THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS, JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT IN A PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANISATION

by

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DECLARATION

I, Maleho Lexcy Anna Manamela (student number 36178292), declare that this dissertation entitled ***The relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a public service organisation*** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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ABSTRACT

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This study examined the relationships between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a public service organisation. The investigation of the relationship between these variables is important considering the changes in terms of the performance management system that was introduced by legislative amendments. Although some research relating to the public service performance management system has been conducted, its perceived effectiveness, as reflected in employees' views about the accuracy and fairness of the system required further investigation. The study used a deductive research approach that was supported by a cross-sectional quantitative research design. A purposive sampling strategy was used to obtain data from a sample (n = 304) of permanent employees of the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) which served as the context for the study. Descriptive statistics revealed that these employees perceived the organisation's performance management system as moderately accurate and fair, and displayed ambivalence or uncertainty about their overall job satisfaction. In terms of organisational commitment, they reported higher levels of continuance commitment than affective and normative commitment. Bivariate correlation analysis and mediation analysis confirmed a positive relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment and indicated that this relationship is indirect through job satisfaction. Therefore, employees who regard their organisations' performance management systems as accurate and fair, will experience greater job satisfaction and will, in turn, display higher levels of commitment towards these organisations.

The study provides some insights into employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system and how these perceptions relate to their job satisfaction

and commitment to the organisation. The findings may be useful to human resource practitioners who wish to enhance performance management practices in their organisations and thereby contribute to the development of positive employee attitudes towards their jobs and the organisation.

KEY TERMS

Attitude; behaviour; job satisfaction; organisational commitment; perceptions; performance management; performance management system accuracy; performance management system effectiveness; performance management system fairness.

DIE VERBAND TUSSEN DIE DOELTREFFENDHEID VAN PRESTASIEBESTUURSTELSELS, WERKSBEVREDIGING EN DIE VERBINTENIS TOT 'N ORGANISASIE WAT 'n OPENBARE DIENS LEWER

deur

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Die verband tussen die doeltreffendheid van prestasiebestuurstelsels, werksbevrediging en die verbintenis tot 'n organisasie wat 'n openbare diens lewer, is in hierdie studie ondersoek. Veranderings aan prestasiebestuurstelsels as gevolg van wetswysigings noodsaak 'n ondersoek na hierdie verband. Hoewel navorsing reeds gedoen is oor die prestasiebestuurstelsel van organisasies wat 'n openbare diens lewer, verg die doeltreffendheid daarvan op grond van werknemers se siening van die akkuraatheid en billikheid daarvan verdere ondersoek. 'n Deduktiewe navorsingsbenadering gerugsteun deur 'n kwantitatiewe navorsingsontwerp is gevolg. Data is deur middel van doelbewuste steekproefneming ingesamel uit 'n steekproef (n = 304) van permanente werknemers van die Departement Landbou, Bosbou en Visserye (DLBV), wat ook as die studiekonteks gedien het. Beskrywende statistiek het aangetoon dat die organisasie se prestasiebestuurstelsel volgens die werknemers taamlik akkuraat en billik is. Van hulle algemene werksbevrediging was hulle egter nie so seker nie. Wat hulle verbintenis tot die organisasie betref, was hulle verbintenis tot voortdurendheid hoër as hulle affektiewe en normatiewe verbintenis. Tweeveranderlike korrelasieontleding en bemiddelingsontleding het 'n positiewe verband tussen die doeltreffendheid van die prestasiebestuurstelsel en werknemers se verbintenis tot die organisasie bevestig. Hierdie verband is egter indirek deur werksbevrediging. Derhalwe sal werknemers wat hulle organisasie se prestasiebestuurstelsel as akkuraat en billik beskou, se werksbevrediging groter en se verbintenis tot die organisasie sterker wees.

Hierdie studie bied insig in werknemers se persepsie van die prestasiebestuurstelsel se doeltreffendheid en hoe hulle persepsie met hulle werksbevrediging en verbintenis tot 'n organisasie verband hou. Hierdie bevindings kan nuttig wees vir menslikehulpbronpraktisyns wat prestasiebestuurspraktyke in hulle organisasie wil verbeter en sodoende by werknemers 'n gunstige gesindheid jeens hulle werk en organisasie wil kweek.

SLEUTELBEGRIPPE

Gesindheid; gedrag; werksbevrediging; organisasieverbintenis; persepsies; prestasiebestuur; akkuraatheid van prestasiebestuurstelsel; doeltreffendheid van prestasiebestuurstelsel; billikheid van prestasiebestuurstelsel.

KAMANO MAGARENG GA SESTEMO YA TAOLO YA PHETHGATŠO YA MOŠOMO YE E ŠOMAGO GABOTSE, KGOTSOFALO YA MOŠOMO LE BOIKGAFO BJA MOKGATLO GO MOKGATLO WA DITIRELETŠO TŠA SETŠHABA

ka

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Nyakišišo ye e sekasekile dikamano magareng ga sestemo ya taolo ya phethagatšo ya mošomo ye e šomago gabotse, kgotsofalo ya mošomo le boikgafo bja mokgatlo go mokgatlo wa ditirelo tša setšhaba. Nyakišišo ya kamano magareng ga dibariabole tše e bohlokwa ge go elwa hloko diphetogo tša sestemo ya taolo ya phethagatšo ya mošomo ye e tsebišitšwego ka diphetogo tša molao. Le ge dinyakišišo tše dingwe ka sestemo ya ditirelo tša setšhaba ya taolo ya phethagatšo ya mošomo di dirilwe, dipego tša bašomi mabapi le go šoma gabotse, go nepagala le go hloka bošaedi ga sestemo go hlohleleditše dinyakišišo tše dingwe.

Nyakišišo e šomišitše mokgwa wa nyakišišo wa go fokotša wo o thekgilwego ke tlhamo ya nyakišišo ya khwanthithethifi ya go kgoboketša datha go batho ba bantši ka nako e tee. Mokgwa wa go kgetha dikemedi ka morero o šomišitšwe go hwetša datha go tšwa go dikemedi (n = 304) tša bašomelaruri ba Kgoro ya Temo, Dithokgwa le Boreahlapi (DAFF) yeo e šomilego bjalo ka dintlha tša nyakišišo. Dipalopalo tša go hlaloša di utollotše gore bašomi ba bona sestemo ya mokgatlo ya phethagatšo ya mošomo e nepagetšego e bile e šoma gabotse, gomme ba tšweleditše maikutlo a go se swane ka kgotsofalo ya mošomo wa bona ka kakaretšo.

Mabapi le boikgafo bja bona go mokgatlo, ba begile maemo a godimo a go nyaka go tšwela pele go feta maikutlo ka, le maikarabelo a bona go mokgatlo. Tshekatsheko ya tswalano ya diphetogo tša dilo tše pedi le tshekatsheko ya botsenagare e laeditše kamano ye botse magareng ga sestemo ya taolo ya phethagatšo ya mošomo ye e šomago gabotse le boikgafo bja mokgatlo gomme ya laetša gore kamano ye ga e lebanye twii go kgotsofalo ya mošomo. Ka fao, bašomi bao ba bonago disestemo tša mokgatlo wa bona tša taolo ya phethagatšo ya mešomo di nepagetšego e bile di šoma gabotse, ba tla itemogela kgotsofalo ya mošomo kudu gomme ba tla laetša boikgafo bja maemo a godimo mekgatlong ye.

Nyakišišo ye e fa tshedimošo enngwe ka dikarabo tša bašomi ka sestemo ya taolo ya phethagatšo ya mošomo ye e šomago gabotse le gore se se ama bjang kgotsofalo ya bona ya mošomo le boikgafo bja bona go mokgatlo. Dikutollo di ka hola bašomi ba merero ya bašomi bao ba ratago go tlhabolla taolo ya phethagatšo ya mošomo mekgatlong ya bona gore bašomi ba be le maikutlo a mabotse ka mešomo ya bona le ka mokgatlo.

MANTŠU A BOHLOKWA

Mokgwa; maitshwaro; kgotsofalo ya mošomo; boikgafo bja mokgatlo; ditemogo; taolo ya phethagatšo ya mošomo; go nepagala ga sestemo ya taolo ya phethagatšo ya mošomo; go šoma gabotse ga sestemo ya taolo ya mošomo; go botega ga sestemo ya taolo ya mošomo.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

xvii

CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

This research focuses on the relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, with specific reference to performance management practices in a public service organisation. The aim of this chapter is to provide the background and rationale for the research and to formulate the problem statement and research questions. Furthermore, it highlights the general and specific research objectives and describes the research design and the methods that will provide structure to the process. The chapter concludes with an outline of the chapters and a summary.

1.1   BACKGROUND TO AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The context of this study was performance management practices and specifically employee perceptions of the effectiveness thereof, in a South African public service organisation. The South African public service consists of 41 national departments (South African Government, 2023) which accounts for approximately a quarter of all formal employment in the country (Moshikaro, 2020). Hence the importance of establishing effective employment relations practices within this context. This study was conducted in the former Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and focussed on performance management, which is governed by legislation and subject to Public Service Regulation that had been recently amended resulting in uncertainty and negativity among employees.

It should be noted that, with the inception of the Sixth Administration, a new cabinet was announced on 28 May 2019. The President of the Republic of South Africa announced the configuration of departments that introduced a number of changes. The DAFF was split into two. The agriculture component was merged with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to form the new Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). The forestry and fisheries components were merged with the Department of Environmental Affairs to form the new Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE). Although the department was restructured, the performance management system of the former DAFF was still used and the empirical data collected from DAFF employees, therefore, still applied.

The research focused on examining the relationships between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a public service organisation. The investigation of the relationship between these variables is important in light

of the changes with regard to the performance management system that was introduced by legislative amendments. By contributing to a greater understanding of the relationship between employees' perceptions of performance management practices, their job satisfaction and organisational commitment, this study may inform better performance management practices that would not only conform to legal requirements but would also enhance employees' job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation.

Performance management is a strategic and an integrated system or tool that aligns individual and team goals with the organisational goals to improve individual and organisational performance (Mone & London, 2018). The tool is utilised by management in organisations to hold employees accountable for individual performance and to drive organisational success (Mavhungu & Bussin, 2017). In addition, the tool is utilised to provide ongoing feedback and coaching to improve performance, enabling the organisation to engage optimally with employees, drive sustainability and communicate organisational values (Armstrong, 2018). Hence, performance management can be defined as an ongoing process in which individual and team goals are aligned to the strategic goals of the organisation, performance planning, feedback and coaching, reviewing and outcomes where individuals and team performance are measured and developed through performance assessments (Armstrong, 2018).

The effectiveness of performance management practices are determined by the perceived accuracy and fairness of the system (Sharma et al., 2016). The system should be able to achieve the intended objectives and employees should be able to do the right things in line with the set goals. Sharma et al. (2016) posit that, while the importance of performance management system effectiveness is widely acknowledged, it has not been adequately conceptualised as a construct or operationalised in extant research. In addition, the different scales that have been developed failed to include the different primary stages of the performance management system being performance planning, feedback and coaching, review and outcomes (Sharma et al., 2016). These authors (Sharma et al., 2016) propose that, in order to establish the effectiveness of the system, it is important to understand its objectives because effectiveness is context-specific. Sharma et al. (2016) further indicate that the system will be effective in achieving its objectives if the right things are done in the right way. Therefore, to establish the effectiveness of performance management systems, the focus should be on its accuracy (doing the right things) and fairness (doing it the right way) (Sharma et al., 2016).

According to Makhubela et al. (2016), employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management practices can affect an organisation in a positive or a negative way. If performance management practices are perceived as fair, it may contribute to organisational goal achievement and enhance employee commitment and motivation (Coetzee et al., 2014). However, negative perceptions of performance management practices may result in poor organisational performance and dissatisfied and uncommitted employees (Makhubela et al., 2016). The researcher's personal observations of such negative perceptions and reports in extant literature that performance management systems are often biased and subjective and not implemented as intended (Makhubela et al., 2016) have prompted this research. Employees in the public service tend to hold negative views about the performance management system (Mello, 2015). The main complaints are that the performance management system is predominantly utilised as a compliance tool and that employees are not involved in performance planning and contracting at an individual level (Makhubela et al., 2016; Mello, 2015). It is lamentable that employees have no say in the development of their own performance standards and do not understand how their performance contribute towards the achievement of the organisational goals (Makhubela et al., 2016; Mello, 2015). Kaposambo (2016) asserts that employees' negative perceptions about the effectiveness of the performance management system should not be ignored but addressed fairly as they may not only influence the credibility of the system but also the success of an organisation.

Within the South African public service context, a focus on the effectiveness of performance management practices is necessitated by the requirements of the Public Service Regulation [PSR] (Department of Public Service and Administration [DPSA], 2016). In terms of the Public Service Act of 1994, as amended, the Minister of Public Service and Administration is responsible to establish norms and standards pertaining to employment practices – including performance management practices – for employees (Department of Public Service and Administration [DPSA], 1994). The Minister can make regulations and directives in determining norms and standards. In 2016, the DPSA issued an amended Public Service Regulation (DPSA, 2016) to replace the 2001 Public Service Regulation. The PSR (DPSA, 2016) provides norms and standards in terms of the performance management and development system (PMDS) for employees who are not senior managers. In terms of Chapter 4, Part 5, Regulation 71 of the amended PSR (DPSA, 2016), the ministers as the executive authorities are expected to establish the PMDS for different occupational groups and to approve and implement the performance management system for non-senior managers (DPSA, 2016).

Although some research relating to the public service performance management system has been conducted prior to the changes enforced by these legislative amendments, a validated and standardised tool that could be used to measure the perceived effectiveness thereof did not exist (Makhubela et al., 2016). Sharma et al. (2016) paved the way, however, for further research in terms of the perceived effectiveness of a performance management system by conceptualising the "performance management system effectiveness" (PMSE) construct and developing a scale to operationalise this construct in performance management research. Sharma et al. (2016) appealed for further research using the scale to test the validity thereof in various contexts and to contribute to the limited body of knowledge that addresses the influence of PMSE on individual and organisational outcomes. By contributing to an enhanced understanding of performance management and how employees' perceptions thereof affect their attitudes toward their organisation, the research may inform better human resource management practices and subsequently assist the new Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and the new Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) formerly known as the Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) to achieve its goals (Amah & Oyetunde, 2019).

Extant literature has shown that employees' perceptions of performance management practices may influence their attitudes towards their jobs and organisations with specific emphasis on job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Srivastava, 2013). Organisational commitment, as an employee attitude, has received extensive attention in human resource management literature (Amah & Oyetunde, 2019). Allen and Meyer (1990) define organisational commitment as an emotional state that binds employees to the organisation. According to Steyn et al. (2017), organisational commitment refers to a state in which an employee remains loyal to the organisation and associates with the goals and values of the organisation. In addition, Coetzee et al. (2014) refer to organisational commitment as the extent to which an employee identifies with an organisation and the employee's willingness to work for the organisation. Salminen et al. (2017) concur that organisational commitment reflects an employees' attitudes in terms of identifying with the organisation and maintaining organisational membership. In this study, Allen and Meyer's (1990) three-dimensional view of organisational commitment as an employees' recognition of the goals and values of the organisation, his or her enthusiasm to make an effort on behalf of the organisation and a plan to stay with it for a long period, will be adopted.

In terms of this view, organisational commitment is typically regarded as a three-dimensional construct, consisting of affective, normative and continuance commitment (Allen & Meyer,

4

1990). Affective commitment relates to the emotional attachment that an employee has towards his or her employing organisation as well as the extent to which the employee identifies with the organisation and is willing to participate in organisational activities (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Employees who are affectively committed to the organisation usually remain with the organisation because they have a harmonious relationship with their employing organisation and they identify with the values and goals of the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Robyn and Mitonga-Monga (2017) refer to normative commitment as an individual's felt accountability to remain with an organisation in which he or she is employed. The employee therefore feels that he or she has a moral obligation not to leave the organisation. Continuance commitment refers to a situation where an employee is afraid of taking another job as a result of the price associated with leaving the organisation (Robyn & Mitonga-Monga, 2017). Furthermore, continuance commitment is considered calculative and is linked to the threat that employees experience when contemplating leaving the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Hence, organisational commitment reflects the attitude of an employee in identifying with the organisation and maintaining organisational membership (Steyn et al., 2017).

Coetzee et al. (2014) posit that organisational commitment is influential in connecting employees to an organisation and the manner in which an employee embraces and internalises attributes of an organisation. Employees who are committed to their organisation are loyal and willing to put more effort towards their employing organisation (Mayer et al., 2015). According to Lumley et al. (2011), employees with a positive attitude towards their organisation are willing to accept the goals of the organisation and go the extra mile on behalf of the organisation, thereby contributing to organisational success. Research has shown that employees who are committed to their employing organisations are willing to be creative and take part in activities beyond their formal responsibilities, thereby improving overall performance and enhancing organisational competitiveness in the market (Gani, 2017). This is especially true for employees who experience high levels of affective and normative commitment. Employees with high levels of affective commitment are more likely to identify with the goals of the organisation and, as a result, they tend to be dedicated and willing to remain with an organisation (Coetzee et al., 2014; Lombard & De Bruin, 2017; Wang et al., 2020). Similarly, employees who are normatively committed (i.e., they feel a moral obligation to stay in the organisation) usually contribute positively in areas like performance and their feelings motivate them to do the right things for their organisation and behave appropriately (Naik, 2012). High levels of affective and normative commitment are therefore desirable. According to Benson et al. (2018), high levels of continuance commitment (i.e. employees feel

obliged to remain in an organisation because of the costs associated with leaving) are not necessarily associated with enhanced performance. Employees who experience high levels of continuance commitment may, in fact, feel entrapped and, as a result, be less willing to exceed performance expectations or "walk the extra mile" for their organisations (Kirsten, 2019).

This study set out to determine whether organisational commitment (especially affective and normative commitment) among public sector employees could be enhanced, by addressing negative perceptions about the performance management system. It was accepted, however, that the commitment of employees to the organisation is also affected by factors other than their perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system. Several antecedents to organisational commitment, as reported in extant literature, were therefore considered. These antecedents include work-related perceptions and work experiences such as perceptions of equity and organisational politics (Chen & Indartono, 2011), organisational trust (Benson et al., 2018), perceived organisational support (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2015), organisational justice (Suifan et al., 2017) and job satisfaction (Saridakis et al., 2018) as well as personal variables such as age, tenure, education, gender and marital status (Karmakar, 2020).

Within the context of this study (i.e. employment relations in the public sector), it was deemed appropriate to focus on job satisfaction as a predictor of organisational commitment as higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment have been associated with enhanced performance (Ahmed et al., 2015). Job satisfaction and organisational commitment are related but distinguishable attitudes that reflect individual assessments of different aspects of the working environment. While organisational commitment reflects an employee's attitudinal response to the employing organisation as a whole, job satisfaction relates to the employee's assessment of specific aspects of his or her job (Najafi et al., 2011). According to Spector (1997), job satisfaction is an attitude that individuals have towards their jobs and the aspects that may influence their jobs (Spector, 1997). Staples and Higgins (1998) define job satisfaction as an employee's emotional reaction following a comparison of the expected and actual outcomes of his or her job. A high level of job satisfaction reflects a positive emotional state following an individual's experiences on the job (Ngidi & Ngidi, 2017). Job satisfaction may thus be viewed as a comparison of what an employee seeks in a job to the actual outcome thereof and an emotional reaction to this comparison (Lumley et al., 2011).

According to Lumley et al. (2011), employees with high levels of job satisfaction tend to hold positive attitudes towards their jobs while the opposite is true for dissatisfied employees. The optimal performance of an organisation depends in part on the level of employees' job satisfaction, hence organisations should strive to enhance employees' job satisfaction at all levels of the organisation (Baloyi et al., 2014). This perspective is supported by Van der Schyff et al. (2018) who assert that high levels of job satisfaction could increase organisational effectiveness resulting in high levels of organisational success, whereas job dissatisfaction could cause employees to decrease their productivity, effectiveness and individual performance. Van der Schyff et al. (2018) further indicate that employees with low levels of job satisfaction are more likely to underperform, therefore, negatively impacting organisational goal achievement. According to Lumley et al. (2011), positive relationships have been observed between work outcomes such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment and performance. As a result, job satisfaction contributes to increased levels of individual commitment and organisational success (Muterera et al., 2015).

The commonly held view in human resource management literature is that highly satisfied employees are likely to present higher levels of organisational commitment than their dissatisfied counterparts (Lumley et al., 2011). The positive relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment has been widely reported (e.g Kola, 2018; Naderi, 2012). Satisfied employees tend to feel accepted and valued and, as a result, often experience a strong emotional bond (i.e. a high level of attitudinal commitment) with their employing organisations (Kola, 2018). However, Saridakis et al. (2018) posit that reports on the nature and direction of the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment have been ambiguous and inconclusive. These authors (Saridakis et al., 2018) suggested that, while increased job satisfaction is likely to lead to enhanced organisational commitment, the opposite may also be true in that greater organisational commitment may lead to higher levels of job satisfaction. They expressed the need for additional study on the reciprocal relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, providing impetus for the focus on these two constructs in this research.

From the preceding discussion, it could be deduced that the commitment of employees to their employing organisations are influenced by their perceptions of the effectiveness of performance management practices and the levels of job satisfaction they experience. However, Baloyi et al.'s (2014) finding that a significant positive relationship exists between employee perceptions of the performance management system used in their workplaces and job satisfaction, suggested that there might be an interactive relationship between these two

antecedent variables and organisational commitment. The view was supported by Lumley et al.'s (2011) assertion that effective performance management practices lead to satisfied and committed employees. Sharma et al. (2016) also suggest that employees who have positive perceptions of performance management practices are more likely to display higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. The view is supported by Olowodunoye (2015) who indicates that if employers treated their employees fairly when implementing performance management systems, employees would develop an attitude that is positive towards the organisation, which in turn would lead to increased organisational commitment. While it was therefore considered imperative to confirm the impact of performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction on organisational commitment in a South African public service setting, it was anticipated that a clearer understanding of their predictive value could be obtained by examining their interactive effect on employees' commitment towards their organisation.

In this study, it was hypothesised that effective performance management practices would result in positive employee perceptions about their jobs (job satisfaction) and the organisation (organisational commitment) and that these perceptions would contribute to organisational success. In addition, it was anticipated that a performance management system that is implemented fairly and accurately measures employee performance will lead to greater job satisfaction, which will, in turn, enhance the commitment of employees to the organisation and ultimately contribute to organisational success. In contrast, if perceptions about unfairness and inaccuracy of performance management practices are not addressed by the organisation, this may lead to dissatisfaction and lack of commitment among employees and consequently failure to achieve organisational goals.

In studying the relationships between the three variables (PMSE, job satisfaction and organisational commitment), it was important to ensure that these relationships were not influenced by employees' personal or job-related characteristics. Extant literature was therefore scrutinised to identify personal and job-related characteristics that have been shown to influence job satisfaction and organisational commitment (i.e., the mediating and dependent variables in this study). Extant literature reported that individuals with different characteristics in terms of age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education may hold different perceptions of performance management practices and report different levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

8

According to Tlaiss (2013), significant relationships between age and job satisfaction have been reported in extant literature. A reported positive linear relationship suggests that older employees tend to be more satisfied with their jobs (Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013). A positive relationship between age and organisational commitment has also been reported (Gani, 2017; Yucel & Bektas, 2012). These positive relationships may be ascribed to more realistic expectations, a stronger sense of achievement, more work-related experience and greater investments made by older employees in comparison to their younger counterparts (Callea et al., 2016; Tlaiss, 2013). The relationship between tenure and job satisfaction has been inconsistent as employees with more tenure may experience promotional opportunities than the less tenured employee (Dobrow Riza et al., 2018). However, Nguyen et al. (2019) posit that employees with long tenure tend to be less committed towards their employing organisation owing to lack of promotional opportunities.

Male and female employees have also been shown to differ in terms of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. According to Laroche (2017), males and females have different expectations of what their jobs should entail, and female employees tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. While it has often been reported that female employees tend to report higher levels of commitment to their employing organisations than their male counterparts (Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013), results with regard to the influence of gender on organisational commitment have been contrasting. For example, Kirsten (2019) found that males show higher levels of attitudinal commitment than females in a sample of South African employees.

In terms of job level, it has been revealed that employees in managerial positions tend to display higher levels of job satisfaction (Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013; Tlaiss, 2013) and organisational commitment (Kirsten, 2019). According to Tlaiss (2013), this may be attributed to their greater involvement in decision-making and the implementation of decisions in the workplace, more opportunities for personal growth and better compensation, benefits and job security than employees at lower levels. Moreover, significant differences in terms of job satisfaction and organisational commitment have also been reported for different levels of education. For instance, Garcia et al. (2019) report a significant negative relationship between level of education and job satisfaction. Higher levels of satisfaction were therefore associated with lower levels of education and vice versa. According to Kirsten (2019), the inverse relationship between level of education and organisational commitment reflects the inability of the organisations to accomplish the often unrealistic expectations of highly educated employees.

9

In summary, this study had intended to determine employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of performance management practices in the DAFF. These perceptions relate to, for instance, their involvement during the contracting period, the existence of performance standards, the means by which these standards are determined and their awareness of performance expectations. This study was important in determining the root causes of the performance management problems during implementation because if the root causes are not addressed, the system would be perceived as unfair and would lead to disgruntled employees. Hence the research set out to determine the perceived effectiveness of the new performance management system and the effect it might have on employees' job satisfaction and ultimately their commitment to the organisation.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In view of the preceding background, the study aims to extend research on performance management practices by investigating the relationship between the perceived effectiveness of these practices, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. A greater understanding of the relationships between these variables is anticipated to inform positive performance management practices in the public service and more specifically the new DALRRD and the DFFE. It is anticipated that, by identifying and addressing negative perceptions of performance management practices, the department may enhance such practices, which may increase employees' job satisfaction and, in turn, have a positive effect on their commitment to the organisation. The research therefore aims to contribute to the discipline of Human Resource Management by proposing recommendations to inform positive performance management practices.

A review of the current literature on performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment outlines the following research problems:
- Although the importance of effective performance management practices is acknowledged in extant literature, the construct "performance management system effectiveness" was not clearly conceptualised or operationalised, specifically in the South African public sector where particular regulations in terms of performance management apply.
- Theoretical models do not clarify the relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in one integrated study. Human resource practitioners require knowledge about the theoretical and

observed relationships between these variables to enhance performance management practices.

- The South African workforce is diverse, and it may be anticipated that different employee groups, in terms of biographical characteristics (age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education) hold different perceptions of performance management practices and report different levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. These differences have, however, received limited attention in extant research. An understanding of these differences may enable human resource practitioners to address diverse employee expectations.

This study, therefore, set out to determine public service employees' perceptions about the effectiveness (accuracy and fairness) of performance management practices and establish how these perceptions influence their attitudes towards their jobs (job satisfaction) and employing organisation (organisational commitment).

1.2.1 General research question

Is there a significant relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the former DAFF and do employees with different characteristics in terms of age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education differ in terms of these variables?

1.2.2 Research questions with regards to the literature review

Research question 1: How are the three constructs, namely performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment conceptualised and explained by theoretical models in literature?

Research question 2: Is there a theoretical relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment and how can this relationship be explained?

Sub-question 2.1: What is the theoretical relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment?

Sub-question 2.2: What is the theoretical relationship between performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction?

Sub-question 2.3: What is the theoretical relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment?

Research question 3: Do personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics influence performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment?

Research question 4: What are the theoretical implications for performance management practices?

1.2.3   Research questions with regards to the empirical study

Research question 1: What are the differences in the perceived levels of performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment between selective groups based on personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics?

Research question 2: What is the nature of the statistical relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a sample of participants employed in the DAFF, South Africa?

Research question 3: Does job satisfaction mediate the statistical relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment?

Research question 4: What recommendations can be formulated for performance management practices and for possible future research in the field of Human Resource Management?

1.3   AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The following aims of the study were formulated based on the empirical research questions discussed above:

1.3.1 General aim of the research

The general aim of this research was to determine whether a statistical relationship exists between performance management system effectiveness (independent variable) job satisfaction (mediating variable) and organisational commitment (dependent variable).

The secondary aim of the research was to determine whether people from different groups in terms of age, gender, job level, tenure and levels of education differ significantly in terms of their perceptions of performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

1.3.2 Specific aims of the research

The following specific aims were addressed in terms of literature and the empirical study.

1.3.2.1 Research aims relating to literature review

The following specific aims were outlined in terms of the literature review:

Research aim 1: To outline performance management and its implementation in the South African public sector.

Research aim 2: To conceptualise and explain the constructs performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in terms of theoretical models in the literature.

Research aim 3: To conceptualise the relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in terms of explanatory theoretical models.

> **Research aim 3.1**: To conceptualise the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment from a theoretical perspective.

> **Research aim 3.2**: To conceptualise the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction from a theoretical perspective.

Research aim 3.3: To conceptualise the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment from a theoretical perspective.

Research aim 4: To conceptualise the influence of personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics on performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Research aim 5: To critically evaluate the theoretical implications for performance management practices.

1.3.2.2 Research aims relating to the empirical study

In terms of empirical study, the specific aims were:

Research aim 1: To measure the levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness (accuracy and fairness), job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a sample of public service employees

Research aim 2: To investigate whether significant differences exist in the levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment between groups based on selected personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics

Research aim 3: To investigate the empirical relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Research aim 4: To determine whether job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment.

1.4   CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study was to determine whether a relationship exists between employee perceptions about the effectiveness of the performance management system, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the DAFF, South Africa. A study of this nature has not been conducted in the organisation and it is the first in determining the effectiveness of the new PMDS that has been implemented following the regulatory changes.

The research will assist in identifying perceived shortcomings in terms of existing performance management practices and will enhance the understanding of how these perceptions relate to employees' job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. In addition, investigating the relationship will assist in improving organisational practices and reviewing factors that influence individual job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Furthermore, the research will add to the body of knowledge that already exists in seeking a relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The findings may be useful to human resource practitioners who wish to enhance the effectiveness of performance management practices as well as future researchers interested in further studying these variables as well as possible research in the field in Human Resource Management.

Successful organisations require not only employees with expertise, skills and experiences but also committed and high performing employees to assist in achieving organisational goals and ensuring competitive advantage (Berger & Berger, 2018). Hence, managing employee performance to improve organisational commitment and effectiveness is important for any organisation to survive. Effective performance management enhances employees' competitiveness and engagement and contributes to a higher level of organisational performance (Mone & London, 2018). It is anticipated that a performance management system that is implemented fairly and accurately measures employee performance will enhance employees' commitment to the organisation and ultimately contribute to organisational success. In contrast, if perceptions about unfairness and inaccuracy of performance management practices are not addressed by the organisation, this may lead to dissatisfaction and a lack of commitment among employees and consequently an inability to achieve organisational goals.

1.4.1   Theoretical contribution

At a theoretical level, this research may be useful because of the potential relationship between performance management system effectiveness (independent variable), job satisfaction (mediating variable) and organisational commitment (dependent variable). If significant relationships are found, the findings should be useful in fostering a culture of better performance management, increased job satisfaction and enhanced organisational commitment. In addition, the organisation will understand how employees perceive the effectiveness of the performance management practices. Furthermore, the study results could

contribute to the existing body of knowledge relating to the effectiveness of performance management practices, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

1.4.2 Scientific contribution

At an empirical level, the study may contribute in investigating the relationships between the variables. If no significant relationships are found between the variables, then the usefulness of the research will be limited to the elimination of performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction as predictors of organisational commitment. In addition, the study may highlight whether individuals from different groups in terms of age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education differ significantly in terms of their perceptions of the effectiveness of performance management practices, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The results may be useful for the organisation in identifying and correcting the shortcomings of the current performance management system, finding ways of enhancing job satisfaction and improving organisational commitment strategies.

1.4.3 Practical contribution

At a practical level, the readers of this research may have a better understanding of the constructs – performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Organisations rely on high-performing employees to achieve success. As such, it is important to understand the perceptions of employees regarding the effectiveness of the performance management system because that could be a driving force in strengthening organisational commitment and enhancing organisational success. The outcomes of the study could raise awareness regarding individual differences in terms of their perceptions of performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment factors.

Another positive outcome of the research may be that human resource professionals could be aware of factors influencing employees' perceptions about their jobs (job satisfaction) and their employing organisations (organisational commitment). Therefore, investigating the relationship between the variables performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment will assist to improve organisational practices in instilling a culture of fair and accurate performance management and reviewing factors that influence individual job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

16

The findings may also be useful to future researchers interested in studying the variables. Specifically, by clearly conceptualising and operationalising the perceived effectiveness of performance management practices as a construct, researchers will be enabled to conduct further research in this field which has received limited attention in extant literature, especially within the South African public sector context.

1.5   FIELD OF STUDY

The present study was conducted in the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), which is described as a philosophy on people management based on its role of assisting the organisation to achieve sustained competitive advantage (Crawshaw et al., 2017). HRM adds value to the organisation by utilising its employees (human resources) through effectively investing in a skilled workforce and HRM policies and practices to achieve the goals and objectives of the organisation (Crawshaw et al., 2017). Leatherbarrow and Fletcher (2019) refer to HRM as a process for managing people and its contributions to the organisational outcomes and emphasise the need to develop employees to their ultimate potential to contribute positively to organisational success.

An effective human resource management function is imperative in building organisational capability to achieve goals quicker, therefore ensuring that the employees are skilled and nurtured continuously to be effective and productive (Armstrong, 2016). As such, the HRM field informs the design of human resource systems and practices that support the business strategy and help implement changes (Armstrong, 2016).

1.5.1   Theoretical models

This research mainly relies on three theoretical models. These models include Sharma et al.'s (2016) model for the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the performance management system effectiveness, Spector's (1985) job satisfaction model and Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment model.

1.5.2   Conceptual descriptions

Concepts are words that represent an aspect of reality and help to understand the real world (Silverman, 2018). Furthermore, concepts within models offer ways of looking at the world while defining a research problem and represent certain aspects of reality (Creswell &

17

Creswell, 2018; Ngulube, 2018; Silverman, 2018). The conceptual descriptions relating to the three constructs of relevance in this study are provided in Table 1.1.

1.6   CENTRAL HYPOTHESES

This research set out to test the following hypotheses:

H_1: Different groups in terms of personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics will display different levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness (PMSE), job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

H_2: Significant positive relationships exist between employees' perceptions of performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

H_{2a}: A significant positive relationship exists between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment.

H_{2b}: A significant positive relationship exists between performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction.

H_3: While employees' perceptions of performance management system effectiveness are positively related to organisational commitment, the relationship between the two variables are mediated by job satisfaction.

Table 1.1

Summary of the Constructs, Core Descriptions, Underpinning Theoretical Models and Measuring Instruments Relevant to the Study

Construct	Description	Underpinning theoretical model	Measurement instrument
Performance management system effectiveness (PMSE)	PMSE is regarded as a two-dimensional construct consisting of employees' perceived accuracy and fairness of performance management	Sharma et al.'s (2016) conceptualisation and operationalisation of PMSE	Performance Management System (PMS) accuracy is measured with the PMA accuracy scale, developed by Sharma et al. (2016)

18

Construct	Description	Underpinning theoretical model	Measurement instrument
	practices (Sharma et al., 2016).		PMA fairness is measured with the Organisational Justice Scale (OJS) developed by Colquitt (2001)
Job satisfaction	Job satisfaction is conceptualised as an attitude that individuals have towards their jobs and the various facets or aspects that may influence their jobs (Spector, 1997).	Spector's (1985) job satisfaction model	Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS), developed by Spector (1985)
Organisational commitment	Organisational commitment is conceptualised as a psychological state that binds individual employees to their organisation and their willingness to exert more effort for their employing organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991)	Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment model	Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS), developed by Meyer and Allen (1997)

Note. Researcher's own compilation.

1.7   RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is viewed as a research plan used to address questions and issues such as access to information to conduct research (Saunders et al., 2019). The current research was quantitative in nature. A cross-sectional survey approach was adopted, which entailed the collection of original data in a standardised manner, using a web-based questionnaire (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach is often adopted in social sciences research as it provides a method of describing a large population that cannot be observed directly and allows

19

for the objective measurement of variables (Saunders et al., 2019). The use of the design was further informed by time and the unit of analysis as the intention was to obtain information on individual employees' perceptions at a particular point in time. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information from a wide variety of respondents with the assumption that the respondents would be willing and able to give truthful answers (Pickard, 2013). The survey allowed data collected to be analysed using descriptive, correlational and inferential statistics.

1.7.1 Exploratory research

Exploratory research was utilised in this study to review relevant literature and organisational practices with the aim of determining the research objectives (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). Extant literature was explored to conceptualise the constructs: performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The research was exploratory in that it identified the relevant theoretical models that have been utilised to explain the relationship between the performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Consequently, the main purpose of the exploratory research was to gain new insight and more understanding of the phenomenon and determine priorities for the current and future research (Siah, 2014).

1.7.2 Descriptive research

Descriptive research is used to describe a situation or look for trends within the sample group that can be generalised to the population of the study (Pickard, 2013). In the empirical study, descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were used to describe the research sample with regards to biographical characteristics. Descriptive research also applied to the mean, standard deviations and internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) measured on the various scales (Duignan, 2014). In the literature review, descriptive research was utilised to conceptualise employee perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

1.7.3 Explanatory research

Explanatory research seeks to explain the cause and effect of the relationships between two or more variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). As shown in the cross-sectional nature of the research design, the current research did not seek to investigate cause and effect, but rather

aimed to explore the nature, direction and magnitude of the relationships between the variables of relevance to the study.

This form of research was applied in the empirical study of the relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The researcher utilised explanatory research to formulate conclusions on the relationship dynamics between the three constructs. Correlation analysis was utilised to specify the relationships between the variables, while multiple regression analysis was used to establish whether individuals from different groups in terms of age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education differ significantly with regards to the constructs measured. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < .05$, which is common practice in social sciences research (Duignan, 2014).

1.7.4 Research variables

This study was conducted within the context of performance management in the South African public sector and aimed to measure one independent variable (performance management system effectiveness) and one mediating variable (job satisfaction) in relation to one dependent variable (organisational commitment). A dependent variable (organisational commitment) is a factor that one wants to explain or measure to predict the effect by other factors, while an independent variable (performance management system effectiveness) is the manipulated factor that causes some change in the dependent variable (Bless et al., 2013). In contrast, the mediating variable (job satisfaction) is located between the independent and dependent variables and explains the relationship between them. Furthermore, a mediating variable explain why an independent variable has the effect it does on a dependent variable (Saunders et al., 2019).

Control variables are factors controlled to neutralise any effect observed on the phenomenon or dependent variable (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). In this study, the control variables included age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education as differences in terms of job satisfaction and employee perceptions of performance management practices based on these characteristics have been recorded in extant literature (see section 1.1).

The study focused on whether a significant statistical empirical relationship exists between the independent (performance management system effectiveness), mediating (job satisfaction) and dependent (organisational commitment) variables and whether differences in terms these

variables exist for different groups based on age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education. To determine the relationship between the independent variable (performance management system effectiveness), mediating variable (job satisfaction) and the dependent variable (organisational commitment), data were gathered utilising the following measuring instruments: Performance Management System Accuracy Scale (Sharma et al., 2016), Organisational Justice Scale (Colquitt, 2001), Job Satisfaction Scale (Spector, 1985) and Organisational Commitment Scale (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

The research was interested in:

- Measuring the relationship between performance management system effectiveness (independent variable) and organisational commitment (dependent variable).
- Measuring the relationship between performance management system effectiveness (independent variable) and job satisfaction (dependent variable).
- Measuring the relationship between job satisfaction (independent variable) and organisational commitment (dependent variable).
- Measuring the differences between groups, based on personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related characteristics (job level and tenure), in terms of employee perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system (independent variable), job satisfaction (mediating variable) and organisational commitment (dependent variable).

Figure 1.1 provides a diagrammatic representation of the relationship between the variables of the study.

Figure 1.1

Theoretical Relationship Between the Independent Variable, Mediating Variable and Dependent Variable

Independent variable   **Dependent variable**
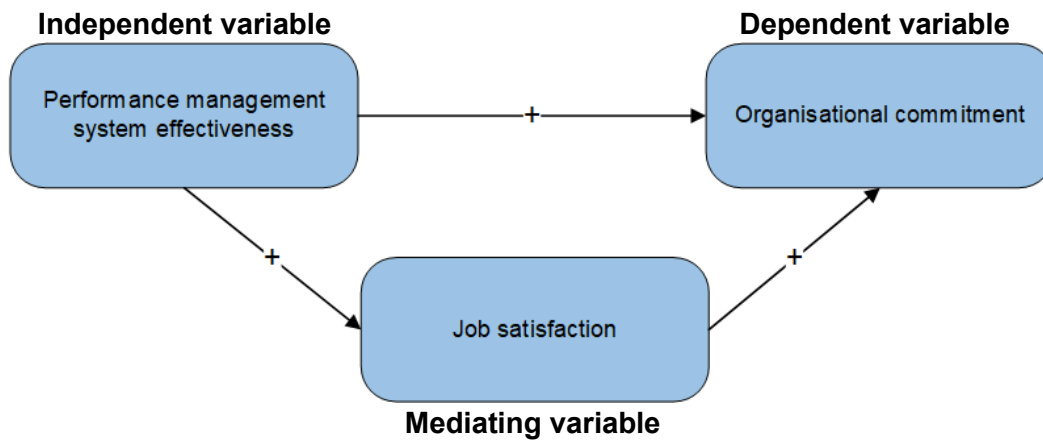
Note. Researcher's own compilation.

1.7.5 Validity

Validity deals with the consistency, accuracy and credibility of the research, and whether the instruments accurately measured what was intended to measure and the research design achieving its objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In quantitative research, validity is essential as it allows for determining the relationship between the independent and dependent variables with a degree of high certainty (Pickard, 2013; Zikmund, 2010).

The research design should be internally and externally valid. According to Gill and Roger (2021), internal validity refers to the extent to which change in the dependent variable can be attributed directly to the independent variable. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) assert that internal validity refers to the extent in which the research study yields credible findings. In contrast, external validity refers to the extent of which the research results can be generalised to a broader population (Gill & Roger, 2021).

In this study, internal validity was ensured by utilising literature that was relevant to the study, relying on appropriate theoretical models and theories and selecting measuring instruments that were applicable to the models and theories informing the study. The literature review was conducted by consulting research that relates to the problems and objectives of this study. The concepts and constructs relating to the effectiveness of the performance management practices, job satisfaction and organisational commitment were structured in a systematic and organised manner (Pickard, 2013). Furthermore, internal validity was ensured by measuring

23

the correct factors with instruments that are available, relevant, reliable and are free from any bias (Strang, 2015). Moreover, construct validity relates to testing a scale in terms of theorical hypotheses underlying the construct (Pallant, 2020). External validity was enhanced by extending the invitation to participate in the research to all employees in the organisation and thereby ensuring maximum participation and representativity. It should be noted that this research was conducted within a specific organisation to address concerns about its performance management system. The objective was not to generalise the findings to other organisations but rather to understand the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables in order to inform performance management practices in this particular workplace.

1.7.6 Reliability

Reliability is an indicator of a measure of consistency, dependency and stability of the measuring instruments (Gill & Roger, 2021; Pickard, 2013). Research is regarded as reliable when the same measure is administered to the same respondents at separate points and the same results are obtained or when different attempts at measuring something produces the same results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Reliability in the literature was addressed by utilising existing literature sources, models and theories (Gill & Roger, 2021; Pickard, 2013). The empirical study reliability was ensured by sending the questionnaire to all employees in the organisation and utilising validated instruments to measure the constructs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, the researcher ensured that instrument scale items measure or assess the relevant constructs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Pickard, 2013). Instruments were selected based on their proven reliability as reported in extant literature (Gill & Roger, 2021).

The IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27 (IBM Corp, 2020) was utilised to analyse data to ensure reliability of the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to establish the internal consistency reliability of the instruments used to collect the data for the current sample.

1.7.7 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis refers to the object or person from which data is collected (Siah, 2014). In this study the individual was the unit of analysis and the focus was on the perceptions, attitudes

and characteristics of individual employees. While the individual (i.e., employees of the DAFF) was the unit of analysis, the study also investigated differences between sub-groups based on person centred characteristic such as age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education.

1.7.8 Delimitations

This study was restricted to research dealing with the relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the DAFF. The aim was to test whether employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of performance management practices and their job satisfaction influence their commitment to the organisation while ensuring that the relationship between these variables are not confounded by the identified biographical variables. The results of the research will inform future organisational practices and may serve as a foundation for forthcoming research addressing unattended issues relating to the three constructs.

The method chosen for the research was not intended to establish the cause and effect in the relationship between the constructs, but its main purpose was to determine whether a relationship exists between these three constructs and, if so, what the nature of this relationship is. In the literature review particular personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) variables that may affect performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and/or organisational commitment were identified and briefly discussed. This was done to ensure a comprehensive and critical overview of the relevant literature. It is acknowledged that these variables may achieve a moderating role in the relationships between the variables of relevance in this study (performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment). However, empirically, this study did not include models that make provision for moderation and it is anticipated that this could be covered in future research. In this study, the identified personal and job-related characteristics were regarded as control variables to ensure the accuracy of the reported relationships between the independent (performance management system effectiveness), mediating (job satisfaction) and dependent (organisational commitment) variables.

1.7.9 Ethical considerations

To adhere to the moral and ethical principles of research according to the University of South Africa's Policy on Research Ethics (University of South Africa, 2016) the following was applied to study:

The ethical procedures as stipulated by the institution were followed at all times of conducting the research. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Director General of the DAFF, Mr M Mlengana. The Ethics Review Committee of Unisa's Department of HRM also granted ethical clearance (see Annexure A).

Participation was voluntary and the anonymity of participants was ensured at all times. The research was conducted in a professional manner and participants were treated fairly. In addition, data and the results were handled confidentially. All sources were quoted and referenced explicitly considering seminal and recent literature in the context of the study. Details in terms of the ethical considerations are provided in Chapter 4.

1.8   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in two phases, being literature review, an empirical study and the integration of the two. Each phase consisted of different steps as outlined in Figure 1.2.

1.8.1   Phase 1: The literature review

The literature review provides the theoretical background for the research and incorporates relevant findings that have been reported in previous studies, an indication of how these findings informed the current research objectives, the boundary conditions of the current research and an indication of how the research may extend the existing body of knowledge (Siah, 2014). In this study, a comprehensive review of literature was conducted with the intention of outlining the meta-theoretical context of the study and conceptualising the constructs performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment) and the relationship between them from a theoretical perspective.

Step 1: Addressed literature research aim 1 by outlining performance management in the South African public sector as the meta-theoretical context for the study. This context is presented in Chapter 2.

Figure 1.2

Overview of the Research Methodology

Phase1: Literature Review

> **STEP 1:** Conceptualise performance management in the South African public service as the meta-theoretical context for the study.
> **STEP 2:** Conceptualise the three constructs: performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in terms of theoretical models.
> **STEP 3:** Conceptualise the relationship between the three constructs in terms of explanatory theoretical models.
> **STEP 4:** Conceptualise the influence of personal (age, gender and level of education) and job related (job level and tenure) characteristics on performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.
> **STEP 5**: Evaluate the theoretical implications for performance management practices.

Phase 2: The Empirical Study

Step 1: Determination and description of the population sample	→	Step 2: Description of the measuring instruments	→	Step 3: Ethical consideration and administration of the instruments
Step 4: Data capturing	→	Step 5: Formulation of research hypothesis	→	Step 6: Statistical processing of data
Step 7: Report findings	→	Step 8: Integrate research findings	→	Step 9: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

Note. Researcher's own compilation.

Step 2: Addressed research aim 2 of the literature review, namely the conceptualisation of the constructs performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, in terms of relevant theoretical models. The construct performance management system effectiveness was conceptualised in Chapter 2, while job satisfaction and organisational commitment were explained in Chapter 3.

27

Step 3: Addressed literature research aim 3, namely conceptualising the relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in terms of explanatory theoretical models. These relationships were explored in Chapter 3.

Step 4: Addressed literature research aim 4 which focused on the effect of the biographical variables (age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education) on performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The reported influence of these variables was discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Step 5: Addressed literature research aim 5 which entailed a critical evaluation of the theoretical implications for performance management practices. This theoretical integration was provided in Chapter 3.

1.8.2   Phase 2: The empirical study

The empirical study was conducted in the South African public service organisational context and included the following steps:

Step 1: Determination and description of the population and sample

The population was identified, and the sample was described (partially addressing empirical research aims 1, 2 and 3). Details can be found in Chapter 4.

Step 2: Description of the measuring instruments

A self-administered web-based questionnaire with applicable and standardised measuring instruments was used to collect data. The measuring instruments that were used to measure the independent (performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction), mediating (job satisfaction) and dependable variable (organisational commitment) are discussed in Chapter 4 (partially addressing empirical research aims 1, 2 and 3).

Step 3: Ethical considerations and administration of the measuring instruments

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Department of HRM's Ethics Review Committee, University of South Africa and an ethical clearance certificate to conduct

research was issued (Annexure A). Furthermore, the Director General of DAFF gave permission for the research. Participation in the study was voluntary and confidentiality of participants was ensured at all times. This step partially addressed empirical research aims 1, 2 and 3. Details are provided in Chapter 4.

Step 4: Data capturing

The LimeSurvey platform was used to administer the survey and the data were exported to an Excel spreadsheet. Data were analysed by means of the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27 (IBM Corp, 2020). This step partially addressed empirical research aims 1, 2 and 3 and details can be found in Chapter 4.

Step 5: Formulation of the research hypotheses

Research hypotheses were derived from the literature study. These hypotheses, which are outlined in chapter 4, partially addressed empirical research aims 1, 2 and 3.

Step 6: Statistical processing of data

The statistical procedures that were used to achieve the empirical aims of this research are described in Chapter 4. This included descriptive statistical analyses (means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis values, Cronbach's alpha coefficients and frequency data); bi-variate correlation analysis (Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient); and inferential (multivariate) statistics to further examine the relationship between the three variables (multiple regression analysis, mediation analysis and tests for significant mean differences). This step partially addressed empirical research aims 1, 2 and 3.

Step 7: Reporting the results

In Chapter 5, the results are presented in tables and figures and the findings are reported in a clear and systematic manner. This partially addressed empirical research aim 4.

Step 8: Interpretation and integration of the research findings

As the overall research findings, the findings of the literature review were integrated with the findings of the empirical study. This step partially addressed empirical research aim 4 and was discussed in Chapter 5.

Step 9: Formulation of conclusions, limitations and recommendations

Conclusions were drawn from the integration of the findings. Limitations of the research were discussed and recommendations for future research were made concerning performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This step addressed research aim 4 and was discussed in Chapter 6.

1.9 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapter layout will be presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Scientific overview of the research
Chapter 2: Performance management in the South African public sector
Chapter 3: Job satisfaction and organisational commitment
Chapter 4: Research methodology
Chapter 5: Research results
Chapter 6: Discussion, conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The background and motivation for the research, problem statement, research aims, research design and methodology, the hypotheses and research variables were discussed in this chapter. The motivation for the study was that research of this nature has not been conducted in the South African public sector, and it was the first in determining the effectiveness of the new PMDS that had been implemented following the regulatory changes. The next chapter outlines the meta-theoretical context of the study, namely effective performance management as a key imperative for organisational success and describes its implementation in the public sector.

Chapter 2 addresses research aim 1. Performance management and its implementation in the South African public sector will, therefore, be outlined. The construct, performance management system effectiveness (PMSE) will be conceptualised and the influence that these perceptions may have on employee attitudes will be explained. The extent to which employees' personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics may influence their perceptions in the workplace will be discussed. This partially addresses research aims 2 and 4 of the literature review.

CHAPTER 2: META-THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY – PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR

KEY WORDS:

Performance management, performance management system effectiveness (PMSE), performance management system accuracy, performance management system fairness

This chapter outlines the meta-theoretical context of the study, namely performance management practices in the public sector and employees' perceptions of the effectiveness thereof. The chapter further outlines performance management as a key imperative for organisational success and describes its implementation in the public sector, focusing on relevant regulations, policies and procedures as well as the challenges experienced. The construct, performance management system effectiveness (PMSE) is conceptualised and the influence that employees' perceptions of PMSE may have on their attitudes is highlighted. The extent to which employees' personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics may influence their perceptions in the workplace is explored.

2.1   PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AS A KEY ORGANISATIONAL SUCCESS

Successful organisations rely on the performance of their employees and the effectiveness of the performance management practices to improve organisational performance and to achieve set goals and sustain a competitive edge. In this section, the importance of performance management as a key to organisational success is highlighted. Relevant theories underpinning performance management are discussed and ways in which effective performance management can be ensured are identified.

2.1.1   Performance management as a strategic human resource management tool

Performance management is a strategic and integrated tool that enhances goal achievement through the alignment of individual goals with the organisational goals (Bussin, 2017). This study relates to performance management at an individual level; hence the alignment of individual and organisational goals to achieve organisational success. Performance management is one of the most critical human resource processes that contribute to organisational goal achievement (Bussin, 2017). Effective performance management enables the organisation to engage optimally with employees through ongoing feedback and coaching

to improve performance and drive sustainability (Armstrong, 2018; Modipane et al., 2019). Performance management systems are utilised by management not only to hold individuals accountable for their performance but also as a tool that facilitates employee development and guides the allocation of rewards (Legalatladi, 2015; Mavhungu & Bussin, 2017).

Performance management can therefore be defined as an ongoing process where individual and team goals are aligned to the strategic goals of the organisation. This process incorporates performance planning, reviewing and assessing progress towards goal achievement, feedback and coaching as well as the measurement and development of individual and team performance through performance assessments (Armstrong, 2018). Mizrahi (2017) defines the performance management process as a means whereby managers set goals and performance indicators for the organisation, define expected standards in relation with benchmarks and apply various means aimed at incentivising supervisors and employees to meet the expected standards. Meyer and Kruger-Pretorius (2018) define performance management as a structured process in which both the employee and the supervisor plan, monitor and review the individual employee's performance objectives and determine his or her contribution to organisational success.

Performance planning starts with the alignment of the senior managers' performance agreements to the annual performance plan, which are then cascaded down to the operational plan for the section or department in which the individual works. As part of the performance management process, managers and their subordinates discuss and agree to individual performance goals. This agreement then serves as the foundation for determining developmental needs and evaluation of employee performance (Bussin, 2017).

