

Performance Appraisal as a Tool to Achieve Higher Efficiency and Productivity in the South African Public Sector, with Reference to Limpopo Department of Education

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Abstract

This qualitative study was conducted to assess the performance appraisal on employee's productivity at the Department of Basic Education in Limpopo, South Africa. Performance appraisal refers to the methods and processes that organisations use to evaluate their employees' level of performance. This usually entails assessing employees' performance and offering them with feedback on both the quantity and quality of their work. The study examined the kind of tool Department of Basic Education utilize and the effects of performance appraisal on employee's productivity. The researchers adopted a qualitative approach in this study in order to better understand performance reviews and employee experiences. Data was gathered through interviews with senior/junior managers purposively chosen. Additionally, subordinates selected from a simple random sample based on their responsibilities, backgrounds, and experience. As a result, the study used a verbatim transcription to capture every detail of the interview. The data was then analysed using thematic mapping. The research findings demonstrated the inefficiency of the current performance management and development method. The study also shows that workers are unmotivated and no longer have faith in the evaluation process. The findings further show that supervisors' management and implementation of the system are prejudiced, which demotivate employees as a result. According to the study, the current system has to be changed or revised in order to address the gaps and issues that have arisen as a result of prejudice and ineffective execution. The study also suggests that in order for the system's goals to be met, managers need acquire the right training, and staff should receive training as well to have knowledge about the system.

Keywords: assessment, appraisal, employees, performance, productivity.

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1. Introduction

Employees are the backbone of every organisation and are essential to its success, no organisation can fulfil its goals and objectives without them. As a result, the calibre and qualities of employees play a crucial role in determining the success of any organisation³. Van Dijk and Schodl⁴ defines performance appraisal as a process of evaluating the behaviour of the employees in the workplace, or it can also be referred as a process of giving feedback on employees' performance. Seotlela and Miruka⁵ adds that performance appraisal is a formal management system which

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³ Daoanis, L.E., 2012. *Performance Appraisal System: It's Implication to Employee Performance*. „International Journal of Economics and Management Sciences”, Vol 2(3): 55-62.

⁴ Van Dijk, D. and Schodl, M. M., 2015. *Performance appraisal and evaluation*. In James D. Wright (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*: Second Edition: 716-721. Elsevier Inc.

⁵ Seotlela, R.P.J. and Miruka, O., 2014. *Implementation challenges of performance management system in the South African mining industry*. „Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences”, Vol 5(7): 177-187.

evaluates the quality of an individual's performance in an organization. It involves assessing various aspects such as goal achievement, skills, and competencies, and providing feedback to improve productivity. Furthermore, the practice of performance appraisal tool has become the heart of the human resource management system in the organisations.

However, due to its widespread acceptability in multiple establishments, performance appraisal has been widely used in developing the abilities of workers and establishments since the resuscitation of trade and industry on a global scale in India⁶. Chowdhury⁷ also supported that practically all institutions use an assessment procedure to keep track of their employees' work production.

The productivity of each individual employee is critical to the overall achievement of any institution's goals⁸. Therefore, it is critical to identify their talents, performance, and weaknesses, as well as how to enhance them within the department's aim. Managers conduct employee evaluations based on their work in the appraisal system, then submit the results to the human resource department, which collects the performance ratings and determines the remuneration package⁹.

Nonetheless, the effectiveness of performance appraisal on employee productivity has been a topic of debate among researchers and practitioners. In this assessment, the researchers analysed the impact of performance appraisal on employee productivity and identified any potential areas for improvement in the process.

2. Theoretical framework. Reinforcement theory of motivation

The study adopted the reinforcement theory of motivation. Gordan and Krishanan¹⁰ defines the reinforcement theory of motivation as a psychological concept that suggests that individuals are motivated by the consequences of their actions. It posits that behaviours that are rewarded or reinforced are more likely to be repeated, while behaviours that are punished or not reinforced are less likely to be repeated. This theory emphasizes the role of external factors in shaping and influencing motivation, as individuals seek to maximize positive outcomes and minimize negative consequences¹¹. The researcher chose the reinforcement theory of motivation because it greatly impact employee motivation, performance, and overall job satisfaction. By understanding how to effectively use positive reinforcement, such as rewards and recognition, managers can create a work environment that encourages desired behaviours and increases employee engagement. Bouxsein, Roane and Harper¹² adds that utilizing negative reinforcement sparingly and providing constructive feedback can help change or modify employees' behaviour.

