AN EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FOR SUPERVISORS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research paper for the degree of Masters of Public Administration at Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership, Faculty of Management Sciences and Law, University of Limpopo, hereby submitted, has not been submitted by me or anyone else for a degree purpose at this or any other university. That it is my own work in execution and design and that materials consulted have been properly acknowledged.

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I sincerely would like to extend my thanks to the Mighty Lord for giving me the strength to climb up the mountain and descend back downward without losing courage. I want to disclose that during my studies I met with challenges which, if it were not through prayer, courage and hope I would not be rejoicing. Some of the officials who I trusted the most, proved to me that not every learned person in this world should be trusted. During my research, an educated colleague, who holds a post of a manager, told me that if I was not going to pay him he would not complete my questionnaire. I thought he was joking, but I realized later when the questionnaire was not returning that he meant his words.

I would like to thank **Malesela Titus Tlowana,** who is my late grandfather, whose words remains my inspiration. When I was a small boy, I don't know what age I was. But I remember that my grandfather liked telling that "**o ntshe mahlo dinameng,**" meaning that "I must wake up". This expression has a lot of interpretations depending on how the interpreter wants to present his/her case. To me, it means that I should wakeup and become wise and be able to do things for myself.

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CHAPTER ONE
OVERVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

It is generally a norm that performance should be recognised as a way of encouragement to the employees to continuously perform better than expected. Both the private and public sectors recognise the performances of their employees by different kinds of incentives that serve as motivation to increase the level of productivity. The system of rewarding best performers encourages competition in the work place. Workers compete through these incentives and thus increase productivity.

Appraisal is a method that helps to identify subordinates who require development for them to specialise in their daily activities. Through appraisal, managers and supervisors are able to notice and be able to introduce training to close performance gaps. Appraisal assists to improve performance by providing a specific feedback about training needs and development. Performance Appraisal is a yardstick to check performance of the workforce. Grobler, Warnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hartfield (2002:179) argue that an employee's performance on the job depends on the employee's ability and motivation to perform the job. Motivation could be provided through awards or money.

1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM
1.2.1 BACKGROUND

Government used various systems to evaluate the performances of its functionaries. The employees completed monthly reports of their performances and submitted them to their supervisors for evaluation and amendments. Thereafter, they submitted them to the departmental assessing authority for final assessment. This system allowed officials to qualify for promotion without necessarily performing better than expected. As long as one is able to motivate and make a strong argument, claiming of having done something that never took place, that person would be rewarded.

When the system mentioned above was phased out because of its loopholes, the government and the unions came to an agreement and introduced an interim solution during 2000. This interim solution was called 2nd and 3rd notch. This system was also not effective as officials who could complete the questionnaire would be given a 2nd notch or the 3rd notch. During 2002, a new system was introduced. This system is called the Performance Management System. The main purpose of this system is salary progression. This system is recommended by the Department of Public Service and Administration. Every official is supposed to have a work plan that must guide him/her in their performances in a twelve month cycle.

1.2.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem addressed in this study is the evaluation of the implementation of Performance Appraisal in the Department of Agriculture, specifically in the Sekhukhune District of the Limpopo Province. The Performance Appraisal is the critical component of the process of managing human resources with the aim of achieving employee and organizational goals. This process requires close monitoring because of the number of complaints it creates.

1.2.3. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is imperative for an organisation to identify the needs to close personnel gaps. Armstrong (1998:60) argues that, "As a line manager you have to decide or recommend how many people and what skills you need now and at least in the short-term future". Managers are therefore obliged to measure performance as one of their competencies required is to have a clear indication of how many personnel are required. They should also know for which job categories are these officials required. Managers must conduct job analysis for every position.

Analysing jobs is central to the people management process. Establishing and defining jobs correctly is the starting point for not just the recruitment process; it plays a major part in the way employees are managed and motivated, thus becoming the basis for the performance management process; it helps to establish how employee's training needs are analysed and has a major input into the design of the pay system, especially the comparison of one employee's pay with another (Sredwick, 2005:120). Job analysis is a critical process which is used to determine

whether the post will be attractive or not. Once job has been created and duties are attached to it must be filled.

Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2002:136) explain that every organization, regardless of its size, product or service, must recruit applicants to fill positions. Now that needs have been identified and jobs have been analysed and vacancies are established qualified candidates must be recruited to fill the positions. Armstrong (2006:409) is of the opinion that the overall aim of the recruitment and selection process should be to obtain at minimum cost the number and quality of employees required to satisfy the human resource needs of the institution. He argues that when recruitment takes place requirements should be defined, suitable candidates should be attracted and candidates must be selected by sifting applications. Interviewing, testing, assessing candidates and offering employment to qualified candidates are components of recruitment.

Most scholars of Public Administration support the notion of appraising the internal personnel by appointing them in higher positions and filling the entry positions through external advertisements. Cloete's (1994:179) perspective about this argument is that "In South Africa public sector promotion has special significance because of the general policy to recruit outsiders for the lower posts and to fill the higher posts by promoting serving officials who have, through experience and in-service training, acquired the necessary knowledge and skills".

