrated in Table 4.1. Percentages are used to present the results, and tables summarising the results appear according to the order of the questions in the questionnaire. Reference will be made to the tables when describing results in the text.

The following sections present the results of the study as well as the findings according to the sections of the questionnaire (i.e., demographics and performance management).

4.2 Results - demographics of respondents

Table 4.1 is the summary of participants' job categories.

Table 4.1: Summary of participants

Department	Admini- stration	Technical officers	Ops Managers	Specialists S6	Managers M5	Total
No. invited	4%	70%	10%	13%	3%	135
No. who responded	Half	More than two thirds	Just over half	Almost two thirds	A quarter	Almost two thirds
Frequency	3	66	7	11	1	88
Percent	3%	75%	8%	13%	1%	100%

All 135 employees across all sections of Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape were invited to participate on an anonymous basis in this survey. A total of 88 persons, from all sections, responded to this invitation. Of the 88 respondents, 66 were technical officers, 11 were specialists, seven were operations managers, three were administrative assistants and one was a manager. The participants represented the different sections, almost proportionately. The majority of participants were male because the employees in CNFO are mainly male. All race groups participated in the study. The participants were from different generations. The qualifications of the participants varied from a Grade 12 to a post-graduate qualification, with the majority possessing a diploma in light current. Tenure varied from 6 to 21 years, while the majority of participants had been in their current position for more than 16 years.

The information in Table 4.1 shows, in line with the number of persons invited per position, that the majority (three quarters) of respondents were technical officers, followed by specialists. Other respondents were operations managers, administrators and one manager. The implication is that the responses may be biased towards the opinions of the technical officers. A manager has an administrative assistant, operations manager and specialist reporting to him. All technical officers, who are the major constituents, report to the operations manager.

The demographics of the respondents were covered in Section 1 of the questionnaire and are presented as follows as a pie chart in Figure 4.1.

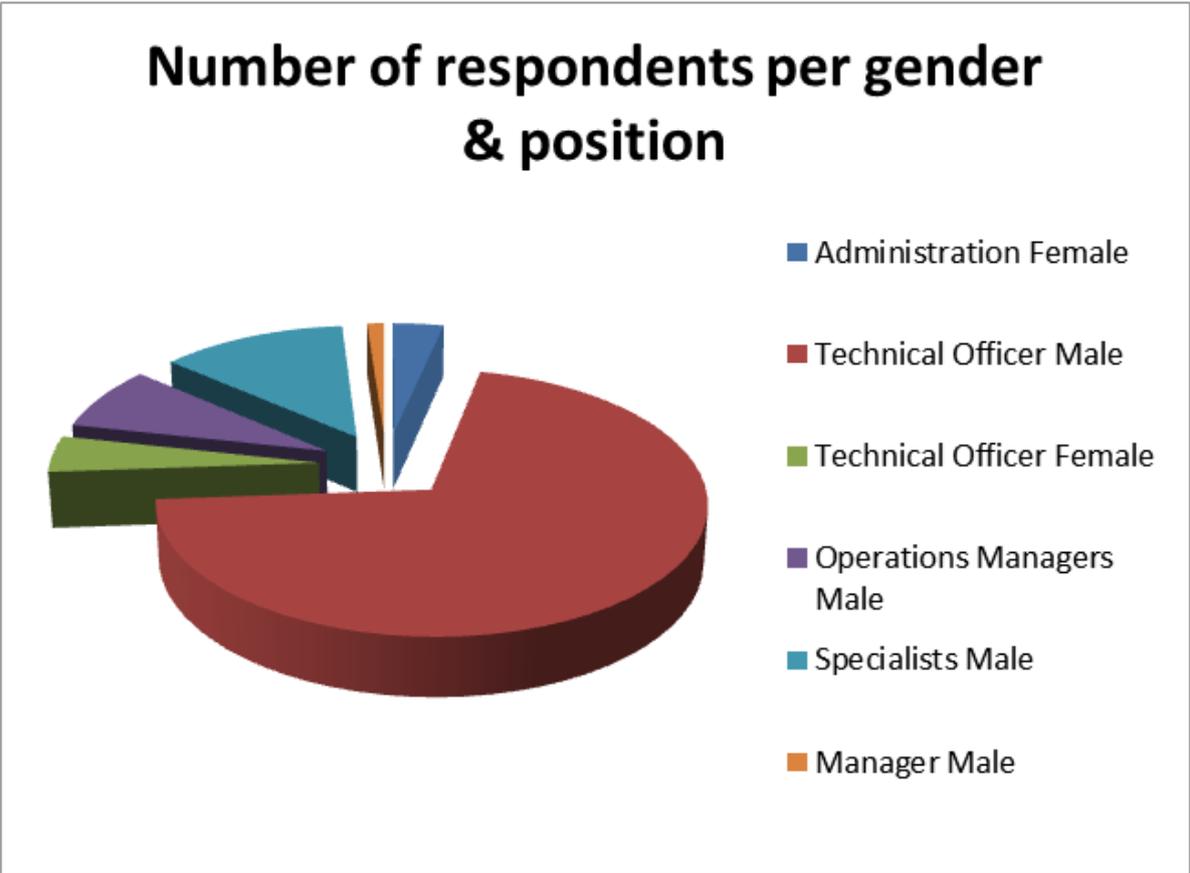


Figure 4.1: Number of respondents per gender and position.

Of the people who participated in the survey, the vast majority were male and the minority were female. More women were technical officers than administrators. No women are represented on the higher level. The results show that this is a male-dominated crew. This is typical of a Core Network Field Operation section as the nature of the work in this section involves climbing and callouts at all hours which is not convenient for women.

Figure 4.2 shows that the majority of participants were white, followed by black, coloured and Asian, and the majority of them were technical officers.

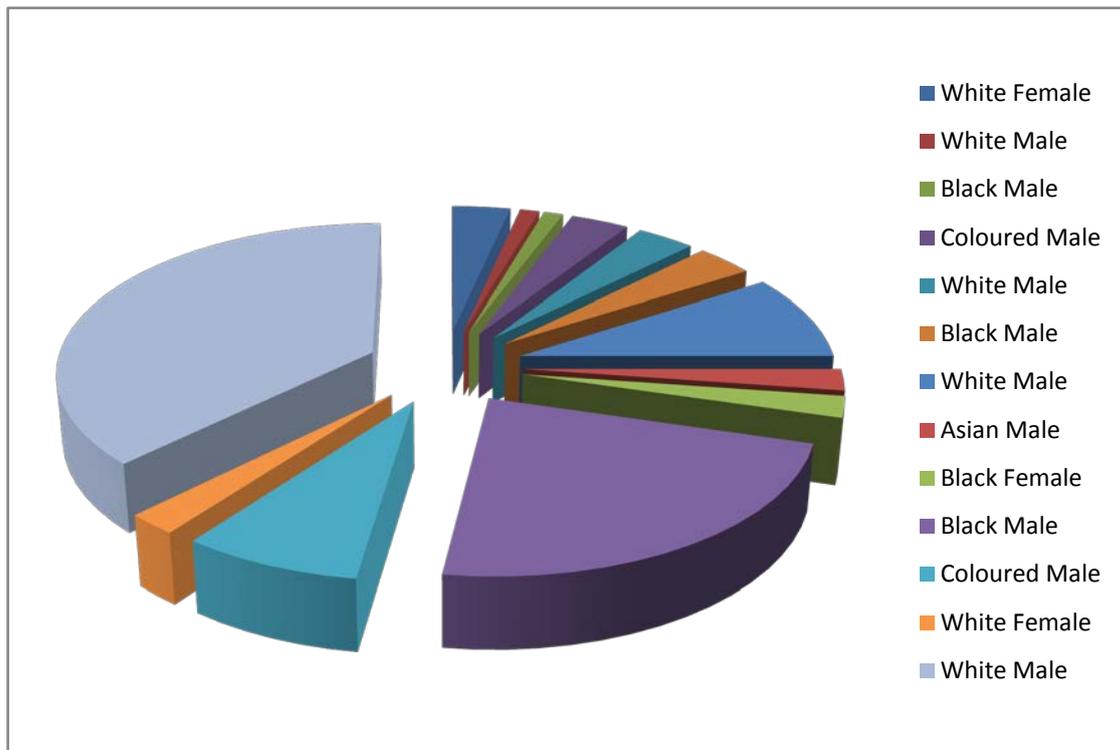


Figure 4.2: Pie chart showing number of responses per position, race and gender.

Most of the participants were baby boomers followed by Generation Xers and a millennial. The greatest percentage of employees is thus approaching retirement age, which should be a concern for the company. This situation does not portray a good future for the section as most of these people are approaching retirement and no growth is evident in the entry level.

Table 4.2: Number per age group: All participants

Position	Age	Number per age group	Generation timeline
Administration	26-45	2	Generation Xers
Administration	46-55	1	Baby boomers
Manager M5	55+	1	Baby boomers
Ops manager M6	46-55+	7	Baby boomers
Specialist S6	26-45	3	Generation Xers
Specialist S6	46-55+	8	Baby boomers
Technical officers	18-25	1	Millennial / Generation Y
Technical officers	26-45	32	Generation Xers
Technical officers	46-55+	33	Baby boomers

The participants belonged to different generations but had the same objectives. A few were millennials or Generation Y, more were Generation Xers and the majority were baby boomers. Baby boomers are very loyal to their employers and colleagues, are workaholics and prefer face-to-face communication. Generation Xers care more about productivity than they do about the number of hours spent on the job. They balance work and family, like to have fun at work and focus in the workplace on relations, outcomes, their rights and skills. Millennials value a balanced lifestyle, are diverse and political, think differently than any other members of the workforce and have a difficult time relating to baby boomers and Xers (Mack 2010). Generation Xers often have a more positive attitude than the others. This mix of generations could be what is keeping the company going.

