

**Effectiveness of staff
Performance Appraisals at the
Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA)**

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Field study submitted to the UFS Business School in the
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Business Administration at the University of the Free State (UFS)

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21 November 2022

Declaration

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Abstract

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) operates from five distinct geographical locations. Five distinct divisions, each with its own set of branches. There are about 388 officials. Employees from the same or different geographical areas perform the same type of work but with varying sizes. Employees complain about an unclear evaluation policy (Performance Management and Development System) and unfair implementation, leading to disengaged employees with low morale, affecting the LHDA's overall performance. The policy is said to be implemented differently in different sections; thus, it is not consistent with regard to all staff. This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of staff performance appraisals at the LHDA by identifying and determining the factors contributing to employee performance and evaluating the impact of performance appraisal on employee performance. A semi-structured interview was used, breaking down responses from different staff from different sections with varying experiences with policy implementation. It is necessary to have an evaluation policy in place to ensure that performance is monitored for the benefit of both the employee and the employer. However, it was discovered that staff believe the policy is unclear and applied differently and unfairly to staff from different sections, negatively impacting morale and performance. The following was also discovered: the LHDA had reported poor performers, but this was not addressed as per policy, staff had been victimised during policy implementation, and they simply filled out the form without evaluating it in order to comply because they did not want to have conflicts with the supervisors. Lastly, the reward contradicts the purpose as it is so little that it is incorrect or not aligned with the performance. Based on the study's conclusions and findings, the recommendations are that it is critical to align individual and organisational goals with a clear policy for all, that implementation is effective through engagement by introducing moderation to all staff's performance, or to initiate the 360-degree-method of performance evaluation. Finally, LHDA should explore other ways to reward performance in real terms.

Keywords: Performance evaluation, rewards, motivation, employee morale

Dedication

I want to thank the Lord in Heaven for giving me the courage to persevere this far and the strength to see this massive responsibility through. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to:

- Dr Liezel Massyn, who played an important role from the initial steps of my master's degree journey.
- Mr Lyle Markham, my supervisor, for his unwavering support and direction.
- LHDA for allowing me to collect data from its employees and support of my boss, Mr Lebohang Moleko.
- My family, for the prayers and support, my dear wife, MaReaoBoka, I thank you for everything.
- My MBA classmates for the support, Jarrod Piderit and Sbongiseni Mkhungo.

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List of Abbreviations

LHDA	–	Lesotho Highlands Development Authority
LHWP	–	Lesotho Highlands Water Project
UFS	–	University of the Free State
KPI	–	Key Performance Indicator
HR	–	Human Resources
ACCA	–	Association of Certified Chartered Accountants
CED	–	Chief Executive Division
SDE	–	Social Development and Environment
DOD	–	Development and Operations Division
FD	–	Finance Division
CPRM	–	Corporate Planning and Risk Management
SDT	–	Self Determination Theory
VET	–	Vroom's Expectancy Theory
GRS	–	Graphical Rating Scale
GREC	–	General Research Ethics Committee
PMDS	–	Performance Management & Development System

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Background of the study

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) is a multi-staged project that supplies water to the Gauteng province of South Africa and generates hydropower for Lesotho. The Treaty, a contractual agreement, was underwritten in October 1986. The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) was founded to administer the project's execution within the Lesotho's boundaries (LHDA,2021).

For LHDA to achieve its mandate to transfer water to South Africa, electricity generation and compensation of affected communities, it is vital that it has high-calibre employees. The key to LHDA's success and long sustainability is having high-performance human resources who can add sustainable value by implementing its operations and achieving preplanned goals and objectives (Widisono et al., 2021). These employees need to work from within a culture of success that can imaginably motivate them to work flawlessly (Hery Winoto, 2021).

It is of paramount importance that for employees to work optimally, their roles are well defined and aligned with those of the LHDA. Hery Winoto (2021) states that organisational devotion is an atmosphere in which employees align their goals with the organisation's goals. With this alignment, the organisation can then evaluate employees' skills, achievement, and growth, which helps to increase their overall contribution to the organisation as well (El-Gebali et al., 2019).

Goals and objectives are established to reflect the mission and vision of the organisation. However, this focus ignores employees' ability to set and achieve personal goals and objectives. Therefore, there is a need to focus on employees' inputs and deliveries at work, as employees are not rewarded for being good dressers and talkers. Furthermore, the essence of performance appraisal is thus the ability to relate an individual's performance to organisational pre-determined objectives (Amzat et al., 2018). The level of staff motivation, competence, and career development certainly impact a company's performance (Widisono et al., 2021). Therefore, staff need to be rewarded for good work, career development, and training where needed (Padhaya et al., 2021).

LHDA has developed and is implementing a policy on staff performance appraisals. However, it was only in 2015 that the monetary factors came into being (performance bonuses). This performance appraisal was initiated to address the employer and employee's benefits. The LHDA executive body formulates its key performance areas, which are the organisation's mandate. These key performance areas are communicated across the spectrum; the divisions formulate their division's objectives (*using a document called Table 3*), key performance indicators, and targets are drawn for the attention of managers and their individual staff. Managers also break *Table 3* into pieces to formulate *Table 5* therefore employees have a better understanding, feel and accountability of their expectations (objectives and targets) (LHDA, 2021).

The organisational objectives, targets, and key performance areas have been linked to divisions through to individual employees' respective positions. Managers usually host a division's workshop to address sectional objectives and link those to individuals. Managers draw up individual job profiles that stipulate the job requirements, competencies, targets, and objectives. Motivation in setting these targets is considered so that employees can have a sense of achievement and monetary compensation. An agreement is then drawn up that clearly indicates the targets and key expectations that each employee must comply with. This is signed to take accountability and becomes a binding agreement to perform within the areas agreed on while also contributing to the LHDA's mandate (LHDA, 2021).

1.1.1 Feedback

Section 17.10 of the LHDA's performance management policy states that managers and supervisors are obliged to give employees feedback during the half-year and end of the year. The feedback provided should be shared with the Human Resources office (HR). If employees are unhappy with the scores, they can indicate and may appeal (LHDA, 2021). According to Hernandez and Wang (2021), effective feedback allows for ongoing improvement in performance throughout time. Despite the importance of feedback in employee development and advancement, most supervisors find it challenging to provide and deliver feedback.

1.1.2 Performance improvement plan

LHDA requires that the negative performance of an employee be evaluated so that such an employee performs better and contributes to the attainment of the organisation's goals.

Causes of negative performance can be evaluated by asking: if the employee have knowledge, skills, or does not have access to relevant resources (LHDA, 2021). **Action** is therefore taken to formulate applicable training and unlock access to resources. **Status** is required to ensure the action yields positive results where employees' contributions are evaluated post training.

LHDA requires all staff to complete job profile analysis and identify areas of development annually. This is done to assist the HR office in putting together the budget needed for staff training in a particular financial year. This is furthermore designed to build employees' competencies to perform better in their roles (LHDA, 2021).

According to Sabuhari et al. (2020), various elements influence an employee's performance to improve a certain set of actions to fulfil the employee's organisational goals in a given time frame. Employee performance refers to what employees do and do not do that affect how much they commit to the organisation. It is influenced by three primary factors: (1) individuals' capacity to work, (2) their amount of effort, and (3) organisational support. This is inextricably linked to the fact that a flexible human resource strategy is an imperative component of a human resource management strategy that supports a company's internal ability to benefit. It is also considered a needful requirement or prerequisite for a company's mastery to adapt to environmental variations more quickly and effectively.

1.1.3 Assessment of performance

Performance is evaluated every six (6) months. There are two (2) formal performance reviews: one at the halfway point of the year (September) and the other after the financial year (March). However, informal feedback is provided on an ongoing basis during and in between the formal review cycles. The manager/supervisor and each employee will conduct a review to monitor progress against the performance agreement and give and receive

feedback on the performance during the period under review (Amzat et al., 2018; LHDA performance policy, 2021).

LHDA has developed a rating system to assess staff performance, ranging from poor/unsatisfactory performance to exceptional performance. Table 1.1 illustrates the ratings used to assess performance.

Table 1. 1: Performance assessment ratings

Rating	Level of performance	Description of performance
1	Poor/Unsatisfactory Performance	Performance does not meet the set target.
2	Performance Partially Meets Expectations	Performance is almost at the set target, with requirements almost met in terms of quality and quantity.
3	Performance Meets Expectations	Performance fully meets the set targets.
3.5	Good Performance	Regularly meets and occasionally exceeds set targets.
4	Performance Exceeds Expectations	Performance is significantly higher than the set targets.
4.5-5	Exceptional Performance	Performance far exceeds the set targets.

Table 1.1 briefly explains each level of performance to assist supervisors in evaluating staff performance. This is also used to determine the need for training and the eligibility for monetary bonuses.

The ratings from rating (4) “*Performance is significantly higher than the set targets*”, and rating (4.5-5) “*Performance far exceeds the set targets,*” are presumed to be too high and unachievable, subsequently demotivating employees. There is a lack of clarity about to what level or extent performance ‘exceeds targets’ and how far is ‘exceeding targets’. There is ambiguity, which makes it difficult to define the ratings and how the monetary value is attached to this rating.

The assessment goes up the hierarchy as opposed to objectives coming down; supervisors may be reluctant to rate performance as high because, traditionally, managers need more explanations; they want to avoid costs in terms of bonus payouts. This may result in employees settling for less because they avoid disputes with the supervisors. In an effort to avoid such conflict, ongoing assessment is important. Amzat et al (2018) adds that there is a need for the provision of feedback throughout the year, which may keep employees on

track to know what to expect in the final assessment. It is important to stay in touch with performance to create a psychologically pleasant workplace for organisational performance and objectives to be attained.

In order to effectively complete the performance assessment, the following phases should be undertaken.

Phase 1. **Self-review** – An employee measures his/her performance based on the signed agreement and allocates ratings accordingly. At this stage, the employee is allowed to detail any other completed roles that were never part of the agreement. An employee must understand the nature of this assessment. Also, an employee's assessment of his or her own ability is evidently to attain a goal (Yokoyama, 2019). It is also advisable that individual employees present substantive proof of performance goals attained.

Phase 2. **Supervisory review** – This is the phase where the supervisor assesses performance and allocates ratings based on the agreement signed. He or she also identifies areas of development. The employee and the supervisor have a session to discuss the assessment and agree on ratings in case they differ. LHDA does this to improve performance. This is also supported in that supervisory skills include providing moral and professional support, creating a safe work atmosphere, and assisting subordinates in improving their performance. Perceptual differences, supportive behaviour, value congruity, trustworthiness, and comparable personalities also influence employee performance.

1.1.4 Recognition and reward

Based on the performance appraisal/evaluation outcome, employees are rewarded as individuals for their performance. At the same time, their contributions to attaining organisational objectives are also acknowledged. This reward is monetary based on agreed-on ratings of the assessment of the performance of each employee (LHDA, 2021). LHDA is no exception. According to Noorazem et al. (2021), bonuses are paid to recognise and motivate employees for their exceptional efforts throughout the year; they also state that bonuses serve as an incentive for employees to outperform low performers in the organisation.

1.1.5 Management of poor performance

If an employee's performance is substandard, the relevant supervisor/manager must provide systematic restorative/corrective or advancement support to help the employee revamp. Disciplinary action may be taken if the preceding steps do not provide the intended results. The procedure to be followed must adhere to the disciplinary measures established in the Lesotho Labour Code, 1992, as well as Section 27 of the LHDA performance management system manual. Vanesa et al. (2019) argue that the more disciplined individuals are, the better the organisation's performance will be. Human resource management relies heavily on discipline. They further describe it as a disciplinary process for correcting or punishing employees who breach the company's policies or procedures.

It has been reported within LHDA that most employees have conflicts with their supervisors, which are brought on by performance appraisals. The HR manual indicates that the process can lead to conflicts if it is not conducted professionally and when supervisors do not want to be fair and misuse their supervisory powers (LHDA, 2021). The flecked/indicated misuse of power transforms supervisors into corporate psychopaths; as stated by Boddy (2014), who further held that torments are liable for abusive supervision and rising levels of conflict at workplaces.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Questions

1.2.1 Problem Statement

The problem at LHDA is the lack of clearly defined ratings that attract monetary value and the lack of accuracy and fairness experienced while undertaking the performance appraisal process. This may impact employees' contributions and commitment towards achieving LHDA's mandate. LHDA has reported cases where supervisors' discretion in assessing performance has brought conflict that resulted in low staff morale. If this problem is not addressed, employee morale and commitment will decrease, leading to high employee turnover and can negatively influence organisational success.

If employees are demotivated, their productivity and commitment towards achieving organisational goals are lowered (Widisono et al., 2021). It is, therefore, important to have a clearly defined appraisal process. It is also important to provide continuous feedback prior to the formal appraisal performance of the organisation (Amzat et al., 2018).

1.2.2 Research Questions

1. How effective is the performance appraisal system at LHDA?
2. What are the staff members' perceptions of the performance appraisal system at LHDA?
3. What impact does the performance appraisal have on LHDA staff (does it add motivation that enhances performance or not)?

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 Primary Objective

To evaluate the effectiveness of the staff performance appraisal system at the (LHDA).

1.3.2 Secondary Objectives

The secondary objectives are as follows:

- To provide an overview of employee performance appraisal.
- To identify and determine factors that contribute to employee performance at LHDA
- To assess the impact of the performance appraisal on employees' performance and make suggestions for improvements within LHDA.

1.4 Preliminary Literature Review

Below are definitions/explanations of the performance appraisal system and components that build up a comprehensive and complete performance appraisal system.

1.4.1 Performance appraisal system

In today's global economy, the performance appraisal system is frequently recognised as one of the most important functions of human resource management. A successful performance appraisal system serves as a catalyst for improving an organisation's human resource management. The systematised, recurring, and unbiased evaluation of an employee's knowledge of topics relevant to his or her current job and prospective for advancement is known as performance appraisal (Padhaya et al., 2021).

One of the most significant human resource management procedures is performance appraisal. It refers to a method of evaluating an employee's performance using clearly established appraisal criteria. Furthermore, performance appraisal is designed to improve

individual performance and connect individual goals and behaviours with the business's strategic goals (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Employee performance appraisal is a critical component of administration in achieving an organisation's goals (Khaliq et al., 2018). It is therefore important to assess the value that employees bring to the organisation that assists in accomplishing the organisational goals and objectives.

A strong and successful *performance appraisal programme* is a necessary managerial tool for rewarding or disciplining employees based on their performance. It allows management to distinguish between inefficient and productive employees based on their output (Khaliq et al., 2018).

The efficaciousness of a *performance management system* is based on how deftly employee and company goals are aligned. Consistency and good results are ensured by carefully implementing an effective performance management system. It is critical to consider the impact of employees on motivation, engagement and retention during such an appraisal (Awan et al., 2020).

According to Carol and Florah (2019), a study on organisational fairness in the performance appraisal system and work performance among organisations found that performance appraisal criteria significantly impact employee productivity. A seemly appraisal is allied to good job management, promotions, rewards, bonuses and salary increases. Furthermore, performance appraisal has been allied to distributive justice, with inferences for how the relationship in appraisal affects employee performance. Distributive justice in this context refers to the perceived fairness in the employee performance assessment and the belief by employees that outcomes are equitable

Performance appraisal combines goal-setting theory, control theory, and expectation theory. This entails developing an action plan, defining forms of controls on the implementation of the plan, and ensuring that the set targets are challenging enough to motivate employees with the rewards at the end. Equity theory is crucial when determining how fair and equitable an organisation's performance management system is in terms of procedures, interactions, and distributions (Awan et al., 2020).

1.4.2 Employee motivation

A policy based on understanding the factors that influence employee performance is required to increase organisational performance (Jumady in 2020, as cited in Nurlina and Jumady, 2021, p. 45). Understanding employees as individuals, encouraging them to be motivated at work, and showing gratitude for their accomplishments are ways to increase employee satisfaction.

Every business desires high-quality employee work to earn considerable revenue and profit. Excellent and high-quality human resources will influence the productivity of a corporation. Human resources are the most important aspect of the overall operation of a company (Musthafa, 2021).

Employee motivation is defined as motivation based on the idea that everyone has the same set of demands and thus prescribes the traits that should be present in the workplace. A person's internal or external motivation mechanism that inspires excitement and vigour to pursue a particular course of action could come from within or outside of them. The motivation process begins with a physiological or psychological lack of needs that trigger a behaviour or drive toward a certain goal (Sitopu et al., 2021).

According to Latief et al. (2018), if a person is highly motivated, she/he will perform at the highest level possible on the job, and vice versa. If an employee is not motivated to work, she/he will be unable to develop new ideas to help the organisation meet its goals. This is why motivation is critical for all employees, as they will each work hard within a psychologically safe environment, which, ultimately, will yield optimal results. Based on the explanations of the preceding theories, workplace motivation can be defined as an effort to encourage oneself to do the work and channel all of one's knowledge so that the company's objectives can be met.

Inspiration for work and the desire to carry out action, according to Wibowo (2016), as cited in Widisono et al (2021), is motivation. A person's motivation can come from a variety of sources. Motivation is a condition that drives employees to reach their objectives. It consists of various parts, including guiding, generating, demonstrating intensity, and maintaining, all of which are long-term and have objectives. According to the Three Needs Theory,

motivation is measured by three factors: achievement, affiliation, and power (Widisono et al., 2021).