Cloete (1994:179) elaborates his argument by stating that "Nowadays it is accepted that officials should not be promoted merely on the grounds of seniority, but that they should be evaluated (appraised) carefully to ascertain their suitability for promotion". The author maintains that promotion should be achieved through performing certain tasks that will qualify an employee to be found suitable for promotion/appraisal. He is of the opinion that effective measures should be used to select and award best performers.

It is essential to make sure that new employees are oriented and inducted into their new positions in order that the goals of the organisation could be realised efficiently. Skills development becomes critical in satisfying the needs of an organization. Personnel Appraisal depends mainly

on the display of skills to perform specific tasks allocated to an individual. Performing tasks in a satisfactory and diligent manner require knowledge and skills which are attained through training. People development is the key to Performance Appraisal. Cheminais *et al*., (1998:99) are of the same opinion as they argue that, "Promotion opportunities for public employees rest on the premise that the person promoted should have the necessary experience and have been trained and developed through the management development programme. In the public sector, formal procedures exist for the selection of candidates for promotion".

People need to be continuously developed as technology is advancing at a very fast pace. Supervisors should take the lead in the development of their subordinates. Development should come from within in the form of internal or on the job training and also from recognized specialised service providers. Beach (1985:204) defines Performance Appraisal as "the systematic evaluation of individuals with respect to their performance on the job and their potential for development. Ordinarily, the evaluation is made by each person's immediate supervisor in the organization, and this rating is reviewed in turn by his supervisor". This book explains the old system of appraisal. However, it maintains that there must be supervision. Middle managers are the most important officials when coming to Performance Appraisal. Managers and middle managers should monitor the performances of their subordinates for quality performance, guidance and training where necessary, for the production of quality output.

Managers are mostly not quick to deal with performance appraisal of their subordinates. Sometimes it goes to an extent that the subordinates lodge complains before their cases are resolved. Gerber, Nel and Van Dyk (1987:169) are in support of this opinion by stating that "Many managers simply do not like the idea of apprising their subordinates and sometimes put it off until the last minutes". This observation is relevant to the situation which prevails in the Department. In the beginning, and during the year, some officials do not complete the work plans, the monthly and quarterly reports. At the end of the year, it becomes a serious issue when they have to be ready to be appraised.

"It must be emphasised, however, that even with the best intentions, Performance Appraisal can never be fully objective and accurate. The most important reason is that people have a limited

ability to process information" (Gerber *et al.,* 1987:169). It is true that people alone will not be able to meet the required measure of performance. Management must develop a strategy to monitor and evaluate each subordinate's performance regularly. The officials, without a strict supervision, could neglect their duties when Performance Appraisals are to be submitted.

Cheminais, Van der Waldt and Bayat (1998:98) argue that, "promotion should be undertaken to provide employees with opportunities to develop and advance. This tends to satisfy the egoistic needs of the employees by permitting them to enjoy the rewards that come from doing more challenging and interesting work with higher pay and better working conditions". These writers explain that promotion should occur to advance and develop officials. Officials should enjoy the reward received from their hard work. According to these authors, promotion should be earned through performance of doing a job successfully.

Performance management is based on the agreement of objectives; knowledge, skills and competence requirements of work; and development plans. It involves the joint and continuing review of performance against these objectives, requirements and plans, and the agreement and implementation of improvement and further development plans. (Cheminais, Bayat, Van der Waldt & Fox, 1998:162). As argued previously, there is a performance cycle starting from the first quarter to the last quarter of a year. In this performance cycle, there must be proper monitoring and evaluation of activities to which the employees have committed themselves that they will perform their duties according to contracts. There must be formal reviews taking place to verify compliance to the agreements.

An appraisal system should be tested or reviewed to determine if it is attaining its intended objective. A yard stick to measure the success of the system needs to be developed. Monitoring and evaluation must be conducted by managers and supervisors. Cloete (1986:159) argues that "when an evaluation system is devised and implemented, special attention should be given to measure for ensuring objectivity. To this end, appropriate training should be given to supervisors whilst their assessments of their subordinates could be made subject to review by third parties. The latter should of course have had the opportunity to observe the work performance of the

subordinates in question". Further on, he recommends that committees should be used to observe the correctness of the reports submitted by the supervisors.

According to Grobler et al., (2002:260) "Performance appraisal (PA) is the ongoing process of evaluating and managing both the behaviour and outcomes in the workplace". Employees should be assessed on the performance of their duties and responsibilities during the rating period. Grobler et al., (2002:260) state that,

> Performance appraisal became popular in 1980s as a total quality management (TQM) programmes emphasised using all the management tools, including performance appraisal, to ensure achievement of performance goals. The tools that are mentioned are reward systems, job design, leadership and training should join performance appraisal as part of a comprehensive approach to performance.

These sets of tools are required for employees to qualify for Performance Appraisal. Work plans are the guidelines for the employees to perform well in their duties. These authors call the work plans job designs which could mean one and the same thing.