The responses indicated that the majority of the employees had been in the same position for more than 16 years, a significant number of them had held the same position for 11 to 15 years, 4.5% had been in their position for 7 to 10 years, a few had been in the same position for 4 to 6 years and others had held their position for up to 3 years. This shows that the majority had not experienced promotion, and this could have implications which may affect the attitude of staff towards performance management because they perceived no development and career advancement. No

mention of recognition and reward has been made. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show the number of years participants had been in their current position and the years and number of staff in their current position per position.

Table 4.3: Years in the current position

	0 - 3	4-6	7-10	11-15	16 +
Frequency	9	10	4	20	45
Percent	10.20%	11.40%	4.50%	22.70%	51.10%

Table 4.4: Years and number in current position per position

Position	Years in current position	Number in current position
Administration	4-6	1
Administration	16+	2
Technical officers	0-3	8
Technical officers	4-6	8
Technical officers	7-10	3
Technical officers	11-16+	47
Ops managers	11-16+	7
Specialists	0-3	1
Specialists	4-6	1
Specialists	7-10	1
Specialists	11-16+	8
Manager	16+	1

The figures in Table 4.4 show that newly appointed and young technicians do not stay long in CNFO. The probability is that they had better offers from the mobile cellular operators (MCO) as staff are always sought by companies like Vodacom, MTN and Cell C, and also Eskom and Infracore of late. The ages of the 15 who had been in their current position for 11-15 years were 26-35 (3), 36-45 (8), and 46-55 (1) with 3 over 55 years.

Of those who had been over 16 years in their current position, the majority were baby boomers in the 46-55 year age group, followed by one in the 36-45 year old

bracket and a minority who were over 55 years. For staff to be in the same position for 11 years and more shows clearly that there is no promotion potential in the section, and this no doubt affects staff attitudes towards performance management.

Although this seems to show that there is no level progression in CNFO, it also portrays stability in the section but surely with unhappy people indicative of continuance commitment rather than effective commitment.

Although the results above show some form of stability in the section, it may be that this was possible with the staff employed some years back, but it may change with the new generation. It appears that there are at least three generations working side by side: 1981-2000 (Generation Y), 1965-1980 (Generation X) and 1946-1964 (baby boomers). The main challenge is that each generation has distinct attitudes, behaviours, expectations, habits and motivational requirements, especially Gen X with their nomadic behaviour.

4.3 Findings – demographics

It is important to highlight that the majority of respondents had been in their current position for more than 16 years (see Table 4.5). This indicates that either they were not performing well, or performance management does not compensate them for their contribution.

Table 4.5: Tenure in Telkom (in years)

	0 - 5	6-10	11-15	16 - 20	21+
Frequency	9	6	13	2	58
Percent	10.20%	6.80%	14.80%	2.30%	65.90%

4.4 Responses to performance management

The following sections cover the responses to the second part of the questionnaire which pertained to performance management. These include cognitive aspects of attitudes towards performance management (definition) and what actually happens under performance management; affective aspects of attitudes towards performance management (feelings, explanation of feelings, reasons for the feelings and general

comments), whether performance management links with other processes in the organisation and finally suggestions for improving performance management.

4.4.1 Results of cognitive components of attitudes to performance management

The information in Table 4.6 shows that CNFO staff generally perceive performance management as relating to the individual and his or her performance as opposed to the organisation. The definition of performance management, as seen by participants, is reflected in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Summary of the first five rankings

		Job category					Total
		Administration	Technical officer	Ops manager M6	Specialist S6	Manager M5	
Measuring of one's performance against the agreed targets	Count	2	35	7	6	0	50
Process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance	Count	1	29	5	8	1	44
Determining, doing, evaluating and rewarding the right actions	Count	1	26	2	5	1	35
Career development	Count	1	30	0	3	0	34
Assessment of development needs	Count	3	20	2	6	1	32
Performance appraisal	Count	1	16	4	4	0	25
Performance-related pay	Count	1	15	2	4	0	22
Regular feedback to individual	Count	2	16	2	2	0	22
Tool in translating organisational strategy into business results, while directing daily activities in a meaningful way	Count	0	14	1	4	0	19
Objective or target setting meetings	Count	1	11	2	0	0	14

Marginally more respondents identified the strategic view of performance management. However, the majority view supports an individual level stance. This response is congruent with the respondents' understanding of performance management. The majority of technical officers and operations managers support "Measuring of one's performance against the agreed targets", while the majority of specialists and the manager (M5) support "Process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance". The latter definition is supported by the overall majority of the respondents as it was ranked number 1 by technical officers, operations managers, specialists and the manager (M5) as shown in Table 4.6 extracted from Appendix C.

As can be seen from Table 4.6 above, it seems that performance management in CNFO means different things to different people, as rightly stated by Stiffler (2006:18). The only danger is that it is the people in the same section who understand it differently, which is not supposed to be. This may be due to inconsistent application of the system. If that is the case, it is not good for the section as different results will be received which may not be the required results or results which add value to the company.

The study found that the majority of participants understood performance management in Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape to "measure performance against set targets", followed by "a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high organisational performance" and then "determining, doing, evaluating and rewarding the right actions". From the above, it is clear that "measuring of one's performance against the agreed targets" is ranked number one. The above statement was ranked as number one by the majority of the participants, who were mainly operations managers, followed by specialists (S6), technical officers and the one manager. The statement ranked number one by the participants is Aguinis's (2013:2) definition of performance management, so employees experience performance management as "a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organisation".

The majority of participants indicated that they were of the view that objective or target setting happened under performance management, followed by regular review meetings to assess progress and performance appraisal. These responses are in line with their understanding of performance management.

4.4.2 Findings of cognitive components of attitudes to performance management

Table 4.7 is a summary of the cognitive components of respondents' attitudes to performance management.

Table 4.7: What happens under performance management?

Cognitive component	Frequency	Rank
Objective or target setting	69	1
Regular review meetings to assess progress	56	2
Performance appraisal	55	3
Development opportunities discussed	46	4
360 degree feedback	32	5
Career development meetings	30	6
Performance related pay	18	7

These responses are in line with their views of performance management, addressed previously, but organisation is absent. A comparison of the responses in Table 4.7 and Appendix C suggests that most of the staff in CNFO feel some confusion about performance management. This may be because of inconsistency in the application of the CNFO performance management system, and that calls for immediate intervention by management to make sure that all employees are informed and have the same understanding.

The different understandings of performance management by staff are in line with the literature. Therefore, it is necessary that Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape align staff to one shared definition to ensure consistency in applying performance management. Given the understanding of performance management by the participants, they still need to make the shift, i.e. performance management is a

management function that is rather strategic in nature – supporting the view of Drucker (1977:225) that it takes time for a new order to take effect.

management by the participants they still need to make the shift i.e. performance management is a management function that is rather strategic in nature.”

Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape should ensure that staff realise that target objective setting should be aligned with the organisational goals to ensure that each staff member can see how his or her objectives contribute to organisational goal achievement and thus organisational performance.

Comparing the responses in Table 4.6 and Table 4.7 suggests that most of the staff in CNFO feel some confusion about performance management. This may be because of inconsistency in the application of the CNFO performance management, and that calls for immediate intervention by management to make sure that all employees are informed and have the same understanding.

Table 4.8 is for comparison of the responses to the questions “What actually happens under performance management?” and “What do you understand by the term performance management?” respectively.

Table 4.8: Comparison of responses to Questions 2 and 3

What do you understand by the term performance management?		What actually happens under performance management?	
	Rank	Rank	
Career development	1	1	Objective or target setting
Assessment of development needs	2	2	Regular review meetings to assess progress
Performance appraisal	3	3	Performance appraisal
Performance related pay	4	4	Development opportunities discussed
Objective or target setting meetings	5	5	360 degree feedback
Regular review meetings	6	6	Career development meetings
360 degree feedback	7	7	Performance related pay

It appears from Table 4.8 above that the understanding of performance management by the respondents and what actually happens under performance management do show a relationship.

4.4.3 Results of affective components of performance management

The minority of respondents described their feelings about performance management in Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape as positive, while the majority described them as negative. The majority of participants indicated that performance management was non-aligned.

In the next section of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to choose from a list of 14 words, one word that explained their feelings and what they thought of the performance management system in CNFO. Below is how they responded.

Table 4.9: Words used to describe performance management in CNFO

	Enjoyable	Satisfactory	Agreeable	Fine	Nonaligned	Terrible	Shocking	Unpleasant	Poor	Confusing	Stressful
Frequency	2	15	4	9	14	3	5	4	12	9	4
Percent	2.50	18.5	4.90	11.1	17.3	3.70	6.20	4.90	14.8	11.1	4.90
Results	Positive				Negative						

According to Table 4.9, the minority of participants described performance management in a positive way. The majority described it as negative. These descriptions can influence the attitude of staff.

Some examples of responses from respondents who found the system stressful were as follows:

- Even though one knows what his/her staff is capable of doing but one must prove that to management before giving any mark on assessment.

- Some people perform continuously at high level and exceed but no increase in salary and that there is no glide path in the job.

The positive feelings towards performance management were ascribed to the perception that performance management can help individuals understand how their behaviour affects organisational goal achievement. On the other hand, the negative feelings towards performance management in Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape were mainly ascribed to the view that performance management benefits the organisation more than the individual. The general question returned generally expressions of negative views on performance management.