Organisations are pressured to collect, analyse and report on their human resource performance data for key decision-making by management (Armstrong, 2018). The performance management system, if properly designed and implemented, has advantages for human resources in organisations as it may be utilised as a talent management tool to analyse data on employee trends and make informed decisions to add value and contribute to the achievement of the organisational goals (Rao, 2016). Berger and Berger (2018) posit that performance management information can be utilised to understand the strengths and weaknesses that employees might have, how it relates to their current jobs and to what extent they will meet the requirements for promotion. Schultz and Van der Walt (2015) assert that performance management information may be utilised to determine compensation, pay progression and performance bonuses, and to establish training and coaching needs. In

33

addition, the information is utilised to ensure that employees who have performed exceptionally well are rewarded and recognised while remedial action is implemented to address poor performance (Schultz & Van der Walt, 2015).

2.1.2 Theories underpinning performance management

Performance management practices relate to individual and organisational performance and are underpinned by various theories of which the most prominent is goal-setting theory. Organisations set strategic goals and need to align individual performance with these goals (Rao, 2016). Performance agreements are therefore concluded with individual employees and their performance in terms of achieving the set goals are assessed. Furthermore, synergy between individual performance agreements and organisational goals is essential as it contributes to employees perceiving the process as fair and transparent (Modipane et al., 2019). In addition to goal-setting theory, control theory and reinforcement theory are important mechanisms for feedback, while expectancy theory relates to performance management as a tool to instil employee motivation. In addition, equity theory and organisational justice theory are also important as they highlight the importance of a transparent and fair performance management system (Armstrong, 2018; Carbery & Cross, 2019). These theories and their relevance for this study are briefly discussed next.

2.1.2.1 Reinforcement theory

Reinforcement theory, as conceived by Skinner (1958), emphasises the role that positive feedback and rewards for successful goal achievement play as incentive for similar behaviour in future (Armstrong, 2018). Desired behaviour aimed at goal achievement is reinforced through positive feedback and recognition in the form of performance rewards (e.g., a salary increase or performance bonus). Recognition has a positive impact on productivity and encourages employees to set challenging goals for themselves and create new ways of achieving the set goals (Mone & London, 2018). In determining performance rewards, it is important to establish whether the set goals have been achieved and the standard by which the goals where achieved. Recognition is important as it contributes towards employee job satisfaction (Mone & London, 2018). In terms of establishing effective performance management practices in organisations, reinforcement theory emphasises the importance of feedback and recognition (Armstrong, 2018).

2.1.2.2   Goal-setting theory

Goal-setting theory was first introduced by Edwin Locke in 1960 and emphasises the setting and agreeing on goals against which performance can be measured. According to Locke's goal-setting theory, individuals who set difficult and specific goals perform better than those who set easy goals (Karmakar, 2020). Locke and Latham (1990) highlight the importance of the theory for performance management (Armstrong, 2018). The theory indicates that goals determine individual satisfaction and assist to develop a sense of achievement, as such they must be clearly defined (Armstrong, 2019). However, Legalatladi (2015) argues that if goals are too challenging, they might not be achievable, therefore, creating a setback for the employees. Legalatladi (2015) reiterates that goals must be achievable and realistic. According to Armstrong (2018), the more challenging the goal, the more people will draw on their full potential. This view is supported by Carbery and Cross (2019) who posit that, in the absence of goals that inspire employees to achieve, employees will not be motivated or put in any effort at work. Goal-setting theory therefore stresses the importance of setting clear and achievable, yet challenging performance goals and measuring the extent to which these goals are achieved (Carbery & Cross, 2019). The achievability of goals is highlighted. Goals should be realistic, if they are too challenging employees will not try to achieve them. On the contrary, if the goals are easily achievable, they are unlikely to motivate employees to make a greater effort (Ashdown, 2018; Mone & London, 2018).

2.1.2.3   Equity theory

Adams' equity theory (1963) relates to perceived fairness in the distribution of resources and the perceived fairness of treatment in comparison to others (Adams, 1965). Equity theory is concerned with the equal treatment of employees in an organisation as employees tend to compare the investments, they make with the resultant rewards to determine whether they are balanced (Adams, 1965). Carbery and Cross (2019) explain that employees compare their effort (inputs) with the rewards they receive in return (output) as well as the input-output ratio of other employees. Employees who perceive equity in the distribution of resources are more motivated to work towards set objectives. However, if there is perceived inequity, employees may reduce efforts and performance levels. Equity theory underscores the importance of transparency in performance management as employees want to be rewarded and treated fairly as compared to other employees (Carbery & Cross, 2019).

35

2.1.2.4 Expectancy theory

Expectancy theory was conceptualised by Vroom (1964) as an effort to drive motivation to achieve performance goals (Mone & London, 2018). Expectancy theory provides employees with a sense of direction and influences behaviour to achieve better results (Armstrong, 2018). The theory posits that the level of employees' motivation is based on the following factors (Carbery & Cross, 2019; Mone & London, 2018):

- *Expectancy*, which is the perceived probability that effort will lead to goal achievement.
- *Instrumentality*, which is the perceived probability that goal achievement will lead to the desired reward or various work outcomes.
- *Valence*, which is the perceived value that the employee attaches to the reward or work outcome.

According to Armstrong (2018), expectancy theory asserts that the stronger the link between the actions and the outcomes, the greater the motivation for employees to improve their performance. This view is supported by Carbery and Cross (2019) who aver that the strength to act in a particular manner depends on the strength of expectation and the attractiveness of the outcome that will follow the act to the individual. Furthermore, Carbery and Cross (2019) posit that to stimulate motivation, organisations should establish performance management systems aimed at recognising and rewarding employees' achievements. Performance management practices must include structured evaluations and clearly defined outcomes that will enable employees to focus their actions on achieving set goals and obtain appropriate performance rewards (Armstrong, 2018).

2.1.2.5 Control theory

In an organisational context, control refers to the regulation of organisational activities to ensure alignment between performance and set objectives (Griffen, 2017). Control theory, which was pioneered by Powers (1973), posits that all behaviour is goal-oriented and controlled by perceptions of goal-directed results (Mansell & Marken, 2015). When applying control theory to organisational performance, it may be said that all organisational systems require some form of control to ensure that their actions are congruent with the overall organisational objectives (Barros & Neey, 2011). According to Barros and Neey (2011), organisations rely on different control mechanisms to obtain the desired results. One such mechanism is the process of performance management which is intended to control employee

36

behaviour and outputs. In a performance management context, control theory therefore suggests that clear performance goals should be set for individual employees that are aligned with the objectives of the organisation. Moreover, employee behaviour should be continuously monitored and evaluated in terms of its contribution to organisational goal achievement. Performance evaluation should be followed by appropriate rewards or sanctions based on the extent to which employee behaviour met predetermined standards. Drawing on control theory, performance management is therefore viewed as the utilisation of organisational controls (i.e. setting goals, developing performance measures, collecting, analysing, reporting, interpreting, reviewing and acting on performance data) to ensure alignment between individual and organisational performance (Smith & Bititci, 2017).

2.1.2.6   *Organisational justice theory*

Organisational justice theory relates to perceived fairness in the allocation of resources within an organisation, the interpersonal treatment received and the processes followed during decision-making (Govender et al., 2015). Organisational justice in the workplace is based on four distinct but interrelated dimensions, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001; Govender et al., 2015).

Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of outcomes received by employees (Colquitt et al., 2005). This dimension of organisational justice reflects equity theory in that employees compare their own contribution/rewards ratios with those of others in similar positions to determine the fairness thereof (Nel & Kirsten, 2020). In a performance management context, employees form perceptions about the fairness of their performance assessment outcomes by comparing their contributions and rewards with those of others (Cheng, 2014). It has also been shown in extant literature that employees report higher levels of perceived distributive justice when their performance assessment ratings and outcomes meet their expectations (Govender et al., 2015).

Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the procedures used to make decisions in terms of the allocation of the outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2005). Performance management practices tend to be regarded as procedurally fair when they are consistently and accurately applied, are based on accurate and quantifiable information, when managers are not perceived as being biased in their assessments and when providing feedback, and when they provide for an opportunity to appeal the outcome (Govender et al., 2015; Modipane et al., 2019). Employees who are actively involved in the performance management process and

have clear role descriptions are more likely to regard it as procedurally fair and are therefore more willing to accept it (De Clercq et al., 2019; Singh, 2013).

Interactional justice relates to both interpersonal justice and informational justice based on the sensitivity in explaining the decisions made and the treatment of employees with dignity and respect. Interpersonal justice entails the perceptions that employees are treated with respect and dignity by the organisation, while informational justice relates to the perception that information provided in explaining the decisions and procedures taken are truthful (Lambert et al., 2021). Employees form judgements about the interactional fairness of the performance management process based on the manner in which communication between the employee and the supervisor was conducted throughout the process and the way in which the employee was generally treated (Carbery & Cross, 2019). In the performance management process, interactional justice perceptions therefore reflect the degree to which employees feel that they are treated with respect and dignity, especially during performance assessments (Rowland & Hall, 2012). While employees tend to regard the performance management procedure as fair when the process is thoroughly explained to them (Modipane et al., 2019) and when clear feedback is provided in terms of the performance assessments (Carbery & Cross, 2019), perceptions of distributive and procedural justice have been shown to have a greater influence on employees' satisfaction with performance ratings (Govender et al., 2015).

The theories discussed earlier highlight important aspects of the performance management process. Goal setting theory underscores the importance of setting challenging but realistic goals and assessing performance against the set goals. Reinforcement theory is fundamental in encouraging positive feedback and recognition in the form of performance rewards while control theory focuses on different forms of control that an organisation can rely on to ensure that individual goals are aligned with organisational goals. To provide a sense of direction, expectancy theory emphasises synergy between employee effort, reward and value attached to the reward. Organisational justice and equity theory highlight the importance of perceived fairness with regards to the outcomes of the performance management process (e.g. rewards, promotions, and compensation), as well as the procedure that was followed to determine these outcomes. Drawing on these theories, performance management can therefore be conceptualised as a continuous process that includes setting and communicating clear performance goals, objective assessment of the extent to which these goals are achieved and recognising and rewarding goal achievement in a fair and transparent way. As part of an effective performance management process, individuals should participate in goal setting and they should be enabled to achieve these goals. Individual performance goals should be

challenging but achievable and aligned with the goals of the organisation (Mone & London, 2018).

In this section, performance management was explained and its main theoretical underpinnings were discussed. It was also emphasised that effective performance management is crucial for organisational success. In the next section, ways of ensuring effective performance management are explored.

2.1.3   Ensuring effective performance management in the organisations

Performance management has shifted from a controlling activity to partnership where the employer and the employee share responsibility to deliver the performance required (Ashdown, 2018). This shift requires employees to proactively take responsibility to develop performance goals and to identify the required resources and strive for continuous improvement to achieve the set goals (Ashdown, 2018). In turn, the organisation should support employees through skills development and constant coaching to perform their tasks and roles with ability and confidence. The ability of employees to actively participate in the performance management process calls for supervisors to create an enabling environment that builds employees' confidence and motivate them to perform (Ashdown, 2018). Ashdown (2018) posits that employees will only perform if they are motivated to do so. According to Ashdown (2018), employees who have the ability, motivation and the opportunity (AMO) to perform will execute their work well using their own discretion. The AMO model therefore suggests that high-performing employees share the following characteristics:

- ability to perform because of the appropriate skills they have acquired;
- motivation to perform because they want to do so; and
- opportunity to perform because they are supported with adequate resources.

Organisations should ensure that individual employees' goals are aligned with those of their work teams as well as the overall organisational goals. Their progress towards achieving these goals should be reviewed and assessed on an ongoing basis. This will encourage employees to be active participants and will enhance the credibility of the performance management system (Armstrong, 2018; Rao, 2016). Legalatladi (2015) posits that employees' involvement in the performance management process does not only assist in discovering their own strengths and limitations but also assists the organisation in establishing challenges at an early stage. Legalatladi (2015) further maintains that employee involvement in the goal setting

process, management support and allocation of adequate resources will motivate employees to achieve the set goals and contribute positively towards the achievement of the organisational objectives. Organisational goals should be clearly communicated downward to ensure that all employees are familiar and involved in the achievement of the goals for the organisation (Bussin, 2017; Meyer & Kruger-Pretorius, 2018).

Makhubela et al. (2016) argue that employees who participate in goal setting are more likely to contribute to organisational effectiveness than those who are assigned performance goals without an opportunity for interaction in setting the organisational goals. In the same vein, Mbonambi (2017) concurs that goal setting helps employees and supervisors during performance contracting to avert duplication of targets and ensure contracting on the right targets. In addition, the performance standards and targets must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (SMART). The setting of SMART performance standards and the involvement of employees during the initial stage are important to create ownership and commitment to the system. Furthermore, Mbonambi (2017) posits that the time spent on training managers and employees on how to develop performance standards and providing feedback are justified by its positive effect on the credibility of the system.

Legalatladi (2015) posits that employees are important resources for any organisation to succeed in achieving its objectives, and this compels managers to improve in managing employees' performance. In doing that, organisations should create an environment that enables employees to excel in performing their duties and successfully achieving set goals and creating an environment that promotes high-level performance and positive employee attitudes. Moreover, employees who are recognised and receive support regard themselves as valued contributors towards organisational success (Breedt, 2018). In addition, Du Plessis and Van Niekerk (2017) assert that supervisors and employees should take ownership in the development of goals and performance standards. This will ensure that employees have a better understanding of the intended goals and standards and will achieve better outcomes within the agreed timeframe (Makhubela et al., 2016).

Employees should be provided with regular feedback to allow them to develop and make changes. However, informal discussions on performance are more important than formal annual assessments (Breedt, 2018; Meyer & Kruger-Pretorius, 2018). The continuous provision of feedback will not only assist in timely identification of performance gaps, but will also allow for the development of strategies to close the identified gaps (Mbonambi, 2017). Kaposambo (2016) concurs that employee consultation is vital as it enhances ownership of

the system and its effectiveness. Therefore, management should ensure that the support, guidance and development employees require to improve are readily available.

Organisations should ensure fair treatment of employees throughout the performance management processes and that performance assessments are fair, not biased and that employees are rewarded accordingly. Employees who perceive that the performance management practices are fair are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and committed to their employing organisations, which may ultimately contribute to organisational success. (De Clercq et al., 2019; Totawar & Nambudiri, 2014).

2.2   PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Performance management in the public service is aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisations to achieve goals and promote accountability in the use of resources. Makhubela et al. (2016) posit that performance management within the public service is key in improving performance and accountability of government. According to Armstrong (2018), effective performance management is essential to ensure that employees develop to their full capacity and are able to meet (or even exceed) their own and the organisation's expectations to the benefit of all role-players.

In the public service, the performance management system for non-senior managers is implemented in line with Chapter 4, Part 5 of the amended Public Service Regulation [PSR], 2016. This regulation as well other legislation that impacts on performance management in the public service are discussed in the next section. This is followed by an explanation of how performance management is conducted in the DAFF, which serves as the context for this research, and a discussion of the performance related problems that gave rise to this research. Finally, the importance of employee perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system and the affect thereof on their attitudes towards the organisation are explored.

2.2.1   Legislation and regulations governing performance in the public sector

2.2.1.1   *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Constitution) provides the overall framework within which government must determine

policies. The Constitution, in section 195(1), underscores the importance of democratic values and principles governing public administration. This includes, inter alia, accountability, the efficient, economic and effective use of resources and a developmental orientation. Employees should therefore be enabled to effectively and efficiently perform their duties. The Constitution further requires the public service to be governed by the principle of fairness, equity, professional ethics and impartiality. In addition, the Constitution stipulates that good human resource management and career development practices must be cultivated in the public service to maximise human potential. Therefore, laying the foundation for the implementation and development of the performance management in the public service is essential (Republic of South Africa, 1996)

2.2.1.2   *Public Service Act*

The Public Service Act [PSA] 103 of 1994, as amended, regulates employment practices in the public service and assigns the Minister of Public Service and Administration the responsibility to establish norms and standards relating to employment practices and conditions of service for employees in the public service (Republic of South Africa, 1994). Employment practices include:

- recruitment procedures, advertising and selection criteria
- appointment and the appointment process
- job and occupational classification and grading
- remuneration and other conditions of service
- job assignment
- the working environment
- work facilities
- training and development
- employee performance management system and practices
- transfer and secondments
- discipline
- management of poor performance and ill health
- termination of employment.

In terms of section 3(2) in Chapter 2 of the PSA, the Minister is required to make regulations, determinations and directives and perform any other undertakings provided for in the Act. Performance management issues are addressed in Chapter 2, section 7(b), of the PSA which stipulates that "the recruitment, appointment, performance management, transfer, dismissal

and other career incidents of employees of that department, including any other matter which relates to such employees in their individual capacities", should be provided for in the public service.

2.2.1.3 Labour Relations Act

The Labour Relations Act [LRA] 66 of 1995 requires employers to set and clearly communicate performance standards and to conduct performance assessments of employees (Republic of South Africa, 1995). In addition, the Act makes provision for dealing with incapacity in the form of poor work performance by employees. According to Schedule 8 of the LRA, an employee may only be dismissed for poor performance if it can be shown that he or she was unable to meet specific performance standards. However, the employer must ensure that remedial action is taken prior to dismissing an employee for poor work performance. The LRA protects both the rights of the employee and the employer and outlines processes for dispute resolution.

2.2.1.4 White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service

The White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service [WPTPS] was published in 1995 and required government departments to prioritise service delivery (DPSA, 1995). The WPTPS provided a framework for government departments to develop service delivery strategies to promote continuous and improved services. Chapter 11 of the WPTPS called for government departments to develop strategies designed to promote continuous improvement in the quantity, quality and equity of service provision. These strategies were required to identify, among other things, the following:

- service delivery mission statements and service guarantees;
- defined outputs and targets, performance indicators and service standards, benchmarked against comparable international standards;
- human resource plans, addressing aspects such as staffing, training and development and organisational capacity building, aimed at meeting service delivery needs; and
- mechanisms and structures for monitoring and evaluation to measure progress and where appropriate introduce corrective action.

The WPTPS further called for government departments to improve organisational performance and the performance of their employees to deliver efficient service. It therefore supported the development of a performance management system to enhance service

delivery in the public service. In addition, the WPTPS indicated that, in improving performance outputs, the public service must be accountable and responsible to bring important cultural and structural changes required by the government department. In terms of the WPTPS, both the national and provincial government were required to develop a human resource development strategic framework aligning the needs of the organisation, employees and the environment. This would enhance employee satisfaction and performance and ultimately contribute to organisational goal achievement. In addition, to ensure government effectiveness and achievement of the results, the WPTPS required departments to be transparent in all their activities, be effective and accountable in resource utilisation and manage performance in a consultative, non-discriminatory and supportive manner.

2.2.1.5   *The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele)*

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery [WPTPSD] provides a policy framework and strategy for the implementation of the transformation of public service delivery (DPSA, 1997a). The White Paper outlines ten Batho Pele principles linked to transforming service delivery. The ten Batho Pele principles are consultation, service standards, courtesy, access, information, openness and transparency, redress and value. The White Paper further indicates that the performance of employees who deal with customers must be monitored regularly and that underperformance should not be tolerated. In addition, the WPTPSD encourages performance assessment of employees who contribute to improving service to the public and employees who provide direct service to fellow public servants. Furthermore, departments should put in place monitoring and reporting system that will enable managers to check progress and take remedial action where necessary.

2.2.1.6   *The White Paper on HRM in the Public Service*

The White Paper on HRM in the public service was published in 1997. The purpose of this White Paper was to facilitate a shift from personnel administration to human resource management practices that would effectively support social and economic transformation in the public service (DPSA, 1997b). In addition, the White Paper ensured that the management of employees and their performance in the public service adhered to the principles of professionalism, fairness, equality, transparency and accountability. It also provided for the identification of employee strengths and weaknesses by means of a performance assessment process and proposed interventions aimed at rewarding good performance and managing poor performance.

The White Paper provided a policy framework that facilitated the development of human resource management practices in support of effective and efficient service delivery in the public service and remains central to the promotion of a conducive working environment. It supports the notion that the success of the public service in achieving its goals depends primary on the employees performing their duties.

2.2.1.7   The White Paper on Public Service Training and Education

The White Paper on Public Service Training and Education [WPPSTE] facilitates the development of HRM practices through a policy framework that supports an effective and efficient public service, geared towards economic and social transformation (DPSA, 1998). According to the White Paper, the public service values employees who are willing to devote themselves to a career in the public service, and who maximise their performance and develop their potential fully through appropriate and adequate training and education.

The White Paper further seeks to enable all public servants to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes in ways that maximise performance in their current roles and allows employees to regularly review their training and education needs and requirements. Employees job satisfaction are thereby enhanced and they are provided with opportunities to prepare for their changing roles and responsibilities in the public service (Public Service Commission, 2018).

2.2.1.8   Skills Development Act

The Skills Development Act [SDA] 97 of 1998 aims to improve the quality of life of employees and develop the work-related skills of the South African workforce (Republic of South Africa, 1998b). Section 2(1) of the SDA encourages employers to utilise the workplace as a learning environment for employees. The Act reflects the commitment of the South African government to human resource development in the workplace (Meyer & Kruger-Pretorius, 2018). According to Meyer and Kruger-Pretorius (2018), the SDA provides a skills development strategy that is flexible, accessible, decentralised, demand led and based on partnerships between the public and private sectors. In addition, the Act strives to improve the workforce competency levels with the aim of enabling organisations to be more productive and competitive (Meyer & Kruger-Pretorius, 2018). According to Legalatladi (2015), training and development of employees is important and employer efforts to capacitate their employees should be through improving opportunities for training. In addition, service delivery should be approached through employee development and performance management (Legalatladi,

2015). Therefore, employers should provide employees with skills that uplift and develop them to improve their performance and employment prospects.

2.2.1.9   *Employment Equity Act*

The Employment Equity Act [EEA] 55 of 1998 aims to ensure equity and representation in the workplace across occupational levels and eliminate discriminations inherited from the pre-democratic government (Republic of South Africa, 1998a). In addition, the Act strives to address the disadvantages experienced by designated groups in the workplace by implementing affirmative action measures. Section 50 of the EEA 55 of 1998, as amended, requires employers to review the performance of any function or person permissible by law. The Act regulates the prohibition of unfair discrimination against employees and implementation of employment equity plans.

2.2.1.10   *Code of Good Practice on the Integration of Employment Equity into Human Resource Policies and Practices*

The Code of Good Practice on the Integration of Employment Equity into Human Resource Policies and Practices aims to eliminate unfair discrimination and provide measures to implement affirmative action (Department of Labour, 2005). The Code of Good Practice further emphasises the importance of the performance management process. It specifically underscores the importance of setting clear expectations, assessing of the extent to which employees meet these expectations and reviewing appraisal results to ensure consistency.

2.2.1.11   *Public Service Regulations*

The Department of Public Service and Administration issued amended Public Service Regulations [PSR] in 2016 to replace the 2001 Public Service Regulation. The new PSR provides norms and standards in terms of the performance management and development system (PMDS) for public service employees who are not senior managers. In terms of Chapter 4, Part 5, Regulation 71 of the amended PSR, the ministers as the executive authorities are expected to establish the PMDS for different occupational groups and to approve and implement the performance management system for non-senior managers (DPSA, 2016).

Regulation 71(5) of the amended PSR further stipulates that the performance management system shall provide for the dimensions of performance assessment; weighting for the key results areas and competency requirements; and monitoring of employees' performance. Performance monitoring should take place on a continuous basis and oral feedback should be given at least quarterly if the performance is satisfactory and in writing if the performance is unsatisfactory. Furthermore, Regulation 71(5) provides for the arrangement and structures for the purpose of performance moderation to ensure equity and consistency in the application of the performance management system.

In terms of Chapter 4, Part 5, Regulation 72 of the amended PSR, the regulation stipulates provisions for entering into a performance agreement and conducting performance assessments. According to this regulation, a performance agreement should include a work plan containing activities, outputs and resource requirements as well as a personal development plan stating the competency and development needs of an employee in terms of the inherent requirements of the job. This regulation also provides mechanisms for dispute resolution if the employee and the supervisor do not agree on the content of the performance agreement or do not sign a performance agreement.

Regulation 72(7) of the amended PSR further indicates that no employee shall qualify for performance rewards if he or she has not signed a performance agreement within the stipulated timeframe. In terms of regulation 72, an employee must be assessed for each performance cycle by the supervisor and, in addition, an executive authority should inform the employee of the outcome of the performance assessment. Based on the outcome of the assessment, the Minister may reward performance where appropriate and provide training to employees who performed poorly to manage poor performance.

In terms of Chapter 5, Regulation 73 of the amended PSR, the Minister shall establish a performance incentive scheme to reward employees and the criteria for rewarding performance. More importantly, Regulation 73(3) maintains that the Minister shall determine a percentage for granting performance rewards that should not be exceeded. Regulation 73(4) of the amended PSR further alludes that the Minister shall determine the maximum percentage for rewarding employees' performance from time to time.

2.2.2 Performance management in the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

The performance management process typically consists of the following phases (Bussin, 2017, p. 17):

- Phase 1: Define goals, standards and measurements
- Phase 2: Provide ongoing coaching and feedback
- Phase 3: Conduct performance dialogue
- Phase 4: Determine performance recognitions, rewards or consequences.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the phases of performance management as applied in the DAFF[1] and serves as a framework for a discussion of these phases in the sections that follow. The performance management challenges experienced in the Department are also highlighted.

2.2.2.1 Performance planning and agreement

The performance management system for non-senior managers is implemented in line with the PSR (DPSA, 2016) and the determination and directive on the performance management and development system (PMDS) (DPSA, 2018). According to the new regulation and directive on PMDS, government departments are expected to review and align their PMDS policies with the new directive. The DAFF policy on employee performance management and development system (EPMDS) is for non-senior managers (DAFF, 2018). The performance cycle is a twelve month period and employees are required to sign a performance agreement within two months after the beginning of the new performance cycle (30 May) while newly appointed employees in the organisation are expected to sign a performance agreement within the first three months of appointment. When entering into a performance agreement, the

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[1] With the inception of the Sixth Administration, the new cabinet was announced on 28 May 2019. The President of the Republic of South Africa announced the configuration of departments that introduced a number of changes among others DAFF was split into two whereby the agriculture component was merged with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to form the new Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). The forestry and fisheries components were merged with the Department of Environmental Affairs to form the new Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment. Although the department was merged, the performance management system for DAFF was still used and the empirical data were collected from employees of DAFF.

supervisor and employee should identify areas for development and indicate when performance will be reviewed and how feedback will be provided. According to the EPMDS policy, a performance agreement must include the following:

- the job title, personnel number, grade of the post, key responsibility areas, competency requirements and a description of the main objectives and relevant outputs of the job;

- a personal development plan outlining developmental needs of the employee in line with the job requirements;

- a workplan with outputs, activities and resource requirements; and

- key responsibility areas that are weighted according to the impact and level of importance for the employee's job – the total percentage for all the key responsibility areas must be 100% and each key responsibility area should weigh between 10% and 30%.

Figure 2.1

Phases of the Performance Management Process

Start of a year
(1 April)

Continuing
dialogue
Midyear reviews
(October)

End of a year
(30 March)

Define goals, standards and measurements
- Performance planning and agreement
- Developing performance standards
- Developing a personal development plan

Provide ongoing coaching and feedback
- Performance monitoring
- Managing poor performance

Conduct performance dialogue
- Performance assessment
- Mechanism for resolving performance matters

Determine performance recognitions, rewards or consequences
- Performance moderation process
- Performance rewards

Note. Researcher's own compilation.

The supervisor and the employee jointly discuss and agree on the generic assessment factors which are elements and standards used to describe and assess performance in terms of

knowledge, skills, attitude and discipline that are relevant to the employee's job. Any developmental area identified in the generic assessment factors shall be included in the personal development plan to bridge any performance gap identified (DAFF, 2018).

2.2.2.2   Developing performance standards

Performance standards are developed for each key result area to promote objectivity during performance assessment. Moreover, performance standards are rated using a four-point rating scale of which one indicates that the performance does not meet the expected standard of the job, while a rating of four indicates that performance is highly effective or far exceed the expected standard.

According to Bussin (2017), it is not enough to set goals, but goals should be linked to expected outcomes (performance standards). Performance standards should be developed for each key responsibility area and activity per job and they must be SMART. Bussin (2017) asserts that the development of performance standards, though time and resource consuming, produce an objective and legally defensible appraisal. Breedt (2018) concurs that objectives should be specific for the employees to know what is expected from them to accomplish and be achievable and challenging. According to Bussin (2017), performance standards should indicate the following:

- How well the activity is performed (quality);
- The volume of work an employee performs (quantity);
- When to perform the duty (time); and
- Procedure to complete the job (process).

In the DAFF, the performance standards that have not been properly developed creates a problem during the assessment committee reviews as the committee has to address the issues of inconsistency and lack of clear or no performance standards. Feedback is not provided continuously in the organisation and the lack of feedback has an impact on timely identification of the gaps as the performance standards cannot be changed at the end of the performance cycle.

2.2.2.3   Developing a personal development plan

The supervisor and the employee are responsible for the development of a personal development plan. A personal development plan is a plan that all employees should have as

it ensures that both the employee and the supervisor identify training and development needs that are relevant to the employees' job (Breedt, 2018). Based on the performance agreement, the supervisor and the employee identify areas that require development in the key responsibility area based on skills, knowledge and competencies. The supervisor should also ensure that the resources are allocated to implement the identified training needs (Breedt, 2018). Although the development of a personal development plan is compulsory at the DAFF, there is no enforcement or accountability on the implementation of the personal development plan because often the plans are not implemented owing to inadequate financial resources. This poses a great concern on the credibility of the system as some employees' regard this as a paper exercise with no value add to them. It is important that both the supervisor and the employee are held accountable for the implementation of the personal development plan and ensure that the plan is achieved because often the accountability remains with the supervisor although employees should also take responsibility for their own development.

2.2.2.4   Performance monitoring

Armstrong (2018) posits that employees' performance must be managed throughout the year by providing feedback regularly or immediately after an incident has occurred and not wait for formal review sessions. The view is supported by Meyer and Kruger-Pretorius (2018) who suggests that supervisors should informally engage with the employees to establish their level of performance as informal discussions on performance are more important than formal annual performance assessments. Employees who are recognised and receive support regard themselves as valued contributors towards organisational success (Breedt, 2018). More importantly, feedback should be provided daily and weekly to allow them to develop and make changes and elements of underperformance should be dealt with on time to allow improvements to be implemented (Breedt, 2018; Meyer & Kruger-Pretorius, 2018). Although monitoring of performance is encouraged within DAFF through feedback, performance is not monitored properly as often performance issues that should have been addressed on time before the end of the performance cycle are raised during the assessment period; hence, supervisors must be held accountable to provide feedback.

2.2.2.5   Managing poor performance

A study conducted by Breedt (2018) suggests that the employee and the supervisor are jointly responsible for dealing with poor performance. The root cause for poor performance should be identified and appropriate actions should be implemented to address it. Breedt (2018)

further maintains that poor performance should be addressed fairly and urgently especially during mid-year reviews to provide the employee with an opportunity to improve his or her performance before the annual assessment. This view is supported by Armstrong (2018) who asserts that underperformance should be dealt with in good time to allow improvements to be implemented. Breedt (2018) further argues that supervisors should clearly communicate performance expectations to employees because lack of coaching or poor supervision can also contribute towards non-performance by employees. However, employees should be encouraged to identify the causes of poor performance and possible solutions to the problem. The EPMDS policy makes provision for supervisors to manage poor performance by implementing a personal improvement plan in an event where poor performance has been identified. However, poor performance is seldom addressed during midterm reviews. It is mainly identified during the annual performance assessment, which leaves the employee with no opportunity to address performance gaps.

2.2.2.6   *Performance assessments*

The supervisor communicates the date for the assessment to the employee to give him or her enough time to prepare for the assessment and a portfolio of evidence. The employee should prepare and present a portfolio of evidence to support the performance assessments. Formal performance assessments are conducted during midyear reviews in October and annual performance assessments are conducted at the end of performance cycle (30 March). Breedt (2018) posits that performance assessments that are not conducted frequently results in both the employee and the supervisor disregarding important achievements.

According to the EPMDS policy, the supervisor and the employee should discuss the performance agreement and the achievements made for the period under review and allocate ratings. The employee can also provide inputs during the assessment session and highlight performance areas that are not satisfactory. In addition, both the employee and the supervisor must identify and eliminate factors that hamper employees' work performance while also recognising significant outputs achieved during the period under review which were not covered by the performance agreement. In instances where an employee is found to be underperforming, a personal improvement plan should be developed (by the employer and supervisor) and implemented with the aim of enabling employee achievement of performance goals (DAFF, 2018). Although the policy compels supervisors to discuss and agree on the ratings, this is not always practiced as some ratings are unilaterally imposed on the employees. In a study conducted by Mwale (2016), he argues that during the performance

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reviews there is a tendency to focus on areas that need improvement but fail to provide suggestions to improve employee performance and as such, employees may view performance reviews as a process of pointing out the wrong things.

2.2.2.7   Mechanism for resolving performance matters

If there is a disagreement between the employee and the supervisor about the content of the performance agreement or the performance assessment, the first step in resolving it would be to seek intervention by the next level supervisor. This intervention should take place within ten working days. If the next level supervisor is unable to resolve the disagreement, a mediator must be appointed by the executive authority within 30 days after the expiry of the due date of the signing of the performance assessment or the performance agreement. The mediation process should be concluded within 30 days and if the mediation process also fails, the employee may consider lodging a formal grievance (DAFF, 2018). Formal grievances have the potential of straining working relationships between the affected employees and their supervisors. If the process is not managed properly, it may affect productivity and motivation of the individual employees (Klaas, 1989). In addition, some employees are not keen to lodge formal grievances as they are afraid of being victimised by their supervisors.

2.2.2.8   Performance moderation process

(a)   <u>Assessment committee</u>

According to the EPMDS policy, the assessment committee is established at the directorate or unit level and is chaired by the relevant director with deputy directors and assistant directors or equivalent ranks as members of the assessment committee. The supervisor presents the employees' performance assessments supported by the portfolio of evidence to the assessment committee. Furthermore, the assessment committee is responsible to scrutinise the scores agreed by the supervisor and the employee against the performance agreement. Based on the portfolio of evidence presented, the assessment committee may change the scores allocated by the supervisor. The chairperson of the committee must sign and indicate the reasons the assessment scores were altered. The relevant supervisor must inform the employee within five working days of the outcome from the assessment committee. The assessment committee should meet before 31 July of each year. However, some committees do not adhere to the due date and this has a negative impact on the timely finalisation of the assessment process (DAFF, 2018).

(b)   <u>Intermediate review committee</u>

The intermediate review committee is established at the departmental branch level to ensure consistency and fairness of the annual assessments. The committee is chaired by the head of the branch together with the relevant senior managers of the branch as committee members. The intermediate review committee scrutinises scores for all the employees within the relevant units and not individual scores. Moreover, the committee also monitors the effectiveness of the performance management process at branch level and ensures that performance rewards do not exceed the 1.5% of the branch remuneration budget as a policy requirement (DAFF, 2018). The intermediate review committee often do not adhere to the policy requirements in terms of the budget and this creates perceptions of unfairness and inconsistency. In addition, this committee also delays finalising the review of the annual assessments which in turn delays the allocation of the performance rewards.

(c)   <u>Departmental moderating committee</u>

The departmental moderating committee is chaired by the Director General with senior managers as members of the committee at the discretion of the Director General. The purpose of the moderating committee is to ensure that the annual performance assessments process has been conducted in a realistic, fair and consistent way. However, the committee does not assess individual cases but reviews the overall results of the assessment process across various units and recommends reward levels for performance outcomes at different levels and remedial action. The moderating committee further ensures that performance bonuses do not exceed 1.5% of the remuneration budget for DAFF. In an event where the performance bonuses exceed the budget, the moderation committee reduces the performance bonuses by scaling down percentages to be allocated for performance bonuses to ensure that the department stays within the budget. The scaling of performance rewards to comply with 1.5% as a legislative requirement often leads to inconsistency and unfairness on the allocation of rewards for employees who at branch level stayed within the budget and those that have exceeded the 1.5% of the remuneration budget. Therefore, employees who have performed well will not be rewarded accordingly and this may lead to dissatisfaction among employees and lack of commitment to the organisation as some employees will resort to challenging the outcomes of the moderation committee.

2.2.2.9   Performance rewards

The EPMDS policy indicates that employees are expected to contribute to the success of the organisation and in turn the organisation is expected to reward outstanding and good performance. To recognise employees with outstanding and good performance, pay progression is awarded to employees' whose performance is regarded as fully effective while performance bonuses are awarded to employees' whose performance is regarded as exceptional and had performed significantly above the set standards. Pay progression is paid annually in July and is eligible to employees who have 24 months of continuous service in the public service on condition that the performance agreement was signed and submitted on time. The granting of performance bonuses is the prerogative of the executive authority and shall not exceed 1.5% of the remuneration budget. Breedt (2018) asserts that performance rewards should be finalised as soon as possible as this will encourage employees to go an extra mile in performing their duties. However, the implementation of the performance rewards is often affected by the delay in various assessment and moderation committees.

2.2.3   Performance management challenges

From the foregoing discussions, it can be concluded that performance management system in the public service has evolved but there are still some challenges. Public service organisations have a challenge in adopting a comprehensive performance management approach that includes structural reform to support performance management and its evaluation (Mizrahi, 2017). The complex environment in which performance management systems function implies that the system may have various indirect effects on organisational success. Although the performance management system is important and utilised by management in the public service, its effectiveness should not be ignored because the performance of the employee is determined by the system where work is carried out and the organisations should provide support to employees as their performance is also affected by system factors that are outside the employees' control (Armstrong, 2018).

Performance agreements that are signed between the supervisor and the employee are submitted as a compliance matter without discussion. This creates a challenge with the alignment of goals with the operational plans because goals are imposed to the employee without discussion. The non-alignment further creates a challenge as the employee will not necessarily know his or her contribution towards the achievement of the set goals and the setting of the performance standards. Lack of ownership by both the employees and the

supervisors during the initial stage in developing goals and performance standards contribute towards lack of commitment to the system.

However, performance standards are not fully developed and there is no consistency as some performance standards are too low or too high and some of the performance standards do not meet the SMART principle. Moreover, the performance standards that have not been properly developed create a problem during the assessment committee reviews as the committee has to address the issues of inconsistency and lack of clear or non-performance standards. The inconsistencies with the performance standards are a concern on the effectiveness and fairness of the system. In addition, the challenge with inadequate performance standards poses a concern on the competency of supervisors to develop performance standards.

The development of the personal development plans is compulsory, but there is no enforcement on their implementation. The organisation does not have a commitment to provide employees with adequate resources to support the achievement of the set targets. Moreover, supervisors do not monitor the implementation of the performance agreement consistently and this delays the identification of performance gaps and intervention to improve performance. In addition, areas where performance gaps have been identified, there is lack of commitment to implement interventions to address the performance gaps and this raises a concern on the credibility of the system.

Feedback is not provided to employees on how they have performed and sometimes lack of preparedness from both the employee and the supervisor during performance assessments creates a challenge. Lack of feedback has an impact on timely identification of the gaps as the performance standards cannot be changed at the end of the performance cycle. In addition, performance is not monitored properly as often performance issues that should have been addressed on time before the end of the performance cycle are raised during the assessment period. Performance assessments become personal and employees approach the assessments with resistance, and they are not comfortable with the review process as the system is used as a punitive measure and not as a developmental tool. Performance management information is poorly utilised because it is collected and interpreted in ways that public service officials view as not productive and ineffective. The system is not applied fairly, consistently and transparently, and incentives are awarded to those who do not deserve them, meaning that the mechanism is not effective (Breedt, 2018; Mizrahi, 2017).

The conclusion and announcement of the performance assessment outcomes takes long owing to several committees that are involved in the process. During the assessment committee, employees at lower levels are disadvantaged because some of them are not represented by their direct supervisors and these results in lack of full knowledge of the actual performance as they do not interact with employees at lower levels daily. In addition, people who serve in the moderation committees do not have technical knowledge of the area of work of the employees. Supervisors are not assessed on their knowledge of performance management system, and the lack of an electronic performance management system remains a challenge. There should be transparency on the performance management system to enhance the confidence of the employees in the system. To minimise the unfairness of the performance management system organisations should focus on learning from data gathered to discuss with employees on how their performance could be improved and build reputation and employee commitment (Mizrahi, 2017; Mone & London, 2018). The preceding challenges are consistent with the Public Service Commission (PSC) report on the effectiveness of the performance management and development system of senior managers in the public service in which the PSC acknowledged in its report that the effective implementation of performance management system remains a challenge due to its controversy, complexity and non-adherence to the principles of effective performance management (Public Service Commission, 2018).

2.3 EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

While performance management in the public service is regulated by particular legislation and regulations (see section 2.2.1), the success thereof is not determined by legal compliance only. Employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system are crucial (Makhubela et al., 2016). Performance management is likely to fail if employees doubt its credibility. Furthermore, performance management will only have positive results if employees perceive it as effective – that is, accurate and fair. Sharma et al. (2016) posit that the acceptance of the system by employees is essential for its success. These authors (Sharma et al., 2016) define performance management system effectiveness as a measure of the success of the system in achieving specific goals. They maintain that the system will only be successful if employees have positive perceptions in terms of the accuracy and fairness of thereof (Sharma et al., 2016). The system should be able to achieve the intended objectives and employees should be able to do the right things in line with the set goals.

Sharma et al. (2016) posit that, while the importance of employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of performance management systems are widely acknowledged, it has not been adequately conceptualised as a construct or operationalised in extant research. In addition, the different scales that have been developed failed to include the different primary stages of the performance management system being performance planning, feedback and coaching, review and outcomes (Sharma et al., 2016). These authors (Sharma et al., 2016) propose that, in order to establish the effectiveness of the system, it is important to understand its objectives because effectiveness is context-specific. Sharma et al. (2016) further indicate that the system will be effective in achieving its objectives if the right things are done in the right way and that if the system is not effective it will not be acceptable to employees. Therefore, to establish the effectiveness of performance management systems, the focus should be on its accuracy (doing the right things) and fairness (doing the right way) (Sharma et al., 2016). For the purposes of this study, performance management system effectiveness (PMSE) is therefore regarded as a two-dimensional construct, consisting of (1) employee perceptions of performance management system accuracy and (2) employee perceptions of performance management system fairness.

2.3.1 Employee perceptions of performance management system accuracy

Employees' perceptions of performance management system accuracy relate to their assessment of the extent to which the system provides accurate information, recognises employee performance and identifies relevant skills that add value to the individual (Sharma et al., 2016). In addition, the accuracy of the system calls for a common vision of standards that are acceptable to all parties and the availability of relevant information to assess performance. Performance management system accuracy, as a dimension of the performance management system effectiveness construct (PMSE), consists of the following four subdimensions (Sharma et al. 2016, p. 235).

- *Performance planning accuracy* (PPA) is the extent to which employees perceive that the performance planning phase ensures the alignment of employees' performance goals with the organisational goals through the relevant skills.
- *Feedback and coaching accuracy* (FCA) are the extent to which employees perceive that the performance management feedback and coaching phase ensures the alignment of employees planned and delivered performance through regular feedback and coaching over the year.

- *Performance review accuracy* (PRA) is the extent to which employees perceive that the annual performance review phase measures the alignment of their annual performance with planned performance through employees' performance assessment against planned goals.
- *Outcome accuracy* (OUA) is the extent to which employees perceive that the outcomes phase of performance management ensures that the performance-based rating, compensation, reward and/or recognition are evidently linked to their annual performance reviews.

Performance management system accuracy provides a base for accurate employee performance recognition that adds value to the organisation and enhance performance which equals to "doing the right things" in the PMS context (Sharma et al., 2016).

2.3.2   Employee perceptions of performance management system fairness

Employees' perceptions of performance management system fairness, as the second dimension PMSE construct (Sharma et al., 2016), is grounded in seminal organisational justice (see section 2.1.2.6) research by Greenberg (1993) and Colquitt (2001). Perceived organisational justice reflects the degree to which employees within an organisation consider their input/outcome ratios as well as the procedures followed in reaching the outcomes as fair (De Clercq et al., 2019). According to Sharma et al. (2016), employees' perceptions of organisational justice are crucial to ensuring effective performance management and the four-dimensional nature of the organisational justice construct, which includes distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001), should therefore be embraced. As indicated in section 2.1.2.6, *distributive justice* is concerned with the fairness of the actual outcomes of the performance management process. Employees also make judgements in terms of distributive fairness of performance practices based on the support and training they received to achieve the set goals and the recognition they receive in return (Carbery & Cross, 2019). *Procedural justice* is concerned with the procedure in which pay and rewards outcomes have been allocated to the employees (Barrett-Howard & Tyler, 1986). Employees consider the procedures to be fair when they feel that the procedure by which the outcome has been received is accurate and unbiased (Barrett-Howard & Tyler, 1986).

Interpersonal justice relates to the perceptions that employees are treated with respect and dignity by the organisation (Lambert et al., 2021). Informational justice relates to the perception that information provided in explaining the decisions and procedures taken are truthful

(Lambert et al., 2021). *Interactional justice* relates to the manner in which communication between the employee and the supervisor was conducted throughout the performance management process and the treatment the employee received, especially during feedback and performance assessments (Carbery & Cross, 2019). Interactional fairness in performance management calls for a sense of mutual respect in personal interactions, the allocation of rewards and explanations of the decisions made (Gupta & Kumar, 2012).

Employee perceptions of PMSE, as a two-dimensional construct that consists of PMS accuracy and PMS fairness, therefore, reflects the extent to which organisational representatives are perceived as doing the right things and doing things the right way when engaging with their subordinates in terms of the performance management system.

Figure 2.2

Performance Management System Effectiveness as a Two-dimensional Construct
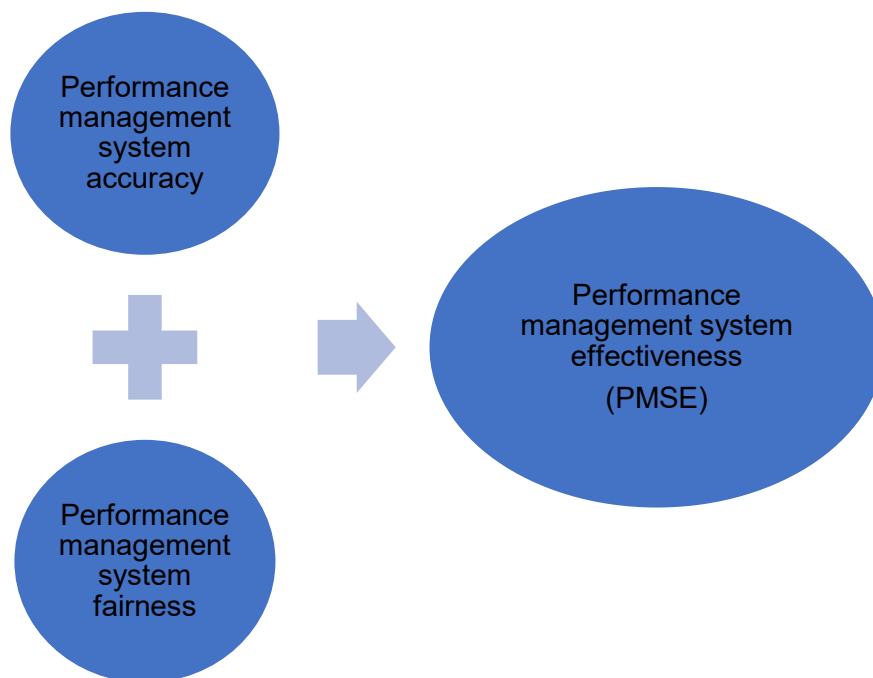
Note. Researchers' own compilation.

Olowodunoye (2015) argues that employees who are treated fairly by the organisation will give back to the organisation by being more committed and showing a positive attitude. Hence, it may be expected that employees who consider the performance management system as fair, will have a positive attitude towards their jobs and their employing organisations. These attitudes and their relation to employees' perceptions are further explored in section 2.4. It is, however, also anticipated that employees' perceptions about the effectiveness of the

performance management system may differ based on their personal and job-related characteristics. The reported differences are discussed in the section that follows.

2.3.3 Person-centred variables that may influence employee perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system

It has been reported in extant literature that individuals with different characteristics in terms of age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education may hold different views of performance management practices and the effectiveness thereof (Govender et al., 2015).

Reports on the influence of age on employee perceptions of performance management practices have been contradicting and relate mainly to perceptions of fairness. Some authors (e.g. Makhubela et al., 2016; Modipane et al., 2019) found no significant differences between age groups while others (e.g. Kim & Holzer, 2016) reported a positive relationship between age and distributive justice perceptions, suggesting that older employees are more likely to regard the outcomes of performance appraisals as fair. It has also been shown that younger employees tend to focus on distributive justice concerns owing to the need for success and economic security, while older employees regard procedural justice in the performance management process as more important (Govender et al., 2015).

Contradicting findings in terms of gender differences have also been reported. Researchers such as Makhubela et al. (2016) and Modipane et al. (2019) found no significant differences between males and females in terms of their perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system. It has, however, been reported that female employees, especially younger females, tend to receive lower performance ratings compared to their male counterparts (Lin & Kellough, 2019). According to Lin and Kellough (2019), these results may be ascribed to the inflation of scores for the male employees as a means of avoiding confrontation. Females may consequently experience the performance management system as biased and therefore, view it as ineffective (Lin & Kellough, 2019).

Modipane et al. (2019) report significant statistical differences between employees at different job levels in terms of the perceived effectiveness of the performance management system. Employees at middle management level were more likely to perceive the system as highly effective, while employees at lower job levels had reservations about the effectiveness thereof. While supervisors (i.e. individuals responsible for performance assessments) tend to regard performance outcomes as fair (Kim & Holtzer, 2016), subordinates (i.e. individuals who are

assessed) often question the fairness of both the procedure followed and the outcomes of the performance management system (Modipane et al., 2019). Tenure has been reported to influence employees' acceptance of the performance management system positively. However, the strength of the relationship tends to decrease over time (Kim & Holzer, 2016; Steffens et al., 2014).

Finally, a positive relationship has been reported between employees' levels of education and their perceptions of performance management system effectiveness (Kim & Holzer, 2016). Therefore, employees who are highly qualified would be more probably to perceive the performance management system as effective than the less educated employees (Lin & Kellough, 2019).

2.4 THE INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS ON THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ORGANISATION

Perceptions are processes of interpretation to which employees ascribe to give meaning to their environment (Tay et al., 2016). Research indicates that perceptual processes are based on the interpretation of information and play a major role in determining the manner in which employees assign meaning to their lives and work environments (Bakhshi et al., 2009; Manimala et al., 2019; Tay et al., 2016). Employees rely on their perceptions to create a meaningful picture of their environments by selecting, organising and interpreting information (Manimala et al., 2019). However, perceptions are often obtained from information that is incomplete with limited observation, hence resulting decisions and actions are affected by perceptual biases (Malik & Chishti, 2018). Negative perceptions, if not addressed, could breed resentment (Manimala et al., 2019).

Employees' perceptions therefore influence their feelings and attitudes towards their employing organisations and as such an understanding thereof is essential (Greenberg, 1987; Mwale, 2016). When employees, for instance, perceive that organisational outcomes have been distributed fairly, they tend to be more satisfied with these outcomes (e.g. position and pay) (Malik & Chishti, 2018). Moreover, if they perceive formal rules and procedures governing organisational decisions as fair, they are more probable to harbour positive attitudes towards their employing organisations (Malik & Chishti, 2018). It has been shown that employees' perceptions of performance management system fairness affect their feelings and behaviour in their employing organisations (Govender et al., 2015). An awareness of employees' perceptions of performance management practices, especially the performance appraisal

system, is therefore essential when aiming to learn their attitudes and behaviour in the workplace (Govender et al., 2015; Kaposambo, 2016).

Research has shown that positive perceptions of distributive justice may enhance job satisfaction (Rifai, 2005). Therefore, if employees perceive the distribution of organisational outcomes as fair, they will be more likely to report high levels of job satisfaction. In contrast, employees tend to display feelings of dissatisfaction if they perceive that the rewards distribution was unfair (Greenberg, 1986). Employees who perceive that they have been fairly treated are also more likely to be committed to their employing organisations (Rifai, 2005). This also applies to perceived fairness in performance management. If employees experience the performance management system as fair and accurate, they tend to display positive attitudes towards the organisation and subsequently perform their duties efficiently and with commitment (Kaposambo, 2016). As such, it is important for organisations to engage in performance management practices that are perceived as effective (i.e. accurate and fair) to improve employee' job satisfaction and commitment, and thereby enhance organisational success (Govender et al., 2015).

In conclusion, employees form perceptions about their organisations based on their experiences in the workplace. One of these experiences is the way that their performance is managed and assessed. They form perceptions about the performance management system and its effectiveness (accuracy and fairness), based on their experiences thereof. These perceptions, in turn, influence their attitudes towards their employing organisations. For example, employees with a positive attitude will embrace the organisation as part of their identity and willingness to stay and their strive towards achieving organisational success will increase. Job satisfaction and organisational commitment as attitudinal reactions are important for this study as they can affect organisational functioning. As such, organisations should understand the satisfaction and commitment of their employees to maintain high levels of employee performance and enhance organisational success.

2.5   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The meta-theoretical context of the study, namely, performance management in the South African public sector, was outlined in this chapter. The role of performance management in determining organisational success and the relevant underpinning theories as well as ways in which performance management practices may be enhanced were discussed. The legislation and regulations governing performance management in the public sector were also explained.

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The performance management system followed in DAFF was outlined and challenges associated with this process were identified. Finally, the extent to which employees' perceptions, and more specifically, their perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system, may influence their attitudes towards their employing organisations were discussed.

The following literature research aims were achieved or partially achieved in this chapter:

Research aim 1: To outline performance management and its implementation in the South African public sector.

Research aim 2: To conceptualise and explain the constructs performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in terms of theoretical models in the literature (partially achieved).

Research aim 4: To conceptualise the influence of personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics on performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (partially achieved).

In Chapter 3, job satisfaction and organisational commitment will be conceptualised as attitudinal outcomes of employee perceptions of the effectiveness of performance management practices. The relationship between these attitudes as well as their relationship with perceived performance management system effectiveness, as reported in extant literature, will be explored. The extent to which employees' personal and job-related characteristics may influence their job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation will also be evaluated. The chapter will conclude with an integration of the literature and a critical evaluation of the theoretical implications for performance management practices.

KEY WORDS:

Job satisfaction, organisational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment

This chapter aims to conceptualise job satisfaction and organisational commitment as attitudinal outcomes of employee perceptions of the effectiveness of performance management practices in the South African public sector. Relevant theoretical models are investigated, and these models are applied to better understand the theorised relationship between employee perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system and their attitudes towards their jobs (job satisfaction) and their employing organisations (organisational commitment). The extent to which employees' personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics may affect their job satisfaction and organisational commitment is discussed. The chapter concludes with a theoretical integration that will inform the empirical study.

