

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE INSPECTORATE DIVISION OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS IN BLOEMFONTEIN**

BY

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**MBA STUDENT STATEMENT: THE RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE
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THE FREE STATE.**

DECLARATION

I, REFILOE MATHIBE, declare that the research project hereby handed in for the qualification Master's in Business Administration at the UFS Business School at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted the same work, either as a whole or in part, for a qualification at/in another university/faculty.

Refiloe Mathibe

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to highlight several reasons why performance management is important. Performance management provides the opportunity to create training opportunities, developmental strategies, and clarity within the organisation for both the employer and the employees. It encourages productivity by increasing confidence and open communication channels as a result, increasing employee retention through rewards and recognition.

The research design that was followed for this study was that of a qualitative nature through the use of semi-structured interviews. The researcher utilized qualitative data collection to collect the data which was then used to compile the study by analysing the collected data.

The key findings of the study were as follows:

- The work attendance had a negative impact on the participants in general as it affected their performance negatively. This resulted in slow progress in achieving team goals, which had a negative impact on the overall performance of the organisation.
- To boost productivity, three components must be considered, namely instrumentality, expectancy, and valence. Instrumentality is dependent upon the trustworthiness of the employee, the expectation is dependent on whether the employee has the skills for the job they are performing, and valence reinforces the values of rewards and consistency with reaching goals, needs, preferences, and values. If all three components are considered and achieved, the employees will be motivated to perform.
- The impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes is vital for retaining talent, aligning the goals of the employees with those of the organisation and enhancing career development. Mentorship in the engineering and built environments will enable people to register as professionals in their fields.
- Organisations gain productivity from working from home and the fifty percent work life, an enabler to this is technology and digitalisation. It is, therefore,

beneficial for the Free State Department of Public Works to introduce digitalisation to the workplace and provide all the required resources so that the productivity and performance of individuals can increase.

The main conclusions of the study indicated that the performance management review of the department could be effective if it was used properly. Instead, the participants highlighted that it was used to obtain cash bonuses. The participants did not feel motivated because there were gaps due to lack of communication about the reviews and they also mentioned the unwillingness of managers to ensure that they receive the support they require to improve themselves. It could, therefore, be concluded that management should get leadership training that would assist them in leading the teams effectively. The work attendance had a negative impact on the participants in general; digitalisation could assist in this regard, as would the provision of resources to enable the employees to do their daily tasks.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Background to the problem

Lalwani (2020) describes performance management as continuous communication between managers and their employees to ensure that the strategic objectives of the organisation are achieved efficiently throughout the year by addressing issues that may affect the performance of the employees. It is a tool that is aimed to align the employees, resources, and systems to meet the organisation's immediate and overarching goals. This is a process done through the clarification of expectations, identification of goals, setting objectives, providing feedback, and reviewing the results. Performance management is used for the development of employees.

Effective performance management is essential to businesses, as it helps foster an open dialogue between employees, management, and the entire company. This, in turn, increases the trust allowing everyone to be more engaged and better supported. It is, therefore, important to have structured and continuous performance management to maintain a high standard in the organisation (Carpi, Douglas and Frédéric, 2017). According to White (2021), there are several reasons ongoing performance management is important. Firstly, ongoing performance management provides a look into the future by consistently managing and monitoring workplace performance for the detection of issues that may arise, as to confront them early. It also helps create development and training strategies that allow organisations the opportunity for improvement by offering mentorships to the employees.

White (2021) further states that performance management is important because it provides clarity within the organisation; this allows employees to be productive and it also increases their confidence because they know exactly what is expected of them. As a result, it allows employees to be open and communicate better in the workplace, allowing them to exchange feedback and voice their thoughts. Performance management can also increase employee retention; this can be done by organisations to encourage the

employees through recognition and rewards – which would, as a result, boost employee productivity and engagement.

A survey to measure the impact of employee performance in a firm in China, conducted by Deloitte in March 2020, indicated 46% of these firms expected a reduction in performance due to Covid-19 (Boichenko and Tymchenko, 2020). A positive outlook on working virtually or working from home was provided by Graves and Karabayeva (2020, who stated that working from home provides flexibility and decreases travel – which, as a result, increases time and data money. Graves and Karabayeva (2020) added that working virtually would increase the performance of an average individual because of their ability to have a wide range of global access to resources and people.

In the Inspectorate Division in the Maintenance Department of the Department of Public Works, however, to save money, teams must work together to reach their desired goal. When inspecting a building for a conditional assessment; civil, electrical, building, and mechanical works must be considered so that the report covers the entire scope of the building. This is also important when inspecting newly constructed work for quality control. Administration personnel who assist with important submissions, however, are not required to work in teams and their schedule is unknown to the work inspectors. Working and submitting team work in the Inspectorate has always been a problem and this in turn could result in slower progress of work because of the fifty-percent working arrangement during lockdown levels 4 and 5 of the Covid-19 pandemic and not having most employees in the office at times, especially when information is required from them. It is evident that in as much as working from home has the potential to save time and money; in construction, however, time and money are saved through travel and working together in one space. This could be a reason for confusion and disruption that have a huge potential of undermining employee engagement; this means that organisations must be intentional in recognising employee accomplishments even more, with the aftermath of Covid-19 resolutions (Free State Department of Public Works, 2019).

A resolution was taken by the Free State Department of Public Works (2019) in Bloemfontein, Free State Province to have employees rotate daily and those who share office space to only have fifty-percent work attendance in the office daily to mitigate Covid-19 exposure. On these days, fifty-percent of the employees would work from home. In addition to having to deal with the fifty-percent working arrangement and the fatigue, there were digital distractions, connectivity issues and virtual overload. In as much as most employees favoured the flexibility that comes with working from home, they acknowledged that fatigue was slowly setting in – putting the employee’s well-being at risk. With the working virtually quickly becoming normal since the pandemic, organisations want to adopt virtual workforce models which are said to bring about great returns for team collaboration, productivity, and innovation. For organisations to effectively take on the virtual workforce model, they must tackle three challenges, namely digital distractions, connectivity issues, and virtual overload which may be experienced by employees. For years, human resource leaders have focused on creating physical features in the office space that would assist employees with becoming more productive and performing optimally. This means that features should be created virtually that will offer employees an improved level of performance and well-being (Venkataramani, 2021).

According to Gatherer (2022), however, it is going to take a long time for South Africa to reach a fully digitalised destination simply because of the oh-so-common phrase “the system is down”, which has become so common that most people would mutter “typical” under the breaths while walking away from a queue. The City of Cape Town, in its Five-Year Integrated Development Plan July 2017 – June 2022, 2017–2022, however, states that some of the benefits that could be enjoyed by going digital are improved and high-quality service access and efficiency; this shows that there will be better service delivery and performance. Access to information is very important and having digital platforms that can assist with this would be very beneficial for officials to be able to perform better and more efficiently in their positions. The City of Cape Town aims to drive operational transparency and improve citizen engagement through Information and Communications Technology (ICT) enabled channels while also enhancing service delivery through process automation. The City of Cape Town uses transparency as their theme for

performance management – digitalisation, which could be beneficial for the Department of Public Works to increase their productivity and performance.

1.2 Problem statement

The problem is the impact on the current performance management system within the Inspectorate division of the Free State Department of Public Works in Bloemfontein which is not yielding the desired outcomes, due to the fifty-percent required work attendance arrangement as a safety precaution to keep Covid-19 from spreading. According to the Department of Public Service and Administration (2020), these strategies were put in place to mitigate the risk factors that are common to Covid-19.

Fifty-percent work attendance in the office means that the teams that were formed to work as units to reach a goal are not all at work on the same day. This causes slow progress, as the teams must be on site on the same day to inspect and assess the buildings. When doing submissions, the administration personnel have their own ways of doing things and only certain people have authority. It is, therefore, very difficult to get certain things done, because not everyone is available at the same time, resulting in slow progress. According to the management at the Public Works and Infrastructure (2019), personnel were often unavailable on their departmental phones on the days when employees were working from home, which posed a problem for the rest of the teams because certain arrangements could not be made and, therefore, a delay was inevitable. It is evident that the fifty-percent workforce has a negative impact on performance management, even though it was put in place as a safety precaution.

Should this problem persist, it could lead to low employee morale, lack of commitment and a decrease in the overall performance of the Inspectorate division.

1.3 Research questions

- How the Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, Inspectorate Division in Bloemfontein evaluates performance management?

- What performance management strategies could be introduced in the Free State Inspectorate Division of Public Works to boost employee productivity and engagement?
- What is the impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes in place for the improvement of performance management at the Free State Department of Public Works?
- Is it beneficial for the Free State Department of Public Works to introduce digitalisation to the workplace to increase the productivity and performance?

1.4 Primary and secondary research objectives

1.4.1. Primary research objective

- To evaluate the performance management of the Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, Inspectorate Division in Bloemfontein.

1.4.2. Secondary research objectives

- To provide an overview of performance management with reference to the Inspectorate Division of the Free State.
- To propose having mentors and mentorship programmes in place for the improvement of performance management in the Inspectorate Division of the Free State Department of Public Works.
- To propose other strategies that can be introduced in the Inspectorate Division of Public Works to boost employee productivity and engagement.

1.5 Research methodology

1.5.1. Research design

According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2010), research design is about the collection of data and analysing the collected data. The research design selected should be able to assist the researcher in compiling the study. Quantitative, qualitative and mix method are the different research design approaches. Quantitative research method approach is a systematic process used to study the relationship between numerical data and produce findings. Mixed method research design has been defined as a combination of qualitative

and quantitative research methods. As explained by Ghauri and Gronhaug (2010), the qualitative research method is applicable when the researcher intends to explore and understand a phenomenon in its natural setting, in this case, the new normal. It includes an “array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, interpret and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (Cooper and Schindler, 2006). Qualitative data collection is the research method that was used in this study.

1.5.2. Sampling strategy

Sampling is dependent upon the research study and how the researcher would approach it. The researcher had to consider who would be able to share information when choosing the subject (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2010). To limit bias and increase the response rate, the researcher had to find participants within the inspectorate division to conduct interviews, a sample size of fourteen full-time permanent employees were identified to participate in the study. These were the employees who were in the inspectorate division and were either positively or negatively impacted by the new normal of working virtually or working from home. The participants were recruited formally with an email and informally with an in-person verbal invitation. This allowed the researcher to provide the participants with as much information as possible and also prescreen to identify and eliminate high-risk participants (Iltis, Misra, Dunn, Brown, Campbell, Earll, Glowinski, Hadley, Pies & DuBois, 2013).

The inspectorate division is divided into different sections based on rank; namely, works inspectors, chief works inspectors, control works inspectors, administration personnel, division deputy director, director, and the chief director. The focus of this study was mainly on the works inspectors and administration personnel. The works inspectors were directly impacted by the new normal, mainly because of their nature of work. A conditional assessment is an assessment of an existing building (normally occupied) which requires a detailed assessment for maintenance, and this is completed by the works inspectors. Therefore, the sampling strategy that was used is non-probability sampling – which does

not involve random selection of individuals to participate in research, but it is based on criteria or convenience; this allows for the easy collection of data (McCombes, 2019).