Performance appraisal creates many challenges for employers. There is some kind of resistance from those officials that are appraised as low performance could be attributed to be lack of supervision. Grobler et al., (2003:260) report the dilemma in South Africa's performance appraisal by arguing that,

> Despite the enthusiasm regarding performance management by various companies, a comprehensive survey of nine leading South African organisations undertaken by the University of Stellenbosch Business School recently revealed a rather bleak picture of the way the employee performance is managed and awarded in South Africa.

Grobler et al., (2003:260) continue to state that

> Major problems that were identified during the survey included the existence of a rather negative working culture; changes in corporate strategy did not result in corresponding behaviour changes; and insufficient line management support for performance management. Regarding periodic and formal performance reviews, the following became apparent: lack of follow up of performance reviews, overemphasis on the appraisal aspect at the expense of development, inadequately maintained objectivity.

This observation by the University of Stellenbosch need to be compared with the Department of Agriculture under Sekhukhune District.

In the book by Fisher, Katz, Miller and Thatcher (2003:74), the differences between Performance Appraisal and performance management are explained as follows: "Performance appraisal essentially entails the measurement and ranking of performance in the organisation, whereas performance management comprises the management of all performance related activities within the organisation, of which performance appraisal is only one of those activities". An emphasis is made on activities like self-rating, peer evaluation, supervision, training, drafting of the performance instruments, monitoring and evaluation of performance form for performance management. All these activities must be fulfilled before an employee could be rewarded for best performance.

Glenn Stahl (1983:259) argues that:

> No organized enterprise can escape making judgments about the behavior and effectiveness of its staff. Assignment, advancement, reward, utilization, motivation, and discipline-all depend upon such judgments, whether they are formalized and recorded or whether they are implicit in the actions of management. Yet efforts to be systematic about evaluation of employee performance are fraught with uncertainty and disenchantment. Despite periodic surges of enthusiasm and a formidable literature on the subject, it remains an almost intractable problem, which has engendered frequent disillusionment.

Procedures to deal with Performance Appraisal are available to uplift the morale of all the employees. However, in most cases employees do not take the process positively. Some of the employees who seem to be lazy take performance appraisal as something which is there to expose them. Glenn Stahl (1983:259) further states that, "Most managers (and employees, for that matter) would probably agree that evaluation should (1) maintain or improve performance, not retard it; (2) support supervisory responsibility for the ultimate effectiveness of work performed; and (3) assure reasonable equity and dignity in human relationships". According to Glenn Stahl, on appraisal will always have problems even if its intention is not to create problems, but rather to build both the employee's capacity and wealth, and the development of the organization to provide a service or a product efficiently and effectively.

It is to the benefit of both the employees and the employer if the organization is able to meet its objectives. This achievement is realized through the trained staff. Through Performance Appraisal, the employer is able to notice employees who need skills improvement. Grobler et al.,

(2002:315) are of the opinion that "Employees who perform unsatisfactorily because of a deficiency in skills are prime candidates for training. Although training cannot solve all problems of ineffective performance, a sound T&D (training and development) programme is often instrumental in minimising these problems". Employees who are trainable will retain their positions while those who are not trainable will lose their employment.

Grobler et al., (2002:315) argue that, sometimes a new or newly promoted employee does not possess the skills and abilities required to be competent on the job. These authors are of the opinion that there is no selection device that is able to predict success or failure all the time. Training is therefore often necessary to fill the gap between the new employee's predicted and actual performance.

People are motivated by what they receive in exchange of their labour. Griffin (1990:438) uses the term motivation for Performance Appraisal. He believes that motivation revolves around three areas: the traditional approach, the human relations approach, and the human resource approach. With the traditional approach, the author is of the opinion that employees are motivated by an incentive pay system. With the traditional approach, work is inherently unpleasant for most people and that the money they earn is more important to employees than the nature of the job they are performing. The ideology is that employees are motivated by money to perform well. Their performance is driven by incentive pay system.

The human relations approach is based on the role of social processes in the workplace. This approach assumes that employees want to belong to a social group, and that this need is more important than money in motivating employees. Griffin (1990:438) contend that:

> advocates of the human relations approach advised managers to make workers feel important, keep them informed, and allow them modicum of self-direction and self control in carrying out routine activities.

This approach is acceptable as once the workers are socially satisfied, they will do their job perfectly, without being followed behind by their supervisors. If such an approach could be adopted by the Sekhukhune District personnel, every work assignment will be done in time and audit queries will be eliminated.

The human resource approach assumes that the contributions are valuable to both the individuals and the organisation. It assumes that people want to contribute and are able to make genuine contributions. Management's task, then, is to encourage participation and to create a work environment that makes full use of the human resources available. This approach is also acceptable as employees are urged to participate on their own to make contributions without being supervised. The system of writing or drawing an individual's work plan which will serve as a guideline throughout a specific financial year, gives an employee the freedom to perform independently while at the same time participating towards the achievement of the objectives of the organisation. Routine reporting and monthly and quarterly evaluations are done without pressure and in a good spirit. Job performance thus becomes rewarding at the end of the day.