A person's motivation is an urge to take action to attain a specific objective. The word "motivation" derives from the Latin word *motive*, which means "impulse," "stimulus," or "driving force". Motivation can also be defined as an internal and external condition that arouses us to act, pushes us to pursue specific goals, and keeps us interested in specific activities (Febrianti and SE, 2020).

1.4.3 Performance appraisal feedback

Employee behaviour can be changed with the help of employee performance appraisal. Conversely, performance evaluations provide an environment where everyone is encouraged to share their burdens. It also assists people in setting and achieving meaningful objectives. Employees believe that performance appraisals provide constructive feedback in a positive and friendly manner (Chatterjee et al., 2020).

Employees receive evolving informal feedback from their bosses on the job, as well as the formal appraisal process. Employees are more receptive to informal feedback and are more likely to improve their performance as a result. Employees' overall performance may be improved if a greater focus is placed on this informal assessment rather than the official appraisal process as said by the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA, 2021).

According to Caruth (2018), there is a preliminary for clear-based performance feedback to employees and a system for tracking feedback sessions. This is discerning in identifying errors and swiftly implementing remedial actions that have a basal impact on the organisation. Giving employees felicitous and decisive feedback is regarded as an ideal path to actualising the organisation's goals (Baruch, 2016).

1.4.4 Career or staff development

The concept of career development is a neutral concept. Experts frequently define *career* as a process or a concept that is neither static nor finished. Career development is a job function that assists employees in planning their future careers in the organisation so that

both the organisation and the employees can grow to their full potential, increasing individual work abilities and achieving the career goals they desire (Rahayu and Widyanty , 2021).

Fair treatment in the workplace, concern for direct superiors, information about numerous promoting options, interest in being promoted, and level of satisfaction are some of the characteristics and indicators of career development, according to Shaputra and Hendriani (2015).

1.4.4.1 The relationship of job performance appraisal with Career Development (H1)

One strategy to advance an employee's career is to achieve success. Job performance appraisals are also useful for determining compensation eligibility and increasing employee quality of work. According to Sumadewi and Suwandana (2017), job performance appraisal has advantages for career advancement and as a foundation for human resource planning to improve working conditions, quality, and output. The higher an employee's performance rating, the more likely s/he is to progress in the firm (Rahayu and Widyanty, 2021).

1.4.4.2 Work experience with Career Development (H2 and H3)

Experience is a learning process and the potential to behave that can be regarded as a process that leads a person to a better pattern of conduct, whether from formal or non-formal education. The length of time or working period of employees working between employers can be used to determine their work experience. Employees with substantial work experience will benefit in every job they undertake since they have experience from their prior employment; therefore, the more work experience they have, the more opportunities they will have to advance in their careers (Saraswati and Dewi, 2017).

1.5 Research methodology

The research methodology section explains the study approach chosen and its associated descriptions. It also describes the target demographic, the sampling method adopted, and the sample size for gathering data that was used in this research study.

1.5.1 Research design

A research design is defined as a plan for gathering, analysing, and studying data. It is also explained as a well-thought-out plan that outlines how data should be evaluated, analysed,

and outcomes acquired using a dialect and inference on data relationships (Carol and Florah, 2019).

The qualitative research approach used in this study was chosen from the available research methods (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods). Qualitative research is explained as an interpretative, naturalistic approach in which the researcher studies objects in their connatural context, striving to make sense of them and translate phenomena in respect of the interpretations that people attribute to them. It entails gathering a wide range of empirical materials, including case studies, personal experiences, introspective, interview, and observational materials, and historical, interactive, and visual communications (Aspers and Corte, 2019).

As a result, LHDA employees shared their perspectives based on their personal experiences, understanding of the performance management system, expectations, and exposure from various professional experiences. This enabled the researcher to ask open-ended questions to better understand the phenomena under the performance management system.

The study was conducted in-house, from within LHDA, making information more easily accessible. It was expected to be convenient, with rich information expected with limited resources.

1.5.2 Research paradigm

This study took a post-positivistic paradigm perspective, defined as a pluralism that seeks to strike a balance between positivist and interpretivist perspectives. It concentrates on research issues in the framework of involving the majority's experience and announcing the results of what the majority deems acceptable. Post-positivism includes historical, comparative, philosophical, and phenomenological viewpoints in addition to qualitative analysis (Panhwar et al., 2017).

1.5.3 Sampling and targeted population

The policy on the performance appraisal system cuts across all levels within the LHDA; therefore, the targeted populations to gather sufficient data that will generate favourable results.

The LHDA's hierarchical structure consists of five (5) divisions, each with lower-level employees, senior officers, managers, and the head of divisions. At least each division represented its understanding, experience, importance, challenges, and perceptions of the LHDA staff performance appraisal. As of the end of September 2021, LHDA had 388 employees (LHDA, 2021). The sample size was estimated at twenty (20) participants from LHDA, with members representing all the divisions.

The five divisions within LHDA are categorised as follows:

1. Chief Executive Division (CED) – Nineteen (19) employees
2. Social Development and Environment (SDE) – Fifty-eight (58)
3. Development and Operations Division (DOD) – 156
4. Finance Division (FD) – Seventy-six (76)
5. Corporate Planning and Risk Management (CPRM) – Seventy-four (74)

A purposive sample of 20 managers and senior officers representing all the divisions was used. Only participants who have been with the organisation for at least three years were assumed to know more about and have experience with the LHDA employee management system. They were deemed to make policy changes and decisions. Participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they had consented to participate by filling out and signing the consent form. However, they could withdraw at any time if they felt the need. The semi-structured interview was sent through company email, allowing participants to respond in their free time, though reminders were sent if the time elapsed with no response.

The purposeful sampling approach is a non-probability sampling method. Non-probability sampling is a method of sampling in which participants are chosen by the researcher rather than involving every member of a target population (Stratton, 2021). This is a qualitative research technique for diagnosing and classifying information-rich examples to efficiently use limited resources (Palinkas et al., 2016). This necessitates locating and choosing

individuals or groups of individuals who are exceptionally educated or proficient in a subject of interest (Palinkas et al., 2016). This implies that a participant's ability to speak, express, and reflect on their experiences and perspectives is relevant (Palinkas et al., 2016). The ability to participate is crucial.

1.5.4 Data collection methods

This study gathered data using semi-structured interviews, a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks participants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions. This method allowed the researcher to engage with the participants on the areas that could add value to the overall aim of this study (Evans and Lewis, 2018).

Semi-structured interviews are valuable because they allow researchers to study subjective viewpoints and acquire in-depth reports of people's experiences. As a rule, the researcher uses an interview schedule, which allows the participant to answer in their own words and explore concerns and areas that are relevant to them. Accordingly, the interview should be guided by a schedule and allow additional pertinent subjects to emerge throughout the discussion (Evans and Lewis, 2018).

1.6 Ethical Considerations

According to Whitney (2021), it is critical to understand the ethical considerations that come with research before embarking on these study designs. Ethics are moral concepts that can or must be applied when conducting research.

1.6.1 Permission obtained

This area involves gaining approval. The researcher must send a written request for permission to the appropriate individual or office, detailing the research study in detail (Ramrathan et al., 2017).

A written request was sent to the LHDA's Chief Executive, requesting permission to conduct this study within the LHDA. There was a response with terms and conditions that was established and followed throughout the research.

1.6.2 Informed consent

White (2020) describes informed consent as a competent, understanding adult who authorises a professional to involve him or her in a study project as a subject.

Participants were enlightened about the study's background and the areas that could directly affect them. They were requested to sign and get a written consent form. This signed permission form indicated that the participant read and understood the terms and conditions and agreed to participate in the study.

1.6.3 Voluntary participation

Informed consent informs research participants about their rights as participants in studies. The fact that participation is voluntary and that the study participant can withdraw at any time is perhaps the most crucial of these rights (Josephson and Smale, 2020).

Communication with participants was done in a professional manner where they were allowed to participate at their convenient time without forcing and imposing anything on them to avoid withdrawals prior to completion of the study.

1.6.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

In order to protect the privacy of human subjects when gathering, analysing, and reporting data, confidentiality and anonymity are ethical standards. The term "confidentiality" refers to the removal or alteration of any personally identifying information provided by participants and separated from the data. On the other hand, anonymity refers to the gathering of data without obtaining any personally identifying information (Allen, 2017).

The information collected as a result of this study was used solely for the purposes of this study. Participants were kept anonymous, and their data was kept anonymous as well.

1.6.5 No harm

To do no harm can be defined as the researcher protecting the safety, dignity, and privacy of the people with whom they work, as well as their rights to privacy, or it can be defined as avoiding imposing and suffering psychological pain on participants (Brittain et al., 2020).

The information obtained from participants was kept strictly confidential. It is kept in a secure location which only the researcher can access. Participants were protected from harm by keeping their data anonymous to protect their dignity and psychological well-being.

1.6.6 Rigour of the research

This is the area in which research procedures are followed precisely and methodically to detect significant influences that occur during the study process. This section examines constructivist criteria for trustworthiness, which are similar to but distinct from those for validity and reliability.

1.6.6.1 Credibility

The degree to which the target audience views the source to obtain expertise and knowledge in their understanding of the product/service (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017).

1.6.6.2 Confirmability

This is about the audit trail, especially in terms of tracking the entire process, from data collection to analysis. It is critical to make an overall judgement about the study's confirmability; data and interpretations are based on occurrences rather than the researcher's assumptions or point of view (Eldh et al., 2020).

1.6.6.3 Transferability

This area is focused on generalisation from case to case or group to group, as well as whether the findings may be applied to a different situation (Eldh et al., 2020).

1.6.6.4 Dependability

This focuses on the study's research process, making it feasible to trace the audit trail. In addition to determining whether the records are correct, the product/data should be analysed to provide an acceptable baseline (Eldh et al., 2020).

1.7 Demarcation of the study

The study was estimated to involve a total of twenty (20) LHDA employees, ranging from lower-level to senior officers, managers, and heads of divisions. This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of employee performance appraisal in the LHDA. The focus of this research was on human resource management.

1.8. Chapter Layout

The research study is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2: Literature review
- Chapter 3: Research methodology
- Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation
- Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

1.9 Conclusion

The study is aimed at evaluating the staff members' perceptions of the performance evaluation system at LHDA to establish the effectiveness of the appraisal system. This will potentially assist both the LHDA and staff members by getting the appraisal process to improve organisational goals while also enhancing staff productivity thereafter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 encompasses a discussion about what performance appraisal is, why it is important, why organisations need to implement it, and how it should properly be conducted. The chapter concludes with why employees need to have a clear understanding of the whole cycle of performance management and appraisal.

2.2 Performance appraisal definitions

Performance appraisal is defined as a process within the overall performance management process, comprising the formal assessment and rating of individuals by their supervisors and the evaluation of an individual's work performance to achieve objective personnel decisions. In general, performance appraisal seeks to recognise the current skill level of the workforce (Islami et al., 2018).

Performance appraisal is a systematic business procedure that compares actual and expected performance based on objective tasks with thoughts and expectations. Many organisational procedures might be included, such as performance measurement, goal setting, and incentive management. Employees' accomplishments and shortcomings are analysed, and whether they warrant future training or advancement is determined (Moradi et al., 2017).

The process of reviewing and evaluating an individual's and a team's contribution to the attainment of the organisation's goals is known as performance appraisal. A performance appraisal system is an important tool that a business may utilise to improve the quality of its personnel. A component of Performance Management is the Performance Appraisal system (PA). PA seeks to improve efficiency and productivity by allowing employees to regularly examine agreed-upon work objectives, subordinate work-related behaviour, and agreed-upon actions to address any inadequacies (Wagacha and Maende, 2017).

However, Dagar (2014) defines performance appraisal as a process of appraising employee performance by scrutinising current performance against previously established and agreed standards that have already been discussed with employees and then granting feedback to

employees about their performance degree/level to improve their performance as needed by their organisation.

Based on the above definitions, this study will adopt the definition Moradi et al. (2017) provided. Their definition addresses the process and complementary incentives and involves training, which is essential for the assessment's output. However, other definitions will play a part as the study sees fit.

2.3 The importance of performance appraisal

According to Raj and Manjula (2019), performance appraisal is critical in any organisation's human resource framework. As an essential component of any organisation, performance appraisal has undergone significant modifications in response to changing employer and employee needs and practices. Different workplaces offer different challenges and opportunities to employees and employers, and as a result, the performance appraisal system varies (Mishra, 2022).

Mishra, (2022) discovered that a comprehensive review of employee performance is critical for organisations to identify their potential. Performance appraisal assists an organisation in knowing the expectations of its employees. Management also must make sound decisions regarding salary increases, promotions, job satisfaction, and increasing employee morale, which in turn improves their performance.

2.4. Performance Appraisal process

Performance appraisals refer to the process of evaluating job-related performance and assigning rewards based on that evaluation. This is an important part of the endeavour to address of contend agency problems, motivating employees to enact in the employer's best interests and is thus a key management practice. The question of how the process works and whether it is valuable is also debatable. For example, Cappelli and Conyon (2018) raise the question of whether performance appraisals should be viewed as a integrant of simple lawful relationships or as representation of a richer relational treaty between organisations and their employees.

Cappelli and Conyon (2018) elaborate on their argument and reflect that evidence presents that performance appraisals are associated with greater levels of individual performance.

This is when compared to individuals in jobs without appraisals, presumably due to this ability to capture and manage open-to-interpretation aspects of performance. Therefore, there is a considerable difference between areas where performance is assessed and areas where there is no performance assessment at all.

2.4.1 Behaviours

Although measuring results is important, focusing solely on results can provide an imbalanced or inadequate view of employee performance. Thus, behaviour patterns, or how a task is completed, form an important component of the planning phase (Aguinis, 2019). According to Dasanayaka et al. (2021), the major criteria for evaluating employee performance entails job-specific attitude and behaviour (e.g., features like volume, quality, knowledge, dependability, and innovation of and on work), core responsibilities of employees' roles, and non-job-specific behaviour (e.g., promptness, dedication, enthusiasm, cooperation and persistence). This is an important consideration because PA systems are expected to include both measurable and non-commensurable aspects to provide a complete picture of the checks in place.

2.4.2 The Performance Review

The greatest assessments involve a two-way conversation in which the employee evaluates his own performance and sets improvement goals. Organisations should also ensure that key performance indicators (KPIs) are clearly communicated and defined with employees and that appropriate benchmarks are in place against which employees are evaluated (Dangol 2021).

2.4.3 Theories related to Performance Appraisal

This section describes the three theories that argue how motivation affects employee performance. The theories in question are Locke's goal-setting theory, self-determination theory, and Vroom's expectancy theory.

2.4.3.1 Locke's Goal-Setting theory

The goal-setting theory is a broad approach to motivation that emphasises the importance of establishing a goal as a source of intrinsic motivation. According to the theory, individuals

are more motivated and perform better when they create specific goals, accept demanding targets, and receive feedback on their performance. In other words, when goals are used as a motivator, the outcome will almost always be positive regardless of how challenging the goals are (Owoyele, 2017). Figure 2.1 depicts the setting of clear goals.

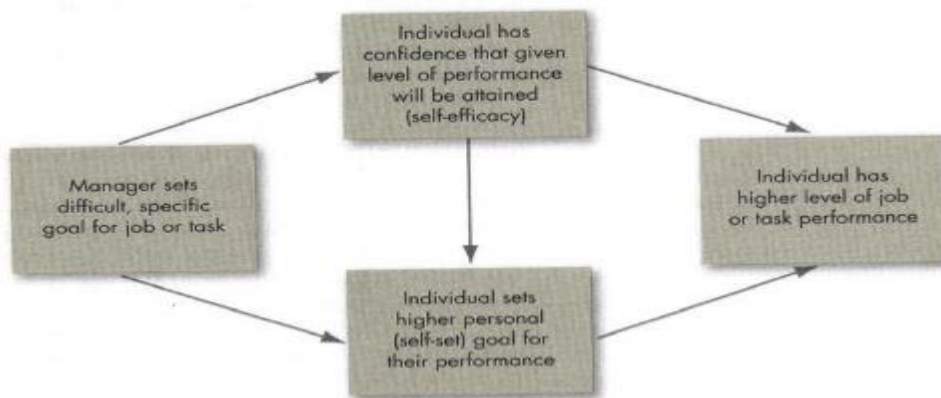


Figure 2. 1: Locke’s Goal-Setting Theory

A goal’s definition can be attributed to an action’s objective or desired outcome. It has been discovered that clearly defined goals encourage higher performance because they create a sense of target and aim. Loosely defined goals with ambiguous boundaries, such as “doing one’s best”, do not produce the same pattern of passionate achievement. However, it is also not true that specific goals have a one-to-one relationship with high performance because goals vary in their difficulty level; however, they do reduce the level of ambiguity toward target achievement (Le and Pastukhova 2018). Goals are described as “the object or goal of an action.” Put differently, goals specify the desired end results or performance to be achieved, forasmuch as performance refers to what is actually accomplished (Van der Hoek et al., 2018).