3.1 OUTCOMES OF EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Employees form perceptions of their employing organisations based on how they experience and interpret events in the workplace. These perceptions, in turn, affect their feelings with regard to and behaviour in these organisations (Kaposambo, 2016; Mwale, 2016). As indicated in Chapter 2, the focus in this study was specifically on employees' perceptions about the effectiveness of the performance management system. The researcher intended to determine the extent to which these perceptions might influence employees' attitudes towards their jobs (job satisfaction) and their employing organisations (organisational commitment).

Perceptions of employees' effectiveness of performance management practices in their organisations can affect these organisations in a positive or a negative way (Makhubela et al., 2016). Extant research suggests that effective performance management practices may enhance employee job satisfaction and lead to improved employee commitment, which are essential contributors to organisational success (Govender et al., 2015). Employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of an organisation's performance management system are

based on the degree to which they regard it as fair and accurate (see section 2.3 in Chapter 2) (Sharma et al., 2016). Research has revealed that employees who feel that they are being treated fairly by their employing organisations are inclined to show positive attitudes and behaviour toward these organisations (Govender et al., 2015, Dhurup & Isabiyre, 2014). According to Moon (2017), employees are more likely to be satisfied and accept the outcome of an organisational process if they regard the distribution of resources, the procedure by which the rewards were distributed and the way they were treated by the decision-makers as fair. In terms of the performance management process, employees form opinions about fairness in terms of the allocation of work, performance assessments and rewards following these assessments (Dhurup & Isabirye, 2014). The way in which employees are treated during the performance management process, and specifically the extent to which they are allowed to participate in the process and provided with feedback, also influence the extent to which they perceive the process as fair (Singh, 2013). If they perceive the process as fair and valid and the rewards for good performance as equitable and receive adequate feedback throughout the process, they will feel valued (Paposa & Kumar, 2015) and will be more likely harbour positive attitudes towards the organisation (Govender et al., 2015; Singh, 2013).

Perceived fairness in terms of organisational actions have been associated with several favourable attitudinal outcomes, including greater trust in the organisation and its management, increased job satisfaction and higher levels of organisational commitment (Kirsten, 2019). According to Greenberg (1986), employees who perceive fair treatment from their organisation tend to develop a bond with their employing organisation. In turn, fair treatment of employees encourages positive behaviour – enhanced performance and focus on achieving performance goals (Diehl et al., 2018). More importantly, an effective performance management system will encourage employees to strive towards continued performance improvement (Kim & Holzer, 2016). Hence, if performance management practices are perceived as fair, it may enhance employee commitment and motivation and thereby contribute to organisational goal achievement (Coetzee et al., 2014).

Extant literature has shown that employees who perceive performance management practices in their organisations as accurate are more likely to display positive attitudes towards their jobs and report higher levels of job satisfaction (Naji et al., 2015). However, if employees perceive that performance planning, assessment and feedback are not well executed or poor performance is not tended to, they may develop defensive or negative attitudes towards their jobs and/or their employing organisations (João & Coetzee, 2011; Naji et al., 2015). As a result, negative perceptions of performance management practices in an organisation, may

therefore have detrimental consequences (Mwale, 2016). When employees regard the performance management system as unfair in terms of the distribution of work and rewards, this may lead to tension in the workplace (Dhurup & Isabirye, 2014). If the performance management system is perceived as ineffective, this may result in dissatisfied and uncommitted employees (Kaposambo, 2016) who are less likely to contribute towards the success of the organisation (Coetzee et al., 2014; Mwale, 2016). While a well-designed performance management system is essential, this does not guarantee that it will be accepted by employees. If employees' perceptions of and reactions to the performance management system is negative, this may cause resistance (Kim & Holzer, 2016; Roberts & Reed, 1996).

It is therefore crucial for organisations to be aware of their employees' work-related perceptions (including their perceptions about performance management practices) as they determine their attitudes towards the organisation and ultimately affect organisational success (Mwale, 2016; Singh, 2013). In the following sections, job satisfaction and organisational commitment are conceptualised as specific attitudinal outcomes of employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system. The relationship of these attitudes to the two dimensions of the PMSE construct, namely, performance management system accuracy and fairness, is examined. In addition, the extent to which individuals' personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics might influence their satisfaction and commitment in the workplace, are explored.

3.2   JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction has been widely studied as a job attitude or an individual state of emotion affected by his or her interactions with the working environment (Sabbagha, 2016; Visser et al., 2012). Lumley et al. (2011) describe job satisfaction as a feeling or an attitude the employee has towards various aspects of the job and working environment. However, job satisfaction is subjective in nature in that it reflects the attitudes and expectations of individuals based on past and present job situations (Macdonald & MacIntyre, 1997; Sabbagha, 2016; Visser et al., 2012). Job satisfaction therefore relates to the feelings and emotions (favourable or unfavourable) that employees have towards their work (Srivastava, 2013).

In this section, job satisfaction, as an attitudinal outcome of workplace perceptions and experiences, is conceptualised. This is followed by a brief outline of the different motivational theories that underly job satisfaction. The factors that influence job satisfaction are explored and the relationship between employees' perceptions of the performance management

practices and job satisfaction are discussed. The section concludes with a discussion of the extent to which employee perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system and their personal (gender, age and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics may affect their job satisfaction.

3.2.1 Conceptualisation of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction, which was first described by Hoppock (1935) as "any number of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances which leads a person to express satisfaction with their job", is a complex phenomenon that has been widely studied in organisational research. Its roots can be tracked down to the work of Gilbreth (1911), Taylor (1919) and Munsterberg (1913), relating to the impact of employee fatigue, contentment and monotony on productivity in the workplace (Wright, 2006). The subsequent Hawthorne studies (Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939), which set out to investigate ways of overcoming fatigue and monotony in the workplace, introduced the understanding that employees evaluate their experiences in the workplace and that these evaluations determine their behavioural reactions. The ensuing human relations movement marked an interest in understanding the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance with seminal research conducted by researchers such as Brayfield and Crockett (1955), Herzberg et al. (1957), Vroom (1964), Locke (1968; 1970), and Schwab and Cummings (1970).

These researchers regarded job satisfaction as an employee's emotional response to his or her job experiences and the extent to which the job meets his or her needs (Judge et al., 2001). The most widely accepted conceptualisation of job satisfaction was proposed by Locke (1975, p. 1304) as a "pleasant or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or experiences".

Employees' levels of job satisfaction are therefore determined by what they perceive as meaningful and important to them in terms of job characteristics (Sempane et al., 2002). Job satisfaction may thus be regarded as an attitude reflecting what an individual likes or dislikes in the job (Gabrani et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016) and the subsequent favourable or unfavourable evaluation thereof (Dalal & Credé, 2013). Attitudes comprise cognitive, affective and behavioural components (Dalal & Credé, 2013; Schleicher et al., 2011). The affective component of job satisfaction relates to an individual's feelings about his or her job, such as acknowledgement, excitement or anxiety. The cognitive component relates to an individual's beliefs regarding the job. It may, for instance, be regarded as respectable,

challenging or rewarding. The behavioural component of job satisfaction relates to the actions of employees in their jobs; for example, extra role behaviour or tardiness (Bakhshi et al., 2009; Dalal & Credé, 2013; Schleicher et al., 2011). Generally, employees display higher levels of job satisfaction if they like their jobs (Berliana et al., 2018) and their working environments (Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2017; Berliana et al., 2018; Gabrani et al., 2016). Job satisfaction can therefore be regarded as an overall favourable assessment one has about his or her job (Judge et al., 2017).

However, job satisfaction also entails an assessment of the extent to which individuals' jobs and the benefits accumulated as a result of their jobs meet their needs (Berliana et al., 2018). In this sense, job satisfaction equates to a general feeling of fulfilment employees experience when the rewards they receive in their current jobs meet their goals or exceed their expectations (Randal, 2006; Visser et al., 2012). It therefore reflects contentment with one's job and the outcomes thereof (Khan et al., 2016). Hence, job satisfaction is an employees' reaction to the job, emanating from a comparison of the actual and required outcomes (Berliana et al., 2018; Stander & Rothmann, 2008).

In contemporary organisational literature, job satisfaction is regarded as an individual reaction to a job, based on a comparison of what the individual seeks in a job to what the job actually provides (Lumley et al., 2011; Rothman & Coetzer, 2002). Job satisfaction is therefore regarded as an emotional response to job-related events or experiences at work (Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2017; Saridakis et al., 2018).

While researchers have adopted various definitions of job satisfaction, the communalities in these definitions are that it is an emotional reaction to individual experiences in the workplace. Employees therefore assess work-related events in terms of the extent to which they contribute to the fulfilment of their needs and meet their expectations. If their assessments are positive, they will display higher levels of job satisfaction.

According to Spector (1997), researchers follow either a global or a facet approach to job satisfaction. A global approach means that job satisfaction is regarded as an overall feeling about one's job whereas a facet approach focuses on specific parts of the job that determines one's satisfaction. Spector (1997) incorporates both these approaches when he defines job satisfaction as an attitude that individuals have towards their jobs and the various facets or aspects that may influence their jobs. Drawing from Locke (1975) and Spector's (1997) conceptualisations of job satisfaction, this study defines job satisfaction as a multidimensional

construct describing an employee's positive emotional response to his or her job or dimensions thereof based on an assessment of the extent to which it meets his or her needs (Gabrani et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2016; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016).

Organisational success depends in part on positive employee attitudes and therefore high levels of job satisfaction are desired (Bakotić, 2016). In an attempt to better understand the aspects that enhance job satisfaction, cognisance has to be taken of the interactive relationship between job satisfaction and motivation (Roos & Van Eeden, 2008). Erasmus et al. (2019) describe motivation in the workplace as a force that directs and energises work-related behaviour. According to Roos and Van Eeden (2008), employee motivation and job satisfaction tend to be influenced by the same factors. Hence, job satisfaction may be regarded as a manifestation of motivation in the workplace. As departure point in investigating the factors that contribute to job satisfaction in the workplace, it was therefore deemed necessary to first explore various motivation theories.

3.2.2 Motivational theories underlying job satisfaction

There are various motivational theories that underlie job satisfaction. Extant literature commonly relies on two conceptual frameworks to group these theories into either content theories or process theories. Content theories focus on individual needs (e.g. pay or recognition) and the extent to which they are met (Griffin et al., 2019). These theories include Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory, Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory, McGregor's (1960) theory X and Y, Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory, and McClelland's (1961) achievement theory (McClelland, 1961). Conversely, process theories focus on how motivation occurs, that is, why people choose certain behavioural options to satisfy their needs and how they evaluate their satisfaction once they have attained their goals (Griffin et al., 2019). These theories include expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), equity theory (Adams, 1963), goal setting theory (Locke, 1968) and job characteristics theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1974).

3.2.2.1 *Content theories*

Content theories focus on identifying the intrinsic needs or goals that motivate employee behaviour.

(a)   <u>Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory</u>

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory, which postulates that human motivational needs can be arranged in a particular order of priority, referred to as a hierarchy of needs, may be regarded as a foundational theory informing job satisfaction research. Maslow (1943) argues that human beings have innate desires to satisfy a given set of needs and believed that these needs are arranged in a hierarchy of importance (Griffin et al., 2019). According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy, needs are represented on five levels of importance. Therefore, as lower-level needs become substantially fulfilled, the next higher-order needs increase in strength and become powerful motivators (Erasmus et al., 2019). Maslow's theory presume that an individual does not move to the next level of need without satisfying the basic need (Ivancevich et al, 2014; Khan et al., 2016; Sabbagha, 2016).

The most basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy are the physiological needs for survival such as water, food, clothing and shelter. In an organisational context, employees need adequate wages and a pleasant working environment (Leatherbarrow & Fletcher, 2019). The second level is safety needs such as physical protection, a danger-free environment and freedom from worry and anxiety. In the workplace, this relates to, for instance, safe working conditions, job security and social benefits (Leatherbarrow & Fletcher, 2019). The third level encompass social needs, which include the need for love and affection and the need to be accepted by peers. Employees may require support from their supervisors or a cohesive working group. The fourth level, esteem needs, includes self-esteem and the need to be respected by others. Finally, the fifth and highest order needs relate to self-actualisation, which relates to the ability of an individual to fulfil personal goals and accomplishment through personal growth (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Khan et al., 2016; Sabbagha, 2016). In the workplace, this may entail job titles, merit pay increases, awards and other forms of recognition and opportunities for creatively and advancement (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Leatherbarrow & Fletcher, 2019).

To enhance performance, organisations should establish programmes that will motivate employees by satisfying new and emerging needs such as service benefits, job security and rewards (Sabbagha, 2016). Employers should ensure that opportunities and services are accessible for employees to feel that their basic needs are met. In addition, employees who are high performers should be recognised through performance incentives showing appreciation for their efforts (Sabbagha, 2016).

Maslow's theory therefore suggests that individuals will experience higher levels of job satisfaction when their jobs allow for the development and attainment of higher-level needs, which, in turn motivate them to perform. It has, however, been argued that this theory may not apply in all contexts. For instance, in South Africa, with high levels of crime and job insecurity, security needs may be more important to employees than self-actualisation needs (Griffin et al., 2019).

(b)   Herzberg's two-factor theory

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) research on motivation and job-satisfaction in the mid-20th century resulted in a shift from viewing job satisfaction as a single construct, ranging from satisfaction to dissatisfaction, to a two-dimensional construct. Hertzberg recognised that the factors associated with dissatisfaction were quite different from those linked to satisfaction. This implied the existence of two dimensions, the first ranging from satisfaction to no satisfaction and the second from dissatisfaction to no dissatisfaction (Griffin et al., 2019).

According to Herzberg et al.'s (1959) two-factor theory, satisfaction is a function of intrinsic factors. These factors, which Herzberg et al. (1959) termed motivation factors, are intrinsic to the work itself and include factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and personal growth. Employee dissatisfaction is influenced by factors extrinsic to the work itself. Herzberg et al. (1959) termed these factors hygiene factors, and they include factors such as supervision, salary, working conditions, pay, interpersonal relations, job security and organisational policies (Erasmus et al., 2019). In addition, Herzberg et al.'s (1959) theory suggests that employees who perceive work-related facets such as pay, job security and working conditions as inadequate will experience feelings of dissatisfaction. However, contentment with these aspects will not necessarily lead to satisfaction, but merely an absence of dissatisfaction (Griffin et al., 2019). While hygiene factors are a necessary prerequisite for a motivated workforce, it will only result in a state of satisfaction and motivation if motivators are also present (Erasmus et al., 2019).

In terms of the two-factor theory of motivation, aspects such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and personal growth therefore contribute to job satisfaction. Furthermore, Herzberg et al. (1959) suggest that work should be interesting, and people should be offered opportunities for promotion and receive recognition. By ensuring a positive work experience, motivation can be enhanced and performance increased (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Leatherbarrow & Fletcher, 2019). To motivate employees, managers should create

72

opportunities for employees to perform work that is challenging, delegate more responsibilities and provide opportunities for growth and a working environment that is conducive (Sabbagha, 2016).

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) theory has been criticised for not accounting for individual differences (e.g. age and organisational level) and not defining the relationship between satisfaction and motivation (Griffin et al., 2019). Its main contribution to better understanding job satisfaction was its differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contribute to satisfaction and dissatisfaction as two distinct constructs, advancing the conceptualisation of job satisfaction as a multi-dimensional construct. It also confirmed that an individual's higher-level needs of self-actualisation can be fulfilled by his or her job resulting in higher levels of job satisfaction.

(c)   McClelland's theory of needs

McClelland's (1961) theory centres on the needs for achievement, affiliation and power. According to Griffin et al. (2019), *achievement* relates to the desire to accomplish a task or goal more effectively than was done in the past. It therefore reflects a need to excel and be successful. *Affiliation* is a desire for companionship and close interpersonal relationships, while *power* as a need to be influential and control others (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Leatherbarrow & Fletcher, 2019).

McClelland's (1961) theory postulates that managers should determine their subordinates' dominant needs and offer opportunities whereby individual needs and organisational goals can simultaneously be met (Erasmus et al., 2019). The theory encourages the setting of challenging goals but, at the same time, emphasises compatibility of individual needs and abilities (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Leatherbarrow & Fletcher, 2019). For instance, employees who are motivated by achievement should be allocated tasks that are challenging with goals that are achievable (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016). To enhance satisfaction, supervisors should provide regular feedback on employee performance that is constructive and meaningful to enhance satisfaction (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016). A key differentiating element of McClelland's (1961) framework is that the needs are acquired, or learned, from cultural, societal and family influences (Griffin et al., 2019).

(d)   <u>McGregor's theory X and Y</u>

McGregor's (1960) theory is based on the premise that managers' assumptions about people fundamentally influence their motivational strategies (Erasmus et al., 2019). Theory X assumes that employees lack ambition, dislike work, avoid responsibility and need close supervision (Gürbüz et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016). Hence, managers are continuously required to persuade employees to work or threaten them with punishment if they do not perform (Gürbüz et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016). In contrast, theory Y assumes that people regard work as a natural part of their lives. They like to work, are self-directed and desire responsibilities (Gürbüz et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016). Employees have the capacity to solve problems and be innovative, therefore, taking responsibility for their actions (Gürbüz et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016). According to theory Y, employees are motivated internally to achieve the objectives they committed to (Gürbüz et al., 2014) and have the potential to develop (Sabbagha, 2016). While McGregor's theory is in essence a leadership theory, it can assist managers to focus on various ways employees relate to and perform work (Sabbagha, 2016).

(e)   <u>Alderfer's ERG Theory</u>

Alderfer (1969) conflated Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory by limiting the needs levels to three core needs of existence, relatedness and growth (ERG theory). *Existence* refers to individuals' material existence needs (incorporating Maslow's physiological and safety needs), while *relatedness* reflects a desire for healthy interpersonal relationships (similar to Maslow's social needs and the external aspect of Maslow's esteem needs) and *growth* indicates an intrinsic need for personal development (similar to Maslow's need for self-actualisation) (Erasmus et al., 2019).

Alderfer's (1969) theory suggests that needs are continuum rather than hierarchical (as suggested by Maslow) and that more than one need may motivate an individual at a given point in time (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Leatherbarrow & Fletcher, 2019). Erasmus et al. (2019) explain that ERG theory does not postulate a rigid hierarchy of needs whereby a higher-order need only becomes operative once a lower-order need has been satisfied substantially. Instead, Alderfer (1969) believe that two or even all three needs categories can influence behaviour simultaneously. ERG theory also suggests that, should one level of needs remain unsatisfied for a period, the person may regress to a lower-order needs category. The desire for satisfying the lower-order need therefore increases. Whereas Maslow held that a person would remain fixed on a particular need level until that need has been satisfied, ERG theory

74

postulates that continued frustration of a need may cause an exaggerated desire to have a lower-order need satisfied. This is referred to as the frustration-regression aspect of ERG theory (Griffin et al., 2019).

The ERG theory acknowledges individual differences and promotes addressing several individual needs simultaneously to enhance motivation (Sabbagha, 2016).

3.2.2.2 Process theories

Process theories focus on the actual process of motivation through the setting of goals and evaluation of the extent to which these goals have been met.

(a)   Vroom's expectancy theory

Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory postulates that the tendency to act in a certain way depends on the strength of the expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome, and on the degree to which the person desires that outcome (Erasmus et al., 2019). According to this theory, individuals are therefore motivated to do things if they assume their behaviour will lead to the outcome they desire or value (Vroom, 1964).

Vroom's (1964) theory has three components described as expectancy, instrumentality and valence. These components and the ways in which the link between actions and outcomes influence employee performance were discussed in Chapter 2 (see section 2.1.2.4). Expectancy theory may, however, also assist in better understanding job satisfaction. According to this theory, performance precedes job satisfaction and is enhanced if the following three conditions are met (Griffin et al., 2019): Firstly, an employee must reasonably expect that exerting effort will produce high levels of performance. Secondly, the employee must believe that performance will realistically result in valued outcomes. Thirdly, the sum of all the valences for the potential outcomes relevant to the employee must be positive. Expectancy theory therefore postulates that employees' satisfaction with a job results from the instrumentality of the job in achieving stated outcomes and the valence of those outcomes for the individual. Park and Kim (2017), drawing on Vroom's expectancy theory, empirically confirmed the positive relationship between performance perception based on rewards and job satisfaction.

It has therefore been shown that employees' performance and as a result, job satisfaction, may be enhanced by offering performance-based rewards, recognising employee efforts and encouraging autonomy (Lee, 2019). Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory suggests that this will only be successful if employees value these outcomes (Lee, 2019). Lawler and Porter (1967) assert, however, that it may not be easy for an employer to ascertain what outcomes employees' value and the extent to which they perceive that their inputs will result in desired outputs. Drawing on Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, it was assumed in this study that different groups of employees might expect different things from their employing organisations (Park & Kim, 2017). To better understand the factors that may affect employees' job satisfaction, it was therefore deemed essential to investigate differences between groups of employees based on their personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics. It was anticipated that an appreciation of such differences might enable an employer to better identify and address employees' needs and thereby enhance their performance and satisfaction in the workplace.

(b)   Adam's equity theory

Equity theory (Adams, 1963) (see section 2.1.2.3 in Chapter 2) assumes that employees are motivated by an aspiration to be treated equally and fairly at the workplace (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Lumley, 2009). In terms of job satisfaction, equity theory postulates that individuals will experience higher levels of job satisfaction when they perceive that their contribution to the job and the resulting outcomes compare favourably with the input-outcome ratio of their co-workers (Erasmus et al., 2019). As explained in Chapter 2, equity theory relates to employees' perceptions of the extent to which they are treated fairly by their employing organisations (Kotzé & Nel, 2020). Perceived equity in the distribution of resources is likely to result in higher levels of satisfaction with the job and/or particular aspects thereof (Lambert et al., 2020). In contrast, employees who feel that the effort-rewards ratio is imbalanced will experience this as injustice, which may, influence their attitude negatively towards their employing organisation (Lambert et al., 2020; Mashi, 2018).

(c)   Locke's goal setting theory

Locke's goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2019) (see section 2.1.2.2 in Chapter 2) assumes that goals determine the satisfaction of employees and assist them to develop a sense of achievement. Goal setting has been associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and plays an important role in determining behaviour (Roberts & Reed, 1996). In a

performance management context, employees' work behaviour is likely to be enhanced by effective performance feedback which, in turn, increases job satisfaction (Ivancevich et al., 2014). According to Kampkötter (2017), goal setting theory assists in better understanding the relationship between performance assessments and job satisfaction. Goals that are challenging and measurable enhance employees' work effort and result in higher levels of job satisfaction (Kampkötter, 2017). A reciprocal relationship exists, however, between job satisfaction and goal achievement in that satisfied employees are more likely to achieve their personal goals and contribute to organisational goal achievement than dissatisfied employees (Ozel & Bayraktar, 2017). Continuous and constructive feedback in terms of goal achievement is likely to enhance employee performance and impacts positively on job satisfaction (Latham et al., 2017).

(d)   Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory

Hackman and Oldham's (1974) job characteristics theory, is derived from expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), and focuses on the motivational properties of jobs. According to Coughlan et al. (2014), job characteristics theory explains how job characteristics may influence employee motivation and job satisfaction. This theory relies on five motivational properties of tasks or job characteristics and three critical psychological states to improve personal and work outcomes (Griffin et al., 2019).

The five core job characteristics are (Ali et al., 2014; Khan et al., 2016):

- *Skills variety*: The complexity of skills required to perform the task.
- *Task variety*: The extent to which the task requires the job holder to complete work with visible outcomes.
- *Task significance*: The extent to which the job affects others' wellbeing.
- *Autonomy*: The extent to which the job provides discretion, independence and freedom, for an employee to schedule his or her work and determine the procedures to be used for carrying it out.
- *Feedback*: The degree to which the job provides activities provides information to employees about the effectiveness of their performance.

The psychological states identified by Hackman and Oldham (1974) include (Griffin et al., 2019: 209):

- Experienced meaningfulness of the work: The degree to which the individual experiences the job as generally meaningful, valuable and worthwhile.
- Experienced responsibility for work outcomes: The degree to which individuals feel personally accountable and responsible for the results of their work.
- Knowledge of results: The degree to which individuals continuously understand how effectively they are performing the job.

According to Hackman and Oldham's (1974) theory, employees who experience these states at a sufficiently high level will be more likely to feel satisfied with themselves and their jobs. Drawing on job characteristics theory, researchers such as Blanz (2017) and Giles et al. (2017) confirm that job satisfaction is enhanced if the job provides for autonomy, task identity, task variety, task significance and job feedback. Employees who have control over their work without supervisor interference are motivated to perform and experience increased job satisfaction (Giles et al., 2017). Employees tend to find their job tasks meaningful if they are given responsibility for work outcomes and have knowledge of the results. This experienced meaningfulness has been shown to enhance motivation, performance and job satisfaction (Cavanagh et al., 2020). According to Cavanagh et al. (2020), highly satisfied employees generally make fewer mistakes, tend to be present at work more often and generally outperform their dissatisfied counterparts. Job characteristics theory emphasises job enrichment through the extension of decision-making responsibilities by including employees in planning activities and increasing autonomy (Blanz, 2017).

3.2.2.3 Summary

The aforementioned theories play a vital role in understanding employees' attitudes and behaviour in the workplace and specifically motivation as the driving force behind their job satisfaction. The core elements of these theories and their application within a job satisfaction context are summarised in Table 3.1. This is followed by a brief indication of how they informed the conceptualisation and understanding of job satisfaction in this study.

Table 3.1

Summary of the Content and Process Theories of Motivation

Motivational theory	Core elements	Application for job satisfaction
Content theories Focus on identifying intrinsic needs that motivates employee behaviours (Griffin et al., 2019)		
Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory	Human motivational needs can be arranged in a particular order of priority (five levels of importance). As lower-level needs are fulfilled, the next higher-order needs increase in strength and become powerful motivators.	Individuals will experience higher levels of job satisfaction when their jobs allow for the development and attainment of higher-level needs.
Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory	Satisfaction is a function of intrinsic (motivation) factors, while dissatisfaction is influenced by extrinsic (hygiene) factors.	Job satisfaction is a multi-dimensional construct. Intrinsic (motivation) factors (e.g. achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and personal growth) contribute to satisfaction, while extrinsic (hygiene) factors (e.g. supervision, salary, working conditions and interpersonal relations) contribute to dissatisfaction.
McClelland's (1961) theory of needs	Employees have one of three driving motivators, namely, the needs for achievement, affiliation and power, that are developed through culture and life experiences.	Individuals are more satisfied with their jobs if they have challenging but achievable goals and receive constructive and regular performance feedback.

79

Motivational theory	Core elements	Application for job satisfaction
McGregor's (1960) theory X and Y	Managers who ascribe to Theory X assume that employees are lazy and dislike work. Conversely, those who ascribe to Theory Y assume that people are naturally active and want to learn.	Theory X employees are generally dissatisfied and indifferent to the needs of the organisation and resistant to change while theory Y employees are generally satisfied and have potential to develop and take responsibility.
Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory	Humans have three core needs, namely, existence, relatedness and growth. These needs are continuum and individuals may be motivated by more than one need at a time.	Employees' levels of job satisfaction are influenced by the extent to which their core needs are addressed. Different needs should be addressed simultaneously.
Process theories Focus on the actual process of motivation through the setting of goals and evaluation of the extent to which these goals have been met (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2017)		
Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory	Employee actions are based on expectancy, instrumentality and valency ascribed to work outcomes.	Job satisfaction is enhanced if employee actions result in the expected outcomes and if these outcomes are desired and valued.
Adam's (1964) equity theory	Employees want to be treated fairly and therefore compare their effort and rewards with others in a similar work environment.	Employees experience higher levels of job satisfaction when their input-output ratio compares favourably with those of others.
Locke's (1968) goal setting theory	Goals should be challenging and measurable to enhance	Employees who have challenging and measurable goals and receive continuous and constructive feedback in terms of goal

Motivational theory	Core elements	Application for job satisfaction
	satisfaction and develop a sense of achievement.	achievement, experience higher levels of job satisfaction.
Hackman and Oldham's (1974)	Employees continuously evaluate the characteristics (i.e. skills variety, task variety, task significance, autonomy and feedback) of their jobs and assign value based on the degrees of meaningfulness and responsibility they experience and the extent to which they achieve the desired outcomes.	The structural characteristics of employees' jobs serve as primary determinants for the levels of job satisfaction they experience. Jobs that are diversified and meaningful and provide opportunities for employees to take responsibility for their actions, while receiving constructive feedback contributes to high levels of job satisfaction.

Note. Researcher's own summary of the main motivational theories and their relevance for job satisfaction.

The motivation theories discussed in this section informed the conceptualisation of job satisfaction as a multidimensional construct reflecting individuals' subjective attitudes and expectations about their jobs. Employees who like their jobs generally report higher levels of job satisfaction (Berliana et al., 2018). Employees tend to display positive attitudes towards their jobs when they feel acknowledged and respected, are allocated challenging and meaningful work and when they are recognised or rewarded for their efforts and contributions towards the achievement of the organisational goals (Pieters, 2018). Job satisfaction is an emotional reaction to individuals' experiences in the workplace (Judge et al., 2001). Employees tend to react to what their jobs provide and the degree to which their needs are satisfied. Job satisfaction, as a multidimensional construct, is influenced by both intrinsic (achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and personal growth) and extrinsic (e.g. supervision, salary, working conditions and interpersonal relations) factors (Herzberg et al., 1959). Organisations should create a working environment that is conducive to both individual and organisational goal achievement and provide performance-based rewards to enhance job satisfaction. The rewards should be equitable and fair for employees to be motivated (Spector, 1997).

Job satisfaction is enhanced if employees' actions result in expected outcomes and the outcomes are valued and desired by employees (Vroom, 1964). Employees are more satisfied with their jobs when their jobs are challenging and have achievable goals (McClelland, 1961). Jobs that are diversified and meaningful provide opportunities for employees to take responsibility for their actions (Hackman & Oldham 1974). Goals that are specific and achievable help employees to develop a sense of achievement and enhance satisfaction (Locke & Latham, 2019). Employees' levels of job satisfaction are also influenced by the degree to which needs are addressed (Alderfer, 1969). Managers should appreciate that employees' needs differ and attempt to meet these needs as this will enhance employees' satisfaction and individual performance and, in turn, contribute to organisational success. In addition, it is essential for employees to receive continuous and constructive feedback in terms of their performance to enhance high levels of job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1974; McClelland, 1961). Feelings of success enable employees to grow and meet the challenges that come with the job (Hackman & Oldham 1974).

Drawing on extant job satisfaction literature and the motivational theories discussed in this section, job satisfaction is therefore conceptualised as a positive emotional state resulting from one's work experience or an attitude employees have about their jobs based on their perceptions and needs comparing what the individual seeks in a job and what the job actually provides (Coughlan et al., 2014; Lambert et al., 2017; Lumley et al., 2011). For this study, job satisfaction will be regarded as a multidimensional construct describing employees positive emotional response to their jobs based on their assessment of the degree to which their needs are met (Spector, 1997).

The preceding conceptualisation of job satisfaction showed that various antecedents to job satisfaction exists. These antecedents include intrinsic factors, such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and the nature of the work itself, and extrinsic factors, such as organisational policies, administration, supervision, co-workers, salaries, benefits, security and working conditions (Liere-Netheler et al., 2017). The next section focuses on examining the main antecedents of job satisfaction as reported in extant literature.

3.2.3   Antecedents of job satisfaction

Various theories aimed at better understanding the antecedents to job satisfaction have been proposed in extant literature. These theories view job satisfaction as either situational, dispositional or interactional in nature. Quarstein et al. (1992), in their Situational Occurrences

82

Theory of Job Satisfaction, posit that job satisfaction is a function of a combination of situational occurrences and characteristics. Situational characteristics refer to those job facets that applicants typically evaluate prior to accepting a job (e.g. pay, promotional opportunities, working conditions, company policies and supervision) while situational occurrences relate to individuals' day-to-day workplace experiences.

The dispositional approach, on the other hand, suggests that individuals' personality attributes, rather than aspects of the job itself, determine their level of job satisfaction. Employees' level of satisfaction is related to their character and personality (Pooja & Pradeep, 2017). Individuals are therefore predisposed to a certain level of satisfaction which remains relatively constant over time (Judge et al., 1998). Personality attributes affecting job satisfaction include traits such as affective disposition and extraversion (Judge & Larsen, 2001) and core self-evaluations, namely, self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control and neuroticism, that impact on job satisfaction (Judge et al., 1998). An interactional approach, which was the approach adopted in this study, suggests that job satisfaction is influenced by both personal traits and job characteristics (Chordiya et al., 2019).

In this section, the focus is firstly on specific facets of a job that have been shown to affect job satisfaction. This is followed by a discussion of selected personal (gender, age and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics and the reported influence of these characteristics on job satisfaction. Drawing on Spector's (1997) recommendation, a facet approach is followed as it provides a broad view of an individual's job satisfaction than a global approach which explains job satisfaction as a single, overall feeling towards a job.

3.2.3.1   *Facets of job satisfaction*

Any part of a job that brings about feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction can be described as a facet of job satisfaction and it is important to understand the interrelatedness and complexity of these facets (Spector, 1997). This study relies on the nine facets of job satisfaction identified by Spector (1985) following an extensive review of the literature. These facets, which are widely accepted in extant literature as contributors to job satisfaction, include pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, the nature of work and communication (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018; Stander & Rothmann, 2008; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016; Van der Schyff et al., 2018).

(a)   <u>Pay</u>

Pay is regarded as a central component of the employer-employee relationship as the relationship is built on rendering services in exchange for compensation (Dalal & Credé, 2013; Khan et al., 2014). Employees continuously assess the fairness of the rewards they acquire from their employing organisations in relation to the efforts made (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Mitonga-Monga, 2019). Furthermore, employees who perceive that the rewards they receive in return for their performance are fair and reasonable are more likely to display higher levels of job satisfaction (Dhamija et al., 2019; Sabbagha, 2016). Organisations should therefore examine their compensation practices to determine whether the rewards match employee desires and expectations as this may impact on job satisfaction and future performance (Dhamija et al., 2019). Furthermore, performance-related pay can be used to align employees' performance outcomes with organisational objectives (Kampkötter, 2017).

(b)   <u>Promotion</u>

Promotion relates to employees' perceptions of opportunities for personal growth, career growth and increased responsibilities afforded by the employing organisation (Mitonga-Monga, 2019; Sabbagha, 2016). Research indicates that promotional opportunities enhance job satisfaction as employees tend to enjoy the benefits associated with such promotions (Dalal & Credé, 2013; Judge et al., 2017; Sabbagha, 2016). In addition, organisations should have policies to guide flexible promotions in preparation for jobs in specialised fields (Khan et al., 2014). Promotional opportunities are vital as a positive indication that the employing organisation acknowledges its employees; hence, employees who perceive that opportunities for promotion are afforded fairly will be more content and satisfied (Dhamija et al., 2019; Sabbagha, 2016).

(c)   <u>Supervision</u>

Supervisors have a management responsibility in the organisation and, as such, they play a significant role in directing, coordinating and coaching subordinates to achieve set goals and objectives within the specific time frames (Dalal & Credé, 2013; Khan et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016). As a result, the supervisor is key in the performance of the subordinate as they contribute towards the desired outcomes. Employees continuously assess the perceived fairness, competency, interpersonal skills and respect received from immediate supervisors (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Mitonga-Monga, 2019). To enhance job satisfaction, supervisors

should motivate employees to perform and provide them with feedback on their performance (Khan et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016). Supervisors should acknowledge good performance and listen to and show interest in their employees, as employees who are content with their supervisors also tend to be satisfied with their jobs (Kampkötter, 2017). Therefore, it is vital for supervisors to be accessible and communicate with their subordinates as these aspects have been shown to enhance job satisfaction (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016).

(d)   <u>Fringe benefits</u>

Benefits have been shown to have a positive relationship with pay and have been found to impact workplace outcomes (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016). Benefits relate to financial compensation such as bonuses and retirement plans as well as non-financial compensation such as job autonomy and flexible working hours (Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). It has been shown in extant literature that offering benefits that are valued by employees such as pension plans, medical aids and flexible working hours as performance rewards enhances job satisfaction (Ivancevich et al., 2014).

(e)   <u>Contingent rewards</u>

Contingent rewards relate to recognition, rewards and appreciation for good work (Spector, 1997; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). These rewards support reinforcement theory whereby repeated performance-related behaviour is encouraged by rewarding desired behaviour (Lumley et al., 2011). They are often linked to performance assessments and supervisors' evaluations of employee performance in relations to set objectives (Sabbagha, 2016).

(f)   <u>Operating conditions</u>

Operating conditions relate to standards, regulations, policies, procedures and any other guidelines that will assist employees in performing their tasks (Sabbagha, 2016; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). Furthermore, employees who perceive that operating procedures are not effective may show lower levels of job satisfaction while employees who work in a culture where innovation is encouraged are more likely report higher levels of satisfaction (Valaei & Rezaei, 2016).

(g)   <u>Co-workers</u>

Co-workers are employees who regularly work together to achieve organisational goals (Spector, 1997). The co-worker facet of job satisfaction relates to employees' perceptions of the support and positive working relationships they have with colleagues (Mitonga-Monga, 2019). In addition, co-worker relationships that are seen as supportive and caring, are likely to lead to increased job satisfaction (Alegre et al., 2016; Sabbagha, 2016). Owing to the amount of time spent with co-workers, a good relationship should be nurtured as it positively affects job satisfaction (Pooja & Pradeep, 2017). Both the employees and the employers should create a culture of dignity and respect to enhance job satisfaction (Pooja & Pradeep, 2017; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016).

(h)   <u>Nature of work</u>

Nature of work refers to the type of work that employees perform (Spector, 1997). Extant literature has shown that employees who are afforded the opportunity to take responsibility, who can work autonomously and perform interesting tasks are more likely to display higher levels of job satisfaction (Ivancevich et al., 2014). An organisation that empowers its employees to make decisions enhances job satisfaction (Alegre et al., 2016).

According to Mitonga-Monga (2019), the nature of work relates to employees' perceptions of their conditions of work such as hygiene, task clarity and expectations. The working conditions of employees have a major influence on their level of satisfaction and as such, job satisfaction can be enhanced by providing a clean workspace, sufficient working tools, and a safe working environment that will enable employees to perform their work efficiently and effectively (Dhamija et al., 2019; Pooja & Pradeep, 2017).

(i)   <u>Communication</u>

Communication plays a vital role in integrating information, guiding activities and linking employees within the organisation (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). Effective communication is essential during performance planning to ensure that employees' goals are aligned with organisational objectives and the development of employees trust in the organisation (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Kašpárková et al., 2018). Good communication between supervisors and their subordinates – especially when setting performance goals and providing

performance feedback – have been shown to enhance job satisfaction (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Kašpárková et al., 2018).

In summary, various interrelated facets that contribute to job satisfaction have been identified in the literature. These facets include pay, fringe benefits and contingent rewards (Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). Higher levels of job satisfaction are associated with perceived fairness in the allocation of rewards (Khan et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016) and linked to the value ascribed to these rewards (Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). Employees who are provided with prospects for growth, better positions and more responsibilities also tend to display higher levels of job satisfaction (Valaei & Rezaei, 2016).

Individuals' satisfaction with their jobs is further influenced by their relationships with their supervisors and co-workers (Alegre et al., 2016). A high level of employee satisfaction can be achieved if the supervisor communicates regularly with the employee, is fair, friendly, appreciative and understanding, and provides clear and continuous performance feedback (Kampkötter, 2017). In addition, co-workers that are perceived as supportive are also likely to increase job satisfaction (Alegre et al., 2016; Sabbagha, 2016). Finally, employees' job satisfaction is determined by the nature of their work and the conditions in which they are expected to operate. Organisations that provide working conditions that are conducive to goal achievement and afford employees the opportunity to take responsibility and perform interesting tasks are more likely to display higher levels of job satisfaction (Mitonga-Monga, 2019).

3.2.3.2   *The influence of person-centred variables on individual job satisfaction*

Different biographical factors such as age, gender, job category, tenure, race and level of education have been associated with job satisfaction (González et al., 2016; Lumley et al., 2011; Sharma, 2017; Spector, 1997) For the purpose of this study, the focus was on age, gender, job category, tenure and level of education and their reported influence on individual job satisfaction. These person-centred variables were selected as they reflect the diverse groups of employees of DAFF, South Africa that served as the population for this study. The reported influence of these characteristics on job satisfaction, as reported in extant literature, are discussed next.

(a)   <u>Gender</u>

While extant literature has reported that woman tend to be more satisfied than men with their jobs (Sharma, 2017; Van Der Schyff et al., 2018), results on the facets that contribute most to job satisfaction for males and females have been inconsistent. It has been suggested that gender differences in terms of job satisfaction may be ascribed to the different needs held by male and female employees. For instance, research indicates that women place more value on the intrinsic attributes of the job, such as job contentment, working conditions and positive relationships with co-workers while men value the extrinsic attributes of the job, such as high pay, opportunities for promotion, independent work, and job security (Suki & Suki, 2011; Van der Schyff et al, 2018). Researchers such as Sharma (2017), Yucel and Bektas (2012) and Zou (2015) confirm that males draw more satisfaction from pay and promotion than females while females' levels of satisfaction are determined mainly by their relationships with co-workers and the flexibility of their work hours. Contradictory results have, however, been reported. For example, in a study conducted by Djordjević et al. (2017), the results showed that male employees' levels of job satisfaction were mainly determined by the nature of their work while female employees based their satisfaction on pay, promotion, operating procedures, rewards and co-worker relationships. However, Pooja and Pradeep (2017) found no gender differences in terms of job satisfaction and reported that factors of satisfaction that affect males are similar to those affecting female employees. This study, therefore, aimed to contribute to the literature in determining whether gender impacts on job satisfaction in a sample of South African public sector employees.

(b)   <u>Age</u>

Research has shown that age and job satisfaction are related and that older and longer tenured employees are more likely to report high levels of job satisfaction than their younger counterparts owing to their emotional involvement with the organisation over an extended period (Yucel & Bektas, 2012). This view is supported by Suman and Srivastava (2012) who report that older employees are normally more satisfied than younger employees. In a study that was conducted by Visser et al. (2012), it was also observed that the level of job satisfaction increases with age. The study further indicates that employees within the age group of 40 to 49 years showed the greatest level of job satisfaction. The same findings were supported by Djordjević et al. (2017) who found that employees from the ages of 41 to 50 showed higher levels of job satisfaction. Kollmann et al. (2020) empirically confirmed the influence of age on

job satisfaction and stressed the importance of further investigating the "aging factor" (p. 109) when attempting to understand job satisfaction in an age-diverse workforce.

(c)   Job level

Research indicates that, as an employee progresses to higher job levels, his or her level of job satisfaction increases (Sempane et al., 2002). Employees who occupy senior positions at work tend to be more satisfied than those occupying junior positions (Sabbagha, 2016). In support of this view, Van den Berg (2016) reported a positive relationship between employment levels and satisfaction, indicating that unskilled employees reported the lowest levels of job satisfaction. According to Mitonga-Monga (2019), employees at senior levels are more likely to be satisfied with various facets of their jobs such as pay, working conditions, promotions and co-worker relationships. The facets that determine employees' levels of job satisfaction have, however, been shown to differ depending on their job levels. For instance, Roberts and Reed (1996) found that inexperienced employees report higher levels of job satisfaction if they are provided with structured work and clear guidance and feedback, while experienced employees tend to be more satisfied if they experience autonomy and self-direction in their jobs (Roberts & Reed, 1996).

(d)   Level of education

Extant literature suggests that job satisfaction is related positively to educational achievement in that individuals with higher level of education, reported higher level of job satisfaction (Sabbagha, 2016). Roberts and Reed (1996) indicate that employees with higher education levels may have a value system that emphasises participation and autonomy, which provides greater opportunity to satisfy motivator needs. Visser et al. (2012) corroborate this by noting an increase in job satisfaction among employees who hold masters' and doctorate degrees.

(e)   Tenure

Research on tenure and job satisfaction has shown inconsistent results (Dobrow Riza et al., 2018). According to Baek et al. (2019), employees have different perceptions about their working environment based on their tenure. Employees with more work experience may experience increased job satisfaction because they have more opportunities for promotion and greater status or autonomy (Dobrow Riza et al., 2018). Employees with less than ten years of tenure have reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction than those with more

than ten years of tenure (Oosthuizen et al., 2016). The research conducted by Oosthuizen et al. (2016) supports the study conducted by Martin and Roodt (2008) that reported an increase in job satisfaction as employees' years of experience increase. However, contradictory results have also been reported. Baek et al. (2019) showed that job satisfaction weakened as tenure increased, especially among employees with tenure of 20 years and more. Lower job satisfaction for longer tenured employees have been ascribed to boredom with their jobs (Dobrow Riza et al., 2018).

Drawing on the reported research findings, it may therefore be expected that employees' personal (gender, age and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics might influence their levels of job satisfaction. It was also shown that the facets that contribute most to the levels of job satisfaction experienced by individuals might differ depending on these characteristics. It was therefore deemed essential for the purposes of this study to not only control for these variables in examining the relationship between employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of performance management practices and job satisfaction, but also to determine whether differences in job satisfaction may be ascribed to personal characteristics in a sample of South African public service employees.

3.2.4 The relationship between job satisfaction and employee perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management practices

In this study, job satisfaction was regarded as an employee's emotional reaction to his or her job experiences and the extent to which the job meets his or her needs (see section 3.2.1). Positive job experiences, characterised by fairness, opportunities for growth and supervisor support may significantly affect employees' motivation and subsequent satisfaction in the workplace (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018). A positive relationship between supervisor support and employee job satisfaction has been reported in extant literature (Baloyi et al., 2014). Employees who perceive their organisations (as represented by their supervisors) as supportive, tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction and work harder to contribute to organisational success (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Naji et al., 2015). Supervisor support promotes trust in the workplace and sets the scene for a conducive working relationship with co-workers, which enhances performance and, in turn, leads to higher levels of job satisfaction (Baloyi et al., 2014; Naji et al., 2015).

In this study, performance was seen as preceding job satisfaction (Vroom, 1964) and, as such, performance and the effective management thereof were regarded as essential contributors to job satisfaction and ultimately organisational success (Bayarçelik & Findikli, 2016; De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018). It was postulated that employees who perceive the organisation's performance management system as accurate and fair would demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction. The reported relationships between performance management system accuracy and fairness, as two dimensions of the performance management effectiveness construct, and job satisfaction are therefore explored in the subsequent sections.

3.2.4.1 *Performance management system accuracy*

Performance management system accuracy relates to the extent to which employees perceive performance planning, feedback, reviews and outcomes as accurate (see section 2.3.1 in Chapter 2). Employee perceptions of each of these subdimensions of performance management accuracy have the potential to influence their job satisfaction.

Performance planning serves as the foundation for an effective performance management process and hinges on goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2019). As the initial step in the performance management process, the supervisor and the subordinate jointly set goals and performance standards (Armstrong, 2018; Bussin, 2017; Mone & London, 2018). According to Hackman and Oldham's (1974) job characteristics theory, subordinates should regard these goals as meaningful. They should also feel personally accountable for achieving the set goals and receive continuous feedback on the extent to which they are performing in relation to these goals (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Rachmaliya, 2017). Goals and performance standards should be discussed and revised with the subordinate where necessary to enhance satisfaction (Modipane et al., 2019; Naji et al., 2015; Paposa & Kumar, 2015). Employees who are involved in the performance management system build a relationship of trust with their supervisors and, as a result, they are often more satisfied and likely to accept the system as accurate (Kim & Holzer, 2016; Modipane et al., 2019; Paposa & Kumar, 2015; Rachmaliya, 2017). In addition, employee participation in performance planning creates a sense of ownership, increasing the likelihood that appraisal ratings will be regarded as accurate (Modipane et al., 2019; Paposa & Kumar, 2015).

Research indicates that constructive feedback has a strong positive effect on employee performance and strengthens employees' motivation and satisfaction (Kampkötter, 2017; Naji

et al., 2015; Paposa & Kumar, 2015). It is vital for supervisors to be transparent with performance feedback to avoid negative perceptions about the performance management system (Kampkötter, 2017; Naji et al., 2015). According to Kampkötter (2017), satisfaction with performance assessment feedback is positively associated with job satisfaction. In the same vein, Lumley et al. (2011) concur that employee satisfaction increases when a supervisor is supportive and acknowledges good performance. Supervisors should therefore continuously monitor employees' performance and provide constructive feedback (Kampkötter, 2017).

Performance reviews can be utilised to improve employees' trust in the system, resulting in higher levels of job satisfaction (Armstrong, 2018; Naji et al., 2015). Employees who are provided with clear and accurate reviews of their performance are more likely to regard the performance management system as accurate (Armstrong, 2018; Modipane et al., 2019). An amicable relationship between the supervisor and the subordinate is, however, vital in accepting the performance assessment as accurate, thereby contributing to greater job satisfaction (Naji et al., 2015). Modipane et al. (2019) posit that performance reviews, if done correctly, should enhance communication between the employee and the supervisor, and initiate proper interventions to address the developmental gaps identified.

Outcome accuracy is based on expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) which postulates that employees will exert effort in their work if they perceive performance goals as achievable and value the rewards associated with goal achievement (Mone & London, 2018). Performance outcomes and rewards should be clearly aligned for the system to be regarded as effective (Lawler, 2003; Mone & London, 2018). If employees perceive that the outcomes of the performance assessment are accurate, they are more likely to accept the results (Gorman et al., 2017; Sharma et al., 2016). Outcome accuracy as a determinant of job satisfaction has not been specifically addressed in the literature. This research study aims to address this gap by examining the nature and strength of the relationships between each of the four subdimensions of performance management system accuracy and job satisfaction.

3.2.4.2   *Performance management system fairness*

Organisational justice is a key factor in improving the perceptions of employees and enhancing satisfaction in the organisation (Badawy & El-Fekey, 2017; Govender et al., 2015; Pieters, 2018). Furthermore, organisational justice relates to perceptions of employees regarding the fairness of the treatment they receive from their employing organisation and their behavioural

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reaction to these perceptions (Badawy & El-Fekey, 2017; Mitonga-Monga & Hoole, 2018). Justice can be seen consisting of four distinct but highly correlated factors namely: fairness of outcome (distributive justice), fairness of procedures (procedural justice), fairness of interpersonal treatment (interpersonal justice) and fairness of explanation (informational justice) (Colquitt, 2001; Govender et al., 2015; Mitonga-Monga & Hoole, 2018; Pieters, 2018). To increase employees' level of perceived distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational justice (Govender et al., 2015), organisations should invest time and effort in clearly communicating not only the outcomes of decisions but also the procedures used to assist employees in understanding how the outcomes were reached (Badawy & Fathy El-Fekey, 2017; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Pieters, 2018).

In a performance management context, procedural justice, as reflected in employees' reactions to the perceived fairness and transparency of performance evaluations and the decision-making process, has been linked to job satisfaction (Govender et al., 2015; Harrington & Lee, 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Pieters, 2018). A performance management system is considered just when procedures are transparent and consistent, when managers are not biased when implementing policies and providing feedback and when employees are provided with an opportunity to present their views in the process (Cropanzano et al., 2002; Govender et al., 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016). Employees who perceive the performance management process as fair are more likely to develop an attitude that is positive towards their jobs and their employing organisations (Kim & Holzer, 2016; Naji et al., 2015; Pieters, 2018; Singh, 2013). Moreover, positive procedural justice perceptions have been shown to enhance job satisfaction by strengthening the link between evaluations, performance improvement and results (Badawy & Fathy El-Fekey, 2017; Govender et al., 2015; Harrington & Lee, 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016).

Distributive justice is based on Adam's (1964) equity theory regarding the perceived fairness of resource allocation and treatment of the individual in comparison to other employees. Drawing on equity theory, it has been shown that employees' job satisfaction are related to their perceptions of equity or inequity in their working environments (Bayarçelik & Findikli, 2016). Equity theory posits that individuals will experience higher levels of job satisfaction when they perceive that their contribution to the job and the resulting outcomes compare favourably with the input-outcome ratio of their co-workers (Erasmus et al., 2019). Perceptions of distributive fairness may be regarded as a cognitive evaluation that may result in an emotional reaction in the form of either increased or decreased job satisfaction (Govender et al., 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Modipane et al., 2019; Pieters, 2018). When organisations are

93

perceived as making fair decisions in terms of the distribution of outcomes, higher levels of trust and job satisfaction will ensue (Mashi, 2018). In a performance management context, perceptions of distributive justice are often based on employees' views about the fairness of performance appraisal ratings (Govender et al., 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016). These ratings are of particular significance owing to their relationship with monetary outcomes (Harrington & Lee, 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016).

Interpersonal justice relates to employees' perceptions about the fairness of treatment they receive throughout the performance management process (Harrington & Lee, 2015; Pieters, 2018). In addition, employees are more likely to regard the procedure as fair if they are treated with respect and dignity (Govender et al., 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Pieters, 2018). Employees' attitudes towards the performance management system may therefore vary owing to different experiences in terms of interpersonal treatment received from their supervisors (Harrington & Lee, 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Pieters, 2018). Informational justice relates to the information employees receive about the performance management process and the outcomes thereof (Govender et al., 2015). It has been shown that the nature and quality of communication during the assessment and feedback process inform employees' perceptions of informational justice (Pieters, 2018) and affect their attitudes towards their jobs (Özpehlivan & Acar, 2015; Pieters, 2018). For instance, allowing employees to participate in decision-making during the performance management process demonstrates individual recognition and respect which may ultimately increase job satisfaction (Özpehlivan & Acar, 2015; Pieters, 2018). Employees who are content with the way they are treated by their supervisors tend to have positive attitudes towards their jobs, displaying higher levels of job satisfaction (Özpehlivan & Acar, 2015; Pieters, 2018).

Extant literature therefore supports the view that employees' perceptions of the accuracy and fairness of a performance management system will influence their job satisfaction. This entails that employees will experience greater levels of job satisfaction if they are involved in setting meaningful performance goals, are held accountable for the achievement of these goals and value the rewards associated with goal achievement. Job satisfaction is further expected to increase if continuous and constructive performance feedback is provided within the context of a supportive and courteous supervisor-subordinate relationship. If performance management is regarded as a means of enhancing communication between an employee and supervisor and identifying developmental needs, it will have a positive influence on employees' levels of job satisfaction. As a result, employees who perceive the performance management

process as transparent and consistent and regard the outcomes of the process as equitable, are also more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction

3.2.5   Evaluation and synthesis

Managers in organisations are concerned about the attitudes of their employees towards their jobs and their employing organisations. Extant literature indicates that employees' evaluations of their work experiences determine their behavioural reactions in the workplace. In this section, the focus was specifically on job satisfaction as an emotional reaction to employees' cognitive assessments of their work experiences. Job satisfaction was conceptualised as a pleasant or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job (Locke, 1975). It was therefore regarded as an attitude displaying what an individual likes or dislikes about his or her job (Gabrani et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2016) based on a comparison of the actual and required outcomes (Berliana et al. 2018).