It is common that officials want a job that has attractive working conditions and a lucrative income which are accompanied by continuous upward mobility. These conditions motivate workers in performing better all the time. Griffin et al., (1990:439) wrote that "Labor leaders often argue that workers can be motivated by more pay, shorter working hours, and improved working conditions. Meanwhile, some behavioural scientists suggest that motivation can be enhanced by providing employees with more autonomy and greater responsibility". It is true that labour always demand better working conditions while at the same time employees who are not willing to do their best will be happy about that.

The responsibility of performance appraisal rests on a great number of players, all carrying the mandate to fulfill the organisational objective. The task of Performance Appraisal involves a number of people who are assigned to carry the objective of the organization forward without fail. Robbins and Stephens (1997:288) argue about who should do the appraisals. Their conclusion is that it should be done by the following groups of people. The immediate supervisor, peers, self-appraisals, immediate subordinates, customers and the comprehensive approach: 360-degree feedback. In terms of the present appraisal adopted by the government, all methods are used except for the comprehensive approach: 360-degree feedback.

1.2.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Conceptual definitions are used in the study by making reference from the *Oxford Dictionary*.

- ✓ Development: Stage of growth or advancement at workplace
- ✓ Performance: An act or process of doing or not dong something
- ✓ Performance Management System Policy Framework: A guideline on Performance Management System
- ✓ Performance Appraisal: Process of evaluating one's performance towards upliftment
- ✓ Performance Instruments: Work plan, memorandum of understanding or duty sheet
- ✓ Supervisors: Employees on levels 6-8
- ✓ Middle managers: employees on levels 6-8/supervisors
- ✓ Supervisee: Subordinate
- ✓ Managers: Employees on levels 11 and 12
- ✓ Sekhukhune: Name of the district.

1.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

1.3.1 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the study is to investigate the application of the policy on Performance Appraisal of the supervisors in the Department of Agriculture in the Sekhukhune District by doing the following:

- ✓ To gather different perceptions of both managers and supervisors on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Performance Appraisal process;
- ✓ To identify whether there are challenges pertaining to the implementation of Performance Appraisal System;
- ✓ To study the impact of the Performance Appraisal system on the employee's motivation; and
- ✓ Finally, to suggest measures of improvement on the overhaul Performance Appraisal System in the district,

The objective of this research is to improve the Performance Appraisal System in the Sekhukhune District.

1.3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

✓ The research question is why the Performance Management System is failing?

✓ Is the system acceptable by the employees?

✓ Does the system have an impact on human resource development?

✓ Does the system allow for participation of all the employees?

✓ Does the system get proper monitoring and evaluation?

✓ Is the control system in place?

✓ Does the system respond to its mission/objective?

1.3.3 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The unit of analysis in this study is human beings from the Human Resource; Finance; Value chain; Animal Production and Health; Land and Agrarian; and specialised agricultural services divisions in the district. All are employed by the Department of Agriculture under the Sekhukhune District. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:53) argue that "We refer to the members or elements of the population as the unit of analysis. In the human behavioural sciences, units of analysis typically refer to the following:

✓ Humans;

✓ Groups (for example, couples married in a particular year; households in a particular geographic region; homosexual clubs; gangs; crime syndicates; and so no); and

✓ Organizations or institutions (for example, schools; classes; congregations; hospitals; political parties; companies; and so on)

In regard to the above, middle managers (including municipal managers) were used as units of analysis

1.3.4 STUDY AREA

The study area in this study is the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture in Limpopo Province.

1.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 SECONDARY DATA SOURCES

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (1994:41) argue that secondary literature sources are books and journals that constitute the subsequent publications of information obtained from primary literature. These publications are aimed at a wider audience and are easier to locate than primary literature as they are covered more thoroughly by the tertiary literature. Annual Performance Reports for the target group were obtained through applying for authority from the district head to have access to peruse the existing records.

1.4.2 PRIMARY DATA SOURCE

Primary literature sources are the first occurrence of a piece of work. They include published sources such as reports and some central and local government publications, such as White Papers and planning documents. They also include unpublished manuscripts such as letters, memos, and committee minutes that may be analysed as data in their own right (Welman et al., 1994:41). Primary data were obtained from readings like books, journals, and the policy document on Performance Management System. Information from interviews obtained from managers and supervisors as well as from the performance management also served as primary data source.

1.4.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING METHOD

The population in this study is the 42 permanent staff of middle managers on level six to level eight, and eleven managers from different divisions of the district. These 42 middle managers are reporting to eleven managers who are on salary level 12. Two of these managers are placed at the district office, heading human resource services and finance divisions. Sekhukhune District is comprised of five municipalities, each headed by an agricultural specialized manager, and four other managers who are strategically placed at the district office. Their specialty is Value chain; Land and Agrarian; Animal production and Health; and Specialized Agricultural Services. The selection of these managers is supported by the fact that they supervise the target population. These managers also become the target because of them being supervisors. Their understanding on the subject matter was thus also tested.