The goal-setting theory identifies three (3) mechanisms that positively influence employee performance when goals are set high: direction, effort, and persistence (Asmus et al., 2015). Firstly, goals assist employees in having a better understanding of where they are going and managing their work accordingly. Employees can then focus on a specific task and complete it rather than deferring it until another day. Setting goals increases goal-related activities, which directly impact performance (Le and Pastukhova, 2018). Secondly, employees are more motivated to complete tasks when they are performing well. According to Locke and Latham (2013), complex and challenging goals tend to produce high-performing individuals,

whereas setting lower goals does not produce the same results. Thirdly, commitment to ambitious goals can also lead to perseverance in goal attainment. This can not only help the road to set goals but also create a general trend in behaviour susceptible to perseverance and hardship (Le and Pastukhova, 2018).

Considering the three factors mentioned above, goals are regarded as an excellent motivator. These are known as the three motivational milestones. The sphere of goal complexity cannot be satisfied with only the three traditional mechanisms mentioned above because motivation alone is insufficient for goal achievement; thus, a strategy is required (Asmus et al., 2015).

2.4.3.2 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

According to self-determination theory (SDT), strengths-based performance evaluations will make subordinates feel empowered by their supervisor and thus satisfy their psychological need for a sense of belonging. As a result of satisfying their need for connectedness, they will be more motivated to learn and improve. Need-satisfaction constructs are frequently investigated in SDT research as mediators that link specific social environments to the benefits that arise from those contexts (Van Woerkom and Kroon, 2020).

2.4.3.4 Vroom's Expectancy Theory (VET)

According to VET, people lean to act in a hedonistic fashion, preferring actions that will furnish the most significant prejudice utility. The strength of a tendency to act is proportional to the strength of the expectation that the act will result in a specific outcome (Suciu et al., 2013).



Figure 2. 2: Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Even when referring to objective elements, expectation is a subjective element. An employee may have all of the resources he needs to complete a task, but their expectancy will be low if s/he does not believe s/he is capable. Organisations can influence the level of expectancy by organising work in such a way that it allows for professional growth, training programmes and/or internal mobility (Suciu et al., 2013).

This study will adopt Locke’s theory because it involves the goal-setting process, in which the employee participates to allow talent, resulting in ownership of the targets set. This also allows both parties to discuss the goal; thus, it is clear, and everyone is working towards the same goal.

2.4.4 Control theory in performance appraisal

Le and Pastukhova (2018) introduced the importance of Control theory, which is an approach to exploring the “self-regulatory system” and functioning as a tool in conceptualising and interpreting human behaviour; it is useful in understanding how feedback and goals drive behaviour. Control theory is positioned on the concept that humans strive to keep track of their behaviour with respect to some criteria to control and govern their performance on a specific activity. Figure 2.3 simplifies this theory.

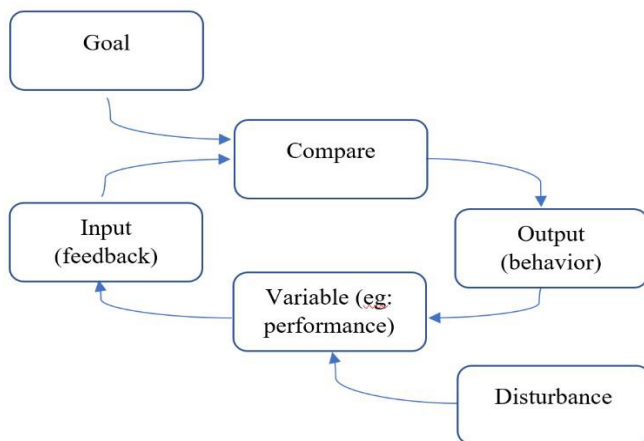


Figure 2. 3: Simple control loop (Le and Pastukhova, 2018)

Self-monitoring comprises comparing one’s current behaviour performance to a reference standard or set of goals. Feedback and goal-setting enable this process because (1) predefined goals or standards inform people about which direction they should move in, and

(2) feedback informs recipients about their current performance so that they are aware of how they are performing and whether what they are doing will result in the desired outcome. When people see a gap between their performance and the desired objective, also known as goal-performance discrepancies, they are more likely to try to close the gap by improving their performance or changing the goal (Le and Pastukhova 2018).

2.4.5 Share Goals and Performance Appraisal

Employees are directed to improve productivity through shared goals. Employees are motivated to achieve the organisation's vision by setting clear, attainable, and mutually agreed-upon goals. Employee motivation thus has the following advantages: employee demands will be satisfied, job satisfaction will rise, productivity will rise, employees will learn new skills, and employees will be more disciplined and dynamic (Uddin and Arif, 2016).

Motivation is a fundamental aspect of an organisation's performance since it avails to keep the work flowing in a commanding way. Employees who are motivated are valuable assets to any company. Furthermore, all internal and external driving forces that bring about an individual to conduct a task, which sets the limits and forms of that task, and causes actions to be immersed toward obtaining specific goals are referred to as motivation (Brhane and Zewdie, 2018).

2.4.6 Types of Motivation

There are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic, which can influence an employee's performance. It is thus argued that motivation is an important aspect of getting the most out of employees; therefore, it is a manager's responsibility to understand the effect of each of the above motivators and the system in place between them; that is, how internal motivators lead to external motivators and vice versa (Owoyele, 2017).

Paais and Pattiruhu (2020) further describe the two types of motivation: intrinsic motivation is associated with self-satisfaction, which can be manifested through achievement, recognition, acceleration, work itself, responsibilities, and personal growth, while extrinsic motivation arises when there are external triggering factors, such as security, work conditions, company policy, status, compensation, and interpersonal relationships.

2.4.7 Communicating the standards or goal

Wararkar and Wararkar (2016) indicated that the employee should not be responsible for determining what is expected of him or her. It is important to note that simply transmitting information one way will not result in profit for anyone; communication should be two-way. Wararkar and Wararkar (2016) further clarified that gathering information about the actual performance is necessary to determine it. The concern should be what to measure and how to measure it, which can be accomplished through four methods: personal observation, statistical reports, oral reports, and written reports. Each has advantages and disadvantages; however, combining them increases the number of input sources and the profitability of receiving reliable information. Below is a flowchart for measuring the performance.

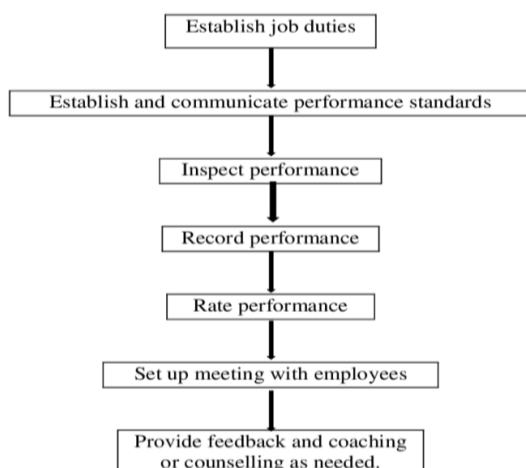


Figure 2. 4: Flowchart for Measuring the Actual Performance (Wararkar and Wararkar, 2016).

2.5 Organisational Performance improved through Appraisal and Feedback

Organisations today use performance appraisal to improve employee efficiency and effectiveness in work environments. Management can identify the need for motivation, set goals and objectives, train employees, and provide feedback on performance through the system of performance appraisal (Kihama and Wainaina, 2019).

According to George (2016), employees today require continuous and regular evaluation, training, motivation, and feedback. In addition, performance appraisals help to develop people, improve structure performance, and feed into business design. The 720-degree

appraisal system evaluates employees' performance on a 360-degree scale. It is the most recent appraisal technique that associates the degree activity with the worker's performance, which is the most challenging part of the Performance Appraisal Method. Until now, this evaluation system has ranged from 90-degree to 720-degree. Previously, the companies used a 360-degree system. The *720-degree Performance Appraisal*, as the name implies, is a recently introduced concept and an integrated method in which an employee's performance is evaluated from 360 degrees and timely feedback is provided (Patil and Dalvi, 2019).

The 720-degree performance appraisal assesses an employee from all perspectives and provides constructive and promptly feedback to warrant that the person can meet the goals set before the next appraisal. In other words, a 720-degree appraisal is essentially a 360-degree appraisal repeated twice. A second 360-degree appraisal is performed at regular intervals and compared to the results of the first 360-degree appraisal (Jency, 2016). Similarly, according to Mishra (2022), a 720-degree performance appraisal is primarily a 360-degree appraisal done twice and an evaluation of an employee from all angles, with prompt and effective feedback to ensure that the employee can accomplish the mission before the next appraisal. Sujith (2017) also indicated that the 720-degree performance appraisal is an embedded method of performance appraisal in which an employee's performance is evaluated from a 360-degree (management, coworkers, self, and customers), and timely feedback is provided; performance is measured again depending on the targets that are set. Figure 2.5 below demonstrates the 720-degree performance appraisal.

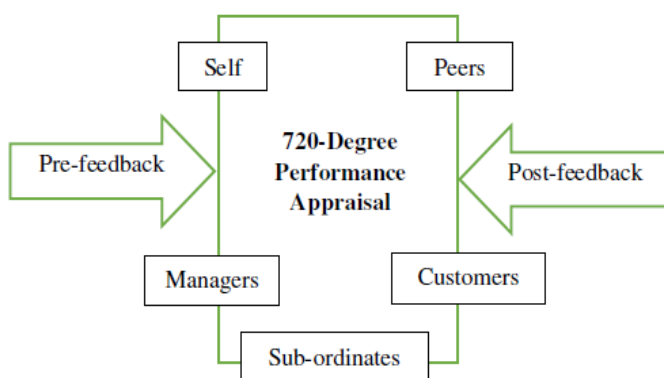


Figure 2. 5: Dimensions of 720-Degree Performance Appraisal (Manawat, 2017, p. 177)

It covers all aspects of appraisal, including pre-appraisal feedback, self-appraisal, peer or colleague appraisal, customer appraisal, managers, and post-appraisal feedback as follows (Manawat, 2017, p. 177):

- Pre-feedback – This is done after gathering feedback from the various aspects or people with whom the employee interacts. The employee's performance is evaluated, goals are established, and feedback or training is provided to assist the employee in meeting the goals.
- Self – Employees are given the opportunity to express their thoughts, evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, and judge their own performance through self-evaluation.
- Peers – Feedback from peers allows the assessment so that an evaluation is made to see if an employee is a team player, cooperates and works in harmony with others.
- Customers – This assessment enhances customer service delivery and quality as the customer assesses the employee providing the service.
- Manager – Managers evaluate the performance and attitude of the employee.
- Post-appraisal feedback – A 720-degree performance appraisal is a step up from 360-degree appraisals. The performance is evaluated, and feedback is provided based on the target set in the pre-appraisal. Timely feedback and guidance aid in motivating employees to improve their performance.

2.6 The relationship between feedback and goal-setting

The direct relationship between goals and feedback was highlighted by Lee (2017). Clear goals help judge performance more fairly, and the employee receives more reasonable feedback as a result. Setting goals allows individuals to get better feedback from their environment, which leads to more efficient techniques/more relevant corrective actions. It was also established that neither of them (goal and feedback) could be effective in the absence of either feedback or clearly defined goals. If one of the elements is missing, the error cannot be detected. Thus no actions to change/improve the situation can be undertaken.

Feedback is also essential in enhancing employee performance because it motivates employees when they receive encouraging feedback about their responsibilities and behavioural patterns. This was also probed, and it was discovered that the feedback environment was significantly associated with employees' effective and useful commitment and motivation (Lee, 2017).

According to the goal-setting theory, distinct and stretching and demanding goals and pertinent feedback contribute to elevated and enhanced task performance (Ahuja et al., 2018). Mirado (2019) explored appraisals from the perspective of individual development, remarking that appraisal provides the feedback required for discussing strengths and weaknesses as well as working to improve attitudes. A developmental appraisal approach recognises that the goal of a manager is to improve job behaviour and attitude rather than simply evaluate past performance. One of the most significant advantages of an appraisal programme is the ability to improve performance on a solid foundation.

2.7 Rewards on assessed performance

A good performance appraisal system should be perceived as a link between the reward an employee expects and his or her productivity. Such a connection can be considered as the individual's productivity = individual's performance appraisal = expected reward. The connections need to be as strong as possible; if any of them fail, the employee will not obtain the potential benefits. Equity and fairness should also be prioritised in compensation administration so that individual employees give their all at all times (Ugoani, 2020).

Extrinsic and intrinsic rewards may be included in reward schemes. Extrinsic rewards are items such as monetary compensation and favourable working conditions that an employee receives as part of the job. These components drive employee performance through the expectation that there is a reward coming to an end. Intrinsic rewards refer to the satisfaction that comes from actually doing the job, such as personal fulfilment and a sense of contributing to society; employees get motivated through self-determination, which enhances performance (ACCA, 2022).

Ekhayemhe and Oguzie (2018) argued that intangible or psychological rewards, such as gratitude and acknowledgement, play an important role in motivating employees and improving their performance. Extrinsic rewards are significant rewards such as pay, bonuses, fringe benefits, and promotions. Employee dedication is also examined in terms of how rewards and recognition influence it.

A proficient motivating scheme is regarded as indispensable for motivating and retaining employees. Motivation, which is presumed to be the central mechanism explaining the effects of compensation on turnover intentions, is divided into sovereign motivation and controlled or inhibited motivation. Autonomous motivation refers to engaging in an activity with complete free will and choice, whereas inhibited motivation refers to behaviour in response to an externally or visibly produced inducement (Mustafa and Ali, 2019).

Kuvaas et al. (2018) argue that motivational trait tends to be lower when payoff is used as the prime driver for inspiring employees at work. Payoff can contribute to motivational quality if the way in which the level of pay is ascertained is understood to be fair and just.

The reward system is critical in any organisation because it is the process that controls human attitudes within the organisation. It helps to assert performance with reference to current goals and determines the feasibility of people joining and being retained in their organisation. It also impacts how much effort is put into developing the organisation's future capabilities. When this is used correctly, a reward system can result in a captivating attitude in an organisation. On the other hand, if a reward system is used incorrectly, it can lead to an organisation's rapid demise (Obiekwe, 2016).

2.8 Types of Performance Appraisal Methods

The next section focuses on the different types of performance appraisal methods.

2.8.1 360-Degree/Multi-Rater Performance Appraisal

A 360-degree rating system is an gauging method that considers the opinions of assorted groups of observers that interact or network with the company's work force. Principals (managers and supervisors), companions, coworkers/peers, and consumers are examples of reviewers. The procedure also considers the employee's perception of himself, earning it the title of diverse-sources, various-raters, and full-circle evaluation system. In addition to the subject matter, this system should encompass four crucial assessments: self-perusal, immediate superior evaluation, inferior/subordinate evaluation, and peer assessment (Grund and Przemec, 2012).

In spite of the proficiency of this full cycle appraisal systems, numerous problems are encountered in the literature that precludes such systems from being effective. According to

Idowu (2017), using a sole type of articulation domain, such as numeric values or semantic, 360-degree confines the capability to collect the depth and complexity of facts provided by observers. Furthermore, reasonable analysis of the end results is difficult since quantitative evaluations do not invariably accurately symbolise qualitative facts.

2.8.2 Management by Objectives (MBO)

This is referred to as a program of evaluation based on results. In more detail, from an MBO outlook, the goals of the performance management system are conjointly defined by several core stakeholders, including inferiors and supervisors. There are various steps in a typical MBO appraisal management system. The process involves the establishment of distinct goals for the employee. A work plan detailing how the goals will be accomplished is being developed. The employee is at that time granted permission to undertake the advanced implementing plan. This empowers for an objective evaluation of performance. Corrective actions are taken in scenarios deemed necessary, and fresh future goals are defined (Idowu, 2017).

The MBO method was found to furnish weighty benefits to both the organisation and the employees in terms of efficaciousness. Remarkably, the MBO approach animates objectivity, grants two-way feedback, and provoke employees to improve their yield. Similarly, Rahman et al., (2020) emphasise that the MBO tactic, when decently administered, assists in instituting a performance management system based on transparency as well as efficiency.

A condemnatory examination of the MBO research revealed that this sort of performance appraisal management is not without flaws. One of the major drawbacks of this technique is that it does not allow supervisors to see how employees deal with every conceivable situation during a given work period (Bipp and Kleingeld, 2011).

2.8.3 Graphical Rating Scale (GRS)

GRS does not have a completely standardised format, but it consists of a list of job performance dimensions, job-relevant human characteristics, and an evaluative continuum on which supervisors are asked to indicate their judgements about target employees. For Idowu (2017), propotions can be used to assess an employee's work quality. This

proportion/scale evaluates an employee's expertise to meet specifications, presumptions, and intended end products continuously. The rating range can be utilised to determine whether an employee makes profitable use of available plans and work programs and completes tasks on time. Furthermore, the workman's job apprehension can be evaluated. These enclose job-related adroitness acquired through learning/education, professional experience, and on-the-job coaching.

Although ratings are effective in some cases, they can suffer from systemic advantage, excluding pertinent indicators of performance, resulting in an inability to truly reflect the employees' full value (Woods, 2012).

2.9 Role of performance appraisal in organisational success

Supervisors and employees can use performance appraisals to assess strengths and faults in employee work. They provide a forum for supervisors and employees to deliberate the employee's personal objectives. It improves management-employee kindred, promotes assignment satisfaction as well as increases employees' sense of commitment to the organisation. Performance appraisals rate workmen with reference to their productivity in today's ruthless economy. Suppose the appraisal operation is solemn and well-articulated. In that case, members will have an exceptional apprehension of their chores and responsibilities, as well as direction on how to revamp their productivity. Performance assessments are additionally critical for stimulating employees, developing demeanours and behaviours, conveying and positioning individual and corporate goals, and establishing strong management-employee rapport (Cesário and Chambel, 2017).