These negative views resulted from the inconsistent application of performance management, no opportunity to provide inputs as to what and how staff should be doing their jobs and the perception that staff can give their best and even display organisational citizenship behaviour, but they cannot get an equitable rating, increase in salary or a promotion.

4.4.4 Findings of affective components of performance management

The dominant code associated with feelings that positively described performance management was trust, which is associated with the theme leadership (Table 1.1) and in particular empowerment. Recognition and reward (Table 1.1) were the predominant codes accompanying the feelings that negatively described performance management. These codes are associated with the theme compensation. Both leadership and compensation are drivers of employee engagement.

Participants were asked to explain in their own words why they felt the way they did. The respondents' responses in Table 4.10. below are clustered according to positive and negative comments.

Table 4.10: Positive and negative feelings

Comment	Attitude	Factor	Theme
It is applied.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation

Comment	Attitude	Factor	Theme
Given the political climate in the country and laws governing corporate companies, it is not ideal but probably the closest one can get at the moment.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation
I am satisfied with the system.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation
I trust that "management" knows what they are doing when it comes to PMS. I have no reason to doubt.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation
It evaluates one's performance in order to develop one's ability.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation
It is guide lines to see what direction we been lead.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation
One can meet the targets that has been set for him.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation
Regular performance appraisals are done to ensure that staff know if they are meeting the targets or not. Managers address areas where development is needed to improve performance.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation
Sections are unique, that makes management to vary on a sectional levels. That also makes some sections better than others depending on individuals' behaviour and teamwork.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation
The way the company operated is good.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation
This gave me an idea what my work duties are.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation
We are involved with planning, meeting or any changes that will include performance management. That makes operating staff feel happy, important and more involved in the structuring CNFO section.	POSITIVE	Engagement	Expectancy theory
Working in some instances.	POSITIVE	Trust	Motivation

Comment	Attitude	Factor	Theme
A CNFO tech's (switching/transmission) performance and an ANO tech's (single line) performance are measured on the same scale.	NEGATIVE	Application	Process theory / Equity
All additional work done is seen as part of the job.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Expectancy
Always hear of other sections performance but we perform even better at times when comparing.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Expectancy
Based on national targets.	NEGATIVE	Application	Process
Because of the complexity of work done in CNFO, it is almost impossible to measure individuals; it is better to measure a team. The current PDMS is suitable for people who work on quantified things e.g. ANO.	NEGATIVE	Application	Goal setting
Because you work as hard as you can and still get nil	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Expectancy
Because we are contracted to complete a 2meg fault within a certain time but most of the time you end up exceeding the expected time because of NNOC (testing, ordering faulty spare, putting in wrong comments on our tickets etc.) most of the time, so end up be stressed.	NEGATIVE	Application	Goal setting
Been on this post for close to a year, and only attended three courses yet. How is that?	NEGATIVE	Training and development	Expectancy theory
CNFO in different regions operate differently.	NEGATIVE	Inconsistency	Expectancy theory
Current contract not aligned to our work phase.	NEGATIVE	Application	Process
Don't get recognise for achievements, everybody gets same benefits even if you don't perform.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Expectancy

Comment	Attitude	Factor	Theme
High level targets for which the member is punished and do nothing about. No accurate measurement tool to ascertain performance. No performance reward to performers. Company has own agenda.	NEGATIVE	Goal setting, not SMART	Goal setting / Expectancy theory
I don't think there is enough development so as to help me as a technician improve in my work phase. There is only being focused on a certain group of people which does not include males.	NEGATIVE	Training and development	Expectancy theory
I think in CNFO there is no real measurement as to the job you are performing. Nothing in place to spell out when you have exceeded what is expected of you.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Expectancy
I would have chosen demotivating if that was available. In our section it is impossible to get anything over a "meet". If you do exceed there is always an excuse why it cannot be awarded. E.g. if I voluntary help out at other sections, whilst still doing my own work, I'm told it is not in your contract and therefore cannot be taken into consideration.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Equity
If I exceeded for half of the year in my work environment why cannot get a "2"- occasionally exceeds- for my PDM?	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Instrumentality
It is used differently by all managers. No matter how hard and effectively you work you still get marked the same as all other staff that do the bare minimum.	NEGATIVE	Inconsistency, Recognition and reward	Equity
No clear targets	NEGATIVE	Goal setting, not SMART	Goal setting, Process theory
No consistency	NEGATIVE	Application	Motivation
No financial gain for those that exceed and where do you go to.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Expectancy

Comment	Attitude	Factor	Theme
No measurement, no clear targets, what were negotiated with labour is far from the practice, create negativity.	NEGATIVE	Goal setting, not SMART	Instrumentality
No rewards for work done, courses far and few.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Expectancy, Equity
No scope for promotion or incentives (notches on pay).	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Process theory
Not fair.	NEGATIVE		Motivation
Not in alignment with outside companies for the scale and work descriptions completed under the banner "wall to wall" compared to work phase with few technologies.	NEGATIVE	Application	Reinforcement
Not much place to advance to next level.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Expectancy
Performance are not evaluated or rewarded.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Expectancy
Performance should not be measured equally across the different work-phases as the challenges differ from one work phase to another.	NEGATIVE	Application	Expectancy
Stressful because you know what your staff is capable of but you must prove management that.	NEGATIVE	Application	Process
Targets and actual work do not align.	NEGATIVE	Goal setting, not SMART	Reinforcement
Terrible how some sections are over looked when it comes to Spotlight award.	NEGATIVE	Application, Recognition and reward	Process, Equity
The company does not reward you for exceeding, doesn't matter how many times you exceed! You still earn the same as the tech that does minimum!	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Equity
The ops managers only do it because it's expected of them.	NEGATIVE	Morale	Process

Comment	Attitude	Factor	Theme
The performance management system is not properly aligned for all sections within the service organisation.	NEGATIVE	Application	Process
The process is not compatible with the maintenance environment.	NEGATIVE	Feedback	Process
The process used is not a functional performance tool.	NEGATIVE	Feedback	Process
The supervisor don't know what you are doing, but still have the final say.	NEGATIVE	Feedback	Process
The unfortunate thing is that it is not promotional based.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Process
The way in which we are marked is not accurate as we are the core business we are the source of communication unlike the other sections. We should be compensated because we do everything.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Instrumentality
There is no accurate way of measuring us in our work phase.	NEGATIVE	Feedback	Equity
There is no incentive besides personal pride to "go the extra mile." There is no reason to achieve more or do more than the next person. There is no reward for the good worker and no punishment for the bad worker. Whether you are excellent or pathetic, you are all the same, treated the same and paid the same. The bad worker is protected and the good worker is ignored.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Expectancy / Equity
They manage people instead of task, and there is no guidance or coaching given to subordinates for improvement/better performance of their task, etc.	NEGATIVE	Training and development	Expectancy
Those that exceed not rewarded correctly. Some sections rewarded better than others	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Equity

Comment	Attitude	Factor	Theme
Too many aspects are admin and not technical.	NEGATIVE	Goal setting, not SMART	Process, Goal setting
Too many changes in processes and not to get things done is a lengthy frustrating process coz some seem not to be aware of their responsibilities.	NEGATIVE	Application	Process
You can be a good worker and meet all your outputs and you can be an average worker and still meet all your requirements.	NEGATIVE	Application, Recognition and reward	Equity
You can get the highest marks on the performance management system, but you still get nothing extra on your salary.	NEGATIVE	Recognition and reward	Expectancy, Instrumentality
Your performance is always called into action if you miss a target. People are not fully equipped to execute their tasks and they don't encourage nor support career development as they are always trying to restrict employees so as to retain them. They are forever focusing on operational staff performance and rarely focus on Manager, Snr Manager and even executive performance, if they do its never cascaded to the operational staff.	NEGATIVE	Application	Reinforcement

The small number of participants who commented positively about their feelings towards the performance management system of CNFO showed trust and, to some extent, engagement in the system. The majority of the participants commented negatively because they perceived a lack of recognition and rewarding, not enough training and development, non-smart goal setting, low morale, lack of regular feedback and incorrect application of the system. Other participants seemed to be neutral in their responses because of their confused state about the performance management system.

Most of the comments in Table 4.10 support the results shown in Table 4.9 that the majority of the participants were not satisfied with the current performance

management system. Some reasons mentioned for dissatisfaction amongst others included the following:

- Working as hard as one can but get[ting] no reward.
- CNFO in different regions operating differently.
- It is used differently by all managers. No matter how hard and effectively you work you still get marked the same as all other staff that do the bare minimum.
- No financial gain for those that exceed and also no salary progression.
- There is no incentive besides personal pride to go the extra mile. There is no reason to achieve more or do more than the next person. There is no reward for the good worker and no punishment for the bad worker. Whether you are excellent or pathetic, you are all the same, treated the same and paid the same. The bad worker is protected and the good worker is ignored.
- You can be a good worker and meet all your outputs and you can be an average worker and still meet all your requirements.
- You can get the highest marks on the performance management system, but you still get nothing extra on your salary.

All the above statements are from white technical officers except the first one which is from a black specialist (S6).

The negative comment “It is used differently by all managers. No matter how hard and effectively you work you still get marked the same as all other staff that do the bare minimum” by one of the respondents is one proof that the performance management system is not consistently applied. This sounds more like unfair discrimination whose implication for performance management could be a demotivated and underperforming workforce.

