

**EXPLORING THE PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS  
OF A GOVERNMENTAL PERFORMANCE  
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

by

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## SUMMARY

### EXPLORING THE PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF A GOVERNMENTAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

by

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Degree: Master of Commerce (Industrial and Organisational Psychology)

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This study explored the perceived effectiveness of a governmental performance management system, through the lived experiences of employees and line managers within the different phases of the performance management system. In this qualitative interpretive study, the literature on performance management and its related constructs was reviewed. Purposive sampling was used to select the 11 employees representing the organisation. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic regulations, semi-structured interviews were conducted online for data collection using Microsoft Teams, and the recordings were saved. Grounded theory was used to create themes and sub-themes, which were used to draw research findings and conclusions and to make recommendations. The study revealed that the planning and monitoring phases of the performance management system were poorly implemented, and that monitoring was neglected. The performance evaluation and reward phases were found to be full of bias, with their purpose misunderstood. The recommendations were presented to the organisation, management, industrial and organisational psychologists as well as employees about what they need to do to enhance the effectiveness of the performance management system.

**KEYWORDS:** performance; performance management; performance management system; effectiveness

## UKUFINGQA

UKUHLOLA UKUSEBENZA NGEMPUMELELO OKUBONWAYO KOHLELO  
LUKAHULUMENI LOKUPHATHA UKUSEBENZA

ngu

P Mashiane

Iziqu: Ezemfundo kwezohwebo (Isifundo sezengqondo kwezezimboni nezinhlango)

Umphathi: uDkt. A van Niekerk

Lolu cwaningo luhlola ukusebenza ngempumelelo okubonwayo kohlelo lukahulumeni lokuphatha ukusebenza, ngokusebenzisa ulwazi oluphilwe nalo lwabasebenzi kanye nabaphathi abasebenzayo ezigabeni ezahlukene zohlelo lokuphatha ukusebenza. Kulolu cwaningo olugxile ekudaluleni ngokuhlaziya leyo mikhuba yokwenza incazelo, imibhalo ephathelene nokuphathwa kokusebenza kanye nokwakhiwa kwakho okuhlobene kwabuyekezwa. Kusetshenziswe amasampula ahlosiwe ukukhetha abasebenzi abayi-11 abamele inhlango. Ngenxa yemithetho yobhubhane lwe-COVID-19, izinhlokhono ezihlelwe kancane zenziwa ku-inthanethi ukuze kuqoqwe imininingwane kusetshenziswa i-*Microsoft Team*, futhi okurekhodiwe kwalondolozwa. Umbono oyisisekelo wasetshenziswa ukwakha izingqikithi nezindikimba, ezasetshenziswa ukudweba okutholwe ocwaningweni neziphetho nokwenza iziphakamiso. Ucwaningo luveze ukuthi izigaba zokuhlela nokuqapha zohlelo lokulawulwa kokusebenza azisetshenziswanga kahle, nokuqapha bekunganakwa. Ukuhlolwa kokusebenza nezigaba zemiklomelo kutholwe kugcwele ukuchema, inhloso yazo ingaqondakali kahle. Iziphakamiso zethulwa enhlanganweni, kubaphathi, kongoti bezengqondo zezimboni nezinhlango kanjalo nabasebenzi mayelana nokuthi yini okumele bayenze ukuze kuthuthukiswe ukusebenza ngempumelelo kohlelo lokuphatha ukusebenza.

**Amagama asemqoka:** ukusebenza; ukuphatha kokusebenza; uhlelo lokuphatha kokusebenza; ngempumelelo;

## KAKARETŠO

GO HLOHLOMIŠA GO ŠOMA GABOTSE KA MO GO KWEŠIŠEGAGO GA SESTEMO YA  
TAOLO YA GO ŠOMA YA MMUŠO

ka

P Mashiane

Tikrii: Mastase wa Khomese (Saekholotši ya Intasteri le Peakanyo)

Molekodi: Ngaka A van Niekerk

Thuto ye e hlohlomišitše go šoma gabotse ka mo go kwešišegago ga sestemo ya taolo ya go šoma ya mmušo, ka maitemogelo a letšatši le letšatši a bašomedi le balaodi ka gare ga dikgato tša go fapafapana tša sestemo ya taolo ya go šoma. Go thuto ye ya tlhalošo ya khwalitheithifi, lithereitšha go taolo ya go šoma le dikgopolo tše di amantšhwago le yona di sekasekilwe. Mokgwa wa go kgetha kemedi wo o sa rulaganywago o šomišitšwe go kgetha bašomedi ba 11 bao ba emelago mokgatlo. Ka lebaka la melawana ya leuba la COVID-19, dipoledišano tše di sa rulaganywago ka mo go feletšego di dirilwe inthaneteng go ka kgoboketša tshedimošo ka go šomiša Microsoft Teams, gomme dikgatišo di bolokilwe. Mokgwa wa nyakišišo wo o rulagantšwego o šomišitšwe go hlama dihlogo le dihlogwana, tšeo di šomišitšwego go kgoboketša dikhwetšo tša nyakišišo le mafetšo le go dira ditšhišinyo. Thuto ye e utolotše gore dikgato tša thulaganyo le tekolo tša sestemo ya taolo ya go šoma ga di a diragatšwa gabotse, le gore tekolo e hlokomologilwe. Tekanyetšo ya go šoma le dikgato tša go putsa di hweditšwe di tletše ka go bontšha kgethollo, gomme morero wa tšona o sa kwešišwe. Ditšhišinyo di filwe mokgatlo, bolaodi, le disaekholotši tša intasteri le peakanyo gammogo le bašomedi mabapi le se ba hlokago go se dira go kaonafatša go šoma gabotse ga sestemo ya taolo ya go šoma.

**MANTŠU A BOHLOKWA:** go šoma; taolo ya go šoma; sestemo ya taolo ya go šoma; go šoma gabotse

## DECLARATION

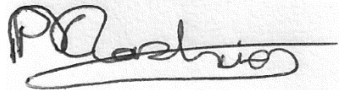
I, **Patricia Mashiane**, student number **48359815** for the degree, Master's of Commerce  
declare that

**“Exploring the perceived effectiveness of a governmental performance management system”**

is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or have quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference list.

I declare that ethical clearance has been obtained from the College of Economic and Management Sciences Ethics Research Committee at UNISA (Annexure A) at the University of South Africa and that informed consent (Annexure B) was given by all participants to conduct the research.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patricia Mashiane', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Date: 28 January 2022

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

DPSA Department of Public Service and Administration

KPA Key Performance Area

KPAs Key Performance Areas

KPI Key Performance Indicator

PA Performance Agreement

PM Performance Management

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## **CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Public service organisations in South Africa are faced with many challenges, including poor service delivery (Cameron, 2015). Therefore, the government implemented a performance management (PM) system across all levels, where employees' performance is being monitored to instil accountability and improve service delivery (DPSA, 2018). The effectiveness of the PM system has received different reviews from employees and line managers (Tseisa, 2016). In some instances, the system is found to be poorly implemented and in others the believe is that the system is not effective (Cameron, 2015). The aim of this qualitative, interpretive study is to gain an in-depth understanding of employees' and line managers' lived experiences of the perceived effectiveness of the PM system. This chapter will describe the rationale, background and motivation to conduct the study, the problem statement, and the aim of the study, the paradigm, the research design, as well as the contribution of the study and the chapter layout of the dissertation.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION**

Performance management entails a two-way engagement between employees and their line manager, which involves communication pertaining to the work they are employed to do and making sure there is a clear understanding of roles and expectations (Plachy & Plachy, 1988). According to Torneo and Mojica (2020), a PM system refers to a comprehensive method utilised by human resource management to monitor, encourage and train workers and to make companies' goals and those of their workers feed into each other. Performance management is an important practice that needs to be understood better by organisations and its employees to ensure its effectiveness towards assisting organisations with the achievement of its objectives (Ramulumisi et al., 2015).

Various researchers have written about different phases of the PM system. According to Modipane et al. (2019), a PM system includes different phases that need to work inter-connectedly with the aim to manage and improve the performance of employees towards achieving organisational goals. Performance management as a process begins with strategic planning, performance planning, performing the tasks, assessing performance and reviewing the performance (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). Some authors describe the phases of the PM system as setting objectives, conducting midyear reviews, conducting an annual review and standardising and authenticating roles and duties (Hurdubei & Profiroiu, 2019).

The PM system needs to be understood better by an organisation and its employees to ensure its effectiveness towards assisting organisations to achieve their objectives (Ramulumisi et al., 2015). Some employees view a PM system as a tool used only to get performance rewards and to get promoted to the next salary levels, that is for pay progression purposes (Mbonambi, 2016). A PM system requires an employee and a line manager to have an agreement and an understanding of the objectives of the organisation, and of individual employees and how they are aligned (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019, Hurdubei & Profirou, 2019, Makhubela et al., 2016, Modipane et al., 2019, Ramulumisi et al., 2015).

In the past five years, numerous researchers such as Makhubela et al. (2016), Modipane et al. (2019) and Ramulumisi et al. (2015) conducted research exploring the effectiveness of PM systems. Makhubela et al. (2016) conducted a study in a government department and investigated employees' perception of the effectiveness and fairness of performance management. They found that employees consider the system as non-functional and their performance appraisal as unfair because of the poor management of its processes (Makhubela et al., 2016). Modipane et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study measuring workers' opinions of how they feel about the way the PM system is being applied at a government department of the North-West province. The study examined the extent to which demographics like gender, age groups and positional levels influenced how workers perceived the effectiveness of the PM system (Modipane et al., 2019). The

findings show that employees perceived the performance management process to be effective but identified shortcomings related to the lack of coaching and managers' non-compliance with procedures (Modipane et al., 2019). However, the limitations of these studies seem to lie in the fact that their research did not explore all aspects of the PM system, but only investigated certain parts thereof. The PM system is a continuous process that consists of multiple interconnected phases (Modipane et al., 2019). Some employees perceive it to be effective whereas others highlight its ineffectiveness by listing what factors contribute to the latter (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019; Hurdubei & Profirou, 2019; Modipane et al., 2019; Makhubela et al., 2016, Ramulumisi et al., 2015).

The PM system's effectiveness is measured against the extent to which it achieves its intended goals (Sharma et al., 2016). The organisational goals will be reached on time if the PM system ensures that employees' performance objectives are aligned to the organisational objectives (Mbonambi, 2016). Organisations need an effective PM system that includes a continuous assessment of individual and organisational performance. The effectiveness of the system can be judged by its ability to continuously monitor employees' performance and by providing training to the employees who are not productive (Sharma et al., 2016).

In the past 20 years, various researchers have conducted studies on the PM system and its related constructs. For instance, Ramulumisi et al. (2015) conducted a quantitative study aimed at investigating employees' views regarding the success rate of a PM system at a government department. The results showed that employees view the system as unsuccessful because their department does not offer them training to improve performance and that management are not helping them to improve themselves (Ramulumisi et al., 2015). Klinck and Swanepoel (2019) conducted a study in the North-West province at a government department, looking at human factors linked to the PM processes and its impact on the effectiveness of service delivery in the North-West government department. Klinck and Swanepoel (2019) found the following shortcomings in some sections within the department, namely no teamwork among employees and their line managers, a lack of employee skills development, poor communication, low job



satisfaction, no feedback on the employees' performance and, on the whole, employees' dissatisfaction and demotivation regarding their work. Klinck and Swanepoel (2019) further focused on factors affecting the effectiveness of service delivery and the impact of the performance management process on it. In their studies, Ramulumisi et al. (2015) and Klinck and Swanepoel (2019) noted that employees' lack of skills development and lack of support from management negatively affected the PM system.

Similarly, Tseisa (2016) conducted a study involving the health ministry of Lesotho to find out why the PM system there was not yielding the intended results. The findings revealed that the PM system failed to achieve its goals because employees at a lower level did not understand it, they did not have individual work plans indicating their key performance areas (KPA) and the expected outputs, and employees also never received performance-related feedback (Tseisa, 2016).

Du Plessis and Van Niekerk (2017) explored the factors influencing managers' attitudes towards performance appraisal. This study found that managers' attitudes were influenced by the nature of the performance appraisal process, which they described as daunting and difficult. The study further revealed that managers avoided doing performance appraisals because the environmental setting influenced their decision(s) about employees (Du Plessis & Van Niekerk, 2017). The managers were found to lack training on how to implement and/or apply some parts or phases of the system (Du Plessis & Van Niekerk, 2017). Furthermore, in another study Makhubela et al. (2016) investigated employees' perceptions of the effectiveness and fairness of performance management and discovered that employees perceived their PM system as ineffective and the performance appraisal system as unfair due to implementation shortcomings. This quantitative study focused on two factors, namely employee involvement and management commitment (Makhubela et al., 2016). The results showed that employees are not involved in the development of the PM system and that employees perceived the support and commitment of top management as moderately effective (Makhubela et al., 2016).

Maimela and Samuel's (2016) quantitative study investigated employees' views on the implementation of the PM system at an education institution that offered distance learning. The study found that employees believed that their leaders were managing the PM system effectively, although the incentives awarded to best performers failed to motivate employees (Maimela & Samuel, 2016). Moreover, Kgosinyane's (2019) quantitative study of a public institution of higher education investigated employees' perceptions of the role played by line managers to ensure the success of the PM system. The study's results showed that, due to the trust instilled by line managers, employees perceived the PM system as effective (Kgosinyane, 2019).

Mbonambi's (2016) qualitative study focused on whether, or not, a successful PM system can lead to better employee performance results at a freight rail organisation. The findings indicated that the system is deemed ineffective due to poor implementation and employees' focus on financial rewards, with the latter being the cause of tensions and negative perceptions among employers and employees (Mbonambi, 2016).

The governmental PM system is aimed at fostering accountability and improving service delivery (Cameron, 2015). The performance evaluation phase includes rewards (performance bonus and pay progression) given to fully effective employees (Cameron, 2015). Employees who score a rating between 1 and 2 get nothing, meaning their salary does not increase (DPSA, 2018). Those who obtain a rating of 3 receive pay progression while those obtaining a rating of 4 are rewarded with pay progression and performance bonus once in that financial year (DPSA, 2018). Past researchers have shown employees are dissatisfied with the manner in which the PM systems have been implemented and managed within some government departments (Cameron, 2015). Heads of departments are appointed on a contractual basis and as a result departments keep on hiring new leaders. This makes it difficult to link individual performance and the performance of a head of department with organisational performance (Cameron, 2015). The Public Service Commission conducted a study on the effectiveness of a PM system and discovered that departments were not complying with the guidelines (Cameron, 2015).

Previous studies proffer that there are challenges with the implementation of a PM system across different organisations (Rajala et al., 2020, Phiri et al., 2021). In some studies, line managers were found to be the cause of the problems, while other studies found employees to be the problem (Kehoe & Han, 2020). Studies were also conducted to explore factors impacting on the effectiveness of the PM system, including various challenges encountered in the implementation and sustenance of the PM system (Teeroovengadum et al., 2018; Marchand et al., 2021). However, these studies do not thoroughly explore all the factors within each phase of the PM system to determine which factors render it effective or ineffective.

This research explored the perceived effectiveness of a PM system at a government department, with particular focus on all the phases of the PM system. The study took place at the head office of a national government department. The researcher started working at the government department in 2013 and has since then witnessed the increased tension(s) whenever the time for performance evaluations approached. Furthermore, the researcher noticed the ineffectiveness of certain phases of the performance management process. Abetted by previous research, this study aimed to investigate whether employees and line managers at a selected government department perceive the PM system to be effective. The PM system is best explored by gaining insight into the lived experiences of the employees and line managers and allowing them to tell their stories. Participants were asked to describe their experience(s) within each phase of the PM system. The results of this study will help the organisation to enhance the effectiveness of its PM system by making recommendations on how to improve the PM system and to strengthen the working relationships between employees and their line managers. In addition, this study's recommendations will assist in improving the performance management process flow. Through this study's findings, the organisation will be able to identify problematic areas within each phase, and hopefully implement the remedial interventions proposed in this study.

### 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

To ensure the effective implementation and use of the PM system, it is important that all stakeholders involved in the performance management process have a good understanding of the purpose of the system, its phases and their respective roles in it (Mone & London, 2018). The general aim of this study was therefore to explore the perceived effectiveness of the different phases of the PM system as experienced by employees and line managers. The purpose of any PM system is to ensure that employees' performance goals are aligned to the strategic goals of the organisation (Aguinis, 2019). The PM systems aim to encourage employees to work hard and to take responsibility for their behaviour, and to identify and develop skills that are required to enhance their performance (Aguinis, 2019). There is a need to continue monitoring all phases of the PM system for it to be effective (Mone & London, 2018). The researcher believes that in exploring the different phases of the PM system as experienced by the participants, the organisation will understand where the problem originates, and which phase is effective or ineffective. The literature shows that most governmental employees complete performance management merely for compliance and that they only focus on the final phase, which is evaluation and performance appraisal (Mbonambi, 2016).

In South Africa, all government departments use the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) to manage the performance of senior managers' services (DPSA, 2018). All government departments are mandated to comply with the DPSA circulars, which are timeously updated and sent to all government departments' heads. It is the responsibility of the heads of all the departments to ensure that the PM system is implemented accordingly and that they subsequently report to the DPSA. The Public Service budget is developed in line with the strategic objectives and the expected results. The management is therefore expected to ensure that the anticipated results are achieved (Cameron, 2015). In government departments, the PM system includes incentives aimed at motivating employees to work hard to achieve their performance goals (Cameron, 2015).