Tahsildari et al., (2015) indicate that the process approach focuses on internal procedures and general operations within a company, such as the work environment and employee satisfaction. A total of 165 semi-structured interviews were distributed to the population. The data collected were analysed using factor analysis, validity, correlation, and acceptance tests. According to the findings, training, employee participation, performance appraisal, and job description all significantly impact organisational effectiveness.

2.10 Employee performance and career development

Career development positively affects employee performance (Ali et al., 2019). Career development is an important factor in achieving personal goals. Career development is defined as whether or not people are appreciative of their work, whether or not their principals are pleased with the work, and whether or not people feel complacent in their jobs. Employee advancement activities and advancement fostered a constructive career attitude in employees, which could lead to improved employee performance. Career advancement aims to embolden and enhance a career path that allows for a wide range of mobility. Employee satisfaction improves as a result of career development, which in turn improves performance (Ali et al., 2019).

2.11 Problems in performance appraisals

The performance judgement implementation has been criticised on account of commentators' deficiency of adroitness and awareness, prejudiced, partisanship, absence of constant documentation, and an impotence to furnish timely commentary. Employees' viewpoints of the appraisal arrangement are baneful, and they are unsatisfied with the assessment practice's application in to practice. Managers naturally dislike criticising a subordinate and frequently mistrust the employee appraisal instrument (Sajuyigbe, 2017).

According to Kampkötter and Sliwka (2014), there are five types of problems in performance appraisal: an unfair perception of the performance appraisal system, the use of inconsistent criteria, which could result in bad attitudes toward the appraisal system, unskilled appraisers who have little or no communication skills and thus are unable to perform thorough performance feedback, the lack of tools targeted at enhancing the performance appraisal system, and finally this remains as the lack of the performance management system. Each of these will be elaborated on in the next sections.

2.11.1 Unfairness in performance appraisal

Adams' proposed Equity Theory can explain the perception of fairness (1965). The unequal input-output ratios of the individual and the referent other will contribute to both parties' feelings of unfairness. Both parties will react interpersonally or psychologically to the unfair situation due to their discomfort (Krishnan et al., 2018).

2.11.2 Use of inconsistent criteria

Performance appraisal critics question the process's overall validity. Employees perceive the process to be divisive and counterproductive to organisational development. Some critics argue that using ratings in employee performance appraisals creates arbitrary divisions among employees. It should be noted that such practices are more popular among supervisors than among employees (Rasch, 2004).

2.11.3 Unskilled and lack of communication on the PA process

Iqbal et al. (2013) have argued that performance appraisal cannot add value if appraisers are inexperienced in the process and that appraisers must not lack communication skills because they cannot achieve effective performance through the appraisal, leading to a negative attitude toward the appraisal system.

2.11.4 Problem with promoting feedback

Promoting feedback adoption has long been a business concern. Unclosed loops occur when employees fail to act on the feedback for various reasons, such as receiving comments after the end of the performance cycle or employees lacking the motivation to strive for improvement (Carless, 2019). Na-Nan et al. (2020) argue that equity transpires when management is cogent, transpicuous, and equable, whilst inequality also transpires when the governing bosy is fruitless, ambiguous, and uncheckable. Fairness comprises three components:

(1) Procedural justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness regarding the suitability of rating mechanism in which reviewee can voice their views and arrogate feedback. Assessment outcomes are transpicuous and honest, and the judgement formula is not unfair with binary merits.

(2) Relational equity is people's thoughts of the execution over the appraisal phase, spotlight reporting, fidelity, ethics, and perspicuous appraisal ambitions.

(3) Outcome equity entails being satisfied with appraisal outcomes that are commensurate to work end products. If the results fall short of the employees' expectations, they will feel betrayed.

The observers' lack of proficiency, failure to understand the appraisal purpose, bias in opposition to appraisees, bias on appraisal, abuse of power, and use of their yardstick without regard for the organisation's criteria cause problems with performance appraisal. Furthermore, some appraisers show favouritism (i.e., primarily embrace their close employees), use their own high merits for assessing or judging the reviewees, and do not provide appraisal feedback to the appraisees (Iqbal et al., 2019).

Performance appraisal systems have several issues where evaluations become more influenced by raters' subjectivity and motivational state. Supervisors can use different criteria for assessments that are untrustworthy and inconsistent. For instance, some employees will be evaluated based solely on their recent activities rather than their entire performance period, whereas others will be evaluated based on negative evidence that is more noticeable than positive ones, a phenomenon known as "recent behaviour bias." Supervisors can sometimes be "Personal Bias" and have an adverse impact on various employees, directly impacting the assessment results. Many other issues with the evaluation could be identified, such as weighted average, leeway, strictness, Halo-and-Horn error effect, and the subterfuge of the analysis (Touma, 2022).

2.12 Research Instrument

The survey/semi-structured interview was chosen as the research tool. It was suitable for the research study because it needed to collect reasonable data from the sample in a short amount of time. This method was also chosen because the researcher needed to ensure that the responses were objective. It is critical that valid opinions and attitudes be expressed. The instruments will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

A semi-structured interview is a formal structured method of collecting data in which each participant is asked the same questions (Peck and Gonzalez-Franco, 2021). Appendix A provides questions for the interview process followed in this study.

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter described performance appraisal definitions, processes, and feedback control theory in performance appraisal. It also discussed the relationship between feedback and goal-setting, as well as how rewards are managed based on assessed performance. It

further explored the types of performance appraisal in the field and the role of performance appraisal in organisational success. Employee performance and career development, problems in performance appraisals, and the importance of performance appraisals were also discussed. Furthermore, the chapter discussed other studies done to support the research objectives that support the empirical investigation.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes how the research investigation problem discussed in Chapter 1 was investigated. The chapter outlines a systematic approach to addressing the research objectives. As a result, research ontology, epistemology, design, sampling data collection, statistical techniques, and ethical concerns are addressed.

3.2 Research design

Hancock et al. (2018) define research design as a plan that outlines the underlying structure for integrating all necessary aspects of a quantitative study to ensure credible results, free of any bias and as generalisable as possible. The research design is vital in any research project. It defines how participants are chosen, what parameters are included and how well they are used. It also includes how data is obtained and evaluated and how unnecessary variability is managed to respond to the overall research issue/problem discussed in Chapter 1.

The research design determines how such a method, or methods, are carried out in a specific study. A research design's goal provides enough details and makes the study transparent, allowing readers to evaluate the study in the context of the stated research objectives while fostering replicability (Sovacool et al., 2018). According to Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018), a research design is a blueprint that details how a study will progress from the research purpose or questions to the desired outcomes. It is a detailed planning process or road map that collects and analyses data to improve understanding of a specific topic. The research process is divided into three stages: posing a question for investigation, collecting data to answer the questions, and presenting an answer to the question.

The three definitions of the research design presented above are the fundamental aspects of research design. It can be summarised to conclude that the research is appropriate for a logical problem. This design should be completed at the start of the research project to ensure that the desired results are obtained.

Alturki (2021) has devised a framework that focuses on a single aspect of the research, trying to demonstrate the variation of paradigms, strategies, and options employed by

researchers throughout their investigations. It depicts all the major issues that must be considered during any research project (see Figure 3.1).

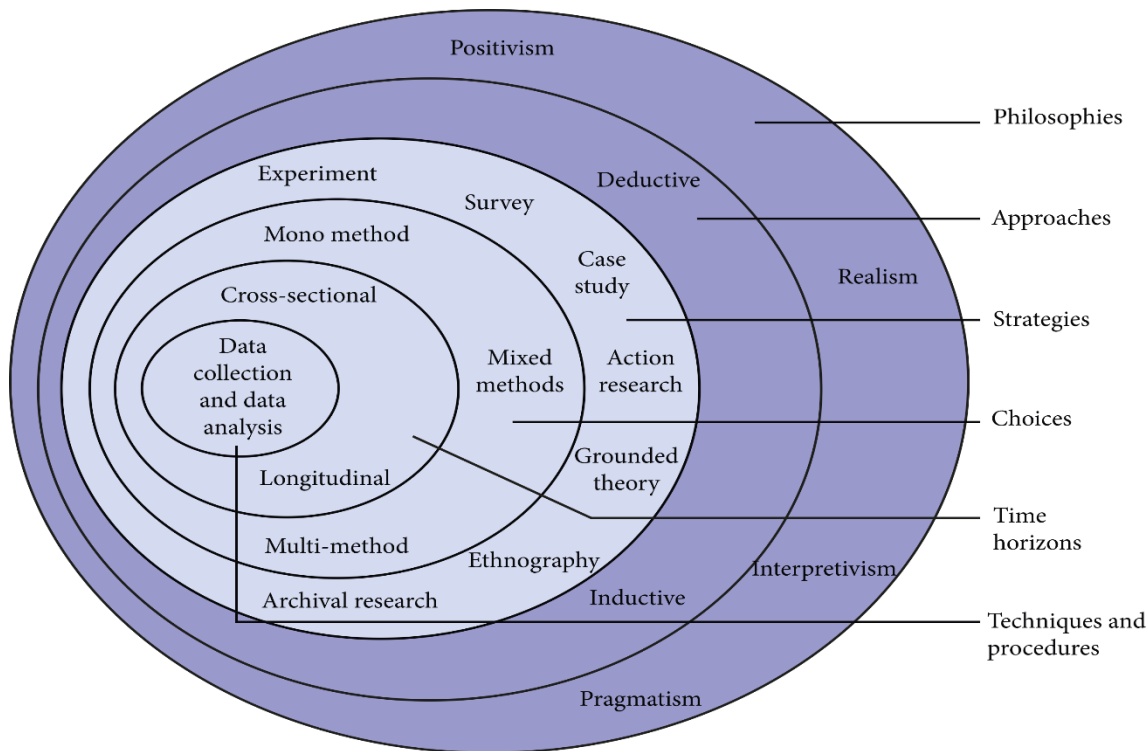


Figure 3. 1: The Research Onion: Framework of the research (Alturki, 2021)

This onion has six main layers/sections: philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons and techniques and procedures. The following sections provide the definitions and components of the research onion.

3.2.1 Research philosophy

The research philosophy serves as the foundation for the research strategy. It defines the methodology adopted to address the research questions, the data collection processes and techniques, the analysis of the results, and the presentation of the findings derived from data analysis (Alturki, 2021). Several research philosophies can be adopted. These are discussed below.

3.2.1.1 Positivism

According to (Berkovich, 2018), positivism claims for a *real* reality that functions imperfectly and can only be understood probabilistically. For Alturki (2021), positivists believe that reality

is stable and constant and that an objective perspective can enable the description and observation of it. Husam Helmi Alharahsheh (2020) also argues that positivism is the theoretical posture of pure scientists who work with observable reality within a culture to create generalisations. It aspires to include depth in the insights gathered.

3.2.1.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is relatively more involved with in-depth variables and factors associated to a whole context; it regards human beings as distinct from physical phenomena as they create greater depth in interpretations with the assumption that human beings can sometimes be evaluated in the same lines as physical phenomena (Husam Helmi Alharahsheh, 2020).

3.2.1.3 Ontology

Ontology is based on the concept of 'subjective' and constructed realities. It also focuses on how things are on the ground, as observed by the researcher (Vogl et al., 2019). When conducting the study, the researcher can be objective or subjective. As a result, ontology focuses on the method of knowledge creation, which is explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

3.2.1.3.1 Objectivism

Pueyo-Ibáñez (2021) defines objectivism as the belief that there is a set of permanent and universal agent-independent truths to which one must inevitably appeal to resolve moral disagreements. Subjectivism, for its part, is based on the idea that moral decisions are nothing more than the result of personal propensities and, as a result, that individuals must make moral decisions purely based on satisfaction; thus, every available alternative inherently elicits.

3.2.1.3.2 Subjectivity

Subjectivism is based on the assumption that the material from which moral judgements are made is mainly volitional. Also, that these result from a person's subjective inclinations, the genuine expression of their will, rather than the result of observational and inferential processes (Pueyo-Ibáñez, 2021).

3.3 The Research Approach

This is the onion's second layer of research. In deduction, the research begins with an ongoing theory, then raises a question or thesis and data obtaining in order to validate or

reject the hypothesis; in induction, the research begins with observations and data collection, then moves to description plus analysis in order to arrive at a theory. Abduction is the observation of an empirical phenomenon followed by research that results in a possible best guess or conclusion from rational or available evidence (Melnikovas, 2018).

As there was no prior information about the effectiveness of performance appraisal for LHDA, data about LHDA's employees' performance appraisal was collected and analysed to identify issues for this study; thus, it was inclined to be an inductive study. Following the selection of the research approach, the research strategy was chosen, as discussed below.

3.4 Research Strategies

Melnikovas (2018) proposes the core research strategies of a survey, action research, and narrative inquiry. On the other hand, research strategies in the field of upcoming studies can be distinguished in a slightly different way. A research strategy is an extensive approach that assists the researcher in designating main data-gathering methods or sets of methods to answer the research question and meet the entire study's objectives.

- Survey – This method entails gathering information, such as through interviews (Triantoro et al., 2019);
- Action Study – It is a study conducted to solve a problem (Sharma et al., 2019);
- Narrative inquiry – According to (Caine et al., 2018), this is both the phenomenon and the methodology for comprehending experience.

This study adopted the survey method. Survey research is gathering information from a sample of the population based on responses to questions asked. This allows for a wide range of methods for recruiting players, collecting data, and utilising numerous instrumentation methods (Ponto, 2015).

3.5 Research Choices

The techniques employed for conducting research, such as data collection and analysis tools, are referred to as research methods. When differentiating between research methods and methodology, the foregoing can be viewed as a subset of the latter. Research methods are generally classified as either qualitative or quantitative (Ragab and Arisha, 2017).

Quantitative studies investigate phenomena by collecting measurable data in binary form and using mathematical models and statistical techniques for data analysis, whereas

qualitative research relies more on words than figures and can be broadly defined as research in which findings are not produced through quantification. It takes a holistic approach that seeks discovery through participation in attested experiences and intends to furnish an in-depth appreciation of social phenomena through data exploration and interpretation. Qualitative data consists primarily of narrative or explanatory accounts in the formation of text (Ragab and Arisha, 2017).

Rutberg and Bouikidis (2018) have indicated that qualitative research focuses more on the social aspect of research. The researcher in this study asks open-ended questions and conducts semi-structured interviews with participants. Interviews are often conducted in the participant's natural environment or in a quiet environment (e.g., closed offices or a conference room) where participants' environment is psychologically friendly to get good information. Many questions are asked to uncover the problem and thoroughly address it.

Qualitative research yields descriptive data on written, spoken and observable behaviour (Taylor et al., 2016). Furthermore, qualitative research holds characteristics such as:

- Reflexivity - The researcher will not be able to be completely objective. As a result, the researcher should state their position so that it is clear how their stance will affect the interpretation of the research findings.
- Qualitative research – It is concerned with tracing out insights about the problem under investigation and taking into account what individuals consider about the problem.

Based on the foregoing, qualitative data assists in collecting information that can provide insights into the effectiveness of performance management within the LHDA. The sampling strategy is discussed below.

3.6 Sampling Strategy

Sampling entails studying a small group of people to represent a larger population. It is extensively utilised because it is impractical to collect material from the whole population due to limited resources. Sampling is an acceptable solution that allows research projects to be completed within budget constraints (Ragab and Arisha, 2017).

Non-probability sampling is an arrangement where the researcher decides samples based on impressionistic judgement instead of arbitrary selection. It is a more lenient method

(Lehdonvirta et al., 2021). There are different types of non-probability sampling, and those are explained below.

- **Convenience/Haphazard** – At random, individuals who are the easiest to reach are chosen until the desired sample size is reached.
- **Purposive** – The researcher can meet research objectives if s/he uses discretion in selecting particularly informative individuals.
- **Quota** – Using stratified testing and choosing individuals from each cluster based on predetermined quotas for every group attempts to generate a sample with the same variability as that found in the population (Ragab and Arisha, 2017).

The above sampling methods were adopted during the study within the LHDA as they appeared to be practical and possible given the time and other resources available. The full-time permanent staff at LHDA were identified as the target population. Non-probability sampling was used for this study in order to select people who may have in-depth knowledge of the LHDA performance appraisal. A person's level in the hierarchy and length of employment at LHDA were factors considered. Employees in higher-level positions in the organisation are more informed than those in lower-level positions. Employees who have been with the company for a longer period may have more information for the study than those new to the company.

Therefore, a purposive sample of 20 managers and senior officers representing all the LHDA divisions was used from the population of all 388 LHDA staff members. The sample comprised the finance manager, social services branch manager, branch managers, senior officers in human resources, senior officers in dam safety, senior officers in finance, senior officers in resettlement, and senior officers in public relations. The data collection method is discussed below.

3.7 Data Collection method

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to collect data, and also took minutes during meetings and later circulated them back to each individual participant for confirmation that the information recorded was correct. Moser and Korstjens (2018) argue that in qualitative research, data collection is unstructured and flexible. While conducting fieldwork, the researcher needs to frequently make data collection decisions, with the guiding questions being with whom, what, when, where, and how. According to Evans and Lewis

(2018), qualitative semi-structured discussions can be used to investigate the experience, meanings, and reality of participants' experiences, as well as how these experiences, realities, and interpretations may be informed by expressions, assumptions, or ideas that exist in the sphere.