It appears that technical officers, the majority of the people in the section and survey, were not satisfied with the CNFO performance management. The main aim of any business is to be productive and to compete successfully; therefore, Telkom needs a performance management system that encourages participation at all levels, not just at management and senior staff levels. The managers of CNFO should encourage employees to set their own targets and make them accountable to achieve them. If

people perform well, they should be rewarded accordingly, but the literature points out that rewards do not always have to be financial. There is no substitute for praise and personal recognition for a job well done (Bruniquel & Mahlambi 2006).

Telkom also needs to create a learning environment in which employees take responsibility for their own training and development, creating career paths for people to progress and develop. In order to create a happy workforce, the need for balance between work and one's personal life has to be recognised by providing life skills training which will prove invaluable to a business in the long run by helping employees to manage their finances, family and personal lives.

Armstrong (2009:59) states that the real goals of any performance management system are threefold: to correct poor performance, to sustain good performance and to improve performance. Remembering these goals and putting them into practice might prevent employees from complaining, "No matter how hard and effectively you work you still get marked the same as all other staff that do the bare minimum."

The survey revealed that the performance management in CNFO Eastern Cape is experienced as demotivating and does not provide equitable pay, although some of the aims and purposes of the performance management system are increasing the motivation and commitment of employees and introducing pay for group performance. It appears that a top-down approach is used. If so, the approach should be different and the staff should be allowed to engage and submit their inputs into the performance management as they have the potential according to their qualifications.

Half of the participants disagreed that performance management gave them the opportunity to provide inputs in what they should be doing. According to Armstrong (2009:56), there must be a kind of negotiation between the employee and his or her manager to find each other and come to an agreement to ensure a shared understanding. Armstrong and Baron (2005) further reveal that, at its best, performance management is a tool to ensure that managers ensure the people or teams they manage have the opportunity to discuss and contribute to individual and team aims and objectives.

One participant said there was “no natural progression in grades” evidenced by the number of years spent in the same position. One of four steps of the process of performance management, according to Armstrong (2009:1), is to provide feedback and a decision is made about training, transferring, promoting, demoting or terminating the contract of an individual.

The word “reward” was cited by a number of participants who called for a system which was capable of rewarding good performance. According to Badenhorst-Weiss *et al.* (2012:222), as cited in the literature review in Chapter 2, “the process of performance management essentially entails three elements one of which is, encouraging performance by providing sufficient rewards and recognition that employees really value in a timely and fair manner.” In support of this, Silverstein (2007:108) argues that most experts agree that a successful system of performance management involves four basic components, one of which is a method of recognizing and rewarding performance.

Performance management seeks to motivate people at all levels to be committed and willing to use their skills and knowledge to produce good results within their capabilities, but one of the participants said, “I would have chosen ‘demotivating’ if that was available.” According to the responses, clearly, the performance management of CNFO Eastern Cape is not experienced as motivating at all but rather fosters a negative attitude.

Much work still needs to be done in developing awareness among staff as most participants believed that the CNFO performance management system benefited the organisation more than the individual. Performance management can be regarded as a proactive system of managing employee performance for driving individuals and organisations towards desired performance and results. The aim of performance management is striking a harmonious alignment between individual and organisational objectives for accomplishment of excellence in performance and for individuals to achieve their full potential to the benefit of themselves and the organisation.

In the next three sections of the questionnaire, participants were asked to show their preference by agreeing or disagreeing with a number of statements regarding performance management.

The dominant codes associated with the general negative views of performance management were lack of recognition, insufficient rewards and unfairness. These codes are associated with the themes of compensation and organisational justice. These codes are mainly associated with the theme organisational justice, which resulted in demotivation of staff.

Table 4.11 reflects responses to the last section of the questionnaire where participants were invited to provide comments on any aspect not captured in the previous statements that they thought would assist the researcher in understanding their feelings about performance management at Telkom CNFO.

Table 4.11: General comments

Positive comments	Code	Theme	Theory
Performance management is good for the company and individual to perform better.	Retention	Talent management	Competitive advantage
I have personally nothing against PM is must be done but the system used for execution of tasks must be design so suit the need.	Fair system	Procedural justice	Organisational justice
Telkomsa management and HR should look very closely with competitors as they keeping on taking skilled technicians or staff from CNFO sections yearly; this may cause problems in future if they do not have clear plan to keep the existing skill.	Retention - career	Talent management	Engagement
I strongly believe that staff needs should be met halfway so that they give back willingly. Staff inputs must be listened to before decisions made by the management; staff should be involved.	Behavioural engagement	Engagement	Motivation

The few positive comments show a presence of talent management and staff engagement in the CNFO section of Telkom, Eastern Cape. However, the majority of general comments were negative with concerns expressed about engagement, involvement, application, goal setting, feedback, reward and recognition.

Negative comments	Code	Theme	Theory
It is a good document, but it needs good, honest and people with integrity; problem is that we have managers that they want us to listen to them without give us a chance to express what we fill about our work and about the company as a whole, that does not mean we want to change the company.	Engagement / Involvement, Application	Participation	Informational and Interpersonal justice
It is not being used to look at the individual's performance but as a whole section. If targets are not met then everyone has not performed; it is not fair if I have done my best and exceeded on targets and get marked the same [as] someone that is not performing. It does not matter how hard you work and how well you work you still get a met. I already know in advance what I will be marked; there is no chance of doing better than a met.	Engagement / Involvement, Application	Justice	Distributive and Procedural justice
It would be better if Telkom would understand that CNFO work differently to other sections, therefore PDMS in its current form is not doing any justice to CNFO staff especially the promoters.	Application	Justice	Distributive and Procedural justice
Management must not generalise sections with each other to determine the outcome for a year. Areas of responsibilities differ.	Application	Justice	Distributive and Procedural justice

Negative comments	Code	Theme	Theory
One system to fit all. We have a number of different business units having different tasks yet we are made to comply to national targets.	Application	Justice	Distributive and procedural justice
PDMS is a system that is not working; everybody is going through the motions just because it is forced onto them and because you will not get your gain sharing if you don't have a contract.	Engagement / Involvement, Application	Justice	Interpersonal justice
Performance management is a motivation tool, but more often than not it has the exact opposite effect. Most Ops Managers don't know how to use it and they simply give a standard contract to all staff (because it is less work for them) and you have zero input or say in it.	Participation	Justice	Interpersonal justice
Performance management is a very clumsy production management tool that has been badly adapted to try to measure a maintenance workforce.	Application	Justice	Procedural justice
Performance management is decided by management's budget.	Application	Justice	Procedural and Distributive justice
Performance management must be specific for each work function, especially within CNFO where the scope is vast, but covered under vague classes.	Goal setting, Application	Justice	Procedural justice
Performance management must enable the individual to achieve e.g. an Exceed if the section does exceed. Should not be so rigidly linked to the company's overall performance.	Engagement	Justice	Procedural justice

Negative comments	Code	Theme	Theory
Plan needs alignment. Reward equally between sections to those that achieve.	Application, recognition	Justice	Compensation and Distributive justice
Processes and tools used for this are ineffective.	Application	Justice	Procedural justice
Some managers don't give any recognition for top performers. Nothing to work for or going the extra mile.	Recognition, reward	Justice	Procedural and Distributive justice
Some people perform continuously at high level and exceed with no increase in salary. Specialists in Telkom waste Telkom's money, they don't perform according to their status! I perform better than our specialist, yet he gets the salary. There is no glide path in my job, this is stressful, what must I do more.	Recognition, Reward/ Engagement, Compensation, Fairness	Justice	Procedural and Distributive justice
Stop the monitoring of individuals so we can get on with our work.	Application	Justice	Informational justice
Targets not clear, Performance not monitored.	Goal setting, Feedback	Justice	Procedural justice
The objectives of PM are too broad with no measurements for the maintenance phase. Assessments are based on human perceptions.	Application, Feedback	Justice	Procedural justice
The output plans are too generic and need to be more in tune with your day-to-day work phase. The measurement tools are not good enough.	Application	Justice	Procedural justice
CNFO measurements must not be measured the same way as the other business units.	Application	Justice	Informational justice
Good basic process idea, difficult to apply evenly and fairly in Telkom.	Application	Justice	Procedural justice

A powerful comment was made by one of the respondents that “Telkomsa management and HR should look very closely with competitors as they keeping on taking skilled technicians or staff from CNFO sections yearly; this may cause problems in future if they do not have clear plan to keep the existing skill.” This participant was indirectly advising Telkom HR to revise its career development and succession planning processes, engagement and talent management. These are some of the aspects Telkom needs to take care of to gain a competitive advantage.

Generally, the participants were not happy with the application of the performance management system in CNFO, how feedback is provided, goal setting, engagement and involvement and the lack of recognition and rewards. All these factors affected their attitude negatively.

4.4.5 Results other process - HR and business

Table 4.12 provides a summary of the responses to Section 6 of the questionnaire where respondents were asked to consider the links between performance management and other HR processes in improving the performance of the individual.

Table 4.12: Links between performance management and other HR processes

		Strongly agree	Agree	Total	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Learning and development	Frequency	8	46	54	15	7	22
Career development	Frequency	7	34	41	27	8	35
Coaching / Mentoring	Frequency	7	44	51	19	6	25
Succession planning	Frequency	6	39	45	26	5	31
Talent management	Frequency	5	32	37	29	10	39
Job / work design	Frequency	7	36	43	25	7	32
Well-being	Frequency	7	39	46	23	7	30
Flexible working	Frequency	6	31	37	30	9	39
Equitable pay	Frequency	2	22	24	30	22	52

The table above depicts the performance management system of CNFO as a good one, but it lacks in talent management, flexible working and equitable pay which are important dimensions for the company workers. Although the majority of the

respondents were happy that performance management links with learning and development in improving their performance, with one of them commenting that “It evaluates one’s performance in order to develop one’s ability,” there were two respondents who commented as follows in disagreement with performance management linking with learning and development:

- Been on this post for close to a year, and only attended three courses yet. How is that?
- I don't think there is enough development so as to help me as a technician improve in my work phase. There is only being focused on a certain group of people which does not include males.