Two documents are used to measure individual performance (DPSA, 2018). The first one is the Senior Management Service Handbook and the second one is the Performance Management Development System used for salary levels 1 to 12 (DPSA, 2018). Individuals' performances are scored in accordance with four rating categories for evaluation purposes, as stated in the DPSA (2018), namely:

- Not effective – does not meet expected standards (rating 1)
- Partially effective -- achievement less than fully effective (rating 2)
- Fully effective -- fully meets the expected standards (rating 3)
- Highly effective --- performance exceeds the expectation (rating 4)

Most employees do not understand the holistic purpose, phases and use of a PM system, and predominantly see it as a tool only to be used to decide whether employees should get performance-related rewards or not (Mbonambi, 2016). In the organisation where this study took place, the mere mentioning of performance management, makes some employees to immediately start talking about performance bonuses. Furthermore, line managers often do not monitor employees' performance continuously and do not inform them immediately about their poor performance. Instead of doing that they wait until the performance review phase, which happens much later, to alert them about their poor performance (Ramulumisi et al., 2015). A PM system was introduced in the South African public sector with the aim to monitor, evaluate and provide training for employees who are struggling to reach the expected performance (Cameron, 2015). Since the introduction of the system, there have been mixed reviews from employees, labour unions and management. Different parties have complained about the failure of departments to implement the system properly. Some have indicated that the PM system is largely dependent on the direction the leader of the department chooses to take. However, government departments are often characterised by political interferences, which cause instability due to continuous changes in the positions of heads of departments and ministers (Cameron, 2015). Against this backdrop, this study aimed to answer the question: What are the employees' and line managers' lived experience of the perceived effectiveness of the different phases of the PM system?

The research set out to answer the following theoretical questions:

- How is performance management and its related constructs conceptualised?
- What are the factors that impact on the effectiveness of the different phases of the PM system?

The empirical questions that this study sought to answer were:

- What are the employees' and line managers' experiences of the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of the different phases of a PM system?
- What recommendations can be made towards enhancing the effectiveness of a PM system within its different phases?

#### **1.4 AIMS**

The research aims comprise one general aim and various specific aims. The aims were formulated based on the research questions listed above. The general aim of this research is to explore the perceived effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system as experienced by employees and line managers.

The specific aims for the literature review are to:

- Conceptualise performance management and its related constructs.
- Explore the factors that impact on the effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system.

The specific empirical aims of the study are to:

- Explore the experience of employees and line managers of the perceived effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system.

- Make recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system.

## **1.5 THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE**

Paradigms are broad systems that tell us how we see life in general and they provide us with ideologies about what the nature of reality should look like (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This framework of thinking guides a study and defines its nature along the dimensions of ontology, epistemology and methodology (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This study adopted the interpretive paradigm as both a theoretical and empirical paradigm.

### **1.5.1 Disciplinary relationship**

The study was conducted within the field of industrial and organisational psychology and falls within the sub-field of personnel psychology. Industrial and organisational psychology is a field of scientific inquiry that is concerned with advancing our knowledge about people's behaviour at work (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). As a sub-field of industrial and organisational psychology, personnel psychology works towards understanding the difference between workers and accepting their differences and finding suitable ways to work with them (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). Some of the functions of personnel psychology include job analysis and evaluation; recruitment and selection; training and development; and performance management (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). Therefore, this study is situated within performance management, and thus falls within the sub-field of personnel psychology.

Industrial psychologists play a vital role in ensuring the management of performance and the effective implementation of the PM system in organisations (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). Through the use of the PM system, industrial psychologists are guided to identify challenges that can negatively impact on the organisation's abilities to achieve its strategic goals and to find amicable solutions to resolve the challenges (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). This includes, although not limited to, identifying skills gaps and training needs,

better aligning recruitment and selection practices and rewarding employees fairly (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019).

### **1.5.2 Theoretical paradigm**

A theoretical paradigm refers to the review of a theory that underpins the scientific basis of a specific topic to be further explored by conducting a scientific research study (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). The theoretical paradigm that informed this study is the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm is used to review the literature on performance management and its related constructs, which include the PM system (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Interpretivism stresses that there are numerous lived realities in the world as opposed to a single reality. Therefore, the interpretive theoretical paradigm was helpful in the review of the literature on the conceptualisation of performance management and its related constructs. It also helped the researcher to explore the factors that impact on the effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system in a variety of contexts.

### **1.5.3 Empirical paradigm**

An empirical paradigm is dependent on the findings of a specific study and is not focused on what past researchers found (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). This study is based on the interpretive perspective because it is a qualitative study seeking to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under discussion (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Interpretive researchers believe that it is vital to know the background from which the research is conducted (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Within the interpretive paradigm, it is believed that the truth about the effectiveness of the PM system can be determined by studying and interpreting people's lived experiences in their natural settings (Neubauer et al., 2019). In this study, the researcher was part of the community under study and therefore understood that there were always multiple realities pertaining to the subject of this study (Tarab, 2019).



The researcher was aware that the ontological and epistemological beliefs of this study's respondents were based on their subjective, lived experiences. The interpretive paradigm contains certain ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Ontology focuses on reality and the study of being (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). As an interpretivist, the researcher assumes reality is subjective and affected by the lived experiences of individuals and their insights about their social environment (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). The ontological assumption of this study is based on employees' and line managers' lived, inner subjective experiences concerning the effectiveness of the phases of a PM system (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Epistemology is concerned with the manner in which people know the things that they know. It refers to the information and the idea that the research seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Rehman and Alharthi (2016) argue that epistemology is all about how the research participants and the researcher relate to one another. Interpretive researchers believe that the way in which the researcher interacts with the research respondents and establishes a relationship of trust are crucial towards understanding and describing their (respondents) lived experiences (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Furthermore, the researcher needs to spend enough time with the participants to be able to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experiences (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In this research, the researcher was part of the community under study, and had established a relationship of trust with them and further understood the environment within which the study was conducted (Alase, 2017).

The methodological assumption refers to all the steps taken when designing and conducting the research (Al-Ababneh, 2020). This study follows an interpretive, qualitative methodological approach. As part of the methodological approach, data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The interpretive methodological assumptions enabled both the participants and the researcher to involve the respondents' experiences concerning the effectiveness of the PM system (Ramsook, 2018).

#### **1.5.4 Meta-theoretical concepts**

The meta-theoretical concepts that form part of this study are performance, performance management, the PM system, effectiveness, employees and line manager. These meta-theoretical concepts are defined below.

##### *1.5.4.1 Performance*

According to Ghalem et al. (2016), performance refers to the successful achievement of goals at the standard that was set, and consists of effectiveness and efficiency. In the workplace, performance refers to the actions or behaviour of people to achieve the assigned tasks as expected of them (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). The definition of performance stresses that there must be actions to attain objectives and the goals must be achieved satisfactorily (Aguinis, 2019). This study adopted the definitions of both Ghalem et al. (2016) and Cascio and Aguinis (2019) as they are essentially the same.

According to Ramulumisi et al. (2015), performance management is a tool used to manage employees' performance towards attaining organisational goals. Armstrong (2017) sees performance management as the process used in the workplace to improve and train the workforce to ensure that the company is productive and achieving its mandate. Amiri and Nobakht (2016), aver that performance management refers to the ongoing process of discovering and improving the performance of individuals and teams and making sure their performance works parallel with organisational strategic goals. In agreement with the preceding scholars, Aguinis (2019) defines performance management as a workplace practice that constantly monitors employees' activities, offering them support when needed and ensuring everyone is working towards organisational success.

#### 1.5.4.2 *Performance management system*

According to Modipane et al. (2019), a PM system includes different elements that have to work inter-connectedly to manage and improve the performance of employees in order to achieve organisational goals. The phases of the PM system are planning, creating goals, monitoring performance, communicating performance outcomes, assessing performance, reviewing performance, mentoring and addressing poor performance (Modipane et al., 2019; Torneo & Mojica, 2020). The performance management system according to Nxumalo et al. (2018, p. 5) consists of “setting of individual and collective goals, mentorship and motivation, distributed leadership, delegation, supervision and monitoring, appraisal and feedback”. Contrarily, Hamid and Naidoo (2019) describe the PM system as a process that involves planning, acting, monitoring and reviewing of the employee performance. This study adopted Hamid and Naidoo’s (2019) definition.

#### 1.5.4.3 *Effectiveness*

Effectiveness refers to the ability of something to succeed in achieving its intended purpose and, more importantly, for the users to perceive it as being effective (Mbonambi, 2016; Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). Effectiveness entails the functionality of the processes of the PM system, and the correct implementation of all the phases of performance management (Aguinis, 2019). For the purpose of this study, all three definitions by Aguinis (2019), Cascio and Aguinis (2019) and Mbonambi (2016) are adopted.

#### 1.5.4.4 *Employees*

Employees are all non-managerial and managerial staff working in an organisation (Kgosinyane, 2019). Aguinis (2019) sees employees as individuals who signed the appointment letter agreeing to perform duties as expected on a daily basis. For the purpose of this study, both definitions by Kgosinyane (2019) and Aguinis (2019) are adopted.

#### 1.5.4.5 *Line manager*

A line manager is an individual who is part of the management hierarchy and is responsible for supervising employees within his or her department, division, or unit. (Lee et al., 2020). Line managers are responsible for drafting performance management contracts for employees and for monitoring and coaching, supporting and allocating resources to assist employees with their duties (Cascio & Aguinis 2019). For the purpose of this study, both Cascio and Aguinis' (2019) and Lee et al.'s (2020) definitions of a line manager are adopted.

### **1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design section will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. The research design refers to the strategy or plan that is used to conduct the scientific study (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The purpose of a research design is to provide a detailed plan of how the study will be conducted and which approach it will follow to answer the research question(s), and to meet its aim and objectives (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Aspects of the research design include the research approach, research strategy and research method. The research methodology section will outline the research setting, entrée and establish the research role, sampling, data collection methods, recording of data and data analysis. This study adopted an interpretive qualitative method with semi-structured interviews to collect data from 11 purposively sampled employees.

### **1.7 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

The PM system is perceived by many as an unfair system that is poorly implemented in public service organisations. A PM system that is correctly implemented and applies all the steps correctly, will be rated as effective. This study will contribute to the field of industrial and organisation psychology research, specifically within a government department setting and within the topic of performance management system effectiveness. This study aims to explore the perceived effectiveness of the different

phases of a PM system as experienced by employees and line managers within a government department. The study will further aim to conceptualise PM and its related constructs for a better understanding and to make recommendations towards enhancing the effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system. The recommendations will be aimed towards employees, line managers and the custodians of the PM system. Recommendations for further research to ensure the PM system is strategically aligned to the organisational objectives and better support employees and line managers in the implementation and effective management of the PM system are also given.

## **1.8 CHAPTER LAYOUT**

This dissertation consists of five chapters and are presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Scientific orientation to the research

Chapter 1 includes an outline of the background and motivation for the research, the problem statement and research questions to be answered, aims of the study, paradigm perspective and contributions of the research. Chapter 1 therefore presents an introduction of what this study is about and motivates why it is important to be carried out.

Chapter 2: Literature review

A review of the available literature is presented in Chapter 2. This chapter aims to conceptualise the PM system and its related constructs by exploring its theoretical foundations and development over time. This chapter also presents a review of the literature regarding the factors that have an impact on the effectiveness of the PM system.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter 3 discusses the research design and methodology that informed this research. This includes the research approach, research strategy and research method adopted.

The research method outlines the research setting, entrée and establishes the researcher's role, sampling, data collection, and recording of data, data analysis, reporting and strategies applied to ensure quality data. The chapter concludes with an outline of the ethical considerations employed within this study.

#### Chapter 4: Findings of the study

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study in line with the research questions and aims. The questions and aims of the study are linked to the employees' and line managers' lived experiences and perceptions pertaining to the effectiveness of the PM system at their organisation. The findings are presented by means of themes and sub-themes drawn from the data analysis.

#### Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations drawn from the theoretical and empirical parts of this research. The researcher makes recommendations that will be useful to human resources professionals, Industrial and Organisational psychologists, employees, line managers, and finally, future researchers.

### **1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter 1 provided an outline of the scientific orientation of this research by discussing the introduction, background and motivation to conduct the study, the problem statement, and the aim of the study, the paradigm perspectives, the research design, as well as the contribution of the study and the chapter-layout for the dissertation. The following chapter will present a comprehensive review of the literature.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the essential concepts of the study. The discussion will present a review of literature on performance management and define performance as a concept. The discussion on the PM system includes its purpose, phases, experiences and effectiveness. Furthermore, this chapter will conceptualise performance management, its related constructs and explore the factors that have an impact on the effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system. The literature review will particularly focus on literature published within the last five years to ensure that the context is obtained of the recent world of work. However, older literature will also be considered to strengthen the understanding of performance management, the PM system, and its related constructs and to establish how knowledge on the topic has evolved over time.

### **2.2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

It is imperative that the term *performance* be defined prior to defining performance management, in order to clarify the context from which it was drawn in this study. Kearney and Berman (2018) define performance as the effective and efficient use of resources to attain results. However, Cascio and Aguinis (2019) define performance as the activities undertaken to produce outcomes. Performance management is a planned and incorporated method that will result in continued achievements in businesses by enhancing the performance of their employees and building the skills of teams and individual employees (Mohsin, 2020). Performance has two parallel sides, namely activities and outcomes, and is best defined relying on these two sides (Aguinis, 2019). Cascio and Aguinis (2019) further argue that in the workplace, performance refers to the actions or behaviour of employees towards enacting the assigned tasks as expected (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019).

Numerous scholars have defined performance according to different contexts. Samsonowa (2012) defines performance as a standard for achieving organisational goals and includes effectiveness and efficiency as essential tenets of the definition. Similarly, Ghalem et al. (2016) defines performance as the level of achieving goals which are important for an organisation and the stakeholders. In contrast, Wettstein and Kueng (2002) defines performance as the level at which organisational stakeholders are content. Performance management, on the other hand, is a tool used to manage employees' performance towards attaining organisational strategic objectives (Ramulumisi et al., 2015). Performance management also refers to the ongoing process of discovering and improving the performance of individuals and teams and making sure their performance works parallel with organisational strategic objectives (Aguinis, 2019, Ullé et al., 2018). Performance management is key to the success of any organisation; therefore, management must fully commit to its processes (Hamid & Naidoo, 2020).

Managing employees' performance in organisations requires an effective strategy that will ensure that strategic objectives are clearly explained and that employees are well trained to perform in line with the contracted standards (Samal, 2019). According to Armstrong (2017), PM is the process used in the workplace that involves improving and training the workforce to ensure that the company is productive and achieving its mandate. Such organisations believe that it is essential to hire high skilled employees, create strong working groups and continue to upskill them by offering training to ensure that they keep up with the latest trends and perform their duties excellently for the organisation to achieve its mission and succeed (Armstrong, 2017). The organisation needs to set strategic objectives and values and discuss them with the employees to ensure they understand how they will be rated (Armstrong, 2017). Managers must monitor the performance of their subordinates to ensure that all individual employees are working towards achieving the strategic objectives (Lievens et al., 2020)

Performance management involves discussion between employees and managers about the KPAs and the expected outcomes (Armstrong, 2019). It requires that organisations should ensure that there are provisions for managers to provide ongoing support,



coaching and training (Aguinis, 2019). Furthermore, managers' performance centres around overseeing and evaluating individual employees' activities, in other words they must keep on checking in detail the activities of each employee (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). Time must be allocated for managers to do timeous monitoring and to provide employees with regular progress reports about the enactment of their duties (Armstrong, 2019). Early detection of any performance hindrance must be address professionally by proving training, coaching and support (Armstrong, 2019).

### **2.3 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The PM system is made up of steps that clarify job descriptions, what tasks are expected of the employees, the standard of the work expected, monitoring and evaluating of the actual job done, and quantifying the results or outcomes (Torneo & Mojica, 2020). The PM system is referred to as a system since it has different components that are interconnected and work interchangeably in a circular motion (Aguinis, 2019). The PM system assists companies to achieve their strategic objectives and to ensure all the tasks of its workers feed into each other (Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018; Lee et al., 2020). The PM system is a professionally detailed process that records the activities of employees and the level at which they are accomplished by all the employees (Mohsin, 2020). PM as a system follows a particular order that ensures that the resources are allocated towards achieving the organisational mission, vision and that strength and weaknesses are identified and rectified (Lee et al., 2020).

The PM system is all about focusing on contracting performance with each employee in the organisation, to monitor how well they perform their duties and how the employer can strengthen the employees' skills as well as encouraging and ensuring employees are content towards effective performance (Raj & Verma, 2020). The PM system is broad and is not only about rewarding good performance and not rewarding underperformance (Raj & Verma, 2020). Park and Krause (2020) agree that an effective implemented PM system can help strengthen and increase organisational productivity. The PM system will further

highlight successes, and failures that need to be improved to ensure better outcomes and greater achievement of strategic objectives (Park & Krause, 2020).

The South African governmental PM system is directed by the DPSA, which is mandated to ensure that all departments implement it. This system is referred to as the PM development system and is applicable to all employees from salary levels 1 to 12 (DPSA, 2018). According to the directive, the PM system cycle runs every financial year from 1 April to 31 March of the next year. Each government department is mandated to create a template that will be used during that year. Every employee needs to sign their individual performance agreement, which must include key performance areas (KPA's) and the requirement for competence (DPSA, 2018). All employees are required to sign performance contracts between themselves and their supervisors (line managers). The PM system in government departments requires more focus to be placed on continuous monitoring and coaching of employees, and not only on creating instruments that will be used in measuring employees' performance and consolidating reports on performance data for political decision making (Asif & Rathore, 2021). Studies on the PM system in government departments evidently show that there are gaps, and various factors must be improved in order to make the system effective and efficient (Osborne, 2016). Asif and Rathore argue that the PM system in government departments continues to be a challenge for both the government and its management.

### **2.3.1 Purpose of a performance management system**

Firstly, to be 'strategic' is one of the purposes of the PM system. This is to ensure that employees' goals and work activities are linked with organisational strategic objectives (Aguinis, 2019). The second purpose is 'administrative', which will ensure that the records related to the PM system are documented and correctly used in making organisation decisions, such as pay increases and the payment of performance bonuses (Smither & London, 2009). The third purpose is 'communication' to ensure that the manager engages individual employees and addresses issues related to work progress and measures that will be followed to enhance performance where there are challenges (Cascio & Aguinis,

2019). Fourthly, there is the purpose of employee 'development' to offer training to employees on aspects of their work they struggle with for them to achieve their individual goals (Aguinis, 2019). The fifth purpose is 'organisational maintenance' to assess the skills of employees, using PM information to plan about the courses that will be offered to employees and to assess the level of individual and organisational performance (Aguinis, 2019). The sixth and last purpose is 'documentation'. This ensures that the organisation uses the PM system data to plan for any future appointments and the data can also be used as proof in any legal case against employees, should there be any dispute after a decision was taken following a performance review (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019).