A questionnaire was distributed to this target group to complete. Interviews were also administered to clarify some of the issues. The total number of 42 middle managers and 11 managers was selected as a sample for the interviews. Fifty-three questionnaires were distributed across the district for data collection.

1.4.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Information was collected firstly from the documentary sources i.e., (books, articles, journals, performance reports, circulars). The documentary technique was employed to collect data relating to Performance Appraisal System. A survey questionnaire was administered to both the managers and the middle managers, which aimed at assessing their perceptions on the Performance Appraisal System. Interviews were also conducted to clarify data that might have been ambiguous.

1.4.5 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Data analysis was done by firstly determining the norms applying to performance management. Thereafter, the views of the respondents were tested against the norms to establish the extent to which the Performance Appraisals are carried out by middle managers. A five point scale was used to determine the level of acceptance of the processes and their perceived effectiveness in establishing the performance of staff by middle managers and managers.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will assist management to reduce the irregularity that is taking place regarding the Performance Appraisal in the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture. The significance of the study is to highlight the irregularity for management to decide on the improving the system in the district.

1.6. RESEARCH REPORT OUTLINE
1.6.1 CHAPTER ONE

Chapter one covers the introduction, background and the intention for conducting the study. It entails the reason why this topic was selected as a problem to be investigated. This chapter clarifies the objective of the selection of this topic. The chapter brings forward the picture of

what is taking place in the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture. The chapter also has a definition of terms used to make the study easily understandable to the reader. As such, the concepts are thus defined.

1.6.2 CHAPTER TWO

Chapter two concentrates on the literature review by summarising the literature consulted in order to derive sense out of it. It is important for the researcher to consult on what is already in the literature so as to compare and find a solution to the problem. The chapter provides the theoretical framework for the research problem as it links to available literature. Where possible, the Internet was also visited to have a wide scope of data related to the problem.

1.6.3 CHAPTER THREE

This chapter outlines the research methodology and design that were followed in the research process. The chapter also identifies the target group, sampling method and size of the population and the research technique.

1.6.4 CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter outlines how the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture operates the appraisal processes. It explains how the Performance Appraisal System is managed within the district. The recording and completion of the annual reports are dealt with in this chapter. This chapter also deals with an in-depth presentation and detailed discussion of the data or information collected during the study. The data are analysed during this stage in a way of converting it to a meaningful information. This chapter answers the research question. The findings of the research are discussed fully in this chapter.

1.6.5 CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter is the last chapter of the research, therefore it contains the summary of the main conclusion of the study. It also addresses the main conclusion of the study. It also deals with the interpretation of the main conclusions. Finally, the chapter gives a recommendation for further study or review of the available prescripts.

CHAPTER TWO

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations in both the private and public sectors should be able to realise whether or not their performance achieves their organisational goals. By so doing, they must evaluate their performances against their organisational strategic goals. In this chapter, views of other scholars are scruitinised in order to learn from them what they perceive about Performance Management System. Monitoring and evaluation need to be done frequently to make sure that performance is according to the set standards and that deviations are avoided by all means.

The Limpopo Provincial government has developed a policy guideline on performance management. Each department has in turn developed its own guideline to suit its organisational requirements. The performance management guideline for the Department of Agriculture explains performance management as a process of harnessing all available resources within an organisation and ensuring that these perform to the maximum, in order to achieve the desired results. Performance management involves building processes, systems, culture and relationships that facilitate the achievement of organisational objectives.

2.2. DEFINITION OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND AIMS.

Performance management is defined by Armstrong (2006:495) as a systematic process for improving organizational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams. It is a means of getting better results by understanding and managing performance within an agreed upon framework of planned goals, standards and competency requirements. Processes exist for establishing a shared understanding about what is to be achieved, and for managing and developing people in a way that increases the probability that goals will be achieved in the short and longer terms. It focuses people on doing the right things by clarifying their goals. It is owned and driven by line management. It is a managerial tool that gives guidance towards successful service delivery. Performance management is thus a goal-driven organised plan.

The overall aim of performance management is to establish a high performance culture in which individuals and teams take responsibility for the continuous improvement of work process and for their own skills and contribution, within a framework provided by effective leadership (Armstrong, 2006:296): Performance management aims to promote the wellbeing of an organisation in making sure that services rendered uplift the client and maintain the highest standard of performance. Employees should be encouraged by building their morale so as to make them perform above expectation in order to benefit both the organisation's goals and themselves.

Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk and Schenk (2003:372) define Performance Appraisal as a formal and systematic process by means of which the job-relevant strength and weaknesses of employees are identified, observed, measured, recorded and developed. Swanepoel *et al.*, (2003: 372) concede that the overall purpose of appraisal naturally is to provide information about work performance. This information serves to guide management on what to do about an individual's performance. From the information obtained on the results of the Performance Appraisal, management is able to take decisions for future planning. Some individual employees will need to be developed whilst others will be rewarded for their outstanding performances.