The classic motivational theories were examined as a means to better understand the aspects that may contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction in the workplace. These theories underscore the importance of need satisfaction and goal setting for enhancing job satisfaction. It was shown that individuals have different needs and that managers or supervisors need to take cognisance of these needs if they want to create an environment that is conducive to higher levels of performance and job satisfaction (Kuvaas et al., 2017). It was, however, also shown that performance management in an organisation should not be aimed at fulfilling individual goals and needs only but should be aligned with organisational goals.

Hackman and Oldham's (1974) job characteristics theory was relied upon to posit that specific characteristics of a job (task identity, task significant, skills variety, autonomy and feedback) determine employees' levels of motivation and satisfaction. Specific job characteristics or facets that are widely accepted as contributors to job satisfaction were subsequently explored. These facets, which include pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, the nature of work and communication (Spector, 1997), were shown to be of particular relevance in a performance management context. Furthermore, literature suggests that a performance management system that recognises and fairly rewards employees' contributions to the achievement of organisational goals, while providing for personal development and career advancement, will contribute to employees' job satisfaction. Job satisfaction will also be enhanced if relationships in the workplace are characterised by

supervisor and co-worker support, clear communication and operating conditions that are conducive to goal achievement. It was shown, however, that the facets that espouse most to the levels of job satisfaction experienced by individuals, might differ depending on personal (gender, age and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics, providing impetus for the need to empirically test these differences within the current sample.

It was shown that employees' perceptions of the effectiveness (i.e. accuracy and fairness) of the performance management system may affect their job satisfaction (Sharma et al., 2016). Employees are more likely to regard the performance management system as accurate and fair if they are involved in the performance management processes – especially the planning and review processes (Armstrong, 2018; Modipane et al., 2019). If they are involved in the setting of performance goals and held accountable for the achievement thereof, this enhances trust and ownership in the process (Kim & Holzer, 2016; Rachmaliya, 2017). The provision of continuous, constructive feedback further enhances effective communication between employees and their supervisors, contributing to better work relationships (Kampkötter, 2017; Kim & Holzer, 2016). A transparent and accommodating performance management system that is aimed at addressing both employer and employee needs in a fair manner, is therefore more likely to result in higher levels of job satisfaction (Kampkötter, 2017; Naji et al., 2015).

In this section, the focus was on job satisfaction and how it may be influenced by employees work-related perceptions, specifically focusing on their perceptions relating to the effectiveness of the performance management system. However, employees' perceptions and experiences in the workplace do not only affect their attitudes towards their jobs, but also their attitudes towards the organisation as a whole. It was therefore deemed important to also investigate organisational commitment as an attitudinal outcome of employees' perceptions of the performance management system. Both job satisfaction and organisational commitment are related but distinguishable attitudes that reflect individual assessments of different aspects of the working environment. In the following section, organisational commitment will be conceptualised as a specific organisationally directed attitudinal outcome of employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system. It is, therefore, theorised that effective performance management practices give rise to satisfied and committed employees.

3.3   ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organisational commitment over the years, has been studied extensively by researchers in the fields of industrial and organisational psychology and HRM. The interest was mainly on an attempt to clarify and understand the work-related behaviour of employees as a result of the relationship found between organisational commitment, attitudes and workplace behaviour (Angle & Perry, 1981; Lee et al., 1992; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002; Porter et al., 1974). Literature on performance indicates that the involvement of employees and gaining their commitment to organisational goals and values are essential for organisational success. The interest in organisational commitment was driven by its potential benefits for both employees and their employing organisations (Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2018). These benefits include enhanced satisfaction, loyalty, productivity, engagement, creativity, less absenteeism and better performance (Lumley et al., 2011; Meyer et al., 2002; Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018; Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Moreover, it has been shown that effective performance management, characterised by clear goals, fair rewards, continuous feedback and open communication, enhances employees' commitment to their employing organisations (Nasurdin et al., 2018). Employees who perceive that the performance management practices are fair have a tendency to be more committed to their employing organisation (Kaposambo, 2016). Therefore, employees' perceptions of the performance management practices determine not only their acceptance thereof but also influence their commitment to their employing organisations (Kaposambo, 2016).

In this section, organisational commitment as an attitudinal outcome of workplace perceptions and experiences is conceptualised. This is followed by an outline of the relevant theoretical models that underly organisational commitment and a discussion of biographical variables that may influence individual commitment. Finally, the section concludes with a discussion of the theorised relationships between organisational commitment and both perceived performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction.

3.3.1   Conceptualisation of organisational commitment

Organisational commitment has been conceptualised in various ways by researchers with the main differences relating to different approaches adopted and the dimensions identified. Two different approaches to organisational commitment have traditionally been adopted, namely, the attitudinal and behavioural approaches. The attitudinal approach means that organisational commitment is regarded as an attitude that employees hold towards their

97

employing organisations (Mowday et al., 1979). It is theorised that affect and cognition give rise to behavioural intent, which in turn leads to actual behaviour. It focuses on how an employee identifies with the goals of the employing organisation and remains committed to organisational goal achievement (Mowday et al., 1979). According to Jaros (1997a) factors such as positive work experiences, personal characteristics and job characteristics are associated with the attitudinal approach.

The behavioural approach to organisational commitment regards individual behaviour as the main determinant of attitudinal change (Meyer & Allen, 1991). In terms of the behavioural approach, certain conditions exist under which displayed behaviour is prone to be repeated (O'Reilly & Caldwell, 1981). Such behaviour then affects individuals' attitudes (O'Reilly & Caldwell, 1981). Proponents of this approach therefore believe that commitment is the result of particular behaviour at work (Mowday et al., 1979). Employees who choose to behave in a particular manner commit to their chosen behaviour and develop attitudes in line with their choices (Brown, 1996).

Contemporary organisational commitment literature, which informed the conceptualisation of organisational commitment in this study, encompass elements of both the attitudinal and behavioural approaches. The integrated approach incorporates three key elements, namely, employees' affective attachment to their employing organisations, the perceived costs of leaving the organisation and their moral obligation to remain in the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Extant literature indicates that the dimensionality of organisational commitment has been conceptualised in various ways. Some researchers, such as Becker (1960), Wiener (1982) and Klein et al. (2014) promote a one-dimensional approach. Wiener (1982, p. 421) regarded organisational commitment as "the totality of internalised pressure to act in a way that meets organisational goals and interests". This focus on organisational goal achievement is also reflected in Brown's (1996) description of organisational commitment as an employee's enthusiasm to support the employing organisation beyond the call of duty and job expectations and Klein et al.'s (2014) view that organisational commitment reflects an individual's responsibility and diligence towards the organisation.

Others, such as Angle and Perry (1981) and Mayer and Schoorman (1989), regarded organisational commitment as a two-dimensional construct. Angle and Perry (1981) conceptualised organisational commitment as the employees' support for the organisational

98

goals (value commitment) and commitment to remain with the employing organisation (commitment to stay). Mayer and Schoorman (1998) distinguished between value commitment and continuance commitment in their proposed two dimensions. Value commitment was described as the acceptance of and identification with organisational goals and values, while continuance commitment was regarded as the need to remain in the organisation (Mayer & Schoorman, 1998).

Porter et al.'s (1974) definition of organisational commitment paved the way for the contemporary view of organisational commitment as a three-dimensional construct. These authors (Porter et al., 1974, p. 604) incorporated three factors in their definition of organisational commitment, namely: "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values"; "a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation"; and "a definite desire to maintain organisational membership". Researchers such as Mowday et al. (1979), O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), Penley and Gould (1988) and Meyer and Allen (1991), supported this view of organisational commitment as a multidimensional construct. Drawing on the work of Porter et al. (1974), Mowday et al. (1979) regarded organisational commitment as: acceptance of the organisation's goals; willingness to work hard for the organisation; and desire to stay with the organisation. The integrated multidimensional models of organisational commitment proposed by O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), Penley and Gould (1988) and Meyer and Allen (1991) were further explored to obtain a clearer understanding of the organisational commitment construct and to determine the conceptualisation thereof for the purposes of this study.

3.3.2   Theoretical models of organisational commitment

Various models aimed at better understanding organisational commitment have been proposed in extant literature. Three models are explored in this section, namely O' Reilly and Chatman (1986) multidimensional model, Penley and Gould's (1988) commitment model and Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component organisational commitment model. The models are frequently relied on in contemporary organisational commitment literature and they support the conceptualisation of organisational commitment as a multidimensional construct.

3.3.2.1   *O'Reilly and Chatman's multidimensional model of organisational commitment*

O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model provided support for the conceptualisation of organisational commitment as a multidimensional construct. The model is based on the

premise that commitment is an attitude (psychological attachment) towards the organisation. This attitude may develop in different ways and manifests in employees' commitment to perform. Furthermore, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) posit that commitment can take three forms, namely compliance, identification and internalisation. According to these authors (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), *compliance* relates to employees' acceptance of rules and influence of management to benefit in terms of promotion and remuneration (Caldwell et al., 1990; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). *Identificatio*n relates to employees' feeling of attachment and affiliation to the employing organisation (Caldwell et al., 1990; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). *Internalisation* takes place when an employee's personal values and objectives correlate with the values and objectives of the employing organisation (Caldwell et al., 1990).

The model proposed by O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) supported Mowday et al.'s (1979) view of organisational commitment as a three-dimensional construct. A high level of interconnection was, however, found between two of the dimensions, namely, identification and internalisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). As a result, further research was conducted, which led to the conceptualisation of organisational commitment as a two-dimensional construct, consisting of instrumental (compliance) and normative (identification and internalisation combined) commitment (Caldwell et al., 1990; O'Reilly et al., 1991). According to O'Reilly et al. (1991), employees' psychological attachment to their employing organisations are therefore based on varying levels of instrumental and normative commitment. These authors (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; O'Reilly et al., 1991) further reported that employees' willingness to participate in positive discretionary employee behaviour is mainly determined by their level of normative commitment to their employing organisation and not by instrumental commitment. According to Kirsten (2019), O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) work supports an integrated approach (attitude and behaviour) to organisational commitment. It also highlights the importance of clearly conceptualising organisational commitment and its dimensions when researching the behavioural outcomes of commitment as the different dimensions have been shown to have different outcomes.

3.3.2.2   *Penley and Gould's commitment model*

Penley and Gould (1988) based their multidimensional framework on the earlier work of Etzioni (1961), confirming the three-dimensional nature of organisational commitment. According to these authors (Penley & Gould, 1988), organisational commitment is viewed from two predominant perspectives reflecting either instrumental or affective sources of commitment. The instrumental perspective to organisational commitment relates to the bond that an

100

@ Manamela, MLA, University of South Africa 2023

employee develops with the employing organisation if there is a balance between his or her individual contributions to the organisation and organisational inducements. In terms of the affective perspective to organisational commitment, employees do not only develop an attachment to their employing organisations based on instrumental inducement, but ascribe personal meaning to their employment relationship if they identify with its values and ideology (Georges, 2020).

Penley and Gould (1988) empirically confirmed Etzioni's (1961) three-dimensional model of organisational commitment, consisting of moral, calculative and alienative commitment. Moral and alienative commitment are regarded as affective forms of commitment (Georges, 2020). Moral commitment refers to an employees' identification with and acceptance of the goals of the organisation (Georges, 2020), while alienative commitment is based in a perceived lack of control over the internal organisational environment and the absence of alternative employment opportunities (Bar-Haim, 2007; Georges, 2020). Calculative commitment, which is instrumental in nature, refers to the incentives or inducements that an employee receives from the organisation in return for his or her contributions to the organisation (Kose & Pehlivanoglu, 2020). It is therefore regarded as an instrumental attachment to the employing organisation in which extrinsic rewards play a major role (Brown & Barker, 2019).

While the model has not been used widely in organisational commitment research, its contribution to this study lies in its confirmation of the multidimensional nature of organisational commitment and conclusion that employees experience a mixture of different types of commitment that are both affective and instrumental in nature (Penley & Gould, 1988). Penley and Gould's (1988) research suggest that forms of organisational commitment differ from one another based on the bonds that are created between individuals and their employing organisations as well as the source of these bonds (Lambert et al., 2021). These authors (Penley & Gould, 1998) further postulate that the different forms of organisational commitment result in different attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. The different forms of organisational commitment and their interactive influence on employee attitudes and behaviour were subsequently further explored by Meyer and Allen (1997).

3.3.2.3   *Meyer and Allen's three-component commitment model*

Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component organisational commitment model has undergone extensive assessment and has been supported and accepted by many researchers as the leading organisational commitment model (Baron & Greenberg, 2003; Coetzee et al., 2014;

Mitonga-Monga & Hoole, 2018). Meyer and Allen (1991; 1997) incorporated both attitudes and behaviour (turnover and on-the-job-behaviour) in their conceptualisation of organisational commitment as a three-dimensional construct. According to these authors (Meyer & Allen, 1991), organisational commitment reflects employees' desire (affective commitment), need (continuance commitment) and obligation (normative commitment) to remain in their employing organisations. As illustrated in Figure 3.1, the model incorporates three distinguishable components of organisational commitment, namely, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, each reflective of a different psychological state or mindset that is experienced by employees in varying degrees (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Each component (or dimension) of organisational commitment develops and impacts employees' behaviour in a different way (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002).

Figure 3.1

The Three-Component Model of Organisational Commitment
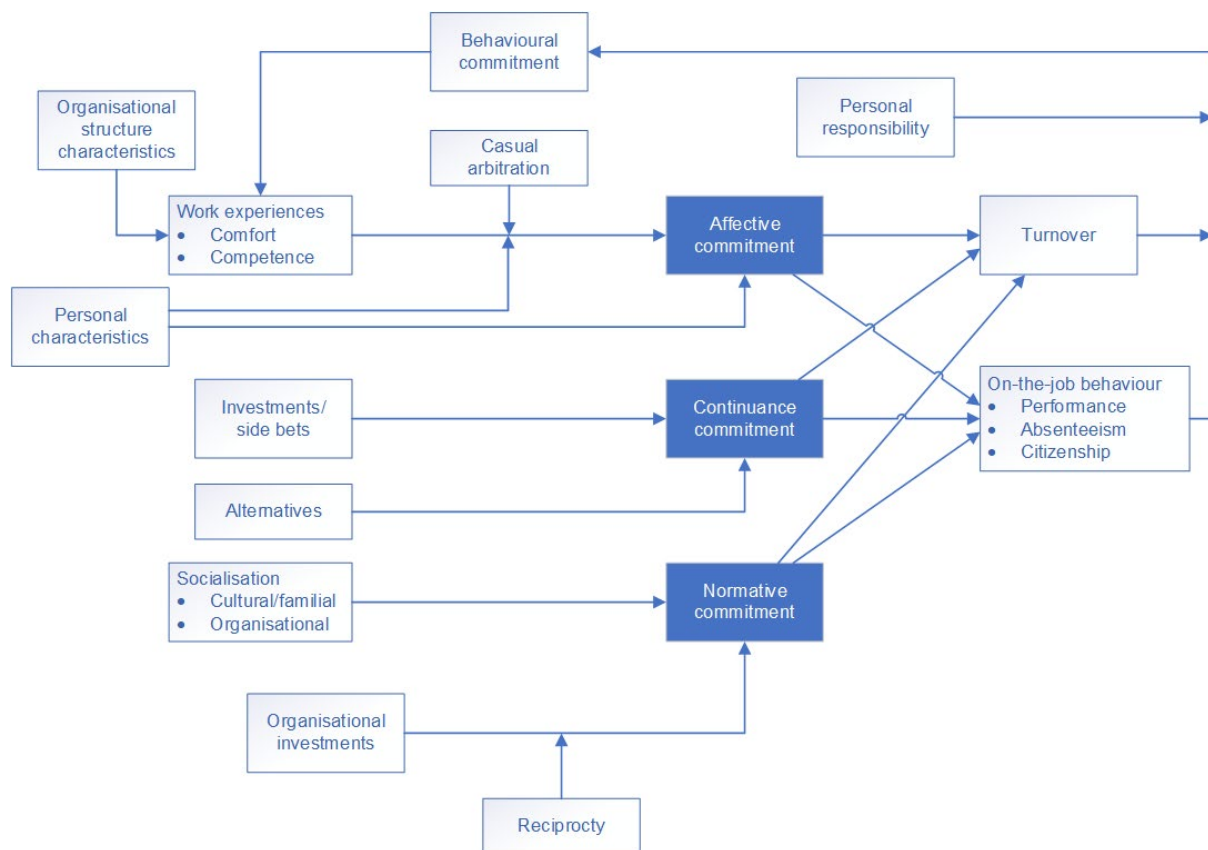
Note. A Three- Component Conceptualisation of Organisational Commitment; Meyer and Allen (1991, p. 68).

Figure 3.1 serves as a framework for discussing organisational commitment as conceptualised by Meyer and Allen (1991; 1997).

(a)   Affective commitment

Affective commitment relates to employees' emotional attachment to the organisation in which an employee stays out of own discretion (Blersch et al., 2020). This attachment is characterised by an identification with the organisation's goals and values, a willingness to engage in activities that are beneficial to the organisation and a desire to remain in the organisation's employment (Porter et al., 1974). Affective commitment emanates through feelings such as loyalty, affection and belongingness experienced by employees in their workplaces (Kirsten, 2019). Because of the high levels of affective commitment, employees continue to work with the organisation out of their own volition (Blersch et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020). They believe in and affiliate with the goals and values of the employing organisation (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018; Saridakis et al., 2018). In addition, employees displaying high levels of affective commitment are more willing to exert effort in achieving organisational goals and tend to engage in activities beyond what the job requires (Blersch et al., 2020; Kotzé, 2020). The positive impact of affective commitment on employee behaviour has been broadly reported in extant literature and it has been empirically confirmed that employees' affective commitment to their organisations have a greater influence on their behaviour than other forms of commitment (Blersch et al., 2020). According to Brown and Barker (2019), employees who display high levels of affective commitment towards their employing organisations

- tend to accept and share the goals and values of the organisation;
- are more willing to help the employing organisation to achieve its goals; and
- have a strong desire to maintain organisational membership.

Organisational commitment literature often draws on social exchange theory to explain the reciprocal relationship between the employer and the employee. The behavioural effects of affective commitment is grounded in social exchange in that employees who are treated well by the employing organisation are envisaged to reciprocate with higher levels of affective commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Twumasi & Addo, 2021). As a result, these employees do not focus on their own interests only, but display positive work attitudes and behaviour that benefit the employing organisation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Ji & Jan, 2020; Kirsten, 2019).

(b)   <u>Continuance commitment</u>

Meyer and Allen (1991) describe continuance commitment as a desire to continue membership with the organisation because of an awareness of the costs associated with leaving it and/or the lack of comparable alternative employment opportunities. Continuance commitment therefore relates to the perceived cost associated with leaving the employing organisation (Blersch et al., 2020). These costs may include, for instance, a loss of income (salary) and benefits (e.g. employer contributions to a pension fund or medical aid) (Meyer et al., 2002). Continuance commitment therefore develops when an employee makes investments over time that would be lost if the activity is discontinued (Lambert et al., 2021). These employees will remain in the employing organisation out of economic obligation if the employers are perceived to be trustworthy (Mitonga-Monga, 2020).

Employees who do not have alternative employment opportunities are prone to display higher levels of continuous commitment towards their employing organisations (Alghusin & Al-Ajlouni, 2020). Sheridan et al. (2019) found, however, that employees who remain with their employing organisations because they do not have any alternative options will simply maintain appropriate behaviour until a better option comes along. According to these authors (Sheridan et al., 2019), the frustration that individuals experience owing to a lack of job alternatives may contribute to poor performance and trigger negative behaviour that violates organisational norms and practices.

(c)   <u>Normative commitment</u>

Normative commitment is defined as a mindset that obligates employees to work towards the organisational goals and remain with the organisation (Liu et al., 2020). Employees' inherent values and obligations are shaped by their experiences prior to joining the organisation (i.e. through familial and cultural socialisation) and further developed after entry into the organisation (Meyer et al., 1997). Therefore, employees feel obliged to reciprocate the investments that the organisation made in terms of their employment by remaining with the organisation and performing their required tasks (Kirsten, 2019). Employees with high levels of normative commitment feel an obligation to assist the organisation in achieving its objectives and they become adaptive and flexible to the organisational changes (Liu et al., 2020). According to Alghusin and Al-Ajlouni (2020), such employees feel a sense of duty to stay and identify with the employing organisation. In addition, these employees, owing to their strong desire to meet their obligations, tend to make personal sacrifices for the organisation

(Liu et al., 2020). High levels of normative commitment are desirable as it is typically associated with positive employee behaviour (Liu et al., 2020). From the preceding discussion, it can therefore be deduced that it is more desirable for employees to display higher levels of affective and normative commitment, as this is linked to positive/desired behaviour, whereas high levels of continuance commitment are not necessarily beneficial to the organisation and may even result in behaviour that is detrimental to the organisation.

In summary, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) proposed three distinct dimensions of organisational commitment, namely, compliance, identification and internalisation. However, the classification was diluted because it was difficult to differentiate between identification and internalisation (Caldwell et al., 1990). Penley and Gould (1988) also proposed three constructs, namely, moral, calculative and alienative commitment. These researchers confirmed the multidimensional nature of organisational commitment and suggested that different types of commitment develop in different ways. They further showed that different types of commitment result in different behavioural outcomes.

These findings were further explored by Meyer and Allen (1991; 1997) who introduced the three dimensions of organisational commitment that are widely accepted in contemporary organisational commitment literature, namely, affective, continuance and normative commitment (Nalla et al., 2020).

Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-dimensional model of organisational commitment shows that each component of organisational commitment develops as a function of different antecedents and impacts differently on employee behaviour at work (Jaros, 1997b). As the focus in this study was on the extent to which performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction determine employees' commitment to their employing organisations, this differentiation between the types of organisational commitment and the distinct antecedents to each type of commitment was deemed essential. Hence, the reliance on Meyer and Allen's (1991; 1997) model as the theoretical foundation for investigating the antecedents to organisational commitment. In the following section, the antecedents of each form of organisational commitment as reported by Meyer and Allen (1997) and confirmed in subsequent organisational commitment research are examined.

3.3.3 Antecedents to organisational commitment

As reflected in Figure 3.1, Meyer and Allen (1991) regarded affective, continuance and normative commitment as distinguishable components of organisational commitment. These authors (Meyer & Allen, 1991) further postulate that the three forms of commitment have different antecedents and relate differently to work related behaviour such as in-role and extra-role performance. To understand the antecedents of organisational commitment, it is therefore necessary to examine the factors that contribute to each form of commitment. These antecedents, as reported by Meyer and Allen (1991) and supported in subsequent research, are therefore discussed in the following sections.

3.3.3.1 Antecedents for affective commitment

There are three main predictors of affective commitment according to Meyer and Allen's (1997) model, namely:

- work experiences (including comfort and competence)
- personal characteristics
- organisational structure characteristics.

Work experiences have demonstrated to be the strongest predictor of affective commitment (Blersch et al., 2020). According to Meyer and Allen (1991), work experiences are divided into two categories namely: comfort and competence. Comfort is associated with confirmation of pre-entry expectation, equity in the distribution of rewards, supervisor supportiveness, role clarity and consideration from the supervisor (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Competence is associated with accomplishment, autonomy, fairness in performance rewards, challenging job, participation in decision-making and opportunity for promotion (Georges, 2020; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Work experiences such as supervisor supportiveness and fairness in policies and procedures on how decisions are made play a major role in affective commitment (Georges, 2020; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Employees who feel that their jobs are secure and provide for their needs tend to display high levels of affective commitment. Competence plays an important role in the sense that employees who are provided with the opportunity to participate in decision-making and contribute to organisational goal achievement feel that they are trusted by their employer (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Employees' competence is linked to commitment as organisations that provide experiences that enhance competence promote affective commitment (Blersch et al., 2020). In addition, organisations that provide challenging jobs,

opportunities for promotion and performance contingent rewards enhance affective commitment (Blersch et al., 2020).

Employees experience higher levels of affective commitment if their basic psychological needs (e.g. recognition, belonging, constructive interaction, clarity of mutual expectations, consideration and support) are fulfilled by their experiences in the workplace (Coetzee et al., 2019). Therefore, the organisation should cultivate a conducive working environment to enhance positive work experiences and commitment to the employing organisation as employees with strong abilities and confidence in their achievements have higher affective commitment than employees with low confidence (Blersch et al., 2020; Coetzee et al., 2019; Georges, 2020).

According to Meyer and Allen (1997), employees' affective commitment to their employing organisations are also determined by their personal characteristics. These personal characteristics consist of both demographic (e.g. age, tenure, gender etc.) and dispositional (e.g. personality and values) variables. The relationships between various personal characteristics and affective commitment have been reported (Blersch et al., 2020; Eleswed, & Mohammed, 2013; Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Kim, 2018; Kirsten, 2019), but the results have been inconsistent. Hence, the need to further explore this aspect. This is further explored in section 3.3.3.4.

Meyer and Allen (1997) further indicated that the structural characteristics of an organisational influence affective commitment in various ways. It has been confirmed in more recent research that organisational structure plays a vital role in shaping employees' involvement in their jobs and commitment to their employing organisations (Lambert et al., 2017). Effective communication, participation in policy discussions and trust in decision-making have been shown to increase affective commitment (Nkhukhu-Orlando et al., 2019). Affective commitment is also enhanced when employees experience support from their supervisors and co-workers, have access to resources and are provided with promotional opportunities and role clarity (Park & Kim, 2017; Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018). Meyer and Allen (1997) postulate, however, that the influence of organisational characteristics on affective commitment is mediated by work experiences and not direct.

In terms of Meyer and Allen's (1991; 1997) model, the antecedents of affective commitment therefore include work experience (comfort and competence), personal characteristics and organisational structure characteristics. Within a performance management context, it may

therefore be expected that employees' experiences in terms of performance management practices, relating to, for instance, role clarity, equal distribution of rewards, feedback, challenging tasks, autonomy, involvement in decision-making and supervisor and co-worker support, influence their affective commitment to their employing organisations.

3.3.3.2   Antecedents for continuance commitment

Continuance commitment relates to employees' desire to remain or retain membership with the employing organisation owing to the awareness of costs associated with leaving or lack of alternative opportunities for employment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). According to Jaros (1997a) and Meyer and Allen (1991), the antecedents of continuance commitment are investments and lack of alternatives. In their conceptualisation of investments or side bets Meyer and Allen (1991) draw on Becker's (1960) research in which it was argued that people's accumulation of side bets commits them to a particular course of action. Employees make investments in their employment relationships over time. These investments are regarded as activities that connect an employee to a course of action and something is lost if the activity is discontinued (Meyer & Allen, 1997). For example, an employee leaving an organisation would lose valuable investments in terms of money, time and effort (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The investments include aspects such as seniority, non-transferable skills, retirement plans and social connections (Lambert et al., 2019; Nalla et al., 2020). Employees choose to remain with the employing organisation as they do not want to lose accumulated benefits (Coetzee et al., 2019).

Lack of alternatives relates to an employee's perceptions about the availability of other employment opportunities. These perceptions are based on events or experiences in the external environment (e.g. high unemployment in the country or factors associated with family relocation) and the marketability of the employee's current skills as well as the outcomes of previous job searches (Meyer & Allen, 1997). According to Brown and Barker (2019), employees form perceptions about the availability of employment opportunities in the market and what is offered by other employers and these perceptions affect their continuance commitment towards their employing organisations. Employees who display high levels of continuance commitment therefore remain in their organisations to protect their investments or owing to the absence or lack of alternative employment opportunities (Georges, 2020). However, employees may leave the organisation if better alternatives become available (Georges, 2020; Lambert et al., 2021).

3.3.3.3 Antecedents of normative commitment

The main antecedents to normative commitment are socialisation and organisational investments (Meyer & Allen, 1997). According to Meyer and Allen (1991), normative commitment relates to the pressure that employees experience to remain with an organisation based on values and obligations that are established prior to entry (i.e. familial or cultural socialisation) or following entry into the organisation (organisational socialisation). Socialisation experiences therefore shape employees' personal values and obligations or sense of responsibility towards their employing organisations (Lambert et al., 2021; Nalla et al., 2020).

Organisational investments, as conceptualised by Meyer and Allen (1991; 1997), relate to investments that an organisation makes in an employee that the employee feels obliged to reciprocate. This may include, for example, payment of an employee's tuition fees or inclusion in an educational programme or the costs associated with on-the-job training (Georges, 2020). These types of investments might leave an employee with feelings of indebtedness and obligation to rectify the imbalance (Brown & Barker, 2019; Meyer & Allen, 1991; 1997). Employees with high levels of normative commitment remain in the organisation because they feel obligated to reciprocate by being committed to the employing organisation to repay debts (Abdul-Nasser et al., 2017; Georges, 2020).

3.3.3.4 Person-centred variables that may influence individual commitment

As indicated in section 3.3.3.1, Meyer and Allen (1991; 1997) assert that employees' personal characteristics are one of the main determinants of affective commitment. The predictive influence of various personal characteristics on affective commitment has been confirmed by various researchers. For example, Blersch et al. (2020) report that age and tenure were significantly and positively correlated to affective commitment. Bodjrenou et al. (2019) found that tenure significantly relates to affective commitment while Kirsten (2019) report that gender relates to affective commitment. Nkhukhu-Orlando et al. (2019) found no significant differences in affective commitment in terms of gender, job level and tenure.

However, contradictory to Meyer and Allen's findings, employees' personal characteristics have also been shown to influence their normative commitment towards their employing organisations. For example, Ferreira and Coetzee (2010) found significant differences between age groups and job levels in terms of normative commitment. It should also be noted

that researchers do not always differentiate between the three types of commitment. Hence, there are also reports of the predictive influence of personal characteristics on organisational commitment as an overall construct in extant literature. For example, researchers such as Bakotić (2022) report that gender has an influence on organisational commitment and Lambert et al. (2017) found a positive and significant relationship between age and organisational commitment.

In this study, it was deemed essential to determine whether different groups, based on specific personal (gender, age, and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics, experience different levels of organisational commitment. It was also regarded as important to determine whether these personal characteristics influence all three types of commitment or whether their influence is limited to affective commitment as proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991; 1997).

(a)   <u>Gender</u>

Research on gender differences in terms of organisational commitment shows inconsistent results (Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013; Luu et al., 2019). While researchers such as Ferreira and Coetzee (2010), João and Coetzee (2011) and Pikanegore (2021) observed no significant differences between gender groups in terms of their levels of organisational commitment, others reported significant differences. For instance, Affum-Osei et al. (2015) found males to be significantly more committed than females. In their research, these authors (Affum-Osei et al., 2015) focused on commitment as an overall construct and not on specific dimensions of organisational commitment. Kirsten (2019) reports a higher level of affective commitment among male employees than their female counterparts. This was attributed to by gender roles and gender discrimination that traditionally woman in the South African workplace experienced (Kirsten, 2019). In contrast, researchers such as Jabaar (2017) and Siciliano and Thompson (2018) report that female employees show more dedication and commitment to their employing organisations. These researchers (Jabaar, 2017; Siciliano & Thompson, 2018) ascribe the difference in male and female commitment to the organisation to the value that female employees place on stability and security in the workplace. Research results in terms of gender differences in organisational commitment are therefore inconsistent and inconclusive. Hence the need to further explore gender differences in terms of organisational commitment in this study. Based on the lack of evidence to the contrary, it is expected that gender differences will mainly influence employees' affective commitment towards their employing organisations.

(b)   <u>Age</u>

Research in respect of the relationship between age and organisational commitment has also been inconclusive. While some researchers, such as Stankevičiūtė and Staniškienė (2018), found no statistically significant differences between employees in different age categories in terms of organisational commitment, a positive relationship between age and organisational commitment has been widely reported. For example, Gani (2017) report that employees develop a greater sense of commitment to their employing organisations as they age. More specifically, older employees have been shown to be affectively and normatively more committed to their employing organisation than their younger counterparts (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Jabaar, 2017; Martin & Roodt, 2008; Yucel & Bektas, 2012). Furthermore, higher levels of affective commitment among older employees have been ascribed to greater job satisfaction experienced by these employees (Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013; Martin & Roodt, 2008). It has also been argued that older employees remain with their employing organisations because they have fewer alternative employment opportunities (reflecting high levels of continuance commitment) and are comfortable with their employing organisations; as such, they have a tendency to display higher levels of organisational commitment (Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013; Yucel & Bektas, 2012). There have therefore been reports of differences in terms of all three types of commitment, as well as overall commitment, for different age groups in extant literature. In this study, it was, therefore, deemed vital to ascertain whether employees from different age groups significantly differ with regard to their affective, normative and continuance commitment toward their employing organisation.

(c)   <u>Job level</u>

Employees in more senior positions tend to be more committed to their employing organisations (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013). This may be ascribed to the fact that they are involved in organisational decision-making and the implementation of these decisions while employees at lower levels are not (Tlaiss, 2013). Furthermore, employees, as they get promoted, gain more employment benefits which, in turn, change their attitudes towards and perceptions of their jobs and the employing organisation (Suman & Srivastava, 2012). Employees at higher levels are also more likely to function autonomously and it has been shown that employees who have authority to control their work situations display higher levels of affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Suki & Suki, 2011). Employees at management level appear to have significantly higher levels of normative commitment than employees at non-management levels (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010).

111

Employees at higher levels display high levels of affective and continuance commitment owing to their attachment to the values and strong belief in the organisation (Kim, 2018). Tubay (2020) also reports significant differences in continuance commitment between employees in supervisory, managerial and executive positions. From the preceding discussion, it may be deduced that employees at different job levels may experience different levels of organisational commitment.

(d)   Level of education

Extant literature reported the influence of educational level on organisational commitment (Luu et al., 2019; Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018). Employees with higher educational levels have greater opportunity to change jobs (Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018). As a result, they tend to be highly committed towards their profession but display lower levels of commitment to their employing organisations (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013). Hence, employees who are highly educated tend to be less committed to their employing organisations owing to other employment opportunities that they may have (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Bakotić, 2022). Moreover, highly educated employees are also less likely to experience a strong emotional bond to the employing organisation owing to the inability of the organisation to fulfil the often unrealistic expectations made by these employees – this is reflected in lower levels of affective commitment (Kirsten, 2019). From the preceding discussion, it may be deduced that employees may experience different levels of organisational commitment based on their educational level. These differences are mainly reflected in their levels of affective and continuance commitment.

(e)   Tenure

Organisational commitment has been reported in extant literature to vary over an employees' career. Tenure tends to influence employees' level of organisational commitment over time (Meyer & Allen 1997). A positive and significant relationship has been found between tenure and organisational commitment (Meyer et al., 2002). Individuals with longer service in the organisation therefore tends to be more emotionally attached and committed (Mitonga-Monga, 2020; Van Dyk et al., 2013). Longer tenured employees tend to develop greater loyalty to the organisation and therefore display higher levels of affective commitment (Kim, 2018). Furthermore, as employees' tenure increase, their development on the job also improves, contributing to shared experiences in the organisation, thereby enhancing affective

112

commitment (Kim, 2018). However, Wang et al. (2020) argue that affective commitment decreases as employees' length of service increases in an organisation.

Tenure has also been found to influence normative commitment. It has been reported that the positive effects of organisational socialisation on employees' normative commitment decline over time if their personal needs are not satisfied (Kim, 2018). Employees with short tenure may perceive socialisation in the organisation as challenging if they cannot adapt to the new working environment and acquire knowledge and new experience, affecting their normative commitment (Kim, 2018).

In extant literature it has been suggested that tenure is positively related to continuance commitment (Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2018). However, Nalla et al. (2020) posit that this is not necessarily a desirable outcome as employees who have been in an organisation for an extended time, most likely remain because of the investments that they have accumulated over time and not because of an affinity towards the organisation. Hence, they experience feelings of entrapment in the job (Nalla et al., 2020).

From the preceding discussion, it may be concluded that employees may experience different levels of organisational commitment based on their tenure. These differences are reflected in their levels of affective, normative and continuance commitment.

In summary, there are three dimensions of organisational commitment and, according to Meyer and Allen (1991; 1997), each of these dimensions have different antecedents and behavioural consequences. Affective commitment is predicted by work experiences, personal characteristics and organisational structure characteristics (Meyer & Allen, 1991,1997). Work experiences such as autonomy, promotion, supervisor support, role clarity and fair rewards have been reported by various researchers, such as Blersch et al. (2020), Coetzee et al. (2019) and Georges (2020), to be stronger predictors of affective commitment than personal characteristics. The influence of organisational structure characteristics, such as effective communication and participation in policy discussions and decision-making, on affective commitment has also been confirmed in extant literature (Nkhukhu-Orlando et al., 2019). Investments and lack of alternatives have been reported to influence continuance commitment as employees do not want to lose the benefits that they have accrued over time. As a result, they choose to remain with the employing organisation (Coetzee et al., 2019). However, if employees feel entrapped in an organisation, this might result in negative work outcomes (Nalla et al., 2020). Socialisation and organisational investments have been reported to

influence normative commitment (Lambert et al., 2021; Nalla et al., 2020). Organisations that provide organisational investments, such as payment of tuition fees to its employees, enhance normative commitment (Meyer & Allen 1997). Employees with high normative commitment remain with the organisation as an obligation to repay perceived debts (Abdul-Nasser et al., 2017; Georges, 2020).

Employees' experiences during the performance management process, for example, the perceived fairness in the way their performance is managed and assessed, the rules and procedures governing organisational decisions, and effective communication are likely to impact on their affective commitment (Blersch et al., 2020; Georges, 2020; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Furthermore, participation in policy discussions, autonomy, role clarity, involvement in the performance planning, accurate reviews, continuous feedback and supervisor support, are likely to impact on the acceptance of the performance management system as accurate (Blersch et al., 2020; Georges, 2020; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees are likely to show high levels of affective commitment when the performance management practices are perceived as fair (Rachmaliya, 2017). Employees who experience performance feedback as constructive and aligned with planned performance goals, will also experience higher levels of affective commitment to the employing organisation (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2015; Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018). Supervisors who support their employees and acknowledge good performance strengthen their loyalty and commitment to the organisation (Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018; Tay et al., 2016). Employees who are allowed to participate in decision-making during performance management process would accept the system as accurate and experience increased affective commitment (Kim & Holzer, 2016; Nasurdin et al., 2018; Rachmaliya, 2017). Employees who experience work as challenging and rewarding will experience increased affective commitment (Kim & Holzer, 2016; Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2015). It may therefore be expected that a performance management process that is experienced as fair, consistent and transparent will positively affect employees' affective commitment (Nasurdin et al., 2018). In addition, the literature suggests that employees will embrace the identity of the organisation if their experiences are positive and will be willing to stay and strive towards the success of the organisation (reflecting higher levels of normative commitment). Finally, organisations that offer incentives or rewards such as performance bonuses and promotion opportunities as part of the performance management process are likely to experience higher levels of continuance commitment among their employees (Pieters, 2018; Safdar & Liu, 2019).

In the next section, the reported relationships between organisational commitment and two theorised antecedents, namely, performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction are explored.

3.3.4 Performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction as predictors of organisational commitment

Various antecedents to organisational commitment exist and, as theorised by Meyer and Allen (1991; 1997), different forms of organisational commitment have different antecedents (see Figure 3.1). This study focused on two specific antecedents, namely, performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction. The researcher set out to determine how employees' perceptions of the performance management system and their job satisfaction may contribute to their commitment towards their employing organisations. As positive work experiences and greater organisational support have been linked to increased job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Blersch et al., 2020; Kotzé & Nel, 2020; Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018; Park & Kim, 2017), it was anticipated that positive experiences with regard to the accuracy and fairness of performance management practices would also enhance employees' job satisfaction and commitment towards their employing organisations. The theorised relationships between performance management system accuracy and fairness respectively and organisational commitment as well as the theorised relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment are therefore explored in the subsequent sections.

3.3.4.1 *Performance management system accuracy as a predictor of organisational commitment*

Performance management system accuracy relates to the extent to which employees perceive performance planning, feedback, reviews and outcomes as accurate (see section 2.3.1 in Chapter 2). Employee perceptions of each of these subdimensions of performance management accuracy have the potential to influence their organisational commitment.

Performance planning, where the supervisor and the subordinate set goals and performance standards and ensure their alignment with the goals of the organisation, is the initial step in the performance management process and serve as the foundation for effective performance management (Armstrong, 2018; Mone & London, 2018). The involvement of employees during performance planning and the development of the necessary skills have been shown to not only enhance performance management system effectiveness but also their loyalty and

115

commitment towards the employing organisation (Rachmaliya, 2017; Sahu et al., 2014; Tay et al., 2016). In addition, positive employee attitudes towards the organisation tend to contribute to greater acceptance of organisational goals and a willingness to extend effort on behalf of the employing organisation (Lumley et al., 2011). Employee involvement in performance planning creates ownership and accountability, which contributes to greater acceptance of the system as accurate and enhances employee commitment to the organisation (Nasurdin et al., 2018; Rachmaliya, 2017; Tay et al., 2016).

Continuous constructive feedback has been shown to have a positive effect on employee performance and strengthens their commitment to the employing organisation (Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018). According to Lapointe and Vandenberghe (2015), feedback that is provided continuously and aligned with planned performance allows the subordinate to grow and succeed, therefore enhancing their commitment to the employing organisation. Supervisors should, therefore, continuously provide feedback that is constructive and support employees to perform better to strengthen their commitment and loyalty to the employing organisation (Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018; Tay et al., 2016).

Performance reviews play an important part in ensuring the effectiveness of the performance management system and has a significant effect on organisational commitment and employee behaviour (Kaposambo, 2016). Performance reviews that are aligned with set goals and standards have been shown to enhance employee commitment (Nasurdin et al., 2018). Therefore, accurate reviews are important as they not only allow fair reward but through frequent communication and feedback, enhance employees' commitment towards their employing organisations (Naji et al., 2015; Nasurdin et al., 2018). Employees that are provided with accurate performance reviews are more likely to accept the performance management system as effective and to commit to the employing organisation (Modipane et al., 2019; Nasurdin et al., 2018).

Outcome accuracy means that performance outcomes and rewards are aligned and that the system is therefore perceived as accurate (Mone & London, 2018). Employees are more likely to accept the results if they perceive the performance assessment and outcomes as accurate (Gorman et al., 2017; Sharma et al., 2016). Outcome accuracy has not been specifically addressed in literature as a determinant of organisational commitment and this study aimed to explore the relationship between the subdimensions of performance management system accuracy and organisational commitment in addressing the gap.

116

3.3.4.2 Performance management system fairness as a predictor of organisational commitment

Organisational justice relates to perceptions of fairness in an organisation and employees' reaction to these perceptions (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.2). Performance management practices have an effect on employee commitment towards the employing organisation (De Clercq et al., 2019; Malik & Chishti, 2018). When employees join organisations and enter into performance agreements, they express an inherent commitment towards the organisation, which they expect to be reciprocated by fair performance management practices (Totawar & Nambudiri, 2014). Employees who experience organisational practices (such as performance management) as fair, are often more satisfied with their job and their employing organisations and therefore show higher levels of organisational commitment (Naji et al., 2015; Pieters, 2018; Salminen et al. 2017).

Procedural justice relates to employees' reaction to the perceived fairness of the procedures used in making decisions (Govender et al., 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016). Perceptions of procedural justice have been shown to affect employees' organisational commitment (Safdar & Liu, 2019). Employees are likely to develop positive attitudes and tend to be more emotionally attached to the employing organisation when they perceive that performance management processes, especially performance appraisals, performance rewards, salaries and promotions are fair (Nasurdin et al., 2018; Safdar & Liu, 2019; Totawar & Nambudiri, 2014). However, employees who feel that they were unfairly treated during the performance management process may develop negative attitudes that manifest in lower levels of organisational commitment and behaviour that is harmful to the organisation (Bayarçelik & Findikli, 2016; De Clercq et al., 2019; Totawar & Nambudiri, 2014).

Distributive justice relates to the perceptions of fairness in terms of the rewards, recognition, pay and promotion received by employees (De Clercq et al., 2019; Pieters, 2018). Employees who perceive that the distribution of rewards are fair are more likely to be satisfied and this will enhance their commitment towards the employing organisation (Bayarçelik & Findikli, 2016; Pieters, 2018). Employees who perceive that everyone got the resources they deserved tend to have a positive attitude towards the employing organisation (De Clercq et al., 2019; Govender er al., 2015). In addition, employees who feel that they have been rewarded fairly for the work performed tend to be more committed (De Clercq et al., 2019). A performance appraisal system that is perceived as equitable will therefore enhance employees' commitment to the organisation (Naji et al., 2015).

Interpersonal justice relates to employees' perceptions of fairness in terms of how they are treated by managers (Mitonga-Monga & Hoole, 2018). More importantly, employees who perceive that they have been fairly treated by their employing organisation tend to have a positive attitude towards the organisation (De Clercq et al., 2019; Govender et al., 2015; Pieters, 2018). It has been shown that organisations that provide developmental opportunities for their employees tend to be successful as they enhance employees' satisfaction and commitment (Naji et al., 2015; Totawar & Nambudiri, 2014). Furthermore, if employees are involved in the performance assessment process with clear and proper communication protocols between the subordinate and the supervisors, employee accountability is promoted, therefore reducing conflict and enhancing commitment (Malik & Chishti, 2018; Naji et al., 2015).

Informational justice relates to the information employees receive about the performance management process and its outcomes (Govender et al., 2015). All the relevant information relied upon for decision-making during an employee's appraisal should be made available (Shrivastava & Purang, 2011). It has been shown that informational justice is informed by clear and proper communication protocols during assessment and feedback (Pieters, 2018). Furthermore, employees who are allowed to participate in decision-making during the performance management process and are given clear reasons for decisions and the distribution of outcomes tend to be more accepting of the process and ultimately demonstrate higher levels of commitment to the employing organisation (Özpehlivan & Acar, 2015; Pieters, 2018).

In summary, the view that employees' perceptions of the accuracy and fairness of the performance management system will influence organisational commitment is supported in extant literature. Performance management processes that are perceived by employees as consistent, fair and transparent are likely to increase organisational commitment. Employees who are involved in the setting of performance goals and standards and are held accountable for achieving the set goals are likely to experience higher levels of organisational commitment. Continuous constructive performance feedback and support from the supervisor are expected to increase the level of employees' commitment to the employing organisation. In addition, feedback that identifies skills gaps enhance communication between the supervisor and the employee, thus, increasing employees' levels of organisational commitment. Employees who are recognised and treated with respect and who are offered an opportunity to participate in decision-making during the performance management process, also tend to display higher levels of commitment to the employing organisation.

3.3.4.3 *Job satisfaction as a predictor of organisational commitment*

The positive relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment is well established in organisational behaviour literature (Cherian et al., 2018; Kola, 2018; Naderi, 2012; Srivastava, 2013). Research has shown that factors such as working conditions, supervision, co-workers, rewards, pay, promotions, nature of work, communication and participation in decision-making affect job satisfaction and that an increase in job satisfaction leads to an increase in organisational commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Naderi, 2012; Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018; Top & Gider, 2013). Job satisfaction, therefore, occurs as a result of positive work experiences (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Bayarçelik & Findikli, 2016). Employees who are satisfied with their jobs also tend to be more committed to the employing organisation (Cherian et al., 2018; Kola, 2018).

Researchers such as Mitonga-Monga et al. (2018), Nalla et al. (2020), Saridakis et al. (2018) and Top and Gider (2013) found a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment. These researchers followed different approaches to measuring job satisfaction: Mitonga-Monga, et al. (2018) and Nalla, et al. (2020) used a facet approach, Top and Gider (2013) measured job satisfaction as an overall construct and Saridakis et al. (2018) focused on nine aspects of the job characteristics. Notwithstanding the different approaches followed, however, the significant relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment was confirmed in all these studies.

A strong relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment has been established in that employees who are satisfied with the rewards, recognition and opportunities for promotion offered by the employing organisations tend to develop strong bonds with these organisations (Gabrani et al., 2016; Hauff et al., 2015; Satardien et al., 2019). Cherian et al. (2018) found positive and significant relationships between job satisfaction and both affective and normative commitment while Coetzee et al. (2014) report that employees' job satisfaction was significantly and positively related to affective and continuance commitment. The study conducted by Mitonga-Monga et al. (2018) found that satisfaction with supervisor, pay, the work itself, promotion and co-workers significantly influenced affective commitment. In addition, both normative and continuance commitment were also positively influenced by satisfaction with pay, the work itself, promotion and supervisor (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018).

The relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment emerges from employees' experiences at the workplace and the nature of the job (Kola, 2018; Shahjehan et

al., 2019). According to Kola (2018), affective commitment is demonstrated by employees' performance at work and has a positive relationship with intrinsic satisfaction while normative and continuance commitment are positively related to extrinsic satisfaction owing to its development based on external working conditions and the value that the employees place on what the organisation provides (see section 3.2.2.1 of Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation). Employees who are satisfied with their job and the working conditions develop emotional bonds with the organisation (Kola, 2018; Top & Gider, 2013).

Performance management was found to greatly influence job satisfaction with regard to work, supervision, pay, promotion and co-workers (Mphahlele & Dachapalli, 2022). Kampkötter (2017) found that performance assessments have a positive and significant impact on employees' job satisfaction. Dimensions of job satisfaction such as autonomy, appraisals and satisfaction with pay influence organisational commitment (Saridakis et al., 2018). Individuals with higher levels of job satisfaction are more likely to report high levels of organisational commitment (Saridakis et al., 2018).

In this chapter, evidence was provided from extant literature to support the theorised relationships between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (see Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1). It was shown that significant positive relationships exist between perceptions of performance management accuracy and fairness respectively and job satisfaction (Baloyi et al., 2014; De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Naji et al., 2015) (see section 3.2.4). Furthermore, significant positive relationships between performance management system accuracy and fairness respectively and organisational commitment was also reported (Naji et al., 2015; Nasurdin et al., 2018; Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018) (see sections 3.3.4.1 and 3.3.4.2). It was shown, however, that the strength of these relationships may differ for the different dimensions of organisational commitment (Naji et al., 2015; Pieters, 2018; Totawar & Nambudiri, 2014). It is anticipated that the strongest positive relationship will be found between performance management system effectiveness (accuracy and fairness) and affective commitment as work experiences are regarded as significant predictors of employees' affective attachment towards their employing organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991; 1997). Finally, in section 3.4.4.3, a positive significant relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment as found by researchers such as Cherian et al. (2018), Kola (2018), Mitonga-Monga et al. (2018), Saridakis et al. (2018) and Top and Gider (2013) were reported. The literature review therefore lends support to the notion that, while the extent to which employees perceive the performance management system as effective (accurate and fair) predicts their commitment to their employing organisations, the

120

predictive influence of these perceptions is indirect through job satisfaction. Therefore, employees who consider their organisations' performance management systems as accurate and fair, will experience greater job satisfaction and will, in turn, display higher levels of commitment (notably affective commitment) towards these organisations.

3.3.5 Evaluation and synthesis

The success of an organisation depends in part on employees' involvement and commitment to the goals and values of the organisation. Organisational commitment has been shown to have benefits for both the employees and the employers (Wang et al., 2020). It is paramount for an organisation to have employees who are dedicated and support the organisation beyond the call of duty (Blersch et al., 2020; Klein et al., 2014). Employees experience a mixture of different types of commitment, which results in different attitudes and behaviour (Penley & Gould, 1988). Various models have been relied upon to better understand organisational commitment as a multidimensional construct (Meyer & Allen, 1997; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Penley & Gould, 1988). This study relied on Meyer and Allen's (1991; 1997) model of organisational commitment as a multidimensional construct, with different dimensions of commitment developing in different ways and resulting in different behavioural outcomes.

Affective commitment has been reported to have a greater influence on employees' behaviour than any other form of commitment (Blersch et al., 2020). It has been noted that employees who are treated well reciprocate with higher levels of affective commitment (Twumasi & Addo, 2021). These employees display a positive attitude towards the organisation and take part in behaviour that benefits the organisation (Kirsten, 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Affective commitment has been shown to be strongly predicted by experiences in the workplace (Meyer & Allen, 1997). For the organisation to enhance affective commitment they should provide employees with work experiences such as autonomy, fairness in performance rewards, providing challenging jobs, opportunity for promotion and participation in decision-making (Blersch et al., 2020; Georges, 2020). Furthermore, organisations should fulfil basic psychological needs of employees such as recognition, support, belonging, constructive interaction, consideration and clarity on expectations (Blersch et al., 2020).

Employees with higher levels of normative commitment tend to feel a sense of duty towards the organisation to achieve its objectives (Liu et al., 2020). These employees tend to make personal sacrifices for the organisation (Liu et al., 2020). It is therefore desirable for an organisation to have employees who display high levels of affective and normative

commitment owing to its link to positive behaviour. It has, however, been shown that high levels of continuance commitment are not necessarily beneficial to the organisation and may even result in behaviour that is detrimental to the organisation. According to Sheridan et al. (2019), poor performance and negative behaviour destructive to the organisation are often associated with high levels of continuance commitment. This is especially true if high levels of continuance commitment are combined with low levels of affective and normative commitment (Kirsten, 2019).

To enhance affective and normative commitment organisations should provide employees with work that is challenging, work autonomy, training to learn new skills and responsibility to make own decision and be held accountable for their actions (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018). Furthermore, employees should be supported with adequate resources, coaching, role clarity and opportunities for promotion (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Georges, 2020; Park & Kim, 2017; Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018). Employees should be involved in the decision-making process, especially relating to the performance evaluation process, to enhance their level of trust and affective commitment (Meyer et al., 1997). Organisations should allocate performance rewards fairly, provide constructive feedback and opportunities for development and treat their employees fairly (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018; Van der Schyff et al., 2018). Organisations should further establish strategies and structures that promote communication and participation in policy discussions to create a working environment that is condusive to increasing affective commitment (Blersch et al., 2020; Georges, 2020; Lambert et al., 2017; Nkhukhu-Orlando et al., 2019). Organisations should also invest resources in the development of their employees in the form of, for example, on the job training and awarding bursaries, to enhance normative commitment (Georges, 2020; Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2018).

3.4 THEORETICAL INTEGRATION

In the literature review an overview of the three constructs that are of relevance in this study was provided. The constructs performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment were conceptualised and the theories underlying these constructs were explored. The theoretical relationship between them, as reported in extant literature, were investigated. This section reflects back on the aims relating to the literature review that were stated in Chapter 1 (see section 1.3.2.1) and serves as a theoretical integration of what was found in addressing these aims.