According to Wei and Yazdanifard¹³, they posits that managers utilize reinforcement theory as a tool to modify or reinforce employee behaviour. Nowadays, there is a greater emphasis on performance and efficacy, thus it is critical to comprehend and apply these ideas when motivating personnel. The most effective method for encouraging employees to perform better in organisations is positive reinforcement. Gohari, Ahmadloo, Boroujeni and Hosseini pour¹⁴ aver that the employees'

⁶ Sing, R. and Vadivelu, S., 2016. *Performance Appraisal in India—A Review*. „International Journal of Applied Engineering Research”, Vol 11(5): 3229-3234.

⁷ Chowdhury, S.N., 2008. *Developing performance appraisal system for performance leadership in banks*, CAB CALLING July-September, 2008, 62-66, https://www.academia.edu/11713451/Developing_Performance_Appraisal_System_for_Performance_Leadership.

⁸ Demissie, E.B., 2015. *An Assessment of Teachers' Performance Appraisal in Secondary Schools of Wolaita Zone, South Ethiopia*. „International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research” (IJSBAR), Vol 23(2): 286-306.

⁹ Daoanis, L.E., *op. cit.* (2012), p. 57.

¹⁰ Gordan, M. and Krishanan, I.A., 2014. *A review of BF Skinner's 'Reinforcement Theory of Motivation'*, „International journal of research in education methodology”, Vol 5(3): 680-688.

¹¹ Martono, S., Khoiruddin, M. and Wulansari, N.A., 2018. *Remuneration reward management system as a driven factor of employee performance*. „International Journal of Business & Society”, Vol. 19, S4, 2018, 535-545.

¹² Bouxsein, K.J., Roane, H.S. and Harper, T., 2011. *Evaluating the separate and combined effects of positive and negative reinforcement on task compliance*. „Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis”, Vol 44(1): 175-179.

¹³ Wei, L.T. and Yazdanifard, R., 2014. *The impact of positive reinforcement on employees' performance in organizations*. „American Journal of Industrial and Business Management”, 4(1): 9-12, DOI:10.4236/ajbm.2014.41002.

¹⁴ Gohari, P., Ahmadloo, A., Boroujeni, M.B. and Hosseini pour, S.J., 2013. *The relationship between rewards and employee*

knowledge that they will receive rewards for exhibiting each desired behaviour motivates them to perform better. When their efforts are rewarded and their work is acknowledged, employees are happy which serve as a motivation to continue delivering the calibre of work expected of them.

Wei and Yazdanifard¹⁵ that managers or supervisors should be able to provide additional training or resources to help employees improve their skills further claimed it. They should give constructive feedback and guidance to redirect behaviour, and implementing performance improvement plans to address specific areas of concern. It is important to note that negative reinforcement should always be used as a last resort and in conjunction with positive reinforcement techniques to create a balanced and supportive work environment. Bouxsein¹⁶ conveyed that the combination of positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement is most effective in modifying behaviours. Therefore this theory advocates that managers should consider different factors such race, age, gender, education level, and ethnicity when implementing these reinforcements. This is because it will help to identify which type of rewards to strengthen desired behaviour.

For the purpose of this study, this theory is of paramount prominence as it advocates motivating employees to improve their skills to provide the customers with the best services, which will lead to an increase in profits and productivity.

3. Problem statement

Employee performance and contribution to the organisation are evaluated on a regular basis in performance appraisals. Its importance stems from the need to develop working settings that promote open communication and aid in the clarification of goals and expectations¹⁷.

Demissie¹⁸ asserts that the employee performance appraisal system gives valuable feedback to employees, encouraging job satisfaction and growth. Makamu¹⁹ added that the approach is intended to promote employee development and identify areas where more assistance may be required. However, performance appraisal processes has several faults that prohibit it from accomplishing the goal for which it was created. Factors such as stereotyping, in which a manager gives feedback on performance while criticizing employees of a different race or religion he dislikes, result in criticized employees being dissatisfied with their working environment because of the constant criticisms affecting the employee's performance²⁰.

Failure to carry out the performance appraisal process leads to a lack of job satisfaction, which has an impact on the employee's job security and degree of accountability²¹. Employees end up being dissatisfied with their work environment because of the factors that hinder the success of performance appraisal, thus resulting in lower productivity and morale because they are less likely to be motivated to be productive and are provided the high-quality services that are necessary²².