2.3. PROVIDING PERFORMANCE REPORT

Performance Appraisal (often referred to as performance evaluation, merit rating, staff assessment, performance review) is the human resource function most critisised and carry the greatest risk of either failing, falling into disuse or degenerating towards a meaningless, paperwork exercise (Swanepoel *et al.,* 2003:374). This book merely cites that the process of performance appraisal could sometimes be useless. It could easily lose meaning and become overlooked to an extent that it may even lose value. The main requirement is that it needs continuous monitoring and evaluation throughout the assessment period.

The concept Performance Management System has many differing meanings. Authors differ in defining the Performance Management System. Robbins and Decenzo (2001:199) define the Performance Management System as a process of establishing performance standards and evaluating performance in order to arrive at objective human resource decisions; such as pay

increases and training needs, as well as to provide documentation to support any personnel action. Robbins and Decenzo simply argue that evidence of documentation is critical for the assessor to establish facts in order that a conclusion could be arrived at.

A Performance Management System, according to Robbins and Decenzo (2001:199), is a process of establishing performance standards and evaluating performance in order to arrive at objective human resource decisions such as pay increases and training needs, as well as to provide documentation to support any personal actions. Employees are evaluated from their written reports about their annual performances. Their performances are aimed at arriving at a particular point of achieving an organizational goal. All incidents performed are recorded for the sake of reference and record purposes.

According to Swanepoel et al., (2003:373) administrative purposes concern the use of performance data as base for personnel decision making, including the following:
- ✓ human resource planning. For example, compiling skills inventories, obtaining information regarding new positions to be created, and developing succession plans;
- ✓ reward decisions, including salary and wage increases (or withholding them), merit bonuses;
- ✓ placement decisions such as promotion, transfers, dismissals and retrenchments; and
- ✓ personnel research. For example, validating selection procedures by using appraisals as criteria or evaluating the effectiveness of training programmes.

Performance is a tool for development. Developed individuals are expected to deliver goods and services according to the objectives of their organisations. Individuals who do not cope with their job specifications will, therefore, need special assistance. They must undergo developmental programmes so that they could be able to meet their desired goals without problems.

Development purposes of Performance Appraisal can focus on developmental functions of the individual as well as at the organisational level. Appraisal can serve individual development purposes by:

- ✓ providing employees with feedback on their strength and weaknesses, and on how to improve future performance;
- ✓ aiding career planning and development;
- ✓ providing inputs for personal remedial interventions, for example, referral to an Employee Assistance Programme (performance impairments may be due to factors outside the work environment); and
- ✓ organisational development purposes may include the following:
  - o facilitating organisational diagnosis and development by specifying performance levels and suggesting overall training needs (Cascio, in Swanepoel *et al.,* 2003:373);
  - o providing essential information for affirmative action programmes, job redesign efforts, multiskilling programmes; and
  - o promoting effective communication within the organisation through ongoing interaction between superiors and subordinates (Swanepoel et al., 2003:373)

Of all the skills, development management is increasingly being seen as the most crucial in the transformation process. It is supposed to halt environmental decline, render services, transform attitudes, overcome isolation, increase the effectiveness of existing management, and develop the potential of all employees, especially the disadvantaged (Saheed, Bayat & Meyer, 1994:191). These authors are of the opinion that development management is about transformation of the attitudes and overcoming of isolation of management, while at the same time addressing the disadvantaged. Increasing the effectiveness of the existing management will obviously lead to Performance Appraisal.

Robbins and Decenzo (2001:201) argue that employees are evaluated by how well they accomplish a specific set of objectives that have been determined to be critical for the successful completion of their jobs. These objectives need to be tangible, verifiable and measurable. These authors further argue that management by objective (MBO) is also a mechanism for appraising performance. They argue that this method is preferred for assessing managers and professional

employees. This method emphasizes ends rather than means; it allows managers to choose the best path for achieving goals.

2.4. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES FOR INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE'S ALIGNEMENT

Employees are human beings, they are therefore subject to making errors, or sometimes it may happen that they do not cope with their job requirement or meet targets. Robbins and Decenzo (2001:201) state that if, for some reason, an employee is not meeting his or her performance goals, a manager needs to find out why. If it is because the employee is mismatched for the job (a hiring error) or because he or she does not have adequate training, something relatively simple can be done. The manager can either reassign the individual into a job that better matches his or her skills or train the employee to do the job more effectively. If the person is not associated with the employer's abilities, but with his or her desire to do the job, it becomes a discipline problem. In that case, a manager can try counseling and, if necessary, take disciplinary action such as verbal and written warnings, suspensions, and even termination. If an employee is not satisfied with the results of the evaluation, he/she could lodge a complaint in terms of the grievance procedure outlined in the public service act.