3.4.1   Performance management in the South African public sector

Research aim 1: To outline performance management and its implementation in the South African public sector.

The meta-theoretical context of the study, namely, performance management in the South African public sector was outlined in Chapter 2. Performance management in the public sector aims to enhance the achievement of the organisational goals and promote accountability. The performance management system is implemented in line with Chapter 4, Part 5 of the amended Public Service Regulation [PSR], 2016 and other legislation that impact on performance management process in the public service. The process of implementing performance management in the public service, specifically in the DAFF was outlined.

It has been noted that performance agreements are signed and submitted for compliance purposes without being discussed between the supervisor and the employee, therefore, leading to non-alignment of organisational goals and operational plans. Performance standards are not consistent and do not meet the SMART principle, meaning that the performance standards are not specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and are not time bound and there is lack of ownership of and commitment to the system. Feedback is not provided on time, and this delay the identification of performance gaps and interventions to improve performance. Performance assessments are often met with resistance as the review process is frequently used as a punitive measure and not a developmental tool. The system is not applied fairly, consistently and transparently and rewards are awarded to those who do not deserve them. It was shown in Chapter 2 that performance management will only be effective if it is regarded as accurate and fair.

3.4.2   The constructs performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment

Research aim 2: To conceptualise and explain the constructs performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in terms of theoretical models in the literature.

The literature review provided an overview of the constructs pertaining to the study and conceptualised the constructs as they apply to this research. The theories underlying the

constructs were also examined to obtain a clear and comprehensive understanding of each construct.

Performance management system effectiveness as a measure of the success of the system in achieving specific goals were explored in Chapter 2. It was shown that a performance management system will be successful if employees have positive perceptions in terms of its accuracy and fairness (Sharma et al., 2016). Employee perceptions of performance management system effectiveness (PMSE), as a two-dimensional construct consists of performance management system accuracy and performance management system fairness and reflects the extent to which the organisation is perceived as doing the right things and doing things the right way when engaging with their subordinates in terms of the performance management system.

Performance management system accuracy, as a dimension of the employee perception of the (PMSE), consists of the following:

- *Performance planning accuracy* – the extent to which employees perceive that the performance planning ensures that employees performance goals are aligned with the organisational goals through the skills that are relevant.
- *Feedback and coaching accuracy* – the extent to which employees perceive that the performance management feedback and coaching over the year ensures that employees planned and delivered performance are aligned.
- *Performance review accuracy* – the extent to which employees perceive that annual performance review measures the alignment of annual performance with planned performance through the assessment of employees' performance against the planned goals.
- *Outcome accuracy* – the extent to which employees perceive that the performance management outcomes ensures that the performance-based rating, compensation, reward and/or recognition are evidently linked to annual performance reviews (Sharma et al. 2016).

Performance management system fairness as a dimension of performance management system effectiveness (Sharma et al., 2016) is grounded in organisational justice theory. As indicated in section 2.1.2.6, *distributive justice* is concerned with the fairness of the actual outcomes of the performance management process. *Procedural justice* is concerned with the procedure in which pay and rewards outcomes have been allocated to the employees (Barrett-Howard & Tyler, 1986). *Interactional justice* relates to the manner in which communication

124

between the employee and the supervisor was conducted throughout the performance management process and the treatment the employee received, especially during feedback and performance assessments (Carbery & Cross, 2019). *Interactional fairness* in performance management calls for a sense of mutual respect in personal interactions, the allocation of rewards and explanations of the decisions made (Gupta & Kumar, 2012).

In Chapter 3, the focus was on job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Firstly, it was postulated, in section 3.2, that employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of performance management practices may influence their job satisfaction. Job satisfaction may be conceptualised as a multidimensional construct describing an employee's positive emotional response to their job or dimensions thereof based on an assessment of the extent to which it meets their needs (Gabrani et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2016; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). The classic motivational theories were examined as a means to better understand the aspects that may contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction in the workplace. These theories emphasised the importance of need satisfaction and goal setting for enhancing job satisfaction. It was shown that individuals have different needs and that managers or supervisors need to take cognisance of these needs if they want to create an environment that is conducive to higher levels of performance and job satisfaction (Kuvaas et al., 2017).

Specific job characteristics or facets that are widely accepted as contributors to job satisfaction were subsequently explored. These facets, which include pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, the nature of work and communication (Spector, 1997), were shown to be of particular relevance in a performance management context. The literature suggests that a performance management system that recognises and fairly rewards employees' contributions to the achievement of organisational goals, while providing for personal development and career advancement will contribute to employees' job satisfaction. Job satisfaction will further be enhanced if relationships in the workplace are characterised by supervisor and co-worker support, clear communication and operating conditions that are conducive to goal achievement (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Ivancevich et al., 2014; Naji et al., 2015; Sabbagha, 2016).

Organisational commitment was regarded as a second outcome of employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of performance management practices and was explored in section 3.3. Organisational commitment was viewed as a multidimensional construct reflecting the acceptance of the organisational goals, willingness to work hard for the organisation and the desire to stay with the organisation (Mowday et al., 1979; Porter et al., 1974). The integrated

125

approach, which incorporates employees' affective attachment to their employing organisations, the perceived costs of leaving the organisation and their moral obligation to remain in the organisation, was adopted for this study (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Affective commitment has been reported to have a greater influence on employees' behaviour than any other form of commitment (Blersch et al., 2020). Employees with high levels of affective commitment are willing to exert more effort in achieving organisational goals. It has been noted that employees who are treated well reciprocate with higher levels of affective commitment (Twumasi & Addo, 2021). These employees display a positive attitude towards the organisation and engage in behaviour that benefits the organisation (Kirsten, 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Antecedents of affective commitment, which include work experiences, personal characteristics and organisational structure characteristics, determine employees' emotional bonds and obligations towards the employing organisation (Amah & Oyetunde, 2019; Coetzee et al., 2019; Meyer et al., 2002). Affective commitment has been shown to be strongly predicted by employees' experiences in the workplace (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Employees with higher levels of normative commitment tend to feel a sense of duty towards the organisation to achieve its objectives (Liu et al., 2020). These employees tend to make personal sacrifices for the organisation (Liu et al., 2020). The antecedents of normative commitment are socialisation and organisational investments. Employees with higher levels of normative commitment remain in the organisation because they feel obligated to reciprocate by being committed (Georges, 2020).

Continuance commitment relates to employees' desire to remain or retain membership with the employing organisation owing to the awareness of costs associated with leaving or lack of alternative opportunities for employment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). The antecedents of continuance commitment are investments and lack of alternatives. Employees who display high levels of continuance commitment remain in their organisations to protect their investments or owing to the absence or lack of alternative employment opportunities (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Georges, 2020).

3.4.3 The relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment

Research aim 3: To conceptualise the relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in terms of explanatory theoretical models.

> **Research aim 3.1**: To conceptualise the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment from a theoretical perspective.

> **Research aim 3.2**: To conceptualise the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction from a theoretical perspective.

> **Research aim 3.3**: To conceptualise the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment from a theoretical perspective.

The relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in terms of explanatory theoretical models was explored in sections 3.2.4 and 3.4.3.

The relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment were conceptualised from a theoretical perspective and the view that employees' perceptions of the accuracy and fairness of the performance management system will influence organisational commitment was shown to be supported by extant literature. Performance management processes that are perceived by employees as consistent, fair and transparent are likely to increase organisational commitment (De Clercq et al., 2019; Govender et al., 2015; Pieters, 2018). Likewise, employees who are involved in the setting of performance goals and standards and are held accountable for achieving the set goals are likely to experience higher levels of organisational commitment (Nasurdin et al., 2018; Rachmaliya, 2017; Tay et al., 2016). Furthermore, continuous constructive performance feedback, identification of skills gaps, communication and support from the supervisor are expected to increase the level of employees' commitment (Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018; Tay et al., 2016). Employees who are recognised and treated with respect and who are offered an opportunity to participate in decision-making during the performance management process also tend to display higher levels of commitment (Özpehlivan & Acar, 2015; Pieters, 2018).

The relationship between performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction was conceptualised from a theoretical perspective and performance was seen as preceding job satisfaction (Vroom, 1964) and, as such, performance and the effective management thereof were regarded as essential contributors to job satisfaction and organisational success (Bayarçelik & Findikli, 2016; De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018). It was shown that employees who perceive the organisation's performance management system as accurate and fair would demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction. The reported relationships between performance management system accuracy and fairness, as two dimensions of the perceptions of performance management effectiveness construct, and job satisfaction were explored, and extant literature supports the view that employees' perceptions of the accuracy and fairness of a performance management system will influence their job satisfaction. This implies that employees will experience greater levels of job satisfaction if they are involved in setting meaningful performance goals, are held accountable for the achievement of these goals and value the rewards associated with goal achievement.

Finally, the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment was conceptualised from a theoretical perspective. The positive relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment is well established in organisational behaviour literature (Bakhshi et al., 2009; Cherian et al., 2018; Kola, 2018; Srivastava, 2013) Factors such as working conditions, supervision, co-workers, rewards, pay, promotions, nature of work, communication and participation in decision-making were shown to affect job satisfaction which, in turn, lead to an increase in organisational commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Naderi, 2012; Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018; Top & Gider, 2013). A strong relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment has been established in that employees who are satisfied with the rewards, recognition and opportunities for promotion offered by the employing organisations tend to develop strong bonds with these organisations (Gabrani et al., 2016; Hauff et al., 2015; Satardien et al., 2019). The relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment emerges from employees' experiences at the workplace and the nature of the job (Kola, 2018; Shahjehan et al., 2019).

These reported relationships are reflected in Figure 3.2, which serves as a conceptual framework for the study.

Figure 3.2

Theoretical Integration of Performance Management System Effectiveness, Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment
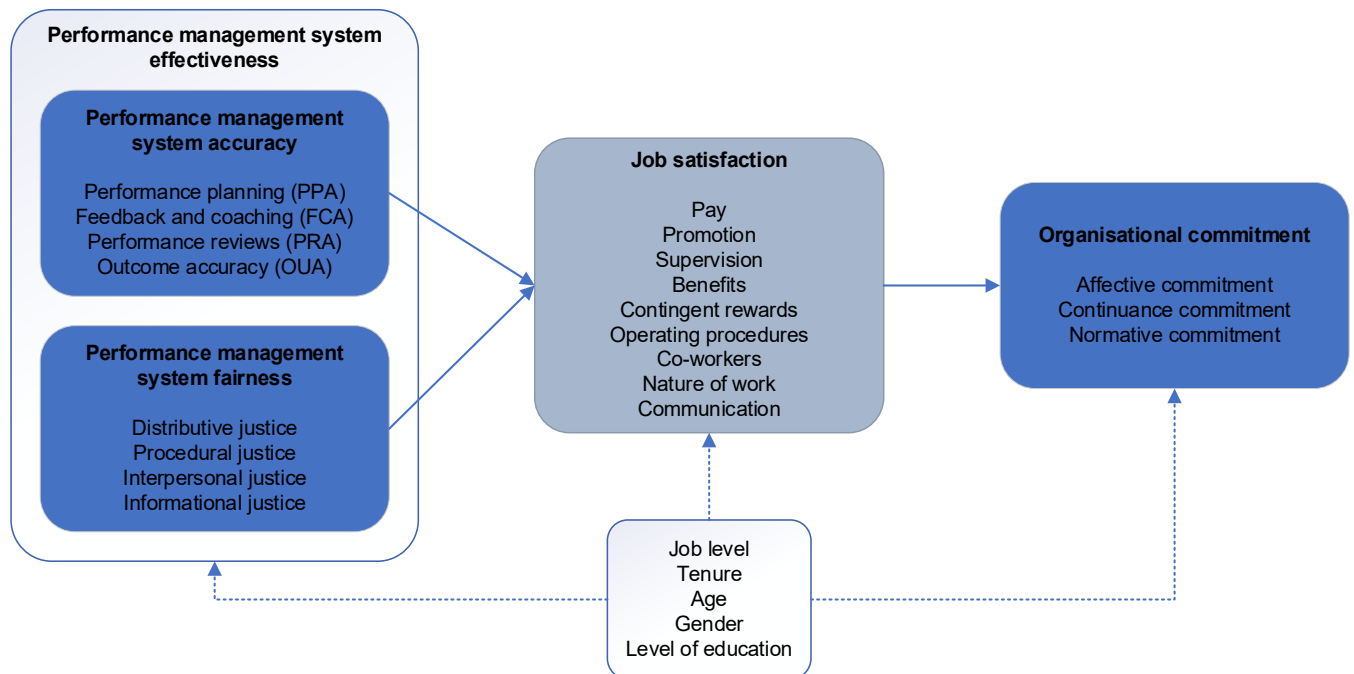
Note. Researcher's own compilation.

The relationship between performance management system effectiveness (accuracy and fairness) and organisational commitment is supported in extant literature. The involvement of employees in performance planning creates ownership and accountability, which contributes to greater acceptance of the system as accurate and enhances employee commitment to the organisation (Nasurdin et al., 2018; Rachmaliya, 2017; Tay et al., 2016). Continuous constructive feedback has been shown to have a positive effect on employee performance and strengthens their commitment to the employing organisation (Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018). Performance reviews that are aligned with set goals and standards have been shown to enhance employee commitment (Nasurdin et al., 2018). Employees who are provided with accurate performance reviews are more likely to accept the performance management system as effective and commit to the employing organisation (Modipane et al., 2019; Nasurdin et al., 2018).

Perceptions of procedural justice have been shown to affect employees' organisational commitment (Safdar & Liu, 2019). Employees who feel that they have been rewarded fairly for the work performed tend to be more committed (Badawy & El-Fekey, 2017). A performance appraisal system that is perceived as equitable will enhance employees' commitment to the

129

organisation (Naji et al., 2015). When employees are involved in the performance assessment process and clear and proper communication protocols between the subordinate and the supervisors exist, this promotes accountability, reduces conflict and enhances commitment (Malik & Chishti, 2018; Naji et al., 2015). Employees who are allowed to participate in decision-making during the performance management process and are provided with reasons for decisions and the distribution of outcomes tend to accept the process and demonstrate higher levels of commitment to the employing organisation (Özpehlivan & Acar, 2015; Pieters, 2018).

Positive relationships between performance management system accuracy and fairness respectively and organisational commitment was reported (Naji et al., 2015; Nasurdin et al., 2018; Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018) (see sections 3.3.4.1 and 3.3.4.2). It was shown, however, the strength of the relationships may differ for the different dimensions of organisational commitment (Naji et al., 2015; Pieters, 2018; Totawar & Nambudiri, 2014). The strongest positive relationship was reported to be between performance management system effectiveness (accuracy and fairness) and affective commitment as work experiences have been shown to be significant predictors of employees' affective attachment towards their employing organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991; 1997).

Positive relationships between perceptions of performance management accuracy and fairness respectively and job satisfaction were also shown to exist (Baloyi et al., 2014; De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Naji et al., 2015). A positive relationship between employee performance and job satisfaction through the involvement of employees in performance management practices was reported (Khan et al., 2016). Furthermore, Kampkötter (2017) asserts that performance appraisals have a significant and positive relationship with employees' job satisfaction, especially when the monetary outcomes are linked to the performance appraisal. Procedural justice has been linked to job satisfaction owing to employees' reactions to the fairness and transparency of performance evaluations (Govender et al. 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016).

Researchers such as Nalla et al. (2020), Saridakis et al. (2018) and Top and Gider (2013) found a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment. However, it is expected that the relationships for the three dimensions of organisational commitment will differ. A strong relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment has been established in that employees who are satisfied with the rewards, recognition and opportunities for promotion offered by the employing organisations tend to develop strong bonds with these organisations (Gabrani et al., 2016; Hauff et al., 2015;

130

Satardien et al., 2019). Meyer et al. (2002) found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment. Cherian et al. (2018) found positive and significant relationships between job satisfaction and both affective and normative commitment. Coetzee et al. (2014) report that employees' job satisfaction was significantly and positively related to affective and continuance commitment.

Based on the positive relationships reported earlier, it is anticipated that the extent to which employees perceive the performance management system as effective (accurate and fair) predicts their commitment to the employing organisation, but that the predictive influence of these perceptions is indirect through job satisfaction. This supports the notion that the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment is mediated by job satisfaction and not direct.

3.4.4 The influence of personal and job-related characteristics on performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment

Research aim 4: To conceptualise the influence of personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics on performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

The literature review also suggests that there may be differences that exist in perceived performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment levels based on specific personal and job-related characteristics. In terms of performance management system effectiveness, no significant differences in terms of perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system were found between males and females (Makhubela et al., 2016; Modipane et al., 2019). In addition, Lin and Kellough (2019) report that younger female employees tend to receive lower performance ratings compared to their male counterparts. Reports on the differences between age groups were contradicting and relate mainly to perceptions of fairness. Makhubela et al. (2016) and Modipane et al. (2019) found no significant differences between age groups. Kim and Holzer (2016) report a positive relationship between age and distributive justice perceptions, suggesting that older employees are more likely to regard the outcomes of performance appraisals as fair. Significant statistical differences between employees at different job levels were reported in terms of the perceived effectiveness of the performance management system (Modipane et al., 2019). Supervisors tend to regard performance outcomes as fair (Kim &

Holtzer, 2016) while subordinates often question the fairness of both the procedure followed and the outcomes of the performance management system (Modipane et al., 2019).

In terms of the job satisfaction, reports on gender differences were inconsistent owing to different needs held by male and female employees (Van der Schyff et al., 2018). The results from the study conducted by Djordjević et al. (2017) showed that male employees' levels of job satisfaction were mainly determined by the nature of their work while female employees based their satisfaction on pay, promotion, operating procedures, rewards and co-worker relationships. Yucel and Bektas (2012) report that older employees are more likely to report high levels of job satisfaction than younger employees. Djordjević et al. (2017) support the findings that employees from the ages of 41 to 50 showed higher levels of job satisfaction. Similarly, employees who occupy senior positions, and those with higher levels of education tend to experience high levels of job satisfaction (Sabbagha, 2016). However, the results on tenure were inconsistent owing to employees' different perceptions about their working environment (Baek et al., 2019; Dobrow Riza et al., 2018). Employees with more work experience tend to experience increased job satisfaction (Dobrow Riza et al., 2018). However, contradictory results have also been reported and Baek et al. (2019) argue that job satisfaction weakened as tenure increased, especially among employees with tenure of 20 years and more.

Literature on organisational commitment and gender differences were inconsistent in terms of the levels of organisational commitment. While researchers such as Ferreira and Coetzee (2010), João and Coetzee (2011) and Pikanegore (2021) observed no significant differences between gender groups, other researchers such as Affum-Osei et al. (2015) reported significant differences and found males to be significantly more committed than females. However, Jabaar (2017) and Siciliano and Thompson (2018) report that female employees show more dedication and commitment to their employing organisations and ascribed the difference in male and female commitment to the value that female employees place on stability and security in the workplace. Literature on age and organisational commitment has also been inconclusive, as some researchers, such as Stankevičiūtė and Staniškienė (2018) found no statistically significant differences between employees in different age categories in terms of organisational commitment. However, Gani (2017) reported that employees develop a greater sense of commitment to their employing organisations as they age. It was shown that, employees in more senior positions are more committed than employees at lower levels organisations (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013). Tlaiss (2013) posits that the commitment may be ascribed to the fact that employees in senior positions are

involved in organisational decision-making and the implementation of these decisions while employees at lower levels are not. Affum-Osei et al. (2015) and Bakotić (2022) report that employees who are highly educated tend to be less committed to their employing organisations owing to other employment opportunities that they may have. In addition, longer tenured employees tend to develop greater loyalty to the organisation and therefore display higher levels of affective commitment (Kim, 2018). However, Wang et al. (2020) argue that affective commitment decreases as employees' length of service increases in an organisation.

In summary, the influence of personal and job-related characteristics of performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment were taken into consideration. There were no significant differences found on gender in relation with performance management system effectiveness. However, the results for job satisfaction and organisational commitment were inconsistent. Older employees are likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction and regard performance management system outcomes as fair, while there are no statistical differences with organisational commitment. The level of education has been reported to have an influence on performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Tenure had an influence on performance management system effectiveness but the results for job satisfaction and organisational commitment were inconsistent.

Table 3.2

Summary of the Influence of Person-Centred Variables on PMSE, Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment

Influencing variables	Performance Management System Effectiveness	Job satisfaction	Organisational commitment
Gender	• No significant differences between males and females were found terms of perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system (Makhubela et al., 2016; Modipane et al., 2019). • Younger females tend to receive lower performance ratings compared to their male counterparts (Lin & Kellough, 2019).	• Reports on gender were inconsistent due to different needs held by male and female employees (Van der Schyff et al., 2018). • Women place more value on the intrinsic attributes of the job. • Men value the extrinsic attributes of the job (Suki & Suki, 2011; Van der Schyff et al, 2018).	• Males were found to be significantly more committed than females (Affum-Osei et al., 2015). • Females show more dedication and commitment to their employing organisations (Jabaar, 2017; Siciliano & Thompson, 2018).
Age	• Differences between age groups were contradicting and relate mainly to perceptions of fairness (Makhubela et al., 2016; Modipane et al., 2019). • Older employees are likely to regard the outcomes of performance appraisals as fair (Kim & Holzer, 2016).	• Older employees are more likely to report high levels of job satisfaction than younger employees (Yucel & Bektas, 2012).	• Stankevičiūtė and Staniškienė (2018), found no statistically significant differences between employees in different age categories in terms of organisational commitment. • Gani (2017) reported that employees develop a greater sense of commitment to their employing organisations as they age.
Job level	• A significant statistical difference between employees at different job levels were reported in terms of the perceived effectiveness of the	• Employees who occupy senior positions tend to experience high levels of satisfaction (Sabbagha, 2016).	• Employees in more senior positions tend to be more committed (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013).

134

Influencing variables	Performance Management System Effectiveness	Job satisfaction	Organisational commitment
	performance management system (Modipane et al., 2019). • Employees at supervisory levels tend to regard the system as fair (Kim & Holtzer, 2016). • Subordinates often question the fairness of the procedure followed and the outcomes (Modipane et al., 2019).		
Level of Education	• Employees with high level of education are to perceive the performance management system as effective (Kim & Holzer, 2016).	• Employees with higher levels of education tends to report higher levels of job satisfaction (Sabbagha, 2016).	• Highly educated employees tend to be highly committed towards their profession (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013).
Tenure	• Tenure influence employees' acceptance of the performance management system positively (Kim & Holzer, 2016).	• The results on tenure were inconsistent, due to employees' different perceptions about their working environment (Baek et al., 2019; Dobrow Riza et al., 2018). • Baek et al. (2019) reported that job satisfaction weakened as tenure increased, especially among employees with tenure of 20 years and more.	• Longer tenured employees tend to develop greater loyalty to the organisation and display higher levels of affective commitment (Kim, 2018). • Wang et al. (2020) argue that affective commitment decreases as employees' length of service increases in an organisation.

Note. Researcher's own summary of the influence of the person-centred variables on performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

135

3.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS

The literature review has shown that performance management is a critical human resource processes and that it should not be ignored as effective performance management contributes to goal achievement and organisational effectiveness (Rao, 2016). It is imperative for the organisation to design a performance management system that is accepted by employees as effective to ensure that its success is not compromised (Naji et al., 2015). Performance management that is effective enables the organisation to optimally engage with employees (Armstrong, 2018; Wang et al., 2020).

Performance planning serves as the foundation and the initial step for an effective performance management process. Therefore, organisations should ensure that the supervisors and the subordinates jointly set goals and performance standards and ensure that they are aligned with the goals of the organisation (Armstrong, 2018; Bussin, 2017; Mone & London, 2018). To enhance performance management system effectiveness, employees should be involved in the performance planning to take accountability and ownership for achieving the set goals (Nasurdin et al., 2018; Rachmaliya, 2017; Tay et al., 2016). Goals and performance standards should be discussed and revised with the subordinate where necessary (Modipane et al., 2019; Naji et al., 2015; Paposa & Kumar, 2015). Supervisors should provide employees with continuous feedback on their performance in relation to the set goals (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Rachmaliya, 2017; Tay et al., 2016).

Constructive feedback aligned with planned performance allow the subordinate to grow and succeed (Lapointe & Vandenberghe., 2015). Organisations should ensure that supervisors continuously monitor employees' performance and provide constructive feedback (Kampkötter, 2017; Stankevičiūtė & Staniškienė, 2018; Tay et al., 2016). Furthermore, supervisors should be transparent with performance feedback to avoid negative perceptions about the performance management system (Kampkötter, 2017; Naji et al., 2015).

Performance reviews can be utilised to improve employees' trust in the system, resulting in higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment (Armstrong, 2018; Naji et al., 2015). Organisations should ensure that performance reviews are aligned with set goals and standards (Nasurdin et al., 2018). More importantly, employees should be provided with clear and accurate reviews of their performance to regard the performance management system as accurate (Armstrong, 2018; Modipane et al., 2019; Nasurdin et al., 2018). Therefore, effective

136

communication by supervisors during performance reviews may enhance employee trust in the organisation and its leaders (Modipane et al., 2019; Naji et al., 2015; Nasurdin et al., 2018).

Organisations should ensure that performance outcomes and rewards are aligned for the system to be perceived as accurate (Lawler, 2003; Mone & London, 2018). Supervisors should ensure that performance goals are achievable and that employees value the rewards associated with goals to be achieved (Mone & London, 2018). If employees perceive that the outcomes of the performance assessment are accurate, they are more likely to accept the results (Gorman et al., 2017; Sharma et al., 2016).

When employees join organisations and enter into performance agreements, they express an inherent commitment towards the organisation, which they expect to be reciprocated by fair performance management practices (Totawar & Nambudiri, 2014). Employees who experience organisational practices (such as performance management) as fair are often more satisfied with their job and their employing organisations and also display higher levels of organisational commitment (Badawy & El-Fekey, 2017; Naji et al., 2015; Pieters, 2018). Organisations should invest time and effort in clearly communicating not only the outcomes of decisions but also the procedures used to assist employees in understanding how the outcomes were reached (Kim & Holzer, 2016; Badawy & Fathy El-Fekey, 2017; Pieters, 2018).

Organisations should ensure that the performance management procedures are transparent and consistent (Cropanzano et al., 2002; Govender et al., 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016). Organisations should further ensure that managers are not biased when implementing policies and providing feedback and that employees are provided with an opportunity to present their views during the process (Cropanzano et al., 2002; Govender et al., 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016).

Employees who perceive that the distribution of rewards are fair are more likely to be satisfied and this will enhance their commitment towards the organisation (Bayarçelik & Findikli, 2016; Pieters, 2018). As a result, it is important for the organisation to allocate resources equally and reward them fairly for the work performed (De Clercq et al., 2019; Govender et al., 2015). Accordingly, organisations should make fair decisions in terms of the distribution of outcomes. Managers and supervisors should ensure that performance appraisal ratings are fair owing to their significant relationship with monetary outcomes (Harrington & Lee, 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016).

Managers and supervisors should treat their employees with respect and dignity (Govender et al., 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Pieters, 2018). Organisations should provide developmental opportunities for their employees to enhance employees' satisfaction and commitment (Naji et al., 2015; Totawar & Nambudiri, 2014). Employees should be involved in the performance assessment process with clear and proper communication protocols between the subordinate and the supervisors to promote employee accountability and to reduce conflict (Malik & Chishti, 2018; Naji et al., 2015). Employees should be allowed to participate in decision-making during the performance management process with clear and proper communication protocols in place during assessment and feedback sessions (Özpehlivan & Acar, 2015; Pieters, 2018). Organisations should ensure that all the relevant information relied upon for decision-making during an employee's appraisal should be made available (Shrivastava & Purang, 2011).

In conclusion, performance management processes that are perceived by employees as accurate and fair will increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Employees who are involved in the setting of performance goals and standards and are held accountable for achieving the set goals are likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Continuous constructive performance feedback and support from the supervisor are expected to increase the level of employees' job satisfaction and commitment to organisation. In addition, feedback that identifies skills gaps enhances communication between the supervisor and the employee, therefore, increasing employees' levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Consequently, employees who are recognised and treated with respect and who are offered an opportunity to participate in decision-making during the performance management process will display higher levels job satisfaction and commitment to the employing organisation.

3.6   CONCLUSION

In Chapter 3 the outcomes of employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management practices were discussed, followed by the conceptualisation of job satisfaction as specific attitudinal outcomes of employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system. The motivational theories underlying job satisfaction were explored together with the antecedents of job satisfaction. The factors that influenced job satisfaction and the extent to which individual personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related and tenure) characteristics might influence employees' satisfaction were discussed together with the relationship between job satisfaction and employees' perceptions

of the effectiveness of the performance management practices. Furthermore, organisational commitment as an attitudinal outcome of employees' perceptions of the performance management system was investigated. Organisational commitment as a specific organisationally directed attitudinal outcome of employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system was discussed. Theoretical models underlying organisational commitment were explored together with the antecedents to organisational commitment. The extent to which employees' personal and work-related characteristics may influence organisational commitment was discussed. The relationship between organisational commitment and the two theorised antecedents, namely, performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction were also investigated. The chapter concludes with the theoretical integration of the constructs performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in literature and the implications for performance management system effectiveness.

Chapter 4 outlines the approach followed in the empirical study as well as the statistical strategies used to investigate the relationship between employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management practices, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a public service organisation in South Africa.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The empirical investigation undertaken in this study is discussed in this chapter with the aim of describing the research design strategies that were employed to investigate the relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. As point of departure, the research approach is described. This is followed by an outline of the study population and sample. The measuring instruments selected are described and justification for selecting each instrument is provided. The data collection method and the means that were used to process and analyse the data are discussed and, finally, the research hypotheses are stated.

The phases of the empirical research entailed the nine steps, as outlined next:

Step 1: Determination and description of the population and sample
Step 2: Description of the measuring instruments
Step 3: Ethical considerations and administration of the measuring instruments
Step 4: Data capturing
Step 5: Formulation of the research hypotheses
Step 6: Statistical processing of data
Step 7: Reporting the results
Step 8: Interpretation and integration of the research findings
Step 9: Formulation of conclusions, limitations and recommendations

In this chapter, steps 1 to 6 are described while step 7 is addressed in Chapter 5 and steps 8 and 9 are covered in Chapter 6.

4.1   RESEARCH APPROACH

4.1.1   Deductive research approach

A deductive research approach was used in this study. This approach is quantitative in nature and explains behaviour and processes moving from theory to hypotheses (Hilton et. al., 2020). The researcher critically analysed the relevant literature (Creswell, 2020), operationalised the constructs to be measured and followed the principle of reductionism to better understand the problems identified (Saunders et al., 2019). By following a deductive research approach, the researcher was able to make various propositions emanating from the literature review. These

propositions were stated in a range of hypotheses (see section 4.5) that were subjected to empirical tests to determine whether they could be supported or not (Zikmund et al., 2019).

4.1.2 Cross-sectional quantitative research

This study used a cross-sectional quantitative research design to support the deductive research approach. The researcher used a web-based questionnaire to collect original data from the respondents at a single moment in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The advantages of a cross-sectional survey are that data can be collected from respondents in large numbers in a short space of time (Johnson & Christenses, 2020) and the costs are limited (Hilton et. al., 2020). However, there are also disadvantages to cross-sectional designs. For instance, the collection of data at a single point in time creates a challenge in measuring changes that occur over time (Johnson & Christenses, 2020; (Hilton et. al., 2020). Cross-sectional designs also do not lend themselves to making causal inferences from the data (Cohen et al., 2018). The cross-sectional research design was, however, deemed suitable for the study as the aim was not to determine cause and effect but to explain the relationship between the constructs under study (Saunders et al., 2019). The research was aimed at exploring the nature, direction and magnitude of the relationships between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

4.1.3 Units of observation and analysis

The unit of observation in this study, was individual employees of DAFF and the focus was on their perceptions and attitudes relating to the performance management system, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, as well as selected personal and job-related characteristics. The unit of analysis included both individual employees and groups (Hilton et. al., 2020). Individual responses to scale items were used to determine construct-data and to establish the direction and magnitude of the relationships between the variables of this study (Creswell, 2020). At a group level of analysis, differences between the sub-groups, based on person-centred characteristics such as age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education, were investigated in this study.

141

4.2 DETERMINATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION AND THE SAMPLE

A population relates to an entity or a total group of people from which the required information is drawn (Blaikie & Priest, 2019). Blaikie and Priest (2019) define a population as "an aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of criteria" (p. 166). In the current study, the population includes public service employees in South Africa. The functional population was limited to full-time employees of DAFF.

A sample is drawn from the population and therefore entails the portion of the population from which data are obtained. The sample should be representative of the population to enable the researcher to answer the research questions and accurately generalise the results to the entire population (Blaikie & Priest, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The researcher's intention is that data obtained from this portion of the population should eventually represent the views of the whole population (Zikmund et al., 2019).

Various sampling methods exist and can be categorised into probability and non-probability sampling methods (Blaikie, & Priest, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A non-probability sample does not provide everyone in the population a chance to be included (Blaikie & Priest, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Examples of non-probability sampling are convenience sampling, quota sampling, snowball sampling and purposive sampling (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). In probability sampling, everyone in the population has an opportunity to be included or selected (Blaikie & Priest, 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Examples of probability sampling are simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, proportional stratified sampling, cluster sampling and systematic sampling (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019).

As it was not possible to include all public service employees in the sample, a purposive sampling strategy was used. With purposive sampling, judgement is used to select cases that will enable the researcher to best answer the research questions (Saunders et al., 2019). It also allows the researcher to specify the characteristics of the population of interest and the criteria that potential respondents should meet (Johnson & Christenses, 2020). In this study, it was decided to limit participation to full-time employees of a specific public service department, namely DAFF, which served as the context for the research. This enabled the researcher to address the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 (section 1.2). The aim of this research study was not to generalise the findings to the broader (public service)

population, but rather to obtain a deeper understanding of the relationship between the identified variables (performance management effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment) as perceived by employees of DAFF, a nonprobability sampling method was deemed appropriate.

An invitation to complete the questionnaire was sent to 3 514 full-time employees of DAFF. A total of 304 questionnaires that were fully completed were received. This amounts to 8.7% response rate. While this response rate is relatively low, this was not unexpected, given the reported downward trend in individuals' willingness to respond to surveys (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). Despite the low response rate, respondents were broadly representative of the functional population in terms of employees' personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics.

4.2.1 Composition of the age groups in the sample

In this section information on the age distribution of the sample is provided.

Table 4.1

Age Distribution of the Sample

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Millennials (25-40 years)	127	41.8	41.8	41.8
Generation X (41-55 years)	150	49.3	49.3	91.1
Baby Boomers (56-64 years)	27	8.9	8.9	100.0
Total	304	100.0	100.0	

Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

Table 4.1 indicates the age distribution of respondents. Participants were grouped into different generational groups in terms of Millennials, Generational X and Baby Boomers based on literature (Colquitt et al., 2017; Kola, 2018; Pikanegore, 2021). The largest group of respondents were aged 41 to 55 years (Generation X) (49.3%), followed by those aged 25 to 40 years (millennials) (41.8%). Respondents aged 56 to 64 years (Baby Boomers) comprised only 8.9% of the sample (n = 304). This compared relatively well with the age distribution of the population (i.e., full-time employees of DAFF) as obtained from the gatekeeper to identify the sample which comprised of 1 220 Generation X employees (35%), 1 477 millennials (42%)

143

and 817 Baby Boomers (23%). The sample was slightly skewed towards the younger generations with fewer employees aged 56 to 64 years participating in the study. The age distribution of the sample is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

Age Distribution of the Sample
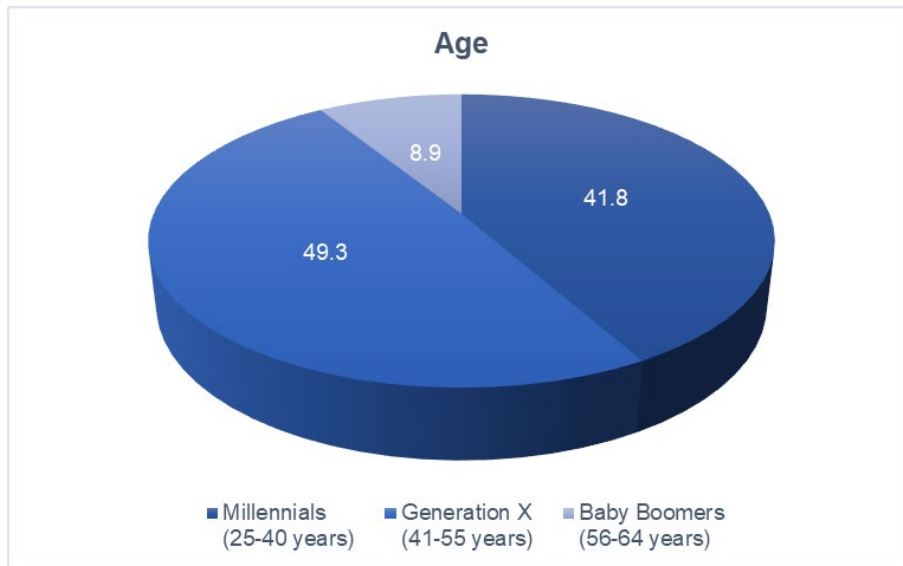
Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

4.2.2   Composition of the gender groups in the sample

In this section, information on the gender distribution of the sample is provided.

Table 4.2

Gender Distribution of the Sample

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	176	57.9	57.9	57.9
Male	124	40.8	40.8	98.7
I prefer not to disclose	4	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	304	100.0	100.0	

Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

Table 4.2 indicates that the gender distribution of respondence comprised 176 (57.9%) females and 124 (40.8%) males while four (1.3%) of respondents did not disclose their gender (n = 304). This distribution is somewhat skewed towards female respondents if compared to

the gender distribution of the population, which consists of 1 782 females (57.9%) and 1 732 are males (40.8%).

Figure 4.2

Gender Distribution of the Sample
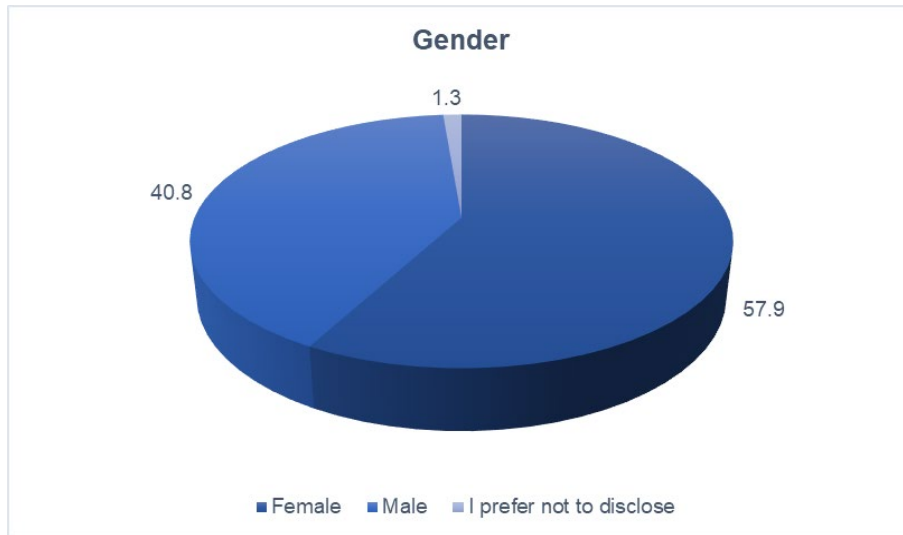
Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

4.2.3   Composition of job levels groups in the sample

In this section, information on the sample in terms of its distribution across job levels is provided. In DAFF, the Equate Job Evaluation System is utilised for job evaluation and grading to determine the level of the job. Job levels 2 to 8 represent entry-level employees, while job levels 9 to 10 represent supervisory levels (assistant managers) and job levels 11 to 14 represent management levels (managers and higher).

Table 4.3

Job Levels Distribution of the Sample

Job Levels	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Levels 2−8	129	42.4	42.4	42.4
Levels 9 & 10	90	29.6	29.6	72.0
Levels 11−14	85	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total	304	100.0	100.0	

Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

Table 4.3 indicates that the majority of respondents were employed on job levels 2 to 8 (42.4%) while the remaining respondents were employed at supervisory levels 9 to10 (29.6%) and

145

management levels 11 to 14 (28.0%). However, the sample does not reflect the distribution of the population in terms of job levels as 2 415 full-time employees of DAFF (69%) are appointed on job levels 2 to 8, while 617 employees are appointed on job levels 9 to 10 (18%) and 482 employees are appointed on job levels 11 to 14 (14%). While employees on levels 2 to 8 comprised the majority of the respondents, it is not a true reflection of the population as a larger portion of the full-time employees in the organisation fall within this category, but the results remain valid. The distribution of the sample in terms of job levels is illustrated in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3

Job Levels Distribution of the Sample
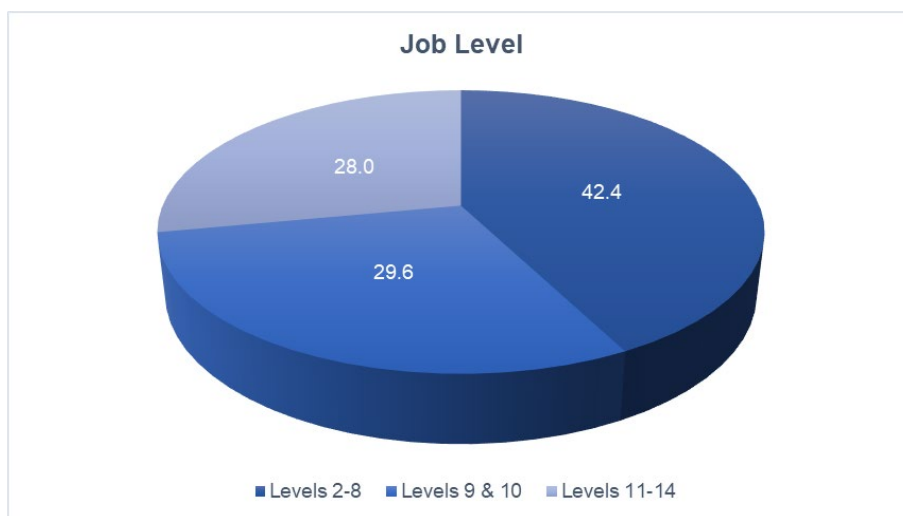
Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

Respondents that fall within job levels 2 to 8 include clerks/chief clerks, technicians, administrative officers, personal assistants, foresters, senior administration officers, inspectors et cetera. Job levels 9 and 10 include respondents that are, for instance, assistant directors, auditors, senior economists and IT specialists while respondents who fall within job levels 11 to 14 include deputy directors, estate managers, state veterinarians, dock masters, statisticians, directors and chief directors.

4.2.4   Composition of tenure groups in the sample

In this section, information on the distribution of the sample in terms of tenure with DAFF is provided.

Table 4.4

Tenure Distribution of the Sample

Tenure	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 5 years	32	10.5	10.5	10.5
More than 5 but less than 10 years	72	23.7	23.7	34.2
More than 10 but less than 15 years	94	30.9	30.9	65.1
More than 15 but less than 20 years	40	13.2	13.2	78.3
More than 20 years	66	21.7	21.7	100.0
Total	304	100.0	100.0	

Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

Table 4.4 indicates that only a small percentage of respondents have been employed by DAFF for less than five years (10.5%). The majority of employees worked for DAFF for 5 to 15 years (54.6%). A large group of respondents worked for DAFF for more than 20 years (21.7%), with a smaller group having been employed in DAFF for between 15 and 20 years (13.2%). The distribution of the sample in terms of tenure with DAFF is illustrated in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4

Tenure Distribution of the Sample
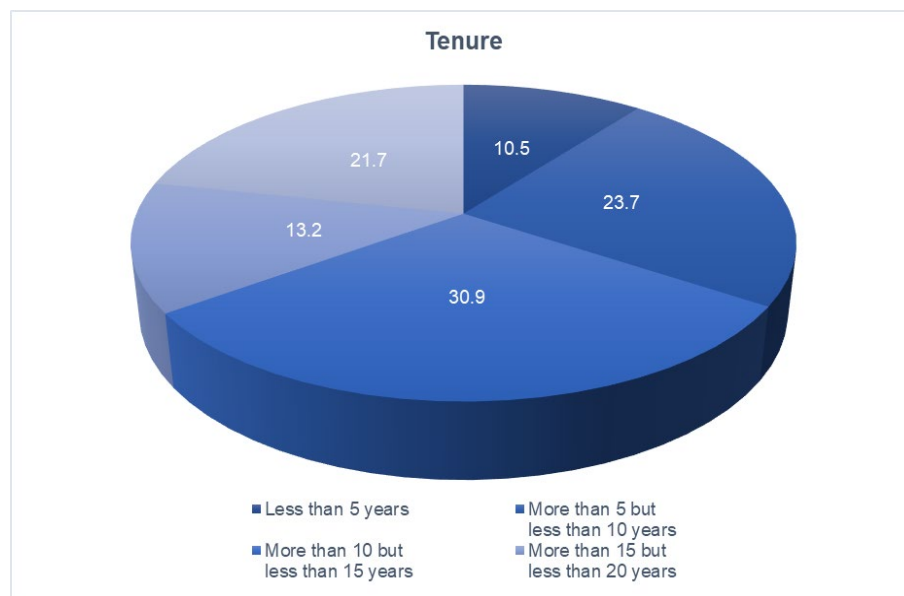
Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

4.2.5 Composition of education level groups in the sample

In this section, information on the distribution of the sample in terms of respondents' highest level of education is provided.

Table 4.5

Highest Level of Education Distribution of the Sample

Level of education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
NQF 4 and lower	31	10.2	10.2	10.2
NQF 5 - 7	109	35.9	35.9	46.1
NQF 8	87	28.6	28.6	74.7
NQF 9 & 10	77	25.3	25.3	100.0
Total	304	100.0	100.0	

Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

Table 4.5 indicates that the sample predominantly comprised respondents with higher certificates and first degrees. Respondents in possession of NQF level 5 to 7 qualifications comprised 35.9% of the sample while those with NQF level 8 qualifications comprised 28.6% and respondents in possession of NQF levels 9 and 10 qualifications comprised 25.3%. Respondents with qualifications at NQF level 4 and lower comprised a small portion 10.2% of the sample as compared to 89.8% of the sample with higher certificates or degrees. The relatively large number of respondents with master's and doctoral degrees 25.3% may be ascribed to the employment of veterinary scientists by DAFF. The department regulates and funds compulsory community service for qualified veterinary doctors in South Africa and a doctoral degree is a minimum requirement for the job. The distribution of respondents in terms of their highest level of education is illustrated in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5

Level of Education Distribution of the Sample
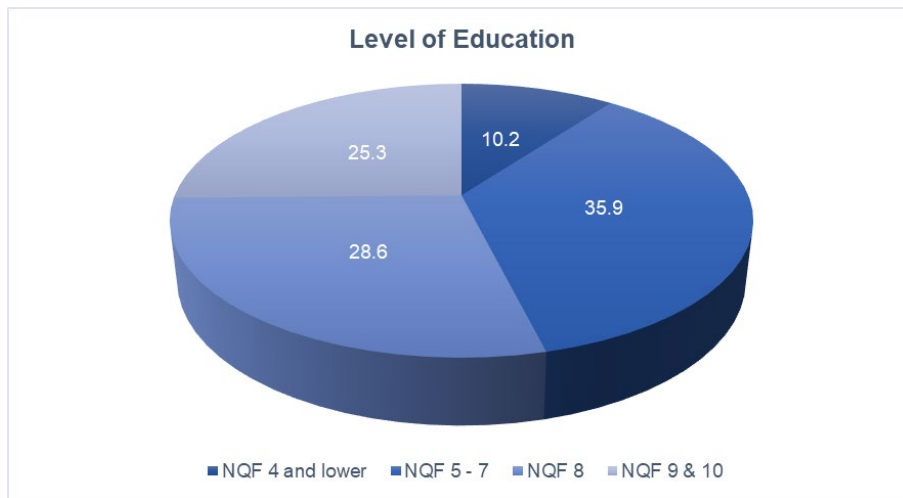
Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

4.2.6   Summary of the biographical sample

In summary, the distribution of the sample in terms of personal and job-related characteristics suggests that the core characteristics that are displayed in the sample are the following: The majority of the respondents were females between the ages of 41 and 55 (Generation X). They have tertiary qualifications ranging from diplomas and Advanced Certificates (NQF level 6) to Masters' and Doctoral degrees (NQF levels 9 and 10), have been with DAFF for more than five years and are employed at supervisory and managerial levels in the department.

4.3   CHOOSING AND JUSTIFYING THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

The literature study guided the selection of the measuring instruments for this study. The following instruments were chosen and utilised:

- a biographical questionnaire to gather data on age, gender, job category, tenure and level of education.
- the Performance Management System (PMS) accuracy scale, developed by Sharma et al. (2016).
- the Organisational Justice Scale (OJC), developed by Colquitt (2001).
- the Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS), developed by Spector (1985).
- the Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS), developed by Meyer and Allen (1997).

4.3.1 The biographical questionnaire

The biographical questionnaire designed by the researcher was utilised to gather information on the personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics of the sample. The data obtained from the biographical questionnaire enabled the researcher to describe the sample in terms of the main characteristics of respondents and to determine whether group differences in levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment exist based on these characteristics.

4.3.2 The Performance Management System (PMS) accuracy scale

This section focuses on the development of and rationale for the Performance Management System (PMS) accuracy scale (Sharma et al, 2016). The composition of the scale, its administration and interpretation and the reported validity and reliability thereof are outlined.

4.3.2.1 Development of the PMS accuracy scale

The PMS accuracy scale was developed by Sharma et al. (2016) to address the concerns relating to the effectiveness of performance management systems. Furthermore, the authors (Sharma et al., 2016) conceptualised the construct performance management system effectiveness (consisting of PMS accuracy and fairness) and wanted to explore the operationalisation thereof. They recommended that the scale could be used to assist organisations to identify and improve weaknesses in their existing performance management systems (Sharma et al., 2016). The scale was also developed to assess the extent to which employees perceive that the PMS provides basis for financial or non-financial recognition for positive employee outcomes (Sharma et al., 2016).

4.3.2.2 Description of the PMS accuracy scale

The PMS accuracy scale is a self-rated questionnaire that consists of 12 items that represent four subscales (three items each), namely, performance planning accuracy; feedback and coaching accuracy; performance review accuracy; and outcomes accuracy. The description of the four subscales is detailed next:

- The performance planning accuracy (PPA) subscale measures the extent to which the employee perceives that the performance planning phase of the PMS ensures alignment between employees' performance goals and organisational goals (Sharma et al., 2016). The PPA subscale consists of three items, for example "*The performance plan based on the performance management system gives a clear idea of what is expected of me to meet organisational goals*" and "*My manager and I update my goals as business/organisational goals change*" (Sharma et al., 2016).

- The feedback and coaching accuracy (FCA) subscale measures the degree to which an employee perceives that the feedback and coaching phase of the PMS facilitates alignment between planned and delivered employee performance through regular coaching and feedback (Sharma et al., 2016). The FCA subscale consists of three items, for example, "*The ongoing feedback during the performance cycle gives an accurate evaluation of how I am performing against planned performance*" and "*During the year my areas for improvement are clearly pointed out to me*" (Sharma et al., 2016).

- The performance review accuracy (PRA) subscale measures the degree to which the employee perceives that the annual performance review phase of the PMS succeeds in determining the extent to which an employee's performance outcomes are aligned with the planned performance goals (Sharma et al., 2016). The PRA subscale consists of three items, for example, "*My goals (behavioural/skills) are accurately rated as part of the review process*" and "*My annual performance review is very objective in the assessment of my annual performance against planned performance*" (Sharma et al., 2016).

- The outcome accuracy (OUA) subscale measures the degree to which the employee perceives that the outcomes phase of the PMS ensures that the performance rating and outcomes (compensation, reward and recognition) are tied to the employee's annual performance review (Sharma et al., 2016). The OUA subscale consists of three items being "*My PMS outcomes (compensation, reward or recognition) are linked to my performance rating*" and "*My annual performance review is directly related to my PMS outcomes (compensation, reward or recognition)*" (Sharma et al., 2016)

4.3.2.3 Administration of the PMS accuracy scale

The PMS accuracy scale is a self-administered questionnaire which takes about ten minutes to complete, although there is no time limit. Clear instructions on the completion of the questionnaire are provided in the beginning of the questionnaire. The respondents are required to rate each item on a seven-point Likert scale to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement (Sharma et al., 2016). The following options are provided: (1) strongly disagree, (2) moderately disagree, (3) slightly disagree, (4) neither agree nor disagree agree, (5) slightly agree, (6) moderately agree, (7) strongly agree. The questionnaire is self-explanatory and as such, no supervision is required.

4.3.2.4 Interpretation of the PMS accuracy scale

Each subscale (PPA, FCA, PRA and OUA) is measured separately and reflects the perceptions of the respondents in terms of the four dimensions of performance management system accuracy. The collated PMS accuracy score (calculated as the mean score for the four subscales) reflects the extent to which the PMS accuracy scale provides an exact basis for recognition of employee performance to accurately enhance performance that contributes value to the organisation (Sharma et al., 2016:238). Higher scores indicate that the performance management system is perceived as highly accurate while medium scores indicate that the performance management system is perceived as moderately accurate.

4.3.2.5 Validity and reliability of the PMS accuracy scale

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted by Sharma et al. (2016) to develop a psychometrically valid measure of employee perceptions of PMS accuracy distinct from their perceptions about its fairness. Reliability analysis was conducted for the 12 items, and it resulted in a Cronbach alpha value of .83, which was above the required threshold of .70 (Pallant, 2020). Sharma et al. (2016) further report that the measurement model for the four-factor PMS accuracy scale consisting of 12 items showed a good fit with acceptable model fit indices (CFI = 1.0, RMR = 0.01, RMSEA = .03, χ^2/df = 1.23, χ^2 = 59.08, df = 48, $p \leq$ 0.01). It was, therefore, confirmed that the instrument possesses sound psychometric properties and that it could be used as a standardised measure to determine employees' perceptions of PMS accuracy (Modipane et al., 2019).

4.3.2.6   Motivation for using the PMS accuracy

The PMS accuracy scale was selected for this research due to its relevance to the current study and its high degree of validity and reliability. The instrument is also easy and quick to administer. In addition, it possesses sound psychometric properties and is a standardised measure for employees' perceptions of PMS accuracy (Sharma et al., 2016). Modipane et al. (2019) confirmed the predictive validity of the scale for a South African sample (a North-West provincial government department) and reported a Cronbach alpha value of .92.