Aguinis²³ claim that the lack of accurate information on assessment forms, as well as expertise and relevance, is a common reason of process failure. Employees who are up for promotion are frequently subjected to a performance evaluation by the organisations. In addition, this calls into questioning the reliability of the assessment system, which should have been used to evaluate all

performance. „Interdisciplinary journal of contemporary research in business”, Vol 5(3): 543-570.

¹⁵ Wei, L.T. and Yazdanifard, R., *op. cit.* (2014), p. 10.

¹⁶ Bouxsein, K.J., Roane, H.S. and Harper, T., *op. cit.* (2011), p. 176.

¹⁷ Daoanis, L.E., *op. cit.* (2012), p. 58.

¹⁸ Demissie, E.B., *op. cit.* (2015), p. 290.

¹⁹ Makamu, N.I., 2016. *Assessment of performance management and development system in selected South African national government departments* (Doctoral dissertation, North-West University (South Africa, Mafikeng Campus), p. 52.

²⁰ Aguinis, H., Joo, H. and Gottfredson, R.K., 2012. *Performance management universals: Think globally and act locally*. „Business Horizons”, Vol 55(4): 385-392.

²¹ Agyei, J.A and Rahaman, A.Z., 2019. *Performance management and appraisal as tools for improving public senior high school teachers. A case study of WA Municipal*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342165247_PERFORMANCE_MANAGEMENT_AND_APPRAISAL_AS_TOOLS_FOR_IMPROVING_PUBLIC_SENIOR_HIGH_SCHOOL_TEACHERS_QUALITY_IN_WA_MUNICIPAL/download?tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6Ii9kaXJlY3QifX0.

²² Seotlela, R.P.J. and Miruka, O., *op. cit.* (2014), p. 179.

²³ Aguinis, H., Joo, H. and Gottfredson, R.K., *op. cit.* (2012), p. 390.

employees' performance and help them improve when appropriate²⁴. However, the productivity and efficiency of the services they provide are influenced by employee performance²⁵. As a result, the study's goal is to determine how performance appraisal systems affect productivity of employee in the Department of Basic Education in Polokwane.

4. Literature review. The nature and type of tools used in employee's performance appraisal

Performance can be viewed as an essential tool for supporting and improving the quality of performance and service rendered by the employees in organisations. Performance appraisal is all about documenting the quality of employee's performance, helping them improve and holding them accountable for their work²⁶. As a result, organisations make use some of the tools which facilitate the appraisal process.

Ranking Method. Gary²⁷ aver that ranking method is ranking employees from best to worst on a particular trait, choosing highest, then lowest, until all ranked. Based on the ranking method, the rater must rank his subordinates based on their overall performance. Simply put, this entails placing a man in a rank order. In this method, an employee's ranking in a work group is determined by comparing it to that of another employee. Each employee's relative position is determined by his numerical rank.

Behavioural Anchored Rating Scale (BARS). Behaviourally anchored rating scale were introduced by Smith and Kendall²⁸ in 1963 with the attention of researchers concerned with the issue of reliability and validity of performance ratings²⁹. BARS assist raters in focusing on specific desirable and undesirable work behaviour incidents that can be used as examples when discussing a rating. For each element of performance, BARS uses behavioural statements or concrete examples to illustrate multiple levels of performance.

4.1. The challenges in performance appraisal

Performance appraisals have a high failing rate in organisations and is viewed as ineffective³⁰. The fairness of the evaluation decision is the main concern in the practice of performance appraisal. Managers have difficulty evaluating performance appraisals properly, in the sense that they evaluate employees differently, with some managers in the department being biased and stereotyped, resulting in employee demotivation because of the unfair evaluations affecting their performance and productivity. Ahmad and Bujang³¹ lament that individual employee performance that is not accurately measured can lead to discontent with the system.

Arthur³² aver that one of the issues contributing to employee unhappiness is that managers lack the necessary knowledge and abilities to carry out the performance appraisal process. As a result, they are unable to properly carry out a procedure with which they are unfamiliar with. This will affect the process of evaluation because bias, unfairness and unreliability occurred³³.

Although there is a formal evaluation form and a set of standards to be followed, employees

²⁴ Daoanis, L.E., *op. cit.* (2012), p. 58.

²⁵ Agyei, J.A and Rahaman, A.Z., *op. cit.* (2019), p. 35.

²⁶ Aggarwal, A. and Thakur, G.S.M., 2013. *Techniques of performance appraisal-a review*. „International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology” (IJEAT), Vol 2(3): 617-621.