The main aim of a PM system is to operate as a strategic tool that aligns the duties of workers with the objectives of the organisation (Schleicher et al., 2019). It assists human resources management to create clear or simple performance expectations for employees, to inform them about their roles and duties, to monitor their performance and to improve the performance of poor performers in the workplace (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). The other purposes of a PM system are to set goals, to plan and execute, to facilitate continuous communication, manage poor performance, provide feedback and coaching to employees, monitor and evaluate performance and to reward good performance (DPSA, 2018; Samal, 2019). This implies that an organisation will successfully achieve its strategic objectives if it has an effective system which ensures that employees' duties are aligned to its strategic objectives and clearly communicated to the employees (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019; Mohsin, 2020).

The PM system essentially involves two parties, namely management and the employees (Hamid & Naidoo, 2020). These two parties need to work together to ensure that the strategic organisational objectives are met (Hamid & Naidoo, 2020). The PM system is implemented to build a culture whereby employees take up responsibility and improve their skills and performance (Singh & Twalo, 2015). In this way, the PM system information informs reward, performance, training and development as well as corrective disciplinary action practices (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019; Pulakos et al., 2019). Overall, the aim of a PM system is to provide employees and line managers with accurate information

that can inform employee performance development plans aimed at closing the skills gap and inform talent management practices (Asif & Rathore, 2021; Phiri et al., 2021; Selepe, 2018).

### **2.3.2 Phases of the performance management system**

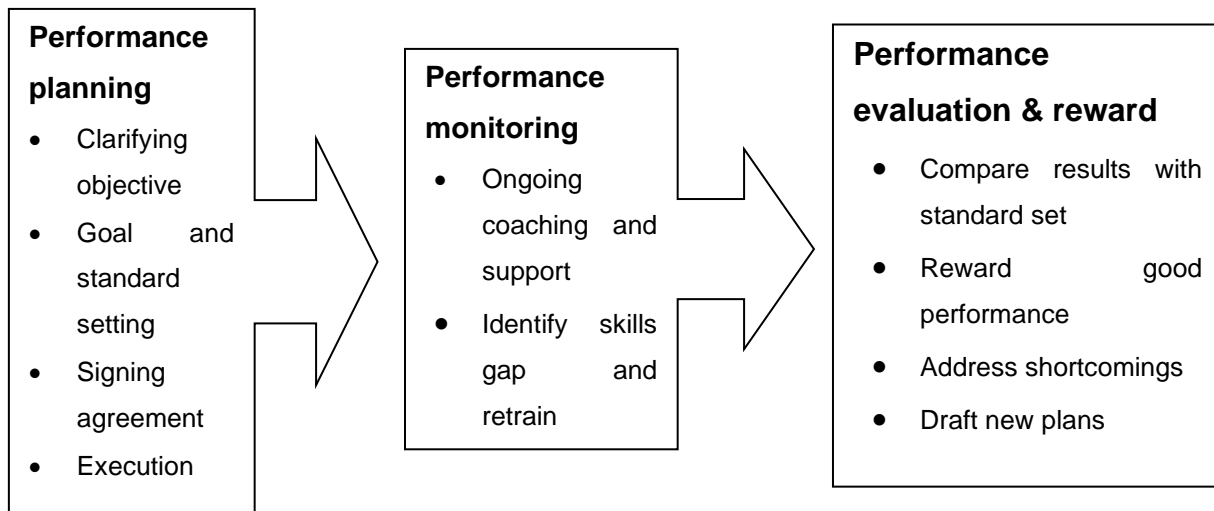
The PM system consists of multiple phases that must be fully implemented for it to be effective and to achieve its intended purpose (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). The phases and components of the PM system are interconnected and work interchangeably to achieve its purpose (Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018; Modipane et al., 2019). In government departments the phases are as follows: performance agreement, performance monitoring and performance review and assessment (DPSA, 2018). In the organisation where the study took place, the participants referred to the review and assessment phase, as the evaluation phase. Therefore, if any one of the phases is poorly implemented, it will compromise the effectiveness of the entire PM system. Hence, it is imperative to consistently monitor and evaluate the PM system across all its levels to identify and solve problems (Aguinis, 2019). The first phase of the PM system entails giving individual employees clear explanation(s) of what is expected of them, then facilitating their performance, monitoring their performance, giving individuals feedback on their performance and lastly providing training and support to employees by management (Modipane et al., 2019).

Ramulumisi et al. (2015) argue that the PM system includes the planning phase, the coaching phase and performance evaluation. Furthermore, the PM system comprises the following elements, namely to develop its employees, review remuneration, assess individual performance, set organisational performance goals for their teams and individuals, implement the PM system design and technology system, and implement human resource policies and the legal framework (Ramulumisi et al., 2015). Prasad et al. (2020) proffer that the PM system constitutes rewarding good work, upskilling employees and preparing them to take on vacant management posts and satisfying to retain them. Figure 1 below illustrates the three phases of the PM system, as summarised in the

literature (Aguinis & Cascio, 2019; Hamid & Naidoo, 2020; Modipane et al., 2019; Prasad et al., 2020; Pulakos et al., 2019).

**Figure 1**

**PM system phases**



**2.3.2.1 Performance planning**

The first phase of the PM system is performance planning. This phase explains what performance means and what the expectations of the employer are and what objectives need to be achieved (Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018). During this phase, employees and line managers discuss the strategic objectives of the organisation, for example what needs to be done over the next twelve months and outline the employees' objectives accordingly. The line manager ensures that employees understand their own objectives and how they align with those of the organisation. Thereafter, the performance agreement (PA) contract will be signed by both parties after an agreement is reached about the expected standards of performance (Pulakos et al., 2019).

### *2.3.2.2 Performance monitoring*

The second phase of the PM system entails monitoring the extent to which the employees have been able to achieve the set performance objectives. This phase consists of two performance reviews within a period of twelve months. The line managers are expected to monitor employees' performance on a regular basis to identify skills gaps, and challenges with execution, and to help in real time, rather than waiting too long to address possible concerns (Hamid & Naidoo, 2020; Pulakos et al., 2019).

### *2.3.2.3 Performance evaluation and reward*

The third phase of the PM system involves the final performance evaluation, which presents an outline of the overall performance achieved in line with the strategic objectives of the organisation (Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018). Line managers and employees are required to assess the performance and rate it against the PA that would have been set during the planning phase (Hamid & Naidoo, 2020). Finally, based on the outcome of the final performance evaluation, the organisation will reward the performance, which often entails a financial reward (Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018).

## **2.3.3 Experiences of performance management system**

Research indicates that the PM system is experienced differently by the role-players involved in its different phases. Du Plessis and Van Niekerk (2017) conducted a study on factors influencing managers' attitudes towards performance appraisal and found that leaders tasked with performance appraisal duties did not support the system because they viewed it as not being user friendly (Du Plessis & Van Niekerk, 2017). The managers were further found to lack training on how to effectively apply and/or use the different phases of the PM system when engaging with their subordinates (Du Plessis & Van Niekerk, 2017). Ramulumisi et al. (2015) conducted a quantitative study aimed at investigating employees' views regarding the success rate of a PM system within a government department. The results showed that employees view the system as

unsuccessful because their department does not offer them training to improve performance and that the management is not helping them to improve (Ramulumisi et al., 2015). The findings of Ramulumisi et al. are in consonance with those of Makhubela et al. (2016) who found that employees viewed their PM system as ineffective and the performance appraisal system as unfair due to implementation shortcomings. Focusing on employee involvement in and management commitment to the PM system, Makhubela et al. (2016) found that employees were not involved in the development of the PM system and that employees perceived top management support and commitment moderately effective. Modipane et al. (2019, p.1) conducted a quantitative study measuring workers' opinions about how they felt about the way the PM system was being applied at the North-West provincial government department. The study looked at whether gender, age groups and positional levels influenced how workers perceived the effectiveness of the PM system. The findings showed that employees perceived their performance management as effective, but identified shortcomings related to the lack of coaching and managers' non-compliance with procedures (Modipane et al., 2019). However, these studies had limitations in that they did not explore all aspects of the PM system, but only investigated certain parts of it.

Tseisa (2016) conducted a study in the health ministry of Lesotho and found that the PM system failed to achieve its goals because employees did not understand it. Employees did not have individual work plans indicating their KPAs and expected outputs and they never received performance-related feedback (Tseisa, 2016). The difference between this study and the aforesaid studies is that the employees did not understand the system and that there was poor implementation of the system by management (Tseisa, 2016).

The quantitative study by Maimela and Samuel (2016) investigated the perception of the PM system by employees working in a distance learning educational institution. The employees indicated that their leaders were running the PM system effectively, but the incentives given to best performers, failed to bring them encouragement (Maimela & Samuel, 2016). Kgosinyane (2019) also conducted a quantitative study in a public higher education institution to investigate how employees perceive the role played by their line

managers in making sure that the PM system is successful. The study's results show that the employees perceive the PM system as effective and its processes as fair because of the trust they have in their line managers (Kgosinyane, 2019). Mbonambi's (2016) qualitative research study focused on whether a successful PM system can lead to better employee performance results at a freight rail organisation. Mbonambi found that the system was deemed ineffective due to poor implementation and the large focus on financial rewards (Mbonambi, 2016).

In a recent study, Bester and Hofisi (2020) aimed to develop a PM model that would replace the current one, which has failed to motivate employees to improve performance. The study used the grounded theory method and was conducted at two ministries in Botswana. The study found that the system did not motivate employees to do their duties better (Bester & Hofisi, 2020). Munzhedzi (2017) conducted a theoretical study to investigate the relationship between PM and training in the South African public services using existing literature. The main finding of the study is that a PM must include skills development (Munzhedzi, 2017). This study only investigated how PM and training are linked. Khotsa and Sebola (2020, p. 1) conducted a study entitled: "Performance management system, an effective service delivery tool in the South African Post Office". The study found that the majority (34,84%) of employees perceived the PM system to be a reliable tool, although it was unfairly applied in the South African Post Office (Khotsa & Sebola, 2020, p. 1). The employees indicated that the PM system was not applied to all employees within the Post Office and that it did not lead to clients' confidence as the decline in users continued (Khotsa & Sebola, 2020). The Post Office continued to lose profits and user's numbers kept decreasing regardless of the implementation of the PM system (Khotsa & Sebola, 2020).

Lemao (2016) investigated the implementation of the PM system at a government department and found that the PM system was poorly implemented. There was no commitment by management and employees were not satisfied with how the system was applied in the department. The government department's emphasis seemed to have been on performance rewarding and not necessarily on whether the PM system was effectively



implemented or not (Lemao, 2016). Selepe (2018) studied the performance of municipal management and the overall performance of the municipality as an organisation. Selepe (2018) also explored the issues related to performance and ways to overcome them. The aim of this study was to provide rules to local governmental employees and their stakeholders on how to improve performance and enhance service delivery. However, the study did not look into the state of the PM system.

Nxumalo et al. (2018) conducted a study at a government district office to investigate PM in times of change. The study focused on the experiences of managers in implementing the performance assessment (Nxumalo et al., 2018). Regarding the implementation of the PM and development system, the study found that some of the managers experienced the system as lacking purpose and they felt that it is merely done for the sake of compliance (Nxumalo et al., 2018). It also found that there was a culture of merely giving high score to employees regardless of their performance standard. However, a few of the managers felt the system worked in addressing skills gaps (Nxumalo et al., 2018). Skills development of managers will assist with the improvement of the PM system (Nxumalo et al., 2018).

Hamid and Naidoo (2020) conducted a quantitative study investigating the effectiveness of the PM development system at the Road Accident Fund. The main findings of this study revealed that the PM system was poorly implemented, a standard procedure with regard to the implementation was lacking, and that different departments use their own discretions (Hamid & Naidoo, 2020). The study found that some managers were not fully involved with the system, but Nxumalo et.al. (2018) found that some managers who were involved in the system felt that it was not achieving any purpose.

Lee et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study in Australia on frontline managers' implementation of the formal and informal PM systems. Their findings were that frontline managers applied both casual and official PM systems in the organisation to achieve their job demands (Lee et al., 2020). Furthermore, they discovered that employees' and management's expectations have a high influence on how the line managers choose to

implement their performance management responsibilities (Lee et al., 2020). Research on the effectiveness of the PM system reveals that employees perceive it as non-functional and that their performance appraisal is unfair owing to poor management processes (Hamid & Naidoo, 2020; Prasad et al., 2019).

#### **2.3.4 Performance management system effectiveness**

An effective PM system includes continuous assessment of individual and organisational performance to determine whether it achieves its intended strategic objectives (Mbonambi, 2016; Modipane et al., 2019; Sharma et al., 2016). The effectiveness of the PM system can be judged by its ability to continue monitoring employees' performance and providing training to the employees who are not productive (Sharma et al., 2016). A PM system will not be effective if the mentioned processes are not being followed effectively (Modipane et al., 2019).

An effective PM system is characterised by clear strategic objectives that are specific and easy for employees to articulate (Marchand & Breton, 2020). According to Teeroovengadum et al. (2018) setting performance goals, involving all employees and managers, providing training on the PM system and discussing outcomes are all characteristics of an effective PM system. Aligned with organisational strategy, the effective PM system ensures that individual employees' goals are aligned with the objectives. Rigour is an important element that assists in ensuring that all steps of the PM system are correctly implemented and followed (Prasad et al., 2019). Feasibility should also be considered to ensure that employees understand and are able to use the PM system so that it can achieve its intended purpose (Teeroovengadum et al., 2018). Significance is also important as the PM system must be used fairly and to the benefit of both the employees and the organisation (Phiri et al., 2021).

The results obtained from performance evaluations must inform decisions that will be beneficial to everyone involved (Hamid & Naidoo, 2020). It is important to distinguish ability because the PM system must state what level of performance score is satisfactory

and what level is unsatisfactory and clearly outline the rewards, outcomes and even consequences (Teeroovengadum et al., 2018). Trustworthiness and reasonableness must be established as different assessors must get the same results from the same performance to prove they are dependable (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). Finally, comprehensiveness should be ensured as employees must be allowed to also score their performance before being scored by managers and performance evaluations committee (Mangipudi et al., 2020).

### **2.3.5 Factors that influence the performance management system**

The literature points out that there are various factors that influence a PM system. The following paragraphs will discuss them, focusing on the studies by Muchelule et al. (2016) and Samal (2019).

#### *2.3.5.1 Reviewing and appraisal of performance*

The reviewing and appraisal of performance are very important within a PM system as they will give an indication of whether the organisation's strategic objectives will be achieved. The reviewing of performance is very significant in ensuring the PM system's success, and includes the appraisal of performance (Muchelule et al., 2016; Samal, 2019).

#### *2.3.5.2 Skills development*

Skills development addresses the need for an organisation to ensure there is career advancement and that training opportunities are offered to employees as a support strategy. Employees must be given equal opportunities to attend training that will help enhance their performance and prepare them for promotions (Muchelule et al., 2016; Samal, 2019).

### 2.3.5.3 *Communication and feedback*

Communication and feedback are imperative within a PM system as they will ensure that employees understand the vision and mission of the organisation and their individual goals and how they are linked with organisational strategy (Muchelule et al., 2016). According to Samal (2019) the communication factor is vital and will ensure that performance and appraisal criteria are clearly understood by employees. Continuous feedback will ensure that employees are clear about their strength and weaknesses and what measures should be implemented towards ensuring strategic objectives are met (Samal,2019).

Sachane et al. (2018) conducted a deductive quantitative study using a questionnaire, exploring the issues that encourage workers to have certain insights into the PM system within a government department, with the aim of finding interventions leadership can incorporate in order to enhance workers' performance. The study found that communication, talent management, retention, recruitment and selection, engagement and motivation were the factors that influenced workers' perceptions of performance management (Sachane et al., 2018, p. 1). An important factor contributing to the success of a PM system is for employees to accept it and perceive it as accurate and fair (Modipane et al., 2019; Sharma et al., 2016). Ramulumisi et al. (2015) view individual growth, employee performance and support by the employer as crucial factors that are required for a PM system to be seen as effective. According to Samal (2019), factors such as well-informed appraisers, employees' actual performance, employee capacity development achieved, setting realistic goals, appraisal follow-ups, and feedback sessions contribute to the perceived effectiveness of a PM system. Employees will perceive the PM system as effective when organisational objectives and individual employees' goals are aligned (Mangipudi et al, 2020).

Literature relating to performance indicated how different contexts influence how people perceive things and that one subject may mean different things to different people. Some authors argue that performance is the effective and efficient method of achieving

organisational and individual goals, whereas others view it mainly as being about successfully achieving goals. PM was presented by different researchers as referring to the continuous monitoring and coaching of employees, giving feedback and developing those employees through talent management programmes. In the process of conceptualising the PM system, it was concluded that it involves multiple phases that are interconnected to achieve the strategic objectives of an organisation. Studies conducted in the past five years show that the PM system did not consider all the aspects of the PM system at government departments. This chapter also explored the factors that have an impact on employees' experiences of the PM system. It became evident that PM systems are often poorly implemented, which results in employees and line managers facing numerous challenges (Aguinis, 2019; Samal, 2019). Reviewed research further emphasised the negative impact of poor communication and mistrust between employees and line managers on the PM system as one of the factors that significantly impact on the effectiveness of a PM system (Samal, 2019)

## **2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

As indicated in the specific literature review aims of this study, this chapter firstly aimed to conceptualise PM and its related constructs, and secondly to explore the factors that impact on the effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system. This literature review considered both local and international studies conducted in public service organisations.