The information was gathered using semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to explain their answers in more detail to allow rich information gathering. Given the Covid-19 pandemic and that emails enable participants to respond in their free time from the convenience of their offices, it was the preferred mode of communication. To follow up on the emails sent, phone calls were made. The chief executive of LHDA approved the study, and work emails and phone calls were allowed, as well as contact with the participants within the LHDA. The data collection was estimated to finish no later than mid-August 2022.

The study also considered data saturation, which is defined as the theoretical saturation of a category, as the criterion for determining when to stop collecting data from various participants relevant to that category. This is explained by the fact that no additional data was discovered that would allow the researcher to develop the properties of the category. When a researcher sees similar instances over and over, he or she gains empirical confidence that a category is saturated. The researcher extensively sought to find a diverse group of participants to ensure that saturation is based on the broadest range of data on the category possible (Saunders et al., 2018).

According to Faulkner (2017), data saturation occurs when no new information is obtained in data analysis, and this superfluous or redundancy alerts researchers that data collection may be discontinued. Saturation means that a researcher can be reasonably confident that additional data collection will produce similar results and serve to confirm emerging themes and conclusions. This study gathered data and reflected similar results from the participants, indicating that there was no new information to be gathered from the study. As a result, this study reached its saturation point from within the LHDA, and data collection was ceased.

3.8. Ethical considerations

Bell (2022) indicates that the reliability of research procedures in terms of their compliance with professional, legal, and social obligations to study participants is called ethics. It is the

epistemological branch that deals with moral behaviour. Because this study includes human participants, the following ethical guidelines were followed:

3.8.1 Permission obtained

Tabary et al. (2021) reinforce that permission to conduct the study grants the researcher to glean the necessary information. This is why concession to conduct this research study was behested from the LHDA management and granted (see attached appendix B) and the General Research Ethics Committee (GREC) of the University of the Free State.

3.8.2 Informed consent and Voluntary participation

Consent should be freely given (voluntary); participants should have a thorough understanding of what is expected of them, and those involved must be proficient in giving permission. Thus, to partake in the research study, participants must be abundantly enlightened apropos the study, understand the relevant information, and be able to either nominate or not to partake (Arifin, 2018). An assent form was explicit to participants that their participation was voluntary, their withdrawal was not limited, and their signatures acknowledged their understanding and endorsement of this study.

3.8.3 No harm

Physical and psychological torment can manifest as stress, agony, anxiety, low self-respect, or invasion/incursion of privacy. The participation process must not in any way harm (intentionally or unintentionally) participants of the study (South Australian Community Health Research Unit., 2022). The study considered that participants are physically and psychologically safe and that their involvement and information are strictly kept safe, solely for this study.

3.8.4 Confidentiality and Anonymisation of responses

Arifin (2018) emphasises that the participants' namelessness and confidentiality should be maintained by not divulging their names or identities in the course of data gathering, analysis, and delineating/reporting of study results. Due to the inherent nature of the study, the researcher knew the participants; however, their responses were made unknown to protect their information and prevent victimisation (Gupta and Bakhshi, 2018). LHDA participants were kept strictly for the purpose of this study; they can only be known by the

researcher, and their responses were solely for the purpose of this study and kept strictly confidential.

3.9 Trustworthiness or Rigour

In order to determine trustworthiness, qualitative research requires reliability and validity. Qualitative research's trustworthiness includes concepts such as the findings' quality, authenticity, and truthfulness (Kyngäs et al., 2019). Below are explanations and applications of each component.

3.9.1 Credibility

The dependability of the research findings is anxious with whether or not they represent or reflect a credible theoretical understanding of the original/real data. Credibility comprises two components: conducting the study so that readers will trust/believe the given/presented findings and taking steps to demonstrate credibility in research reports (Kyngäs et al., 2019).

From the selected sample, LHDA participants were taken as experienced employees within the LHDA who can provide rich information. The questions were designed not to influence participants' answers but to allow inductive data. In an effort to manage the risk of hurting the study's credibility, pretest interviews were held to understand the responses the questions would yield better.

3.9.2 Confirmability

Eldh et al. (2020) raised the question of how one can tell if a study is scientific and based on real data and interpretations rather than the researcher's assumptions or point of view. This is about the audit trail, particularly the ability to track the entire process, from data collection to analysis throughout to report presentation. In an effort to enhance conformability, certain responses were used as part of audit trails. These were anonymised to prevent participants from being victimised by the reader of the report.

3.9.3 Authenticity

The degree to which researchers truthfully and faithfully portray various realities is called genuineness or authenticity (Kyngäs et al., 2019). Citation is of vital importance. Thus, all information received from participants was referenced.

3.9.4 Dependability

Kyngäs et al. (2019) define dependability as a quality assessment of the consolidated processes from data collection, examination, and theory generation. It is more concerned with ensuring consistency from the very first stage of data collection through to the end. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews structured with open-ended questions, which allowed rich information from participants. A more structured tool was again developed after noticing that not all participants were providing more information.

3.9.5 Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is a combination of conditions that raises the possibility that professional judgement or actions concerning a primary interest will be unduly influenced by a secondary interest (Grundy et al., 2020). This study was 0.8% funded by the LHDA, which is immaterial in influencing the objectivity of the study. However, the funding can be forgone should it affect the objectivity of this study. Professionalism was incorporated as objectivity was key to remaining transparent, fair and honest to the nature of the study.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research design used in this study, the sampling methodologies used, including a thorough discussion of the data collection methods. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the ethical considerations that the researcher had to adhere to throughout the study.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Assessment of Results

4.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to implement the research methodology outlined in Chapter 3. The data is based on the semi-structured interviews distributed via email and collected via the same platform by the employees of the LHDA from different branches. It is worth noting that all branches were covered: Polihali, Mohale, Muela, Katse, and the headquarters, Maseru. Participants came from the finance branch, social services, dam safety, human resources, resettlement and development, internal audit, and the environment branch.

This chapter presents an analysis of the results as directed by the semi-structured interview (Appendix A). The semi-structured interview included eight (8) main questions that focused on the primary and secondary objectives of the research study. The questions addressed the objectives to assess the effectiveness of staff performance appraisals at the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority. The main focus is on the study's results and conclusions and references to the literature on restructuring studies and the research methodology.

4.2 Data Presentation and Interpretation

4.2.1 Functional Areas

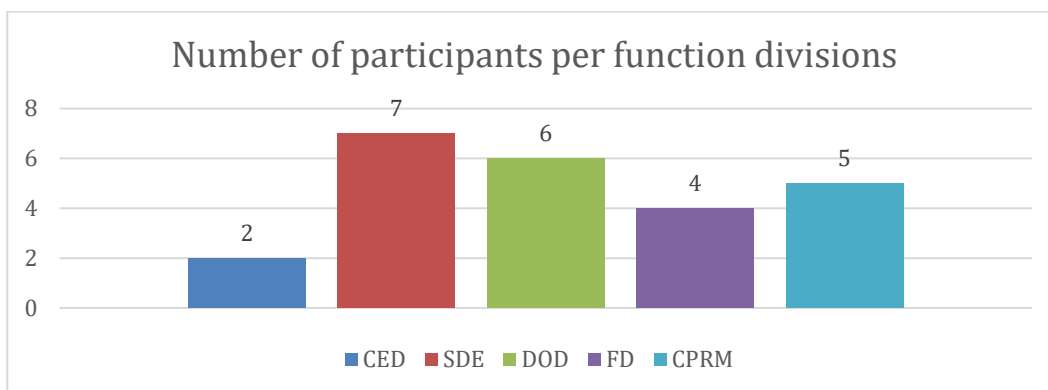


Figure 4. 1: Participants per function divisions

4.2.1.1 Findings and interpretation of the results

LHDA operates with five (5) divisions, each of which has different branches. Figure 4.1 shows the number of participants from each division. The presentation is not per branch to anonymise branch members where each branch has fewer than two employees. According to Figure 4.1, the research covered all of the divisions with which LHDA operates, and a total of twenty-four (24) participants were able to respond to the semi-structured interview.

4.2.2 Responses Information from the Participants to the semi-structured interview

4.2.2.1 Question 1.1

Appendix A question 1.1 Based on your experience, what do you think of LHDA's policy (performance management policy); **Is it clear?**

The aim was to assess the clarity of the policy to the users to assess if it is not ambiguous. Figure 4.2 shows the responses of the participants.

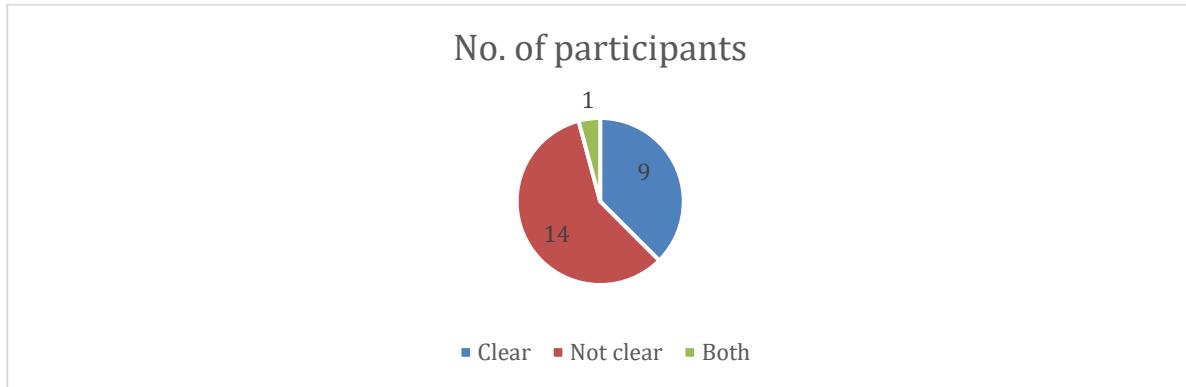


Figure 4. 2: Number of participants on the clarity of the policy

4.2.3 Responses

Table 2. 1: Some of the responses on the clarity of the policy

Participant No.	Is the policy clear?		Responses from Participants
	Yes	No	
1	Yes	No	No one seems to know exactly what the policy tries to achieve.
2	Yes	No	Clearly written but not necessarily practicable. There is a lot of gaps and ambiguity in the policy that leads to disgruntlement and different interpretations by LHDA staff.
3	Yes	No	The policy is not clear at all; one of those amendments done to the Human Resource Manual are never explained to the employees.
4	Yes	No	The policy manual is not user-friendly. There is a lot of detail put forwards, which makes it hard to appreciate.
5	Yes	No	It is either not clear because every individual within organisation interprets and implements it his/her own way.
6	Yes	No	It is clear but interpretation of the policy is different from Branch to Branch.

4.2.4 Findings and interpretation

According to Figure 4.2, majority of participants believe the performance assessment policy is not clear. In contrast, one person believes the policy is clear to some extent. The remaining participants (minority) believe the policy is much clearer. Table 2.1 above reflects a sample of the responses received from the participants.

4.2.5 Discussion of the results

According to the findings above, the majority of LHDA employees do not understand their policy, with a smaller number of employees understanding the policy. It is worth noting that the participants were senior officers and above. With the level of policy misunderstanding, there is a greater likelihood that their subordinates will also be unable to interpret their policy in a standard and understandable way across the board. An employee must understand the nature of the assessment and how it is undertaken (Yokoyama, 2019). However, this is not the case within the LHDA based on the results in Table 2.1. According to Cesário and Chambel (2017), a formal and well-structured performance appraisal process provides employees with a better understanding of their duties and responsibilities and guidance on how to improve their performance. Furthermore, Nurlina and Jumady (2021) state that there should be a clear policy to understand the factors that influence employee performance to improve organisational performance.

4.2.2.1 Question 1.2

Question 1.2: Is the policy available to everyone?

The goal was to determine whether the policy was accessible to all LHDA employees, regardless of demographic location or staff position. Figure 4.3 demonstrates the responses to this question.

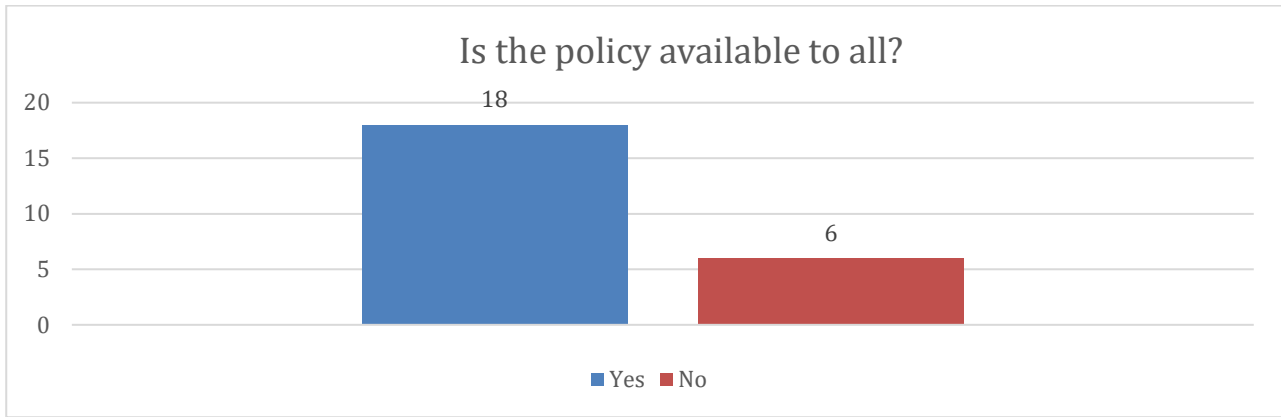


Figure 4. 3: Number of participants on the availability of the policy

4.3 Responses

Table 3. 1: Some of the responses on the availability of the policy

Participant No.	Is the policy available to everyone?		Responses from Participants
1	Yes	No	All LHDA policies are supposed to be placed on SharePoint, unfortunately, not every employee has access to SharePoint. Also, all policies need to be workshopped, and this is not happening religiously.
2	Yes	No	I think the policy is available, but not everyone can access/use it. It is written in English, and not every employee knows English nor has access on SharePoint (computer).
3	Yes	No	All policies are on SharePoint, which majority of the employees have access to, except the office assistants, drivers and labourers.
4	Yes	No	Below senior management levels, the employees do not seem to have it, as it is seen during the review sessions when interrogated on their scoring.

4.3.2 Finding and interpretation

Based on the above (Figure 4.3), majority of participants indicated that the policy is available to all LHDA staff, while minority indicated that the policy is not available to all LHDA staff. While the majority clearly indicated that the policy is available to all members of the LHDA, Table 3.1 contradicts this and reflects some of the reasons why the conclusion cannot be that the policy is available to all members.

4.3.3 Discussion of the results

Most of the participants indicated that the policy is available from all LHDA internal share points, the HR office, and shared via email to all new employees joining the organisation and other forums that the HR undertakes in recruiting and training staff. However, minority of them indicated that not all LHDA staff have access to the laptops (evidenced by Table 3.1), making it impossible or difficult to access the internet where the policy is shared. These staff cannot access the policy as and when they want to read and understand it on their own. The minority of participants further indicated that the policy is written in English, and some staff within the LHDA cannot thoroughly understand the language and thus do not understand the policy (e.g., drivers, cleaners, and unskilled labour).

The literature emphasises the significance of equality in employee performance evaluations (Na-Nan et al., 2020). However, as per Table 3.1, the finding appears contradictory, as a specific group of employees is disadvantaged by the policy's availability. According to Sharma (2016), equality is evenly important because it affects all members in an organisation. If it is legitimately managed, an organisation has the potential to surpass productivity, opportunity as well as competitiveness. Furthermore, equality is practised by conducting a positive culture and management systems audits to unmask or uncover the origins of probable biases toward certain cultural groups and to identify corporate culture components that may disadvantage certain members.

4.2.2.1 Question 1.3

Is the policy been implemented within the branch?

This question aimed to determine if the policy is standardised across all divisions in terms of implementation. It also aimed to ensure the effectiveness of its implementation and to determine where improvements to implementation may be required, as well as to establish uniformity across the LHDA branches. Figure 4.4 below is based on responses received.