Unlike probability sampling, non-probability sampling does not grant an equal chance to all the members for participating in the study. In other words, non-probability sampling is according to the researcher's judgement rather than through random sampling and it is commonly used in qualitative research (Formplus, 2022). Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique which helps the researcher to filter responses for the systematic investigation, which means that the researcher must know the population of interest to match their responses to the aim and objectives of the study (Formplus, 2022).

Sampling was conducted at the Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (Inspectorate division) in South Africa; it was beneficial to field workers and office-bound personnel alike, in the public sector, to determine the impact of the fifty-percent work attendance on productivity and performance.

1.6 Data collection method

The data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview combines both structured and unstructured interview styles and offers the advantages of both. The interviewer asks a few predetermined questions while the rest are not planned, providing an opportunity to explore the topic spontaneously (Pollock, 2020). All the interview questions were sent electronically to the different participants before scheduling the face-to-face interviews, this in turn allowed the participants to pursue the questions before the actual interview.

The type of questions that were asked included whether the performance management reviews would be effective and whether these would be fully regarded without considering factors like the Covid-19 pandemic. The interview schedule was not limited to the questions above; rather, the questions were self-developed yet informed by the literature. The collected data was analysed using narrative analysis to interpret the interviews.

According to Mihas (2019), narrative analysis provides insight into people's complex behaviour and feelings.

1.7 Ethical considerations

It is very important for a researcher to consider ethics, which means a basic understanding of ethics is also important. According to the code of research ethics, the researcher must protect the welfare of the participants. The researcher should understand the importance of ethical considerations in any research study and that it is crucial to protect the participants. The researcher is also aware that in as much as the goal is not to harm, there is no definite way of confirming whether the interview schedule will bring forth harm to the participants. The qualitative research study that will be used for this research has a subtle effect when it comes to ethical problems, but it is still very important (Bryman, Bell, Hirschsohn, Dos Santos, Du Toit & Masenge, 2014).

The researcher obtained permission to conduct the study once the sample was selected. A formal letter was written to the chief director of the Inspectorate Division of the Free State Department of Public Works to request permission to conduct the research study and, as a result, distribute the interview guide/schedule to the employees in the inspectorate division before conducting physical interviews. The researcher distributed an information sheet to all the participants, including an informed consent form – which was provided to inform about any potential negative consequences and had to be signed to indicate a willingness to participate in the study. Confidentiality formed part of the information sheet; this was to put the participants at ease because their confidentiality was protected. As the researcher, one would not intentionally pose questions that would bring forth harm to the participant; therefore, the information sheet also included that potential harm could be expected, but it is not the researcher's intention to bring forth embarrassment or any other negative reaction to the questionnaire . The researcher is very intentional when it comes to communication results, by being aware of plagiarism, academic fraud, and the misrepresentation of results helps to avoid them. This also includes conflict of interest and deceit (Bryman et al., 2014).

1.8 Rigour of the research

Confirmability is influenced by credibility, transferability and dependability which must be established before confirmability occurs. Researchers must consider how their preconception affects the research as it must be reflective and maintain a sense of openness and awareness for the study. Confirmability implies that the interpretation and representation of the data is the exact depiction of the data collected from the participants. Transferability is the ability to transfer the findings from the research from one group to another. It refers to the extent to which the researcher can show a range of realities and the potential for extrapolation. Another way of establishing transferability is through the provision of a dense description of the sample by describing the geographic boundaries of the study (Elo, Satu; Kääriäinen, Maria; Kanste, Outi; Pölkki, Tarja; Utriainen, Kati; Kyngäs & Helvi, 2014).

Dependability, which is related to reliability, occurs when another researcher can follow the decision trail used by the researcher because the collected data should be able to withstand different conditions and time should not be a factor. It is important for the researcher to be self-aware from the perspective of establishing credibility. Credibility is the focus of the research which refers to the way the data focuses on the intended study for content analysis. The researcher must also make sure that the participants of the study are described and identified accurately. This will, as a result, assist the researcher to obtain rich data which answers the proposed research questions (Elo et al., 2014).

1.9 Demarcation of study

The main idea of the study is to evaluate the performance management within the Inspectorate Division of the Free State Department of Public Works in Bloemfontein. The study was conducted in the City of Bloemfontein, which is situated in the Free State province in South Africa. The target sample size of 14 candidates was identified to participate in the study; specifically, those who were office-bound employees, those who were field-based or site-based, and those who did both periodically before the Covid-19 pandemic. The field of study is part of the human resource management discourse because it focuses on the employee and their performance.

1.10 Chapter layout

This thesis is organised across five chapters as follows;

Chapter 1 outlines the research problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the methodology that will be used, the research design, sampling strategy, the data collection method that will be used, the ethical considerations the research should abide with, the rigour of research and the demarcation of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on performance management starting with the definition thereof, the importance, the processes, the impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes in the workplace, the success factors and models of performance management, and the strategies which boost performance and productivity.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research design, sampling, data collection methods, ethical considerations which will be followed and the rigour of research.

Chapter 4 discusses the data analysis and interpretation of the biological data collected when the semi-structured interviews were conducted. The criteria used to measure the key responsibility areas and the perceptions of performance management are also discussed. Recommendations are given in line with the findings.

Chapter 5 presents the key findings of the study, the conclusions of the study, an overview of performance management, the impact of implementing certain programmes and strategies that can be introduced to boost the engagement and productivity of employees. Chapter 5 also provides the limitations of the research and recommendations for future research.

1.11 Conclusion

Organisations usually conduct performance reviews biannually, which include mid-year performance reviews. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, management was debating on whether to adjust their traditional check-ins that would typically measure employee

objectives without considering the impact of the pandemic on their productivity, resourcing, and morale. There are different work environments either field work or office work, performance in the field normally has production as a result. Therefore, the study aimed to determine whether working from home or digitalisation would be beneficial to both field workers and office-based workers and whether it would have an impact on their productivity and performance. The research methodology the researcher adopted was the qualitative method. Semi-structured interview schedules were used to collect data. The study will be beneficial to field workers and office-bound personnel alike, in the public sector to determine the impact of working from home on productivity and performance.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher explored whether there is a relationship between performance and efficiency in the Inspectorate Division of Public Works. It is also important to investigate whether the employee's needs for training and skills development are in alignment with those of the organisation's goals, objectives, and vision. The aim is to diagnose what the challenges are when it comes to the implementation of performance management in the department. It is acknowledged that performance management cannot operate in a vacuum; but, instead, human resources must encourage leadership support, employee involvement, goal clarity, management capacity and innovative cultures to increase effectiveness and morale.

2.2 Definitions of performance management

Performance management be used as a tool for organisations to inform their promotion, succession-planning, and compensation decision-making, allowing employees to use it for their career advancement by prioritising their development areas or focusing on their strengths. This is an ongoing process. These systems are used to create a shared understanding and alignment when it comes to achieving company deliverables (Baker, 2020).

Furthermore, performance management can also be defined as a systematic approach that can measure the employee's performance in alignment with the organisation's goals, resources and mission which sets the priorities (Rebentisch and Prusak, 2017). The aim is to measure and monitor the performance against the desired objectives and the desired goals to optimise the results – which can be improved through the provision of training, coaching, guidance and mentoring of employees at different designations or levels. It provides clarity on the organisational objectives – which, as a result, improve the organisation's processes through the different methods (Rebentisch and Prusak, 2017).

Performance management is a process that links individuals to the larger goals and values of the organisation. It is also supposed to be used to establish a shared understanding of how and what should be achieved to contribute to a healthy organisation. Instead, most people are threatened by the process – especially when it is used by managers in a negative manner as punishment. On the other hand, if it is used properly, performance management can yield better results and performance in the organisation by understanding that the concept behind it is development. On an individual level, however, performance management forms the crux of the strategic and operational requirements of an organisation, which means that every individual must understand the ways in which they contribute to the final product for the organisation to achieve its larger goals and values (Bussin, 2010).

As defined by Rebentisch and Prusak (2017), in an ideal world, performance management would be aiming to understand complex systems with a global view, while understanding that there are multiple factors which can have an impact on how things are done in an organisation. A systematic approach allows organisations to “zoom out” to try and determine why their way of doing things is not yielding the results they would have otherwise wanted to achieve. Also, mentorships are very important, especially in big organisations that could benefit from skills transfer. The focus of the study was to determine the impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes in place for the improvement of performance management in the Inspectorate division of the Free State Department of Public Works.

In Local Government, a Public Service Regulatory Framework which is used to guide conduct and work, or service delivery of the public servants is referred to as the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS). The fundamental elements of managing performance include setting goals, the selection of competency levels, learning and the formal review of performance (The Public Service Act , 1994). The employees are scored against Key Result Areas (KRAs) using a 5-point scale, when the annual performance assessment is conducted, which should as a result provide a basis for dealing with poor performance, performance rewards and the development of

the employees. To justify the scores individual employees give themselves, they must provide reports and evidence which are then moderated, and cash bonuses provided for outstanding and significantly above expectation results (Public Service Commission (PSC), 2016).

2.3 The importance of performance management

The performance review is important, but the feedback throughout the year is most important as a means of helping everyone in the team learn and grow by enabling them to understand how new tasks are performed and what skills or knowledge will be required. This, as a result, gives provision for guidance but still allows the teams to think for themselves, be creative and also come up with ideas. Performance reviews can be regarded as learning events whether they are conducted formally or informally, where individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for their own development and learning process. Individuals should also be encouraged to consider which skills they would like to acquire and the direction in which they would want to develop. To obtain the best performance management results, the performance reviews should be linked to the performance objectives, performance plan and performance management processes (Sibiya, 2017).

According to Kniffin, Narayanan, Anseel, Antonakis, Ashford, Bakker, Bamberger, Bapuji, Bhave, Choi, Creary, Demerouti, Flynn, Gelfand, Greer, Johns, Kesebir, Klein, Lee, Ozcelik, Petriglieri, Rothbard, Rudolph, Shaw, Sirola, Wanberg, Whillans, Wilmot, and van Vugt (2020), there is an acceleration regarding the virtual and online environments, which was a trend that was slowly being picked up by many organisations and individuals. It is important to note that there are professionals who require interactions with their colleagues due to the complex nature of their jobs; work that must be done on the ground and together. The authors also express the importance of not using uniformity when it comes to performance management stating that the teams are multifaceted.

The Malaysian government are using what is referred to as a dynamic performance management approach, which has led to the deployment of strategic resources like

transparency, leadership, citizen participation, accountability, and political and administrative commitment to ensure consistency and coordination in policy design and the implementation thereof (Xavier and Bianchi, 2022).. This approach has been said to go beyond the static logic frame by supporting the design of governance systems and the performance management that cultivate trade of analysis in both space and time (Xavier and Bianchi, 2022).