It can be concluded that gaps in knowledge about the experiences of employees and line managers of the perceived effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system are evident. The effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system in government departments is still not adequately researched. This study aims to add to the body of knowledge by further exploring the lived experiences of employees and line managers of the perceived effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system. Furthermore, to make recommendations towards enhancing the effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system, specifically in a governmental context.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the research design, approach, strategy and methodology adopted for this study. The research method describes the research setting, entrée and establishes the researcher's role as the primary instrument, sampling, data collection methods, data recording, data analysis, reporting, strategies employed to ensure quality data and ethical considerations.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design refers to the strategy or plan that will be used to conduct the scientific study (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The purpose of a research design is to provide a detailed plan of how the study will be conducted and which approach it will follow (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The research design is concerned with making decisions about the research components, such as the research purpose, research questions, sampling, data collection, data analysis and scope of conclusions (Schoonenboom, 2018). A qualitative descriptive research design was chosen for this study. Qualitative research refers to the research method that studies subjects in the natural setting where the phenomenon occurs (Salkind, 2018). In line with the research questions presented earlier, the research design is structured according to the research approach, strategy and method to be discussed below.

### **3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH**

A qualitative, interpretive research approach was applied to explore the factors that impact on the effectiveness of the different phases of the PM system (Taylor et al., 2016). The overall purpose of the research is therefore descriptive as it seeks to understand and describe the experiences of employees with a specific PM system. In line with qualitative research, the qualitative interpretive approach informed the data collection, data analysis,

and interpretation of the findings of this study (Tarab, 2019). Qualitative researchers examine the phenomenon within the context in which it occurs (Salkind, 2018). Qualitative research studies people in their natural setting and believes there are multiple truths from different contexts (Flick, 2018; Tarab, 2019). Therefore, this study aimed to provide an opportunity to the employees to describe their lived experience concerning the effectiveness of the PM system (Taylor et al., 2016).

In a qualitative study, the collected data are analysed to give a new interpretation of a construct from a new setting. By applying specific paradigms, the phenomenon was given a new coverage and new trends were uncovered. To this effect, data was collected using semi-structured interviews and the data was analysed by means of grounded theory to obtain themes from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The interpretive perspective purports that researchers must adopt an empathetic approach to understand participants' views (Tarab, 2019). In this study, the researcher expressed researcher empathy (Tarab, 2019). Open-ended questions were posed to collect data, and to construct and describe reality as experienced by the participants (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

### **3.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY**

The research strategy is the research guide illustrating step-by-step how the study is conducted. The current study used a descriptive research strategy to grant the participants an opportunity to describe their lived experiences according to how they understood it (Al-Ababneh, 2020). Therefore, this research adopted a descriptive research strategy as it was deemed fit to assist in exploring the employees' perceived effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system. This assisted the researcher to derive meaning and answer the research questions (Al-Ababneh, 2020). The researcher further used an inductive approach and interviewed the participants to understand their lived experiences. The researcher relied on the results from the interview to make recommendations towards improving the effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system (Al-Ababneh, 2020).

## **3.5 RESEARCH METHOD**

Research method refers to the methodological approach the researcher adopts to conduct the research (Bryman & Bell, 2014). The research method includes outlining the research setting, entrée and establishing the researcher's role, sampling, data collection, recording of the data, data analysis, reporting, and strategies to ensure quality data and all ethical considerations. The following section describes the research methodology in more detail.

### **3.5.1 Research setting**

The study was conducted in a South African government department exploring the lived experiences of 11 participants - six employees, three line managers and two PM system specialists who are also line managers, from different directorates based in the head office. The interviews were conducted using an online platform, namely Microsoft teams due to Covid-19 regulations. The Covid 19 guidelines under alert level 3 restricted face to face interviews to prevent Covid 19 infections (Meyiwa, 2020). The interviews were conducted virtually and due to poor video of Microsoft teams, it was hard to observe behaviour of participants as they shared their experiences. Network was also an issue during load shedding, interviews would be cut and had to continue when the power was back and the participants would forget some of the points. The participants were given an opportunity to choose the time of the interview that suited them best and allowed them to be at a private, secure location to conduct the interview uninterrupted. The researcher assisted participants on how to use Microsoft teams, using WhatsApp video call to demonstrate to those who were not familiar with teams.

### **3.5.2 Entrée and establishing researcher roles**

The researcher is part of the organisation in which the study was conducted. The researcher is employed in the Employee Wellness section responsible for events co-ordination. The researcher does not work in the performance management section of the



HR department. The research was not conducted as a request from the HR department, but rather to fulfil the requirements towards completing a Master's degree at the University of South Africa. Permission was granted by the head of the HR department to conduct the research. Employees and line managers were invited to participate in the study. Those interested were provided with more information to make an informed decision and were asked to sign the informed consent form prior to the data collection process. The researcher explained her role and created rapport with the participants to get them to freely share their lived experience of the perceived effectiveness of the various phases of the PM system (Bryman & Bell, 2014). As the researcher was not in a position of authority, the participants did not feel forced to participate in the study.

### **3.5.3 Sampling**

Population refers to the larger group of people from which a sample is drawn to represent the organisation during the study (Salkind, 2018). In this study, the population encompassed all the employees within the government department and comprised more than a thousand permanent employees. The sample refers to a small, selected group to represent a whole population, this study used a sample of 11 participants (Salkind, 2018). Consistent with qualitative research, this study adopted purposive sampling to select participants (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). According to Moser and Korstjens (2018), purposive sampling refers to the selection of participants who can speak with experience on the research topic and assist in answering the research questions. The research seeks to investigate and interpret the participant's perceived effectiveness of the PM system and the sample represents participants with rich experience. Data saturation was reached when there were enough information and the themes emerging were the same, with no new themes emerging from the data (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied when selecting participants. The inclusion criteria included any individual with a minimum of five years' work experience in the organisation and who had insight into and experience of the PM system. The sample included males and females participants. Employees between the ages of 23 and 65 were

considered as they could then have been employed for five years up to 65 years, which is the retirement age. In addition, further inclusion criteria were applied in the case of the line manager in that the line manager participants must have been in a line manager position for a minimum of five years. This ensured that they had sufficient insight and experience with the PM system. The exclusion criteria applied to the sample concerned participants younger than 23 years and who have fewer than five years' experience in the organisation. In addition, line managers who had been on the position for fewer than five years were excluded as it was concluded that they had not yet obtained extensive experience and knowledge of the PM system.

#### **3.5.4 Data collection methods**

Data collection is the process that involves gathering information for the researcher to analyse, interpret and draw research conclusions from (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Data collection in a qualitative interpretive study is about understanding people's subjective experiences by gaining insight into their natural setting (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). It depends on what each participant believes to be the truth about the phenomenon. The researcher, through interaction with the participants, gained a deeper understanding of the experience as seen through the eyes of each participant and to understand how they constructed meaning by telling their story (Neubauer et al., 2019).

An interview protocol guide was used to guide the researcher and to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the participants as aligned to the aims of this study (see Annexure C) (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The researcher compiled a list of questions to give direction during the interview session and to ensure the discussion stayed aligned to the aims of the study. The following questions guided the interview:

- When did you start working for this organisation as a permanent employee?

- Are you familiar with the all the phases of performance management system? (At this point the researcher will confirm the phases to ensure the participant and researcher are in sync.)
- How can you describe your experience with each phase of the performance management system?
- Considering the different phases of the performance management system, what do you believe works well?
- Do you believe the phases of performance management system at this organisation have all achieve their intended purposes?
- Again, considering the different phases of the performance management system, what recommendation would you like to make towards improving the effectiveness of the performance management system?

The researcher commenced by appreciating the participants for their valued inputs and thanked them for willingly consenting to take part in the study. Participants were requested to sign the informed consent form after which they were assured that they were free to withdraw at any point if they no longer wished to continue. The researcher then re-affirmed the background information of the study, the motivation for it and the role of the participant. Permission was then requested and granted by the participants for the interview to be recorded. The participants were informed that the researcher would also make notes as they responded to the questions. The interviewer kept probing and reminding the participants of the research aims throughout the sessions, when needed. Semi-structured interviews involve repetition to probe further the participants' insights through follow-up questions until there is a clear understanding (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Therefore, the researcher used different techniques like repeating what the participant mentioned, to encourage participants to open up and share their stories (Bryman & Bell, 2014). The questions were explored further by probing questions,

confirmatory questions and paraphrasing to keep the loose, flexible semi-structure. The interviews were concluded with the researcher again expressing gratitude for their participation, explaining how the data will be used and the process participants should follow to request the results, should they wish.

### **3.5.5 Recording of data**

The research was conducted in line with ethical standards as set out in the Ethical Rules of Conduct by the Professional Board for Psychology of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA, 2006). Participants gave consent for the interviews to be recorded prior to the commencement of the interviews. Participants were also asked to give informed consent prior to the interview (see Annexure B). The interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed by the researcher herself. Recording the data also allowed the researcher to keep record of the interviews and to revisit the recordings during the data analysis process (Kelly et al., 2018). The recordings and transcriptions were kept in a safe, password-protected place, only accessible to the researcher and her supervisor.

### **3.5.6 Data analysis**

According to Creswell (2014), data analysis is all about giving meaning to the data that was collected during a study. The process of data analysis involves working through the information collected to try and understand in detail what it conveys (Creswell, 2014). This study adopted grounded theory as data analysis method. Grounded theory is a qualitative data analysis methodology that aims to compare collected data and develop a theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In grounded theory, the activities that take place are regarded as indicators of a phenomenon and are given conceptual labels (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Grounded theory focuses on building theory using empirical data and also on finding the relationship among categorised themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Therefore, the researcher classified the data into smaller, more manageable themes (Elo et al., 2014).

Data collection and data analysis go hand in hand, and the researcher writes notes and analysis the participants as the interview progresses (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In this study, data analysis began immediately after the first interview, meaning that data collection and analysis took place at the same time (Creswell, 2014). The researcher read the transcribed interviews and wrote notes and headings in the margin (Elo et al., 2014). The researcher focused on the most interesting data and the meaning of the content to create codes (Creswell, 2014). For the purpose of trustworthiness and for other researchers to replicate this study, the researcher aimed to report in detail on the data analysis process that was followed (Henning et al., 2005).

#### *3.5.6.1 Grounded theory data analysis steps*

Data collection and data analysis in grounded theory follow a circular motion as the process is ongoing as the researcher conducts interviews and analyses it at the same time (Charmaz, 2006). According to Charmaz (2006), data analysis in grounded theory follows the process that begins with open coding, axial coding, selective coding and then interpretation of the phenomena. The data must first be broken down into codes, thereafter the data will be organised around the different concepts emerging. Thirdly, grouping the categories resulting from the concepts and lastly presenting the theory that is grounded in the data in the form of themes and sub-themes (Connor & Hagan, 2015). Grounded theory is an inductive methodology that allows comparisons of themes, and offers steps on how to collect data, analyse and conceptualise qualitative data. The process applied are more inductive in nature than deductive (DePoy & Gitlin, 2016). The steps will be discussed in more detail below.

Open coding is the first step in the grounded theory data analysis process. This step includes the process where the researcher codes the data sentence by sentence whilst generating concepts, putting labels to the concepts and creating categories (Johansson, 2019). The researcher then arranged these phenomena into codes according to specific elements (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The researcher labelled topics or subjects that came up from the data codes (Charmaz, 2006). The topics were continuously compared to each

other (Silverman, 2000), to classify codes that were comparable to those in interviews that came after the first interview, where the data presented new topics. Considering Corbin and Strauss's (2015) recommendations, the researcher continued with this process throughout all the interviews, until it became apparent that themes were being repeated and no new data were emerging. The researcher also continuously made use of *memoing* as this prompts one to analyse the data collected early in the research process (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher captured the memos and pasted them next to the transcribed data and interview notes. The ideas that came to the mind during the process based on specific occurrences in the data, were recorded in the notebook (Locke, 2001). Memoing also reflects how the researcher analysed, thought about and interpreted the data and questions the researcher asked (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

The second step is axial coding, which involves looking for the link between the categories and sub-categories derived from participants' voices (Charmaz, 2006). The categories were then grouped together to create core categories or phenomenon (Lacey & Luff, 2009). During axial coding, the researcher identified single sub-themes and began exploring the interrelationship between them. From this, the researcher developed a coding paradigm in order to portray these interrelationships visually. The researcher also made a distinct effort to see relationships between different themes and sub-themes, and to reason the positioning of certain data across the interviews (Lacey & Luff, 2009).

Thereafter, the researcher moved to selective coding and began to write the theory that was drawn for the data (Johansson, 2019). The researcher verified the relationships among themes in order to integrate them and develop the grounded theory (Johansson, 2019). The data was given meaning by applying interpretivism as the paradigm guiding this study and towards seeking to understand how people interpreted their lived experiences with the phenomenon and how they give meaning to it (Charmaz, 2006). Interpretivism places emphasis on participants' interpretation, perceptions and own meaning of a phenomenon (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Interpretivism focusses on the participants' lived experiences and allows them to tell their own stories. In this study, the researcher went through the responses repeatedly, scrutinising, reorganising and

analysing the interview responses to make sure that nothing is omitted, and the real meaning is not missed.

According to Flick (2018) the interpretation of data in qualitative research is crucial. During the interpretation of the data analysis of this study, the following phases were applied. The first phase consisted of all the responses from the participants to bring their voices to life. Secondly, the interpretation phase involves the researcher's reflections, mirroring of own opinions and views and making sure they do not influence the interpretation of the data. Finally, the third interpretation phase involves presenting a broad discussion of the phenomenon and making sure every little detail is unpacked to get a clear understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). During data interpretation, the researcher scrutinised her own viewpoints and beliefs to ensure these do not skew the findings and that the interpretations were ultimately a true and correct representation of the participants' voices.

### **3.5.7 Reporting**

The findings of the study are presented in a narrative manner by providing thick and rich descriptions of the findings supported by unedited verbatim quotations to give life to the voice of participants and to provide support to the researcher's data interpretations (Patton, 2015). Through data analysis, key themes and sub-themes emerged and were reported on to give a holistic account of the participants' experiences of the effectiveness of the PM system. The participants' responses enabled the researcher to make recommendations towards enhancing the effectiveness of the PM system under study. The researcher made use of pseudonyms to refer to the participants, they are referred to as Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 7, Participant 8, Participant 9, Participant 10 and Participant 11.

### **3.5.8 Strategies employed to ensure quality data**

To ensure quality data and findings, researchers must prove that the data are trustworthy by being conscious of their own experiences, theories, understanding and beliefs (Anney, 2014). In qualitative studies, validity and reliability are substituted by trustworthiness used for promoting values such as professional ethics, rigour and transparency (Connelly, 2016). Trustworthiness or rigour in qualitative research refers to the extent to which a study's findings and the criteria used in ensuring its quality, can be trusted (Connelly, 2016; Polit & Beck, 2014). It is important for a qualitative researcher to ensure that the data is free of bias by having a system that ensures the data is worthy (Amankwaa, 2016). The researcher remained professional, honest and truthful, and the participants were not manipulated or coerced to give their answers. It is of the utmost importance for a researcher to ensure that the findings of a study are a true reflection of participants' experiences. The researcher included verbatim quotes from participants to show that the findings are a true representation of their voices (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Strategies to ensure trustworthiness of a study include that the researcher must acknowledge and be accountable for his or her personal bias, which might influence the study (Polit & Beck, 2014). The researcher ensured careful record keeping, was consistent and transparent with data interpretations and ensured that there was a clear decision trail (Amankwaa, 2016). Trustworthiness in qualitative research speaks to examining the manner in which the researcher recorded and interpreted the meaning of participants' responses (Polit & Beck, 2014). The researcher must present the data findings in a way that keeps the original meaning and does not alter the voices of the participants, showing how the interpretations were concluded (Amankwaa, 2016). Considering all of the above, the researcher will now report on how credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and reflexivity were worked with and ensured.

#### *3.5.8.1 Credibility*

According to Connelly (2016), credibility refers to the researcher's self-assurance in knowing the 'truth' about X that their study uncovered. In this study, credibility was



obtained by firstly piloting the research questions with the first participant to ensure they are well aligned to the aims of this study. Also, by reading the verbatim transcriptions of the interviews to ensure that they accurately reflect what was recorded during the interviews. During the interviews, the researcher also ensured that the participants understood the questions. Adequate time was allocated to each interview to ensure that the participants had sufficient time to answer the research questions in a credible manner (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Kyngas et al., 2020). The researcher further engaged with the supervisor to ensure that the data analysis process followed was accurate and presented a true account of the voice of the participants and that verbatim quotes supported the analysis and interpretation of the data accurately (Ramsook, 2018). Furthermore, the researcher assessed the data to account for personal bias, which could influence the research findings. The interviews were recorded on Microsoft Teams after the participants granted their permission to participate in the study. The researcher took notes during the interview and carefully transcribed the audio clips. To ensure reliability, the researcher repeatedly listened to the audio recorded interviews, and compared it with the transcribed data.

#### 3.5.8.2 *Transferability*

Transferability means that descriptions and results of a particular study are provided to enable other researchers to conduct similar research with different populations and in different contexts (Anney, 2014). The goal of this study was not to generalise the findings to other people and contexts. However, Gunawan (2015) assert that a researcher must be able to give all details pertaining to the background of the research and the research design and methodology followed, to enable other researchers to apply the research process in other contexts. Therefore, to enable future researchers to apply the results in other settings, the researcher documented all steps that were followed and provided sufficient details of the participants' experiences of the effectiveness of the phases of the PM system at a specific government department.

### 3.5.8.3 *Dependability*

Dependability refers to the stability and reliability of the research findings over time (Connelly, 2016). A study is reliable if it can be repeated (Elo et al., 2014). For this study, the researcher ensured dependability by maintaining consistency during the process of data collection, data analysis and reporting of the findings. The researcher used verbatim quotes to ensure dependability by reporting on the exact responses and voices of the participants. Relationships between the theoretical and empirical parts of this study were also outlined. Questions were asked, including follow-up questions, and the participants were given enough time to share their experiences and perceptions without any hindrances. The researcher's supervisor was also involved in ensuring that the research findings, interpretations and conclusions were drawn from the data without bias.