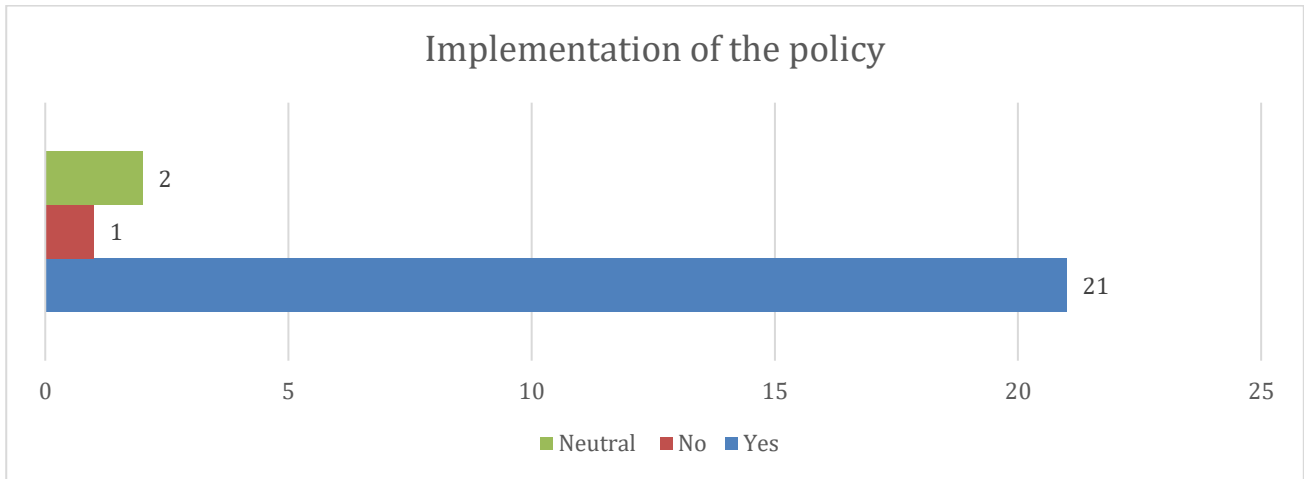


Figure 4. 4: Level of responses towards the implementation of the policy

4.2.2.1.1 Responses

Table 4. 1: Some of the responses on the availability of the policy

Participant No.	Is the policy been implemented?		Responses from Participants
	Yes	No	
1	Yes	No	The answer is yes and no. Yes, because some aspects of the policy are implemented, but others are not. For example, we draw performance agreements every year but consequence management for poor performance is not consistently applied.
2	Yes	No	No. since no one knows what to make of it. People usually just thumb-suck through the whole process.
3	Yes	No	While a larger portion of the manual is implemented, some of the areas mentioned are not implemented; for example, outcome and impact assessments are not done as listed under the benefits and team accountability is not measured/ identified.
4	Yes	No	Yes, it is implemented, but it is not applied in a uniform way.

4.2.2.1.2 Finding and interpretation

The majority of participants reported that the policy was implemented in their respective branches (see Figure 4.4), with two (2) members being neutral to the question and one (1) indicating it was not. Table 4.1 depicts participant responses, showing that the policy has not been fully implemented.

According to the findings of Figure 4.4, the policy had been implemented across the board, as this is part of the HR responsibilities; they need to ensure that such a policy is

implemented. It was also noted that staff is evaluated at least every six months throughout the year. Two participants indicated a 50/50 response because they agree that the policy has been implemented, though they do not believe it has been fully implemented and that some policy areas have not been implemented, making their rating of its implementation somewhat subjective.

4.2.2.1.3 Discussion of the results

The majority reflect that, while the policy has been implemented, the issue is with its proper implementation. Their opinion is that its implementation is not standardised across all branches but depends on different interpretations of each branch manager. As a result, there is a need to reduce the level of ambiguity within the LHDA regarding the implementation of this policy (Le and Pastukhova 2018). They also stated that the assessment's output is not consistently considered. For example, no measures are taken for poor performance, despite the policy indicating what measures should be taken for such performance. This is also against the literature, as Moradi et al. (2017) indicated the importance of analysing the employee's strengths and weaknesses to determine if they require additional training or promotion.

While most participants agree that the policy has been implemented, one participant stated that people simply enter information into the assessment form to complete the process. This is not implemented because it does not address the issues the policy intended to address. There was a reflection that this is done to avoid conflicts because no continuous feedback is expected to improve performance on a daily basis, as also argued by Amzat et al., (2018).

4.2.2.2 Question 2

Question 2: How would you rate your knowledge of the performance appraisal management that is implemented by the LHDA?

This aimed to test the LHDA staff's knowledge of the performance assessment system. Participants had to choose from Excellent (E), Good (G), Do not know (D), Weak (W), and Very Weak (VW). Figure 4.5 reflects the number of responses per category.

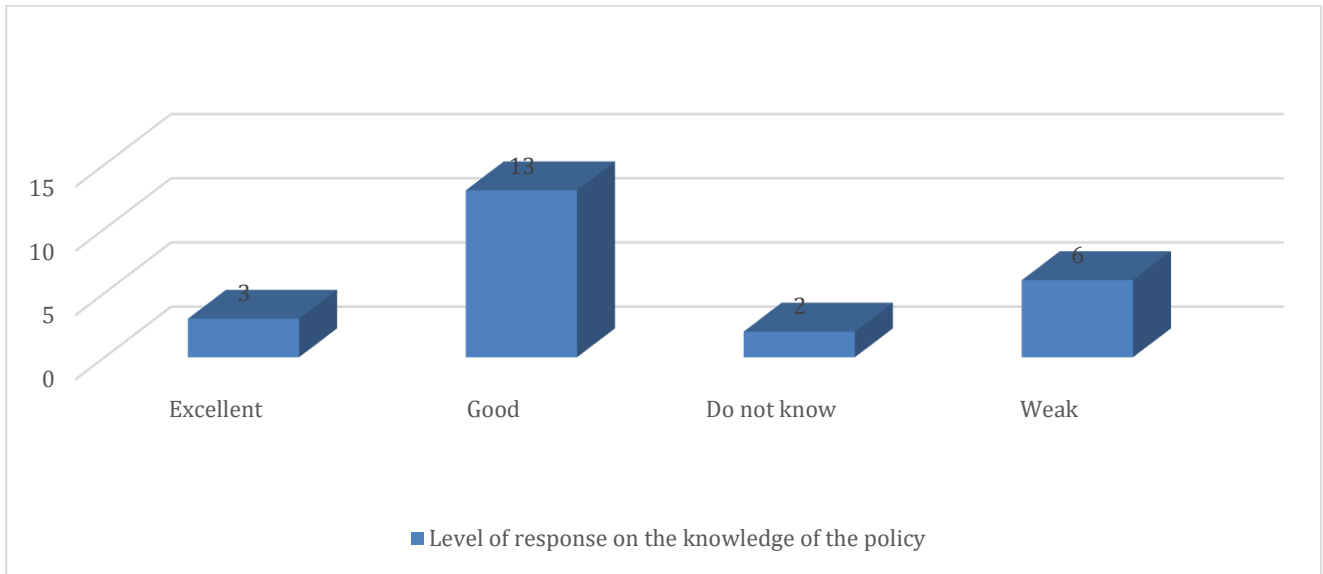


Figure 4. 5: Knowledge of the performance assessment system

4.2.2.2.1 Responses

Table 5. 1: Some of the responses on the knowledge of the policy

Participant No.	Rate your knowledge of the PMDS policy.				Responses from Participants
1	E	G	D	W	Cannot confidently say I understand the appraisal methods used by the LHDA. I cannot differentiate where a person should get a 3 (Achieved the task adequately) or a 4 and 5 (Exceeded the requirement). It is a very subjective judgement.
2	E	G	D	W	When it started, it was done every 3 months, and then it was changed to 6 months, and no explanation was ever given to the employees why this was done. The ratings were from 1 to 5 some time ago; now they have halves (1.5, 2.5 etc.) no explanation why. There is no understanding of what more than a 3 rating entails since a 3 is given when the employee met their targets. How about if the target is met, but the employee went the extra mile to meet it?
3	E	G	D	W	I say good because I understand it though sometimes, I do not understand its implementation.
4	E	G	D	W	Since I haven't personally seen the policy, I cannot boast of my knowledge of the performance appraisal management. I can only confirm that implementation is somehow happening.

As per Figure 4.5, the majority of participants indicated they had a good understanding of the performance assessment policy, minority found it weak, some did not know, and the

remaining three indicated it was excellent. Table 5.1 reflects some of the participants' responses. Based on that, the knowledge can be regarded as good to the senior officers of the LHDA.

4.2.2.2.2 Discussion of the results

As per the findings, there is a good understanding of the performance management system, as evidenced by 13 responses indicating that if the implementation is done correctly, LHDA can improve its performance. Six participants rated their knowledge as low, reflecting that the policy has ratings ranging from one (1) to five (5), and it is unclear how the ratings are used. The explanation provided for each rating is unclear and open to many interpretations. Rasch, (2004) argues that using ratings in employee performance evaluations creates undefined divisions among workers.

While three participants rated their knowledge as excellent, two believed it is difficult to link individual tasks to organisational performance to justify what poor to good performance entails. Thus the performance assessment system is not fully understood, and these results contradict what the literature entails.

4.2.2.3 Question 3

Question 3: What factors do you think contribute to employee performance within LHDA? The researcher aimed to assess what employees regard as contributing to their performance within the LHDA.

4.2.2.3.1 Responses

Table 6. 1: Some of the responses to “factors that contribute to employee performance”

Participant No.	Responses from Participants
1	Leadership, Individual discipline, proper/appropriate planning, and supervision. The above helps shape the implementation of the planned targets with proper management support and leadership.
2	Good working environment, engaged staff, multi-dimensional communication, transparent systems, and knowledge management.
3	Culture and work environment – If the employees feel the organisation culture is aligned with theirs. Employee engagement – acknowledged, appreciated, and included in decision-making that affects them, and Job satisfaction – the job that gives them a sense of satisfaction.
4	Allocation of enough and right resources, training (internal and external), coaching and mentorship, and capacity building.

Table 7. 1: Summary of keywords on the findings

Summary of responses
Financial Incentives
Resources and feedback
Leadership and Culture
Environment (conditions & relations)
Recognition and being valued
Training, mentoring, coaching, and capacity building

Table 7.1 shows the factors participants believe add value to improving employee performance. This table displays keywords that nearly all participants mentioned in response to this question.

4.2.2.3.2 Discussion of the results

Participants indicated that financial incentives and recognition improve their performance because both contribute to their motivation, enhancing their productivity (Moradi et al., 2017). On the other hand, they want recognition from their leaders; they indicated that they

work with leaders who always take their credit and never recognise good performance. They indicated that a pat on the shoulder for good performance might be sufficient for recognition. They believe paying employees for their worth is critical to managing staff turnover and improving employee motivation. Ekhayemhe and Oguzie (2018) enforce gratitude to recognise staff performance.

Some participants stated that a good working environment, good direction reinforced by good leadership, organisational culture, and the availability of resources all help them perform well. According to participants, agile and good leadership impact culture, and thus a positive work culture promotes productivity, engagement, and a better employee experience; this is in line with the study made by Heny (2021). The availability of resources for assigned roles appeared to be a contributing factor, as participants indicated that only relevant tools are used to carry out roles and responsibilities. This contradicts the findings of Suciu et al. (2013), who found that an employee may have all of the resources needed to complete a task, but if not determined, the output will still be low.

Constrictive feedback and good relationships between the employee and the supervisor were also mentioned as directly impacting performance. This meant that employees' performance constantly improved due to constrictive and positive feedback (Le and Pastukhova 2018). Furthermore, that good relationships with their leaders lead to a healthy working environment in which employees are free to ask clarifying questions to understand the direction without fear. This, however, is contrary to the literature, as professionalism is to be explored more than personal relations.

According to the responses, coaching, mentoring, continuous professional development, agile leadership, and training are factors that add value to employees. These also provide them with an assurance of business continuity, motivation, and an eagerness to learn new things and encourage engaged staff to increase their productivity. Working in a healthy work environment where leaders appear to be on top of the game and allowing followers to follow will add to employees' sense of belonging to the company. Vroom's Expectancy Theory by Suciu et al. (2013) aligns with the requirements of professional training to improve staff performance.

4.2.2.4 Question 4

Question 4 was designed to determine whether the evaluations are having an impact on improving branch performance. The question was “indicate if the performance appraisal system that is implemented within your branch achieves the intended results of improved performance of an employee?”. Figure 4.6 reflects responses indicating Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) as received from participants.

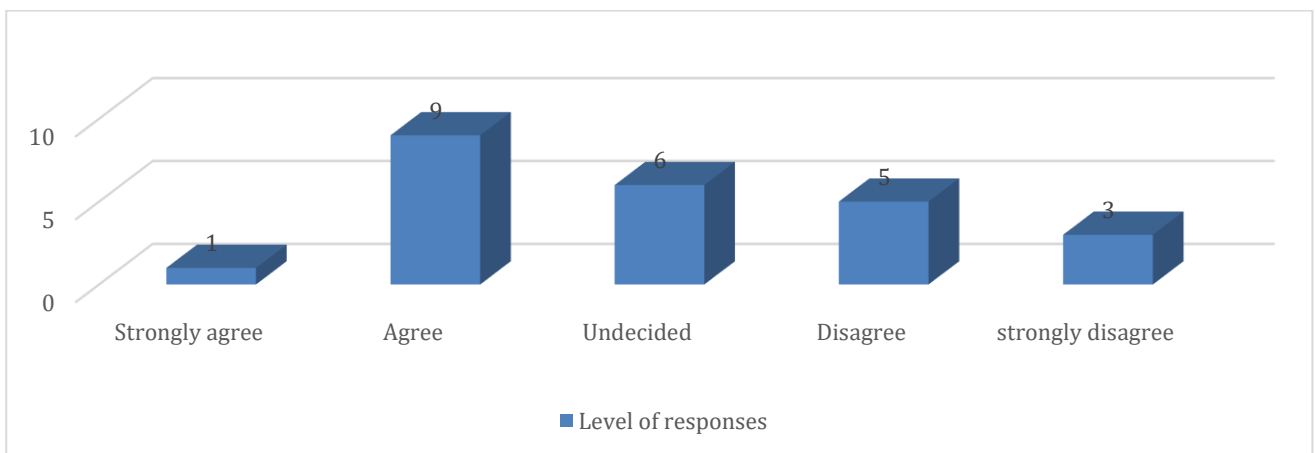


Figure 4. 6: Responses on the impact of evaluation on performance

4.2.2.4.1 Responses

Table 8. 1: Some of the responses on the results of PMDS within branches' performance

Participant No.	Question 4 as per Appendix A					Responses from Participants
1	SA	A	U	D	SA	While it is a good initiative, I think the current performance appraisal system does not necessarily improve the performance of the employees. By virtue of its design, employees become more inclined to tick the boxes than the actual improvement.
2	SA	A	U	D	SA	it depends on the appraiser, not on the results. The scoring cannot be quantified; it is highly subjective. Therefore, no improvement can be achieved if the appraiser has scored the employee undeservedly high.
3	SA	A	U	D	SA	Within my branch, the problem of performance is not assisting in improving the employees' performance as the problem or challenges to perform are deeper than just the performance appraisal system. These issues need to be addressed before the employees can improve their performance.
4	SA	A	U	D	SA	Disagree. It is usually thumb-sucking, not based on any scientific methods. It usually depends on the relationship with the supervisor during the appraisal period and not the input to the branch.

4.2.2.4.2 Findings and interpretation of the results

As shown by Figure 4.6, one participant strongly believes that performance evaluation has a direct impact on its intentions, majority agree, six (6) are undecided, five (5) disagree, and three (3) strongly disagree. Table 8.1 above demonstrates some of the responses, as received from participants.

4.2.2.4.3 Discussion of the results

According to the findings, minority of those polled agree or strongly agree, while majority disagree, strongly disagree, and are undecided. As a result, the majority of participants see the evaluation system as not adding value to improving performance within their branches. They stated that the system is subjective and that only the supervisors have the final say on

the ratings because, more often than not, they disagree with their supervisors on this evaluation process. Participants emphasised that there is no way to improve performance when supervisors rate employees below their performance worth. This finding was also supported by (Woods, 2012), who stated that while ratings have been demonstrated to be effective in assessments, their inability to truly reflect the employees' full value has a negative impact on performance.

The majority of responses indicated that, while evaluating employee performance is a good initiative, the current performance appraisal system does not necessarily improve employee performance. Because of how it is designed, employees are more inclined to check the boxes than make actual improvements. This, however, is contrary to Cesário and Chambel (2017), who indicated that employees will have stronger insight into their duties and responsibilities and guidance on improving their performance if the appraisal process is formal and well-structured.

Participants also suggested that performance is hampered by factors other than individuals. For example, there is an over-reliance on other branches and agencies (other than LHDA) that deliver some outputs on behalf of the branch. Thus, all internal and external influencers that cause an individual to engage in an activity should be considered as part of the performance evaluation (Brhane and Zewdie, 2018).

Responses also indicated that there is much more to achieving the set target than exploring talent to allow for creativity and innovation (George, 2016); perhaps the findings are contrary as participants feel that the system does not allow employees to be more creative and innovative because they work with a fear of meeting the set targets, which are repetitive in nature and do not advance individuals from their respective career paths. Others believe that only employees with good relationships with their supervisors receive good bonus ratings rather than improving their performance.

4.2.2.5 Question 5

Question 5: How can you rate the performance appraisal system?

This question was designed to elicit participants' opinions on the LHDA's PMDS, allowing participants to express their thoughts based on their own experiences.