2.4 Performance management processes

The processes used to improve and achieve organisational objectives has three main stages, as determined by Armstrong (2006); namely, the performance agreement, managing the performance throughout the year and the performance review at the end of the financial year that provides learning opportunities. For the performance agreement, it is important to clarify the individual's new or updated role as this can set out the kind of results that are required to achieve the deliverables. These discussions can develop the employee by challenging their viewpoint – not only in achieving their current role, but also to expand their knowledge and skills to grow understanding that learning is a continuous process for career advancement. Armstrong (2006) further states that developing high-performance cultures is necessary and a continuous process, for the monitoring of performance forms the basis of the formal and informal reviews that will be part of the performance agreement.

In addition to the above, Woyessa (2015) has highlighted that managing performance should be an ongoing process as it can help strengthen the relationships between the managers and the employees by allowing them to go through successes and failures, making the review easier and more engaging. The benefits thereof mean that the employees are mentored and coached by their supervisors or managers throughout the year, which also helps in the building of strong relationships by ensuring that there are effective communication and action steps taken to improve performance. Effective leaders focus on providing tools, resources and building relationships to help employees succeed at work. Feedback is a great example of a powerful tool that is always neglected by management; this tool allows employees to improve the quality of work they produce,

and increase productivity, creativity and effectiveness in team work. It also helps the employees become more independent and opens up the communication channels. Feedback on performance includes the conducting of informal reviews, dealing with performance issues and updating objectives or goals (Grote, 2015).

Organisations usually conduct performance reviews biannually, which include mid-year performance reviews. According to Bagga (2020), the mid-year performance review is the point in the performance management process with a formal check-in. This check-in point has been designed to measure the progress towards the annual goals or objectives and to draft the performance expectations for the remainder of the year. Bagga (2020) also states that in 2020, management was debating on whether to adjust their traditional check-ins due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which would typically measure employee objectives without considering the impact of Covid-19 on their productivity, resourcing, and morale. Due to the lockdown and other obstacles, it would be tricky and unfair to the employees to be expected to deliver the objectives that were agreed upon in January 2020. As a result, this allowed many organisations to pilot new approaches that would focus on scaling the performance ratings in terms of the business unit performance, and the contribution of the employee to their team performance and success.

2.5 The proposal of having mentors and mentorship programmes in the workplace for the improvement of performance management

A mentor is someone who encourages their protégé by sharing their experience, knowledge, and expertise on their personal and professional development journey. This mentor-mentee relationship is built on respect, trust and communication which encourages and challenges both parties to set goals, discuss progress, and exchange ideas as they meet on a regular basis (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021).

To improve performance management, mentoring programmes should be initiated to heighten those competencies that are deemed to be important by the organisation while developing employees for future roles. A mentor is someone with skills, knowledge, and experience and willing to transfer this information through the provision of support and

insight (Reeves, 2021). Growth for employees can be realised when mentoring and training are combined with developmental tools to improve performance and boost the success of the organisation. Mentorship has benefits for leaders and mentors because it provides a sense of responsibility and belonging, which means that the employees will make decisions in favour of the growth of the organisation. It also brings along prerequisites for the development of the mentee as it contributes to their performance, and confidence, and allows the mentor to develop their strengths and address their weaknesses. When an employee is mentored, they feel valued because it shows that the company values their personal growth and development; this often leads to an increase in productivity (Reeves, 2021).

Cronin (2022) states that mentorship is very important as it helps mentees gain self-confidence, job satisfaction, loyalty to the organisation, self-awareness, fulfilment at work, aspirations, and a likelihood of a promotion. It is highly likely that the mentees will go on to become mentors and contribute to the cycle of development and learning within the organisation. The benefits for the mentors are an increase in self-confidence, job satisfaction, fulfilment at work, communication skills and loyalty to the organisation. Benefits for both the mentees and the mentors are similar; for example, job satisfaction, loyalty to the organisation and fulfilment at work which could, as a result, improve diversity in leadership, increase knowledge sharing and a strong company culture. Organisations are always looking for ways to retain and nurture their best people and the employees want to get satisfaction and fulfilment from their work, this can be viewed as a key area for cultivation.

Performance management, as defined by Bagga (2020) above, is a formal check-in designed to measure the progress towards the annual goals or objectives and to draft expectations. Mentors can use these conversations to report on the development and performance of their mentees and assist management with identifying those high-performing individuals. Therefore, mentoring can assist the employer to show the employees that they see their potential and, as a result, the organisation is willing to invest in their future through education and promotion. This means that the organisation would reap

the benefits of having an engaged workforce who help the organisation achieve its goals (Wolverton, 2020).

2.6 Success factors in performance management

Performance management systems are used to create a shared understanding and alignment when it comes to achieving company deliverables that got lost in the crisis warranting a revision for the new normal. A survey conducted by Deloitte to measure the impact of employee performance in a firm in China indicated that 46% of firms expected a reduction in performance due to Covid-19 (Boichenko and Tymchenko, 2020). A positive outlook on virtual work or working from home is that working from home provides flexibility and a decrease in travel – which increases time and money. In other words, being virtual would increase the performance of an average individual because of their ability to have a wide range of global access to resources and people.

Endresen (2020) points out that when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the US in March 2020, it resulted in what is now referred to as the new normal with millions of workers working from home. This brought about a rise in communication and connectivity technologies with organisations considering contractors who are connected digitally rather than the full-time employees as a cost-saving opportunity. The author further states that organisations had already started moving into the digital space before the Covid-19 pandemic through platforms that allowed teams to have virtual meetings.

According to Kniffin et al. (2020), the Covid-19 pandemic brought about an acceleration with regard to the virtual and online environments, which was a trend that was slowly being picked up by many organisations and individuals. It is important to note that there are professionals who require interactions with their colleagues due to the complex nature of their jobs. Kniffin et al. (2020) also go about explaining why it is important not to use uniformity when it comes to the characteristics of the virtual team, stating that the teams are multifaceted and that due to the virtual new normal, the teams had different geographical distributions. In addition to that, it was stated that the virtual teamwork lacked the richness which would otherwise be available in a non-virtual traditional teamwork

meeting and that social distancing limited or removed the co-worker helping behaviour. Virtual engagements or meetings mean more work because team processes must be formalised, and team goals must be clarified; it is also vital that there be innovations to allow for optimal functionality during virtual team meetings.

Chen and Yeh (2021) studied the enormous impact on the financial market due to the surging numbers of the Covid-19 pandemic. To control the spread, there were restrictions put in place, travel bans and closures of non-essential businesses which resulted in a drastic deterioration in work activity across the global regions as lockdown restrictions eased. The impact, however, varies depending on government measures, the timing of when the lockdowns took effect, and the severity of the pandemic. The increase in prices since January 2020 suggests that there will be financial pressures to come. The only country in the Middle East to report an increase in construction markets was Saudi Arabia, while the Middle East was dealing with the collapse of oil prices. It is, however, very important to take note that the performance of any industry has been dominated by the impact of Covid-19, with firms having to deal with the financial strain of having limited activities take place due to the lockdown.

In addition to having to deal with working from home and the fatigue that comes with it, there are digital distractions, connectivity issues and virtual overload that the individual employee had to deal with. In as much as most employees favour the flexibility that comes with working from home, they acknowledge that fatigue is slowly setting in – putting the employee's well-being at risk. With the virtual environment quickly becoming normal, organisations want to adopt virtual workforce models which are said to bring about great returns for team collaboration, productivity, and innovation. For organisations to effectively take on the virtual workforce model, they must tackle the digital distracts, connectivity issues and virtual overload challenges experienced by employees after having to work from home for over a year. For years, human resource leaders have focused on creating physical features in the office space that would assist employees become more productive and perform optimally, with organisations wanting the virtual

workplace model, it means features should be created virtually that will offer employees an improved level of performance and well-being (Venkataramani, 2021).

According to Gatherer (2022), it is going to take a long time for South Africa to reach a fully digitalised destination simply because of the oh-so-common phrase “the system is down”, which has become so common that most people would mutter “typical” under the breaths while walking away from a queue. The City of Cape Town, however, in its Five-Year Integrated Development Plan July 2017 – June 2022, 2017–2022 states that some of the benefits that could be enjoyed by going digital are improved and high-quality service access and efficiency; this shows that there will be better service delivery and performance. Access to information is very important and having digital platforms that can assist with this would be very beneficial for officials to be able to perform better and efficiently in their positions. They aim to drive operational transparency and improve citizen engagement through ICT-enabled channels while also enhancing service delivery through process automation. It can be said that the theme for performance management is transparency – which could mean that by becoming digital, it could be beneficial for the Department of Public Works to increase its productivity and performance.

2.7 Performance management models

Performance management models must be implemented in organisations for the planning and reviewing of employee performance for the benefit of both the employees and the management for greater growth to occur. In other words, this model would assist management in targeting growth by accessing employee performance. The most effective model is based on ongoing communication, frequent feedback, and robust goal setting because learning and training will look different to different individuals in different organisations. Therefore, one of the performance management models that can be implemented is the planning, coaching/monitoring, reviewing, and rewarding model, which is meant to facilitate the performance management process of an individual and how they can contribute to the organisation (Valamis Group, 2021).



Figure 1: Source: Adopted from LeeC D (2005) *Rethinking the goals of your performance management system*, *Employment Relations Today*, **32** (3), pp 53-60

This model depicts how an ideal system of performance management works with logical sequential activities which contributes to for the achievement of the performance objectives. The success of this model is dependent on the proper conduction of each stage and places a huge demand on the participants, being the manager and the team members (Armstrong M. , 2018).

Another model is the High-Growth Based model which gives reference to the relationship between performance and motivation through the process of planning, monitoring, reviewing, and rewarding. It provides frequent and feasible employee evaluations which can be conducted periodically using check-ins. The model requires that the goals be SMART, in order words they must be Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant and

Time-bound and consider other factors. As a result, this allows for fairness in the measurement of performance (HR Insights for Professionals, 2023).

Kellner, Cafferkey, and Townsend (2019) stated that the Blumberg model of performance (Figure 2), which dates to 1982, is based on behaviour influenced by three different factors; namely, motivation, opportunity, and ability (capacity). The model suggests that an individual's performance at work is a function of these three factors and that they are interlinked; in other words, good performance will have an impact on the employee's job satisfaction and will, as a result, increase their willingness or motivate them even further because it is a partial determinant of motivation, opportunity, and ability (capacity).