²⁷ Gary Dessler, 2011. *Human resource management*. Pearson India Education, 2011, p. 70 et seq.

²⁸ Smith, P. C., & Kendall, L. M. (1963). *Retranslation of expectations: An approach to the construction of unambiguous anchors for rating scales*. „Journal of Applied Psychology”, 47(2), 149–155. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0047060>.

²⁹ Aggarwal, A. and Thakur, G.S.M., *op. cit.* (2013), p. 619.

³⁰ Sing, R. and Vadivelu, S., *op. cit.* (2016), p. 3230.

³¹ Ahmad, R. and Bujang, S., 2013. *Issues and challenges in the practice of performance appraisal activities in the 21st century*. „International Journal of Education and research”, Vol 1(4): 1-8.

³² Arthur, P., 2015. *The challenges facing performance appraisal management: Lessons for polytechnics in Ghana*. „African Journal of Applied Research”, Vol 1(1), 2015, p. 299-314.

³³ Makamu, N.I., *op. cit.* (2016), p. 59.

seem not to trust the tools of evaluation of the performance appraisal in the department as it is inefficiently evaluated³⁴. There is an issue of subjectivity in the performance appraisal although is deemed to be as objective as possible however during the implementation of the appraisal the evaluation becomes subjective where the managers in organisations makes evaluation of the employee's performance based on intangible and false information³⁵.

4.2. The effects of performance appraisal on employee's productivity

Wei and Yazdanifard³⁶ declare that employees can only perform successfully and efficiently if they are satisfied with their work, and this can be accomplished through encouraging staff both monetarily and non-financially. Ali and Ahmed³⁷ support that performance appraisal assists organisations in determining their employee's interest in their job and in providing them with the necessary resources or facilities to accomplish the duties assigned to them efficiently and effectively. It motivates the employees and encourages them to work at the best interest of the organization. And it also aids in the creation of a new culture within the firm, allowing employees to feel at ease at work, resulting in an increase in productivity³⁸.

Employees are motivated by incentives such as promotions and pay raises. Extrinsic incentives are extrinsic benefits that can be employed to increase performance, according to Herzberg's idea³⁹. Improved performance of employees in an organisation boosts the production as they satisfied and are willing to go lengths to efficiently supply services. Promotions as part of the performance appraisal process, the evaluators measure the employee's performance and offer a performance number⁴⁰.

The performance number is then used to create a level performance number, which is then used by management to decide rewards as part of the motivation process⁴¹. Whenever there are new job openings beyond the entry level, the level of performance number becomes a useful reference point for the managers to use for internal promotions. Promotions not only serve as a reward for an employee's past performance, but they also send a message to co-workers that their hard work will pay off in the future. As a result, other employees in the company are inspired to improve their performance and give it their all, thereby raising productivity⁴².

Salary increases and bonus payments are widely recognized as the most effective methods of rewarding employees and, as a result, enhancing their drive to improve their performance, resulting in increased productivity⁴³. The reinforcement theory is used to explain the rationale behind pay for performance, which proposes that pay can be connected to performance through the setting of targets⁴⁴.

Appraisals influence the administrative because they enable an organized process for calculating wage increments and other awards, as well as allocating authority and responsibility to the most capable personnel⁴⁵. When the assessment system provides data to managers and appraises

³⁴ Radebe, P.Q., 2015. *Managers' perceptions of the performance appraisal system in the local municipality of Gauteng province in South Africa*. "Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences", Vol 6(1 S1): 175-182.

³⁵ Ahmad, R. and Bujang, S., *op. cit.* (2013), p. 5.

³⁶ Wei, L.T. and Yazdanifard, R., *op. cit.* (2014), p. 11.

³⁷ Ali, R. and Ahmed, M.S., 2009. *The impact of reward and recognition programs on employee's motivation and satisfaction: an empirical study*. „International review of business research papers", Vol 5(4): 270-279.

³⁸ Mwema, N.W. and Gachunga, H.G., 2014. *The influence of performance appraisal on employee productivity in organizations: A case study of selected WHO offices in East Africa*. „International Journal of Social Sciences and Entrepreneurship", 1(11), pp. 324-337.

³⁹ Bassett-Jones, N. and Lloyd, G.C., 2005. *Does Herzberg's motivation theory have staying power?* „Journal of management development", Vol. 24 No. 10, pp. 929-943, <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710510627064>.