According to one respondent, “There is no incentive besides personal pride to go the extra mile.” The respondents seemed to believe that there was no reason to achieve more or do more than the next person. There was no reward for the good worker and no punishment for the bad worker. Whether they were excellent or “pathetic”, they were all the same, treated the same and paid the same. The bad worker was protected and the good worker was ignored. This is in contradiction to the 61% who agreed that performance management linked with HR in improving the performance of the workers by looking after their well-being.

Performance management links to other HR processes like learning and development, coaching and mentoring, and career development.

4.4.6 Findings – other processes

Table 4.13 provides a summary of the responses to Section 7 of the questionnaire where respondents were asked to consider the links between performance management other business aspects to assist individuals to improve their performance.

Table 4.13 Links between performance management and other business aspects

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Policies	Frequency	8	43	20	5
Procedures	Frequency	10	42	18	6
Systems	Frequency	7	45	20	4
Structures	Frequency	6	41	25	4
Technology	Frequency	9	49	14	4

Most of the respondents seemed to be happy and agreed with the linking of all the business aspects above with performance management to assist individuals to improve their performance. Contrary to that, 33% of the respondents were not happy with the implementation of certain policies like talent management (51% dissatisfied), flexible working / hours of work policy (51% dissatisfied) and equitable pay (68% dissatisfied). They saw themselves as being stuck in one position for a long time, if not forever, without any opportunity for movement to the next position which would translate to more money, learning and challenging assignments.

4.4.7 Results - suggestions for improvement

Table 4.14 gives the responses to the question “What changes would you like to see made in the performance management system of Telkom CNFO? Why?”

Table 4.14: Changes respondents would like to see

Comment by respondent	Factor	Theme
1. Individualised contracts, where I can give my input on what and how I think I should be working. 2. Contracts should not be drawn up in such a fashion that “exceed” becomes impossible. 3. Ops managers should be trained on how to contract employees.	Engagement / Involvement	Informational / Interpersonal justice
1. There should be steps within the salary grades of techs, so that a tech can be rewarded fairly, show value and receive a pensionable salary incentive. 2. No natural progression in grades, only progression by merit. 3. Merit to be decided by committee of supervisors on a standard grading system. 4. Incorporate a Patterson type system into 'performance management'.	Recognition / Reward	Distributive justice
A definite reward to achievers.	Recognition / Reward	Justice

Comment by respondent	Factor	Theme
A technical officer (switching/transmission) must be on a much higher salary scale than a single line tech.	Recognition / Reward	Justice
All managers at Telkomsa CNFO must be more the people who had knowledge or that have work at CNFO environment. That will make business to grow quick and is easy to approach grow or achieve the goals of any organisation is the management knows their work practical and theoretical.	Training and development	Procedural justice
An acceptable measuring tool for every business unit.	Application	Justice
Better rewards for those that are performing. Grouping is not very rewarding.	Recognition / Reward	Justice
Better systems be put in place to measure performance.	Application	Justice
Better talent development. Technicians are not being helped to perform to the best of their abilities.	Development and talent management	Procedural justice
Career development.	Career development and talent management	Justice
CNFO: Training of more youth in this field.	Career development and talent management	Justice
Consistency between colleagues and a consistent measuring tool.	Consistency	Justice
Contract must be based on actual functions. Proper measurements must be in place. Counter performance systems and process must be replaced.	Application	Procedural justice
Course attendance for new recruits should not drag as this hampers the dispatch ability of the individual.	Training and development	Justice
Development of true systems for training and remunerated according to performance	Training and development / Reward	Justice
Exceed financial gain should be looked at - now good results with no gain.	Recognition / Reward	Distributive justice
Fairness throughout all sections. Big differences, almost as if different companies.	Consistency	Justice
Financial reward for the exceptional employees. Stop protecting those who do not achieve.	Recognition / Reward	Procedural justice
Get a system that rewards you for doing excellent work. At the moment a person that is doing excellent work and a person that is only doing good work gets the same mark.	Recognition / Reward	Justice
Give a bit more credit for going the extra mile and in that way you will always give of your best.	Recognition / Reward	Justice
I don't feel that our current PMS for CNFO can truly measure performance in a maintenance environment.	Application	Distributive justice
I so wish that every section can see how important is to empower techs with knowledge. Decision made with staff not management alone. Transparent with staff no surprises will in turn makes good feedback to company.	Training and development, Engagement	Informational / Interpersonal justice

Comment by respondent	Factor	Theme
I would like to see it implemented, it is not currently implemented.	Application	Procedural justice
If some-one exceeds on yearly basis, contribute extra to his salary, don't make promises, make me feel worth to this company, make me feel special for what I do! Pay me for what I'm worth!	Recognition / Reward	Distributive justice
It must be re-planned and started afresh as to accommodate our barriers.	Application	Procedural justice
Let ops managers manage their sections.	Application	Justice
Let people involved to partake on discussion that are going to affect them, and stop underestimating workers.	Engagement / Involvement	Interactional and Interpersonal justice
Make it more work specific, with a better measurement tool.	Goal Setting	Procedural justice
Management needs to understand that as much we are all CNFO, we don't work under the circumstances or geographical spheres which can have a good or bad influence on your performance if situations are not isolated but instead we are all evaluated using the criteria. And secondly they need to stop limiting employees, give us the chance to use our minds to the best of their ability.	Application	Distributive justice
Management should discuss with field tech before they apply rules.	Engagement	Interpersonal justice
Money in the pocket if you perform.	Recognition / Reward	Justice
More money.	Recognition / Reward	Distributive justice
Must be allowed to move up levels. so that good work can be rewarded	Recognition / Reward / Career advancement	Justice
Need to improve on individual measurement tools.	Application	
No performance management system will work as there is still too much favouritism	Application	Procedural justice
Outputs / Targets must be reachable, clear and fair.	Goal Setting	Distributive justice
Own business targets	Application	
Pay employees what they are worth.	Recognition / Reward	Distributive justice
Performance linked to Salary or bonuses.	Recognition / Reward	Distributive justice
Performance management must be applied on a sectional performance and not on a company performance. All sections gets penalised if one section delivers poor results.	Application	Procedural justice
Performance management performed properly	Application	Procedural justice

Comment by respondent	Factor	Theme
Redesign PDMS to mark and reward teams and not individuals at CNFO.	Recognition / Reward	Procedural justice
Related more to what technologies are executed within each level and not merely covered under "wall and all", This does not always cover the cracks in the CNFO technical wall.	Application	Distributive justice
Requested performance enhancement courses to be considered at least.	Training and Development	Justice
Reward for a top performance	Recognition / Reward	Justice
Reward individuals who are willing to go the extra mile rather than having a pre-determined number of people which could be rewarded in the "exceed" bracket in their section/work-phase!	Recognition / Reward	Justice
Road shows every two months period to show us how we performed.	Regular Feedback	Informational justice
Scrap it, it is causing more negativity and stress and NO positive input. It brings the morale of the staff down and has a negative impact on relationships. Predetermined numbers of staff that can exceed target are set, who is bullshitting who?	Application	Procedural justice
Set clear, achievable and measurable targets.	Goal Setting	Procedural justice
Staff should be rewarded for good work and not for bad work	Recognition / Reward	Justice
Take away advantex as tool.	Application	Procedural justice
The input from promoters must account for at least 50% of the pdms process.	Application	Procedural justice
The way CNFO techs are measured needs to be change. There must be a better way to measure and a better interpretation as to what an exceed entails as there are no clarity about it. There is different interpretation across CNFO. This will definitely change the attitude of many, which will increase the productivity as well as the efficiency.	Application	Distributive / Procedural justice
They can scrap it. I would think it was put in place to motivate and reward staff; currently it's de-motivating staff. Personally I'm only working to get a "met".	Application	Distributive / Procedural justice
To enable individuals to acquire an extra mile. E.g. if I need to achieve and exceed in my performance I must get all the required material to do so.	Application	Distributive justice
We perform well but Telkom do not pay the salary according to our performance (it is governed by unobtainable percentage targets)	Recognition / Reward	Procedural justice
I am happy the way it is.	Satisfaction	Interpersonal justice

All the negative comments above indicate aspects of performance management that the respondents were not happy with and would like the company to change. They would like to see a change in how the following are dealt with:

- Application
- Goal setting
- Feedback
- Engagement / Involvement
- Recognition / Reward
- Development and talent management
- Career development
- Consistency

4.4.8 Findings - suggestions for improvement

Table 4.15 is a summary of respondents' preferences regarding statements about performance management. It appears that there is alignment between the responses in Table 4.15 and previous responses, e.g., Table 4.13. Most participants viewed performance management as favouring the organisation more than the performer.