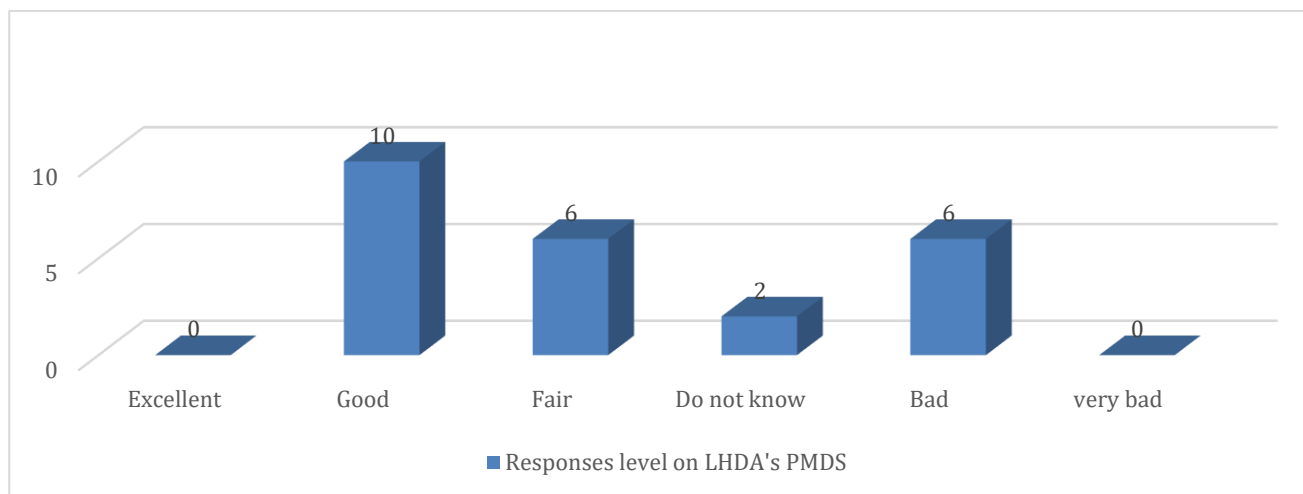


Figure 4. 7: Views of participants on LHDA's PMDS

4.2.2.5.1 Responses

Table 9. 1: Some of the responses on rating the PMDS

Participant No.	Ratings on the LHDA's PMDS.				Responses from Participants
	G	F	D	B	
1					It is not totally bad but also not so good. The greater challenges are in its application. Some of the employees use it for their personal benefit (bonuses), defeating the intended organisational purpose. Not consistently applied across the organisation. Seen as an HR activity and not a management tool.
2					There are complaints that PMDS is not applied in a standard manner across, and there are rumours that other colleagues are being victimised.
3					It is an isolated system that is entrusted by the organisation to correct employee's performance issues, while performance depends on more factors than just money.
4					Appraisal system is relatively rigid, the ratings scale and descriptions can be unclear as to what constitutes good performance vs average performance.

4.2.2.5.2 Finding and interpretation

No one opined that the LHDA's PMDS was excellent, with ten people stating it was good, six indicating it was fair, six believing it was bad, and no one stating it was very bad. Referring to Figure 4.7 above, minority of participants indicated that the LHDA's PMDS is

good, while majority indicated that it is fair, do not know, or bad. Table 9.1 illustrates some of the choices and explanations provided regarding the policy.

4.2.2.5.3 Discussion of the results

Although participants indicated that they do not know, they still indicated that the performance appraisal system is not good. They reflected that the appraisal system is relatively rigid. The rating scale and descriptions can be unclear as to what constitutes good performance against average performance. Perhaps this may contradict Moradi et al. (2017), who defined performance appraisal as a business process comparing actual and expected performance.

Responses from minority participants indicated that, while their opinion of the system is positive, there are complaints that PMDS is not applied uniformly and that other colleagues are being victimised. This conflicts with the literature, as Mishra, (2022) indicated that the evaluation process helps management make sound decisions about promotions, pay raises, and other career advancements.

Participants also stated that performance assessment moderation is only done at the management level, which allows for unfair assessments because they make final decisions in the absence of the assessed staff, that complained to either HR or senior management. While the results may contradict the literature, a 360-degree appraisal system considers the opinions of various groups of reviewers who interact with personnel, which may bring fairness and break other perceptions.

Only minority of participants found the process fair, and two undecided participants stated that while it is not completely bad, it is also not very good. The greater challenges in its application are that some employees use it for their personal benefit (bonuses), which defeats the intended organisational purpose. It is also not consistently applied across the organisation and is viewed as an HR activity rather than a management tool to address performance deficiencies. Perhaps the finding reflects conflicting issues in the literature. Rahman et al., (2020) indicated that both the employee and the employer must benefit from

performance evaluation, with the employer needing increased performance and the employee needing various types of support.

It is clear that majority of participants do not rate the system as good, indicating a need for management to take corrective action. Those who criticised the system stated that it is an isolated system entrusted by the organisation to correct employee performance issues, even though more factors than just money determine performance. Furthermore, staff have complained that they do not understand the system or are still dissatisfied with it. However, it is still being implemented as is, despite user complaints. Participants also indicated that there is no two-way communication. Dangol (2021) highlighted that the employer and employee must have two-way conversations and feedback during appraisals to improve processes and performance.

4.2.2.6 Question 6

Question 6: In your experience, does the LHDA reward its employees in order to encourage good performance?

This question examined how consistently the LHDA implements incentives resulting from good performance. Participants had to rate based on their experience. Figure 4.8 illustrates their responses.

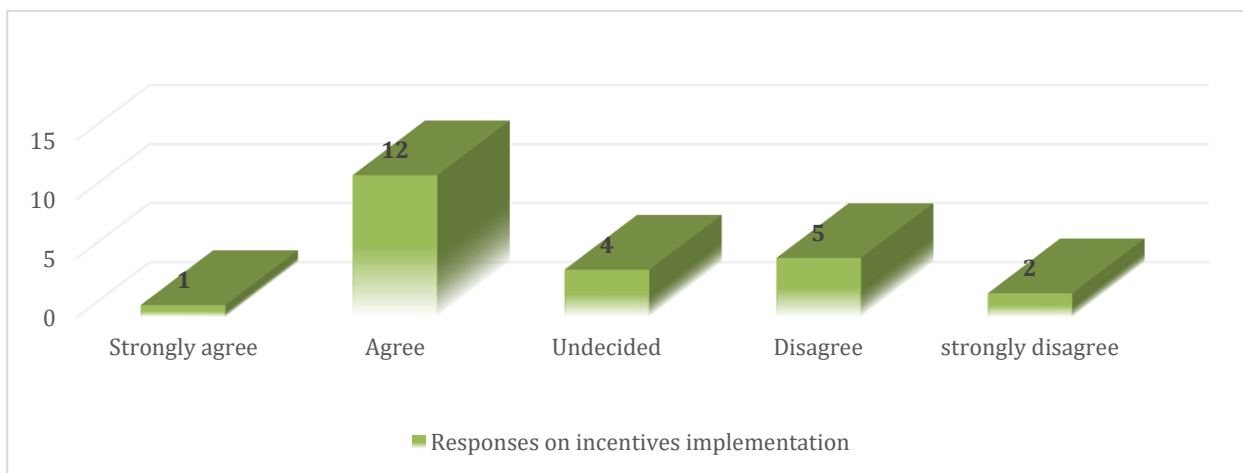


Figure 4. 8: Responses on the implementation of incentives

4.2.2.6.1 Responses

Table 10. 1: Some of the responses on rewards to encourage good performance

Participant No.	Rewards to encourage performance					Responses from Participants
1	SA	A	U	D	SD	Disagree. No one in the LHDA seems to have the authority to reward a good performance even when they fully acknowledge that the performance was indeed commendable.
2	SA	A	U	D	SD	I do not know of any reward given for good performance or even doing work beyond the scope of one's Performance Agreement/description.
3	SA	A	U	D	SD	The intention was to reward for performance, but this does not seem to be effective. In some areas, performance rewards don't match results on the ground.
4	SA	A	U	D	SD	In my experience, ratings are given based on the mood of the manager, and there are no checks and balances in place to ensure fairness. If the Manager is in a good mood, you get a high rating; if the Manager is in a bad mood, you get a low rating. Furthermore, it is implied that officers performing the same duties should be assigned the same rating to the point where an assessment can be returned to ensure that they are all the same. This in no way encourages good performance.
5	SA	A	U	D	SD	Whether reward is good or bad depends on the supervisor. The LHDA has a model that is interpreted by the supervisors, and it can be either good or bad.

4.2.2.6.2 Finding and interpretation

As shown by Figure 4.8, only one participant strongly agrees that LHDA's PMDS results in incentives to reward good performance, 12 agree, four are undecided, three disagree, and four strongly disagree. A mixture of undecided people, disagreeing people, and strongly disagreeing builds the minority of participants against the majority agreeing. Table 10.1 depicts some of the responses from participants.

4.2.2.6.3 Discussion of the results

Figure 4.8 shows that majority of participants agree that LHDA rewards good performance. Their responses indicated that after evaluating performance, LHDA pays such individuals

bonuses based on the scoring made on the assessments. Responses on this line also indicated that the policy allows for the bonus to reward good performance. However, the issue remains the subjectivity of what the ratings mean and how they achieve a rating of three and above. This contradicts the literature.

The undecided (4) responses reflected a provision for a performance bonus payout. However, the bonus is so minimal that it does not serve as a good motivator. They went on to indicate further that, in their opinion, the reward should be a product of good performance and not the other way around. A good appraisal system should be viewed as a link between an employee's expected reward and productivity (Ugoani, 2020).

Five participants disagreed that LHDA rewards good performance. They believe management is pushing the implementation of the policy to use the budget for bonuses. However, in reality, the bonus is so minimal that it does not encourage good performance. They also reflected that not everyone is enticed by money and that LHDA should focus on the good quality of life for its employees, consider flexible hours, and hybrid work. The finding aligns with the literature as the reward system is regarded as fundamental in any organisation because it is the mechanism that governs human attitudes (Obiekwe, 2016).

Furthermore, two participants strongly disagreed, stating there is no reward for good performance or even going above and beyond the scope of one's performance agreement/description; there are people within the LHDA who are so engaged that the LHDA saves millions as a result of them, but they are not rewarded. This finding is conflicting with the literature.

They also stated that the ratings are given based on the assessor's mood and that no checks and balances are in place to ensure fairness. Furthermore, it is implied that officers performing the same duties should be assigned the same rating to the point where an assessment can be returned to ensure they are all the same. Individuals' unequal input-output ratios should be considered; otherwise, both parties will feel unfairly treated (Krishnan et al., 2018).

4.2.2.7 Question 7

Question 7: In your experience, do you believe LHDA takes corrective measures on the reported poor performance of its employees?

The purpose of Question 7 was to determine whether LHDA consistently takes corrective action for poor reported performance.

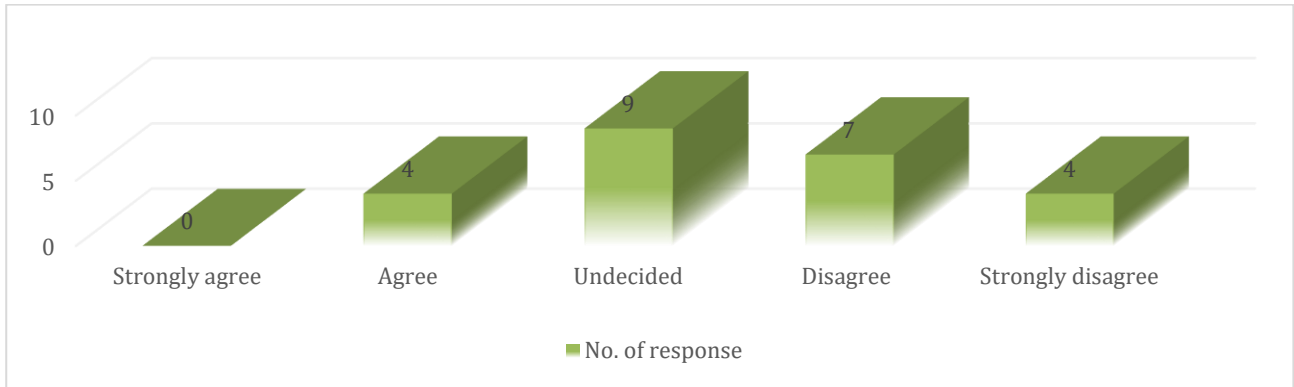


Figure 4.9: Number of responses that LHDA takes corrective action on poor performance

4.2.2.7.1 Responses

Table 11. 1: Some of the responses on action on poor performance

Participant No.	Is there action toward poor performance?					Responses from Participants
	SA	A	U	D	SD	
1						Disagree. The poor performance usually depends on the mood of the appraiser and is not based on any scientific method, so no one feels that LHDA should incur costs of training the poor performer since the poor mark was awarded based on temperaments.
						I do not know of any action taken. Rather the scoring under PMDS hides poor performance. Even people who are known to perform poorly score high, so there will not be any action taken against poor performers.
						In most cases, the corrective measures are left as the responsibility of the employee and not a team effort by the supervisor and employee. Some employees are victimised by this and are not guided as to what needs to happen when they are not performing.
						Sometimes, I've heard a few occasions when that happened. Actually, it's entirely up to managers to ensure that corrective measures are taken. Usually, they do not do anything to ensure budgets are approved if they happen not to remove such line items as proposed by staff.

4.2.2.7.2 Finding and interpretation

The question was designed to determine whether measures are taken for poor performance and whether the LHDA continues to work on poor performance to improve it. The responses in Figure 4.9 show that no one strongly agrees, four agree, nine are undecided, seven disagree, and four strongly disagree. The total number of people who disagree or are undecided is the majority of participants indicating that the majority of people do not agree that LHDA takes corrective action in response to poor performance, as reflected by PMDS evaluations.

4.2.2.7.3 Discussion of the results

Referring to Figure 4.9, four participants agreed that LHDA does take corrective action on reported poor performance. It was stated that many recommended interventions make it into the training plan, and it is entirely up to the branch manager to implement the appropriate interventions. The finding questions the proper implementation of the policy as management appears not to be doing what they should do.

The majority are undecided, disagreeing, or strongly disagreeing because PMDS scoring conceals poor performance. Even people who are known to perform poorly score highly; no action will be taken against poor performers. Employees may receive low ratings in multiple assessments, but no action is taken. They also stated that it is entirely up to managers to ensure that corrective measures are implemented. However, such managers do not appear to be assisting such people. The finding contradicts the literature. According to Vanesa et al. (2019), consistent poor performance should be reported, and if it occurs again, such an employee should be subjected to a disciplinary hearing if training is not an option.

Some participants indicated that they had reported poor performance more than once, including their subordinates on the training plan. However, their supervisors lag in getting the training approved, thus there has been no improvement in poor performance as the discretion of the manager becomes critical, even in cases where individuals truly need to be trained. According to participants, the LHDA encourages poor performance because non-performers are not considered as long as they have good relationships with their respective managers. The finding contradicts the results found in previous studies. Such studies

indicated that an employee's weaknesses are evaluated, and whether they warrant additional training or advancement is ascertained (Moradi et al., 2017).

4.2.2.8 Question 8

The final question of the semi-structured interview (Question 8) sought suggestions from participants based on their experience with the LHDA's PMDS.

4.2.2.8.1 Responses

Table 12. 1: Some of the suggestions from the participants

Participant No.	Responses from Participants
1	I would propose the 360-degree type of performance assessment – where all relevant internal stakeholders partake in assessing the employee – thus, an employee is assessed by both supervisors and supervisees.
2	Ensure that the tasks are aligned properly with the capacity of resources without possible overloading work. Ensure the cognitive health of the employees, then apply the principle of performance appraisal Management. For continual improvement, employees require support that includes continual training and resources.
3	To clarify the issues surrounding how the scoring is done and when is an employee eligible for more than a 3 score. To invest in assisting the poor performers through training and mentorship and monitoring if they have been achieved or implemented. To standardise the performance appraisal. To frequently remind the staff on what performance appraisal system entails and its purpose.
4	The system should be more transparent; the policy should be accessible by all employees, even to those at the lowest levels, the policy to be available in Sesotho as well to ensure that it is clear to all. Then all will understand how it affects them. The scoring criteria that is standard across the board and can be objectively rated is encouraged. Various ways of recognising performance should be explored and implemented.

4.2.2.8.2 Finding and interpretation

While participants had different viewpoints, a summary of their thoughts resulted in the following aspects to consider: revisiting the policy to make it clearer, encouraging constructive feedback, provision of relevant and adequate resources, the need to take action on poor performance, exploring other measures of performance evaluation such as 360-degree appraisals or benchmark with other similar entities.

4.2.2.8.2 Discussion of the results

Participants suggested mechanisms need to be devised to have PMDS applied in a standard manner and grievances addressed. LHDA must benchmark with other related organisations to enhance the appraisal system, encourage regular and constructive feedback, ensure adequate resources align with the amount and type of work, and ensure effective improvement programmes for poor performance are in place.

Participants further suggested that the policy be revised and simplified for better understanding by its users. While moderation is only for management level and above, participants believe this should be applied across the board. They also suggested that the revision of the system should include the 360-degree type of appraisal as internal factors and external stakeholders affect their performance. They added that this could bring about fairness and end conflicts and grievances. According to Min et al., (2020), the link between sustainable employee behaviour and supervisory behaviour was improved by conflict management techniques.

Finally, participants suggested that LHDA may need to ensure the cognitive health of the employees and then apply the principle of performance appraisal management. For continual improvement, employees require support that includes continual training and relevant resources. Participants recommend that LHDA include personal attributes in the PMDS policy, explore other reward options, as the current one is too minimal, and engage in continuous performance reviews aligned or linked to promotion or upward movement to reward good performance in real terms. Participants also recommended more frequent workshopping of the policy, coaching, mentoring at all levels, as well as capacity building. These suggestions promote the concept of equality of opportunity.