⁴⁰ Kumar, J., 2012. *Performance appraisal and promotion process: A measure approach*. „International Journal of Advancements in Research & Technology", Vol 1(1): 1-6.

⁴¹ Idowu, A., 2017. *Effectiveness of performance appraisal system and its effect on employee motivation*. „Nile Journal of Business and Economics", Vol 3(5): 15-39.

⁴² Kumar, J., *op. cit.* (2012), p. 4.

⁴³ Gohari, P., Ahmadloo, A., Boroujeni, M.B. and Hosseini-pour, S.J., *op. cit.* (2013), p. 555 et seq.

⁴⁴ Catania, A.C., 2001. *Positive psychology and positive reinforcement*. „American psychology", Vol. 56(1): 86-87.

⁴⁵ Patro, C.S., 2019. *Performance Appraisal in Mehdi Khosrow-Pour, D.B.A. (ed.) Advanced Methodologies and Technologies in*

about individual strengths and flaws, it fulfils the informational purpose. Finally, the motivational function comprises providing a learning environment that encourages employees to better their work. When done correctly, performance appraisals assist employees and managers in setting goals for the time preceding the next appraisal⁴⁶.

Employee disengagement results from the organisations inadequate execution of the performance appraisal process, where employees simply do what is expected of them to get the job done because they lack interest⁴⁷. Their performance and productivity suffer because of this behaviour. Radebe⁴⁸ also add that spread of office politics also resulting from the inadequate execution of the performance appraisal process, where other employees feel superior to other employees in the organization, gossips going around causing intimidation and demotivation, which has a negative impact on performance and productivity because employees who are dissatisfied with their working environment are demotivated and do not perform their duties effectively in the best interests of the organization as they have lost interest⁴⁹.

5. Research method

Qualitative approach was used in this study and the researcher saw it fit to use qualitative approach because of the nature of the study. It is crucial to use the qualitative approach since it makes use of open-ended questions and in-depth interviews, which will yield rich, thorough data and allow for flexibility during the research process.

5.1. Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- to establish the nature and type of tools used in employee's performance appraisal in the Department of Basic Education.
- to establish the challenges in performance appraisal in the Department of Basic Education.
- to examine the effects of performance appraisal on employee's productivity in the Department of Basic Education.

5.2. Study area

This study was conducted at the Limpopo Department of Basic Education in Polokwane, a city previously known as Pietersburg. Polokwane is a city and a capital city of Limpopo Province of South Africa. It is South Africa's largest urban centre north of Gauteng.

5.3. Sampling technique

In order to collect more relevant data, the researchers employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, and random sampling to sample respondents from the research population. Purposive and random sampling is better suited for this study because the target population exhibits similar traits and is more likely to be informed about the issue being studied. Therefore, purposive sampling was used in this study to get relevant information from the senior officials in the department. One on one interviews were conducted. Due to accessibility concerns, only a few randomly chosen officials at the lower level were also afforded an opportunity to partake in this study.

Business Operations and Management. IGI Global: 867-878.

⁴⁶ Mwema, N.W. and Gachunga, H.G., *op. cit.* (2014), p. 327.

⁴⁷ Arthur, P., *op. cit.* (2015) p. 311.

⁴⁸ Radebe, P.Q., *op. cit.* (2015), p. 180.

⁴⁹ Mwema, N.W. and Gachunga, H.G., *op. cit.* (2014), p. 328.

5.4. Data collection technique

In this study, researchers used a structured interview guide to conduct one-on-one interviews with the senior officials and the junior officials in the Department of Education in Limpopo province. This was done in order to comprehend how managers evaluate their subordinates and how performance affects employees' productivity. The researchers facilitated interviews with the officials using the interview guide that was developed based on the hypothesis; moreover, it was very important that researchers develop the interview guide for the sake of collecting data and answer the research question.

6. Discussion of findings-Insights from the managers

6.1. The nature and type of tool the department of basic education used to appraise employees.

A structured interview was conducted with the managers at the Department of Basic Education working in different units: Curriculum, and Finance. The questions were derived from the study's objectives and the questions were open minded based on how the participants answer. The question derived from this objective was designed to understand the method used and also elicit the managers' understanding of the method used to assess staff performance within all the units in the Department of Basic Education. All the respondents agreed that there is a method that assess the employee's performance in the department of basic education. In response to a query on the format and tools used for employee performance assessments, managers from the Department of Basic Education stated that they use the Performance Management System (PMS) as their performance appraisal technique developed by the Performance Management Development System Unit.