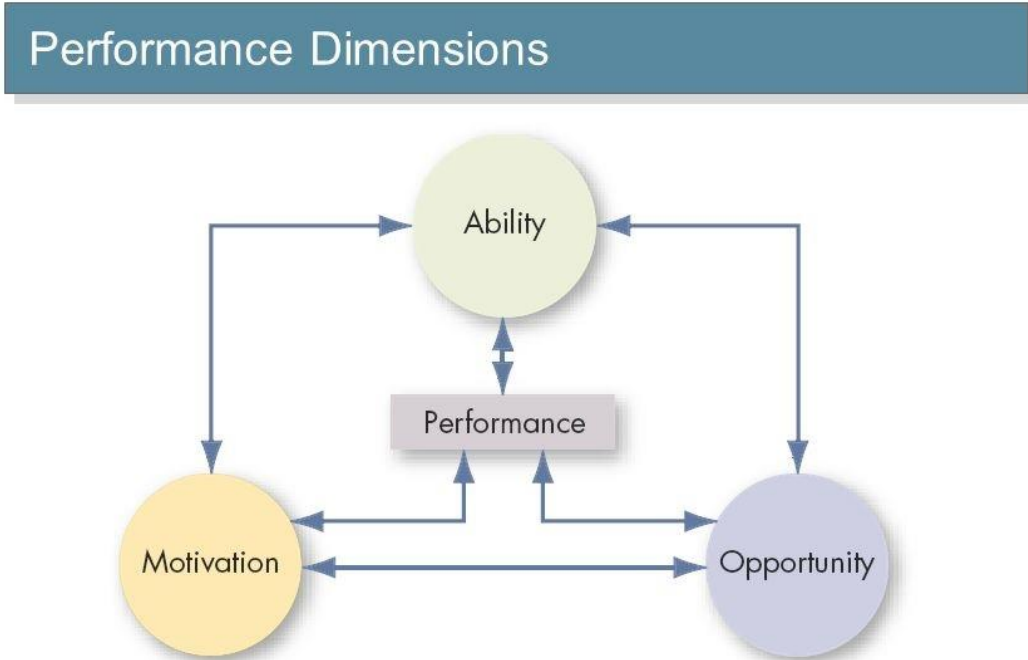


Figure 2. Source: Adopted from M. Blumber and C.D Pringle. 1982. "The Missing Opportunity in Organizational Research: Some Implications for a Theory of Work Performance," *Academy of Management Review*, October, p.565



Figure 3. Source: Adopted from Mitchell, T. R. (1982). Motivation: New directions for theory, research, and practice. p 80–88.

The models in *Figure 2* and *Figure 3* are old but they still depict performance as highly influenced by motivation and ability. Motivation being the desire achieve a goal or a certain level of performance and a force that leads one to perform. Ability is having the know how, the skill to perform, this can be taught or trained but it is also an important determinant of effective performance (Mitchell, 1982).

In the public sector the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) as defined in 2.2, measures employee performance based on scores they give themselves and it is justified by the provision or availability of reports and evidence which are then moderated, and cash bonuses provided for outstanding and significantly above expectation results (Public Service Commission (PSC), 2016). This however over-centralises the service delivery due to the presence of a decision-making apparatus that reduces accountability among the employees of the public sector. According to Mwita (2000), this is a recipe for the mismanagement of resources, performance, and undesirable decisions at the expense of public service quality – which is the reason why developing countries are lagging behind developed countries when coming to the quality of public sector management.

2.8 Strategies to boost employee productivity and performance

Strategies that can be used to boost employee productivity and performance start with being recognised. In most cases, public acknowledgement, or appreciation measures more than monetary rewards. Most organisations have been experiencing a slowdown in

terms of business because of the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused panic with employees fearing for job security. The organisation could use this as an opportunity to affirm employees by providing development opportunities in the direction the organisation wants to take, through the provision of mentorships and training opportunities; this will to some effect reinforce the commitment of the organisation to the long service of the employee(Zhou, 2022).

According to the Indeed Editorial Team (2022), training and developing the team encourages performance, therefore, organisations must employ robust training programs or mentorship programs especially when internal transitions take place for the success of the employees and the organisation. Expanding employee skills sets is also a great strategy to boost employee productivity and performance, investing in their development can help foster a culture of respect and loyalty which could in turn increase engagement (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

Mone and London (2018) state that strategies to boost productivity are dependent on a multiplication of three components to motivate the employee which comprise expectancy, instrumentality, and valence which all equals zero. Therefore, if any of these components have a probability of zero – in other words, if they are not achieved – there will not be any motivation for the employees to perform. Expectation is dependent on whether the employees have the skills for the job they are performing, or they can acquire the necessary skills. Instrumentality, on the other hand, is dependent upon the employer and their way of demonstrating their trustworthiness by helping the employees believe that they will be rewarded accordingly. Lastly, valence is reinforcing the value of rewards and their consistency with goals, preferences, needs and values.

Performance management, especially for the future, should focus on ways of working and leading through a crisis. Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the ways of working have changed drastically with people working from home. Strategic performance management demands an approach that recognises the importance of focusing on both results and the techniques that can be used to achieve these results. According to Rosenberg (2021), for most organisations, the difference will depend on the white-collar

and blue-collar workers and a clear gain in productivity from working from home and the fifty-percent work life. An enabler of this will be technology and digitalisation. Therefore, performance management systems will have to adapt to this new normal, which means coaching, mentoring, tracking of productivity, opportunities for development and ensuring company values will have to be reflected.

2.9 Conclusion

Performance management is a continuous process of developing and measuring an individual's performance and aligning it with that of the organisation's strategic goals. It is very important to regard this as a process instead of a system to allow the flexibility to introduce ways in which individuals can be assisted to achieve their personal work goals. The process should also be designed to support the achievement of the organisation as well as those of the individuals for the performance management system to be effective through simplification, integration with the organisational culture, alignment with the organisation's goals and the use of technology.

Chapter 2 defines performance management and then discusses the importance and the processes thereof; these theories are of vital importance in understanding the approach that was followed in this research. The utilization of models to further explain and depict for understanding. Strategies which can be used to boost the productivity and performance of employees. Lastly, it was also important to highlight the performance management success factors to recognize when there is shared understanding and alignment when it comes to achieving deliverables.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology which considers the logic behind the research techniques and methods that were followed in this study and the criteria for inclusion that were used; it also provides information on the participants and how they were sampled. The researcher describes the chosen research design, the purpose of the study and the reasons thereof. The researcher also includes the data collection instrument and the procedures that were carried out. Lastly, the methods that were used to analyse the data and the ethical issues that were followed are also discussed.

3.2 Research philosophy and philosophical considerations

The knowledge of philosophy can help the researcher to recognise which design will work and which will not. In the case of this qualitative study, which examines the performance management of the Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, Inspectorate Division in Bloemfontein, an in-depth qualitative method can be deemed to be the most appropriate. Qualitative methods have their philosophical origins in phenomenology, and the inductive approach taken was deemed to be the most suitable. The methods by which we study people affect how we view them. If we reduce people to statistical aggregates, we can lose sight of the subjective nature of human behaviour. A phenomenologist seeks understanding through such qualitative methods as participant observation, open-ended interviewing, and personal documents (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022).

These methods yield descriptive data that enable the phenomenologist to see the world as subjects see it. An effective means by which to do this is through interviews, or texts, where the response to a question can be open or through semi-structured interviews, which can enable the researcher to develop the questions throughout the process to ensure that the respondent further expanded upon the information provided (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022).

3.3 Research design

The research design for a study can be described as an overall plan, decided upon by the researcher, for collecting, measuring and analysing data, which will offer the best chance of answering the research questions posed. The research design 'is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions' (Yin, 2014, p. 2). It is the glue that holds the various elements together. This research is exploratory as it attempts to explore performance management within the Inspectorate Division of the Department of Public Works in Bloemfontein. The research design that was followed for this study was that of a qualitative nature by semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research gives a detailed picture by asking direct semi-structured interviews often to individuals, whereas a quantitative research method focuses on numerical data of the group. Mixed method methodology focuses on both the quantitative and qualitative research methods. This study does not require a big data, it requires focused and direct questions to portray a true reflection. Hence only the qualitative method is used.

According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2010), research design is collecting data and analysing the collected data. The research design selected should be able to assist the researcher to compile the study. Qualitative data collection is the research method that was used in this study as it brought out the experiences of the participants. As explained by Ghauri and Gronhaug (2010), the qualitative research method is applicable when the researcher intends to explore and understand a phenomenon in its natural setting; in this case, the performance management within the inspectorate division. It includes an "array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, interpret and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

The aim of the researcher using qualitative research was to gain insight that could be used to make business decisions. The main objective of the study was to determine whether the current performance management system within the department was

assisting the inspectors and the administration personnel to achieve their individual goals, as well as the department's strategic objectives.

3.4 Sampling strategy

The sampling strategy that was used is non-probability sampling, which does not involve a random selection of individuals to participate in research, but it is based on criteria or convenience; this allows for the easy collection of data (McCombes, 2019). The research participants and the site were selected using a strategy referred to as purposeful sampling. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), purposeful sampling is a strategy used by selecting a small group of individuals who are likely to be representative or informative on the phenomenon of interest. Therefore, the target sample was selected based on the problem that was investigated; in this regard, the sample comprised the full-time permanent employees of the Inspectorate Division of the Free State Public Works and Infrastructure in Bloemfontein.

Sampling is dependent upon the research study and how the researcher intends to approach it. The researcher needs to consider who will be able to share information when choosing the subject (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010). A sample size of 14 candidates under the inspectorate division was identified to participate in the study. The 14 participants were supposed to either be field workers, office-bound or both. This means they would have either been positively or negatively impacted by the new normal of virtual working or working from home.

The inspectorate division is divided into different sections based on rank; namely, works inspectors, chief works inspectors, control works inspectors, administration personnel, division deputy director, director, and the chief director. The focus of this study will be mainly on the works inspectors and administration personnel. The works inspectors were (are) directly impacted by the new normal – mainly because of their nature of work. A conditional assessment is an assessment of an existing building (normally occupied) that requires a detailed assessment for maintenance, and this is completed by the works inspectors.

Purposeful sampling was conducted at the Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (Inspectorate Division) in Bloemfontein. It was beneficial to both field workers and office-bound personnel alike, in the public sector, to determine the impact of fifty-percent work attendance on productivity and performance.

3.5 Data collection method

Research data collection is a process of gathering pieces of information which would allow the researcher to gain knowledge and insight into the research problem by accurately analysing the research using validated techniques. Therefore, it is crucial for the information collected to be reliable so that data-driven decisions can be made for the research (Bhandari, 2020).

The data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview combines both structured and unstructured interview styles and offers the advantages of both. The interviewer asks a few predetermined questions which are in line with the research questions and themes that emerged from the literature review, while the rest are not planned, providing an opportunity to explore the topic spontaneously (Pollock, 2020). All the interview questions were sent electronically to the different participants before conducting a physical interview.

The type of questions that were asked included whether the performance management reviews would be effective and whether these should be fully considered without considering other factors that could have had an impact on the employee's performance. The interview schedule was not limited to the questions above – but rather, the questions were self-developed but informed by the literature. This allowed the researcher some flexibility and the opportunity to probe for more information and clarification where necessary using carefully worded questions. The collected data was then analysed using narrative analysis to interpret the interviews that were conducted. According to Mihai (2019), narrative analysis provides insight into people's complex behaviour and feelings.

3.6 Ethical considerations

It was very important for the researcher to consider the ethics involved, which meant that a basic understanding of ethics was also important. According to the code of research ethics, the researcher must protect the welfare of the participants. The researcher understands the importance of ethical considerations in any research study and that it is very crucial to protect the participants. The researcher is also aware that in as much as the goal is not to harm, there is no definite way of confirming whether the interview schedule will bring harm to the participants. The qualitative research study that will be used for this research has a subtle effect when it comes to ethical problems, but it is still very important (Bryman et al., 2014).