Table 4.15: Preferences regarding performance management statements

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Performance management benefits the organisation more than the individual	Frequency	28	40	6	2
		68		8	
Performance management has a positive impact on individual performance	Frequency	7	29	25	15
		36		40	
Performance management has a positive impact on organisational performance	Frequency	11	40	17	8
		51		25	
Performance management enables individuals to better understand what they should be doing	Frequency	8	43	20	5
		51		25	
Performance management enables individuals to better understand how they should be doing their work	Frequency	7	38	26	5
		45		31	
You can see how your job	Frequency	7	38	24	7

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
contributes to the strategy execution or goal achievement of Telkom CNFO		45		31	
Performance management gives me the opportunity to provide inputs in what I should be doing	Frequency	4	32	29	11
		36		40	
Performance management gives me the opportunity to provide inputs as to how to do my work	Frequency	4	32	30	9
		36		39	
Performance management helps line managers to manage staff, including me, better	Frequency	8	42	20	6
		50		26	
Performance management can help individuals, including me, develop their skills to improve their performance	Frequency	9	42	17	8
		51		25	
Performance management can help individuals, including me, develop their career options in line with the organisation's needs	Frequency	9	39	17	10
		48		27	
Performance management can have an impact (positive and or negative) on employee well-being	Frequency	17	48	8	3
		65		11	
Performance management can help people, including me, understand the organisation's strategic priorities	Frequency	7	42	17	9
		49		26	
Performance management can help individuals, including me, understand how their behaviour and actions affect the achievement of the organisation's strategic priorities	Frequency	9	49	11	6
		58		17	
Performance management provides opportunity to the individual, including me, to influence the organisation's strategic priorities	Frequency	6	40	17	12
		46		29	

The performance management system is not a bad one, but it is most probably not implemented correctly. Most participants believed that performance management benefited the organisation more than the individual and that it had a more positive influence on the organisation than the individual. In support of that, the majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that “performance management has a positive impact on individual performance”; this was a negative response. It also

appeared that performance management did not provide an opportunity for individuals to provide inputs into what they should be doing, as indicated by the majority of responses to that statement. They believed the performance management system did not give an opportunity to the individual to provide inputs on how to do their work, as evidenced by 52% of the respondents, even though the staff is adequately skilled. Almost two thirds of the participants believed that performance management had a positive and negative effect on their well-being. There was a positive response from the majority of the participants who said that the performance management system could help individuals develop their skills to improve their performance. It was surprising that the majority (almost two thirds) of the respondents responded positively that “performance management can help individuals develop their career options in line with the organisation’s needs,” and yet they remain for a lifetime in a position. One of the benefits of performance management identified in the literature is that it produces meaningful measurements (Armstrong 2009:2).

4.5 Conclusions

This chapter contained a presentation and discussion of the results of the survey. In summary, the researcher was correct in sensing dissatisfaction with performance management for these reasons:

- A minority of participants were happy with the system against a majority who were unhappy.
- The performance management system was perceived as not helping them to progress to next levels as the majority of staff had been in the same position for over 16 years.
- HR processes linked to performance management that a greater number of participants were not happy with were talent management followed by flexible working times and equitable pay which are contentious issues in contemporary times.
- The word “pay” was quoted and used in different ways by many participants. The performance management system enables the organisation to know how the employees perform, discovering those who add most and those who add least value to the organisation. It allows the organisation to

undertake a thorough assessment of the training and development needs of its employees and set development plans and gives the opportunity of using the results of the performance management process to shape an individual's remuneration.

The responses to the questionnaire were accepted as reliable as all the respondents were employees in the CNFO section of Telkom Eastern Cape who had a valid performance management contract for the year 2012/2013.

It would seem that the respondents were generally honest in their responses as they answered the questionnaire at their own convenience without interviewer bias and acknowledged where correct processes and procedures were followed in implementing the performance management system.

The key issues in performance management which affect the attitude of staff negatively or positively depending on how they are applied are as follows:

1. **Communication** between management and staff and a sense of **joint ownership** of the system is imperative. The respondents seemed to think that management had the monopoly in decision making which could make the staff feel powerless.
2. **Consistent use and application of performance management** to the satisfaction of management and staff. The respondents suggested that the system was adequate but that its practical application was not.
3. **Goal achievement**, not only for the organisation but also for the individual staff members, is imperative.
4. **Motivation**: if employees are unhappy and disappointed with performance management, their productivity will decrease and it may lead to staff turnover.
5. **Recognition**: from most respondents' responses, it seems that they worked hard, and yet their efforts were not considered good enough by management as they did not receive any recognition.

It is hoped that recommendations will be accepted and implemented by the company as most of the HR processes link well with performance management and with all business aspects.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter includes the researcher's conclusions based on the research study, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Findings

5.2.1 What do you understand by the term "performance management"?

It would appear that respondents had different and various understandings of performance management. It is, therefore, recommended that there should be continuous training on performance development and the performance management system.

Most respondents according to Table 4.7 understood performance management to be measuring of one's performance against the agreed targets. It is mostly the technical officers who have this understanding followed by ops managers, specialists and administrative assistants. Very close were the respondents who understood performance management to be a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance. This definition is supported by just less than half the number of technical offices who participated.

5.2.2 What actually happens under "performance management"?

It appeared that the respondents were not sure of what happens under performance management, as evidenced by their different responses in Table 4.8. Some thought objective or target setting takes place; others thought it is about regular review meetings to assess progress, performance appraisal, development opportunities discussion, 360 degree feedback, career development meetings or performance-related pay respectively.

5.2.3 How do you feel about the performance management system in CNFO?

The words the respondents used to describe their feelings about the performance management system in CNFO as shown in Table 4.9 do not show a good perception

of the system by employees. Only a minority used positive terms such as *enjoyable*, *satisfactory* and *agreeable*, while the majority said the system was *nonaligned*, *terrible*, *shocking*, *unpleasant*, *poor*, *confusing* or *stressful*. Retraining, clearly stating the aim and purpose of performance management would possibly change the negative perception. These responses of staff should be taken into consideration especially as employees are professionally trained.

5.2.4 Please explain in your own words why you feel this way

The data from the responses of the participants (Table 4.10) showed the following issues were prominent in causing the staff to have negative attitudes towards performance management: Promotion, performance appraisal, different and inconsistent use of the system by all managers, non-financial gain and no incentive to “go the extra mile”, no reward for the good worker and no punishment for the bad worker, and a perception that the bad worker was protected and the good worker was ignored.

According to Muchinsky (2006:214), performance management is the process that incorporates appraisal and feedback to make performance-based administrative decisions and help employees improve to ensure that goals are achieved. Further, Muchinsky (2006) states that it should be noted that there is no uniform understanding of what constitutes “performance” and that it should be distinguished from effectiveness and that the two concepts should not be confounded although there is a relationship between them.

Performance (which one leaves behind) is synonymous with behaviour (which one takes with one when one leaves the organisation); it is what people actually do, and it can be observed, whilst effectiveness refers to the evaluation of the results of performance, and it is beyond the influence or control of the individual. Measures of effectiveness, though of major importance to the organisation, are contaminated by factors over which the employee has little influence.

The significance of the distinction according to Muchinsky (2006:214) is that appraisal of employee performance should be directed at job-related behaviours that are under the control of the employee.

Murphy and Cleveland (1995) in Muchinsky (2006:214) believe that performance appraisals can help organisations in several ways:

- They enhance the quality of organisational decisions ranging from pay raises to promotions to discharges.
- They enhance the quality of individual decisions, ranging from career choices to the development of future strengths which is a key to maintaining high levels of work motivation.
- They affect employees' views of and attachment to their organisation, and an organisation's successful performance appraisal system may help to build employee commitment and satisfaction. Employees who believe that an organisation's decisions are irrational or unfair are unlikely to develop a strong commitment to that organisation.
- They help provide a rational, legally defensive basis for personnel decisions. (Muchinsky 2006:214).

5.2.5 Reasons for participants' feelings about performance management

Referring to Table 4.15 in chapter 4, most participants viewed performance management as favouring the organisation more than the performer. The performance management system was not a poor one, but it was probably not implemented correctly. Most participants believed that performance management benefited the organisation more than the individual and that its positive influence was greater for the organisation than for the individual. It also appeared that the performance management system did not provide an opportunity for individuals to provide inputs into what they should be doing. The performance management system did not give an opportunity to the individual to provide inputs as to how to do his or her work. However, according to 63.20% of the participants, the performance management system affected their well-being both positively and negatively. It is recommended that retraining is needed to change these perceptions.

Another common perception was that there was "no financial gain for those that exceed their expectation". This perception supports the 68% who disagreed that performance management links with HR in improving the performance of the

individual by equitable pay. It is advised that rewards should be used to recognise performance because rewards will act as extrinsic motivation for the performer.

Respondents also mentioned that the performance management system was not properly aligned for all sections within the service organisation. A respondent said it was “terrible how some sections are overlooked when it comes to Spot light award”. Consistent application of the system is recommended. Contrary to this, 59% of the respondents agreed that performance management could help people understand the organisation’s strategic priorities, 77% agreed that performance management could help individuals understand how their behaviour and actions affected the achievement of the organisation’s strategic priorities and 61% agreed that performance management provided an opportunity to the individual to influence the organisation’s strategic priorities. This seems to show alignment with the strategies of Telkom CNFO.

5.2.6 Links between performance management and other HR processes

As tabulated in Table 4.12 in chapter 4, participants believed that performance management did not link well with talent management, flexible working and equitable pay. The HR section should investigate the implementation of these processes. They should assess potential and identify, develop and retain talent for the long-term viability of the organisation.

5.2.7 Links between performance management and other business aspects

Table 4.13 in chapter 4 shows that participants believed that performance management links perfectly with other business aspects such as policies, procedures, systems, structures and technology.

5.2.8 General comments

The participants offered many comments (recorded in Table 4.11), but lack of recognition, targets not being clear and performance not being monitored were common concerns, and management needs to do something to change these perceptions.