### 3.5.8.4 *Confirmability*

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the research findings reflect the participants' true stories and that they are not influenced by the researchers' own prejudice, bias and motives (Forero et al., 2018). To ensure confirmability, the researcher wrote down all the steps taken in collecting the data from beginning to end (Forero et al., 2018). Furthermore, the researcher was continuously mindful to not allow her views, beliefs and perceptions to influence the data collection, analysis and interpretation (Anney, 2014).

### 3.5.8.5 *Reflexivity*

Through reflexivity, the researcher was able to reflect on the "self" as the primary research instrument (Palaganas et al., 2017). The researcher was aware of the level of influence that a researcher has on the data collection process, data analysis and interpretation (Palaganas et al., 2017). All aspects of the qualitative research study rely on how the researcher will critically reflect on his or her role, as that will impact on the interpretation of the data. Thus, reflexivity refers to the researcher's level of self-awareness and consciousness of his or her values, beliefs and bias about the topic being researched

(Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher must also be able to handle the emotions displayed by the participants, and act on them appropriately (Palaganas et al., 2017).

### **3.5.9 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations in research come into play from sampling, data collection, data analysis up until the reporting of the findings (Welman et al., 2005). Ethics is important in research to ensure the researcher conducts the research in a professional, authentic and accountable manner (Welman et al., 2005). In studies that include humans as participants, ethical considerations ensure subjects are protected from harm by making sure they participate voluntarily, and that their rights are protected. The roles of the researcher and participants are clearly specified (Welman et al., 2005). The most important ethical issues to consider during a research project will now be discussed.

#### *3.5.9.1 Ethical clearance*

The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of South Africa's Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology's Research Ethics Review Committee (see Annexure A). The researcher requested gatekeeper permission from the head of the HR Department in the government department and ensured that all protocols were observed. Upon receiving approval from the gatekeeper and ethical clearance, the researcher commenced with the research.

#### *3.5.9.2 Informed consent*

The researcher informed potential participants about the purpose of the study and what was expected of them and how data was going to be collected if they wished to participate. All interested participants were required to sign an informed consent form prior to the interviews being conducted (see Annexure B). Before the interviews commenced, the researcher once again went through the informed consent form to ensure that all the participants were comfortable to proceed.

### 3.5.9.3 *Voluntary participation*

The researcher assured the participants that their participation was voluntary. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they so wished without any judgement or negative consequences. The participants confirmed that they were volunteering and were not in any way coerced, remunerated or bribed to participate in the study.

### 3.5.9.4 *Protection from harm, including Covid-19 protocols followed*

According to Salkind (2018), the researcher must protect respondents from harm, respect their right to privacy by not using their personal information without their consent, not forcing people to participate, requesting them to sign the informed consent form and guaranteeing confidentiality. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the researcher ensured adherence to all protocols as outlined by both government regulations and UNISA's Covid-19 guidelines (Meyiwa, 2020). Subsequently, interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams.

### 3.5.9.5 *Privacy and confidentiality*

To ensure anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were used instead of their real names. The participants were referred to, for example, as Participant 1, Participant 2, and so forth. Furthermore, interviews were conducted at a time and place where the participants had privacy. All electronic copies of the data collected will be kept safe on a computer that is password protected for five years, hard copies will be stored in a locked cabinet at home. The researcher and the supervisor are the only people with access to the data collected. As the researcher is registered as a student in Psychology and the supervisor is a registered Psychologist within the category Industrial at the HPCSA, both adhered to the Psychological Code of Conduct and all ethical guidelines prescribed to protect the data and the participants against any harm.

### **3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the research design, approach, strategy and methodology adopted for this study. The research method described the research setting, entrée and the researcher's role, the researcher as primary instrument, sampling, data collection methods, data recording, data analysis, reporting, strategies employed to ensure quality data and ethical considerations.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the data analysis. The presentation is accompanied by a detailed discussion of the perceived effectiveness of the phases of a government PM system, as experienced by the participants. Firstly, this chapter will relay the demographic data of the employees who participated in the study (see Table 4.1). Secondly, a detailed account will be presented in terms of the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the data analysis guided by the grounded theory methodology. The themes and sub-themes are illustrated in Table 4.2. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the findings of the empirical part of this study.

### 4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.1 provides an outline of the demographics of the research participants.

**Table 4.1**

#### **Participant demographics**

<b>Employee pseudonyms</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Position in the organisation</b>	<b>Year permanently employed from</b>
Participant 1	Female	African	45	Employee salary level 9	2007
Participant 2	Male	African	45	Employee salary level 9	2012

Participant 3	Female	African	43	Employee salary level 10	2004
Participant 4	Male	African	38	Employee salary level 6	2011
Participant 5	Male	African	40	Line manager salary level 11	2010
Participant 6	Female	African	41	Employee salary level 9	2006
Participant 7	Male	African	48	Employee salary level 10	2002
Participant 8	Male	African	49	External specialist salary level 11	2010
Participant 9	Male	African	41	Internal specialist salary level 11	2016
Participant 10	Male	African	52	Chief director- line manager salary level 14	1997
Participant 11	Male	Coloured	45	Office Manager-line manager salary level 12	2003

### 4.3 THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Table 4.2 below illustrates the four main themes and sub-themes that emanated from the empirical data findings. The four main themes are experience with performance planning and the agreement phase; experience with the performance monitoring phase; experience with the evaluation and reward phase; and finally, the recommendations. A detailed discussion will be presented below of each of these four themes and the subsequent sub-themes.

**Table 4.2**

#### **Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis**

Themes	Sub-themes
Experience with performance planning and agreement phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracting performance objectives and standard</li> <li>• Compliance</li> <li>• Misaligned skills development</li> </ul>
Experience with performance monitoring phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of commitment</li> </ul>
Experience with evaluation and reward phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misunderstanding of the evaluation purpose</li> <li>• The fairness of the evaluation process</li> <li>• Lack of support from management</li> <li>• Lack of consequence for management</li> <li>• Lack of confidence in evaluation committee</li> </ul>
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees and line managers' recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the performance management system</li> </ul>



### 4.3.1 Theme 1: Experience with performance planning and agreement phase

The first theme that emerged from the data pertains to the participants' experience of the performance planning and agreement phase. The sub-themes that emerged are contracting performance objectives and standards, compliance, and misaligned skills development.

#### 4.3.1.1 Contracting performance objectives and standards

Participant 7 shared his views on why PAs are done stating that they are merely done for the sake of compliance and that all employees are obliged to enter into a PA contract with their manager.

*They will just call on you for compliance purposes and then you go and sit down and then you start arguing about what you were supposed to be doing vis-a-vis the agreement if you had any in place and mostly people will just sign off the performance agreement for the sake of compliance without necessarily understanding. (Participant 7)*

Participant 11 revealed that in most instances, managers were reluctant to discuss with employees how their objectives are aligned with those of the organisation.

*Now for my experience, to answer your question, that doesn't necessarily happen it does not happen in that way, because for me, to have my performance agreement aligned to my supervisor's, it means I must see my supervisor's one first, and we never see them. I have never seen my supervisor performance agreement. So, it is not done in terms of the guidelines and directives from the DPSA, so, I don't think we are doing it properly, that is my personal view. (Participant 11)*

Participant 7 agrees with Participant 11 and states how no discussion that takes place to ensure a better understanding of what is expected of employees, and that it seems to be a mere compliance exercise.

*People will do as I explained before just throw these papers to subordinates to sign there's no proper discussion and no understanding of what somebody's objectives are you understanding divisional objectives.*

Participant 6 stated that some employees merely take previous years' PAs, sign them and forward them to their line managers, who then sign them off without any discussion taking place to discuss the related KPAs.

*You just print what you printed last year and then you just be signing it off.*  
(Participant 6)

According to Participant 6, the PM system documents never change since they have been doing the same job for years. Hence, when it is time for submission, they take documents from previous years, change dates and submit. Participant 6 added:

*It will be something that you signed last year so you would print it out and sign it off just change your date, you change date or maybe by any chance your supervisor is changed you change the name of that, but the content it would remain the same there wouldn't be some form of discussion.*

Contrary to the experiences of the participants noted above, two participants indicated a different experience in that they do have meetings with their line managers to discuss their KPAs. It is noted by Participant 1 and Participant 2 how in their divisions, performance planning is done according to the book, and that the manager always conducts meetings to discuss objectives. Participants 1 and Participant 2 further shared that they experienced good communication during the planning phase and while contracting the PA and setting the objectives.

*My boss calls me to a one-on-one meeting to talk about all that I am going to be doing for the whole year, we discuss the plan and we agree and disagree but at the end we agree and sign. (Participant 1)*

*We sit down and discuss the objectives, check my key performance areas and then we go through them and we agree that's what you should be doing and by doing that we will be achieving the objectives of the component or of the organisation. Then we sign. (Participant 2)*

In support of Participant 1 and Participant 2, Participant 3 noted how in some instances, the manager developed plans for the employees, and then called them to a meeting to discuss those plans.

*Like the manager will develop the plan for us, and we would meet and discuss the plan and thereafter we will agree. (Participant 3)*

Participant 4 indicated that during the planning phase, managers never inform them about the objectives they need to meet and the standard against which these objectives will be measured.

*When everyone is informed when everyone understands what is expected of them, when everyone understands how is this objective calculated. If they say quality how is it measured. If you understand then its fine, they say just say at the end that four mistakes equal to 20 per cent, I must know at hand that this is how this is going to be calculated then I think that is fair. (Participant 4)*

Participant 3 and Participant 5 both noted how objectives often do not align with what they believe needs to be done and what management perceives.

*Somewhere along the way, you will realise that the objectives, do not align with what you want to do. (Participant 3)*

*For him to sign or else he will have disagreement then I take to the chief director, because now we would have discussed what is in the work programme for section or division, and how are we going to achieve that. Because sometimes your immediate director that you report to, sometimes they do not align well. (Participant 5)*

As voiced by Participant 3, their manager would set goals for employees that were not attainable, just to set them up for failure. This further shows that during the agreement phase, some employees signed without interrogating the objectives to see if they meet the smart principles.

*They give you unrealistic objectives which the manager will know that you won't be able to achieve them or if he feels like giving you something that you can't achieve. (Participant 3)*

Participant 5 mentioned that employees work on the performance plan alone and then send it to the line managers for them to sign. He further revealed that he sometimes works with his manager's boss, who will sign the PA for him. Furthermore, Participant 5 said that his line manager does not understand most of the work he does.

*I do it alone, and it depends with who am working with as well, because sometimes I would sign directly with the chief director. No, with us I don't sit with him, I don't sit with him and the dilemma is 90% of my work, he doesn't even understand it. (Participant 5)*

Participant 4 indicated how, over the years, attempts to express dissatisfaction and requests for changes on how their objectives are structured, were not acknowledged by management.

*Management just do things their way without inputs from the people actually doing the work, communication seems to be only one way. The objectives are not clear for them to understand and they are not getting clarity form managers. Over the years when there are some disagreements with some of the objectives that are put in place, you'll find that it's very difficult to actually get what you want as juniors or to actually get the necessary clarity on certain objectives. They (management) don't want us to have views on the objectives that are there, they say, is what they say, and it ends there. (Participant 4)*

#### 4.3.1.2 Compliance

Participants indicated that most line managers complete the PAs just to comply and rarely follow the prescribed process step-by-step. Participant 5 observed how some employees just become passengers on this journey as performance is not really measured effectively.

*In terms of performance, we are doing service for compliance sake that is all I can tell you. Because, why am I saying this? Even in terms of performance agreement, you find that in one section, you would find so many deviations that are not talking to each other, so, that's why I'm saying for me, where I'm sitting, we are just doing them, in terms of performance management, we are just doing it for compliance sake, we are not doing justice, because there is no true measure of efforts and energy it has to be spent on every step of the way, hence we have people that becomes passengers in the system. (Participant 5)*

Participant 6 and Participant 8 indicated that employees and line managers merely sign off the PAs without having any constructive evaluation discussions to determine if objectives have been met. It is merely a case of meeting deadlines and submitting documents in time to the PM system section.

*Normally over the years what would happen it's because is due, you know it's a compliance issue, because its due submission is nearing because normally it should be in by 31<sup>st</sup> of May. (Participant 6)*

*According to me all the processes are ineffective because the implementation is wrong, in fact people are just doing everything for malicious compliance just to meet the deadlines, just to make sure that they have submitted because they are required to, they know if they don't submit, maybe they will be some consequence. (Participant 8)*

Participant 11, a line manager, pointed to the DPSA (2018) directive, which indicates a supervisor's performance plan must be aligned with the plans of the subordinates. However, this does not seem to happen. According to Participant 11, the line managers neglected to discuss the division's objectives and to indicate how they are allocated within the division, during divisional meetings.

*To answer your question, that doesn't necessarily happen it does not happen in that way, because for me, to have my performance agreement aligned to my supervisor, it means I must see my supervisor's one first, and we never see them I have never seen my supervisor, It is not done in terms of the guidelines and directives from the DPSA, so, I don't think we are doing it properly, that is my personal view. I'm obviously not happy with the way that we are doing, it we can do better. (Participant 11)*

Participant 8 highlighted that nothing is done about the PM system until the submission dates are received from DPSA. Consequently, employees would wait until the last hour to complete and submit the documents, with some even missing the deadline.

*Most managers wait for the submission date to be released by DPSA to start planning. They are always rushing to meet the deadline and thus compromise the*

*quality of the work. On this matter. Those people even on the strategic plan start to rush, they no longer making quality. (Participant 8)*

Participant 9, a PM system specialist, further indicates that the challenge with the PM system process is also due to poor planning by management.

*The challenge with the PM system process is also due to poor planning from the management. (Participant 9)*

#### 4.3.1.3 *Misaligned skills development*

Participant 10, a senior manager, indicated that in the organisation, training of employees is often neglected.

*Managers find ourselves caught between work done and what skills set are required for training this person, and the supervisor is judged, reviewed or evaluated according to work done. Therefore, the supervisors are concentrating more of their energy on work done and negligibly not considering training and capacitating employees. (Participant 10)*

Participant 3 mentioned that it was hard for the organisation to take them for training, although the employees had identified their need for improvement.

*The challenge is the issue of when it comes to training, you will be having your plan after making it submit it, when submitting it has issues of training, but at the end of the you find that you end up finishing the whole year without attending training that you were supposed to attend. (Participant 3)*

Participant 8 indicated that according to him there is no guarantee that the courses indicated on employees' personal development form will be attended. He further mentioned that the employer might take you to the course or might not.

*Personal development plan (PDP) is the plan not necessarily that you will go to those training as indicated maybe the employer might have some training that are priority for that particular year. (Participant 8)*

Participant 2 felt that the training needs on their PDP were addressed through the internal training that is offered by the organisation.

*The training needs that I put were always taken care of I think It's because it's what they are providing internally so whatever that I wanted or that I asked for Is what was provided internally. (Participant 2)*

Participant 5 and Participant 7 highlighted the importance of employees taking the responsibility and ownership to ensure they gain access to appropriate training. This responsibility also entailed participants enquiring from HR about their skills training, especially if training needs are stipulated on the personal development plan. If the employees do not take it upon themselves to inquire about training, they might never attend any.

*Nobody bothers, unless I start asking that maybe try to follow them then they will start telling me because the issue of training it is either, if for me it is paining me I will start following up and say no I wanted to go this training but then I haven't been awarded the opportunity. (Participant 5)*

*If you don't stand up and do it yourself, nobody will do it, mostly in my unit, staff members of my same rank, we sit down and discuss what can we do, they will probably complete the forms and choose in terms of priority courses to do or which training needs they have, and one of them would run around with the documents to actually arrange that's what we have been doing realising that from the top we are not going to get far. (Participant 7)*



Participant 9 said that the trainings offered internally are mostly just for compliance purposes, Participant 9 also indicated that people would be sent to training that is not even relevant to their jobs.

*There is training for impact and training for activity, training for activity is just for sending people for training like for example, you find that they send you to attend training on performance management, but you do not work in performance management section, you will ask yourself why are they sending me to go do training on statistics or survey training while I'm in HR or I'm an engineer you see, so they are just chasing numbers to achieve the numbers because the training ought to happen. (Participant 9)*

#### **4.3.2 Theme 2: Experiences with performance monitoring phase**

Another prominent theme that emerged from the data was the employees' experiences of the monitoring phase of the PM system. 'Lack of commitment' emerged as a sub-theme during data analysis. The participants indicated that the performance monitoring phase is the most neglected and ineffective phase of the PM system in the organisation.

##### *4.3.2.1 Lack of commitment*

Numerous participants highlighted how they experience that managers fail to regularly check-in and engage in performance management discussions. On the contrary, management rather seems to wait until it is time for the bi-annual or annual reviews before they engage in conversation with the employees about their performance to determine whether their performance is in line with the set objectives and standards. This can be seen as a lack of commitment on the part of management to ensure the PM system is implemented effectively throughout the year. As noted by Participant 11, this lack of commitment and engagement often leads to conflict and ineffective monitoring. Also, it leads to performance issues not being addressed timeously and the work progresses, leading to further issues.

According to participant 11, the monitoring phase poses a problem since it is not being conducted correctly. Furthermore, it is done for compliance and there is no commitment.

*The DPSA directive says for levels 1 to 12 they have 2 compulsory evaluations it's bi-annual review and then final evaluation, at the end of the year. Now, it says that you can do the other 2 quarterly once voluntarily, but nobody does that, they only do the compulsory one and those compulsory ones they are not even done to monitor the work, they are just done for compliance, so, the work is not monitored, as a results when you have to come now and evaluate yourself at the end of year and score yourself, there's serious fight between you and your manager, because right through the year nobody was monitoring your work for the purposes of performance management. (Participant 11)*

Participant 10 revealed that line managers complete monitoring forms, but do not monitor the progress of employees.