In some cases, performance management does not work as positively as expected. Armstrong (2006:517) confirms the views of Robbins and Decenzo, as quoted above, by stating that, the programme for introducing performance management should take into account the fact that one of the main reasons why it fails is that line managers are not interested, or they don't have the skill, or both. It is important to get buy-in from top management so that their leadership can encourage line managers to play their part. To ensure buy-in, the process has to be simple (not too much paper) and managers have to be convinced that the time they spend will pay off in terms of improved performance. The demanding skills of concluding performance agreements, setting objectives, assessing performance, giving feedback and coaching, need to be developed by formal training, supplemented by coaching and the use of mentors.

It is normal that employees sometimes find it difficult to perform according to the standard required. In cases where it is discovered that employees are unable to cope with their job

demand, they could be assisted through assistant programmes. Robbins and Decenzo (2001:201) contend that employee counseling is a process designed to help employees overcome performance related problems. Rather than viewing the performance problem from a punitive point of view (discipline), employee counseling attempts to uncover why employees have lost their desire or ability to work productively. Most importantly, it is designed to find ways to correct the problem. Employee counseling attempts to assist employees in getting help to resolve whatever is bothering them. Once a problem is identified and resolved, performance will again rise.

2.5. ERRONEOUS SELECTION OF EMPLOYEES

Mullins (2002:707, in Swanepoel et al., 2003:380) contends that performance appraisal requires the supervisor or manager to observe and judge behaviour as objectively as possible. Since both these processes are conducted by human beings, and managers may not be experts in all the operational fields in their department, the appraisal process is prone to distortions and biases. It is sometimes true that managers may misjudge their subordinates, depending on their relationships and job expertise. Most managers are not experts on administrative aspects. These managers are appointed because of some special reasons for their appointment. They have no particular knowledge about human resources, but they are employed to manage Performance Appraisal. Instead of asking for assistance, they feel their status will be downgraded and so they carry on, thus making mistakes.

Managers must frequently monitor and evaluate their subordinates. Managers and supervisors should not relax and wait for the annual evaluation. An appraisal of the subordinates should be based on what they already know. Without having been involved in the daily performances of their subordinates, it will be difficult for managers to give informed rating. Swanepoel *et al* (2003:330) argue that:

> in order to evaluate the effectiveness of an employee's behaviour, the supervisors must first have observed such behaviour. Unless the rater is able to observe his/her subordinates continuously and to provide regular evaluative feedback, annual appraisal judgements will have to be based on a limited sample of observed performance events.

2.6. ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Organisations operate in line with their organisational strategic plans, which may sometimes be called Organisational Strategic Policies. Employees are performing to fulfill the strategic objectives of their institutions. These employees are all obliged, as an employment requirement, to have a performance instrument, which may sometimes be called a work plan or memorandum of understanding. Joy-Matthews, Megginson and Surtees (2004:61) state that performance management lies at the juncture of a strategy and actual activity. It involves forming and implementing policy; setting goals and targets; assessing and recognizing performance; developing processes for continuous improvement; and establishing links between individuals and organisations.

The strategic objectives of an organisation are the expectations or goals to be achieved. Organisations set goals and perform their duties toward achieving them, as their main targets. Michael Armstrong (1998:141) argues that the expectations of the organization determine what functions, departments and teams are expected to do to contribute to the achievement of the organization's purpose. All this defines what individual line managers and team leaders are expected to achieve. Finally, organisational, departmental and team expectations define what individuals are expected to do in terms of achieving targets and standards of performance to uphold corporate values.

Joy-Matthews *et al.*, (2004:61) state that performance management requires an appreciation of the learning needs of individuals and job-specific needs; an understanding of learning processes and theories; knowledge and experience of different approaches to learning; and how individual job performance might be considered and developed. Individuals are expected to follow their work plans to perform their tasks. They must be able to adapt to the environment they are placed under. Where there is a skills gap, the organisation must be able to identify the gap and must therefore arrange training for such employees. By training, they will be able to meet their strategic objectives of their organisation.

2.7. TRAINING AND MOTIVATION FOR PERFORMANCE

Human resource development provides ways of releasing potential in performance, removing blockages to improve performance and promote effort and energy to obtain the desired results. Individual performance rests within, and informs, wider contexts, i.e., group, unit, organisation, sector and the environment (IRS, 1998:23 in Joy-Matthews *et al.,* (2004:60)). During the compilation of performance instruments, individual employees indicate the competencies that they require to be trained in. Human Resource Development compiles its list for training needs and includes all competencies requires by individuals. It becomes the task of HRD to procure a service provider to offer these competencies to the employees in order to increase productivity.

Michael Armstrong (1998:141) states that managing performance is not just a matter of filling in an elaborate form once a year and then conducting an appraisal meeting which produce a rate determining a pay increase. Managing performance is about raising performance not rating performance. Like Jennifer *et al*., Armstrong is also of the opinion that performance is a continuous process and not an annual event. Forms and formal review processes have their uses. However forms are completed for the benefit of managers and individuals. They are not completed for the benefit of the personnel department, just to be filed away. Formal reviews provide a means for both parties to reflect on the past plan for the future.