4.3.3   The Organisational Justice Scale (OJC)

This section focuses on the development of and rationale for the Organisational Justice Scale (OJS) (Colquitt, 2001), which was used to measure the fairness dimension of employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system. The composition of the scale, its administration and interpretation and reported validity and reliability are outlined.

4.3.3.1   Development of the OJS

The OJS was developed by Colquitt (2001) to assess employee perceptions of organisational justice regarding the theorised four-factor model of organisational justice, consisting of procedural, distributive, interactional and informational justice. The scale was developed to resolve complications arising out of inconsistent measures of the organisational justice construct and was intended for adaptation for use in specific contexts (Colquitt, 2001). In this study, the OJS was adapted to use specifically within the context of performance assessment.

4.3.3.2   Description of the OJS

The OJS (Colquitt, 2001) is a self-administered questionnaire that consists of 20 items. These items are divided into four subscales which measure employee perceptions of procedural justice (seven items) distributive justice (four items), interpersonal justice (four items) and informational justice (five items).

The following is a description of the four subscales and examples are provided of items included in the instrument to measure each of the four dimensions of organisational justice within a performance management context (Colquitt, 2001):

153

- The procedural justice subscale measures the fairness and transparency of organisational procedures. In this case, the focus was on the performance assessment procedure, and in particular, employees' reactions to performance evaluation and the decision-making process. The scale consists of seven items, for example, "*To what extent have you been able to express your views and feelings during the performance assessment procedure*?" and "*To what extent has the performance assessment procedure been applied consistently in the organisation*?".

- The distributive justice subscale measures employees' perceptions on the fairness of the outcome (Govender et al., 2015). The scale consists of four items, for example, "*To what extent does your performance assessment outcome reflect the effort you have put into your work?*" and "*To what extent is your performance assessment outcome justified, given your performance*?".

- The interpersonal justice subscale measures employees' perceptions of the fairness of the treatment received throughout the performance management process (Harrington & Lee, 2015). It consists of four items, for example, "*To what extent has your supervisor treated you in a polite manner?*" and "*To what extent has your supervisor treated you with dignity?*".

- The informational justice subscale measures perceptions of the nature of communication received during the performance management process (Govender et al., 2015). It consists of five items, for example, "*To what extent has your supervisor explained the performance assessment procedure thoroughly?*" and "*To what extent has your supervisor communicated the performance assessment details in a timely manner?*".

4.3.3.3   Administration of the OJS

The OJS is a self-administered questionnaire which takes about 15 minutes to complete, although there is no time limit. Clear instructions on the completion of the questionnaire are provided in the beginning of the questionnaire. Respondents are required to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale to indicate the extent to which the stated aspects are addressed in their most recent performance assessment. The respondent should rate their responses as (1) to a very small extent, (2) to a small extent, (3) to a moderate extent, (4) to a relatively

large extent, (5) to a large extent. The questionnaire is self-explanatory and as such no supervision is required.

4.3.3.4   Interpretation of the OJS

Each subscale (procedural, distributive, interpersonal and informational justice) is measured separately and reflects the perceptions of the respondent regarding the perceived fairness of the performance management system. Procedural justice is the factor that deals with fairness of the procedure, distributive justice deals with fairness of the outcomes, interpersonal justice deals with fairness of treatment and informational justice deals with the extent to which the reason for decisions is communicated (Colquitt, 2001). It is possible to establish which dimension is truer for the respondent. Higher scores reflect a higher level of perceived organisational justice while medium scores reflect a moderate level of perceived organisational justice.

4.3.3.5   Validity and reliability of the OJS

Sharma et al. (2016) conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to validate the organisational justice scale developed by Colquitt (2001) as a measure of employee perception of PMS fairness (Sharma et al., 2016). The CFA-results showed a good fit measurement model for employee perceptions of PMS fairness confirming the four-dimensional structure for the construct. The CFA showed a reasonably good fit (CFI = .93, RMR = 0.00, RMSEA = .07, χ^2/df = 2.75, χ^2 = 343.70, df = 125, $p \le 0.01$). The standardised factor loading was more than .50 and significant $p \le .01$. The co-variance between the factors were less than .80. Sharma et al.'s (2016) results confirmed the construct reliability (α = .93) and validity for the adapted measure of PMS fairness. Snyman (2021) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .93 for the OJS in a study conducted in a South African higher education institution.

4.3.3.6   Motivation for using the OJS

The OJS was selected for this research due to its relevance to the current study. The instrument was developed to be adapted for use in different contexts and Sharma et al. (2016) confirmed its validity as a measure to determine the perceived fairness of a performance management system. More importantly, the instrument is easy to administer and has shown beyond doubt to be free from any bias (Sharma et al, 2016; Snyman, 2021).

4.3.4 The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)

In this study, Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) was used to measure respondents' satisfaction with their current jobs. This section outlines the development of the instrument, its content, administration, interpretation, validity and reliability. An indication of its relevance for the purposes of this study is provided.

4.3.4.1   Development of the JSS

The JSS was developed by Paul Spector (1985) to assess employees' attitudes about their jobs and various aspects thereof (Spector, 1985). Spector (2022) adopts a facet approach to job satisfaction, measuring nine job satisfaction dimensions, namely, pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, the nature of work and communication. The multifaceted approach adopted by Spector (2022) provides a comprehensive view on how satisfied employees are with their jobs according to various facets of job satisfaction.

4.3.4.2   Description of the scales of the JSS

The JSS is a 36-item, nine facet scale to assess employee attitudes about the job and aspects of the job (Spector, 1985). Each facet is assessed with four items, and a total score is computed from all items (Spector, 1985). A summated rating scale format is used, with six choices per item ranging from "disagree very much" to "agree very much" (Spector, 1985). Items are written in both directions; so, about half must be reverse scored. The nine facets are pay (pay and remuneration), promotion (promotion opportunities), supervision (immediate supervisor), fringe benefits (monetary and nonmonetary fringe benefits), contingent rewards (performance based rewards, which includes appreciation, recognition, and rewards for good work), operating procedures (required operating policies and procedures), co-workers (people you work with), nature of work (job tasks themselves), and communication (communication within the organisation) (Spector, 1985).

The following questions are examples of questions included in the instrument to measure job satisfaction (Spector, 1985):
- Pay: *"I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do."*
- Promotion: *"There is really too little chance for promotion on my job."*
- Supervision: *"My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job."*

156

- Fringe benefits: *"I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive."*

- Contingent rewards: *"When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive."*

- Operating conditions: *"Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult."*

- Co-workers: *"I like the people I work with."*

- Nature of work: *"I sometimes feel my job is meaningless."*

- Communication: *"Communications seem good within this organisation."*

4.3.4.3 Administration of the JSS

The JSS is a self-rated questionnaire which can be administered individually and takes about ten minutes to complete, although there is no time limit. The respondents are required to rate each item on a six-point Likert-type scale to indicate their agreement or disagreement (Spector, 2022). The responses are recorded as (1) disagree very much, (2) disagree moderately, (3) disagree slightly, (4) agree slightly, (5) agree moderately, and (6) agree very much. The questionnaire is self-explanatory; as such, no supervision is required.

4.3.4.4 Interpretation of the JSS

The JSS assesses job satisfaction on a continuum from dissatisfied to satisfied. However, no specific scores determine whether an individual is satisfied or dissatisfied. Spector (2022) indicates that two approaches can be used to draw conclusions about satisfaction or dissatisfaction for individuals or samples. The normative approach would compare the sample or person to the norms of the sample while the absolute approach selects some logical cut scores to represent dissatisfaction versus satisfaction. Spector (2022) explains that the JSS uses 6-point agree-disagree response choices and that agreement with positively worded items and disagreement with negatively-worded items would represent satisfaction whereas disagreement with positive-worded items, and agreement with negative-worded items represents dissatisfaction. For the 4-item subscales and the 36-item total score, scores with a mean item response (after reverse scoring the negatively-worded items) of 4 or more represents satisfaction, whereas mean responses of 3 or less represents dissatisfaction (Spector, 1985). Mean scores between 3 and 4 represent ambivalence or uncertainty (Spector, 1985). In this study, the overall 36-item score was used as an indication of employees' levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their jobs. Spector (2022) explains that

respondents can obtain a total score ranging from 36 to 216. A score of 36 to 108 will indicate dissatisfaction while a score of 108 to 144 will reflect ambivalence or uncertainty and a score of 144 to 216 will indicate satisfaction.

4.3.4.5 *Validity and reliability of the JSS*

Spector (1985) reported the internal consistency reliability for the overall JSS score as .91. Similar Cronbach alpha values were reported by Lumley (2009) (.92) and Ngidi and Ngidi (2017) (.90) in studies conducted in South African Information Technology companies and a South African university of technology respectively.

4.3.4.6 *Motivation for using the JSS*

The JSS was chosen for this research because it is based on the facet approach to job satisfaction, which provides a more comprehensive view of an individual's satisfaction with various aspects of their job than the global approach (Spector, 2022). The instrument is also easy and quick to administer, and its reliability and validity has been well estabished in extant literature.

The multifaceted approach is relevant for this study which draws on Locke (1975) and Spector's (2022) conceptualisations of job satisfaction, as a multidimensional construct describing an employee's positive emotional response to his or her job or dimensions thereof based on an assessment of the extent to which it meets his or her needs.

4.3.5 The Organisational Commitment Survey (OCS)

The development and content of the Organisational Commitment Survey (OCS), how it should be administered and interpreted, and its validity and reliability are discussed in this section. Reasons for selecting this instrument to measure organisational commitment in this study are also provided.

4.3.5.1 *Development of the OCS*

The OCS was developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) to assess employees' workplace commitment. The instrument measures three simultaneous employee mindsets encompassing affective, normative and continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

158

4.3.5.2   Description of the scales of the OCS

The OCS (Meyer & Allen, 1997) is a self-rated questionnaire consisting of 18 items that represent three dimensions (six items each) namely: affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. The items are in a statement format and reflect employees' self-perceived commitment towards their employing organisations. The OCS consists of the following three subscales:

- The affective commitment subscale measures the emotional attachment of an individual to his or her employing organisation as well as his or her identification with and involvement in the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Individuals with high levels of affective commitment remain in the organisation because they want to (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This subscale consists of six items, for example, "*I really feel as if my organisation's problems are my own*" and "*I do not feel emotionally attached to my organisation*" (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

- The normative commitment subscale measures the individual's obligation to remain with the employing organisation. Individuals with high levels of normative commitment remain with the employing organisation owing to their perceived moral responsibility to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This subscale consists of six items, for example, *"I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer*" and "*I would feel guilty if I left this organisation right now*" (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

- The continuance commitment subscale measures the commitment of individuals to the employing organisation owing to the costs associated with leaving (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Employees with high levels of continuance commitment remain with the employing organisation because they need to (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This subscale consists of six items, for example "*Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now" and "It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to*" (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

4.3.5.3   Administration of the OCS

The OCS is a self-rated questionnaire which can be administered individually and takes about 15 minutes to complete, although there is no time limit. Respondents are provided with clear instructions to complete the questionnaire. They are required to rate each item on the following

159

seven-point Likert scale to indicate their agreement (Meyer & Allen, 1997): (1) strongly disagree, (2) moderately disagree, (3) slightly disagree, (4) neither agree nor disagree, (5) slightly agree, (6) moderately agree, and (7) strongly agree. The higher the score the truer the item is for the respondent. The questionnaire is self-explanatory and as such, no supervision is required.

4.3.5.4   Interpretation of the OCS

The OCS consists of 18 items with three subscales measuring affective, continuance and normative commitment. The statements in the questionnaire indicate the individual's commitment to their employing organisation. Each item should be rated according to the extent to which the respondents agree or disagree with the statement. The responses of the subscale of affective, continuance and normative commitment are indicated on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Each dimension of affective, continuance and normative commitment is measured separately showing participants' perceptions and feelings in relation to the dimensions. Higher scores are indicative of respondents' identification with a particular statement. The subscales with the highest mean scores indicate respondents' dominant organisational commitment attributes (Kirsten, 2019).

4.3.5.5   Validity and reliability of the OCS

Meyer and Allen (1997) found evidence of the validity and reliability of the OCS. Content validity was built into the questionnaire by developing a construct definition of affective, normative and continuance commitment. The original organisational commitment scale with affective, continuance and normative subscales each with six items was modified from the original 24 items to the 18-item instrument used in this study. Meyer and Allen (1997) report internal consistency reliabilities of .85 for affective commitment, .79 for continuance commitment and .73 for normative commitment.

Gani (2017) report internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alphas) for affective commitment (0.81), continuance commitment (.82) and normative commitment (.89). The study by Gani (2017), which was conducted among academic, administrative and managerial staff at a South African university, confirm the reliability and validity of organisational commitment scale in the South African context.

4.3.5.6   Motivation for using the OCS

The organisational commitment scale was chosen because it is widely used to measure organisational commitment and is aligned with Meyer and Allen's (1991) conceptualisation of organisational commitment as a three-dimensional construct consisting of affective, normative and continuance commitment that was adopted for the purposes of this research. The instrument is easy to administer and its reliability and validity has been proven (Kola, 2018; Ncube, 2018).

In summary, this research study utilised scales that have been adopted in the past and the instruments were selected because they reflect the conceptualisation of the constructs in the literature review. In addition, the instruments have been reported to be valid and reliable measures of the constructs in the study. While self-report measures are commonly used in social sciences research, they have been shown to give rise to common method bias. To limit this bias, a number of precautionary measures, as recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2012) were implemented. This included assuring respondents of anonymity and confidentiality; using existing, validated instruments to measure the constructs; using different types of scales; randomly sorting the items of each scale; and including negatively worded items that were reverse coded.

4.4   DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

The researcher conducted a pre-test of the instrument by testing the survey link and ensuring that the survey could be accessed and completed on various devices. The survey link was also sent to the statistician to ensure that the data analysis plan can be implemented to address the research objectives and test the hypotheses.

This was followed by a pilot study, which may be regarded as a trial of all the planned procedures to be used in the main study (Hilton et. al., 2020). The pilot study was conducted to ascertain whether the instructions were clear and to identify potential problems in answering the questions. By conducting the pilot study, the researcher ensured that the respondents would be able to complete the survey and that there would be no problems regarding the recording of the data (Saunders et al., 2019). The pilot study was conducted within the public service with individuals who work in a similar environment but did not form part of the population for this study (Saunders et al., 2019). A link with clear instructions was emailed to

selected employees in various public service organisations. These employees were requested to complete the survey and also to provide feedback or comments on the questionnaire including the time it took to complete the survey. A total number of 21 responded but only 19 gave informed consent and continued with the survey. All 19 respondents were able to complete the survey and no problems were reported. One respondent expressed the view that there were too many negatively worded items and that a more positive tone should be used. However, as existing validated instruments were used, the researcher was not at liberty to amend the items.

Although existing instruments that have been reported to be valid and reliable were utilised, the pilot study was conducted to ensure that the instructions were clearly understood by the respondents and that no errors occurred in the online data collection process (Hilton et. al., 2020). The pilot testing assisted the researcher to establish the duration it takes the participants to complete the questionnaire and to ensure that participants understand the items in the questionnaire and the instructions for completing it.

4.4.1   Approaching the target population to participate in the research

To protect the identity of the respondents and ensure the integrity of the research a gatekeeper was identified to communicate with the target population. This gatekeeper was a senior human resource practitioner in DAFF. She assisted the researcher to identify the sample frame and sent emails to the employees to invite them to take part in the study by completing the online survey. Moreover, the gatekeeper sent the invitation to all permanent employees in the department and the initial e-mail was followed up by two reminders to obtain maximum participation. By using a gatekeeper, the anonymity of the respondents was maintained as the researcher did not have access to any identifiable information.

4.4.2   Ethical considerations

Research ethics relates to a "set of principles developed to guide and assist researchers in conducting ethical studies" (Johnson & Christenses, 2020, p. 120). However, it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that the research is ethically conducted (Blaikie & Priest, 2019; Bless et al., 2013). This research was conducted in line with the Policy on Research Ethics of the University of South Africa (University of South Africa, 2016). Permission to conduct research was obtained from DAFF, South Africa and the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of HRM at the University of South Africa (see Appendix A).

The researcher applied the required ethics standards of Unisa which were aimed at protecting the dignity, privacy and confidentiality of the participants. Participants gave informed consent to participate in the study and enticement in the name of research was avoided by informing the participants that they would not benefit individually from participating in the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Special care was taken to ensure that participants of a particular gender were not embarrassed and participants were given an opportunity not to disclose their gender (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). A statement informing participants of their right to withdraw from the research at any time prior to submission of the survey was included.

An online survey was utilised for this study and the data collected were only accessible to the researcher, supervisor and statistician (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). The researcher will keep the original data for a period of five years and thereafter the information will be destroyed. A gatekeeper in the position of a senior human resource practitioner was appointed to support the researcher in this study. Accordingly, the appointment of a gatekeeper ensured that all participants were treated in a respectful manner, and that there were accountability, transparency and integrity throughout the research process (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). A description of the purpose and benefits of the study was included in the introductory part of the survey. Participants were informed that all responses would be anonymous and confidential. The researcher's name and contact details were provided, and respondents were invited to raise any concerns relating to the research with the researcher. The process and findings of the research were reported in the form of a dissertation and a summarised report of the findings were submitted to the Department of HRM for dissemination to employees.

4.4.3   Data collection and capturing

Data were collected by means of a self-administered web-based questionnaire consisting of a range of published, validated instruments and a biographic questionnaire as explained in section 4.3. The online survey allowed the researcher to gather data from a wide population within a limited timeframe without incurring high costs.

The questionnaire was converted to an online survey, using the LimeSurvey platform, and respondents could only continue with the survey if they gave consent to participate in the study. By giving consent to take part in the study, respondents confirmed that they were aware of the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation of the research (this information was provided in the invitation e-mail). They also agreed that they have read and understood the information relating to the study; have been provided with

the contact details of the researcher and had sufficient opportunity to ask questions if needed; understood that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any time. They were aware that the findings of the study would be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings but that their participation would be kept confidential. Instructions to complete the questionnaire were given on the first page of the online survey.

The respondents were requested to complete all questions in the survey as only fully completed surveys would be included in the data set and used for analysis. The researcher used the LimeSurvey platform to administer the survey and the data were exported to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The data were subsequently imported and analysed using the IBM SPSS, version 27 (2020).

4.5   FORMULATION OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

A hypothesis is a "formal statement of the researcher's prediction of the specific relationship that exists among the variables under investigation" (Johnson & Christenses, 2020, p. 99). Table 4.6 indicates the research hypothesis that was formulated to meet the empirical research aims of the study (see section 1.3.2.2).

Table 4.6

Research Hypotheses

Empirical research aims	Research hypotheses	Statistical Procedure
Research aim 1: To measure the levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness (accuracy and fairness), job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a sample of public service employees.	n/a	Descriptive statistical analysis

Empirical research aims	Research hypotheses	Statistical Procedure
Research aim 2: To investigate whether significant differences exist in the levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment between groups based on selected personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics.	H_1: Different groups in terms of personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics will display different levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness (PMSE), job satisfaction and organisational commitment.	Tests for significant mean differences
Research aim 3: To investigate the empirical relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.	H_{2a}: A significant positive relationship exists between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment. H_{2b}: A significant positive relationship exists between performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction.	Correlation and regression analysis

Empirical research aims	Research hypotheses	Statistical Procedure
Research aim 4: To determine whether job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment.	**H₃**: While employees' perceptions of performance management system effectiveness are positively related to organisational commitment, the relationship between the two variables are mediated by job satisfaction.	Mediation analysis

Note: Researcher's own compilation.

4.6   STATISTICAL PROCESSING OF DATA

A quantitative method was utilised for this study to investigate the relationship between the variables performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Preliminary statistical analysis was conducted to ensure that there were no missing values or unengaged responses (Pallant, 2020). To ensure the validity and the reliability of the instruments, this research study utilised validated published scales to measure all the constructs. Cronbach alpha values and inter-item correlation were determined to establish internal consistency reliability of the scales (Pallant, 2020). The researcher screened all cases and data were checked for errors and outliers to ensure a clean and error free data set. The statistical procedure followed included descriptive statistical analyses (means, 95% confidence intervals, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha coefficients); bi-variate correlation analysis (Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient); and inferential (multivariate) statistics were further used to examine the relationship between the three variables (multiple regression analysis, mediation analysis and tests for significant mean differences).

Figure 4.6 illustrates the statistical analysis process followed in this chapter.

Figure 4.6

Statistical Data Analysis Process

Stage 1 Preliminary statistical analysis	Stage 2 Descriptive statistical analysis	Stage 3 Correlation analysis	Stage 4 Inferential and multivariate statistics
Case screening Data check for errors and outliers Data check for scores out of range Cronbach's alpha coefficients Frequency data	Means 95% Confidence Interval Standard deviation	Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient	Multiple regression analysis, mediation analysis and tests for significant mean differences

Note: Researcher's own compilation.

4.6.1 Preliminary statistical analysis

To ensure a clean and error free data set, the researcher screened all cases and data were checked for errors and outliers which are values that are well above or below other scores (Pallant, 2020). No errors were found on the data set for this current study. Furthermore, variables were checked for scores that were out of range by inspecting the frequencies of each variable (Pallant, 2020). A complete case approach was followed. Respondents were therefore compelled to answer all the questions, which resulted in no missing values. The standard deviation was calculated for all cases to identify unengaged responses. A standard deviation of 0 would be indicative of unengaged responses (Hair et al., 2020). No such cases were detected and therefore no cases were excluded from further analysis.

Internal consistency reliability is the degree to which the items in the scale measure the same construct and it is determined by calculating the Cronbach alpha values (Pallant, 2020). Internal consistency reliability means that the scale measures the same underlying construct or it measures what is supposed to measure (Hair et al., 2020; Pallant, 2020). The widely accepted norm for a scale to be regarded as reliable is a Cronbach alpha value of .7 or more

(Hair et al., 2020). However, Pallant (2020) posits that the Cronbach alpha is sensitive to the number of items in a scale. As a result, values below .7 are sometimes found for scales consisting of a limited number of items. It is therefore not sufficient to only look at the Cronbach alpha value (Pallant, 2020). In cases where the number of items is limited, inter-item correlations should also be considered (Pallant, 2020). Inter-item correlations reflect the extent to which scores on various items in a scale relate to one another and these values should be above .2 for the scale to be regarded as reliable (Pallant, 2020).

4.6.2 Descriptive statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics describe the existing data using measures like mean, the midpoint, spread and the closeness of variables to one another (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). Descriptive statistics can also be used to summarise and display data in a meaningful way (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). In addition, it is used to check variables for any violation of statistical techniques and address research questions that are specific and provides information on the distribution of the scores (Pallant, 2020). Descriptive statistics were utilised to describe and summarise the characteristics of the constructs in the sample data to understand features of the data set that are specific and allow patterns that are not visible in raw data to be distinguished (Collins & Hussey, 2021).

This study used descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages of categorical data) to indicate the distribution of the sample (Johnson & Christenses, 2020). This was done in both tabular and graphical format (see section 4.2). Frequencies are summaries of numerical values that indicate the number of cases in a specific category (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Percentages reflect a proportion of the numerical data grouped to summarise the total data count (Biddix, 2018). The researcher used descriptive data (frequencies, percentages and cumulative percentages) to describe the distribution of the data in terms of personal (age, gender and education level) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics. Furthermore, pie charts were used to graphically illustrate this distribution.

Descriptive statistics were also used to provide information on the distribution of the construct data. These statistics included the mean, standard deviation and 95% confidence intervals (lower and upper bounds) for performance management system accuracy, performance management system fairness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Pallant, 2020). The mean is the average measure used to summarise numerical data (Hair et al., 2020) and is calculated to measure central tendency of the sample (Saunders et al., 2019). The standard

deviation (SD) is the range to which values differ from the mean (Saunders et al., 2019) and therefore measures the spread of data around the mean (Zikmund et al., 2019, p. 364). Standard deviation is calculated to determine the usefulness of the mean as a typical value for the distribution of continuous data (Saunders et al., 2019). The 95% confidence interval refers to the range of values of a sample statistic that have a chance to be included in the parameter of the population (Hair et al., 2020). Therefore, if an infinite number of samples of the same size is drawn, on average 95% of them would produce confidence intervals containing the true population value (Vogt et al., 2016). Histograms were also used to graphically illustrate the distribution of the construct data (Gill & Roger, 2021). The shapes of the histograms were inspected to determine whether normal distribution could be assumed. Given the relatively large sample size (n = 304), the normality of the sampling distribution could be assumed based on the central limit theorem. According to Saunders et al. (2019, p. 797), the central limit theorem suggests that "the larger the absolute size of a sample, the more closely its distribution will be to the normal distribution".

4.6.3   Group differences

This research sought to determine whether differences between groups, based on their personal (age, gender, educational level) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics exist in terms of performance management system accuracy, performance management system fairness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (see Hypothesis 1 in Table 4.6). Either parametric or non-parametric tests could be used for this purpose (Gill & Roger, 2021). Accordingly, non-parametric techniques are used when the sample is small and data do meet the assumptions of the parametric techniques (Pallant, 2020). In this study, parametric tests were deemed appropriate owing to the large (n = 304) sample size and the assumed normality of the sampling distribution (Hair et al., 2020).

An independent sample t-test was therefore used to compare gender groups and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) were used to compare groups in terms of age, job level, education and tenure. Furthermore, independent sample t-tests are used to compare the mean scores of two groups (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). In this study, an independent sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of males and females in terms of performance management system accuracy, performance management system fairness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment to ascertain whether statistically significant differences exist. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was used to determine whether the assumption of equal variances had been violated (Pallant, 2020). Equal variances were

169

assumed where the significance value (Sig.) for Levene's test was larger than .05 (Gill & Roger, 2021). To assess the differences between groups, the *p*-values (2-tailed) obtained from the t-test for Equality of Means were scrutinised. A *p*-value of equal to or less than .05 was regarded as indicative of the existence of a statistically significant difference (Pallant, 2020). Cohen's d, which presents the difference between groups in terms of standard deviation units, was used as an indication of the magnitude of the differences between groups (.2 = small, .5 = medium .8 = large) (Pallant, 2020).

ANOVAs are used to explore whether statistically significant differences exist between three or more groups in terms of a dependent, continuous variable (Pallant, 2020; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). In this study, ANOVAs were used to compare the mean scores of different age, job level, education and tenure groups in terms of performance management system accuracy, performance management system fairness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment to determine whether statistically significant differences exist. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was used to determine the variance in scores were the same for each of the groups (Pallant, 2020). Where the significance value (Sig.) for Levene's test was larger than .05, it was concluded that the assumption of homogeneity of variance had not been violated (Gill & Roger, 2021). In instances where the significance value (Sig.) for Levene's test was less than .05, unequal variances were assumed, and Welsch's F was relied upon to correct for the degree of heterogeneity (Field, 2018). A significance level of less than or equal to .05 was indicative the existence of significant group differences and the Partial Eta Squared value, which reflects the proportion of variance of the dependent variable that is explained the independent variable, was used as an indication of the effect size (.01 = small; .06 = medium; .14 = large) (Pallant, 2020). In instances where statistically significant differences were found to exist, post hoc analyses were conducted to determine the source of these differences. Where equal variances could be assumed, the Bonferroni test was used and where unequal variances were assumed, the Games-Howell procedure was relied upon (Field, 2018).

4.6.4   Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis is a procedure used to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two or more variables as presented by a correlation coefficient (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). In this study, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (*r*) was utilised to test of significant positive statistical relationships exist between employees' perceptions of performance management system effectiveness, as measured by PMSA and PMSF, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (see Hypotheses 2_a and 2_b in Table

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4.6). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) values range between +1.00 and -1.00 with values close to .00, indicating no relationship (Hair et al., 2020; Pallant, 2020). A positive correlation shows that as scores for the dependent variable (X) increase, the independent variable (Y) scores also increase (Cumming, 2011; Pallant, 2020). A negative correlation shows that, as scores for the dependent variable (X) increase, the independent variable (Y) scores decrease (Cumming, 2011). Pearson's r can be positive or negative based on the direction of the relationship between variables (Hair et al., 2020). A strong correlation does not indicate a cause-effect relationship, but indicates the direction and strength of the linear relationship between variables (Vogt & Johnson, 2016). A strong correlation is indicated by values that are neatly assembled around the straight line while a weak correlation is indicated by values that are spread all over the place (Pallant, 2020).

Exploratory analysis was conducted to test for the assumptions underlying correlation analysis, namely, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity (Pallant, 2020). Linearity is assumed when the values of X and Y represents a straight line relationship on a scatterplot (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Homoscedasticity relates to the assumption that a quantitative dependent variable shows equal variance across the range of predictor variables (Hair et al., 2020). According to Vogt and Johnson (2016), parametric tests often assume homoscedasticity. Violations of these assumptions tend to influence the linearity and predictive capacity of the variables involved in case of further analyses. To test the assumptions, the skewness and kurtosis values for all the variables were determined. For all variables, these values were smaller than the recommended absolute values of 2 (skewness) and 7 (kurtosis) which indicates that there was no substantial deviation from normality (Pallant, 2020). In addition, according to Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) with large samples, as in the case of this study, marginal deviations from normality in skewness and kurtosis will not have substantive difference in the analysis. Hayes (2018) supports this notion, indicating that large samples reduce the effects on nonnormality in the data (Hayes, 2018). No violations were identified. Lastly, scatter plots confirmed that deviations from homoscedasticity did not pose a significant risk on violation of the assumption (Pallant, 2020).

Finally, as indicated in Chapter 1 (section 1.7.4), age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education were identified as control variables that may affect the relationship between the performance management system effectiveness (as represented by PMSA and PMSF), job satisfaction and organisational commitment. To assess the size and direction of the linear relationship between PMSA, PMSF, JS and OC, while controlling for job level, tenure, age, gender and level of education, partial correlation coefficients were therefore calculated. Partial

correlation is used to measure the relationship between two continuous variables while statistically controlling or eliminating the influence of a third variable to provide a clear picture of the linear relationship between the variables (Pallant, 2020).

A cut-off of $r > .30$ (medium practical effect) at $p < .05$ was utilised in this study to establish the significance of the correlation coefficient. According to Cohen (1988), as cited by Pallant (2020), a Pearson's r of between .10 and .29 is regarded as indicative of a small practical effect size, while $r \geq .30 < .50$ presents a medium practical effect and $r \geq .50$ a large practical effect (Pallant, 2020). The large effect size is evident of the construct validity of the overall constructs.

4.6.5 Inferential and multivariate statistics

Inferential and multivariate statistics were utilised to allow the researcher to draw conclusions from the data. Multivariate data analysis was utilised in the form of regression and mediation analysis to test if the statistical relationship between performance management system effectiveness (consisting of PMSA and PMSF) and organisational commitment, is mediated by job satisfaction (see Hypothesis 4 in Table 4.6).

Mediation takes place when the relationship between a predictor variable (independent variable, X) and an outcome variable (dependent variable, Y) can be explained by their relationship to a third (mediating, M) variable (Field 2018). A simple mediation model is depicted Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7

Diagram of a Simple Mediation Model
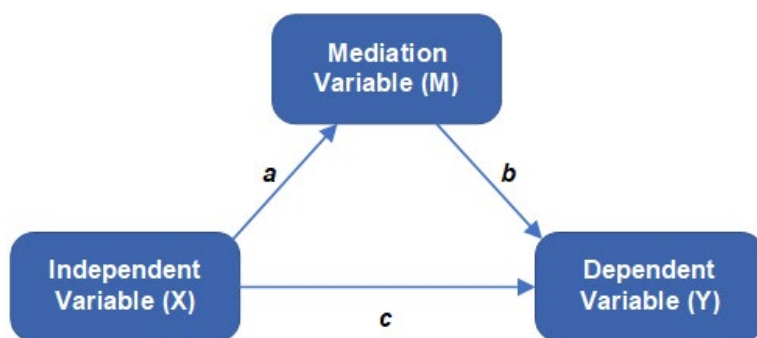
Note. Researcher's own compilation.

The simple mediation model illustrated in Figure 4.7 assumes that M is affected by changes in X while changes in M are associated with changes in Y beyond the direct effect of X on Y (Hayes, 2018).

According to Meyers et al. (2017), the following conditions need to be met to confirm mediation:
(1) The independent variable (X) must significantly predict the dependent variable (Y) in isolation (path *c*).
(2) The independent variable (X) must significantly predict the mediating variable (M) (path *a*).
(3) The mediating variable (M) must significantly predict the dependent variable (Y) (path *b*).

These conditions reflect the seminal work done by Baron and Kenny (1986) on mediation analysis. More recently it has, however, been recommended that the existence of a statistically significant relationship between X and Y should not be regarded as a determining factor in establishing mediation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Instead, the emphasis should be on the indirect influence of X on Y through M (path *ab*) (Hayes, 2018).

The simple mediation model illustrated in Figure 4.7 assumes that M is affected by changes in X while changes in M are associated with changes in Y beyond the direct effect of X on Y (Hayes, 2018).

In this study, job satisfaction was theorised as a mediating variable between employees' perceptions of the performance management system effectiveness (consisting of PMSA and PMSF) and organisational commitment. Two simple mediation analyses were therefore conducted.

In the first mediation analysis, PMSA was regarded as the independent variable (X), with job satisfaction as the mediating variable (M) and organisational commitment as the dependent variable (Y). The second mediation analysis included PMSF as independent variable (X), job satisfaction as mediating variable (M) and organisational commitment as dependent variable (Y).

The analyses for mediation were conducted using the PROCESS macro for IBM SPSS (PROCESS macro), version 3.5.3 (Hayes, 2018). Ordinary least squares regression-based analysis was conducted to estimate the effects in the mediation models (Hayes, 2018). To avoid bias in standard errors estimated, heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors and

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5000 bootstrap resamples with 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals for the indirect effect at different levels were applied as part of the testing procedure. Inferences about mediation were based on the indirect effect of X on Y (*ab*) (Hayes, 2018). Rejection of the null hypothesis that the indirect effect (*ab*) is zero (or a bootstrap interval estimate that does not include zero) was regarded as sufficient, supporting evidence of a mediation effect of X on Y through M (Hayes, 2018).

4.7   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter discussed the empirical investigation of the research study. The discussion included the research approach, the description of the sample and population, choosing and justifying the measuring instruments, the administration of the measuring instruments used, data collection procedure and approaching the target population to participate in the research, ethical consideration, the research hypothesis formulation and statistical processing of data.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter provides information on the results of the statistical analyses conducted. These analyses were conducted to test the research hypotheses formulated. The statistical results of the empirical study are reported in this chapter by means of descriptive statistics, correlations and inferential statistics. Tables and figures are used to present the statistical results in this chapter. This chapter will address step 7 (reporting the results) of the empirical research (see Figure 1.2 in Chapter 1). The chapter will conclude with a discussion and synthesis of the reported results.

5.1   PRELIMINARY STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The preliminary statistical analysis involved the screening of 304 recorded cases. All cases were checked for errors and outliers to ensure reliable and quality data (Pallant, 2020). Variables were checked for scores that were out of range by inspecting the frequencies of each variable and the case involved to ensure that there are no missing values on the data set (Pallant, 2020). Moreover, no errors were found on the data set for this current study and no cases with missing values were observed. The standard deviation was calculated for all cases to identify unengaged responses. However, no cases with a standard deviation of .0 were reported, reflecting no unengaged responses, and therefore no cases were excluded from further analyses.

5.1.1   Scale validity and reliability

Previous research also supports the notion of reliability. Although the researcher used published validated scales to measure all constructs, the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach alpha values) and inter-item correlations of the scales were determined to ensure their reliability within the sample of the current study. A Cronbach alpha coefficient of at least .7 is widely regarded as the norm for a scale to be regarded as internally consistent (i.e. all items measure the same underlying characteristics) (Pallant, 2020). However, in some instances lower Cronbach alpha values are reported for scales with a limited number of items. In such cases, inter-item correlations were considered. According to Pallant (2020), inter-item correlations of .2 and above support the reliability of a scale.

175

5.1.1.1 Performance Management System Accuracy (PMSA) Scale

The internal consistency reliability of the PMSA scale is reported in this section. Table 5.1 presents the number of cases and items processed to conduct the reliability test.

Table 5.1

Item and Reliability Analysis for Validated Performance Management System Accuracy Scale

Construct description	Construct abbreviation	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Inter-item correlation
Performance planning	PMSA_PPA	3	.82	.61
Feedback and coaching	PMSA_FCA	3	.87	.70
Performance reviews	PMSA_PRA	3	.83	.62
Outcome accuracy	PMSA_OUA	3	.89	.73
PMSA TOTAL	PMSA	4	.91	.72

Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

The Cronbach alpha coefficients of the four subscales of the PMSA scale are reflected in Table 5.1. These values range from .82 to .89 for the sample (n = 304), which are well beyond the minimum requirement of .7. The total PMSA scale also recorded a Cronbach alpha value of .91, which confirms the internal consistency reliability of the scale for this sample. The PMSA scale was, thus, considered as a reliable instrument to measure the PMSA construct for this study.

5.1.1.2 Performance Management System Fairness (PMSF) Scale

The internal consistency reliability of the PMSF scale is reported in this section. Table 5.2 presents the number of cases and items processed to conduct the reliability test.

Table: 5.2

Item and Reliability analysis of Validated Performance Management System Fairness Scale

Construct description	Construct abbreviation	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Inter-item correlation
Distributive justice	PMSF_DJ	7	.89	.53
Procedural justice	PMSF_PJ	4	.93	.77
Interpersonal justice	PMSF_InterJ	4	.92	.75
Informational justice	PMSF_InforJ	5	.92	.71
PMSF TOTAL	PMSF	4	.91	.72

Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

176

The Cronbach alpha coefficients of the four subscales of the PMSF scale are reflected in Table 5.2. These values range from .89 to .93 for the sample (n = 304), which are well beyond the minimum requirement of .7. The total PMSF scale also recorded a Cronbach alpha value of .91, which confirms the internal consistency reliability of the scale for this sample. The PMSF scale was, thus, considered as a reliable instrument to measure the PMSF construct for the purposes of this study.

5.1.1.3   Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS)

The internal consistency reliability of the JS scale is reported in this section. Table 5.3 presents the number of cases and items processed to conduct the reliability test.

Table: 5.3

Item and Reliability analysis of Validated Job Satisfaction Scale

Construct description	Construct abbreviation	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Inter-item correlation
Pay	JS_Pay	4	.66	.32
Promotion	JS_Pro	4	.67	.33
Supervision	JS_S	4	.74	.43
Benefits	JS_B	4	.63	.30
Contingent rewards	JS_CR	4	.64	.30
Operating procedure	JS_OP	3	.60	.34
Co-worker	JS_Co	4	.58	.29
Nature of work	JS_NW	4	.73	.43
Communications	JS_Com	4	.67	.34
JS TOTAL	JS	35	.82	.32

Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

The Cronbach alpha values of the supervision (JS_S) and nature of work (JS_NW) subscales were .74 and .73 respectively. As these values exceed the norm of .7, these subscales were regarded as reliable. The Cronbach alpha values for the pay (JS_Pay), promotion (JS_Pro), benefits (JS_B), contingent rewards (JS_CR), operating procedure (JS_OP), co-worker (JS_Co) and communications (JS_Com) subscales ranged from .58 to .67. These lower values may be the result of the limited number of items included in each scale. As a result, the inter-item correlations were therefore used to determine the reliability of these scales. Inter-item correlations ranging from .29 to .34 were reported for these subscales. The subscales can, therefore, be regarded as reliable given that the inter-item correlations exceed .2.

177

The 4-item operating procedure (JS_OP) subscale reported a Cronbach alpha value of .10 and an inter-item correlation of .05. To improve reliability of the scale for the current sample, one of the items (Q10.15) was discarded, which resulted in a Cronbach alpha value of .60 and inter-item correlation of .34. The operating procedures subscale used for this study therefore consisted of a 3-item scale with the above Cronbach alpha value and inter-item correlation confirming the reliability of the scale for the purposes of this study. The total JS scale recorded a Cronbach alpha value of .82, which confirms the internal consistency reliability of the scale for this sample. The JS scale was thus considered as a reliable instrument to measure the JS construct for the purposes of this study.

Further analyses relating to the relationships between the variables were based on the overall scale and were not conducted at a subscale level.

5.1.1.4   *Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS)*

The internal consistency reliability of the OCS is reported in this section. Table 5.4 presents the number of cases and items processed to conduct the reliability test.

Table 5.4

Item and Reliability analysis of Validated Organisational Commitment Scale

Construct description	Construct abbreviation	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Inter-item correlation
Affective commitment	OC_AC	6	.80	.40
Continuance commitment	OC_CC	6	.72	.29
Normative commitment	OC_NC	6	.86	.51
OC TOTAL	OC	3	.76	.50

Note. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304.

The Cronbach alpha coefficients of the three subscales of the OC scale are reflected in Table 5.4. These values range from .72 to .86 for the sample (n = 304), which exceed the minimum requirement of .7. The total OC scale also recorded a Cronbach alpha value of .76, which confirms the internal consistency reliability of the scale for this sample. The OC scale was therefore considered as a reliable instrument to measure the OC construct for the purposes of this study.

5.2   DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

This section addresses empirical research aim 1 and the descriptive statistics relating to the four constructs of the study are reported. Further analyses were conducted at a construct rather than a subconstruct level. The means, 95% confidence intervals and standard deviations for each of the four constructs are reported (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5

Construct Means, 95% Confidence Intervals for Means and Standard Deviations

Construct	Mean	95% Confidence Interval		Standard Deviation
		Lower	Upper	
PMSA	4.04	3.85	4.22	1.65
PMSF	3.01	2.90	3.12	.99
JS	3.39	3.31	3.47	.72
OC	4.21	4.08	4.35	1.21

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304; PMSA was measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree); PMSF was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (to a very small extent) to 5 (to a large extent); JS was measured on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (disagree very much) to 6 (agree very much); and OC was measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

5.2.1   Construct Descriptive Analysis for Performance Management System Accuracy

The PMSA scale measures the extent to which employees perceive that the PMS provides basis for financial or non-financial recognition for positive employee outcomes. PMSA was measured using a 7-point Likert scale where respondents had to indicate their agreement with statements relating to the accuracy of their PMS by using the following options: (1) strongly disagree, (2) moderately disagree, (3) slightly disagree, (4) neither agree nor disagree agree, (5) slightly agree, (6) moderately agree, (7) strongly agree. The mean score reflects the extent to which the PMS accuracy scale provides an exact basis for recognition of employee performance to accurately enhance performance that contributes value to the organisation (Sharma et al., 2016:238). The *SD* indicates the distribution of the scores in relation to the mean. The mean score for PMSA was 4.04 with a standard deviation of 1.65 which indicates that, on average, the respondents perceive the PMS as moderately accurate in terms of recognising and enhancing employee performance. The reported 95% confidence interval indicates that it can be concluded, with 95% certainty, that the true PMSA mean value for the population would fall within the estimated confidence intervals of between 3.85 (lower bound)

and 4.22 (upper bound). The shape of the distribution of the PMSA scores is graphically presented in Figure 5.1. Although the histogram does not reflect a normal distribution, normality in terms of the sampling distribution could be assumed based on the central limit theorem.

Figure 5.1

Distribution of the Mean Scores for Performance Management System Accuracy
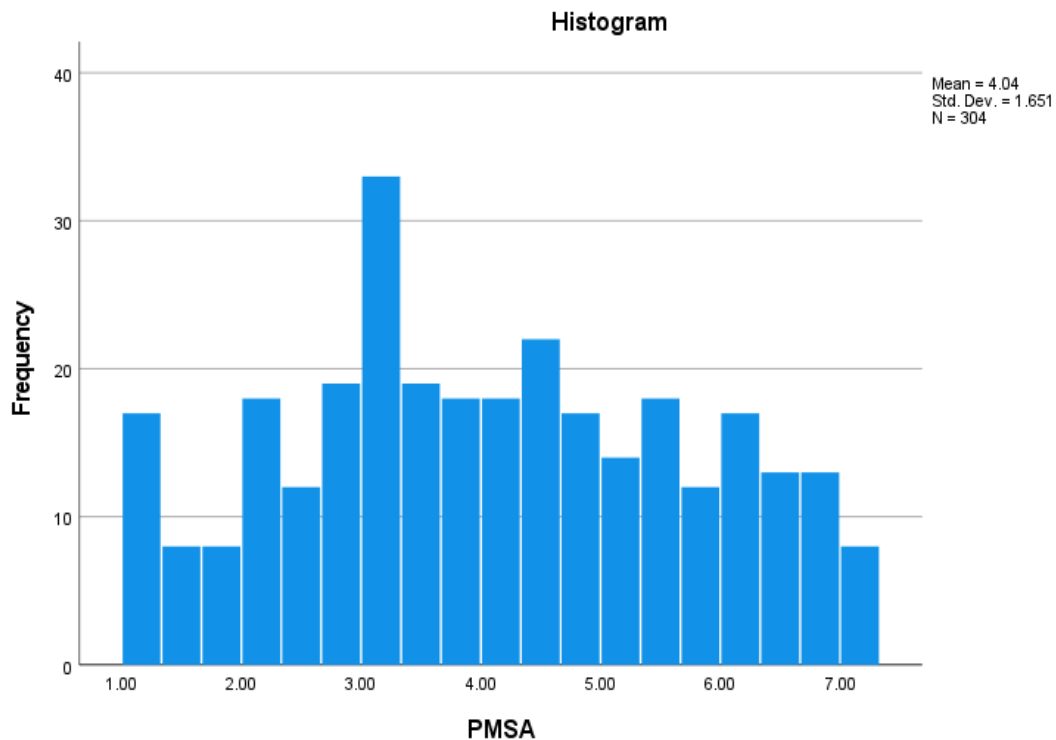
Note. Researcher's own compilation.

5.2.2   Construct Descriptive Analysis for Performance Management System Fairness

The OJS (see section 4.3.3) reflects the perceptions of the respondent regarding the perceived fairness of the performance management system. Higher scores reflect a higher level of perceived organisational justice. The respondents were required to indicate the extent to which the stated aspects were addressed in their most recent performance assessments on a 5-point Likert scale: (1) to a very small extent, (2) to a small extent, (3) to a moderate extent, (4) to a relatively large extent, (5) to a large extent. The mean score reflects the level of perceived PMS fairness. The *SD* indicates the distribution of the scores. The mean score for the PMSF construct was 3.01 and the standard deviation .99. This implies that the respondents regarded the performance management system as moderately fair. A 95% confidence interval of

between 2.90 (lower bound) and 3.12 (upper bound) was reported, which means that we can determine with 95% certainty that the mean value for the population will fall within this range. The shape of the distribution of the PMSF score is graphically presented in Figure 5.2. The histogram reflects a slightly skewed distribution.

Figure 5.2

Distribution of the Mean Scores for Performance Management System Fairness
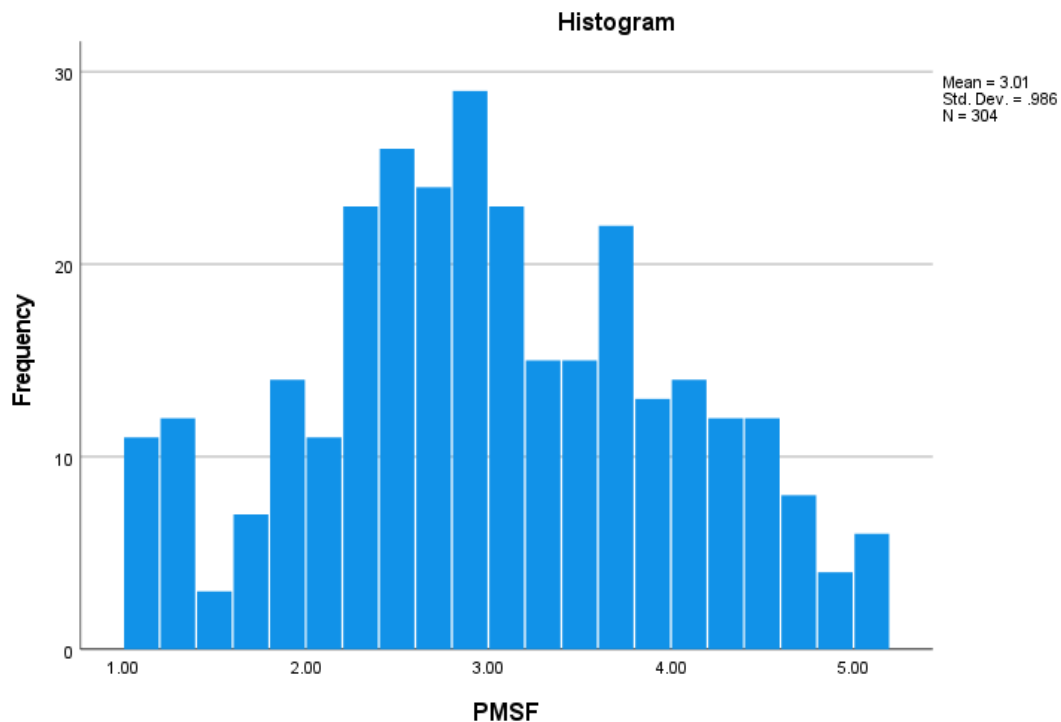
Note. Researcher's own compilation.

5.2.3 Construct Descriptive Statistical Analysis for Job Satisfaction

The JSS assesses employee attitudes about the various aspects of the job and the extent to which they are satisfied with their current job. Furthermore, the JSS was a 6-point Likert scale where respondents had to indicate their agreement with statements relating to aspects of job satisfaction by using the following options: (1) disagree very much, (2) disagree moderately, (3) disagree slightly, (4) agree slightly, (5) agree moderately, and (6) agree very much. The mean value indicates the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction that an employee experiences in his/her job. The *SD* indicates the distribution of the scores. The mean score for the JS construct was 3.39 and the standard deviation .72. This implies that the responds were not

particularly satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs. A 95% confidence interval of between 3.31 (lower bound) and 3.47 (upper bound) was reported, which means that we can determine with 95% certainty that the mean value for the population will fall within this range. The shape of the distribution of the JSS is graphically presented in Figure 5.3. The histogram reflects a normal distribution.

Figure 5.3

Distribution of the Mean Scores for Job Satisfaction
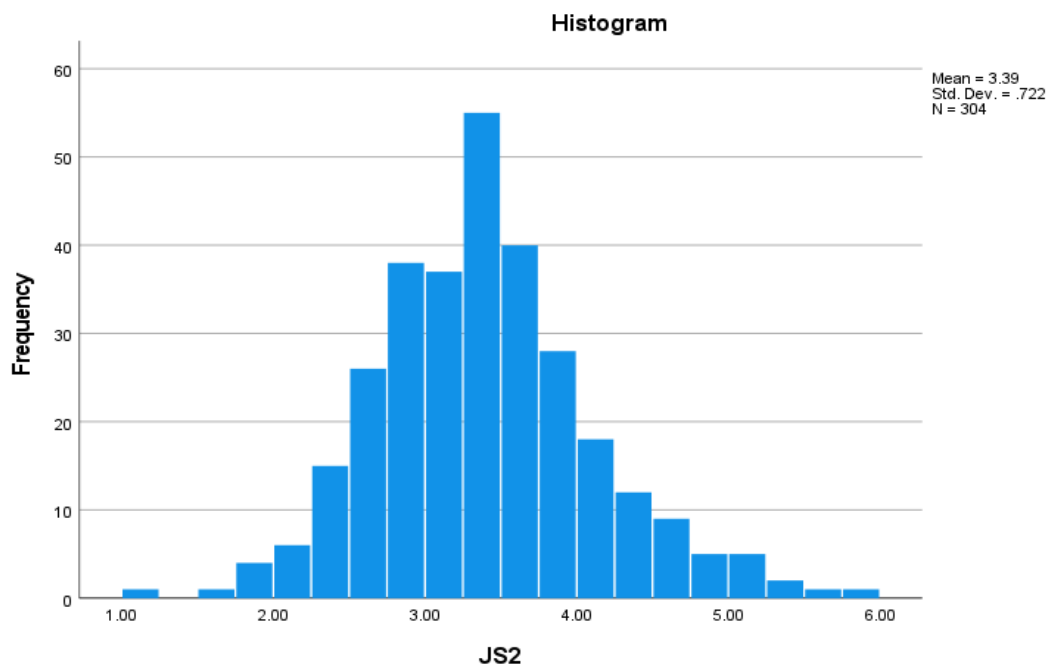
Note. Researcher's own compilation.

5.2.4   Construct Descriptive Statistical Analysis for Organisational Commitment

The OCS measures employees' workplace commitment and their mindsets encompassing affective, normative and continuance commitment. The statements indicate an individual's commitment to their employing organisation. The higher the score the truer the item is for the respondent. The OCS used was a 7-point Likert scale where respondents had to indicate their agreement with statements relating their organisational commitment by using the following options: (1) strongly disagree, (2) moderately disagree, (3) slightly disagree, (4) neither agree nor disagree, (5) slightly agree, (6) moderately agree, and (7) strongly agree. The mean score indicates the level of commitment to the organisation. On a 7-point scale the mean score for the OC construct was 4.21 and the standard deviation 1.21. This implies that, on average, respondents are committed to their organisation, but the level of commitment is relatively low

and can improve. A 95% confidence interval of between 4.08 (lower bound) and 4.35 (upper bound) was reported, which means that we can determine with 95% certainty that the mean value for the population will fall within this range. The shape of the distribution of the OC score is graphically presented in Figure 5.4. The histogram reflects a relatively normal distribution. Normality could also be assumed in terms of the sampling distribution based on the central limit theorem.