The researcher adhered to the genuine ethical standards of research by obtaining ethical clearance (Appendix B) before undertaking the research; in this way, the participants' and the researcher's rights, dignity and safety were protected. The researcher then distributed an information sheet together with an informed consent form to all the participants, to inform them about any potential negative consequences. Confidentiality formed part of the information sheet; this was to put the participants at ease, ensuring them that their confidentiality was protected. The researcher would never intentionally pose questions that will cause harm to the participant; therefore, the information sheet will also include that potential harm could be expected but it is not the researcher's intention to cause embarrassment or any other negative reaction to the questionnaire (Bryman et al., 2014).

The researcher is very intentional when it comes to communication results, by being aware of plagiarism, academic fraud, and the misrepresentation of results – it helps in avoiding them. This also includes conflict of interest and deceit (Bryman et al., 2014). It is important for the participants to be assured that they are not obligated to participate and that they can withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. The participants were also informed that the findings of the study would be available should they wish to peruse them, but no names would be recorded on the sheet and in the event of publication.

3.7 Rigour of the research

Confirmability is influenced by credibility, transferability, and dependability which must be established before confirmability occurs. The researcher considered how their preconception affected the research as it was reflective and maintained a sense of openness and awareness for the study. Confirmability implies that the interpretation and representation of the data is the exact depiction of the data collected from the participants. Transferability is the ability to transfer the findings from the research from one group to another. It refers to the extent to which the researcher can show a range of realities and the potential for extrapolation. Another way of establishing transferability is through the provision of a dense description of the population by describing the geographic boundaries of the study (Elo et al., 2014).

Dependability, which is related to reliability, occurs when another researcher can follow the decision trail used by the researcher as the collected data should be able to withstand different conditions and time should not be a factor. It was important for the researcher to be self-aware from the perspective of establishing credibility. Credibility is the focus of the research which refers to the way the data focuses on the intended study for content analysis. The researcher was also supposed to ensure that the participants of the study were described and identified accurately. This assisted the researcher to obtain valid and rich data which answered the proposed research questions (Elo et al., 2014)

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to discuss the methodology that was used for the study of performance management within the Inspectorate Division of the Department of Public Works in Bloemfontein. The researcher explained the qualitative research method for data collection and gave brief information about the sample. The research was undertaken to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of performance management within the department.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse and interpret the findings of the qualitative data obtained from the interview schedule using the results from the study. The findings were discussed in conjunction with the available literature and the research findings. These findings will be used to identify similarities and differences between this study, previous studies and the literature where applicable. The methodology of the research study is outlined in Chapter 2(3).

4.2 Analysis and interpretation of biographical data

The Ethical Clearance Committee of the University of the Free State granted ethical clearance for data collection to proceed. The qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews to investigate the performance management within the inspectorate division of the Department of Public Works in Bloemfontein. The researcher will be presenting the analysis and the interpretation of the data obtained from the individual semi-structured interviews on performance management within the inspectorate division of the Department of Public Works in Bloemfontein. The data was extracted and analysed according to the secondary research objectives of the study.

Table 4.1 provides data on the categories of the participants who were interviewed according to their age, gender, and nationality. As stated in Chapter 1 of the project, the target sample size envisioned was to obtain 14 participants to participate in the study; specifically, those who were office-bound employees, those who were field-based or site-based employees, and those who did both periodically before the Covid-19 pandemic. The topic of performance management is a challenging subject as it has the potential of making people uneasy, as a result, it was not easy to obtain responses from participants. Since the sample size is small, the profession was removed from Table 4.1 as it would marginalise the participants and could be used very easily to identify who they are.

The researcher discovered that of the 14 participants invited, only 43% responded – none of whom were administration personnel; only the technical personnel responded. This, as a result, could have a negative impact on the type of data obtained from the interviews as it may not paint the full picture as predicted but a lower participation has the potential of being a rich and focused by providing an in-depth analysis. The researcher reached data saturation from the data, which was gathered, which means that the researcher noticed similar patterns in the interviewee’s responses. Collecting more data was not necessary as it would not contribute to any new discoveries on performance management at the Free State Department of Public Works.

Table 4.1: Category of respondents

Respondent	Age	Gender	Nationality
Participant A1	30 – 39	Female	South African
Participant A2	40 – 49	Male	South African
Participant A3	30 – 39	Male	South African
Participant A4	20 – 29	Male	South African
Participant A5	50 – 59	Male	South African
Participant A6	30 – 39	Female	South African

4.2.1 Analysis and interpretation of data on performance management

The purpose of the data interpretation was to determine to what extent the participants agreed or disagreed with the performance management procedures, practices, and policies.

4.2.1.1 Definition of performance management

Performance management is defined in Chapter 2 under Section 2.2 as a systematic approach that can measure the employee’s performance in alignment with the organisation’s goals and resources (Rebentisch and Prusak, 2017). The aim of which is to measure and monitor the performance against the desired objectives to optimise the results – which can be improved through the provision of training, coaching, guidance

and mentoring of employees at different designations. It provides clarity on the organisational objectives – which, as a result, improve the organisation’s processes through the different methods (Rebentisch and Prusak, 2017). The participants were requested to define performance management so that there is no confusion when answering the questions. The participants gave the following definition.

Participant	Response
A1	<i>It's an ongoing process of communication between the supervisor and the employee throughout the year, ensuring the activities and the outputs meet the organisation's goals.</i>
A2	<i>It is a strategy used by organisations to ensure that goals and objectives are met.</i>
A3	<i>The management of the performance of an individual or a team or an organisation</i>
A4	<i>Performance management is intentional and direct management aimed at evaluating the performance of workers in a specific field.</i>
A5	<i>It is a subjective value judgement.</i>
A6	<i>Performance management is a continuous checking system which measures our performance and development.</i>

As defined by Rebentisch and Prusak (2017), the participants understood what performance management is and what the required outcomes thereof are. Participant A4 elaborated on the fact that performance management is intentional and specific to a field; in other words, there should be goals set for the employees to achieve which can then be reviewed and measured against. This point was then also emphasised by Participant A6, who highlighted that it is a continuous measuring system; this way, progress can be seen or measured easily.

4.2.1.2 The impact of the fifty-percent work attendance on individual performance

Working from home or the fifty-percent work attendance because of Covid-19 meant that most employees had to start using their personal laptops because they have a desktop

setup at the office. This, however, was important to highlight because it posed a potential impact on the performance of most of the participants because some of the participants did not have personal laptops and had to wait until they went back to the office to do their part of the teamwork. This is how the participants viewed the restrictions.

Participant	Response
A1	<i>It didn't have any impact on my performance since there are not many projects that are running.</i>
A2	<i>Slow progress on attending complaints.</i>
A3	<i>It had a terrible impact as the performance was affected badly. The fifty-percent attendance did not bear any fruits as I also became lazy to do any work due to some of the resources were not available due to some people not being at work.</i>
A4	<i>It had a negative influence because it slows production in general. As the saying goes "two heads are better than one".</i>
A5	<i>Have not yet experienced it.</i>
A6	<i>It had a negative effect because we have to work together as teams and the fifty-percent work attendance meant that we would be submitting late or there will not be coordination.</i>

The fifty-percent work attendance had a negative impact on the performance as stated by participants A3 and A6, who highlighted that teamwork would be submitted late or there would not be coherence. Participant A3 also stated that it made some people lazy and this had a negative impact on one's performance. Therefore, it can be stated that the fifty-percent work attendance would work if all resources were always readily available for coherence and to achieve targets on time. Participant A1 mentioned that there were few projects running at the time; this also has a negative impact on performance because what an individual is measured on – projects – are not there for them to get measured which raises the question; what were the participants being measured on if not their performance in terms of the work that they have to execute?

4.2.1.3 Perceptions on whether the participants are motivated after performance management

The general perceptions of the participants in the response are that most employees see performance management reviews as a way for people to get performance bonuses and say it has nothing to do with their actual performance. The participants made the following statements.

Participant	Response
A1	<i>I don't feel motivated; you don't receive the feedback since I joined the organisation, performance management review was all about people receiving the cash bonuses instead of checking the objectives of the organisation.</i>
A3	<i>No, I didn't feel motivated, no information with regards to opportunities to improve performance in the workplace.</i>
A4	<i>I do not feel motivated as no new opportunities have been made known to me.</i>
A6	<i>No, I don't. We always questioned how managers can receive performance bonuses when none of their subordinates received same.</i>

These responses highlighted the lack of commitment or willingness of managers to ensure that the employees receive support for their individual development. There seems to be no communication about the review and the opportunities available for the participants to improve. In so saying, it can be noted that the department's performance management did not meet the employee's expectations, requirements, and support towards improving themselves in the department.

4.2.1.4 Perception of individual accountability for not completing tasks

The participants mentioned that they work in teams to achieve their departmental goals. The question of whether the individuals are held accountable for not completing their tasks is very crucial because it has the potential of making or breaking any team, department, or organisation. Every organisation or department is responsible for certain outputs which require people on the ground to perform and give feedback on the findings by compiling reports which will then be used by upper management to decide on which

projects should be implemented and when. Therefore, when reports are not done on time it could delay the implementation process of projects and pose planning difficulties. Participants were asked whether individuals were held accountable for not completing their respective tasks and these were their responses:

Participant	Response
A1	<i>"No"</i>
A2	<i>Not at all</i>
A3	<i>No one is held accountable even if they didn't do their tasks.</i>
A4	<i>Yes, individuals are held responsible and accountable if tasks are not completed.</i>
A5	<i>Not necessarily.</i>
A6	<i>Yes, we would get letters instructing us to explain why the report was late.</i>

Most participants indicated that no one is held responsible, while some said they would receive letters requesting an explanation for not completing a task on time. It can be argued that in as much as the letters were sent out to those who were not performing, that was all that was done, and no follow-ups were made to strengthen the warning so that employees did not continue falling behind nor do their part. Sometimes, the same people wound up being the ones who are always receiving the letters with no other consequence, hence the demotivation by participants stating that no one is held accountable for not producing.

4.2.1.5 The impact of training in an organisation

Some participants suggested that they do not get support from their managers that would encourage them to grow or develop. Giving reference to the definition in Chapter 1, performance management is a chain of activities intended to improve an individual's performance; however, several participants alluded to the fact that there were no performance engagements in terms of their performance, and the focus was on performance bonuses as stated above. The opportunity to engage and improve the department could have been a great opportunity where the individuals are supported to

grow and ensure the expected results are achieved, but the participants highlighted that the managers themselves were not getting the training required to be able to manage the teams. Participants highlighted that the reason could be that there was no training offered in the department and that managers also do not receive training for their development as managers to be able to lead a team. This is what the participants had to say:

Participant	Response
A1	<i>I don't think there is training offered to them hence sometimes their management style and leadership skills are questionable.</i>
A2	<i>Not the one I am aware of.</i>
A3	<i>Officials are encouraged to organise their own training and the department will pay for them.</i>
A4	<i>No training is offered as far as I know.</i>
A6	<i>No training is offered.</i>

Participant A3's response is very important because it displays a possible obstacle in what seems to be a great opportunity. The participants mentioned that there is no feedback on the performance management reviews; this is a problem because this is the first step to choosing one's training. Knowing where the problem areas are so that they can be solved is the first step in seeking solutions and development. Without a target, nothing can be measured if there is no starting point.