5.2.9 What changes would you like to see made in the performance management system of Telkom CNFO? Why?

Amongst many comments by the participants, listed in Table 4.14, mention was made of individual contracts, equal gain sharing for all levels, an acceptable measuring tool, implementation of better systems, rewards for excellent work, credit for going the extra mile, staff involvement in decision making and many other issues.

5.3 Conclusions of the study

A minority of the participants showed positive attitudes with trust, satisfaction and engagement or involvement being factors responsible for those positive attitudes.

The following factors were responsible for the negative attitudes which seemed to predominate:

- Incorrect and inconsistent application of the performance management system
- Poor goal setting
- Irregular feedback
- Lack of staff engagement / involvement
- Lack of and inconsistent application of recognition and rewarding
- Lack of development and talent management
- Lack of career development

In summary, the main factors responsible for the negative attitudes were first, **the shortcomings of the command and control system**. According to participants, management did not heed the inputs of staff who are knowledge workers because they are all qualified, that is, they hold a diploma or degree. Second, participants perceived an **absence of talent management**. The most important aspect of talent management is the development and deployment of staff. Participants felt they were stuck forever in a position and could not advance. This causes frustration and affects motivation negatively and thus decreases productivity. This is why absenteeism and poor job performance are prevalent in some sections in CNFO.

Only a minority of employees indicated a positive attitude towards performance management. They believed that under performance management, objective or target setting, regular review meetings to assess progress and performance

appraisal were paramount. They did not believe that performance management had a positive effect on individual performance but that it had a positive effect on organisational performance in line with the findings of the CIPD (2012) survey. This is an anomaly which needs to be attended to for this perception to be reversed. They believed that performance management benefited the organisation more than the individual which leads to a feeling of not being appreciated.

- A minority believed that one can see how one's job contributes to the strategy execution or goal achievement of Telkom CNFO:
 - Performance management helps line managers to manage staff better.
 - Performance management can help individuals develop their skills to improve their performance.
 - Performance management can help individuals develop their career options in line with the organisation's needs. They believe this even though one stays for years in the same position.
 - Performance management can help people understand the organisation's strategic priorities.
 - Performance management can help individuals understand how their behaviour and actions affect the achievement of the organisation's strategic priorities.
- They believed that performance management links with other HR processes like learning and development, career development, coaching / mentoring, succession planning, job / work design, and well-being, but not equally so with talent management, flexible working and equitable pay.
- From most of the responses, it appears that the respondents lacked motivation (both intrinsic and extrinsic); they felt that their performance was not recognized. This may influence their behaviour and, consequently, less than high performance may be achieved.
- They believed that performance management links perfectly with other business aspects such as policies, procedures, systems, structures and technology, even though they perceived performance management negatively, as shown in Table 4.9.

In interacting with technicians from different sections in Telkom on a daily basis, the researcher noticed that although they were seen moving around and about doing

their work, they did not seem to be totally committed and dedicated to their work, thus sacrificing Telkom's goal of achieving high performance. They seemed to be doing the minimum required as if they thought that was what they were paid for.

In informal conversations with some of these technicians, it transpired that they were not entirely happy with many issues around performance management and because of this, the researcher considered it important to explore the factors influencing staff attitudes towards the performance management in Telkom, specifically the CNFO section.

The purpose of the study was to understand what factors influenced employees' attitudes towards performance management with a view to enhancing performance in Telkom CNFO Eastern Cape; the research question and the primary and secondary objectives fit together.

5.4. Recommendations

The success of an organisation is mainly determined by the effectiveness and efficiency of its management. The definition of performance management in Telkom is determining, doing, evaluating and rewarding the right actions.

Telkom should consider adopting the definition of performance management found in Armstrong (2009) and Armstrong and Baron (2005) instead of the current one. Armstrong and Armstrong and Baron's definition of performance management is as follows:

A systematic process for improving organizational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams. It is a means of getting better results by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and competency requirements. Processes exist for establishing shared understanding about what is to be achieved, and for managing and developing people in a way that increases the probability that it will be achieved in the short and longer term. (Armstrong 2009:9; Armstrong & Baron 2005:2).

This may help focus the total organisation on the organisational goals. In this way, managers and employees will be able to align their objectives with organisational goals.

Referring to Figure 4.2 in chapter 4, it would be advisable that succession planning be put into place so that before these people reach retirement, there are successors to keep the company going.

Table 4.2 portrays age group per position and shows that the majority of technical officers were predominantly in the 46-55 year age group, the 26-45 year age group, a few over 55 years and very few in the 18-25 year age group. This poses a threat to the company as there are too few technicians in the younger age groups, and without young technicians, the future of the company is insecure. The company might soon be without technical officers due to natural attrition and old technicians taking retirement.

It is recommended that the performance management system in place be reviewed to determine whether it is yielding positive results and meeting the intended objectives of the company.

There should be continuous training and workshops on the performance management system within the section to remind all employees what performance management is and what is expected of them.

The performance management system in Telkom is the process whereby the performance and development of each individual is managed, that is, the planning, assessing and rewarding of performance and recognition of development, supported by continuous coaching and development to help Telkom, through its performers, to achieve its strategic objectives. Therefore, the following are recommendations for management. Management should

- Be flexible, transparent and responsive by clearly articulating job expectations to all employees across all job categories.
- Make alignment by communicating expectations for the employees to understand the complete performance management process.

- Be consistent, fair and reasonable by applying job expectations and work rules equally across all job categories.
- Engage employees in all decisions concerning performance management. This, according to Nelson and Quick (2008:342), will make people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally as they perform their jobs and their work roles.
- Enhance the annual performance review.
- Provide feedback to employees instantaneously for the employee to understand where he or she has not performed well.

The following process is further recommended:

From the job description, planning is done and continuous observation done for continuous personal development and continuous performance improvement. After every three months, feedback, review and coaching should be done to enhance personal development and performance improvement. After a year, assessment should be done to reward performance and further personal development and encourage performance improvement.

Suggestions for improvement include providing an opportunity to provide inputs and paying attention to differentiated pay as well as to recognise achievers and to differentiate appropriately between the different sections and their contribution to performance and to apply performance management consistently.

Under performance management, object and target setting should be maintained. However, the emphasis should be on the link between these objectives and targets and the organisational goals. Telkom needs to address the issue of consistency in applying performance management to ensure a sense of justice. This may also result in an experience of benefit to the individual.

Line management should improve their interrelations with their subordinates. A small number of respondents commented positively about performance management and thus expressed trust which is a consequence of manager-subordinate interrelations. This may reduce if not eradicate their sense of injustice. No recognition or reward leads to the experience of injustice, and intervention is essential. The employees' suggestions should always be considered.

If Telkom wants to progress, it will be necessary to adopt the strategy definition. This is the only way that each individual will be able to understand how his or her objectives match the organisation's goals. This raises the question of how well employees are informed about organisational goals. It also questions the individuals' understanding of their role in organisational goal achievement.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

From the findings of this study, it would appear that there is a need to discover

- Whether or not the performance of the employees is properly managed
- The cause of the high staff turnover rate within CNFO
- Whether or not the performance management is yielding the results and meeting the intended objectives of the company.

These questions could be investigated in further studies that extend to Telkom as whole or in a follow-up study after recommendations have been implemented to check for change.

5.6 Conclusion

The aim of the study was to investigate the factors affecting the attitude of employees towards the performance management system of Telkom's CNFO. Sufficient evidence from the research results indicates that this study has succeeded in exploring those factors.

Telkom should clearly outline the purpose and objectives of performance management to be clearly understood by employees at all levels. It is important for all employees to be made aware that for performance management to succeed, it requires them to be totally responsible and understand the effect of every employee's actions on the success of the company.

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APPENDIX A

The questionnaire

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey / interview about CNFO performance management. Completing this survey will not take more than 30 minutes of your time.

Instructions

Please read the questions and statements carefully before choosing and marking with an (X) the most appropriate box

1 General

1.1 Gender

Male Female

1.2 Marital status

Single Married Divorced

1.3 Race

Asian Black Coloured White

1.4 Highest qualification

Grade 12 Certificate Diploma Degree

1.5 Age group

18 - 25 26 - 35 36 - 45 46 - 55 56 +

1.6 Years in the current position

0 – 3 4 – 6 7 – 10 11 – 15 16 +

1.7 Length of service in Telkom (in years)

0 - 5 6 - 10 11 - 15 16 – 20 21 +

1.8 Job category

Administration	Technical officer	Ops manager M6	Specialist S6	Manager M5
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2. What do you understand by the term “performance management”?

Please choose the most important five statements and rank your five choices in order of importance from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important):

- 2.1 Assessment of development needs
- 2.2 Regular review meetings
- 2.3 Objective or target setting meetings
- 2.4 Regular feedback to individual
- 2.5 Performance appraisal

- 2.6 360 degree feedback
- 2.7 Performance related pay
- 2.8 Talent spotting
- 2.9 Career development
- 2.10 Coaching / mentoring
- 2.11 Succession planning
- 2.12 Competency frameworks
- 2.13 Talent management
- 2.14 Behaviour management strategies
- 2.15 Job / work design
- 2.16 Well-being
- 2.17 Flexible working
- 2.18 Occupational health
- 2.19 Measuring of one's performance against the agreed targets
- 2.20 Determining, doing, evaluating and rewarding the right actions
- 2.21 Tool in translating organisational strategy into business results, while directing daily activities in a meaningful way
- 2.22 Process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance

3. What actually happens under "performance management"? (Choose all you know to be happening under "Performance management")

- 3.1 Performance appraisal
- 3.2 Objective or target setting
- 3.3 Regular review meetings to assess progress
- 3.4 Development opportunities discussed
- 3.5 Performance related pay
- 3.6 Career development meetings
- 3.7 360 degree feedback

4. How do you feel about performance management system in CNFO?

Choose one word from the list below which explains your feeling about and what you think of the CNFO performance management system.