Figure 5.4

Distribution of the Mean Scores for Organisational Commitment
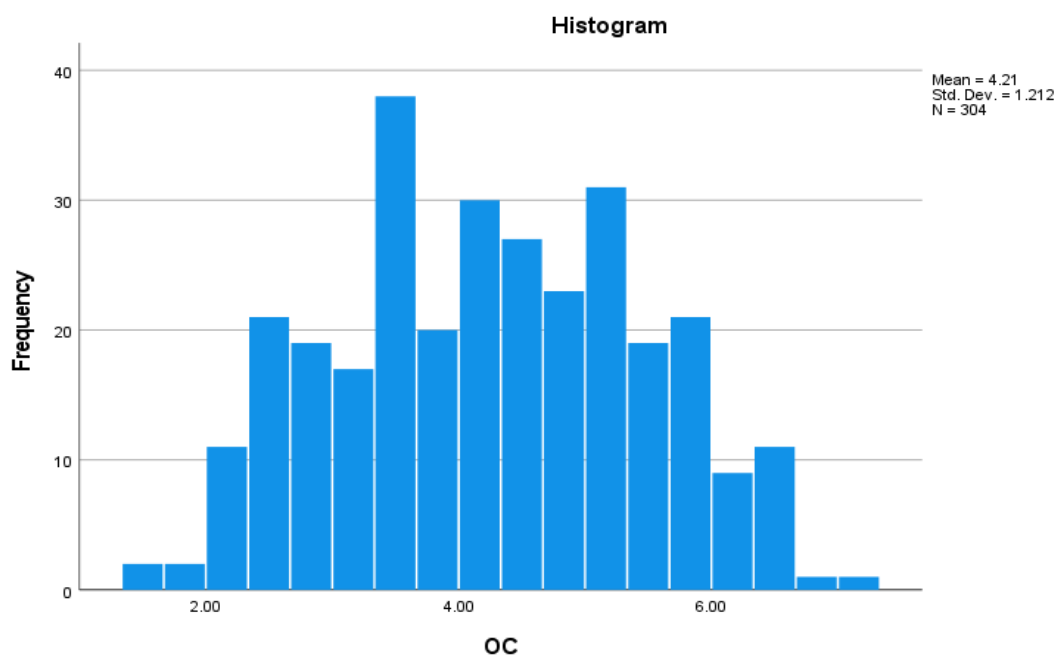
Note. Researcher's own compilation.

While further analyses were not conducted at a subdimension level, the mean scores reported for the three dimensions of organisational commitment provide some insight into the attitudes of employees towards DAFF and are therefore reported. The highest mean score was recorded for continuous commitment (M = 4.60), followed by affective commitment (M = 4.05) and normative commitment (M = 3.99). This is indicative that the respondents' continuous commitment to the organisation is dominant and that employees mainly remain with the organisation because they need to and not because they want to or feel that they ought to.

5.3   TEST FOR SIGNIFICANT MEAN DIFFERENCES

In this section, the results of the tests for significant mean differences, using the IBM SPSS software, version 27 (2020), to determine whether individuals from selected personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics differ significantly in terms of their perceptions of performance management system accuracy and fairness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (addressing research aim 2) are reported.

H₁: Different groups in terms of personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics will display different levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness (PMSE), job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

This study relied on the central limit theorem, which suggests that with sufficient and large samples the sampling distribution of the mean may be regarded as normal. Hence parametric tests were used (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). An independent sample t-test was used to compare gender groups and one-way analysis if variance (ANOVAs) were used to compare groups in terms of age, job level, education and tenure.

5.3.1   Gender

Table 5.6 summarises the results of the independent sample t-test that was conducted to compare the significant mean differences between gender groups for performance management system accuracy, performance management system fairness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Significant differences were observed regarding organisational commitment and the results are reported in Table 5.6.

Observing the results of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, the assumption of equal variance was not violated for the scales (Pallant, 2020). No significant differences were observed in the mean scores for PMSA between females (M = 3.92, SD =1.69) and males (M = 4.25, SD = 1.57) and the scores for PMSF between females (M = 2.96, SD = 1.03) and males (M = 3.09, SD = .92). Similarly, no significant differences were found in the JS for females (M = 3.33, SD = .71) and males (M = 3.48, SD = .71). Significant differences were observed in terms of the OC reported by females (M = 4.05; SD = 1.16) and males (M = 4.47; SD = 1.23; t (298) = -2.98, p < .001; d = -.35 small to medium practical effect).

Table 5.6

Test for Significance Mean Differences: Gender

Variable	Source of difference	n	Mean	SD	t-value	p	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval		Cohen d
								Lower	Upper	
PMSA	Female	176	3.92	1.69	-1.70	.09	-.33	-.71	.05	-.20
	Male	124	4.25	1.57						
PMSF	Female	176	2.96	1.03	-1.05	.30	-.12	.35	.11	-.12
	Male	124	3.09	.92						
JS	Female	176	3.33	.71	-1.84	.07	-.15	-.32	.01	-.22
	Male	124	3.48	.71						
OC	Female	176	4.05	1.16	-2.98	.00	-.42	-.69	-.14	-.35
	Male	124	4.47	1.23						

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 300;   ***$p \le 0.001$, **$p \le 0.01$, *$p \le 0.05$; d = .20 small practical effect, d = .50 medium practical effect, d = .80 large practical effect

5.3.2 Age

One-way ANOVAs were conducted to compare mean scores in terms of PMSA, PMSF, JS and OC between employees in different age groups. Post hoc analysis by means of the Bonferroni test was conducted as unequal variances were assumed. Significant differences between age groups were observed in terms of organisational commitment. The results are reported in Table 5.7.

No statistically significant differences were reported between age groups in terms of PMSA, PMSF and JS. The one-way ANOVA (F(2) = 8.06, p < .001) revealed statistically significant differences in terms of OC for different age groups. Post hoc analysis by means of the Bonferroni test revealed that the mean OC value was significantly different between Millennials (employees aged 25 - 40 years) (M = 3.90, SD = 1.06; 95% CI: 3.72 to 4.09) and Generation X employees (those aged 41 and 55 years) (41 - 55 years: M = 4.48, SD= 1.26; 95% CI: 4.27 to 4.68; d = .05; small to medium practical effect size). There were no statistically significant differences in means scores between Millennials and Baby Boomers (p = .50) or between Generation X and Baby Boomers (p = .61).

5.3.3 Job levels

One-way ANOVA analyses were performed to determine whether statistically significant differences in PMSA, PMSF, JS and OC exist between different groups in terms of job levels. The results reported in Table 5.8 show that no significant differences were observed.

The results, as reflected in Table 5.8, revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in terms of PMSA, PMSF, JS and OC found between groups at different levels of employment.

Table 5.7

Test for Significance Mean Differences: Age

Construct	Group	n	Mean	*SD*	95% Confidence Interval		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	*F*	*p*	Source of significant difference between means	Partial eta squared
PMSA	Millennials (25-40)	127	3.97	1.66	3.68	4.26	3.02	1.51	.55	.58	No significant group differences	
	Gen X (41 -55)	150	4.04	1.61	3.78	4.30						
	Baby Boomers (56-65)	27	4.34	1.85	3.61	5.07						
PMSF	Millennials (25-40)	127	2.98	1.06	2.79	3.16	1.47	.74	.76	.47	No significant group differences	
	Gen X (41 -55)	150	2.99	.93	2.84	3.14						
	Baby Boomers (56-65)	27	3.23	.96	2.85	3.61						
JS	Millennials (25-40)	127	3.36	.78	3.23	3.50	.24	.12	.23	.79	No significant group differences	
	Gen X (41 -55)	150	3.40	.70	3.28	3.51						
	Baby Boomers (56-65)	27	3.46	.59	3.23	3.70						
OC	Millennials (25-40)	127	3.90	1.06	3.72	4.09	22.62	11.31	8.06	.00	Millennials – Baby Boomers: -.57***	.05
	Gen X (41 -55)	150	4.48	1.26	4.27	4.68						
	Baby Boomers (56-65)	27	4.21	1.33	3.69	4.74						

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304; ***$p \leq 0.001$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *$p \leq 0.05$; Partial eta squared = .01 small practical effect, Partial eta squared = .06 medium practical effect, Partial eta squared = .14 large practical effect

Table 5.8

Test for Significant Mean Differences: Job Levels

Construct	Group	n	Mean	SD	95% confidence interval for the mean		Anova Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	p	Source of significant differences between means
					Lower bound	Upper bound					
PMSA	Levels 2-8	129	4.12	1.65	3.83	4.41	1.63	.81	.30	.74	No significant group differences
	Levels 9-10	90	3.97	1.68	3.62	4.32					
	Levels 11-14	85	3.98	1.63	3.63	4.33					
PMSF	Levels 2-8	129	2.96	1.01	2.78	3.13	.73	.36	.37	.69	No significant group differences
	Levels 9-10	90	3.02	1.07	2.79	3.24					
	Levels 11-14	85	3.08	.86	2.89	3.26					
JS	Levels 2-8	129	3.33	.75	3.20	3.46	1.18	.59	1.13	.32	No significant group differences
	Levels 9-10	90	3.39	.68	3.25	3.53					
	Levels 11-14	85	3.48	.72	3.32	3.63					
OC	Levels 2-8	129	4.22	1.10	4.03	4.42	2.14	1.07	.73	.48	No significant group differences
	9-10	90	4.10	1.26	3.84	4.36					
	Levels 11-14	85	4.32	1.32	4.04	4.61					

Notes: Researcher's own compilation; n = 304; ***$p \le 0.001$, **$p \le 0.01$, *$p \le 0.05$;

5.3.4 Tenure

One-way ANOVAs were conducted to compare mean scores in terms of PMSA, PMSF, JS and OC between tenure groups. Post hoc analysis by means of the Bonferroni test was conducted to determine the source of the differences in terms of PMSA and PMSF as unequal variances were assumed. For OC, the Games-Howell test was used for post hoc analysis as unequal variances were assumed. Statistically significant differences were observed between various tenure groups and the results are reported in Table 5.9.

No statistically significant differences were reported between tenure groups in terms of PMSA and JS. Although the ANOVA results detected significant differences between groups in terms of tenure relating to PMSA, post hoc analysis (Bonferroni test) did not confirm these differences. This might be attributed to the p-value adjustment in the post hoc analysis.

The one-way ANOVA ($F(4) = 3.09$, $p = .02$) revealed statistically significant group differences in terms of PMSF between employees in differerent tenure groups. Post hoc analysis by means of the Bonferroni test revealed that the mean PMSF value was signifcantly different between those employeed more than ten years but less than 15 years ($M = 2.86$; $SD = .94$, 95% CI: 2.67 to 3.05) and employees with more than 20 years ($M = 3.32$; $SD = .86$, 95% CI: 3.10 to 3.53; Partial eta squared = .05 which is a small to medium effect). The PMSF mean scores of these groups did not differ significantly from those employed for less than 5 years ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.18$); more than 5 years but less than 10 years ($M = 2.86$, $SD = .96$) or more than 15 but less than 20 years ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.01$).

In terms of OC, the one-way ANOVA ($F(4) = 4.44$, $p < .001$) revealed statistically significant differences in the mean scores reported by tenure groups. Post hoc analysis by means of the Game-Howell test, revealed the sources of these differences as being between the following groups (Partial eta squared = .06, medium effect):

- Those employed less than five years ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 1.16$, 95% *CI*: 3.45 to 4.28) and those employed more than 20 years ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.23$, 95% *CI*: 4.37 to 4.97)
- Those employed more than five years but less than 10 years ($M = 3.95$, $SD = .91$, 95% *CI*: 3.74 to 4.17) and those employed more than 20 years ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.23$, 95% *CI*: 4.37 to 4.97)

- Those employed more than ten but less than 15 years (*M* = 4.12, *SD* = 1.20, 95% *CI*: 3.88 to 4.37) and those employed more than 20 years (*M* = 4.67, *SD* = 1.23, 95% *CI*: 4.37 to 4.97)

The OC for employees who had been employed for more than 15 but less than 20 years (*M* = 4.43, *SD* = 1.49) did not differ significantly from any of the other groups.

5.3.5 Education level

One-way ANOVAs were conducted to compare mean scores of performance management system accuracy, performance management system fairness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment between employee groups based on their level of education. Post hoc analysis by means of Bonferroni test reported significant differences between these groups in terms of job satisfaction. The results are reported in Table 5.10.

No statistically significant differences in means scores for PMSA, PMSF and OC were reported between groups in terms of level of education.

The one-way ANOVA (*F*(3) = 2.98, *p* = .03) revealed statistically significant group differences in terms of JS between employee groups based on their level of education. Post hoc analysis by means of the Bonferroni test (Partial eta squared = .03 which is a small to medium effect) revealed that the mean JS value was significantly different between those with NQF 4 and lower qualifications (*M* = 3.75; *SD* = .77, 95% CI: 3.47 to 4.03) and those with NQF level 5 to 7 qualifications (*M* = 3.35; *SD* = .73, 95% CI: 3.21 to 3.48). Statistically significant mean differences were also reported between those with NQF 4 and lower qualifications (*M* = 3.75; *SD* = .77, 95% CI: 3.47 to 4.03) and those with NQF level 8 qualifications (*M* = 3.33; *SD* = .67, 95% CI: 3.19 to 3.47). However, the mean JS of these groups did not differ significantly from those with NQF 9 and 10 qualifications (*M* = 3.36, *SD* = .73).

Table 5.9

Test for Significant Mean Differences: Tenure

Construct	Group	n	Mean	SD	95% confidence interval for the mean		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	p	Source of significant differences between means	Partial eta squared
					Lower bound	Upper bound						
PMSA	Less than 5 years	32	4.54	1.65	3.94	5.13	32.77	8.19	3.09	.02	No Significant group differences	.
	More than 5 but less than 10 years	72	3.77	1.63	3.39	4.16						
	More than 10 but less than 15 years	94	3.79	1.51	3.48	4.10						
	More than 15 but less than 20 years	40	3.94	1.72	3.39	4.49						
	More than 20 years	66	4.49	1.72	4.07	4.92						
PMSF	Less than 5 years	32	3.37	1.18	2.94	3.79	15.41	3.85	4.13	.00	More than 10 but less than 15 years – more than 20 years: -.46*	.05
	More than 5 but less than 10 years	72	2.86	.96	2.64	3.09						
	More than 10 but less than 15 years	94	2.86	.94	2.67	3.05						
	More than 15 but less than 20 years	40	2.82	1.01	2.50	3.14						
	More than 20 years	66	3.32	.86	3.10	3.53						
JS	Less than 5 years	32	3.58	.68	3.33	3.82	3.93	.98	1.91	.11	No significant group differences	
	More than 5 but less than 10 years	72	3.29	.64	3.14	3.44						
	More than 10 but less than 15 years	94	3.32	.78	3.16	3.48						
	More than 15 but less than 20 years	40	3.33	.85	3.06	3.60						
	More than 20 years	66	3.54	.62	3.39	3.69						

| Construct | Group | n | Mean | SD | 95% confidence interval for the mean | | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | F | p | Source of significant differences between means | Partial eta squared |
					Lower bound	Upper bound						
OC	Less than 5 years	32	3.87	1.16	3.45	4.28	24.95	6.24	4.44	.00	Less than 5 years – More than 20 years: -.80*	
	More than 5 but less than 10 years	72	3.95	.91	3.74	4.17					More than 5 years but less than 10 years – more than 20 years: -.72**	
	More than 10 but less than 15 years	94	4.12	1.20	3.88	4.37					More than 10 but less than 15 years - more than 20 years: -.54*	
	More than 15 but less than 20 years	40	4.43	1.49	3.95	4.90						
	More than 20 years	66	4.67	1.23	4.37	4.97						

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304; ***$p \le 0.001$, **$p \le 0.01$, *$p \le 0.05$; Partial eta squared = .01 small practical effect, Partial eta squared = .06 medium practical effect, Partial eta squared = .14 large practical effect

Table 5.10

Test for Significant Mean Differences: Levels of Education

Construct	Group	n	Mean	SD	95% Confidence interval for the mean		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	p.	Source of significance difference	Partial eta squared
					Lower bound	Upper bound						
PMSA	NQF 4 and lower	31	4.58	1.97	3.85	5.30	15.33	5.11	1.89	.13	No significant group differences	
	NQF 5 - 7	109	4.10	1.66	3.79	4.42						
	NQF 8	87	4.01	1.47	3.70	4.32						
	NQF 9 & 10	77	3.76	1.67	3.38	4.14						
PMSF	NQF 4 and lower	31	3.26	1.19	2.82	3.69	2.24	.75	.77	.51	No significant group differences	
	NQF 5 - 7	109	2.99	.97	2.81	3.18						
	NQF 8	87	2.99	.88	2.80	3.18						
	NQF 9 & 10	77	2.95	1.03	2.71	3.18						
	Total	304	3.01	.99	2.90	3.12						
JS	NQF 4 and lower	31	3.75	.77	3.47	4.03	4.58	1.53	2.98	.03	NQF 4 and lower and NQF 5-7: .40*	.03
	NQF 5 - 7	109	3.35	.73	3.21	3.48					NQF 4 and lower and NQF 8: .42*	
	NQF 8	87	3.33	.67	3.19	3.47						
	NQF 9 & 10	77	3.36	.73	3.20	3.53						
	Total	304	3.39	.72	3.31	3.47						

Construct	Group	n	Mean	SD	95% Confidence interval for the mean		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	p.	Source of significance difference	Partial eta squared
					Lower bound	Upper bound						
OC	NQF 4 and lower	31	4.60	.07	4.21	4.99	7.31	2.44	1.67	.17	No significant group differences	
	NQF 5 - 7	109	4.16	1.15	3.94	4.38						
	NQF 8	87	4.07	1.17	3.82	4.32						
	NQF 9 & 10	77	4.30	1.37	3.99	4.61						
	Total	304	4.21	1.21	4.08	4.35						

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304; ***$p ≤ 0.001$, **$p ≤ 0.01$, *$p ≤ 0.05$; Partial eta squared = .01 small practical effect, Partial eta squared = .06 medium practical effect, Partial eta squared = .14 large practical effect

5.4 CORRELATIONS ANALYSIS

Bivarate correlation analyses were used to inspect the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables in this study. This section addresses empirical research aim 3.

H₂ₐ: A significant positive relationship exists between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment.

H₂ᵦ: A significant positive relationship exists between performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction.

5.4.1 Correlations between PMSA, PMSF, JS and OC

Hypothesis 2 (H$_2$) aimed to test if significant positive statistical relationships exist between employees' perceptions of performance management system effectiveness as measured by PMSA and PMSF, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. To test this hypothesis, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (r) were calculated. Cohen's (1988) recommendations (see Pallant, 2020) were applied to interpret the correlation coefficients: a correlation coefficient of .10 is thought to represent a weak or small association, a correlation coefficient of .30 is considered a moderate correlation, and a correlation coefficient of .50 or larger is thought to represent a strong or large correlation.

The results of the bivariate correlation analyses are reported in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11

Bivariate Correlation between PMSA, PMSF, JS and OC

Variable	PMSA	PMSF	JS	OC
Performance Management System Accuracy (PMSA)	1			
Performance Management System Fairness (PMSF)	.707*	1		
Job Satisfaction (JS)	.544*	.600*	1	
Organisation Commitment (OC)	.273*	.249*	.427	1

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304 *p < .01 at 2-tailed testing.

195

Table 5.11 reports that the linear relationship between PMSA and PMSF is positive, large and significant, r(301) =.71, $p < .001$, with R^2 = .504 (50.4%). In other words, higher levels of PMSA are strongly correlated with higher levels of PMSF, and vice versa, with a shared variance of 50.4% between the two variables. The large effect size is evident of a close relationship between the two constructs and the fact they can be regarded reflective of general performance management system effectiveness.

The relationship between PMSA and JS is positive, large and significant, r(301) =.54, $p < .001$, R^2 = .292 (29.2%), with the relationship between PMSF and JS also positive, significant and large, r(301) =.60, $p < .001$, R^2 = .36 (36.0%). PMSA and PMSF have shared variance of respectively 29.2% and 36.0% with JS. While higher levels of PMSA and PMSF are associated with higher levels of JS, the effect sizes are lower compared to that reported between PMSA and PMSF.

The relationship between PMSA and OC is positive, significant and moderate, r(301) = .27, $p < .001$, R^2 = .072 (7.2%), while the relationship between PMSF and OC is positive, significant and small, r(301)= .25, $p < .001$, R^2 = .062 (6.2%). In both cases, the shared variances with OC are less than 10%. Lastly, the relationship between JS and OC is positive, significant and moderate, r(301) =.43, $p < .001$, R^2 = .184 (18.4%). The two variables have a shared variance of 18.4%.

The findings, therefore, reject the null hypothesis that there is no positive significant relationships between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. However, in context of the research, the relationship between these variables also needed to be examined while controlling for job level, tenure, age, gender and level of education.

5.4.2   Partial correlation

The partial correlation coefficients were also interpreted using Cohen's (1988) conventions (see Pallant, 2020) where a correlation coefficient of .10 is thought to represent a weak or small association, a correlation coefficient of .30 is considered a moderate correlation and a correlation coefficient of .50 or larger is thought to represent a strong or large correlation.

5.4.2.1 Partial correlation controlling for job level

The results of the partial correlation analysis controlling for job level are presented in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12

Partial correlation: Controlling for Job level

Controlling variable		PMSA	PMSF	JS	OC
	PMSA	1			
Job level	PMSF	.709*	1		
	JS	.546*	.599*	1	
	OC	.273	.249*	.428*	1

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 304 *p < .001 at 2-tailed testing.

The partial correlation between PMSA and PMSF is positive, significant and large, r(301) = .71, p < .001 R^2 = .504 (50.4%). The correlation coefficient and R^2 value are very similar to that reported without controlling for job level. It would therefore seem that job level had very little effect on the strength of the relationship between PMSA and PMSF.

The partial correlation between PMSA and JS is also positive, significant and large, r(301) = .55, p < .001 R^2 = .303 (30.3%).The correlation coefficient and R^2 value are very similar to that reported without controlling for job level. It would therefore seem that job level had very little effect on the strength of the relationship between PMSA and JS. The results further indicate that the partial correlation between PMSF and JS is positive, significant and large, r(301) = .60, p < .001 R^2 = .36 (36%). The correlation coefficient and R^2 value are very similar to that reported without controlling for job level would therefore seem that job level had very little effect on the strength of the relationship between PMSF and JS.

The partial correlation between PMSA and OC is positive, significant and small, r(301) = .27, p < .001 R^2 = .073 (7.3%), and that between PMSF and OC positive, significant and small, r(301) = .25, p < .001 R^2 = .062 (6.2%). The correlation coefficient and R^2 value are very similar to that reported without controlling for job level. It would therefore seem that job level had very little effect on the strength of the relationship between PMSA and OC and also for PMSF and OC.

Lastly, the partial correlation between JS and OC is positive, significant and moderate, r(301) = .43, $p < .001$ R^2 = .185 (18.5.%). The correlation coefficient and R^2 value are very similar to that reported without controlling for job level. It would therefore seem that job level had very little effect on the strength of the relationship between JS and OC.

5.4.2.2 *Partial correlation controlling for tenure*

Table 5.13 indicates the partial correlations using tenure as a control variable.

Table 5.13

Partial correlation: Controlling for Tenure

Controlling variable		PMSA	PMSF	JS	OC
	PMSA	1			
Tenure	PMSF	.706*	1		
	JS	.543*	.599*	1	
	OC	.265*	.245	.429*	1

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 303 *$p < .001$ at 2-tailed testing.

The partial correlation between PMSA and PMSF is positive, large and significant r(301) = .71, $p < .001$ R^2 = .504 (50.4%), no change when controlling for tenure. The partial correlation between PMSA and JS is also positive, large and significant r(301) = .54, $p < .001$ R^2 = .292 (29.9%), no change when controlling for tenure, while the partial correlation between PMSA and OC is positive, small and significant r(301) =.27, $p < .001$ R^2 = .073 (7.3%), no change when controlling for tenure. The results further indicates that the partial correlation between PMSF and JS is positive, large and significant r(301) = .60, $p < .001$ R^2 = .36 (36%), no change when controlling for tenure and the partial correlation between PMSF and OC was positive small and significant, r(301) = .25, $p < .001$ R^2 = .06 (6%), no change when controlling for tenure. There were slight changes in correlation sizes and variance accounted (ΔR^2) across all the relationships when controlling for tenure, with the highest change not more than 2%.

Lastly, the partial correlation between JS and OC is positive, significant and moderate r(301) = .43, $p < .001$ R^2 = .185 (18.5.%). The correlation coefficient and R^2 value are very similar to that reported without controlling for tenure. It would therefore seem that tenure had very little effect on the strength of the relationship between JS and OC.

5.4.2.3 Partial correlation controlling for age

Table 5.14 indicates the partial correlations using age as a control variable.

Table 5.14

Partial correlations: Controlling for Age

Controlling variable		PMSA	PMSF	JS	OC
	PMSA	1			
	PMSF	.705*	1		
Age	JS	.540*	.597*	1	
	OC	.263*	.237*	.417*	1

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 303 *p < .001 at 2-tailed testing.

The partial correlation between PMSA and PMSF is positive, large and significant r(301) =.71, p < .001 R^2 = .49 (49%), no change when controlling for age. The partial correlation between PMSA and JS is also positive, large and significant r(301) = .54, p < .001 R^2 = .292 (29.2%), a decrease from .55 to .54 while the partial correlation between PMSA and OC is also positive, small and significant r(301) =.26, p < .001 R^2 = .07 (7%), a decrease from .27 to .26. The results further indicates that the partial correlation between PMSF and JS is positive, large and significant r(301) = .60, p < .001 R^2 = .36 (36%) and the partial correlation between PMSF and OC was positive small and significant, r(301) = .24, p < .001 R^2 = .062 (6.2%), a decrease from .25 to .24. There were slight changes in variance accounted (ΔR^2) across all the relationships when controlling for age, with the highest change not more than 2%.

Lastly, the partial correlation between JS and OC is positive, significant and moderate, r(301) = .42, p < .001 R^2 = .176 (18.%). The correlation coefficient and R^2 value are very similar to that reported without controlling for age. It would therefore seem that age had very little effect on the strength of the relationship between JS and OC.

5.4.2.4 Partial correlation controlling for gender

Table 5.15 indicates the partial correlations using gender as a control variable.

Table 5.15

Partial correlations: Controlling for Gender

Controlling variable		PMSA	PMSF	JS	OC
	PMSA	1			
	PMSF	.703*	1		
Gender	JS	.536*	.593*	1	
	OC	.252*	.232*	.404*	1

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 303 *p < .001 at 2-tailed testing.

The partial correlation between PMSA and PMSF is positive, large and significant r(297) = .70, *p* <. 001 R^2 = .49 (49%), a decrease from .71 to .70. The partial correlation between PMSA and JS is also positive, large and significant r(297) =.54, *p* < .001 R^2 = .292 (29.2%), while the partial correlation between PMSA and OC is also positive, small and significant r(297) = .25, *p* < .001 R^2 = .063 (6.3%), a decrease from .27 to .25. The results further indicates that the partial correlation between PMSF and JS is positive, large and significant r(297) = .59, *p* < .001 R^2 = .36 (36%), a decrease from .60 to .59 and the partial correlation between PMSF and OC was positive small and significant, r(297) = .23, *p* < .001, R^2 = .063 (6.3%) a decrease from .25 to .23. There were slight changes in correlation sizes and variance accounted (ΔR^2) across all the relationships when controlling for gender, with the highest change not more than 2%.

Lastly, the partial correlation between JS and OC is positive, significant and moderate, r(301) = .40, *p* < .001 R^2= .16 (1.6%). The correlation coefficient and R^2 value reported slight changes when controlling for gender with slight effect on the strength of the relationship between JS and OC.

5.4.2.5   Partial correlation controlling for level of education

Table 5.16 indicates the partial correlations using level of education as a control variable.

Table 5.16

Partial correlations: Controlling for Level of Education

Controlling variable		PMSA	PMSF	JS	OC
	PMSA	1			
	PMSF	.707*	1		
Level of Education	JS	.537*	.598*	1	
	OC	.268*	.246*	.424*	1

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 303 *p < .001 at 2-tailed testing.

The partial correlation between PMSA and PMSF is positive, large and significant r(301) = .71, p < .001 R^2 = 504 (50.4%). The partial correlation between PMSA and JS is also positive, large and significant r(301) = .54, p < .001 R^2 = .292 (29.2%), while the partial correlation between PMSA and OC is also positive, small and significant r(301) = .27, p < .001 R^2 = .073 (7.3%). The results further indicate that the partial correlation between PMSF and JS is positive, large and significant r(301) = .60, p < 001 R^2 = .36 (36%) and the partial correlation between PMSF and OC was positive small and significant, r(301) = .25, p < 001 R^2 = .057 (5.7%). There were no changes in variance accounted (ΔR^2) across all the relationships when controlling for level of education.

Lastly, the partial correlation between JS and OC is positive, significant and moderate, r(301) = .42, p < .001 R^2= .176 (18.%). The correlation coefficient and R^2 value are very similar to that reported without controlling for level of education would therefore seem that level of education had no effect on the strength of the relationship between JS and OC.

When controlling the relationship between PMSE, JS and OC using various biographical variables in the study the relationship was found to be positive and significant with all the biographical variables. The partial correlation demonstrated that there are relationships even after a third variable is controlled.

5.5   MEDIATION ANALYSIS

The third and final hypothesis aimed to test if the statistical relationship between performance management system effectiveness (consisting of PMSA and PMSF) and organisational commitment, is mediated by job satisfaction. This section addresses empirical research aim 4.

H₃: While employees' perceptions of performance management system effectiveness are positively related to organisational commitment, the relationship between the two variables are mediated by job satisfaction.

Figure 5.5 presents the conceptual research model to be tested.

Figure 5.5

Mediation Model
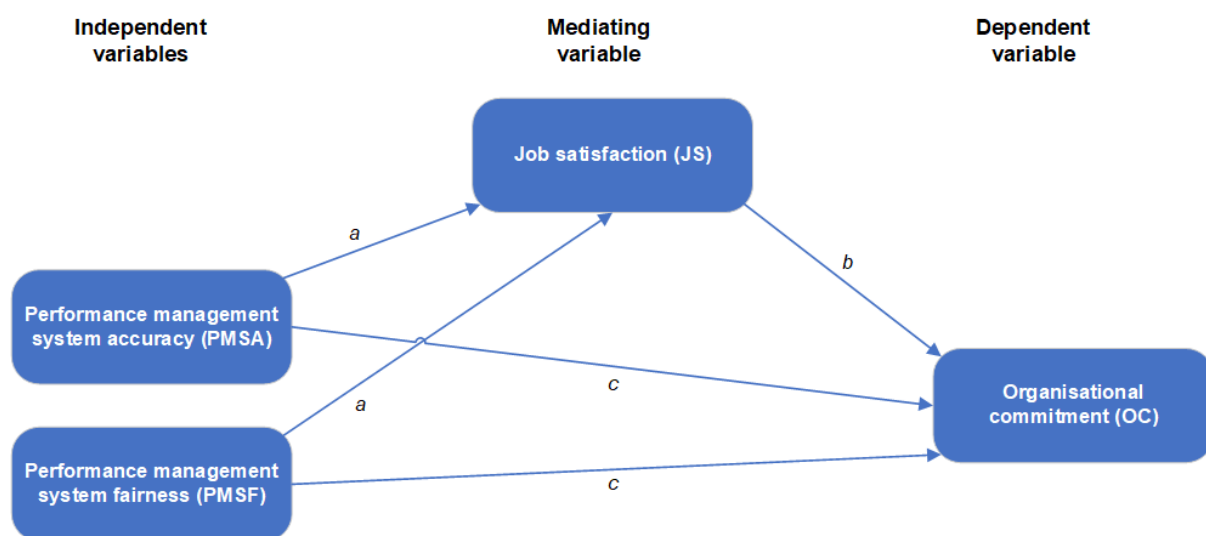
Notes. Researcher's own compilation; c = direct effect of X on Y; ab = indirect effect of X on Y through M

The analyses for mediation were conducted using the PROCESS macro for IBM SPSS (PROCESS macro), version 3.5.3 (Hayes, 2018). To avoid bias in standard errors estimated, heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors and 5000 bootstrap resamples with 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals for the indirect effect at different levels were applied as part of the testing procedure.

5.5.1 Job Satisfaction as Mediator between Performance Management System Accuracy (PMSA) and Organisation Commitment (OC)

The first mediation analysis focused on testing JS as mediator between PMSA and OC. Three regression models are presented in Table 5.17. The first model considers the relationship between PMSA and OC. This is referred to as the total effects model. The second model tests the relationship between PMSA and JS. Lastly, the relationship between PMSA and JS is jointly tested. The relationship between PMSA and OC in the last model is referred to as the direct effects model. The effects of PMSF and the selected demographic variables (job level, tenure, age, gender and level of education) are controlled for in all three models.

Table 5.17 provides a summary of the unstandardised (B) and standardised (Std β) regression coefficients, 95% confidence intervals (LLCI and ULCI), standard error (SE) and R^2 values for the mediation model.

Table 5.17

Mediation Model Coefficients for PMSA, JS, and OC

	B [LLCI, ULCI]	Std β	SE
Model 1			
DV: OC (R^2 = .152*)			
Constant	1.895 [.900, 2.890]		.506
PMSA (IV-predictor)	.114 [.003; .225]*	.155	.056
Model 2			
DV = JS (R^2 = .41*)			
Constant	2.168 [1.68, 2.66]		.250
PMSA (IV-predictor)	.099 [.044, .154]*	.228	.028
Model 3			
DV = OC (R^2 = .253*)			
Constant	.384 [-.665, 1.434]		.533
PMSA (IV-predictor)	.045 [-0.62, .152]	.061	.054
JS (M variable)	.697 [.478, .916]*	.412	.111

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n = 300, *p < .001, R^2 = variance accounted for, DV=dependent variable; IV=independent variable; M=mediator variable; LLCI=lower limit confidence interval; ULCI=upper limit confidence interval

The results of model 1 (the total effects model) with PMSA as a predictor of OC accounted for significant unique variance, R^2 = .152, F(7,292) = 7.47, p < .001. PMSA was a significant predictor of OC, B = .114, SE = .056, 95% CI [.003,.225], Std β = .155, p < .001. By Cohen's (1988) conventions (see Pallant, 2020), a combined effect of this magnitude can be considered 'small' (f^2 = .18).

Results for model 2 indicate that PMSA is a significant predictor of JS accounting for unique variance, R^2 = .41, F(7,292) = 28.59, B = .099, SE = .028, 95% CI [.044,.154], Std β = .23, p < .001. By Cohen's (1988) conventions (see Pallant, 2020), a combined effect of this magnitude can be considered 'large' (f^2 = .69).

The mediation model (model 3) accounted for significant unique variance in OC, R^2 = .25, F (8, 291) = 12.30, p<.001. By Cohen's (1988) conventions (see Pallant, 2020), a combined effect of this magnitude can be considered 'small' (f^2 = .33). JS was a significant predictor of OC, B = .697, SE = .111, 95% CI [.478,.916], Std β = .412, p < .001. However, in contrast to model 1, PMSA was no longer a significant predictor of OC after including for the mediator, B = .045, SE(Boot) = .054, 95% CI (Boot) [-.062,.152], β = .061, p = .409. This is consistent with a mediating or indirect effect with cross sectional research (Hayes, 2018).

The indirect effect was tested using a percentile bootstrap estimation approach with 5000 samples as suggested by Shrout and Bolger (2002), implemented with the PROCESS macro, Version 3.5.3 (Hayes, 2018). These results indicate there is significant and positive total effect of .114, SE = .056, 95% CI [.003, .225], p <.05. The results also indicate that the direct effect is not significant although positive, .045, SE = .05, 95% CI [-.062, .152], LLCI/ULCI = 0, p = .409. However, the indirect effect of PMSA on OC is significant with positive effect of .069, SE (Boot) = .022, 95% CI (Boot) [.029,.115], partially standardised β = .057, LLCI/ULCI ≠ 0, p<.05. The difference in the effect sizes is approximately .024 (.069 - .045) points, which is higher as mediated by JS. The results support the mediational hypothesis (H_3) that while employees' perceptions of performance management system effectiveness are positively related to organisational commitment, the relationship between the two variables are mediated positively by job satisfaction.

Table 5.18

The effect of JS on PMSA

Total effect of X on Y							
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_ps	c_cs
.114	.056	2.017	.045	.003	.225	.094	.155
Direct effect of X on Y							
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_ps	c'_cs
.045	.054	.826	.409	-.062	.152	.037	.061
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y							
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI			
JS	.069	.022	.029	.115			

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n= 304; bootstrap sample size = 5 000; LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; UPLL = upper limit confidence interval.

5.5.2 Job Satisfaction as Mediator between Performance Management System Fairness (PMSF) and Organisational Commitment (OC)

The second mediation analysis focused on testing JS as mediator between PMSF and OC. Three regression models are presented in Table 5.19. The first model considers the relationship between PMSF and OC. This is referred to as the total effects model. The second model tests the relationship between PMSF and JS. Lastly, the relationship between PMSF and JS is jointly tested. The relationship between PMSF and OC in the last model is referred to as the direct effects model. The effects of PMSF and the selected demographic variables (job level, tenure, age, gender and level of education) are controlled for in all three models.

Table 5.19 provides a summary of the unstandardised (*B*) and standardised (Std β) regression coefficients, 95% confidence intervals (LLCI and ULCI), standard error (SE) and R^2 values for the mediation model.

The results of model 1 (the total effects model) with PMSF as a predictor of OC accounted for significant unique variance, R^2 = .152, F(7,292) = 7.47, *p* < .001. PMSF was not a significant predictor of OC, B = .138, SE = .094, 95% CI [-.046,.322], Std β = .113, *p* = .141. By Cohen's (1988) conventions (see Pallant, 2020), a combined effect of this magnitude can be considered 'small' (f^2 = .18).

Results for model 2 indicate that PMSF is a significant predictor of JS accounting for unique variance, R^2 = .41, F(7,292) = 28.59, B = .302, SE = .046, 95% CI [.211,.394], Std β = .417, p

< .001. By Cohen's (1988) conventions (see Pallant, 2020), a combined effect of this magnitude can be considered 'large' ($f^2 = .69$).

Table 5.19

Mediation Model Coefficients for PMSF, JS, and OC

	B [LLCI, ULCI]	Std β	SE
Model 1			
DV: OC (R^2 = .152*)			
Constant	1.895 [.900, 2.890]		.506
PMSF (IV-predictor)	.138 [-.046; .322]	.155	.094
Model 2			
DV = JS (R^2 = .41*)			
Constant	2.168 [1.675, 2.661]		.250
PMSF (IV-predictor)	.302 [.211, .394]*	.417	.046
Model 3			
DV = OC (R^2 = .253*)			
Constant	.384 [-.665, 1.434]		.533
PMSF (IV-predictor)	-.073 [-.258, .113]	-.059	.094
JS (M variable)	.697 [.478, .916]*	.412	.111

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n=300, *p < .001, R^2 = variance accounted for, DV=dependent variable; IV=independent variable; M=mediator variable; LLCI=lower limit confidence interval; ULCI=upper limit confidence interval

The mediation model (model 3) accounted for significant unique variance in OC, R^2 = .25, F (8, 291) = 12.30, p < .001. By Cohen's (1988) conventions (see Pallant, 2020), a combined effect of this magnitude can be considered 'small' (f^2 = .33). JS was a significant predictor of OC, B = .697, SE = .111, 95% CI [.478,.916], Std β = .412, p < .001. However, similar to model 1, PMSF was not a significant predictor of OC after controlling for the mediator (JS), B = -.073, SE(Boot) = .054, 95% CI (Boot) [-.062,.152], β = -.059, p = .442.

The indirect effect was tested using a percentile bootstrap estimation approach with 5000 samples as suggested by Shrout and Boulger (2002), implemented with the PROCESS macro Version 3.5.3 (Hayes, 2018). These results indicate there is a positive but not significant total effect of .138, SE = .094, 95% CI [-.046, .322], p =141. The results also indicate that the direct effect is not significant and negative, -.073, SE = .094, 95% CI [-.258, .113], LLCI/ULCI = 0, p = .442. However, the indirect effect of PMSF on OC is significant with positive effect of .211, SE (Boot) = .050, 95% CI (Boot) [.119,.316], partially standardised β = .174, LLCI/ULCI ≠ 0, p < .05. The difference in the direct and indirect effect sizes is approximately .014 (.211 - .073) points, which is lower as mediated by JS. The results support the mediational hypothesis (H₃) that while employees' perceptions of performance management system effectiveness are

negatively related to organisational commitment, the relationship between the two variables are mediated by job satisfaction.

Table 5.20

The effect of Job satisfaction on PMSF

Total effect of X on Y								
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_ps	c_cs	
.138	.094	1.475	.141	-.046	.322	.114	.113	
Direct effect of X on Y								
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_ps	c'_cs	
-.073	.094	-.770	.442	-.258	.113	-.060	-.059	
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y								
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI				
JS	.211	.050	.119	.316				

Notes. Researcher's own compilation; n= 300; bootstrap sample size = 5 000; LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; UPLL = upper limit confidence interval.

5.6   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The validity and reliablity of the scales used in this study was reported. The descriptive statistics for the constructs, test for significance mean differences, correlation and mediation analysis were discussed in this chapter to integrate the literature review findings with the empirical research findings conducted in this study. The following empirical research aims of the study were addressed in Chapter 5.

Research aim 1: To investigate whether significant differences exist in the levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment between groups based on selected personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics.

Research aim 2: To investigate the empirical relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Research aim 3: To determine whether job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment.

The empirical research aims of the study was thus achieved. In Chapter 6 the empirical study will conclude by addressing the research aim that follows.

Research aim 4: To formulate recommendations for performance management practices as well as further research in the field of HRM based on the research findings.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter interprets and discusses the research results that were reported in Chapter 5. Furthermore, the conclusions of the study are presented, and its limitations are outlined. Recommendations in terms of performance management practices and further research are made. The chapter addresses empirical research aim 4, namely, to formulate recommendations for performance management practices as well as further research in the field of HRM based on the research findings.

6.1   INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

The following section presents a synthesis and discussion of the results. The demographic profile of the sample is outlined, followed by a discussion of the results of the statistical analyses that were conducted to address the research aims and test the hypotheses outlined in Table 4.6.

6.1.1   Biographical profile of the sample

All participants were full-time employees of DAFF. The participants in the sample were predominantly females (57.9%) between the ages of 25 and 55 years. In terms of generational categories, the sample consisted mainly of millennials (aged 25-40 years, 41.8%) and Generation X employees (aged 41-55 years, 49.3%). The majority of respondents were employed on job levels 2 to 8 (42.4%), which represent entry-level positions, and have been employed in DAFF for ten to 15 years (30.9%). In terms of the level of education, the sample predominantly comprised of respondents who have completed tertiary qualifications, ranging from higher certificates (NQF level 5, 2.0%), diplomas or advanced certificates (NQF level 6, 14.5%), Bachelor's degrees or advanced diplomas (NQF level 7, 19.4%), Bachelor honours degrees, postgraduate diplomas or professional qualifications (NQF level 8, 28.6%) and Masters' and Doctoral degrees (NQF levels 9 and 10, 25.3%).

6.1.2 Profile of the sample in terms of performance management system accuracy, performance management system fairness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment

This section addresses empirical research aim 1, which set out to measure the levels of performance management system effectiveness (consisting of PMSA and PMSF), job satisfaction (JS) and organisational commitment (OC) in a sample of public service employees.

The descriptive statistics relating to PMSA, PMSF, JS and OC were reported in Table 5.5. The overall mean score for PMSA (4.04) was slightly above the midpoint on a 7-point Likert scale, which suggests that employees, on average, perceive the organisation's performance management system as moderately accurate in terms of recognising and enhancing their performance. This implies that employees feel that there is some (albeit limited) recognition for their performance. The findings are similar to those reported by Modipane et al. (2019) in a sample of North-West provincial government employees and provide support for the assertion that public sector employees in South Africa perceive the current performance management system as moderately accurate. While employees, therefore, do not express major concerns about the accuracy of the performance management system, they do feel that there is room for improvement. Modipane et al. (2019) recommend that PMSA may be enhanced by setting clear performance goals and continuously measuring goal achievement and providing feedback.

The mean score for PMSF (3.01), which is slightly above the midpoint range on a 5-point Likert scale, indicates that employees perceive the PMS as moderately fair. These findings correspond with those of Modipane et al. (2019), suggesting that employees in the South African public sector are not overly concerned about the fairness (or unfairness) of the performance management system but that there is room for improvement. Makhubela et al. (2016), in a study in the South African public sector, reported shortcomings in terms of performance management system fairness. As a means to address these shortcomings, they recommend that regular feedback should be provided and that employees should be involved in goal setting. Modipane et al. (2019) recommend various ways in which PMSF may be enhanced. This includes, inter alia, applying objective performance standards, quantifying employee contributions and justifying performance assessments (distributive justice). Furthermore, performance management should be implemented consistently and objectively while upholding ethical principles and employees should be allowed to actively participate in

the performance assessment process (procedural justice). Finally, details about the performance management process should be clearly communicated and explained to employees to eliminate misunderstanding (informational justice) (Modipane et al., 2019).

With regard to job satisfaction, a mean score of 3.39 on a 6-point Likert scale suggested that DAFF employees were not particularly satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs. According to Spector (1985), a mean score of 3.39 indicates that the respondents displayed ambivalence or uncertainty about their overall job satisfaction. The aspects of their jobs that respondents were least satisfied with were promotion and operating procedures. Respondents experienced the nature of their work as positive and were satisfied with their supervisors. However, they were not satisfied with their current working procedures and felt that they were not afforded opportunities for promotion, which affected their overall job satisfaction negatively. The findings of the current study support previous findings by Hambuda (2017), who reported that public sector employees expressed concern about limited promotional opportunities.

A mean score of 4.21 (on a 7-point Likert scale) was reported in terms of organisational commitment. This implies that, on average, employees of DAFF are committed to their organisation. However, there were some employees who reported very low levels of organisational commitment (see Figure 5.4), suggesting that the employer should take actions aimed at enhancing the commitment of its employees. Research has shown that employees who are highly committed to their employing organisations tend to have a work ethic that is conducive to increasing productivity and efficiency (Pikanegore, 2021).

In this study, the participants scored higher on continuance commitment (4.60) and lower on affective (4.05) and normative (3.98) commitment, which is an indication that they mainly remain with the organisation owing to the cost and risk associated with leaving rather than a moral obligation or emotional attachment to the organisation. Similar findings were reported by Gani (2017) and Pikanegore (2021) who conducted research on organisational commitment in the South African education sector and steel industry respectively. However, it has been shown in extant literature, that high levels of continuance commitment are not necessarily desirable. Pikanegore (2021) warns that high levels of continuance commitment mean that employees remain in the organisation to address their own needs and not because they identify with the goals of the organisation. These employees would not hesitate to leave when better employment opportunities arise (Pikanegore, 2021). Employees who remain with the organisation owing to a lack of alternative options will simply maintain acceptable behaviour until a better option comes along or may perform poorly and engage in negative

behaviour that violates organisational norms and practices as they do not have a moral obligation or emotional attachment to the organisation (Sheridan et al., 2019).

Organisations should find ways of enhancing affective commitment by ensuring that promotion opportunities, allocation of resources, procedures and policies are fair (Mitonga-Monga & Hoole, 2018; Shahjehan et al., 2019). In addition, managers and supervisors should create a working environment that is conducive by being supportive, provide employees with challenging tasks, reward performance fairly and allow employees to participate in decision-making to enhance employees' satisfaction and commitment (Blersch et al., 2020; Georges, 2020; Pikanegore, 2021). To enhance normative commitment, employees should be involved in meaningful work, setting of performance goals and performance standards and be provided with feedback continuously. This will further increase their loyalty and willingness to assert more effort to the success of the organisation (Hendri, 2019). Furthermore, the organisation may enhance the normative commitment of their employees by investing in their development by paying tuition fees or providing job training opportunities (Satardien et al., 2019).

6.1.3 Differences between groups in terms of personal and job-related characteristics

This section addresses empirical research aim 2, which was to investigate whether significant differences exist in the levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment between groups based on selected personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics.

The results of the tests for significant mean differences were reported in Tables 5.6 to 5.10.

6.1.3.1 Gender

The majority of the respondents in this study were females. In terms of gender and PMSA, this study found no significant differences between males and female groups. The results of this study corroborate the findings of Modipane et al. (2019) who found no significant differences between men and women in terms of their perceptions of performance management system accuracy.

Extant literature has shown that males tend to perceive the fairness of performance management systems more positively than their female counterparts (Festing et al., 2015).

This has been attributed to the finding that the scores of male employees are often inflated to avoid confrontation (Lin & Kellough, 2019). Female employees consequently feel that the performance management system discriminates against them and experience it as biased and ineffective (Festing et. al., 2015). These findings have, however, been disputed by Makhubela et al. (2016) and Modipane et al. (2019) who found no statistically significant differences between males and females. Hence, it was deemed important to determine whether such differences exist in the current study. This study's findings corroborate those of Makhubela et al. (2016) and Modipane et al. (2019) that no statistically significant differences exist between men and women in terms of their perceptions of the fairness of a performance management system. It may, therefore, be concluded that, in the current sample, gender does not substantially affect employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system.

Reports in the literature relating to gender differences in terms of job satisfaction have been inconsistent. In instances where differences were detected, these differences have been ascribed to the different needs held by males and females. According to Laroche (2017), males and females have different expectations of what their jobs should entail, and female employees tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. Van der Schyff et al. (2018) indicate that women value working conditions such as job contentment, working envrionment that provides emotional support and positive co-worker relationships, while men value high pay, opportunities to work independently, promotion opportunities and job security. In contrast, however, Djordjević et al. (2017) report that the nature of work determine male employees' level of job satisfaction while pay, promotion, rewards and co-worker relationships determine female employees' level of job satisfaction. In terms of job satisfaction, this study found no significant differences between male and female groups. The results are consistent with the findings of Pooja and Pradeep (2017) who found no significant differences between males and females in terms of job satisfaction. It may therefore be concluded that, although gender differences in terms of job satisfaction were reported in the literature, gender was not a contributing factor to differences in job satisfaction in the current sample.

Inconsistent and inconclusive results relating to gender differences in terms of organisational commitment have also been reported in extant literature (Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013; Luu et al., 2019). Affum-Osei et al. (2015) found males to be significantly more committed than females. However, researchers such as Jabaar (2017) and Siciliano and Thompson (2018) report that female employees show more dedication and commitment to their employing organisation. This study found significant differences between males and females in terms of

organisational commitment, with males reporting higher levels of commitment than females. This is consistent with the findings of Affum-Osei et al. (2015) who found that males are more committed than females. Kirsten (2019) also found that males displayed higher levels of attitudinal commitment than females. The differences may be ascribed to the nature of work or work experiences in the organisation as employees who are treated well reciprocate with higher levels of affective commitment (Twumasi & Addo, 2021). The lower level of commitment reported by females has been ascribed to the valuation of masculine characteristics in the workplace (Ngakantsi, 2022) and the higher levels of work-life conflict experienced by female employee who often carry greater family responsibility than their male counterparts (Gani, 2017; Siciliano & Thompson, 2018).

6.1.3.2 Age

The respondents were mainly Generation X (aged 41-55) employees and millennials (aged 25-40), but also included some Baby Boomers (aged 56-64). As the literature suggested that there might be differences in terms of employees' perceptions of performance management effectiveness (mainly the perceived fairness thereof), job satisfaction and organisational commitment due to their age (see Table 3.2), this aspect was empirically tested. However, no statistically significant differences between the different age groups in terms of PMSA, PMSF and JS were found. These results are consistent with those reported by Makhubela et al. (2016) and Modipane et al. (2019) in that neither of these studies found any significant differences between age groups in terms of the perceived accuracy of the performance management system.

Reports in extant literature about the differences in PMSF for different age groups have been contradicting. For instance, Kim and Holzer (2016) report that older employees are more likely to regard the outcome of performance appraisals as fair while Makhubela et al. (2016) and Modipane et al. (2019) found no statistically significant differences between age groups in terms of the fairness of the performance management system. This study's findings corroborate those of Makhubela et al. (2016) and Modipane et al. (2019) as no statistically significant differences in terms of PMSF were found between age groups. This implies that employees' perceptions of the fairness of the performance management system are not dependent on or affected by their age.

It has also been reported in extant literature that older employees tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction than their younger counterparts and that job satisfaction increases with age

(Dobrow Riza et al., 2018; Yucel & Bektas, 2012). However, this study found no significant differences in terms of job satisfaction between the different age groups. It can, therefore, be deduced from the findings that DAFF employees do not experience different levels of job satisfaction because of their age, but that there are other aspects that determine their job satisfaction.

Significant differences between age groups in terms of organisational commitment were observed in this study, corroborating similar results reported by Bakotić (2022). This study found significant differences in terms of organisational commitment between millennials (aged 25-40) and Baby Boomers (aged 56-65), with older employees displaying higher levels of organisational commitment than their younger counterparts. These findings contradict Bakotić's (2022) assertion that younger employees tend to commit to their organisation, but that their level of commitment decreases over time if their (often unrealistic) expectations are not met. Baby Boomers value respect, job security and promotions and, in contrast with Bakotić's (2022) view, have been reported to display the highest level of commitment to their employing organisations (Benson et al., 2018; LaGree et al., 2021; Markom, 2018). This has been ascribed to more realistic expectations and a greater sense of achievement held by older employees and the work-related investments that these employees have made over an extended period (Callea et al., 2016; Tlaiss, 2013). In general, employees have been shown to develop a greater sense of commitment towards their employing organisations over time (Gani, 2017; González et al., 2016) as they become more familiar with and comfortable in their employing organisations (Benson et al., 2018).

Extant literature indicates that older employees tend to display higher levels of affective and normative commitment than younger employees (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Jabaar, 2017; Yucel & Bektas, 2012). Older employees are also more likely to display higher levels of continuance commitment owing to high costs associated with leaving the employing organisation after an extended period of employment and a reluctance to break the bonds that they have established with their employers over time (Qureshi et al., 2019). Moreover, they tend to place more value on investments already made, such as pensions, job security and seniority, than their younger counterparts, rendering them dependent on continued membership with the organisation (Saleem et al., 2021).

215

6.1.3.3 Job levels

The majority of the respondents in this study were entry-level employees (job levels 2 – 8). A review of the literature suggests that employees at higher job levels are more likely to perceive the performance management process as effective and tend to display higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment (see Table 3.2). However, no significant differences in terms of PMSA, PMSF, JS and OC were found between DAFF employees at different job levels. The findings of this study differ from those reported by Modipane et al. (2019) who found statistically significant differences between employees at different job levels in terms of the perceived accuracy of the performance management system.

In terms of job levels and PMSF, literature indicates that employees at supervisory level responsible for performance assessment tend to regard performance outcomes as fair (Kim & Holtzer, 2016). However, subordinates often question the fairness of both the procedure followed and the outcomes of the performance management system (Modipane et al., 2019). This study found no significant differences in terms PMSF between employees at different job levels. These findings differ from the findings of Makhubela et al. (2016) and Modipane et al. (2019) who reported statistically significant differences between employees at different job levels in terms of perceived performance management system fairness. The results imply that employees' perceptions of the effectives (accuracy and fairness) of the PMS are not dependent on their job levels and that there are other aspects that inform their perspectives in this regard.

In terms of job satisfaction and job levels, literature indicates that as employees progress to higher job levels, their level of job satisfaction also increases (Sempane et al., 2002). Sabbagha (2016) reports that employees in senior positions tend to be more satisfied than those in junior positions. Employees at senior levels are more likely to be satisfied with various facets of their jobs such as pay, working conditions, promotions and co-worker relationships (Mitonga-Monga, 2019). However, this study found no statistically significant differences in terms of job satisfaction between groups in terms of job levels. The results of this study do not corroborate expectations following the literature review and the results reported by other researchers. Hence, in this sample, employees' level of job satisfaction is not dependent on or affected by their job levels but by other aspects of their jobs, which might include promotions, pay, recognition and support from supervisors (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015).