*It's mostly a matter of completing the monitoring forms, I don't think there is too much emphasis that is put on monitoring. (Participant 10)*

Participant 11's experience in the organisation has been that performance management is when people complete bi-annual reviews and annual review documents and then just submit them. The discussions only take place during annual reviews. Furthermore, employees are not involved in the matter, or have their performance checked to identify skills gaps.

*Performance management is now confined to bi-annual review and then the final annual review. This one (lack of monitoring) is from the top, because on the top they will not even do that. The time for evaluations, they will come and say we want proof, what proof the whole year you never looked at my work. (Participant 11)*

Participant 6 indicated that monitoring is done by merely completing bi-annual review forms showing the progress. However, there is no discussion with the manager or continuous checking of progress.

*We will just complete the forms for bi-annual reviews, just to submit for compliance, and not interact with the on progress matters will be very minimal over the past 10 years or 13 years, maybe I can say maybe we would have had 3 incidents (interaction about work progress) like that if I remember it wouldn't be every annual circle. (Participant 6)*

Participant 9 indicated that to most managers, performance monitoring is not as important, therefore they do not focus on it.

*It's just a process, to them it's just a process maybe they are busy with other bigger commitment and when it comes to the administration of some HR functions they don't put that much effort. (Participant 9)*

After being asked if the monitoring phase was effective, Participant 6 said:

*It is not effective, I don't know what it is missing but it is not completely thoroughly done, so from the agreement itself to during the monitoring there is something missing I don't know if maybe I'm exaggerating or am comparing with the private sector. (Participant 6)*

Participant 10's experience with the monitoring phase is that it is not being taken seriously and it is simply not being done.

*I think it is one of those neglected areas that we have in the organisation, not monitoring. (Participant 10)*

Another PM system specialist, Participant 8, expressed that management do not take the monitoring phase seriously and they do it incorrectly.

*The monitoring phase is also not correctly done. (Participant 8)*

Participant 7 indicated that when it comes to the scoring of performance, there appears to be conflict between employees and the line manager due to the fact that there was no ongoing monitoring, hence employees will not agree with low scores from managers.

*Because people are not agreeing on the score, that should be a clear indication that certain things were not done properly on a quarterly or bi-annual basis. Remember, if you do your quarterly performance evaluations reviews you are not going to argue about the same thing come the end of the performance circle. Because they have addressed the shortcomings in the second quarter and the third quarter and the fourth quarter but now you go and sit with person in at the end of performance circle and they are telling you of possible things that you might have done wrongly in the first quarter. (Participant 7)*

Participant 11, a line manager, indicated that the problem with lack of monitoring also emanates from the managers' freedom and power to decide whether to monitor employees' performance or to neglect the process altogether.

*It's about individual managers who do not comply with the guidelines or the directives. The only way that the organisation will find out there is a problem is the end of the year, when there are disputes, people disagreeing on the scores. The only problem is when there are disputes, because your supervisor for instance, you didn't work but the supervisor will only tell you at the end of the year. (Participant 11)*

Participant 10 believes in order to ensure successful PM, sufficient time and resources should be allocated.

*The entire performance management system process requires a lot of time and resources, which are not allocated. (Participant 10)*

In contrast, Participant 11 believes there was enough time allocated to do performance monitoring and evaluations.

*Managers in this organisation are not busy because they are too many, however in my experience most managers are just not fully committed. There is enough time to do performance monitoring, I even have time to do all the staff. Some managers are just lazy and not taking monitoring serious. (Participant 11)*

Participant 8, a PM system specialist, shared that prior to the introduction of the new regulation by DPSA, employees did not comply. However, training assisted a lot.

*The training that was provided when introducing the new DPSA (2018) assisted a lot. (Participant 9)*

Participant 9 further indicated that they still have a lot of managers missing the submission date and as a result, they have to follow up until they get the documents. This shows that managers are not being held responsible and accountable for non-compliance or late submissions.

*A lot of follow-ups after obviously the due date has past, so one wouldn't necessarily say compliance has improved. (Participant 9)*

### **4.3.3 Theme 3: Experience with evaluation and reward phase**

The third theme that emerged from the data analysis was the employees' experience regarding the evaluation and reward phase. Five sub-themes emerged within this theme, namely misunderstanding of the evaluation purpose; the fairness of the evaluation

process; lack of support from management; lack of consequence management; and lack of confidence in the evaluation committee.

#### *4.3.3.1 Misunderstanding of the evaluation purpose*

The employees experienced that the evaluation and reward phase in the organisation was not used for its intended purpose. The participants said some managers use it to reward their friends and to punish those employees they are not fond of. Some participants stated that, no matter how hard an employee might have worked, if the supervisors did not like that employee, they would ensure that such an employee's score is reduced to an average level, preventing him or her from getting a performance bonus. One manager, Participant 11, indicated that the employees and some managers see the evaluation phase as a system that generates performance bonuses instead of it being about assessing actual performance outcomes.

Participant 3 revealed that she would score herself according to how she believed she had performed, only to be asked by the manager to lower the score. Participant 3 would then change the score just to avoid fighting.

*You will feel like no let me give myself the marks that you feel like you have performed, when he says decrease then I will decrease, because somewhere somehow you don't want to have an argument. (Participant 3)*

Participant 11 indicated that employees and managers do not necessarily understand the purpose of the performance evaluation:

*We have misunderstood and it is all of us, its employees and supervisors, we have misunderstood the purpose of this evaluation. We evaluate how much I can score myself to get a bonus that is what I do as an employee. I don't have to work, I just have to be able to argue and speak good English, at the end of the year to justify why I must get 4.*

Participant 3 said that, during performance evaluation, he would put a score he felt was fitting the standard achieved. However, when the score reaches the line manager for his or her own rating, the score will be lowered because the manager will see it as mismatching the performance. In response to this, the participant said:

*You will feel like no let me give myself the marks that you feel like you have performed, when he says decrease then I will decrease, because somewhere somehow you don't want to have an argument. (Participant 3)*

Participant 4 indicated that, due to the lack of clarity on performance standards, there are often disagreements between employees and their manager(s) during the evaluation phase.

*The misunderstanding on performance standards causes disagreement during the annual performance evaluation phase, where employees would feel that they performed exceptional well, however the manager would just disagree. (Participant 4)*

#### 4.3.3.2 *The fairness of the evaluation process*

Some participants experienced this phase as effective since there are employees who have been rewarded as a result of good performance. Whereas some employees experienced it as being unfair.

Both Participant 4 and Participant 10 experience the reward system as effective, more than the other phases of the PM system:

*The reward system, it is more working far better than the planning, the monitoring and the actual performance management. I would say to a certain extent, not total performance, but does really measure a certain part of performance. (Participant 4)*

*The evaluation and reward phase is partly effective when one looks at it from the rewards angle, because some employees are able to get performance rewards every year, showing that it works. (Participant 10)*

Participant 11 concurred with Participant 4 and Participant 10.

*I think overall is effective given that many people will get reward for performance, that they have done a larger percentage, if you look at it from that point of view, that if you are able to motivate for your scores you are able to take the matter further, and if you are able to show with documentation what you have done. (Participant 11)*

According to Participant 10, the process does allow employees to fight for higher scores if they feel the manager underscored them.

*You are able to take the matter higher up for intervention and mediation, and you might mostly find that if you have all those, and you did what you have done, and you have moved to beyond what was expected of you consistently. You will get an incentive for that, even if your supervisor, it might take long, but it might at the end find yourself rewarded. (Participant 10)*

Some participants indicated that the performance evaluation process is perceived to be unfair, since managers use personal feelings to determine their performance score instead of their actual achievement of the set goals. Participants indicated that there are always arguments with the line managers when it comes to scoring, with some managers disagreeing that an employee delivered beyond expectation, choosing instead to give them an average score. Consequently, they develop feelings of demotivation.

*I am demotivated since there is no fairness during evaluation and reward phase. The employee who works hard end up not getting recognition and rewards and it is because it is about favouritism and not actual goal achievement. The manager*



*will just tell you that you performed well as you were expected, however you did not qualify for a reward, since you did not exceed expectations. The hardest of workers is not getting anything. (Participant 7)*

Overall, the participants felt that managers' personal feelings about employees hindered a fair performance evaluation and rewarding practice as is noted by Participant 3.

*I was having some conflicts with the manager, it is where I felt that I don't have time to argue with her with regard to the issue of what is it that I did. (Participant 3)*

Participant 11 stated that, over the years, the PM system outcomes were unfair in that it benefitted the manager's close allies.

*The system favoured friends of managers and those who are liked most. The ones who are [the manager's] favourite[s] will get it [performance reward]. (Participant 11)*

Participant 7 spoke about one colleague who always scored high and received the supervisor's approval for a performance reward. However, this approval was due to a personal relationship with the line manager, and not for good performance.

*One guy was known in the unit to be very lazy, always disappearing from work, but every time when it was time for evaluations, him and the supervisor, I think they were in the good terms, [would] get high scores. (Participant 7)*

For Participant 10, employees who had a bad relationship with their line manager ended up being denied the performance reward every year. Such employees lost faith in the system and consequently perceived the PM system as unfair.

*They still see the system quite unfair, and because of their relations with the supervisor. (Participant 10)*

Participant 8 stressed that the reason why the process is full of negatives is because some managers use it as a weapon to fight battles with the employees they do not like.

*Remember it is too faulty because some supervisors they are using it to punish the employees. In fact, what I can say is that the system it doesn't serve the desired purpose. (Participant 8)*

Participant 11 mentioned that employees and managers have different purposes to fulfil during the evaluation and reward phase. In this phase, the employee focuses on scoring himself or herself to qualify for rewards, whereas the manager gives his or her favourite employee a high score, with his or her least favourite employee receiving a low score.

*And my supervisor evaluates how much can I score this man not to get a bonus, if I don't like him or much can I score this man to get, because I like him. It is used now to get bonuses, and to punish. (Participant 11)*

Participant 8 said that, in some instances, the line manager was the one who was scared of an employee and as a result would rather always approve the high scores out of fear of conflict, and neglect to assess the actual performance.

*The supervisors don't ask the employee how they got the high score even though they know the person under-performed. (Participant 8)*

Participant 10 noted that, over the years, people did not understand the PM system and that there used to be numerous disputes reported to the labour section.

*Because of a lot of grievances on this area, it forced everyone to understand. (Participant 10)*

Participant 7 agrees and confirm how unions receive numerous grievance cases as a result of the outcomes of performance evaluations. To Participant 7, this points to misunderstanding of the numerous roles by all parties involved.

*There were a number of grievances that would come up immediately after the completion of annual performance evaluations is an indication that things were not as rosy as they should be, or people still do not understand what their role is. (Participant 7)*

Participant 10 indicated that there are employees who have lost interest in the PM system, and do not regard the system as being important. He said there should be a broad reward scheme.

*Look at patterns phenomenal behaviour of those that might not be interested in or being made to no longer consider performance management as an important tool of the organisation, of meeting goals, I would say maliciously complying. Broaden the incentive scheme, long term satisfactory avenue. (Participant 10)*

Participant 10 highlights the importance of effective process flows of the numerous PM sections to guide all parties from task level to activity level and how that should be evaluated and rewarded.

*You know initially I used to say the organisation rewards poor performance and the reason that I would say and I didn't even care about the performance. Whether I am getting the reward or not because I had seen then that if you don't have proper process flows of section just from task level for activity level. (Participant 10)*

Participant 8 stated that the PM system was unfairly implemented because managers are not objective, meaning that they will not give employees high scores, even when they deserve them.

*Remember the issue of lack of objectivity, the issue of the unfairness will always be there, when a person doesn't like you, they don't like you. A person won't give you score 4 when they don't like you. Whether it is 4 months or what, there is no honesty. A person might work well, then he understands that the supervisor hate him even if he performs well the supervisor hates him, whereas when you are one of the supervisor's favourite they give you 4 score even if you don't deserve it.*  
(Participant 8)

Participant 3 mentioned that line managers do not want employees to get high scores. It is perceived that line managers' main objective was to prevent employees from getting performance rewards:

*They have realised that at the end of the day if you can get high marks, it means you are going to get the performance bonus. The manager doesn't want you to get any incentive; to that sometimes it happens that he would underscore you.*  
(Participant 3)

Participant 9 thought that the root cause of the squabbles between employees and line managers was that the PM system included monetary rewards, which caused relational dysfunctions between employees and their line managers.

*And for both of them to sit and discuss that evaluation obviously it has its own challenges, of course remember where there is money they will always be that in-fight between the employee and the supervisor, yes we have them because we can't avoid them.* (Participant 9)

#### 4.3.3.3 *Lack of support from management*

Participant 9 believes management does not take the PMS processes seriously.

*We are being led down by obviously our superior, I think they are the ones who are not taking this process serious. (Participant 9)*

Participant 8 indicated that when some managers are asked to make changes on performance documents, the managers still submit them without making the requested changes. The participant could not pinpoint the main reasons behind this behaviour.

*I don't know if it's the issue of laziness or maybe the problem of lacking commitment or a person not taking their work serious, because remember if you are given advice saying that fix here, I mean the advice comes from the subject expert, and you don't fix and you submit that thing being non-quality. (Participant 8)*

Participant 8 reaffirms how the submission of erroneous documents by managers continues to happen despite the fact that employees urge them during training engagement not to do so.

*Other people don't make the changes. I don't know if it's the issue of laziness or maybe the problem of lacking commitment or a person not taking their work serious. (Participant 8)*

Participant 9 disclosed that it is hard for the employees to do their work when there is no support from management. Without support from management, employees struggle even to have their PM system documents accurately submitted for capturing. Participant 11 shared how he has been witness to many cases where disputes were lodged by employees against their line managers, but that these employees are still merely told to sign their PAs. However, it seems the organisation never addresses such disputes:

*I have seen a lot of disputes, where people have disagreement in terms of this performance agreement, when is time for them to contract or to sign their agreement the disputes there are generally not attended to. (Participant 11)*

#### 4.3.3.4 *Lack of consequence for management*

Participant 11 indicated that managers, who conduct performance evaluations unfairly and are found to be wrong, are not punished by senior management and therefore suffer no consequences from their wrongful actions.

*I had a dispute at the end of the year with my supervisor and it gets escalated to the DDG, when it gets to the DDG, he agrees with me and then I get my scores. But nothing is done to that supervisor... there is no consequence management as results people don't change; you get same problems every time. (Participant 11)*

Participant 9 stated that managers know that they will not be held responsible for the outcomes of the performance management process, even when they did it for mere compliance. There seem to be no consequences for management.

*They knew that even if I don't submit there won't be any consequences. (Participant 9)*

Participant 10 indicated that the department has a problem of process flow, which is why employees who perform poorly at times get rewarded. He said that the organisation was fixing all the problems with the implementation of the PM system.

*This organisation does not have a process flow when it comes to PM and employees get rewarded even when their performance is bad. Some of the things we learn them through audit, shock or non-performing. Currently we are in a process of correcting our wrongs. (Participant 10)*

The participant further stated that the organisation is improving its PM system, but the pace is slow and he said out of 10 points they are at 5.

*We are progressing, however, not quite faster, so we were very bad in terms of that I would say at the moment we are on average probably out of 10,5. (Participant 10)*

The participant indicated that, in the past, managers used to just fill out the monitoring forms, but did not do that properly. Currently they have improved since they know there will be consequences.

*Initially I think I will say it was just the issue of filling the forms. But now they know and they know obviously the repercussion that comes with just filling. (Participant 9)*

#### *4.3.3.5 Lack of confidence in evaluation committee*

Some employees mentioned that the moderation committee act unfairly, and employees experience that the aim is merely to reduce scores. All the employees who participated in this study complained about the performance bonus. It seems the whole PM system is all about the reward and not about the actual performance. The conflicts and arguments mainly occur during the evaluation phase and are caused by managers who do not agree with the evaluation committee pushing to have higher scores cut.

*I always had conflict with the seniors there because they didn't want me to defend the scores and I ended up being chased away because I called them a score cutting committee, from my view they were only there to reduce the scores. (Participant 7)*

Participant 4 indicated that the moderation committee is not transparent with regard to the criteria they apply, and managers are never told exactly what they want from them. Furthermore, no matter how much proof they submit to justify their higher scores, the committee still does not approve.

*Over the years they have been very tricky with us. They are not open when we sign the plans so our issue is not knowing that this is what is expected but when it comes to evaluation, they will twist. Some of those points were not covered in your plan so they always try to penalise us by not being open from the get go.*  
(Participant 4)

Participant 4 seems to have a different view of the moderation committee. According to Participant 4, the presence of disagreements during the PM system process and the moderation thereof is an indication that things are done accurately. Participant 4 further notes that in the past there used to be many disagreements because the moderation committee was just agreeing with the supervisors and not doing their work correctly.

*It was the issue of evaluating for the sake of evaluating and basically moderation process it was just rubberstamping.* (Participant 9)

Participant 8 notes how he experienced the presence of bias in the moderation committee, especially when you are not liked that much.

*If it is you and they don't like you, your work won't pass even if you scored 4s.*  
(Participant 8)

#### **4.3.4 Theme 4: Recommendations**

Theme 4 presents the employees and the line managers' recommendations, which they believe can be used to enhance the effectiveness of all the various phases of the PM system.

##### *4.3.4.1 Employees and line managers' recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of performance system*



Participant 2 and Participant 3 recommended that within every division in the organisation, managers must ensure that all employee performance plans include performance indicators that are measurable and can be effectively monitored. In other words, all KPAs should clearly outline their objectives, be measurable and employees should be able to provide evidence of their performance during the annual evaluation phase. Participant 2 and Participant 3 believe this will eliminate unnecessary conflict and misalignment between managers' and employees' expectations and ratings will not be seen as being bias and unfairness will be ruled out.