4.3 Conclusion

The participants' overall responses indicated that the LHDA's PMDS is ineffective. According to the responses, participants still have little knowledge of the policy. They believe that the LHDA's performance management system is not clear, and very subjective, and too much power is given to supervisors/assessors. They further added that there are no measures undertaken for poor performance, and the bonus is too minimal that they regard it as not encouraging. Also, there is no continuous feedback and no moderation of the

assessment to bring the process to fairness. The process is used to victimise other staff and is rigid. Participants believe that the policy requires extensive revisions and proper implementation that is fair and beneficial to both the LHDA and its employees.

It was established in Chapter 2 that staff performance evaluation is crucial for organisations looking to improve their general performance. Thus, to improve employee performance, it is necessary to provide ongoing, constructive feedback, create plans that the employee can understand, and consider both internal and external stakeholders. This is why 360-degree assessments should be considered. This chapter explored additional options for rewards that LHDA does not offer. It also discussed professionalism in the evaluation process, where power is not only in the hands of supervisors but includes fair and equitable procedures that result in effective measures against subpar performance.

The recommendations for addressing the challenges identified by participants and the study's limitations will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The findings of the qualitative study were presented and analysed in Chapter 4. In this chapter, an abstract of the findings from the LHDA study will be provided. This chapter will also make recommendations while outlining the study's limitations.

The results of this study can benefit the organisation involved in the study. The LHDA can benefit from the study by understanding the various groups of employees' perspectives on implementing the unfair policy, understanding the causes of non-performance, and taking no initiatives to improve the reported poor performance. Because of employee concerns about the policy's unfairness, there is a low level of proper implementation. As a result, there is a call for LHDA to consider the moderation of performance evaluation by investing in a tool that considers all factors that impact an employee's performance, such as the 360-degree assessment tool. LHDA may need to clarify its policies further and capacitate, coach, mentor, and train its employees on its policies.

A semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect data, which was emailed to participants. The semi-structured interview schedule contained eight questions that addressed various aspects of the LHDA's PMDS implementation. The goal of the semi-structured interview was to assess the effectiveness of staff performance appraisals at the LHDA.

5.2 Research objectives

5.2.1 Primary objectives

To evaluate the effectiveness of the staff performance appraisal system at the (LHDA).

- To provide an overview of employee performance appraisal.
- To identify and determine factors that contribute to employee performance at LHDA
- To assess the impact of the performance appraisal on employees' performance and make suggestions for improvements within LHDA.

5.3.1 Conclusions

This section will discuss the conclusions on this study's primary and secondary objectives, as well as reiterations of the findings and actions taken to achieve the objectives. An effective performance appraisal system is a critical tool for improving organisational productivity. It is a ritual system that enables a regular review and evaluation of an employee's or team's job performance. Part of supervisors do not take performance evaluations as critically as they ought to. Such mindsets are often counterproductive and reduce employee and group productivity.

Chapter 1 discussed the study's main problems and historical context. The second chapter reviewed the literature on the criteria for an fruitful performance appraisal system. Chapter 2 also emphasised the strategic methodology to performance appraisals to maximise the proficiency of an evaluation system. The third chapter described the investigation of the research problem discussed in Chapter 1. The emphasis on a systematic approach to addressing the research objectives was highlighted. The research methodology used to collect the data for the study was also discussed in Chapter 3. The researcher used the qualitative approach because it was the best fit for this study. Participants had to complete a semi-structured interview. All ambiguous themes were restructured during the pilot study to ensure maximum reliability and validity. The level of the same answers was identified, and where repetitive responses from participants were received, the data collection ended.

The data were analysed and presented in Chapter 4. The data was analysed according to eight questions from the semi-structured interview (see Appendix A). For ease of interpretation, the data was presented in the form of graphs, charts and tables. The data analysis divulged flaws in the yardstick and regulations in the prevailing performance appraisal system as implemented by the LHDA. The main goal was to assess the effectiveness of the staff performance appraisal system at the LHDA in Lesotho. The researcher conducted this study to assist the LHDA in determining the efficacy of the employee performance evaluation system governed by PMDS policy. The data analysis results clearly showed inefficiencies in the benchmarkings used to determine the fruitfulness

of the current LHDA's performance appraisal system. Thus, the researcher can conclude that the current performance appraisal system is ineffective and inefficient.

5.3.2 Recommendations

Considering the literature review in Chapter 2 and the research results in Chapter 4, the following recommendations are made:

5.3.2.1 Clarity of the policy

The results show that majority of participants from both management and senior officers believe the policy is unclear and open to multiple interpretations. Therefore, it is recommended that the policy be written unambiguously to ensure that it is well-defined and understood by all relevant users. LHDA may need to revisit the wording of the policy and amend the policy to ensure that all parties involved understand the content thereof.

5.3.2.2 Availability of the policy

While the predominance of participants indicated that the policy is available to all LHDA employees, minority indicated that the policy is only available to individuals with laptop computers, excluding drivers, office assistants, and labourers. They indicated that the policy is not in the officers' native language for better comprehension. Equity theory is critical in determining how fair and equitable an organisation's performance management system is in terms of procedures, interactions, and distributions. As a result, it is recommended that LHDA investigate other measures to ensure that all the employees have access to the policy and understand how it is written.

5.3.2.3 Implementation of the policy

Based on Figure 4.4 in Chapter 4, majority of participants agree that the policy has been implemented across all LHDA branches. However, employees have negative perceptions of the appraisal system, and they are dissatisfied with the appraisal practice's implementation. The issues raised are a lack of proper implementation due to supervisors' insufficiency of proficiency and knowledge, subjectivity, nepotism, continual documentation, and inability to provide convenient feedback.

Based on the foregoing, it is recommended that the LHDA consider moderators of the performance assessment to ensure that performance is assessed fairly with no perception of bias or favouritism. Also, those supervisors must be trained on the assessment criteria to

fully understand and guide other employees towards the policy's objective and implementation.

5.3.2.4 Employees' knowledge of the policy

A total representing almost half of the population of senior officers and managers have little knowledge of the policy. This is a cause for concern because they are expected to assist their subordinates with the policy. Thus, how do they implement the policy to their subordinates without knowledge of it? The major criteria for evaluating employee performance include job-specific behaviour, which includes knowledge of the job, the guiding principles, and the core responsibilities of employees' roles.

Therefore, it is recommended that LHDA consults its employees in the development of its policies to gain user buy-in and improve understanding and ownership, making implementation easier because knowledge will be adequate. It is also recommended to train or review policies for supervisors to improve understanding which is presumed to yield implementation.

5.3.2.5 Factors contributing to employees' performance

5.3.2.5.1 Constructive feedback

Participants stated that they do not receive positive and constructive feedback from supervisors and that such information is not included on the PMDS forms. Effective feedback allows for continuous improvement in performance over time, allowing them to improve their performance. As a result, it is suggested that ongoing feedback be provided, and the PMDS forms must be revised to include areas such as narrative feedback from supervisors. While there are two cycles of performance evaluation, it is also recommended that supervisors provide ongoing and informal feedback as well as a summary at the time of the formal assessment settings.

5.3.2.5.2 Incentives

Participants indicated that the bonus derived from the evaluation of staff performance is insufficient to influence their performance. Therefore, it is recommended that LHDA consider other measures to improve the performance of its employees, such as hybrid work, flexible hours, and quality of life incentives (e.g., cover for health issues, a healthier work

environment). Employee motivation, career development, and the ability to work flexible hours all impact a company's performance.

5.3.2.5.3 Availability of resources

Participants indicated that allocating relevant resources for the roles assigned is critical because these impact employee performance. It is therefore recommended that all employees be provided with the necessary resources to carry out their roles and that the issue of resources be noted on the performance evaluation if such employees are evaluated while the employer does not provide the necessary resources.

5.3.2.5.4 Culture and leadership

Participants stated that their performance is governed by business plans informed by the LHDA's strategy. As a result, they believe that a strong and reinforced direction led by good leadership has an impact on a positive work culture that promotes productivity, engaged employees, and better performance.

According to the researcher, there is a need for agile leadership, more engagement with employees, and a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down approach to allow business process owners to plan, which may improve motivation and increase a sense of ownership and belonging.

5.3.2.6 Intention of PMDS in branches

The majority of participants disagreed that performance appraisals improved branch performance, highlighting that the issue was with implementation and supervisor ratings. The answers to Question 4 showed that the current system is susceptible to distortions. These misrepresentations could be caused by inefficient work standards (Question 5), a deficiency of specific prerequisites for a successful performance management system (Question 1.1), or insufficient rater guidance. This is evident as almost half of participants (see Figure 4.5) felt that their knowledge of the policy as raters was insufficient, which could be interpreted as a deficiency in policy implementation.

5.3.2.7 The Purpose of the Appraisal System

According to the results of the data examination for Question 5, the majority of participants perceived the performance appraisal to be rigid, used to victimise other employees, used to obtain financial benefits (bonuses), and that it is an isolated system entrusted with correcting employees' performance. However, some participants thought it was developmental.

With reference to the findings, it is proposed that investments be made to either train employees on the appraisal system, invest in assessment moderation, or reinvent the 360-degree performance to include both internal and external factors that affect employee performance.

5.3.2.8 Substandard performance

According to Figure 4.9, majority of participants were undecided, disagreed, or strongly disagreed that the PMDS takes corrective action in the event of poor performance. Participants also stated that managers are doing nothing to address known cases of this nature.

Suppose an employee's performance falls short of expectations. In that case, the relevant supervisor/manager must lay-out systematic remedial or advancement assistance to inspire the employee in improving. It is recommended that moderators must be involved and continuously follow up to ensure that poor performance is rectified by training, subsequently ensuring that such individuals contribute as per the employer's expectations.

In summary, based on the above findings and recommendations, it may be beneficial for LHDA to invest in an independent study to identify subgroups' perspectives on the policy, impacts, and recommendations on how LHDA can improve its performance assessment to refine the performance of both the employer and the employees.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The following limitations were noted for this study:

- The other divisions' subsections were not evenly represented in the study. Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4 indicated that two participants were from the CED, which may have some inferences in terms of the extensive applicability of the out-turn; some may argue that the opinion of two people is not generic.
- Some employees regarded their opinions on the performance management system as highly confidential and could not share enough of their experience, leaving other questions unanswered.
- Certain employees could have provided biased answers in the belief of being sensitive to their experience. Some participants could have considered this study as requested by the LHDA's executive to identify non-performers, causing it to become too brief and, to some extent, biased to their answers.

- Because the study was confined within a certain period of time, it could have been a limitation.
- Interviews with “lower” level employee could have been applied in order to ensure a balanced research approach.

5.5 Conclusion

This study pursued to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority’s (LHDA) staff performance appraisals. The researcher believes that this goal has been fulfilled grounded on the findings reported in the fourth Chapter.

The literature review established a relation connecting employee performance and organisational performance. The findings of the research indicated that it is important that employee performance appraisal should be clear. Other important aspects indicated were the following: the factors that contribute to an employee’s performance, the need for constructive feedback, the importance of supervisors knowing the policy, and guiding principles for conducting fair and objective performance evaluations.

As a result, this study contributed to evaluating the effectiveness of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority’s staff performance appraisal system. It also identified employee subgroups who view the appraisal process as unfair, rigid, victimising, and thus ineffective. This data will enable organisational leaders to implement interventions to maintain and improve the current performance management system within the LHDA.

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Appendix A: Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interview for LHDA performance appraisal system

Please answer the following question by typing in the space provided (below each question).

Question 1.

Based on your experience, what do you think of LHDA's policy (performance management policy)?			
		Explain your answer	
Is it clear?	Yes	No	
Available to everyone?	Yes	No	
It is implemented?	Yes	No	

Question 2.

How would you rate your knowledge of the performance appraisal management that is implemented by the LHDA?

Excellent	Good	Do not know	Weak	Very weak
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Please explain your choice: |

Semi-structured interview for LHDA performance appraisal system

Question 3.

What factors do you think contribute to employee performance within LHDA?

Please explain your choice:

Question 4.

Indicate if the performance appraisal system that is implemented within your branch achieves the intended results of improved performance of an employee?

+	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	□
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Please explain your choice:

Semi-structured interview for LHDA performance appraisal system

Question 5.

How can you rate the performance appraisal system?

Excellent	Good	Do not know	Bad	Very bad
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Please explain your choice:

Question 6.

In your experience, does LHDA reward its employees in order to encourage good performance?

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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Please explain your choice:

Question 7.

In your experience, do you think LHDA takes corrective measures on the reported poor performance of its employees?

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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Please explain your choice:

Question 8.

What suggestions can you propose for an improved performance appraisal system within the LHDA?



Appendix B: Permission to conduct research

CONFIDENTIAL



Lesotho Highlands Development Authority

P.O. Box 7332, Maseru 100, Lesotho • Tel: (+266) 22 246 000 / 22 311 280 / 522 52000 • Fax: (+266) 22 310 665 • Email: lhwp@lhda.org.ls

REF : HR/367/22/CO
FILE : HR/00/14

05 APRIL 2022

The Ethical Clearance Committee
University of the Free State
205 Nelson Mandela Dr
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN THE LHDA GRADED

Mr. Bokang Sakoane (student number 2020910341) has requested permission from the LHDA Chief Executive to conduct his Master of Business Administration (MBA) research within the LHDA. He stated that his goal will be "Evaluations of The Effectiveness of Staff Performance Appraisals at the (LHDA)." He has been granted permission to collect information from relevant parties and interview employees who are willing to participate in his research.

The LHDA believes that the study will benefit the organization and hence will be provided with the necessary assistance to ensure completion of his research project.

Yours sincerely

M. RAMAFIKENG (Mr.)
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

You are kindly invited to take part in this research project and to give your perception or experience of the performance appraisal of employees within the LHDA. This involves your views/opinions and experience based on the employee performance assessment system as implemented by the LHDA. The sample is based on individuals who have worked with the LHDA and can have a view from a few years of experience in the performance management system. A total of 20 participants will form part of the study, this involves senior officers and managers as they have control over the process of the performance management system.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

I the researcher, Bokang Sakoane will send via the email the questionnaire to the participants using the LHDA email addresses of the affected participants as the study is approved by the Chief Executive of the LHDA.

Participation in this study is based on the principle of making a free and informed decision about the nature, implications, and risks of participation. Staff members will be informed that their participation is entirely voluntary and will be kept strictly confidential. The researcher and participants have no competing interests. The purpose and scope of the study will be explained to participants before they access the questionnaire and again at the recruitment email.

Participants of this study are full-time employees of the LHDA, who are presumed to have experience within the performance system and can provide rich information about the performance appraisal system. The data collection will be conducted once ethical clearance has been obtained from the University of the Free State.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Participation is entirely voluntary, and there are no consequences or lost opportunity of benefit for failing to do so. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are under no obligation to do so. If you choose to participate, you will be provided this explanatory note to keep and will be required to sign a written consent form. Take into consideration that in all correspondence for this research study, you have the choice of responding to each question individually or skipping any question that asks you to reveal information you do not want to reveal. However, once they have submitted the questionnaire, they will be unable to withdraw.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Participants in this study will receive no direct benefits.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There are no known drawbacks, risks, or unpleasantness relating to this study.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Yes. The questionnaire responses will be kept strictly private and will not be shared with anyone. This participant Consent Form will be kept strictly confidential and severely damaged once the field study is completed.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

Information received from the study will be kept on a laptop that has security for access. This, on the other hand, will be printed and deleted along with the rest of the work email. I, the investigator, will safely keep the collected data in a secured locked cabinet in the lockable office where access is limited to myself. Once the data has been fully utilized then such data will be destroyed.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Participation in this study will NOT result in any means of payment or any incentives.

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to be kept up to date on the final results of this study, please contact Bokang Sakoane at sakoaneb@lhda.org.ls or +266 62525420. The results could be available in 6 to 9 months from November 2022. If you have any concerns about how the research was conducted, please contact Mr. Lyle Markham at markhamlg@ufs.ac.za or +27 (0)51 401 2337. It's important to note that there are no direct risks or benefits to taking part in this study. Although it is impossible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, the researcher has taken reasonable precautions to minimize any known and potential but unknown risks.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Appendix D: ethical Clearance



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

09-Sep-2022

Dear Mr Bokang Sakoane

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Effectiveness of staff Performance Appraisals at the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA).

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2022/1293/22

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Dr Adri
du
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Adri du Plessis
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Appendix E: Recruitment email

Dear Colleague

I am a student in Master of Business Administration (MBA) at the University of the free state.

I am currently doing research on the topic "Effectiveness of staff Performance Appraisals at the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA)". The research seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the employee performance appraisal within the LHDA. This study could help to determine if there are any shortcomings in the current performance appraisal system within the organisation and how these shortcomings, could be overcome.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. The objective of the research is to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of the current performance appraisal system utilised within the LHDA. In order to comply with strict ethical standards maintained by the University of the Free State, you are requested to sign the permission clause attached before participating in this research.

If you agree to participate in this research project, please complete the attached questionnaire. The questionnaire should take between 5-10 minutes to complete. All inputs will be treated as confidential. Furthermore, the data collected will only be used for the purpose of the field study. There are no right or wrong answers. So, please provide your honest opinion on each question.

While I understand that you are a busy professional, please know that each completed questionnaire is greatly appreciated.

Please do not hesitate to contact me (sakoaneb@lhda.org.ls+266 62525420) for anything regarding this email and its attachment, should there be such a need. Due to the time constraints of this project, I will need to collect all questionnaires at least by the 30th of September 2022.

Many thanks,



Bokang Sakoane
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