This study found no significant differences in terms of organisational commitment between employees at different job levels. The results differ from those reported by researchers such as Affum-Osei et al. (2015) who found that employees in senior positions tend to be more committed than those in junior positions. The higher levels of commitment reported by senior employees have been ascribed to the fact that employees at higher levels are involved in organisational decision-making and the implementation of decisions, while employees at lower levels are not (Tlaiss, 2013). Employees at higher levels are also more likely to function autonomously and it has been shown that employees who have authority to control their work situations display higher levels of affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Suki & Suki, 2011). Employees at higher levels also tend to display high levels of affective commitment owing to their attachment to the values and strong belief in the organisation (Kim, 2018). However, the results of this study did not corroborate the expected differences between employees at different job levels in terms of organisational commitment. Employees of DAFF are generally committed to the organisation and their level of organisational commitment is not dependent on or affected by their job levels.

6.1.3.4   Tenure

While tenure has been reported to influence employees' acceptance of the performance management system positively (Kim & Holzer, 2016; Steffens et al., 2014), no statistically significant differences were reported between tenure groups in terms of PMSA in this study. In terms of PMSF, statistically significant differences were observed between employees in different tenure groups. Significant differences were observed between employees employed more than ten years but less than 15 years and those employed for longer than 20 years. Employees who have been with the organisation for longer than 20 years mostly regarded the PMS as fair, while those employees who have been with the organisation for a shorter period were less convinced about the fairness of the system. This finding corroborates Kim and Holzer's (2016) assertion that longer tenured employees tend to be more accepting of the performance management system and are more likely to regard it as fair. In this study, employees who have been with the organisation for a shorter period did not express a strong view in terms of either the fairness or unfairness of the PMS. This could be ascribed to the quality of the relationship these employees have with their supervisors as negative relationships or a lack of trust between employees and their supervisors have been shown to negatively affect their perceptions of organisational practices (Kim & Holzer, 2016).

Extant literature further suggests that longer tenured employees tend to be more satisfied than their co-workers who have been in the organisation for a shorter period (Baek et al., 2019; Dobrow Riza et al., 2018). Moreover, Oosthuizen et al. (2016) report that employees with less than ten years of tenure have significantly lower levels of job satisfaction than those with more than ten years of tenure. This may be ascribed to the varied perceptions about their working environment that differently tenured employees tend to hold (Bakotić, 2022). However, this study found no statistically significant differences between tenure groups in terms of job satisfaction. This means that for DAFF employees, job satisfaction is not determined by their tenure in the organisation but by other factors in the work environment such as promotions and operating procedures.

It has also been shown in extant literature that employees with long years of service tend to be committed and emotionally attached to their employing organisations (Mitonga-Monga, 2020; Van Dyk et al., 2013). In terms of tenure and organisational commitment, statistically significant differences between various tenure groups were reported in this study. It was found that DAFF employees who have been employed for more than 20 years displayed substantially higher levels of organisational commitment than those employed for shorter periods. The findings of this study corroborate those of Bakotić (2022) who found that employees with more than 20 years' tenure tend to be highly committed to their employing organisations. DAFF employees with less than five years of employment reported substantially lower levels of organisational commitment. According to Bakotić (2022), this may be ascribed to unmet expectations that cause employees to consider changing jobs.

6.1.3.5 Educational level

Most of the respondents in this study had NQF levels 5 to 7 qualifications, with a substantial number also reporting having postgraduate (NQF levels 8-9) qualifications. This reflects a highly educated workforce. Extant literature suggests that employees who are highly educated will be more likely to perceive the performance management system as effective than their less educated counterparts (Lin & Kellough, 2019). However, in this study no significant differences in terms of either PMSA or PMSF were found between employees with varied levels of education. The results show that the level of education of DAFF employees does not affect their perceptions about the effectiveness of the PMS. However, other factors such as continuous provision of feedback and setting of clear performance goals may influence their perceptions in this regard (Modipane et al., 2019).

Sabbagha (2016) indicates that employees with higher educational qualifications report higher levels of job satisfaction. In terms of job satisfaction and level of education, this study reported statistically significant differences between groups. Significant differences were found between employees with NQF level 4 and lower qualifications and employees with NQF level 5 to 7 and NQF level 8 qualifications respectively. Nevertheless, the mean JS scores of these groups did not differ significantly from those with NQF levels 9 and 10 qualifications. Employees with lower levels of qualifications reported higher levels of job satisfaction than those who were better educated. The results imply that employees' level of education affects their JS. Artz (2008) indicates that individuals who are highly educated are satisfied with factors such as pay and support as they have a closer relationship with management.

Finally, extant literature indicates that employees that are highly educated tend to be less committed to their employing organisations (Bakotić, 2022; González et al., 2016). According to González et al. (2016), this may be ascribed to the fact that these employees have more employment opportunities than their less educated counterparts and they also tend to have different expectations. While differences between groups in terms of level of education with regards to organisational commitment was, therefore, expected, no significant differences were reported, suggesting that the commitment of DAFF employees towards the organisation is not determined or affected by their levels of education but by other factors in their working environment such as opportunities for promotion (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Bakotić, 2022).

The results provide evidence to partially support research hypothesis H_1: Different groups in terms of personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics will display different levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness (PMSA and PMSF), job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

The hypothesis was partially supported as significant group differences were not found in all instances. For age and gender groups, significant differences were reported in terms of OC. Statistically significant differences were also reported for groups in terms of tenure with regards to PMSF and OC. Furthermore, groups in terms of highest educational level reported statistically significant differences in terms of JS. No statistically significant differences in PMSA, PMSF, JC and OC were reported for different groups in terms of job levels.

6.1.4 Relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment

This section addresses empirical research aim 3, which was to investigate the empirical relationship between performance management system effectiveness (consisting of PMSA and PMSF), job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

The results of the bivariate correlation analyses that were conducted to address this aim were reported in Table 5.11. Firstly, the results indicated that a significant positive relationship exists between PMSA and PMSF. A similar strong positive correlation between the variables was also reported by Modipane et al. (2019) in a sample of North-West provincial government employees. Modipane et al. (2019) explain that these results corroborate Sharma et al.'s (2016) conceptualisation of PMS effectiveness as a two-dimensional construct consisting of both PMS accuracy and fairness. A PMS will not be regarded as accurate if it is perceived as unfair and vice versa.

The results in Table 5.11 further indicate that a significant positive relationship exists between PMSA and job satisfaction. Employees' perceptions of performance management system accuracy relate to their assessment of the extent to which the system provides accurate information, recognises employee performance and identifies relevant skills that add value to the individual (Sharma et al., 2016). The significant positive relationship between PMSA and job satisfaction implies that employees who regard the PMS as accurate are likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Therefore, employees who are involved in the planning of their performance in terms of setting meaningful performance goals and standards are more likely to experience higher levels of the job satisfaction (Kim & Holzer, 2016; Modipane et al., 2019; Rachmaliya, 2017). Employees who are supported by their supervisors and are provided with constructive feedback as part of the performance management process, will also be more likely to display higher levels of job satisfaction (Kampkötter, 2017; Modipane et al., 2019). Job satisfaction can also be enhanced by ensuring that employees' performance review ratings are aligned with their planned performance goals as it has been shown that employees' levels of job satisfaction increase when the outcome or performance rewards are linked to the annual performance review (Kim & Holzer, 2016; Modipane et al., 2019; Rachmaliya, 2017).

As shown in Table 5.11, the results further indicate that a significant positive relationship exists between PMSF and job satisfaction. Employees' perceptions of performance management

system fairness are grounded in organisational justice theory (see section 2.1.2.6). Employees' perceptions of organisational justice are crucial to ensure effective performance management. Moreover, employees should perceive the outcomes of the performance management process (distributive justice), the procedure used to make decisions in terms of the allocation of outcomes (procedural justice) the way that they are treated by their supervisors (interpersonal justice) and the way information is provided in explaining the decisions and procedures taken (informational justice) as fair (Colquitt, 2001; Sharma et al., 2016). The significant positive relationship between PMSF and job satisfaction implies that employees who regard the PMS as fair are likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. The findings of the study corroborate those of Mphahlele and Dachapalli (2022) who found a positive relationship between PMSF and JS. Therefore, employees will experience higher levels of job satisfaction when they are fairly treated during the performance management process and perceive the distribution of the outcomes of the process as fair (Pieters, 2018). According to Pieters (2018), job satisfaction will likely increase when employees are allowed to participate in decision-making during the performance management process. Furthermore, literature has linked job satisfaction with perceived fairness and transparency of performance evaluations and the decision-making process (Govender et al., 2015; Harrington & Lee, 2015; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Pieters, 2018). Mphahlele and Dachapalli (2022) report that the perceived fairness of policy implementation positively affects job satisfaction. Employees are also more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction when they are supported by their supervisors and trained to achieve the set goals; when they are treated with respect during the performance assessment; and performance rewards are allocated fairly (Carbery & Cross, 2019; Gupta & Kumar, 2012). Individuals will, further, experience higher levels of job satisfaction when they perceive that their contribution to the job and the resulting outcomes compare favourably with the input-outcome ratio of their co-workers (Erasmus et al., 2019).

Performance management system accuracy relates to the extent to which employees perceive performance planning, feedback, reviews and outcomes as accurate (see section 2.3.1 in Chapter 2). Employee perceptions of each of these subdimensions of performance management accuracy have the potential to influence their organisational commitment. The significant positive relationship between PMSA and OC reported in Table 5.11 suggests that employees who regard the PMS as accurate are likely to display higher levels of OC. The findings corroborate extant literature which states that employees will accept the performance management system as accurate and commit to the organisation if they are provided with accurate performance reviews and are involved during performance planning (Modipane et al., 2019; Nasurdin et al., 2018). Furthermore, this study's findings confirm reports in the

literature that continuous and constructive feedback strengthens employees' commitment to their employing organisations (Benson et al., 2018). This implies that employees who are involved in the planning of their performance and are provided with continuous feedback which is aligned to their planned performance will display higher levels of commitment to their organisations.

The significant positive relationship between PMSF (see section 2.3.2) and OC reported in Table 5.11 suggests that employees who regard the PMS as fair are likely to display higher levels of OC. The findings are consistent with literature that employees will accept the performance management system as fair and commit to the organisation if the procedure followed and the distribution of performance rewards are regarded as reasonable (Bayarçelik & Findikli, 2016; Pieters, 2018). Employees who are fairly rewarded for their performance, provided with opportunities for development and promotion and regard organisational policies and procedures as fair, tend to display higher levels of organisational commitment (Blersch et al., 2020; Naji et al., 2015). Accordingly, employees will also display higher levels of organisational commitment when they are provided with constructive performance feedback and allowed to participate in decision-making during the performance management process (Benson et al., 2018; Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2015; Rachmaliya, 2017).

Finally, a significant positive relationship was found to exist between JS and OC confirming similar findings by researchers such as Mitonga-Monga et al. (2018), Kola (2018), Shahjehan et al. (2019) and Nalla et al. (2020). These researchers found that elements of job satisfaction such as conducive working conditions; support from supervisors and co-workers; fair pay, rewards and opportunities for promotion; challenging work and effective communication increase employees' level of job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

In a performance management context, job satisfaction and organisational commitment are enhanced when supervisors motivate and support employees to perform and provide them with feedback on their performance (Khan et al., 2014; Sabbagha, 2016). More importantly, the organisation should ensure that employees are afforded fair promotional opportunities and the rewards employees receive in return for their performance should be reasonable and fair (Dhamija et al., 2019; Sabbagha, 2016). Organisations should, therefore, examine their compensation practices for future performance to determine whether the rewards match employee desires and expectations as this may impact positively on job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Dhamija et al., 2019). Job satisfaction and organisational commitment increase in working environments where co-workers are supportive and encourage a culture of dignity and respect (Pooja & Pradeep, 2017; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016).

222

Employees should be empowered and afforded the opportunity to take responsibility, work autonomously and perform interesting tasks (Alegre et al., 2016; Ivancevich et al., 2014). Procedures, regulations, policies and any other guidelines that will assist employees in performing their tasks should be effective and encourage employees to be innovative (Sabbagha, 2016; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). During performance planning, effective communication is essential to ensure that organisational objectives and employees' goals are aligned (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Kašpárková et al., 2018).

The results provide evidence to support the following research hypotheses:

H₂ₐ: A significant positive relationship exists between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment.

H₂ᵦ: A significant positive relationship exists between performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Partial correlation analysis, controlling for job level (Table 5.12), tenure (Table 5.13), age (Table 5.14), gender (Table 5.15) and level of education (Table 5.16) confirmed that the positive relationships between PMSA, PMSF, JS and OC were not significantly influenced by these biographical variables.

6.1.5   Job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment

This section addresses empirical research aim 4, which was to determine whether job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between performance management system effectiveness (as represented by PMSA and PMSF) and organisational commitment. Two mediation analyses, as depicted in Figure 5.5, were conducted and the results were reported in Tables 5.17 to 5.20.

The results of the mediation analyses confirmed that PMSA is a significant predictor of OC while PMSF was found not to be a significant predictor of OC. The existence of a statistically significant relationship between PMS effectiveness (as represented by PMSA and PMSF) and OC was, however, not regarded as a determining factor in establishing mediation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Instead, the focus was on the indirect influence of PMSA and PMSF on OC through JS. The results confirmed that both PMSA and PMSF served as significant predictors of JS while JS significantly predicted OC. The results empirically confirmed the theorised

relationship between PMS effectiveness (as represented by PMSA and PMSF), job satisfaction and organisational commitment (see Figure 3.2) indicating that job satisfaction positively mediated the relationships between (1) PMSA and OC and (2) PMSF and OC respectively. Hence, higher levels of both PMSA and PMSF were associated with higher levels of JS, which were subsequently associated with higher levels of OC. It was, therefore, empirically confirmed that employees' perceptions of the accuracy and fairness of the performance management system influence their job satisfaction, which, in turn, determines their level of commitment towards their employing organisations.

The mediating effect of job satisfaction has been confirmed in various contexts. For example, Mashi (2018), in a study of public sector employees in Nigeria, found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between organisational justice and behavioural outcomes (organisational citizenship behaviour, turnover intention and deviant behaviour). Kaur et al. (2020) report that job satisfaction served as a mediator in the relationship between employer branding and organisational citizenship behaviour in the private banking sector in India, while Dinc et al., (2018), in their study in the health sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, determined that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between organisational commitment and job performance. Similarly, in their study in the South African financial services sector, Ndlovu et al. (2021) report that the influence of line manager communication on affective organisational commitment is indirect through employee trust and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction has, therefore, been used as a means to explain the nature of the relationships between various organisational variables. Hence, the mediation results in this study provide insight about the significance of job satisfaction in explaining organisational commitment in a performance management context. Even though literature has shown and it was confirmed in the correlation analyses that PMS effectiveness (PMSA and PMSF) contributes to higher levels of OC, the mediation analyses suggest that this relationship is indirect through JS. Therefore, in their performance management practices employers should focus on aspects that will enhance employees' job satisfaction to achieve higher levels of organisational commitment.

The results provide evidence to support research hypothesis H_3: While employees' perceptions of performance management system effectiveness are positively related to organisational commitment, the relationship between the two variables are mediated by job satisfaction.

6.1.6   Summary of decisions regarding the research hypotheses

The results provided supportive evidence for all the stated research hypotheses. Table 6.1 provides a summary of the empirical research aims, the stated hypotheses, the statistical procedures used to test them and the final decisions relating to each hypothesis that were reached.

Table 6.1

Summary of Decisions Regarding the Research Hypotheses

Aim	Research hypotheses	Statistical procedure	Supporting evidence
Research aim 2: To investigate whether significant differences exist in the levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment between groups based on selected personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics.	H_1: Different groups in terms of personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics will display different levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness (PMSE), job satisfaction and organisational commitment.	Tests for significant mean differences and post hoc tests to ascertain the source of the differences	Yes (partial support)
Research aim 3: To investigate the empirical relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.	H_{2a}: A significant positive relationship exists between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment.	Correlation analysis (Pearson product-moment correlation)	Yes
	H_{2b}: A significant positive relationship exists between performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction.	Correlation analysis (Pearson product-	Yes

Aim	Research hypotheses	Statistical procedure	Supporting evidence
		moment correlation)	
Research aim 4: To determine whether job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment.	**H$_3$**: While employees' perceptions of performance management system effectiveness are positively related to organisational commitment, the relationship between the two variables are mediated by job satisfaction.	Mediation analysis	Yes

Note. Researcher's own compilation.

6.2   CONCLUSIONS

The general aim of this research was to determine whether a statistical relationship exists between performance management effectiveness (independent variable), job satisfaction (mediating variable) and organisational commitment (dependent variable). The secondary aim of the research was to determine whether people from different groups in terms of age, gender, job level, tenure and level of education differ significantly in terms of their perceptions of performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. These aims were achieved by addressing and achieving specific literature and empirical research aims. The conclusions drawn in terms of each of the stated specific aims are discussed in the section below.

6.2.1   Conclusions drawn from the literature review

The following conclusions were drawn from the literature research aims:

The first literature research aim was to outline performance management and its implementation in the South African public sector. This aim was achieved in Chapter 2 and the following main conclusions were made:

Performance management in the public sector aims to enhance the achievement of the organisational goals and promote accountability. Section 195(1) of the Constitution lays the foundation for the implementation and development of performance management in the public service to enable employees to be effective and efficient in performing their duties. In the public sector, performance management system is implemented in line with Chapter 4, Part 5 of the amended Public Service Regulation [PSR], 2016 and other legislation that impact on performance management process (see section 2.2.1).

6.2.1.2   Literature research aim 2

The second literature aim was to conceptualise and explain the constructs performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in terms of theoretical models in the literature. This aim was achieved in Chapters 2 and 3.

(a)   Conclusions relating to performance management system effectiveness

Performance management system effectiveness was conceptualised as a two-dimensional construct consisting of PMSA and PMSF. PMSA consists of four subdimensions, namely, performance planning accuracy, feedback and coaching accuracy, performance review accuracy and outcome accuracy, while PMSF relates to employee perceptions of distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational justice within the performance management context.

For performance management system to be effective, it should be perceived as being both accurate and fair, which implies that the organisation should be perceived as doing the right things and doing things the right way when engaging employees in terms of the performance management system (Sharma et al., 2016). For the PMS to be accurate, employees should be involved in performance planning and ensure that employees' goals are aligned with organisational goals (Sharma et al., 2016). Employees should be provided with continuous feedback and the performance assessment should be against the planned goals (Lapointe &

Vandenberghe, 2015). The performance outcomes should be linked to annual performance reviews in terms of rewards or recognition (Mone & London, 2018). Organisations should ensure that the distribution of the actual outcomes and the procedure followed to allocate rewards are fair (Bayarçelik & Findikli, 2016; Pieters, 2018). Furthermore, supervisors should communicate and treat employees with respect especially during the performance assessment and while providing feedback (Sharma et al., 2016).

(b) Conclusions relating to job satisfaction

For the purpose of this study, job satisfaction was conceptualised as a multidimensional construct describing an employee's positive emotional response to their job or dimensions thereof based on an assessment of the extent to which it meets their needs (Gabrani et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2016; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). This study explored facets that are regarded as contributors to job satisfaction and relevant in a performance management context. This included pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, co-workers, the nature of work and communication (Spector, 1997). It was shown that a performance management system that recognises employees provide opportunities for development and promotion and rewards employees fairly for their performance will contribute to employees' job satisfaction (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Ivancevich et al., 2014; Naji et al., 2015; Sabbagha, 2016). Job satisfaction will further be enhanced when workplace relationships are characterised by support from supervisors and co-workers, when communication is clear and when working conditions are conducive to goal achievement (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Ivancevich et al., 2014; Naji et al., 2015; Sabbagha, 2016).

To better understand the aspects that may contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction in the workplace, classical motivational theories were examined. To enhance job satisfaction the theories emphasised the importance of need satisfaction and goal setting. Managers or supervisors should take cognisance of the individuals' needs of their employees and create an environment that is conducive high levels of performance and job satisfaction (Kuvaas et al., 2017).

(c) Conclusions relating to organisational commitment

This study adopted an integrated approach to the conceptualisation of organisational commitment which incorporates employees' affective attachment to the organisation, the

perceived costs of leaving the organisation and their moral obligation to remain in the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Organisational commitment was regarded as reflecting employees' desire (affective commitment), need (continuance commitment) and obligation (normative commitment) to remain in their employing organisation. Each component (or dimension) of organisational commitment develops and impacts employees' behaviour in different ways (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002).

Literature on organisational commitment draws on social exchange theory to explain the reciprocal relationship between the employee and the employer. In addition, employees who receive supportive treatment from supervisors will reciprocate with commitment to the organisation (Benson et al., 2018). Affective commitment has great influence on employees' behaviour (Blersch et al., 2020). Employees who are treated well reciprocate with higher levels of affective commitment, and exert more effort in achieving organisational goals (Twumasi & Addo, 2021). Employees with higher levels of normative commitment feel a sense of duty towards achieving organisational objectives (Liu et al., 2020) while employees with high levels of continuance commitment remain with the organisation owing to awareness of costs associated with leaving or lack of alternative opportunities for employment (Blersch et al., 2020). Although high levels of attitudinal and normative commitment are desired, it is not necessarily advantageous for an organisation if their employees display high levels of continuance commitment (Pikanegore, 2021). Organisations should, therefore, find ways to enhance affective and normative commitment while limiting the level of continuance commitment among their employees.

6.2.1.3   Literature research aim 3

The third literature research aim was to conceptualise the relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in terms of explanatory theoretical models. This aim was achieved in Chapter 3.

(a)   <u>Conclusions relating to the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment</u>

The view that employees' perceptions of the accuracy and fairness of the performance management system influenced organisational commitment is supported in extant literature. The initial step in the performance management process is performance planning, which serves as the foundation for effective performance management (Armstrong, 2018; Mone &

London, 2018). The supervisor and the subordinate should set goals and performance standards and ensure that they are aligned with the goals of the organisation (Modipane et al., 2019; Naji et al., 2015). Accordingly, employees should be involved in the performance planning to create ownership and accountability (Nasurdin et al., 2018; Rachmaliya, 2017; Tay et al., 2016). The involvement of employees will contribute to the acceptance of the system as accurate and enhances employee loyalty and commitment to the organisation (Nasurdin et al., 2018; Rachmaliya, 2017; Tay et al., 2016).

Extant literature has shown that employees' commitment to their employing organisations can be enhanced in various ways. This includes providing constructive and continuous feedback which is aligned with planned performance and allowing employees to grow and succeed (Benson et al., 2018; Tay et al., 2016). Furthermore, performance reviews should be accurate and aligned with set goals and standards and feedback and communication must be clear (Naji et al., 2015; Nasurdin et al., 2018). Employees are more likely to accept the performance management system as effective when the performance reviews are accurate (Modipane et al., 2019; Nasurdin et al., 2018) and when performance outcomes and rewards are aligned (Mone & London, 2018; Sharma et al., 2016; Twumasi & Addo, 2021).

Employees' commitment to their employing organisations can also be enhanced by ensuring that the procedure followed when conducting performance appraisals and decisions about performance rewards, salaries and promotions are fair (Nasurdin et al., 2018; Safdar & Liu, 2019; Totawar & Nambudiri, 2014). Managers should distribute resources and reward employees fairly and equitably (Bayarçelik & Findikli, 2016; Naji et al., 2015; Pieters, 2018). Moreover, employees should be actively involved in the performance assessment process, and clear and proper communication protocols that promote accountability should be followed (Malik & Chishti, 2018; Naji et al., 2015). Employees should be treated with respect and allowed to participate in decision-making during the performance management process (Özpehlivan & Acar, 2015; Pieters, 2018). Employees who are involved in the setting of performance goals and standards and are held accountable for achieving the set goals are likely to experience higher levels of organisational commitment (Nasurdin et al., 2018; Rachmaliya, 2017; Tay et al., 2016). This implies that employees should be actively involved in all the phases of the performance management process as this will not only enhance their performance but will also contribute to higher levels of organisational commitment.

(b) <u>Conclusions relating to the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction</u>

Performance planning hinges on goal setting theory and is the initial step in the performance management process. Employers should take cognisance of the following aspects of the planning process that have been shown to enhance employees' job satisfaction. The supervisor and subordinate should jointly set meaningful goals and performance standards (Armstrong, 2018; Bussin, 2017; Mone & London, 2018) and employees should be held accountable to achieve the set goals and should receive continuous and constructive feedback to ensure that they know what is expected of them and where they stand in terms of meeting these expectations (Ivancevich et al., 2014; Kim & Holzer, 2016; Rachmaliya, 2017). Goals and performance standards should be discussed and revised where necessary (Modipane et al., 2019; Naji et al., 2015; Paposa & Kumar, 2015) and supervisors should be transparent when dealing with performance matters to enhance employees' trust in the system (Armstrong, 2018; Kampkötter, 2017; Naji et al., 2015).

 Supervisors should be supportive and acknowledge good performance (Lumley et al., 2011; Mabasa & Ngirande, 2015). The supervisor and the subordinate should maintain an amicable relationship as it is vital in accepting the performance assessment as accurate and enhancing job satisfaction (Naji et al., 2015). Performance assessment outcomes should be accurate (Sharma et al., 2016; Twumasi & Addo, 2021) and outcomes and rewards should be clearly aligned for the system to be regarded as effective and enhance job satisfaction (Lawler, 2003; Mone & London, 2018).

To enhance job satisfaction, managers should ensure that the procedures pertaining to the performance management system are transparent and consistent (Mphahlele & Dachapalli, 2022). Furthermore, managers should provide employees an opportunity to present their views and not be biased when implementing policies and providing feedback (Mphahlele & Dachapalli, 2022). Organisations should also ensure that they make fair decisions in terms of the distribution of rewards (Mashi, 2018) and that they treat employees with respect and clearly communicate performance feedback and outcomes to them (Benson et al., 2018).

(c)   <u>Conclusions relating to the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment</u>

It has been reported in extant literature that a positive relationship exists between job satisfaction and organisational commitment and that this relationship emerges from employees' experiences at the workplace and the nature of their jobs (Bakhshi et al., 2009; Kola, 2018; Naderi, 2012; Srivastava, 2013). Factors that affect job satisfaction are similar to those affecting organisational commitment. Job satisfaction occurs as a result of positive work experiences such as constructive relations with co-workers and support from supervisors (Pooja & Pradeep, 2017; Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). More importantly, employees who are afforded fair promotional opportunities and rewards (Dhamija et al., 2019; Sabbagha, 2016) and those that are allowed to participate in decision-making tend to display higher levels of job satisfaction (Kola, 2018; Shahjehan et al., 2019). In the same vein, employees who are satisfied with their jobs are also more likely to be committed to their employing organisations (Shahjehan et al., 2019). Furthermore, employees who are satisfied with working conditions develop bonds with the employing organisation (Shahjehan et al., 2019; Top & Gider, 2013).

The theorised relationships between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment were depicted in Figure 3.2. As illustrated in this figure and discussed in the preceding sections, extant literature suggests that there are positive relationships between performance management system effectiveness (accuracy and fairness) and both job satisfaction and organisational commitment. In addition, there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, suggesting that the relationship between performance management effectiveness and organisational commitment, is indirect through job satisfaction. Therefore, employees who are involved in performance planning and receive performance reviews that are accurate as well as constructive feedback that create ownership and accountability, will be more likely to accept the PMS as accurate and display higher levels of job satisfaction and increased organisational commitment. Furthermore, employees who are provided with the opportunity to participate in decision-making and who are equitably and fairly rewarded for the work performed while receiving proper communication will experience higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

6.2.1.4   Literature research aim 4

The fourth literature research aim was to conceptualise the influence of personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics on performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

(a)   <u>Gender</u>

Extant literature suggests that male and female employees may differ in terms of their perceptions of performance management system effectiveness and that their levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment are determined by different aspects in the work environment. For instance, it has been shown that lower performance ratings are often awarded to young female employees as compared to their male counterparts and, as a result, females may hold negative views about the effectiveness of the PMS (Lin & Kellough, 2019). Differences in terms of job satisfaction have also been reported. The level of job satisfaction for males is mainly influenced by the nature of their work while female employees' level of job satisfaction is influenced by pay, promotion, operating procedures, rewards and co-worker relationships (Djordjević et al., 2017). Literature on gender differences in terms of organisational commitment is inconsistent. Some researchers, such as Affum-Osei et al. (2015) and Kirsten (2019) found that males are more committed than females while others (e.g. Jabaar, 2017; Siciliano & Thompson, 2018) reported the opposite. For the purposes of this study, it was therefore concluded that differences in terms of PMSE, JS and OC between male and female employees may exist and, therefore, further empirical investigation was deemed essential.

(b)   <u>Age</u>

Extant literature suggests that age has an influence on PMSE, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. It has been reported that older employees tend to regard the outcomes of the performance appraisals as fair and have a higher regard for the effectiveness of performance management systems than their younger counterparts (Kim & Holzer, 2016). Furthermore, older employees have been shown to display higher levels of job satisfaction (Yucel & Bektas, 2012) and develop a greater sense of organisational commitment than younger employees (Gani, 2017). It is, therefore, essential for organisations to determine which aspects in the workplace inform younger employees' perceptions of performance

management and to address these aspects as this will enhance their job satisfaction and commitment.

(c)   <u>Job level</u>

Positive relationships between employees' job levels and their perceptions about the PMS have been reported in the literature. For instance, employees at supervisory levels tend to regard the performance management system as fair, while similar views are not shared by their co-workers at lower levels (Kim & Holtzer, 2016). Subordinates often question the fairness of the procedure followed and the outcomes thereof (Modipane et al., 2019). This may be owing to the fact that supervisors or senior employees have access to more information and are often more involved in decision-making (Bauwens et al., 2019). It has also been shown that employees who are in senior positions experience higher levels of job satisfaction (Sabbagha, 2016) and organisational commitment than their counterparts at lower job levels (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Eleswed & Mohammed, 2013). It is, therefore, essential for organisations to improve communication with employees, provide opportunities for participation, encourage co-workers and supervisor support, award performance incentives fairly to create positive perceptions of performance management, which will, in turn, enhance job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

(d)   <u>Level of Education</u>

Literature indicates that employees' level of education may influence their perceptions about workplace procedures, such as performance management and their attitudes towards their jobs and their employing organisations (job satisfaction and organisational commitment). For instance, Kim and Holzer (2016) found that employees with a higher level of education tend to have positive views of the effectiveness of the performance management system. Highly educated employees also tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction (Sabbagha, 2016) and organisational commitment (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; González et al., 2016). It is, therefore, essential for organisations to determine which aspects in the workplace inform the perceptions of performance management of those employees with lower levels of education and to address these aspects as this will enhance their job satisfaction and commitment.

(e)   <u>Tenure</u>

Extant literature suggests that tenure has an influence on PMSE, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. For instance, longer tenured employees have been shown to be more accepting of the performance management system (Kim & Holzer, 2016). Contradictory findings have, however, been reported in terms of the effect of tenure on job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Baek et al., 2019; Dobrow Riza et al., 2018). In terms of job satisfaction, Dobrow Riza et al. (2018) report that employees with more work experience tend to experience increased job satisfaction, while Baek et al. (2019) indicate that job satisfaction weakened as tenure increased, especially among employees with tenure of 20 years and more. In terms of organisational commitment, Kim (2018) reports that longer tenured employees tend to develop greater loyalty to their organisations and display higher levels of affective commitment, while Wang et al. (2020) indicate that affective commitment decreases as an employee's length of service in an organisation increases. It is, therefore, crucial for organisations to further investigate the aspects that influence organisational commitment for newer employees and onboarding for employees should address aspects such as role clarification, performance management process, resources to assist employees to achieve performance targets and the involvement of the supervisors to support newer employees to fit in the organisation and enhance job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Caldwell & Peters, 2018).

6.2.1.5   Literature research aim 5

The final literature research aim was to critically evaluate the theoretical implications for performance management practices.

From the preceding discussions, it may be concluded that supervisors and subordinates that jointly set and discuss goals and performance standards to ensure that there is alignment of individual goals with organisational goals will increase employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Furthermore, the joint setting of performance standards and goals will allow employees to take accountability and ownership to achieve the set goals. Supervisors that provide their subordinates with constructive feedback and accurate reviews will improve employees' trust in the performance management system and increase their level of job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation.

The success of an organisation depends in part on employees' performance to achieve the goals of the organisation. For the performance management system to be perceived as accurate and fair, organisations should make certain that the supervisors and the subordinates jointly set goals and performance standards and ensure that they are aligned with the goals of the organisation (Armstrong, 2018; Bussin, 2017; Mone & London, 2018). Organisations should make provision for adequate resources, coaching, promotions and role clarity to support the employees (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Georges, 2020; Park & Kim, 2017). PMS effectiveness is further enhanced when organisations allow employees to be involved in the decision-making process during performance evaluation, constructive feedback is provided, performance rewards are allocated fairly, and employees are treated with with respect (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018; Van der Schyff, 2018). To create a working environment that is condusive, organisations should establish structures and strategies that promote communication and participation in policy discussions and invest resources in the development of their employees (Blersch et al., 2020; Georges, 2020; Lambert et al., 2017; Nkhukhu-Orlando et al., 2019).

6.2.2   Conclusions relating to the empirical study

The following conclusions were draw from the empirical research aims:

6.2.2.1   *Empirical research aim 1*

The first empirical research aim was to measure the levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness (accuracy and fairness), job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a sample of public service employees. The aim was achieved in Chapters 4 and 5 by conducting descriptive statistical analyses.

The results of the empirical study showed that DAFF employees perceived the effectiveness of the performance management system used by the department as moderate. Therefore, while they have not expressed great concern about the accuracy and fairness of the system, it is evident that they feel that it can be improved.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

DAFF employees perceive the PMS as moderately accurate, which implies that there is some (albeit limited) recognition for their performance. The department should improve on how the PMS is implemented by setting clear performance goals, continuously measuring the achievement of goals and providing constructive feedback. Employees should be involved in the planning of their performance and setting of performance standards, and they should be held accountable for meeting these standards. There should be clear alignment between employees' planned goals and their performance assessments outcomes.

DAFF employees perceive the PMSF as moderately fair, which implies that they feel that they are not being recognised adequately for their performance. Therefore, DAFF should improve the performance management system by implementing it consistently and objectively while upholding ethical principles. Employees should be allowed to participate actively in the performance assessment process. Moreover, supervisors should explain the performance management process clearly to avoid misunderstanding. The rewards for performance should be allocated fairly to deserving employees.

In terms of job satisfaction, employees displayed ambivalence or uncertainty about their overall job satisfaction. Employees are dissatisfied with the limited opportunities for promotion and the department's operating procedures, which negatively affect their overall job satisfaction. The dissatisfaction could be attributed to the non-filling of positions by the department over an extended period which affected employees negatively as opportunities for promotions were no longer available.

The organisation should ensure that the working environment is conducive by affording employees opportunities for promotion, career and personal growth by developing their skills. Supervisors should recognise and appreciate good performance and provide constructive feedback. Supervisors should also direct and coach employees to achieve the set goals. They should be accessible and communicate with their subordinates on aspects of their performance. Policies, standards and guidelines should be applied consistently.

In terms of organisational commitment, DAFF employees are generally committed to the organisation, reporting higher levels of continuance commitment than affective and normative commitment. This means that employees remain in the organisation because they cannot afford to leave and not based on their emotional attachment or moral obligation towards the organisation.

While the reported level of commitment was acceptable, some employees reported low levels of commitment and, therefore, the organisation should take appropriate actions to enhance employees' commitment to the organisation. Higher levels of continuance committed coupled with low levels of affective and normative commitment are not necessarily desirable for the organisation as it means that employees do not identify with the goals of the organisation but simply remain with the organisation because they do not have other alternatives, or the cost associated with leaving is too high. This may result in poor work performance and employees who are compelled to stay in the organisation owing to a lack of alternative options may perform poorly or even engage in negative behaviour. These employees will leave when better opportunities arise.

The organisation should take actions aimed at enhancing affective and normative commitment by involving employees in goal setting and providing employees with work that is challenging, train employees to learn new skills and be held accountable for their actions (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018). Moreover, employees should be supported with adequate resources, coaching, role clarity and opportunities for promotion (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Park & Kim, 2017). Involve employess in the decision-making, especially relating to the performance evaluation process. Organisations should allocate performance rewards fairly and provide constructive feedback.

6.2.2.2   *Empirical research aim 2*

The second empirical research aim was to investigate whether significant differences exist in the levels of perceived performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment between groups based on selected personal (age, gender and level of education) and job-related (job level and tenure) characteristics. This aim was achieved in Chapters 4 and 5 by conducting tests for significant mean differences to empirically test hypothesis H_1.

The results provided partial support for hypothesis H_1, drawing the following conclusions:

- Males reported higher levels of organisational commitment than females. This implies that the working environment (work experiences and the nature of work) at DAFF favour male employees. Hence, they reciprocate with higher levels of commitment than their female counterparts. Female employees' levels of organisational commitment may be enhanced by implementing a coaching programme to empower them and

inspire career development, offering opportunities for promotion and treating them with respect.

- Older employees (Baby Boomers: 56 – 64 years) reported higher levels of organisational commitment than younger employees (Millennials: 25 – 40 years). This implies that older employees in DAFF have established bonds with the organisation over time that they are reluctant to break. Younger employees in the organisation do not experience a similar level of commitment. Managers and supervisors should support younger employees and nurture positive working relationships to enhance their commitment.

- Longer tenured employees reported higher levels of PMSF than employees who have been in the organisation for a shorter period. Employees who have been with the organisation for longer than 20 years mostly regarded the PMS as fair, while those employees who have been with the organisation for a shorter period were less convinced about the fairness of the system. This could be ascribed to the quality of the relationship these employees have with their supervisors as negative relationships or a lack of trust between employees and their supervisors have been shown to negatively affect their perceptions of organisational practices (Kim & Holzer, 2016). It is essential for the organisation to allow employees in the organisation to actively participate in the performance assessment process. The performance rewards should be allocated to employees that are deserving fairly in the organisation (Daley, 2017). The organisation should have onboarding for employees with shorter tenure and allocate them with mentors during the integration process so that they feel as part of the team (Caldwell & Peters, 2018). Furthermore, newer employees should be trained in line with jobs to understand systems and the culture of the organisation (Caldwell & Peters, 2018).

- It was found that DAFF employees who have been employed for more than 20 years displayed substantially higher levels of organisational commitment than those employed for shorter periods. In contrast, DAFF employees with less than five years of employment reported substantially lower levels of organisational commitment. This may be ascribed to unmet expectations that cause employees to consider changing jobs (Bakotić, 2022). This implies that newer DAFF employees are less committed than longer tenured employees. The organisation should determine the expectations of newer employees and establish interventions such as onboarding where employees

239

will learn about the culture of the organisation, training to transition quickly and learn quality of work and productivity to enhance their level of organisational commitment (Caldwell & Peters, 2018).

- Highly educated employees reported higher levels of JS than their less educated counterparts. This could be as a result of unrealistic expectations of highly educated employees in this organisation and the difficulty in offering rewards that are satisfactory (Bakotić, 2022). It is essential for the organisation to create a working environment that offers opportunities for promotion and better pay (Affum-Osei et al., 2015; Bakotić, 2022).

6.2.2.3   *Empirical research aim 3*

The third empirical research aim was to investigate the empirical relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This aim was achieved in Chapters 4 and 5 by conducting correlation analyses to empirically test hypotheses H_{2a} and H_{2b}.

The results provided support for hypotheses H_{2a} and H_{2b}, drawing the following conclusions:

(a)   <u>Relationship between Performance Management System Accuracy and Performance Management System Fairness</u>

The results found a significant, positive relationship between PMSA and PMSF. Age, gender, level of education, job level and tenure did not have a substantial effect on the strength of the relationship between PMSA and PMSF. This corroborates Sharma et al.'s (2016) notion that high levels of both PMSA and PMSF are required for a PMS to be regarded as effective.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The acceptance of the performance management system by employees is essential for its success. A PMS will only be regarded as effective if it is regarded by employees as both accurate and fair.

(b)   Relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organisational commitment

The results found a moderate, positive and significant relationship between PMSA and OC and a small, positive and significant relationship between PMSF and OC. Age, gender, level of education, job level and tenure did not have a substantial effect on the strength of the relationships between PMSA and OC or PMSF and OC. The results imply that employees' positive perceptions of PMS fairness and accuracy give rise to higher levels of organisational commitment.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The empirical results confirmed that employees' who hold positive perceptions of the effectiveness (fairness and accuracy) of the PMS will be more likely to display higher levels of organisational commitment. Therefore, DAFF can enhance their employees' commitment to the organisation by clearly articulating performance expectations, enabling employees to meet these expectations and fairly rewarding them when they do. Employees should be provided with work that is challenging and adequate resources and coaching to enable them to achieve the agreed performance standards. Employees also tend to be more committed when they are allowed to make their own decisions and are held accountable for their actions. As a result, employees should be involved when decisions about performance standards and evaluation are made as this will enhance their trust in the organisation and its management and enhance affective commitment. Furthermore, constructive feedback and opportunities for development should be provided and employees should be treated with respect. Peformance rewards should be allocated fairly and opportunities for promotion for employees who meet performance expectations should be availed.

(c)   Relationship between performance management system effectiveness and job satisfaction

The results found a positive, large and significant relationship between PMSA and JS. The relationship between PMSF and JS was also found to be positive, large and significant. However, age, gender, level of education, job level and tenure did not have a substantial effect on the strength of the relationships between PMSA and JS or PMSF and JS.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

241

Employees' perceptions of the accuracy and fairness of the performance management system who regard the PMS as effective (i.e. high PMSA and high PMSF) will display higher levels of job satisfaction. DAFF should ensure that supervisors and subordinates jointly set and discuss goals and performance standards to ensure alignment of individual goals with organisational goals to increase employee job satisfaction. Employees should take accountability and ownership to achieve the set goals. The organisation should ensure that supervisors provide their subordinates with constructive feedback and accurate reviews to increase their level of job satisfaction.

(d)   Relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment

The results found a moderate, positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment. However, age, gender, level of education, job level and tenure did not have a substantial effect on the strength of the relationships between JS and OC.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The study results confirm a positive significant relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Therefore, employees who display higher levels of job satisfaction will also be more committed to the organisation (González et al., 2016; Kola, 2018). As indicated in section 3.4.4.3, positive work experiences contribute to job satisfaction and an increase in job satisfaction lead to an increase in organisational commitment (Bakotić, 2022; Benson et al., 2018).

Employees who are involved in the setting of performance goals and standards and are held accountable for achieving the set goals are likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Continuous constructive performance feedback and support from the supervisor are also expected to increase the level of employees' job satisfaction and commitment to organisation.

6.2.2.4   Empirical research aim 4

The final empirical research aim was to determine whether job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and

organisational commitment. This was achieved in Chapters 4 and 5 by conducting mediation analyses to empirically test hypothesis H_3.

The results provided support for hypothesis H_3, drawing the following conclusions:

The results confirmed that, while employees' perceptions of performance management system effectiveness are positively related to organisational commitment, the relationship between these two variables are mediated by job satisfaction. This means that PMSE affects OC through JS. Therefore, the relationship between PMSE and OC is not direct, but indirect through JS. Employees who consider their organisations' performance management systems as accurate and fair will experience greater job satisfaction and will, in turn, display higher levels of commitment (notably affective commitment) towards these organisations.

6.3   LIMITATIONS

While every effort was made to ensure academic rigour in the research, it is not without limitations. The limitations in terms of the literature review and empirical study are discussed next.

6.3.1   Limitations of the literature review

This research study on employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management system in a public service organisation was limited by the following:
The literature research was limited to the three constructs only, namely, performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. It is, however, acknowledged that additional antecedents to job satisfaction and organisational commitment exist. Furthermore, while extensive work has been done on job satisfaction and organisational commitment, performance management system effectiveness is a relatively new construct, which was conceptualised by Sharma et al. (2016), and research relating to the PMSE construct is limited. Hence, the literature review in terms of performance management system effectiveness and its relation to job satisfaction and organisational commitment was guided by broad research on performance management and organisational justice.

6.3.2 Limitations of the empirical study

The empirical study encountered the following limitations:

Owing to its cross-sectional nature, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to other populations. The results represent the views of a sample of public sector employees at a particular point in time. There was also a possibility of common method bias as the independent variables and dependent variables were measured with a single survey at a particular point in time (Kock et al., 2021). To limit common method bias and enhance the integrity of the results, the following precautionary measures were taken (Kock et al. (2021): Respondents were ensured of anonymity and confidentiality; clear instructions were provided in the questionnaire; existing, validated instruments and different types of scales (i.e. attitudinal and frequency scales) were used to measure the constructs; and the items of each scale were randomly sorted to minimise associations between them (Kock et al., 2021).

The sample was slightly skewed towards female employees who have worked for DAFF for more than five years. Respondents were also generally highly educated with the majority reporting to have completed postgraduate qualifications. It is anticipated that different results may be obtained in workplaces with a different workforce composition.

6.4   RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings, conclusions and limitations discussed in this chapter, recommendations for performance management practices as well as further research in the field of HRM are made in this section, addressing the final empirical research aim.

6.4.1   Recommendations for performance management practices

The Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries should improve on performance management practices to ensure that the system is accepted by employees and that its success not comprised. It is recommended that the following actions be taken:

Figure 6.1

Steps when implementing a Performance Management System

Phase 1: Define goals, standards and measurments	Phase 2: Provide ongoing coaching and feedback	Phase 3: Conduct performance dialogue	Phase 4: Determine performance recognitions, rewards or consequences
• Involve employees in performance planning • Set clear performance goals and standards • Record the performance agreement • Determine what is required from both parties (employer and employee) to enable goal achievement	• Monitor employees performance continuously • Provide employees with constructive feedback • Identify performance gaps • Implement intervetions to address the identifed gaps • Provide employees with meaningful and challenging tasks	• Involve employees in the performance assessment process • Clearly communicate and explain the assessment process • Align performance outcomes with rewards • Afford employees opportutinies for promotion • Allocate resources to employees transparently	• Ensure that performance management practices are fair • Porvide employess with clear and accurate reviews • Provide employees an opportunity to present their views • Treat employees with respect • Reward employees faiirly for the work performed

Note. Researcher's own compilation.

In terms of the first phase of the performance management system, employees should be involved in the planning of their performance to ensure that employees' goals are aligned with organisational goals (Sharma et al., 2016). The subordinate and the supervisor should jointly set goals and performance standards to increase employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Performance standards should be clearly articulated, and employees should be held accountable for the achievement of the set goals. Organisations should make certain that workplace relationships are characterised by support from supervisors and co-workers to enhance job satisfaction (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Naji et al., 2015; Sabbagha, 2016). Furthermore, communication should be clear and working conditions should be conducive to achieve the set goals and enhance job satisfaction (Kuvaas et al., 2017). The organisation should clearly articulate performance expectations and enable employees to meet expectations and reward them fairly when expectations are met.

In terms of the second phase, employees' performance should be continuously monitored and they should be supported by providing regular constructive feedback in relation to set goals and the performance assessment should be against the planned goals (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2015). Supervisors should assist employees in improving their performance by identifying performance gaps and recommending appropriate interventions. Managers should communicate frequently with employees to enhance employees' trust in the system (Armstrong, 2018; Kampkötter, 2017; Naji et al., 2015). Organisations should create a

supportive and participative working environment and employees be provided with challenging and meaningful tasks (Blersch et al., 2020; Georges, 2020; Pikanegore, 2021). Managers should communicate clearly the procedure in terms of the performance outcomes (Kampkötter, 2017).

In terms of the third phase, employees should be allowed to participate in the performance assessment process clear explanation of the process to avoid misunderstanding. Performance outcomes and the performance rewards should be clearly aligned and the distribution of the actual outcomes and the procedure followed to allocate rewards be fair (Bayarçelik & Findikli, 2016; Pieters, 2018). In addition, the working environment should be conducive and employees be afforded opportunities for promotion, coaching, adequate resources and personal growth (De Juana-Espinosa & Rakowska, 2018; Park & Kim, 2017). The organisation should establish structures and strategies that promote communication and participation in policy discussions and invest resources in the development of employees to promote a condusive working environment (Blersch et al., 2020; Lambert et al., 2017; Nkhukhu-Orlando et al., 2019). Opportunities for promotions should be awarded to qualifying and deserving employees. The performance management process should be clearly communicated and the allocation of resources be transparent. Performance standards and goals should be discussed with employees and revised where necessary.

In terms of the fourth phase, managers should ensure that performance management practices are fair and accurate to be regarded as effective and enhance employees' satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. The performance outcomes to be linked to annual performance reviews in terms of rewards or recognition (Mone & London, 2018). Employees be provided with clear and accurate reviews and be allowed to present their views and treated with respect (Özpehlivan & Acar, 2015; Pieters, 2018). Managers and supervisors should acknowledge and reward employees who perform better than simply meeting the required performance standards. Employees who are treated well reciprocate with higher levels of affective commitment, and exert more effort in achieving organisational goals (Twumasi & Addo, 2021). Organisations should limit the level of continuance commitment among employees and find ways to enhance affective and normative commitment. Employees should be involved in all phases of the performance management process to enhance employees' performance and higher levels of organisational commitment.

Organisations need to determine which aspects in the workplace inform younger employees' and employees with lower levels of education's perceptions of performance management and

address the aspects to enhance job satisfaction and commitment. Organisations need to further investigate the aspects that influence organisational commitment for newer employees and improve communication with employees, provide opportunities for participation, encourage co-workers and supervisor support, award performance incentives fairly to create positive perceptions of performance management to enhance job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

6.4.2   Recommendations for future research

While the study contributed to the operationalisation of the performance system effectiveness construct that was conceptualised by Sharma et al. (2016), research in terms of this construct remains limited. The current research is also limited to the relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a public service organisation. It is therefore recommended that further research be conducted in different contexts to explore the performance management system effectiveness construct and its relation to other attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. This will enable human resources management practitioners to review their performance management practices with the aim of ensuring positive outcomes for both employees and organisations. Future research should be conducted on a larger representative sample including public and private sector employees in South Africa. Furthermore, additional variables such as diversity, organisational culture and organisational values could be included to add more insight in terms of the antecedents of employee perceptions about performance management system effectiveness.

6.5   INTEGRATION OF THE RESEARCH

This study investigated the relationship between performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a South African public sector organisation. A comprehensive literature review provided support for the theorised positive relationships between performance management effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

The study found a significant positive relationship between PMSA and PMSF, confirming the conceptualisation of PMS effectiveness as a two-dimensional construct consisting of PMSA and PMSF (Sharma et al., 2016). The results also confirmed that employees who regard the PMS as effective (accurate and fair) will experience higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The mediation analyses results provided insight about the

247

significance of job satisfaction in explaining organisational commitment in a performance management context. It was shown that, although PMS effectiveness (PMSA and PMSF) contributes to higher levels of OC, this relationship is indirect through JS. Therefore, in its performance management practices, the organisation should focus on aspects that will enhance employees' job satisfaction and this will, in turn, result in higher levels of organisational commitment.

Recommendations are that employees should be involved in the planning of their performance and be held accountable for the achievement of the set goals. Goals and performance standards should be jointly set by the subordinate and the supervisor to increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Organisations should ensure that working conditions are conducive to achieve the set goals and enhance job satisfaction. Performance should be monitored continuously and supported by regular constructive feedback and the performance assessment should be aligned with the planned goals. Supervisors should identify performance gaps and appropriate interventions. Procedure in terms of the performance outcomes should be clearly communicated. Employees should be allocated challenging and meaningful tasks and be allowed to participate in the performance assessment process and afforded the opportunities for promotion. Therefore, there should be clear alignment between performance outcomes and the performance rewards. The distribution of the actual outcomes and the procedure followed to allocate the rewards should be fair. Structures and strategies that promote communication and policy discussions should be established and resources be invested in the development of employees to promote a condusive working environment. Employees should be allowed to present their views during performance reviews and be treated with respect. Employees will experience higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment when they are treated with respect, provided with the opportunity to participate in decision-making, receiving proper communication, provided with clear and accurate reviews and rewarded fairly for the work performed. Performance management practices that are accurate and fair will enhance employees' satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. Employees' who hold positive perceptions of the effectiveness (fairness and accuracy) of the PMS will experience increased job satisfaction and display higher levels of organisational commitment.

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide some insights into employees' perceptions of PMS effectiveness and how these perceptions affect their job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. This may be useful to human resource practitioners who wish to enhance

performance management practices in their organisations and thereby contribute to the development of positive employee attitudes towards their jobs and the organisation.

6.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter commenced with the interpretation and discussion of the results that were reported in Chapter 5. This was followed by a presentation of conclusions in terms of the theoretical and empirical objectives and the identification of the limitations of the research study. The chapter concluded with recommendations for performance management practices and future research investigating performance management system effectiveness, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a South African context. The final research aim (to formulate recommendations for performance management practices as well as further research in the field of HRM based on the research findings) was thereby achieved.

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UNISA HRM ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 17 March 2020

Dear Ms Maleho Lexcy Anna Manamela

Decision: Ethics Approval from April 2020 to April 2023

NHREC Registration #: (if applicable)

ERC Reference #: 2020_HRM_003

Name: Ms MLA Manamela

Student: #36178292

Researcher(s): Name: Ms Maleho Lexcy Anna Manamela
E-mail address, telephone # 36178292@mylife.unisa.ac.za, 084 470 0327/012 319 8464

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr M Kirsten
E-mail address, telephone # kirstm@unisa.ac.za, 012 429 4924

Working title of research:

The relationship between employee perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management practices, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a public service organisation

Qualification: MCOM

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa HRM Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for Ms MLA Manamela for 3 years.

The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the HRM Ethics Review Committee on 17 March 2020 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. 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 HRM Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

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279

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date April 2023. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number 2020_HRM_003 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Signature
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EDITING AND PROOFREADING CERTIFICATE

7542 Galangal Street

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16 January 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This certificate serves to confirm that I have language edited MLA Manamela's dissertation entitled, **"THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS, JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT IN A PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANISATION."**

I found the work easy and intriguing to read. Much of my editing basically dealt with obstructionist technical aspects of language, which could have otherwise compromised smooth reading as well as the sense of the information being conveyed. I hope that the work will be found to be of an acceptable standard. I am a member of Professional Editors' Guild.

Hereunder are my contact details:

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