The respondents pointed out that the performance management system is a method whereby in the beginning of the quarter or in the beginning of the financial year they sign an agreement that will cover the department for the whole financial year. Additionally, the respondents added that it meant a procedure where a manager and employee come to an understanding on specific performance goals and then create a strategy to meet those goals. It intends to improve employee engagement and commitment while bringing organizational goals into alignment which Gary⁵⁰ agrees with.

The findings are also supported by Gary⁵¹ who lamented that performance appraisal is all about documenting the quality of employee's performance, helping them improve and holding them accountable for their work.

6.2. The challenges in performance appraisal in the Department of Basic Education

All the respondents concurred that it can be difficult to evaluate staff. All the respondents complained about the employees feeling entitled to receive a high rating of 4 which is regarded as performing exceptionally well. The study revealed that there is a problem of compliance from the employees. Even though they underperformed, some employees believe they are entitled to a higher grade to get the financial incentives, such as wage advancement or bonuses. As a result, there are disagreements between the managers and the staff at the end of the year.

"For instance, if you ask an employee to sacrifice at least 30 minutes of their lunch break to finish some tasks, they might reject, but if another employee agrees to sacrifice and is rated higher than they are, they might argue that favoritism was involved," said the respondent.

The study revealed that some of the employees are not willing to compromise so that they finish up their duties before the record time. The respondents mentioned that an employee gets a 4

⁵⁰ Gary Dessler, *op. cit.* (2011), p. 80.

⁵¹ Ibid.

rating if they have exceeded their expectations. To qualify for the performance incentive, staff must be prepared to take on additional responsibilities to receive a 4 rating, they should not demand it. The respondent further stated that one of the challenges they face is linking overall department performance with individual performance, there is lack of synergy between overall departmental performance and individual performance.

“For example, there has been a disagreement with the people in PMDS that the department can't even account for our finances properly. Reports are not credible, but you find people getting bonuses even though there is no overall impact on the performance of the department,” said the respondent.

As a result, the respondents stated that although employees perform, there is no impact on the department. This shows that the goals set for the employees do not connect with the department goals. The respondent also stated that Limpopo remains at the bottom in terms of matric scores, indicating that the department of Basic Education is not meeting the needs of the schools they serve.

The respondents mentioned that to set goals, supervisors and employees collaborate. However, because of the supervisor's position of power within the organization, there are occasionally tensions between the two parties. They might not feel safe or at ease sharing their honest opinion about the objectives a manager suggests, which could result in the employee setting unattainable objectives. The study has discovered that workers only deliver to reach the goals that have been set for them. They achieve their objectives, but the department's objectives, which include effectively supplying schools in Limpopo, are not fulfilled. In essence the goals set for the employees should align with the departmental goals.

6.3. The effects of performance appraisal on employee's productivity in the Department of Basic Education

The question was posed to find out how performance appraisals increase employee productivity. All the respondents have agreed that performance management system improve employee productivity in the department of basic education. The respondents stated that they give a performance score and evaluate the employee's performance as part of the performance assessment process. To choose incentives as part of the motivational process, the level performance number, which is developed further from the performance number, serves as a basis. The respondents added that anytime there are new job openings above the entry level, the level of performance number serves as a useful benchmark for us to use for internal promotions. The responder also stated that employees are motivated to perform better because they want to advance, and Kumar⁵² concurs that promotions send the message to staff members that they must put in extra effort if they want to advance to a new job.

In addition to rewarding the employee for prior performance, such promotions play a critical function in communicating to co-workers that their future effort will pay off. As a result, the company's employees are motivated to improve their performance and increase departments' productivity. Employee motivation is influenced by rewards, such as promotions and wage increases, as supported by Wei and Yazdanifard⁵³.

According to the respondents, financial incentives play a significant role in encouraging workers to meet their goals and be more productive at work. The respondents further mentioned that promotions and the creation of an enabling work environment were viewed as essential components in increased productivity. The respondent went on to explain that higher work performance was a direct effect of employees feeling like they were being compensated sufficiently. The study discovered that performance reviews increase employee productivity since the incentives they receive after being evaluated encourage them to put in extra effort.

Insights from the subordinates A structured interview was conducted with five subordinates

⁵² Kumar, J., *op. cit.* (2012), p. 4.