4.2.1.6 Perception of performance management conversations

The importance of performance management conversations was discussed by the researcher in Chapter 2, where it was highlighted that such conversations could be used in the identification of high-performing individuals. The conversations can be used for setting and agreeing upon performance goals, providing feedback on observations, and shedding light on opportunities or possible interests. The participants were requested to provide their perception of whether performance management conversations were valuable or not and the measure to be used. This is what the participants had to say:

Participant	Response
A1	<i>They are valuable to give accurate ratings and discuss where to improve.</i>
A2	<i>They are valuable, by seeing that the organisation is reaching goals.</i>
A3	<i>In a proper organised work environment they are valuable if the management is willing to listen. Value will be measured by the improved performance in the organisation.</i>
A4	<i>It's not valuable at all as no results or conclusion are realised in our department.</i>
A5	<i>If conducted in a safe environment it has the potential to add value.</i>
A6	<i>Yes, they are valuable, self-development is how they are measured.</i>

As seen from the participant's responses, performance management conversations are valuable because value should be measured by improved performance in the organisation. It will determine how strong the team is, where the team requires development in the form of training or mentorships and, the team's ability to grow by aiming for larger-scale goals. This is growth which should be the result of any performance management communication, the realisation and validation that there is value in the work that was performed by the person which then has the potential to motivate them to work even harder. The conversation also helps managers because this way, they learn what goals the employee wants to achieve and they get to help them by steering them in the right direction through mentorship or training or even funding their education. The main aim is to retain the employees.

4.2.1.7 Barriers that hinder performance

Fifty-percent work attendance as mentioned by the researcher and the participants above, highlighted that it becomes very difficult to work with a lack of resources. Lack of resources means the support and presence of the other team members, and only having desktops instead of personal laptops which can be used at home on the days the employees work from home. Performance can also be hindered by a lack of communication as mentioned above; this entails a lack of guidance and information which could be beneficial for the growth and development of the team. The participants were

requested to provide their perceptions on the barriers that had the potential of hindering their performance and this is what they had to say in response:

Participant	Response
A2	<i>Protocol.</i>
A3	<i>Lack of motivation, sitting around and not being given any work to do, little salary, and lack of professionalism in the workplace.</i>
A4	<i>The fact that we do not get training at all is the biggest hindrance.</i>
A5	<i>The emphasis is on financial benefits and not development.</i>
A6	<i>The department offers bursaries, but they do not reward us for completing “promotion” there will be a PhD candidate as a works inspector (no motivation).</i>

Lack of engagement and motivation, Participant A6 stated that the department provides bursaries but there are no rewards upon completion, hence there are PhD candidates who would be working as works inspectors for years without promotions or recognition. Low salaries were mentioned by Participant A3 as an addition to the lack of motivation; this was also emphasised by almost all the participants. It can be said that ineffective communication can hinder performance; participants A3 and A4 highlight development, which could be a result of ineffective communication and lack of feedback from management.

4.2.1.8 The type of training required for better performance

Training is essential and having the right training is of critical importance as it is a process where one learns the skills required to perform a particular job. The best output can be expected once training has been conducted and the employees know exactly what is expected of them; in most instances training is disregarded, and people learn on the job. This has shortcomings as they may be limited to certain things and not be exposed entirely to what the role requires. The researcher believes that performance management review feedback could be essential in knowing which training the employees should undergo, either individually or as a group. The feedback is very important to give an

overview of the type of skills required in the department and work towards that by arranging training. The participants were requested to name the type of training that would assist them to perform better in their roles and these are their responses:

Participant	Response
A1	<i>Trade test and wireman's licence.</i>
A2	<i>To attend programmes relating to my job description.</i>
A3	<i>On-the-job training will assist greatly under a mentor who knows what they are doing.</i>
A4	<i>Exposure and training in regard to new building and engineering apps that we can use in the field.</i>
A5	<i>I am happy with my performance.</i>
A6	<i>Training in our field (engineering).</i>

The participants' views on training echoed the basic types of training required for them to perform their day-to-day functions at an optimal level. This should be regarded as the most critical application after performance reviews which management should zoom into and question why the participants gave the responses they did to optimise the resources available. Training has a way of retaining employees, similar to mentorship.

4.2.1.9 The impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes

Mentorship like training is very important as it has a way of building confidence and encouraging development. As defined in Chapter 2, when employees are granted the opportunity to grow they tend to be more engaged, motivated, and dedicated; this, as a result, retains them because they do not want to lose the relationship formed between them and their mentors. The secondary objective question, Section 2.5 of Chapter 2, seeks to determine the impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes. Some of the participants said the following:

Participant	Response
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A1	<i>It's very important to retain talent, enhance career development and align the employees with the organisation's goals.</i>
A2	<i>That will help a lot more, especially for young professionals who just being employed by the department.</i>
A3	<i>The impact will be great as there will be someone who monitors your performance as an employee and where you're lacking, they will be able to indicate, and also state your weakness and where improvements need to be done.</i>
A4	<i>Mentors and mentorship programmes are of core importance because they will help all employees to know that they are doing the right work and that they are well aligned with what is expected from them.</i>
A6	<i>Mentors and mentorship programmes are important for development and retaining, this will allow us to learn from those who have done it before.</i>

The participants agree that mentors and mentorship programmes are important. They also note that mentorship is a requirement for young professionals to register with their affiliate bodies because mentorship is a minimum requirement. The Engineering Council of South Africa or the South African Council for the Project and Construction Management Professionals or any other reputable council require young professionals to have mentors who guide them through the road to professional registration and then sign off their reports as confirmation that they transferred the skills the mentee mentioned in the report.

4.2.1.10 Perceptions of challenges associated with personal growth in the organisation

Challenges which are associated with the participants' growth within the organisation are mainly around training, lack of mentorship and recognition. Some challenges were also mentioned about the barriers which hinder performance and the participants mentioned lack of motivation. Lack of motivation can also be viewed from a financial aspect. The participants were requested to mention their perceptions of the challenges associated with their personal growth in the organisation. This is what the participants had to say:

Participant	Response
A2	<i>Political deployment. When a position is advertised, it is pointless to apply because most of the time, there is already someone who has been appointed. Interviews and advertisements are there to conform.</i>
A3	<i>Not been given work, no new challenge, doing the same thing over and over again, no improved work duties.</i>
A4	<i>Challenges that are hindering my growth in the organisation are firstly mentorship, adequate training and ongoing learning made available by the departments, lastly it is the recognition of what is your qualification and is it in alignment with your job title.</i>
A6	<i>The department develops us by providing bursaries but no motivation, there is nothing to look forward to after obtaining the qualification, we feel stuck because there is no reward.</i>

In the interview schedule, there was the following question: “How often do managers and employees talk about performance?” Participants did not fully agree or disagree with the question, which questioned the regularity in terms of managers talking to the teams about performance management. The researcher had given two options, namely: “Enough that employees know how they are doing and can improve” and “Enough that managers can give accurate performance ratings.” Most participants argued that it was none of the options given. This, then, highlights that the performance talks or intentional goal settings are not performed as regularly as they should, which raises the question: “How then are the employees measured if their progress cannot trace back to the goal that was not set in the first place?” It is very evident that goals are not set; and even if they are, there is no communication about ways to improve or whether one is struggling or not. This, as a result, makes it a fruitless exercise – there is no target nor are there rewards.

4.2.1.11 Criteria used to measure key responsibility areas

The key responsibility area is something that is discussed as soon as an individual takes on a specific role. This is important because often the organisation will advertise posts stating what skills they require to achieve their goals; therefore, an individual must know

and understand their duties and be able to perform efficiently and effectively, understanding that they form part of a bigger picture. This is what the participants had to say about how their key responsibility areas are measured.

Participant	Response
A1	<i>Scoring structure. No one can go beyond a certain score without it being questioned.</i>
A2	<i>Job description and responsibilities.</i>
A3	<i>There's no criteria that is used to measure the performance of any employees, there's a system called PMDS [performance management and development system], but this is hardly executed as it should be by managers.</i>
A4	<i>PMDS.</i>
A6	<i>PMDS. The goals are set per term in the form of a percentage, these are the only goals which have been predetermined by the employer.</i>

The PMDS or performance management and development system is a framework that guides the organisation to set goals, review and strengthen the performance of public servants in delivering services to the public; it is, therefore, important that the individuals fully understand what is required of them and know how they can fully achieve these goals.

4.2.1.12 Perceptions about the performance management of the organisation

Performance management as defined in 4.2.1.1 is a tool that can guide and steer an organisation in the right direction. How employees perceive it is also critical because if the feedback is positive, it possibly means that the employees are growing and if it is negative, it could possibly mean that they are not reaping the rewards thereof. Here is what the participants had to say about the perception of performance management in the organisation.

Participant	Response
A2	<i>It's very poor when it comes to performance management.</i>

A3	<i>No one cares about the performance of the organisation because performance has been low for the number of years now since I've been here.</i>
A4	<i>It is lacking and needs serious attention.</i>
A6	<i>It is very negative.</i>

Participants' responses are alarming, to say the least. Participant A3 says that no one cares about performance, while Participant A2 says that it is poor and Participant A6 says it is negative. If participants' perception of the performance management of the organisation is negative, management should intervene since Participant A3 further stated that it has been like that for years. This shows that participants are not receiving feedback and management is not communicating about possibilities and opportunities for growth everything is the same and there seems to be no urgency in changing it.

4.3 Discussion of the results

The participants indicated throughout the interview schedule that performance management is something that is done because it must be done not necessarily because individuals must reach their individual goals. There is no individual goal setting; the scores are predetermined for the entire department and every individual must work towards those scores – one cannot go beyond them, or they will be queried.

According to Bagga (2020), however, performance management is designed to measure the progress towards the annual objectives and draft expectations. Not everyone can have the same goals because people have their strengths and weaknesses in different areas in a workplace; some want to develop certain areas which require attention whereas others already possess that specific skill. Measuring everyone using the same scale is risky and limiting at the same time. As highlighted by the participants, the department uses a standard measure for everyone; this is one of the reasons there are no regular meetings – what should the individual be measured on if they do not have goals set or a target to work toward?

4.3.1 Definitions of performance management

According to participants' feedback, performance management is a continuous communication process between the employee and the supervisor to ensure that the individual outputs are in alignment with those of the organisation. It was also stated that it is a strategy which is used to ensure that the organisation's goals are achieved. In other words, it is an intentional evaluation of a specific field.