- 4.1 Enjoyable
- 4.2 Pleasant
- 4.3 Nice
- 4.4 Satisfactory
- 4.5 Agreeable
- 4.6 Lovely
- 4.7 Fine
- 4.8 Nonaligned
- 4.9 Terrible
- 4.10 Shocking

4.11 Unpleasant

4.12 Poor

4.13 Confusing

4.14 Stressful

4.15 Please explain in your own words why you feel this way

5. Your feelings about performance management result because:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

5.1 Performance management benefits the organisation more than the individual

5.2 Performance management has a positive impact on individual performance

5.3 Performance management has a positive impact on organisational performance

5.4 Performance management enables individuals to better understand what they should be doing

- 5.5 Performance management enables individuals to better understand how they should be doing their work
- 5.6 You can see how your job contributes to the strategy execution or goal achievement of Telkom CNFO
- 5.7 Performance management gives me the opportunity to provide inputs in what I should be doing
- 5.8 Performance management gives me the opportunity to provide inputs as how to do my work
- 5.9 Performance management helps line managers to manage staff, including me, better
- 5.10 Performance management can help individuals, including me, develop their skills to improve their performance
- 5.11 Performance management can help individuals, including me, develop their career options in line with the organisation's needs
- 5.12 Performance management can have an impact (positive and or negative) on employee well-being
- 5.13 Performance management can help people, including me, understand

the organisation's strategic priorities

5.14 Performance management can help individuals, including me, understand how their behaviour and actions affect the achievement of the organisation's strategic priorities

5.15 Performance management provides opportunity to the individual, including me, to influence the organisation's strategic priorities

6. Performance management links with other HR processes, improving the performance of the individual, especially:

Strongly Agree Disagree Strongly
agree disagree

6.1 Learning and development

6.2 Career development

6.3 Coaching / Mentoring

6.4 Succession planning

6.5 Talent management

6.6 Job / work design

6.7 Well-being

6.8 Flexible working

6.9 Equitable pay

7. Performance management links with other business aspects, to assist individuals to improve their performance, specifically:

Strongly Agree Disagree Strongly
agree disagree

7.1 Policies

7.2 Procedures

7.3 Systems

7.4 Structures

7.5 Technology

8. General comments

Are there any comments you would like to provide which are not captured in the statements above to assist me in understanding your feelings about performance management in Telkom CNFO? My additional comments are:

9. What changes would you like to see made in the Performance Management System of Telkom CNFO? Why?

APPENDIX B

Invitation to participate

Dear Participant,

You have been invited to participate in a survey.

One of the aims of Telkom's performance management is to inspire all employees to meet and exceed the expectations of customers and ensuring growth and competitiveness as a company.

You are invited to participate in a study aimed at exploring factors which have an influence on the attitude of staff, in CNFO Southern region, regarding the performance management system. The study is being conducted by Wonga Mabona for purposes of the MTech degree in Business Administration at the University of South Africa.

The company has agreed that I conduct this study as part of my mini dissertation.

It is important to note that your participation is voluntary and that your response will be treated as **strictly confidential and anonymous** as your name will not be mentioned anywhere in the study. By participating in the study, you can help us to know whether or not the performance management system in Telkom meets its aim of inspiring employees to meet and exceed customer expectations.

Your kind cooperation will be highly appreciated. A copy of the report will be available on request.

I would value your input to the questions in the attached questionnaire. I understand that your day is already full, but your input is valuable in making me understand the factors which impact on your attitude towards performance management.

To participate, please click on the link below.

The questionnaire will not take more than 25 minutes to complete.

Please, can you complete the survey before close of business on Friday **17 August 2012**.

Sincerely,

Mr W Mabona (MabonaWD@telkom.co.za)

Click here to do the survey:

<http://surveys.unisa.ac.za/index.php?lang=en&sid=71841&token=zedamke9anbckmq>

APPENDIX C

Summary: Understanding of performance management

Rankings: What do you understand by the term "performance management"?

Statement	Ranking	Job category					Total
		Administra tion	Technical officer	Ops manager M6	Special- ist S6	Manager M5	
Measuring of one's performance against the agreed targets	1	0	10	2	2	0	14
	2	1	11	3	2	0	17
	3	0	8	0	1	0	9
	4	1	4	1	1	0	7
	5	0	2	1	0	0	3
Total		2	35	7	6	0	50
Process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance	1	0	10	3	2	1	16
	2	0	7	1	1	0	9
	3	1	5	1	3	0	10
	4	0	2	0	2	0	4
	5	0	5	0	0	0	5
Total		1	29	5	8	1	44
Determining, doing, evaluating and rewarding the right actions	1	0	4	0	0	0	4
	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
	3	0	6	1	1	1	9
	4	0	6	0	2	0	8
	5	1	8	1	2	0	12
Total		1	26	2	5	1	35
Career development	1	0	10	0	1	0	11
	2	0	9	0	1	0	10
	3	0	2	0	1	0	3
	4	1	5	0	0	0	6
	5	0	4	0	0	0	4
Total		1	30	0	3	0	34
Assessment of development needs	1	2	7	0	1	0	10
	2	0	3	0	3	1	7
	3	1	4	1	0	0	6
	4	0	4	1	2	0	7
	5	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total		3	20	2	6	1	32

Statement	Ranking	Adminis- tration	Technical officer	Ops manager M6	Special- ist S6	Manager M5	Total
Performance appraisal	1	0	2	1	1	0	4
	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
	3	1	6	2	0	0	9
	4	0	1	1	0	0	2
	5	0	5	0	3	0	8
Total		1	16	4	4	0	25
Performance related pay	1	1	3	0	1	0	5
	2	0	5	1	0	0	6
	3	0	2	0	0	0	2
	4	0	2	0	2	0	4
	5	0	3	1	1	0	5
Total		1	15	2	4	0	22
Regular feedback to individual	1	0	4	0	0	0	4
	2	0	2	0	1	0	3
	4	1	4	2	1	0	8
	5	1	6	0	0	0	7
Total		2	16	2	2	0	22
Tool in translating organisational strategy into business results, while directing daily activities in a meaningful way	1	0	1	0	2	0	3
	2	0	1	1	0	0	2
	4	0	7	0	0	0	7
	5	0	5	0	2	0	7
Total		0	14	1	4	0	19
Coaching / mentoring	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
	2	0	3	0	0	0	3
	3	0	2	1	2	0	5
	4	0	5	1	0	1	7
	5	0	1	3	0	0	4
Total		0	12	5	2	1	20
Objective or target setting meetings	1	0	3	0	0	0	3
	2	1	4	0	0	0	5
	4	0	2	1	0	0	3
	5	0	2	1	0	0	3
Total		1	11	2	0	0	14
Occupational health	2	0	1	0	0	0	1
	3	0	5	0	0	0	5
	4	0	2	0	0	0	2
	5	0	4	0	1	1	6
Total		0	12	0	1	1	14

Statement	Ranking	Adminis- tration	Technical officer	Ops manager M6	Special- ist S6	Manager M5	Total
Job / work design	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
	2	0	3	0	2	0	5
	3	0	2	0	1	0	3
	4	0	0	0	1	0	1
	5	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total		0	8	0	4	0	12
Regular review meetings	1	0	3	1	0	0	4
	4	0	6	0	0	0	6
	5	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total		0	10	1	0	0	11
Well-being	1	0	2	0	0	0	2
	3	0	2	0	0	0	2
	4	0	1	0	0	0	1
	5	0	4	0	1	0	5
Total		0	9	0	1	0	10
Talent spotting	1	0	1	0	1	0	2
	2	1	1	0	0	0	2
	3	0	2	0	1	0	3
	4	0	1	0	0	0	1
	5	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total		1	6	0	2	0	9
Competency frameworks	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
	3	0	3	0	0	0	3
	4	0	1	0	0	0	1
	5	0	1	0	1	0	2
Total		0	7	0	1	0	8
Behaviour management strategies	2	0	1	0	0	0	1
	3	0	1	0	1	0	2
	4	0	3	0	0	0	3
	5	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total		0	7	0	1	0	8
Flexible working	2	0	1	0	0	0	1
	3	0	1	0	0	0	1
	4	0	2	0	0	0	2
	5	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total		0	7	0	0	0	7
360 degree feedback	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2	0	4	0	0	0	4
	5	1	1	0	0	0	2
Total		1	5	0	0	0	6

Statement	Ranking	Adminis- tration	Technical officer	Ops manager M6	Special- ist S6	Manager M5	Total
Succession planning	2	0	0	1	0	0	1
	4	0	3	0	0	0	3
	5	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total		0	4	1	0	0	5
Talent management	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
	3	0	2	0	0	0	2
	4	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total		0	3	0	1	0	4

APPENDIX D

Permission for research project

Group Human Resources

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To: **Dr Hester Nienaber**

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (UNISA)

Re: WONGA D M MABONA

STUDENT NUMBER 5671361

Approval is hereby given that **WONGA D M MABONA** may conduct research in Telkom on “**EXPLORING FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ATTITUDE OF STAFF TOWARDS THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**”. However the research information is subject to clearance by Telkom’s External Reporting and HR divisions.

Yours sincerely

Mrs M van Niekerk

HR Manager

Group Human Resources

Telkom SA Ltd