⁵³ Wei, L.T. and Yazdanifard, R., *op. cit.* (2014), p. 11.

at the Department of Basic Education working in different units: Curriculum, and Finance. The questions were derived from the study's objectives and were open minded based on how the participants answer.

7. The nature and type of tool the department of basic education used to appraise employees

The first question was used as an opening statement to gauge participants' understanding of the evaluation process. While some respondents claimed they were aware of the performance management system being used to evaluate them, others claimed they were not. The respondent stated that the performance management system is a system where employees are compensated based on the evaluation results provided by their supervisor. The respondents claimed that a performance management system is a type of procedure where they evaluate their performance and that it outlines goals that they agreed upon with the management to raise performance.

The respondent further stated that they sign a contract every year in terms of performance results areas (PRAs) to indicate their goals for the financial year. "We have quarterly reviews after contracting at the beginning of financial year, which is April, in June you do your first quarter assessment, September you do second quarter assessment, December you do third quarter assessment and in March you do annual assessment where you'll be checking in terms of how far is your performance in terms of goals that you have set for yourself," said the respondent.

Performance is evaluated on a quarterly and annual basis, with the purpose of determining if you are meeting your obligations. Additionally evaluated each year, with the staff receiving feedback. However, the researcher on the follow up on the matter that two of the respondents did not comprehend performance evaluation discovered that some of the employees in the department of basic education units did not fully understand performance management system and do not receive adequate feedback.

8. The challenges in performance appraisal in the Department of Basic Education

The question derived from this objective was posed to establish the challenges that the employees face in the department of basic education. Respondents claimed they are content with their working environment, while others voiced dissatisfaction with it, particularly with how occasionally noisy the office is. The respondents continued by saying that they frequently have trouble using functional tools in the unit. The respondent further mentioned that printers break down and they occasionally run out of toner or paper. When they face load shedding, generators do not function, which has an impact on their performance. There are mixture of opinions here because the rest of the respondents highlighted that they are satisfied with their working environment as they have a good relationship with their colleagues.

It was also highlighted that employees achieved the goals set for them at the beginning of the year. The respondent mentioned that the goals were met despite the challenges about printers not working and loadshedding affecting the performance. All respondents mentioned that they have documented what's expected of them to achieve their goals, they have a weekly planner to ensure that they work towards those goals.

"I list all the goals set for me from my performance contract, set time frames and revisit it on a timely basis this is to ensure I can achieve each of my goals and submit what is expected from me on time. I also record important things on my calendar," said the respondent.

Findings from this study reveal that the department has not been able to address any of the problems that the employees are having with the resources they need to perform their jobs. Employees print outside of their units since the printers in their divisions are broken, and supervisors still want them to meet their objectives despite any obstacles. As a result, there is a decrease in production rate and a delay in work document deliveries.

8.1. The effects of performance appraisal on employee's productivity in the Department of Basic Education

Finding out how performance appraisals affect employee productivity was one of the goals of the process. All the respondents have agreed that performance management has a negative and a positive effect on their performance. Additionally, respondents stated that they work hard to perform better because they want to earn rewards and raise their organisation's production. Notably, the performance appraisal system inspires employees to work in the organisation's best interests and encourages them to do so, which boosts the Department of Basic Education's productivity.

In their study, *The Effectiveness of Performance Management Systems in the Workplace: A Case of Tzaneen Local Municipality*, Modika, Malatji and Selepe⁵⁴ they are of the view that officials should be made to understand that low individual performance may lead to a low departmental performance and productivity and that compliance should be strengthened by ensuring timely submission of performance instruments.

The employees in the Department have further acknowledged that they get a bonus and salary increase at the end of the year provided they have scored at least 4 in their assessments. It was complemented that all workers who have served the Department for a period of more than 20 years are eligible for long service incentives. The respondent suggested wage progression, which is an addition to your pay that you only get for successful years. The study has discovered that the employees of the Department of Basic Education receive financial incentives that encourage them to perform better because only those who are rated at 4 are eligible for wage advancement. Kumar⁵⁵ support that the possibility of compensation motivates workers to increase their performance and output.

The respondents noted that while it motivates them to perform better, they only pay attention to it when tests are approaching. Because human nature plays a part in this process, the respondent claimed that prejudice is a common and inescapable element of employee performance reviews, and that this has a negative influence as well. The respondents added that unfair feedback from the managers demotivates people from improving their skills because it is based on subjective judgments rather than objective facts. "For the performance management system to be effective, employees should be aware of it, and I somehow believe that most employees do not understand the system itself. Perhaps there should be training that is conducted perhaps quarterly for all the employees to understand how the system operates and its importance", said the respondent.