*I think in every individual or whatever, there must be measurable (something to measure) and there must be evidence at the end of the day, you can argue with what is there in black and white the number will speak for themselves. (Participant 2).*

*The organisation must appoint people who will conduct the monitoring system to ensure it is free from bias and unfairness. Furthermore, monitoring must be done consistently on a quarterly basis and ensure that poor performance is detected early, and assistance provided timeously to employees, and employees must rotate and learn different things. Because if you do it continuously, doing it quarterly, it ensures that if there is something that you are lacking you will improve. Instead of waiting for the day of evaluations, that's when you will find that you didn't perform or you didn't reach the objectives. So, that is why I'm saying that is the challenge, all the time we don't say anything about the whether you are on par or not. (Participant 3)*

Participant 3 also mentioned that awarding performance incentives to some employees and withholding the same incentives from other employees are problematic but can be corrected by implementing a monitoring system that ensures fairness and accountability.

*There must be a monitoring system which is not biased, it must be properly monitored the issue of incentive, it must not be there because it favours other people more than others, issue of accountability is not there. (Participant 3)*

Participant 7 further recommends that the PA should be done regularly throughout the year as and how matters arise to clear up issues and prevent those issues from becoming future grudges.

*My recommendation is that it should be done regularly to not wait for the end of the year. Yes, there is nobody who is going to have such a super glue memory that will remember everything. That is why I'm saying it becomes a grudge, if we meet in April and May and we are doing the performance evaluation that happened between April and March this year, and there was no sitting and discussion between the two of us, but you are telling me off that April and May last year there is no longer uh performance management process, it's now a grudge holding process. (Participant 7)*

Participant 4 recommended that both employees and managers arrange meetings to discuss performance agreements, objectives and standards, and how these will be rated during the evaluation phase.

*I think both parties, the employer and employee, should be involved ... sit down and agree on these things so that there is fairness, wouldn't want to see myself being penalized, because had I known, I will avoid such things...we must have common understanding of objectives...when everyone is informed when everyone understands what is expected of them, when everyone understands how is this objective calculated if they say quality how is it measured. (Participant 4)*

Participant 7 recommended that the organisation should ensure that all employees are involved in the performance planning phase when objectives are set. These objectives should be set in a simplified manner and managers must explain to the employees exactly

what is expected of them. In the same context, the employees should be afforded the opportunity to also give their inputs. Participant 7 further recommended that employees' performance be monitored transparently and continuously, as opposed to bi-annual and annual performance reviews. The participant further stated that managers should address poor performance on the spot instead of waiting for the annual evaluations to raise these issues.

*Performance planning should be done in an open way, it shouldn't just be a document simplifying the documents in an open discussion with staff before they sign. When people sign, they would know what they are signing for, they are just not signing some paragraphs written in English and which they don't understand in terms of what did they do performance monitoring it should be done regularly to not wait for the end of the year. (Participant 7)*

Participant 8 recommended that planning must be done early to avoid the rush to submit the PM system documents when they are due. According to Participant 8, waiting until the deadline to submit the performance agreements or submitting them late, negatively impacts on the quality and results. Participant 5 recommended that the organisation should ensure that for every work reported as complete, evidence is provided, and that people are held accountable. Participant 5 also said that employees are required to submit performance reports, but no one verifies the content of these reports and see to it that the supporting evidence is indeed correct. It would only be discovered months later or after a year that the work was incomplete although it would have been reported as complete.

*We need performance management system that will keep the evidence. Without evidence, it is a cooking system. All the key deliverables, they need to be recorded on to the system. (Participant 5)*

Participant 6 recommended that all management levels receive proper training on the purpose and function of the PM system and its phases. In this way, managers will be able to impart their knowledge to the employees under their management.

*That hierarchy of levels be thoroughly equipped in terms of understanding what is PMDS, really understanding why you are managing the people and their performance ... thoroughly engage your people on their level, you come to their layman understanding...on the monitoring issue, doing the word itself, monitor, truly you know do the word. (Participant 6)*

Participant 9, also a PM system specialist, stressed the importance of keeping all parties involved and accountable and that they should be encouraged to take the PM system process seriously.

*The top (top management) needs to do something to those that are not doing their work --- let's take this process seriously. (Participant 9)*

Participant 10's first recommendation was that the organisation should focus more on the performance planning phase and ensure that there is capacity building. The second recommendation was that the organisation should appoint an independent committee for monitoring and evaluation purposes so that bias is ruled out. Participant 10 also recommended that the incentive scheme be broadened to encompass long-term benefits.

*Concentrate on the performance planning, especially on the area of a balancing skills development and work that needs to be done; if you increase the knowledge base of someone you are more likely to get better performance. Much emphasis on evaluation and monitoring performance management by an independent, even if that committee is from within the organisation. Look at patterns phenomenal behaviour of those that might not be interested in or being made to no longer consider performance management as an important tool of the organisation, of*

*meeting goals, I would say maliciously complying. Broaden the incentive scheme, long term satisfactory avenue. (Participant 10)*

Finally, and in consensus with Participant 7's voice earlier, Participant 8 also believes that the monitoring phase must be done more frequently. In addition, it should be ensured that the moderation committee members are unbiased when giving their feedback. Participant 8, a PM system specialist, recommended that employee performance be aligned with organisational performance.

*Moderation committee also must not be biased ... they do malicious compliance, meaning we won't get quality because people they are chasing the submission, doing everything in the rush ... individual performance versus organisational performance, they must correlate ... directorates that are supporting one another they must work together and plan in advance and they must have action plan ... now its 2021/2022 we are supposed to plan for 2022/2023. (Participant 8)*

This concurs with Participant 11, who recommended that the organisation should ensure that the organisational strategic objectives are aligned and run parallel with those of the employees and management. Participant 11 also emphasised the importance of the monitoring phase of the PM system and that its processes should be standardised.

*Is aligning the performance target or your KPAs to the ... is it KPIs or KPAs? I don't know, your KPIs, align it to that of supervisors, so that when you don't perform, means your supervisor doesn't perform, the supervisor will feel it, and as a result they will come down and make sure that they monitor you ... properly align it also to the objectives, and strategic objectives of the organisation, first objectives of your component and then strategic objectives of the organisation. After that and which is more important, because this is what performance management is actually about, you then start to monitor it on the continuous basis we need to have a standardised way of doing things. (Participant 11)*

#### **4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter detailed the findings of the empirical study, reporting on the lived experiences of employees' and line managers' perceived effectiveness of the phases of the PM system. Four main themes and sub-themes emerged from the data analysed by means of the grounded theory methodology. The main themes were experiences with the performance planning and agreement phase, experiences with the monitoring phase and the experience with the evaluation and reward phase and recommendations. The next chapter will present the discussion of the findings.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a unified discussion of the conclusions drawn from the literature review and the empirical findings. Furthermore, it indicates whether the study's aims, as indicated in Chapter 1, were achieved or not achieved. The chapter concludes with the study's limitations and recommendations for future research.

### **5.2 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

The aims of the literature review were to:

- Conceptualise performance management and its related constructs.
- Explore the factors that impact on the effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system.

#### **5.2.1 Conceptualising performance management and its related constructs**

This section showed that the reviewed literature describes performance in the workplace as employees' actions or behaviour towards executing assigned tasks (Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). Performance management was found to be an ongoing process that entailed monitoring employees' performance as well as ensuring that any challenges that hinder workflow are addressed effectively (Nchimbi, 2019, Samal, 2019). The reviewed literature also emphasises that organisational goals and employee goals should be interconnected (Aguinis, 2019; Cascio & Aguinis, 2019). The effective management of employees' performance in organisations was found to require a good plan to enable employees to deliver the expected service based on the organisational goals (Samal, 2019). Scholars perceived the PM system as assistive to human resources management in structuring managers' and employees' roles and duties (Ramulumisi et al., 2015). The PM system monitors employee performance and has the potential to help poor performers to achieve

organisational goals (Ramulumisi et al., 2015; Singh & Twalo, 2015).

The reviewed literature reveals that a PM system consists of different phases. The first phase commences with providing individual employees a clear explanation of what is expected of them, then facilitating their performance, monitoring their performance, giving individual feedback and concludes with training and receiving support from management (Alsarayrah & Alsarayrah, 2021; Modipane et al., 2019; Nchimbi, 2019). For Ramulumisi et al. (2015), the PM system comprises the coaching phase and performance evaluation. The PM system was also said to include the following factors, namely to develop its employees, review remuneration, assess individual performance, set organisational performance goals for their teams and individuals, draw up a performance management system design, implement a technology system, and formulate human resource policies and a legal framework (Ramulumisi et al., 2015).

Previous studies found that employees viewed the PM system as unsuccessful because their department did not offer them training to improve performance (Ramulumisi et al., 2015). Du Plessis and Van Niekerk (2017) found that leaders tasked with performance appraisal duties did not support the PM system because it was not user friendly in their opinion. Makhubela et al. (2016) discovered that employees perceived their PM system as ineffective and the performance appraisal system unfair due to implementation shortcomings.

### **5.2.2 To explore the factors that impact on the effectiveness of the different phases of a performance management system**

Sharma et al. (2016) proffer that the effectiveness of the PM system is measured by how the system achieves its intended purposes. Employees' perception of the PM system determines its success or failure (Sharma et al., 2016; Modipane et al., 2019). The characteristics of an effective PM system include well-informed appraisers, employees' performance, employee capacity development, setting of goals, appraisal follow-up, and feedback sessions (Samal, 2019). Employees perceive the PM system as effective when



it ensures that organisational objectives and individual employees' goals are connected (Modipane et al., 2019). Samal (2019) and Ramulumisi et al. (2015) view individual growth, employee performance and support by the employer as crucial factors that determine the effectiveness of the PM system.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION DRAWN FROM THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The conclusion drawn from the findings was based on the main themes and sub-themes of this study. The aims of the research were:

- To explore the experience of employees and line managers of the perceived effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system.
- To make recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the different phases of a PM system.

#### **5.3.1 Theme 1: Experience with the planning and agreement phase**

The participants indicated that the performance planning and agreement phase was ineffective, and alluded to the following sub-themes as the major causes:

##### *5.3.1.1 Contracting performance objectives and standard*

The findings of the research reveal that certain sections in the organisation did not implement some of the phases of the performance agreement according to the stipulated rules. Employees merely signed the document without fully understanding what the contents meant. There was no formal discussion of the organisation's objectives and how those objectives aligned with the employees' duties. Some managers were said to complete the PA on their own and thereafter sent it to the employees to sign. Some employees completed the PA alone and then sent it to the manager to sign. This showed up the notion that the process is not being taken seriously. Furthermore, a lack of engagement between managers and employees implied that not everyone in the

organisation fully understood the strategic objectives of the organisation and how they could meet those objectives. This became evident when only two participants indicated that they have meetings to discuss their objectives. Other participants indicated that they still encountered problems when doing their work because there was no clear plan to guide them. The participants only became aware of their mistakes and deviations from their duties during the annual performance evaluation when they are trying to prove they deserve high scores for their performance. The participants ascribed their mistakes to the lack of coaching and development, inaccurate completion of the PM system documents (a process to which managers do not commit fully), and the misalignment between organisational objectives and employees' duties.

#### *5.3.1.2 Compliance*

At the organisation under study, it was found that PAs are done merely for the sake of compliance. In other words, it is compulsory for all employees to complete the PA for submission to HR. Employees' training needs are never addressed even though they are stated in the development plan. If the organisation does offer training, such training will not be what the employees requested. This revelation shows that there is no engagement between employees and their managers on matters related to the PM system. Line managers were said to merely sign off the PA document mainly because the DPSA required it, and not necessarily because they sought to develop their employees' skills. It also came to light that the management does take the processes of performance management for granted. In most instances, the documents submitted by the line managers were of less quality because they were completed in a rush to meet the deadlines. Employees, on the other hand, simply changed the dates on the previous year's document, signed it off, and submitted it. Seemingly, line managers and employees do not take the PA seriously.

### 5.3.1.3 *Misaligned skills development*

The study revealed that employees in the organisation feel that the training offered internally in the organisation does not address the skills shortage, and they do not learn any new skills to enhance their performance. Some participants indicated that the organisation offers training to comply with the DPSA and never to improve the performance of employees. The internal training offered in the organisation is found to be misaligned with the job that employees perform. A participant added that you find people who are working in finance being sent to attend training about the human resources system, which is not in line with the work they do. Another issue raised by some participants was regarding the training offered by external institutions. Employees would indicate on their development plans which courses they need to attend to enhance their performance, but were then not given the opportunity to attend the relevant training. However, one employee indicated that the employees themselves are the ones who need to follow up with the relevant section to ensure they attend those external trainings. The employee participants revealed that their manager never discussed their skills needs with them, even after an average or poor performance. Even when the employees indicated their need for training and skills development, the kind of training provided by the organisation did not cater to their needs and expectations. For this reason, some participants recommended that their organisation should consider providing them with external training in order to develop their skills. Most participants indicated that the internal trainings provided by the organisation were ineffective.

### **5.3.2 Theme 2: Experience with the performance monitoring phase**

Theme 2 was described by the participants as the most ineffective phase of performance management. The participants ascribed this observation to the incorrect implementation of the phase. The monitoring phase was also classified as just a completion of bi-annual review documents, without monitoring the actual work. Aspects such as coaching and development were not actualised during the phase. The participants expressed that their work was not monitored on a continuous basis and that as soon as the performance

agreements were signed by them and the manager, they would send monthly reports only. Some participants expressed that their line managers neglected to have meetings to discuss and evaluate their performance on a weekly and monthly basis. Monitoring of performance is done by submitting monthly reports to their supervisors and filling in bi-annual review forms. The progress or shortcomings of employees were not discussed during the course of the year. Some line managers are accused of neglecting the monitoring phase activities because they do not take the process as seriously as they should. The study found that this phase of the PM system is done merely for compliance purposes. Documents are submitted merely because it is required by DPSA.

#### *5.3.2.1 Lack of commitment*

The participants believe that there is no commitment towards the monitoring phase, both line managers and employees concur that the actual performance is not monitored. The study found that line managers focused on the other two phases of the PM system and neglected to do continuous monitoring, which required them to monitor employees and offer support where needed. Participants indicated that they sent monthly reports to supervisors, but that no discussions were held to discuss challenges, even though an employee was performing poorly. The completion of the bi-annual review was done for compliance purposes without even discussing the content. Employees just complete the forms and send them to their line managers who will sign and submit to HR for capturing. It became clear that the reports and bi-annual reviews are completed for the sake of compliance. The participants revealed that commitment from line managers is more on the HR deadlines to submit bi-annual reviews, and not on monitoring employee's performance progress.

The participants mentioned that employees also focussed on completing the bi-annual reviews and sending reports just to comply with regulations. Some participants were not even sure what the monitoring phase entails. Both the line managers and employees seemed to lack commitment towards this phase. The study found that monthly reports and the bi-annual review that were completed to submit in HR as monitoring tools, were

believed to not serve the purpose since they are not done correctly. Another participant said the process merely entails the completion of a form and that meetings to discuss the progress and ways to enhance performance did not take place. Some participants mentioned that this crucial phase of the PM system is neglected by the majority of line managers. This became evident when disputes arose at the end of the year when employees and line managers disagreed on the performance scores. The shortcomings were supposed to be addressed earlier on. Other participants mentioned that some line managers within the organisation are committed, and they continuously monitor their employees' performance. However, the number of those who correctly implemented the system is far too small when compared to those who neglect the process and merely sign off forms for compliance purposes. There were two participants who revealed that their managers monitored their performance on a monthly basis using the reports and who would call them to a meeting to discuss ways to improve performance. If they needed training resources, they would be assisted.

### **5.3.3 Theme 3: Experience with the evaluation and reward phase**

This phase was found to be the only phase that both the employees and line managers took quite seriously. The participants appeared to see the evaluation phase as the epicentre of the PM system. With every question they were asked, their responses always included remarks related to the reward phase. Throughout the study, participants had much to say about the process of rewarding performance. They seem to believe that malpractice is rife when it comes to how the performance bonuses are awarded to employees. This was because the phase entailed opportunities to secure monetary reward for those employees who performed beyond expectations. Due to its association with monetary reward, some employees even believed that the PM system was essentially about this phase. Furthermore, it was noted that line managers were unfair in their allocation of performance rewards. Some employees lamented over being victimised and excluded by the managers during this phase for personal reasons, if not emotional ones. Thus, line managers used this phase either to punish the employees they did not like or to reward those employees they were fond of.

#### 5.3.3.1 *Misunderstanding of the evaluation purpose*

Participants in this study indicated that the purpose of the evaluation purpose is to score high in order to receive performance rewards. There appear to be a strong belief that managers reward their favourite employees and deprive their least favourite employees from getting performance rewards. Participants believe that managers use their powers to punish employees using the evaluation phase of the PM system. Some of the participants indicated that they work hard hoping to receive a performance reward. They are focussed on getting a high score that will secure them such a reward. The study revealed that participants believe that, as the employees in the organisation, they should be rewarded for their work every year. The participants mentioned that they score themselves high to qualify for the reward, but that their line managers lower their scores indicating that their performance does not warrant a high score. The study revealed that the evaluation phase got more attention from employees and line managers albeit for different reasons. The misunderstanding of the purpose and the process has caused both parties to accuse each other of misusing the process. The study revealed that there is a gap in the education of the intended purpose of the evaluation and reward phase. The participants expressed, with concern, how some people get rewards while others do not. This highlights how the focus is on the reward. The employees believe they work hard and deserve to be rewarded, but some line managers believe that the performance they achieve is not of the expected standard.

Some of the participants indicated that they even underscored themselves just to avoid disputes with their line manager to prove they did achieve performance at an expected level. One participant mentioned that the process of evaluating performance is tedious as it requires one to provide evidence of the performance, which gets to be interrogated by line managers before it even reaches the moderation committee. It is evident that the purpose is not clear to all employees, and this is causing infighting as they all have different perceptions about how the whole process should unfold. The study found that employees and line managers do not agree on several issues regarding the evaluation and reward phase. A participant indicated that the employees and line managers do not

focus on evaluating the work itself. The line managers focus on how to score the employees to prevent them from qualifying for performance rewards, and the employees focus on how to score themselves to qualify for performance rewards.