Performance management, according to Baker (2020), is an ongoing process to create shared understanding and alignment when looking at achieving company deliverables. It is a tool that informs the succession-planning, promotion, and compensation decision-making; this also a way to focus on their strengths and development to advance their career.

Bassin (2010) defines performance management as a process which links individuals to the goals of the organisation. Leadership often use performance management as punishment, which is a negative way of using it, instilling fear around it instead of allowing employees to understand that the concept behind it is for development. Bassin (2010) further states that performance management forms the crux of the operational and strategic requirements of an organisation, meaning every individual must know how they contribute to the overall picture or whole of the organisation, for the organisation to achieve its goals.

4.3.2 The impact of the fifty-percent work attendance on performance management

As per the feedback from the participants, the fifty-percent work attendance meant that there was slow progress in achieving team goals which in turn had a negative impact on the overall performance of the organisation because the submissions would always be submitted late. It was highlighted by one participant that they became lazy to do work because there was a lack of resources available. It is also important to note that the late submissions would not have coordination because some team members would be present when others are not, as stated by one of the participants.

According to Rosenberg (2021), most organisations gain productivity from working from home and the fifty-percent work-life, an enabler to this being technology and digitalisation. In this case, however, the participants highlighted that there was a crucial lack of resources. It could be assumed that had there been resources like laptops and the internet, teams could meet online to discuss their projects online without having to wait for the days that they do go to work.

4.3.3 Perceptions on whether the participants are motivated after performance management

The general feedback from participants was that they did not feel motivated after performance management simply because they did not receive feedback. The one point they emphasised, however, was that performance reviews are conducted so that performance bonuses can be received instead of measuring one's goals against the organisation's goals and objectives to align the two. It was also stated that there are no opportunities for improvement. In response to the perception on whether the participants were motivated after performance management Participants A1 and A3 had the following to say;

Participants A1: I don't feel motivated; you don't receive the feedback since I joined the organisation, performance management review was all about people receiving the cash bonuses instead of checking the objectives of the organisation.

Participant A3: No, I didn't feel motivated, no information with regards to opportunities to improve performance in the workplace.

Sibiya (2017) says to obtain the best results from performance management reviews, the objectives, the plans, and the management processes should be linked to reviews. This is because the reviews can be considered as learning events which have the potential to encourage individuals to take responsibility for their development. This can be achieved by providing feedback throughout the year which enables the individuals to understand which skills and knowledge are required so that they develop it. Challenges have the potential to motivate certain individuals, and feedback allows for that.

4.3.4 Perception of individual accountability for not completing tasks

Participants stated that individuals are not held accountable for not completing their tasks as there were no follow-ups on non-performance letters; instead, it would always be the same people who would always receive letters. Hence, the participants noted that there is no consequence management for lack of performance. This was highlighted by Participant A3 in response to their perception of individual accountability for not having completed tasks and who said the following; *“No one is held accountable even if they didn’t do their tasks.”*

Accountability is linked to employee morale, which could impact the commitment to work. Employees are responsible for their performance, actions, decisions, and behaviour in the workplace (Amin, 2022).

4.3.5 The impact of training in an organisation

The impact of training in an organisation suggests that the lack of support or communication from managers stifles growth and development. The lack of training has a negative impact on the entire department because even the managers are not receiving adequate training opportunities to be able to lead and manage the teams. The participants highlighted that the individuals are encouraged to organise their own training; this, as a result, raises some gaps because the officials do not have targets and will, therefore, not be motivated to grow and develop.

Zhou (2022) states that providing developmental opportunities and training tends to affirm the employees by showing commitment to serving the employees because it is also a way of retaining the employees. This, as a result, goes against what is currently taking place because as a manager should one decide to apply elsewhere, the lack of training or opportunities to lead would be highlighted and, as a result, the individual could be stuck. Growth opportunities are not necessarily for people to leave but, instead, it is to retain them by sending the subminimal message that the organisation will help them grow and develop. This is motivation enough. There is a gap when it comes to employees

having to organise their own training because the organisation has to have goals which should be fulfilled by those employed; in this regard, however, the employee is expected to know what goals the organisation wants to achieve and then book training in line with that. They are basically saying that employees should figure out what the organisation requires to reach its goals and go train for that, instead of asking which goals the individual has and trying to align those with those of the organisation.

4.3.6 Perception of performance management conversations

Perception of performance management conversations by the participants is that they are valuable only if management is willing to listen of which the value would be measured by the improved performance. Participant A5 stated that conversations are of vital importance if conducted in a safe environment as it has the potential to add value to the employee and for the organisation. These are some responses from the participants regarding the perception of performance management conversations;

Participant A3: In a proper organised work environment they are valuable if the management is willing to listen. Value will be measured by the improved performance in the organisation.

Participant A5: If conducted in a safe environment it has the potential to add value.

Formal check-ins are designed to draft expectations and to measure the progress towards annual goals. Mentors use conversations to report on the development of the mentees and to assist management with identifying high-performing individuals (Bagga, 2020). It should be noted that there are no expectations because goals are not set but instead, they are predetermined. There are no conversations; therefore, the progress, development and identification of high-performing individuals have the potential to slip through the cracks.

Valamis Group (2021) states that the most effective model is dependent on ongoing communication, frequent feedback, and robust goal setting because learning looks different to different individuals. To facilitate the performance management process of an individual, planning, monitoring, reviewing, and rewarding should be implemented.

4.3.7 Barriers that hinder performance

Participants highlighted the lack of motivation due to no activity, the low salary and the lack of professionalism in the workplace. The department also offers bursaries but upon completion, the employees are not rewarded in any way to motivate them to stay or to continue developing themselves.

To boost productivity, Mone and London (2018) suggest that three components must be considered that would result in motivating the employees. These components comprise instrumentality, expectancy, and valence which should all equal zero. In other words, if they are not achieved, there will not be any motivation for the employees to perform. Instrumentality is dependent upon the trustworthiness of the employee, the expectation is dependent on whether the employee has the skills for the job they are performing, and valence is the reinforcement of values of rewards and consistency with reaching goals, needs, preferences, and values. As stated by the participants above, there is no motivation. In any work environment, an ideal motivational theory would be Maslow's hierarchy of needs which implies that people always seek for their basic needs to be fulfilled first which makes up the base of the pyramid. Maslow's hierarchy is often represented in a pyramid and outlines five human needs namely, physiological needs which are the basic needs as mentioned previously, then they need their safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization needs fulfilled (Maslow, 1943).

4.3.8 The type of training required for better performance

It has been said that every new employee must be trained to be able to perform their daily tasks in their new role. One participant, however, stated that they would want to attend training related to their job description, while another mentioned that the on-the-job training would have a great and positive impact. Training should be regarded as the most critical after performance reviews.

An effective way to conduct performance is through training and some of the training required are teamwork training, leadership training, emotional intelligence training and

training which has been designed to increase the flow. Teamwork training encourages teams to work effectively together which, as a result, increases their engagement. This type of training would assist with the teamwork required, especially during the fifty-percent work attendance. Leadership training is very important because it was stated that it is assumed that the managers have not received any form of training to be able to lead. This type of leadership training encourages transparency and trustworthiness which, as a result, has a positive impact on performance. Emotional intelligence training is also just as vital as the others, being aware of one's triggers, and emotions and being able to detect them in terms of how others may experience and perceive them. Training designed to increase flow is experienced when there is a sense of control and value in the work being executed, instead of always blaming others or expecting others to do it, the individual can take control and do the work themselves (Etherington, 2017).

4.3.9 The impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes

The impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes is vital for retaining talent, aligning the goals of the employees with those of the organisation and enhancing career development. Participants further stated that having mentors is helpful for young professionals as it will have a great impact on their development because they receive constant constructive criticism aimed at their development. It was also stated that in the engineering and built environments, mentorships are required for individuals to be eligible to register as professionals in their fields.

According to Cronin (2022), mentorship is important because it is highly likely that the mentees will become mentors to contribute to the development cycle of learning within the organisation. This would, as a result, increase their self-confidence, fulfilment at work, communication skills and loyalty to the organisation. Mentorship helps the mentees gain self-confidence, self-awareness, fulfilment at work, job satisfaction, aspirations, loyalty to the organisation and the likelihood of a promotion. Organisations are always looking for ways to retain their best people; this can be viewed as a key area for cultivation.

4.3.10 Perceptions of challenges associated with personal growth in the organisation

Participants stated that the challenges that they have in the organisation which hinder their personal growth are that they hit the growth ceiling in lower-level positions as indicated by Participant A6 under 4.2.1.7. In other words, the department would invest in their education but not reward the individuals by providing job opportunities. There is also no mentorship, inadequate training, and no new challenges one is expected to perform the same task repeatedly which tends to stifle growth.

According to Reeves (2021), mentorship has the potential of helping employees feel valued because it sends the message that the organisation considers their personal growth and development which, in turn, results in increased inductivity. This negates what is currently taking place and, as a result, causes employees to lose confidence in the organisation's ability to help them develop.

4.3.11 Criteria used to measure key responsibility areas

The criteria used to measure the key responsibility areas is the PDMS which is a framework used to guide organisation set goals. According to the participants, these goals are predetermined, and it is the same for every individual, making it difficult to set individual goals. It is also stated that no one can go beyond a certain score without it being queried, what this means is that one cannot overachieve even if one truly overachieves in that area.

What was shared by the participants is in contradiction to what Bagga (2020) says. Bagga (2020) states that performance management is designed to measure goals and to draft expectations, the drafting of expectations is something which the organisation falls short of in this regard as the goals are already predetermined. This also raises the question of how the development of an individual can be measured if they are expected to stay within specific bounds. This then implies that being an engaged workforce to help the organisation achieve its goals, as Wolverton (2020) says, can be something very farfetched, especially if individuals are expected to reduce their scores in some instances.

4.3.12 Perceptions of the performance management with reference to the Inspectorate Division of the Free State

Performance management is poor, negative and lacks attention. This is what the participants had to say about performance management in the organisation. One participant went as far as to say that no one cares about performance management as they observed that the performance has been low for years and no one has ever questioned nor raised it as a problem.

Performance management, however, requires constant observation and it is dependent upon three stages, namely the performance agreement, the management of the performance throughout the year and the performance review at the end of the year. According to Armstrong (2006), these three stages provide a learning opportunity. In other words, continuous monitoring of performance is necessary for the development of high-performance cultures.

4.4 Conclusion

The researcher analysed and interpreted the collected data to provide insight into the requirements of how performance management in the department and whether this is an effective measure or not. It could be a very effective method but have limitations because the user could be unfamiliar with the processes, which may fall short of its potential in its application. To improve the individual performance management outcomes, the recommendations can be used which could also result in an improved institutional performance.

The chapter aimed to analyse and interpret the findings obtained from the interview schedules. The findings were, as a result, discussed in conjunction with the secondary objectives discussed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 5, the researcher will present the findings and make recommendations.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Performance management should be seen as the result of various inputs including but not limited to the monitoring and evaluating of the progress towards the planned outcome, and the environmental influences. It can then be said that management is accountable for the continuous improvement or lack thereof in the workplace when taking into consideration employee performance management practices. The focus of this chapter is to provide the conclusions and recommendations which could contribute to the improvement of the department's performance management system.