Findings from this study revealed that the fact that employees do not understand the system's clear objectives, they do not take assessments seriously. The requirement for employees to execute tasks outside of their job description is not perceived. The respondent stated that they only think about the performance management system when it's time for evaluations. Makamu⁵⁶ supports the idea that employees' performance and productivity may suffer because of their lack of understanding of how their ratings are generated or rewarded.

9. Conclusion and recommendations

The current attempts have shown that upgrading any performance rating system is a difficult task that necessitates creating appraisal procedures and hiring experienced and motivated raters. To ensure that the system is successful and that its goals are successfully met, it is crucial that appraisers receive training. Training is a necessity if you want to reduce rating errors and increase validity and dependability. According to the study, the majority of respondents lacked the necessary understanding of performance evaluation and hence did not perceive the need to comply by filling out performance review reports. Due to insufficient incentives, they either submit late or never at all.

⁵⁴ Modika, P.P., Malatji, T.L. and Selepe, M.M., 2023. *The Effectiveness of Performance Management Systems in the Workplace: A Case of Tzaneen Local Municipality*, „International Journal of Social Science Research and Review”, 6(7), pp.448-459.

⁵⁵ Kumar, J., *op. cit.* (2012), p. 4.

⁵⁶ Makamu, N.I., *op. cit.* (2016), p. 59.

The study also showed that the assessors who are used to validate the final annual performance scores have a significant negative impact on improving employee performance because most employees become more demotivated as there is some degree of bias present during the performance evaluation by these committee. Additionally, it was discovered that the assessment method is a one-way procedure that does not offer feedback. Evidence from the study also shows that, as is the case in the Department of Basic Education, there is little correlation between employee goals and departmental goals.

Lack of understanding of how appraisals affect employee performance, proper training for appraisers themselves, lack of adequate resources, routine and systematic training programs for employees, and lack of faith in the entire appraisal system are all contributing factors. This study's findings support the notion that the Department of Basic Education's performance and productivity are negatively impacted by the inappropriate implementation of the performance appraisal system. It is obvious that the current system needs to be adjusted as a result.

No matter how good a performance appraisal system is created, the managers who must apply the system will determine how effective it is in large part based on their knowledge, dedication, and talents. The Department of Basic Education's performance appraisal system must be changed to better serve its intended purpose(s):

1. The Department of Basic Education's performance appraisal system must substantially incorporate evaluations into its overall design.
2. Every quarter, appraisals must receive adequate and impartial feedback on their performance.
3. Appraisals must be familiar and satisfied with the Department of Basic Education's appraisal system.
4. There must be a strong correlation between a good performance appraisal system and the department's output or productivity.

Recommendations. Department of Basic Education should adjust the method to become a more objective format. Therefore, the researcher fervently hopes and believes that these recommendations, which are very important components of a good and effective appraisal system, will be put into practice to encourage the performance of the employees of the Department of Basic Education to increase output and productivity.

Some suggestions for the Department of Basic Education's employee performance appraisal system that management should consider are as follows:

- managers and supervisors must receive the required training to conduct efficient appraisals that take into account the constantly changing workplace. If a company values performance, it also values the evaluation of that performance. Managers need to be guided in acquiring the abilities necessary for efficient appraisal. The organizational appraisal process cannot achieve its targeted goals, which include raising staff productivity, without these essential competencies. Only trained and certified officials are permitted to oversee and carry out an employee's performance.

- providing sufficient resources, such as new printers, so that staff members won't have to go to other units to make copies or print off documents.

- the importance of continual training, coaching, and counselling for both high achievers and underachievers should not be underestimated. Employees' personal development plans should be swiftly addressed to help them improve their performance and to enable them to do so.

- effective performance feedback is necessary to increase staff productivity. Feedback helps employees understand exactly what is expected of them. For increased efficiency, it is crucial to talk about and discuss staff performance. For performance feedback to increase employee productivity, it must be free from bias-based inaccuracies like stereotyping.

- a strong change agent must be hired to provide change management training for senior, middle, and operational staff with the goal of assisting them in changing their views and mind set on the system due to the negative mind set and loss of trust and confidence by employees regarding the performance management system.

The performance management system should prioritize building a senior post from the HR

director to the Chief Director level so that senior officials can mentor their subordinates and address complaints and grievances of senior officials on the same level.

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