#### *5.3.3.2 The fairness of the evaluation and reward phase*

The study found that both the employees and the line managers perceive the evaluation and reward phase to be unfair. The participants expressed that they are discouraged because managers use the evaluation phase unfairly. They indicated that hardworking employees end up not receiving the deserving high scores because they have poor relationships with the manager. The participants revealed that management use the evaluation process to score employees they are not fond of unfairly. The study revealed how the employees favoured by their managers benefit more, whereas those who are least favoured do not benefit. The participants indicated that scoring of performance by management is not about good performance but rather about favouritism.

On the other hand, the study revealed that the evaluation process is perceived to be fair by those who have benefitted from the rewards. A participant indicated that when you look at the evaluation process from the angle of employees who will be rewarded for proving they have performed above the expected standard; it is considered to be fair. It was proven in this study that employees who are scored average marks and who do not receive any reward regard the process as unfair. Employees who feel discouraged and discriminated against by the evaluation process, are those who continuously fail to get performance rewards and are not given the reasons for that. Moreover, a participant indicated that employees are often unable to justify in writing that they have indeed performed exceptionally well. Some participants revealed that employees who obtain high performance scores are merely those favoured by line managers and those who have learned to manipulate the system by providing written proof although they did not actually perform well. It was revealed that employees generally known to perform poorly, are the ones who continuously receive high marks and then rewarded, whereas those employees who put in more effort and who work hard are not being recognised and rewarded.

#### 5.3.3.3 *Lack of support from management*

The PM system specialists indicated that management do not give them support, as they take long to sign PM documents and they often must follow up on the progress. Other participants agreed that top management do not appear to be taking the system seriously. This study revealed that employees perceive management in this organisation as not supporting them when it comes to PM system matters. There is a communication gap between line managers and their employees and feedback is not provided after the PM system cycle, leaving employees feeling unfairly treated. When it comes to employees' performance, management are not offering employees the needed support. However, they record employees' mistakes in order to use that to deny them high scores during the evaluation process. Some participants mentioned that they only learn of their mistakes and poor performance during the evaluation phase, and not during the performance monitoring phase. The study revealed that employees and management are not working together towards achieving the common goals and objectives of the organisation. The participants mentioned that although they send monthly reports and bi-annual reviews to their line managers they are not called to a meeting to discuss their progress. However, during the evaluation process line managers would start mentioning how employees failed to satisfactorily reach the expected standard since monetary rewards are involved.

#### 5.3.3.4 *Lack of consequence management*

The study revealed that managers who are not implementing the PM system correctly are not disciplined for their wrongdoing, and therefore the behaviour continues year after year. There are no measures in place to tackle line managers approving and motivating poor performing employees' high scores due to personal relationships. Such cases are not investigated. A participant mentioned that when they report cases where the PM system was not followed correctly to the labour division of HR, such cases are not resolved satisfactorily, and managers always win because management tend to support line managers. The managers in the organisation who are misusing the PM system continue to do so and are not disciplined. The participants indicated that when their



manager refuses to sign to support their high score, and they opened a case it would be taken for mediation. The mediator would then approve the employee's high score, but the manager is not dealt with. The participant revealed that the same happened every year and such cases always landed up at the mediator who agrees with the employee's score. However, the line manager is not investigated even though it became a pattern during every PM system cycle. Furthermore, it is evident that measures to correct the PM system are not implemented in the organisation. Employees continue complaining and feeling unfairly discriminated against by their line managers, and line managers continue having the power to decide who will get high scores and be rewarded. A participant mentioned that if you are not a favourite of the line manager, you can forget about having your high score approved. Employees who raised their issues with management, feel that they are being punished because their high scores are not approved by their line managers. As a result, employees perceive line managers as enemies who only reward their close allies while punishing the least favourite employee, regardless of who performs well or poorly.

#### *5.3.3.5 Lack of confidence in evaluation committee*

The study discovered that the moderation committee responsible for the performance evaluation process in the organisation is perceived by employees as lacking transparency. Participants indicated that the committee agree with line managers about the scores of the least favourite employees. Some participants described the moderation committee as a group that would always ensure that employees' scores are reduced, so that they do not qualify for the performance rewards. Participants indicated that in some instances when they agree with their line managers on high scores, the committee would decide to cut such scores. Participants feel that the committee does not inform them of the criteria they use to approve or disapprove scores.

#### **5.3.4 Theme 4: Recommendations**

Theme 4 presents the employees and line managers' recommendations they believe can be used to enhance the effectiveness of all the various phases of the PM system.

#### *5.3.4.1 Employees and line managers' recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of a performance system*

Participants recommended that the organisation must ensure that individual employees' performance plans clearly clarify the goals. Line managers must hold meetings with individual employees to discuss performance plans and to ensure that employees understand what is expected of them and how they should set out to achieve their goals. Employees' performance objectives must be aligned with those of the organisation. Furthermore, in every section, line managers must ensure that all employee performance plans include performance indicators that are measurable and can be effectively monitored. The performance monitoring must be conducted continuously, identifying challenges faced by individual employees and offering support and training where needed. The line managers must address problems as they occur and not wait for the evaluation phase and then reduce performance scores. The evaluation process must be fair and not bias towards some employees. The rewarding of high performing employees must be free of bias and favouritism, and it must not benefit some employees over others. The participants recommended that the performance moderation committee must be unbiased. A participant recommended that the organisation broaden the incentives to include other benefits, such as scholarships to give opportunities to high performing employees to empower them.

#### *5.3.5 Managers versus Subordinates experiences*

With regards to phase one which is the performance planning, both the managers and the subordinates agreed that the meetings do take place and at the end both parties will sign the agreement. However, some employees still felt that it is just for formality and that managers just sign the plan draft from previous years. Similarly, with regards to the second phase which is the performance monitoring phase, both the managers and the subordinated agreed that the phase is neglected and there is no proper monitoring of the actual performance. The researcher noticed that the managers were more comfortable sharing their experiences as employees and they shied away from their positions as

managers. They complained about the system looking at it from both employees and as managers. The third phase which is the evaluation and reward phase, managers felt that employees misunderstood the purpose. According to managers the phase is more effective as everyone takes part fully hoping to get performance bonus, however, everyone is focussed on the money part. Similarly, employees views the phase as effective but unfair since not everyone gets rewarded. According to the employees, only the managers' favourite employees are rewarded, in contrast, managers indicated that employees who can prove that they have achieved more than was expected, get rewarded fairly. With regards to this phase, both managers and employees expressed both good and negative remarks. It appeared that those who have benefitted most have good things to say about the phase, however, those who did not get performance rewards, viewed the phase as unfair. Both the managers and the employees agreed that this phase was the most effective as all the steps are followed. Moreover, employees further expressed that some managers use the phase to punish employees they do not like. In contrast managers indicated that employees fail to motivate and show evidence of exceptional performance. Both employees and managers also mentioned that in most cases performance rewards are rewarded to poor performers since they know how to motivate and mostly they are either liked or feared by their managers.

#### **5.4 INTERGRATING THE FINDINGS WITH THE LITERATURE**

The findings show that the PM system is ineffective when the phases are not working in alignment with each other. The PM process starts with the planning of performance, the execution, the monitoring and lastly the evaluation and reward phase. The results indicate that when one PM phase is not correctly implemented, the whole system will fail. The participants experience the PM system differently, but they all agree that it does not serve its purpose as it is done just to comply with DPSA directives.

During the planning phase, managers and employees fail to discuss the strategic objectives of the organisation and how they link up with the individual performance goals. The findings concur with the literature that the PM system is not correctly implemented

and that managers do not offer support and coaching to employees (Hamid & Naidoo, 2020). The study's findings were that the performance planning phase was done just to comply and that the steps were not properly applied. It was revealed the employees' and managers just want to sign the PAs, neglecting the thorough discussions on what standard is expected from the employees. The literature show that a successful PM system should ensure that objectives are clear and understood by participants (Samal, 2019). The results indicated that some employees do not even understand the objectives they sign for in the PAs due to lack adherence to the guidelines from DPSA. The findings of the study show that employees view the PM system to be ineffective as managers use it for the wrong purposes.

The findings further revealed that line managers rarely monitor employees' performance continuously. In addition, line managers do not inform the employees' right there and then when they see that their performance is poor. Instead, they wait until the performance review phase, which often happens much later when attending to the performance matter at hand is less effective. The study by Ramulumisi et al. (2015) also revealed that there was poor performance monitoring from the management side. The study by Naskar (2021) which focussed on how to reinvent a new effective performance management system in the public sector, came up with mechanism that can be applied to improve performance in government organisations.

The literature by Jugmohum (2018) showed that communication, training, coaching and management support, are some of the important characteristics of an effective PM system. Furthermore, the literature and the findings of the study show that human factors have a huge influence on the PM system's processes. The findings indicate that managers need to be well trained on how to implement the system. Also, employees seem to experience some managers working against them instead of working together to achieve the strategic objectives of the organisation. The findings show that the performance rewards cause divisions between managers and employees. Furthermore, performance rewards seem to derail the way the PM system is managed, since the employees seem to confuse it with the PA itself and does not see it as an outcome of the

PA. Moreover, the findings show that much still needs to be done to educate employees and managers on the purpose of the PM system, and the characteristics of an effective PM system. In this study, the employees and managers, all agreed that the system is ineffective. The study by Naskar (2021) also found that PM systems in the governmental organisations must be able to compare actual performance with agreed standards by regularly monitoring employees.

The findings of the study were that there seem to be no consequence management as those doing wrong continue doing so and they are not disciplined. The literature also show that in governmental organisations, there are no measures in place to deal with poor performance by management and that more still needs to be done (Barth & De Beer,2018).

The findings show that management and employees are not understanding the PM system the same way and that there is no clear understanding of the objectives. Furthermore, there is no commitment to the processes of PM system and its impacting on the effectiveness on the system. Literature also show that there appear to be a lot of gaps in knowledge by employees and management (Barth & De Beer, 2018). The study by Jugmohun (2018) revealed that top management commitment leads to effective PM system in an organisation. The study further revealed that employees do not have trust in the performance evaluation committees that are responsible for final scoring of performance.

## **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In every research study, it is of the utmost importance to do an assessment of the limitations of that study to ensure the reliability thereof. This section discusses the limitations of the literature review and those of the empirical study.

### **5.5.1 Limitations of the literature review**

Previous research revealed that most government departments complete performance management just for the sake of compliance and not necessarily for staff development or the fulfilment of organisational goals. Government departments only focus on the last phase of the PM system, which is evaluation and performance appraisal (Mbonambi, 2016). Although literature on the PM system in government departments in South Africa was available, literature on the effectiveness of the different phases of a governmental performance management was limited. The study was supported by the literature conducted both in South Africa and outside the country, and the objectives of the study were fulfilled to contribute to the gap in the literature.

The literature conducted in the government departments in South Africa indicated that there are problems with the PM system implementation and the relationships between employees and line managers. However, there is no literature that focussed on the effectiveness of the different phases of the governmental PM system. The available literature pointed to different factors contributing to the challenges with the implementation of the PM system, but it was not clear where the failure of the system originates. This study then focussed on each of the phases of the PM system to identify the root cause of the poor implementation, to learn how PM systems can be successfully implemented in South African government departments.

### **5.5.2 Limitations of the empirical study**

Several limitations were encountered during this study. Firstly, it took time for the researcher to complete interviews because most employees work from home due to Covid-19 and the interviews had to be conducted online. In addition, connectivity issues arose due to poor network coverage at employees' homes.

Secondly, it is possible that the researcher's own bias implicitly became a limitation, especially because she is an employee at the organisation under study and is familiar

with the issues around the PM system. However, to overcome this limitation, the researcher had to write down her views and opinions on the subject to ensure that she maintains objectivity throughout the study. Moreover, the researcher asked her peers to check the data prior to the final submission of the dissertation to eliminate any subjective views that might have influenced her interpretations.

Thirdly, the researcher observed that one internal specialist felt the need to either defend himself or the system he was mainly responsible for in the implementation of the performance management process. Therefore, highlighting all the flaws or failures of the process would in some way imply that he was not excellent at his work, hence, the researcher felt that some details were withheld at that level.

Finally, the issue of the language used during the interviews proved to be significant for most participants. Some participants spoke freely and clearly in their first language, but as soon as the researcher started recording, and formally asking questions in English, they spoke less. This showed that the use of English hindered the participants from expressing themselves completely and clearly. As might have been noted in the transcriptions in Chapter 4, most participants struggled to present their views in a coherent manner using the English language. Perhaps an interview in their mother tongue would have yielded even more views about this study.

## **5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations of this study are as follows:

### **5.6.1 Recommendations for future studies**

Future qualitative researchers should consider conducting interviews in the first language of the participants, especially when they realise that lack of fluency in English restrains participants from fully expressing themselves. In future, researchers must include members who serve on moderation committees to give their side of the story. More in-

depth research on the separate phases of PM system is required to gain sufficient knowledge on exactly what can enhance the effectiveness of each phase. Thereafter, researchers could look for transcribers and translators to assist in conveying the participants' views in English.

## **5.6.2 Recommendations for organisational implementation**

The organisation must ensure that they put measures in place to correctly implement all the phases of the PM system. The recommendations are discussed in detail below.

### *5.6.2.1 Recommendations to employees*

In agreement with some of the participants, the organisation under study should ensure that its employees attend training and workshops on the role and significance of the PM system in the organisation. In tandem with this, the organisation should also afford the employees the latitude to express their challenges and remedial ideas on how to develop, implement and sustain an effective PM system. Put succinctly, employees' perspectives on each of the various phases of the PM system should be considered so that they are concurrently well informed about their PM system, and are clear about how to effectively contribute to its success.

### *5.6.2.2 Recommendations to line managers*

In agreement with some of the participants, the organisation under study should ensure that the line managers attend training and workshops on the role and significance of the PM system in the organisation. The organisation should also afford the line managers the opportunity to express their challenges and remedial ideas on how to develop, implement and sustain an effective PM system. In other words, line managers' perspectives on each of the various phases of the PM system should be considered so that they are concurrently well informed about their PM system, and are clear about how to effectively contribute to its success. Having noted that some line managers are accused of being



unfair in their evaluations of employees' reported performance, it is recommended that an independent (and external) evaluator or reviewer be appointed to facilitate the process. This or another evaluator should also be responsible for the evaluation of the line managers' performance.

### 5.6.2.3 *Recommendations to HR and IOP specialists*

The organisation under investigation should ensure that both the employees and the line managers possess the same conceptual understanding of the term *performance management* and its related constructs. This will enable employees and line managers to share a common understanding and interpretation of the term. Furthermore, this mutual understanding of the term should be accompanied by a clear and corporate understanding of how the organisation implements and evaluates its PM system. Language editors, proof-readers, external experts on PM systems and other relevant stakeholders should be invited to the organisation to contribute to the development and sustenance of an effective PM system. In addition, an independent body should be appointed to regularly identify and mitigate the factors that inhibit the effectiveness of the PM system in the organisation under study.

## **5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the conclusions that were drawn from the literature review in Chapter 2. The central aim of Chapter 2 was to highlight various perspectives on the conceptualisation of performance management and its related constructs. Chapter 2 also discussed various factors that have an impact on the different phases of the PM system. Chapter 5 further summarised the conclusions that were drawn from this study's findings, with particular focus on the employees' and line managers' experiences of the different phases of the PM system. The findings guided the researcher towards making recommendations on how the organisation under study could enhance the effectiveness of its PM system. The recommendations were made considering the main themes and sub-themes that emerged from the findings, with the main themes being employees'

experience of the PM system's planning and agreement phase, experience of performance monitoring, and employees' experience with the evaluation and reward phase. Sub-themes included malicious compliance with the PM system, and employees' lack of skills development. This chapter also integrated the findings with the literature review and highlighted the limitations of the study, which were encountered during the literature review and the empirical study. Chapter 5 concluded with the recommendations to future researchers and the organisation under study.

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## ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



### UNISA CEMS/IOP RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

06 April 2021

Dear Mrs Patricia Mashaine

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)  
ERC Reference # : **2021\_CEMS/IOP\_003**  
Name : Mrs Patricia Mashaine  
Student # : 48359815  
Staff # : N/a

**Decision: Ethics approval from  
06 April 2021 to 06 April 2024**

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mrs Patricia Mashaine  
Address: 1772 Alleta Avenue, Raslow, South Africa, 0109  
E-mail address, telephone: [48359815@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:48359815@mylife.unisa.ac.za), 0711424429

**Supervisor (s):** Name: Dr Annelize Van Niekerk  
E-mail address, telephone: [ynieka2@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ynieka2@unisa.ac.za), 012 429 8231

**Exploring the perceived effectiveness of a governmental performance  
management system.**

**Qualification:** Masters (MCom)- Post graduate degree

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for **Three** years.

*The **low risk application** was reviewed by the CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee on the **30<sup>th</sup> March 2021** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was approved on **30<sup>th</sup> March 2021**.*

The proposed research may only commence with the provision that:

- 1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa COVID-19 Position Statement on research ethics dated 26 June 2020 which is attached.**



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Open Ribb

2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.
3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Unisa CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **(06 April 2024)**
8. Submission of a complete research ethics progress report will constitute an application for the renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

The reference number **2021\_CEMS/IOP\_003** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Signature

Acting chair of IOP ERC

**E-mail:** [tebelc@unisa.ac.za](mailto:tebelc@unisa.ac.za)

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Signature

Executive Dean : CEMS

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**ANNEXURE B: CONSENT LETTER**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the Microsoft team’s interview session.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname.....

Participant Signature.....Date.....

Researcher’s Name & Surname.....

Researcher’s signature.....Date.....

## **ANNEXURE C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

1. When did you start working for this organisation as a permanent employee?
2. Are you familiar with the all the phases of performance management system? (At this point the researcher will confirm the phases to ensure the participant and researcher are in synch.)
3. How can you describe your experience with each phase of performance management system?
4. Considering the different phases of the performance management system, what do you believe works well?
5. Do you believe the phases of performance management system at this organisation have all achieve their intended purposes?
6. Again, considering the different phases of the performance management system, what recommendation would you like to make towards improving the effectiveness of the performance management system?