5.2 Key findings from the study

The presentation of the key findings will be linked to the research questions:

- *What kind of impact did the fifty-percentage work attendance have on your performance?*

The fifty-percent work attendance had a negative impact on the participants in general as it affected their performance negatively; they could not perform their teamwork. There was slow progress in achieving team goals, which in turn had a negative impact on the overall performance of the organisation because the submissions would be submitted late.

- *What performance management strategies could be introduced in the Free State Inspectorate Division of Public Works to boost employee productivity and engagement?*

To boost productivity, three components have to be considered, namely instrumentality, expectancy, and valence. Instrumentality is dependent upon the trustworthiness of the employee, the expectation is dependent on whether the employee has the skills for the job they are performing, and valence reinforces the values of rewards and consistency with reaching goals, needs, preferences, and values. If all three components are considered and achieved, the employees will be motivated to perform.

- *What is the impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes in place for the improvement of performance management at the Free State Department of Public Works?*

The impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes is vital for retaining talent, aligning the goals of the employees with those of the organisation and enhancing career development. Having mentors is helpful for young professionals to receive constructive criticism aimed at their development. Mentorship in the engineering and built environments will enable people to register as professionals in their fields.

- *Is it beneficial for the Free State Department of Public Works to introduce digitalisation to the workplace to increase the productivity and performance?*

Organisations gain productivity from working from home and the fifty-percent work life, an enabler to this is technology and digitalisation. It is, therefore, beneficial for the Free State Department of Public Works to introduce digitalisation to the workplace and provide all the required resources so that the productivity and performance of individuals can increase.

According to the findings of the study, the fifty-percent work attendance only fell short because there were no resources available for the employees to be able to work from home. Performance strategies can be implemented to motivate the employees to perform. Mentorship programmes must be introduced; this will retain the best talent and produce the best results through the “each one teaches one” concept. The world is moving towards digitalisation; it would be very beneficial for the Free State Department of Public Works to move in that direction as far as possible as it could have a positive impact on the turnaround strategy and response rate.

5.3 Conclusions of the study

The main conclusions of the study indicated that the performance management review of the department could be effective if it was used properly. Instead, the participants highlighted that it was used to obtain cash bonuses. The participants did not feel motivated because there were gaps due to lack of communication about the reviews and

they also mentioned the unwillingness of managers to ensure that they receive the support they require to improve themselves. It can, therefore, be concluded that management should get leadership training that would assist them in leading the teams effectively. The fifty-percent work attendance had a negative impact on the participants in general; digitalisation could assist in this regard, as would the provision of resources to enable the employees to do their daily tasks.

The participants mentioned that no one was held accountable for late submissions. It is also important to note that management did not meet the expectations, requirements, and support of the employees in working towards improving themselves. Performance management requires constant constructive criticism; this helps individuals to grow. It can be assumed that there will be no need for anyone to take accountability for late submissions but, instead, it would have been highlighted in the robust feedback sessions.

The conclusions of the study will cover the content from the literature review by presenting the findings in parallel with the secondary objectives. The primary objective was to evaluate the performance management of the Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, Inspectorate Division in Bloemfontein. The following secondary objectives were asked to answer the primary objective.

5.3.1 To provide an overview of performance management

An overview of performance management was provided, and the participants were also requested to define performance management in a way that revealed that they understood the phenomenon on a wide scale, presenting that certain factors may be shortcomings in the application thereof. Performance management, therefore, is an approach used to measure employee performance to monitor their performance against the organisation's goals. It should provide clarity in terms of what the organisation requires and what the employee wants to achieve to align these. There should be a mutual understanding of what must be achieved on either side. In the department, however, the lack of feedback and engagement meant that there was no motivation for participants to want to grow and achieve goals.

5.3.2 To determine the impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes in place for the improvement of performance management in the inspectorate division of the Free State Department of Public Works

In engineering, mentorship is very important. This was highlighted in Chapter 4 as a requirement for registration with engineering bodies as a professional. Mentorship programmes are, therefore, very important because one must be guided on the basic engineering principles and continuously learn to grow. The department used to deploy young people to consulting firms to be mentored by consultants who do the job daily; the challenge was that the department did not have a retaining programme in place to retain those who were eventually registered professionally. The journey does not end when one gets registered; therefore, it becomes difficult not to grow and develop in the field as a professional. The department then decided to recall all the young people who were deployed, fearing that they would not be able to retain them after investing in them. There have not been mentorship programmes since then and, as a result, the employees resign at the sight of another opportunity even if it is not necessarily a better opportunity in the immediate run.

5.3.3 To propose other strategies that can be introduced in the Inspectorate Division of Public Works to boost employee productivity and engagement

Strategies that could be introduced to boost employee productivity and engagement include continuous feedback and input, the provision of mentorship programmes and training for the development of every employee from top managers cascading down, the provision of resources, for example laptops, and the recognition of qualifications through the reward system so that people feel special for working on themselves. Granting people opportunities to have full responsibility to run projects from start to finish will in turn allow them to learn and grow through their mistakes and, as a result, retain them.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations can be made in view of the research findings in Chapter 4. The participants defined performance management in a way that revealed that they understood the phenomenon on a wide scale, presenting that certain factors may be

shortcomings in the application thereof. It is thus recommended that the department implement training that will explain the process and its importance; therefore, starting from top management to the lower-level employees in the entire department. In this way, performance management reviews will have an impact on everyone working in the department.

The second finding from the questionnaire was that the fifty-percent work attendance had a negative impact on the participants in general as it affected their performance negatively. It can, however, be recommended that for the fifty-percent work attendance, the participants be equipped with all the required resources so that they can execute their individual and team tasks effectively and efficiently. The required resources would involve a work laptop that is equipped with internet and a video call application so that the teams can call and set up discussion meetings when required to assist each other in the completion and compilation of the final submissions on time.

The next finding was the highlighting of gaps due to a lack of communication about the reviews; also mentioned was the unwillingness of managers to ensure that the participants receive the support they require to improve themselves. It was noted that management did not meet the expectations, requirements, and support of the employees in working towards improving themselves. The recommendation is that the participants should be granted the opportunity to converse continuously with management about the result and discuss possible developmental areas and how these could be achieved, such as the possible training or courses in which they can enrol to further develop themselves. Continuous follow-ups on progress and development are also of vital importance.

The fourth finding was based on the participants stating that the barriers that hinder their performance are the lack of motivation and engagement. This coincides with Maslow's theory that once human beings have satisfied their basic needs through the realisation of their true potential, they strive for self-actualisation which then motivates them to achieve (Maslow, 1943). The department provides bursaries for the development of its

employees. It is, therefore, recommended that there be opportunities or rewards for those who complete their studies so that they become motivated; this will result in retaining them so that they develop and grow within the department. The department is currently losing a lot of money and resources because once equipped without recognition, the employees find another place where they will be recognised.

The final finding was that the world is going digital, while workstations are still desktop setup workspaces. This, in turn, brought to the fore the question of how beneficial it would be for the Free State Department of Public Works to introduce digitalisation to the workplace to increase productivity and performance, which is a potential recommendation that would assist in the performance management processes.

5.5 Limitations

It should be noted that every study has its own limitations, which lie within the research method or the scope of focus. In this case, the study was limited to focus on the performance management in the inspectorate division, which has the potential of improving the performance thereof. The findings of the study are, however, not transferable. The managers were not invited to participate in the study because some questions were about the management and leadership styles of the managers; the administrative personnel did not respond to the study, which means that the findings and recommendations were restricted to the technical personnel only. The response rate of the study was low, but data saturation was reached, which was very important for this study.

5.6 Recommendations for future research

The study focused only on the inspectorate division of the department. It is, therefore, recommended that future studies rather focus on the entire infrastructure division and use both qualitative and quantitative methods. This could provide a clearer picture of how things are done in the different divisions and an overview of how performance management reviews are conducted in the department's different divisions.

5.7 Conclusion

The researcher outlined the key findings of the study in alignment with the research questions. The conclusions were determined in line with the secondary research objectives of the study. The researcher went on to recommend based on the findings obtained. Limitations of the study were highlighted and recommendations for future research were also outlined.

Appendix A: Permission Letter from Public Works



To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE INTERVIEWS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: INSPECTORATE

With regards to the above-mentioned subject, kindly note that Refiloe Mathibe has been granted permission to conduct interviews in the Free State Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in the Inspectorate Division. The permission is accorded solely on the study entitled "Performance Management Within the Inspectorate Division of the Department of Public Works in Bloemfontein".

We hope that the information gathered will be of value towards your study and the organisation.

Kind regards,

Works, Design, Construction and Maintenance
Recommended/Not Recommended

Appendix B: Ethical Clearance Letter



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

16-Feb-2023

Dear Ms Refiloe Mathibe

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Performance Management Within the Inspectorate Division of the Department of Public Works in Bloemfontein

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2022/1872/23

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

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Appendix C: Interview Schedule Questions

- Age

	20 – 29
	30 – 39
	40 – 49
	50 – 59
	60+

- Gender

	Male
	Female
	Other

- Nationality

- Occupation or Profession

- How would you define Performance Management?

- What kind of impact did the fifty-percentage work attendance have on your performance?

- After the Performance Management review, do you feel motivated? Are you informed about possible opportunities for improvement?

- What kind of influence did the fifty-percent office attendance have on your performance?

- How does the work-from-home “new normal” impact your performance?

- Are individuals held accountable for not completing their respective tasks?

- What tools and training are offered to assist managers to gain confidence and credibility in discussions if any?

- Would you say that the performance management conversations are valuable and how would you measure the value?

- What do you think are the barriers that hinder your performance?

- What kind of training would assist you to perform better in your role?

- What is the impact of having mentors and mentorship programmes in place for the improvement of performance management at the Free State Department of Public Works?
- What challenges are associated with your growth within the organisation?
- How often do managers and employees talk about performance?

	Enough that employees know how they're doing and can improve
	Enough that managers can give accurate performance ratings

- What criteria is used to measure your key responsibility area?
- What are your perceptions about the performance management of the organisation?

Appendix D: Language Editor Certificate

Jacqueline Kraamwinkel

PO Box 38824 Garsfontein 0060 | +27 72 709 4463 | jackykraamwinkel@gmail.com

28/04/2023

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that the research study **RISK PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE INSPECTORATE DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS IN BLOEMFONTEIN** by **REFILOE MATHIBE** has been copy-edited and proofread by a professional language editor in accordance with the requirements of the partial fulfilment of the degree **MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION** at the **UFS BUSINESS SCHOOL, FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES** at **THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE**. The onus is on the author to attend to the suggested changes. Furthermore, I do not take responsibility for any changes in the document after the fact.

Sincerely,



Jacky Kraamwinkel

BA (English and Psychology) – UJ
BA (Hons) English Literature – UJ
PEG membership no: KRA002

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