Organisational goals are met by imparting relevant skills through training of individuals. Training makes performance easier. Skilled personnel are a scarce resource in this country, and ways to transfer skills are being addressed by organisations. Smit, Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2007:339) argue that an employee must possess a high level of motivation plus the appropriate training, knowledge and skills that are necessary to perform effectively in a given work situation. In South Africa, with its critical shortage of skilled workers, it becomes increasingly important for managers to address the ability component of the performance equation. The 2006 World Competitiveness Report shows that South Africa could make substantial gains in its competitive position through improvements in the training of its people.

2.8. WORK ENVIRONMENT AS MOTIVATION FOR PERFORMANCE

Smit *et al*., (2007:339) state that:

> In addition to motivation and ability, the employee should be supportive. The employee must have adequate resources, such as tools, equipment, materials, and supplies, to be able do the work. Conducive working conditions, helpful co-workers, supportive policies and procedures, sufficient information to make job related decisions and adequate time to do a good job are factors that influence workers performance. Work performance is also determined by a person's value and attitude, perceptions, learning, emotional intelligence, and so on.

It is a fact that good performance should be accompanied by resources such as human, physical and financial resources to get the job properly done. Managers must provide resources to their teams to allow them to perform maximally.

Once the employees are motivated to perform their duties the organisation will be able to meet its target. These achievements require a team work between employees and their supervisors or managers. Armstrong (1998:140) contends that managers exist to achieve results. To be able to do so, they have to manage the performance of their department or team and the individual members of the team. In carrying out this responsibility for managing performance, the aim of managers is to contribute to the improvement of the overall performance of the organisation by getting better results from their teams and individuals. Armstrong simply means that organizational achievement is a joint venture. Managers must manage the performance if they really want to get positive results.

Performance management is about improving both results and the quality of working relationships. The effective use of Performance Management processes means that people are clear about what they are expected to achieve and their priorities, know what they should be doing now and in the future to improve their performance and capabilities, and what they can do individually and as team members to contribute to the attainment of team and corporate objectives (Armstrong,1998:147). Performance Management is all about people working together for the achievement of a common goal. Performance Management encourages communication and participation of individual employees with their managers. It is a two way system of operation. Individuals and managers meet on consultative purposes to discuss performance and goals or even to amend their plans.

2.9. FLEXIBILITY OF THE PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

Targets set are deemed to represent the standard required by the job specification. If the performance is according to the plan, or goals have been achieved, it is referred to as meeting the standard. Armstrong (1998:152) maintains that performance standards define the level of performance expected for a particular aspect of the work on a continuing basis. However, they will be modified from time to time as circumstances change, especially when it is thought that the standards should be tightened or the expected level of performance increased. The author maintains that the performance standard is not fixed as it will depend on how it is required to evaluate the quality of work. The standard may be high or low depending on what should be performed. John Stredwick (2005:296) also maintains that standards need to be developed in order to be able to measure performance.

John Stredwick (2005:290) maintains that:

> Performance management also acts as a measure of the effectiveness or efficiency of the workforce, particularly where there are external or inter-unit comparisons. The strongest and the weaker performers can be readily identified; the strongest can be used as role models or utilized in training and the weaker employees helped to improve through coaching, training or discipline.

Good performers will be rewarded for their outstanding performances whereas bad ones will be assisted through training. In most cases, good performers are used to assist in training to save costs of procuring external service providers.

Armstrong (2006:496) explains that performance management is a continuous and flexible process that involves managers and those whom they manage, acting as partners within a framework that sets out how they can best work together to achieve the required results. It is based on the principle of management by contract and agreement, rather than management by command. It relies on consensus and co-operation rather than control or coercion. A mutual relationship between managers and their subordinates should prevail in order to realise intended goals. The system of performance management is not rigid as it allows for amendments where the initial plan becomes impossible to attain.

2.10. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AS A PLANNED PROCESS

Performance management involves a number of factors. Many scholars of administration define it differently. Each has a unique way of explaining performance management. Armstrong (2006: 496) summarises performance management as a planned process of which the primary elements are agreement, measurement, feedback, positive reinforcement and dialogue. It is concerned with measuring outputs in the shape of delivered performance, compared with expectations expressed as objectives. In this respect, it focuses on targets, standards and performance measures or indicators. It is based on the agreement of the role requirements, objectives and performance improvement and personal development plans. It provides the setting for ongoing dialogues about performance that involves the joint and continuing review of achievements against objectives, requirements and plans.

It is possible that the variance is a result of an unrealistic standard. That is, the goal may be too high or too low. In such cases, it is the standard that needs corrective attention, not the performance (Robbins, 2000:175). In this case, the standard needs to be reviewed. If the standard produces unexpected results, it should be restrategised. Management should consider the set standards. If the adjustments are of a minor nature, managers and their subordinates could jointly correct them. The standards should not hold the organization back and make it difficult to achieve goals. Selection of standards should be informed by previous records. Standards must be simple, straight and attainable.

Initially, performance assessment development was used to provide information for promotions, salary increases and discipline. More recently, performance measurement has wide purposes, namely:
- Identifying and enhancing desirable or effective work behavior;
- Reinforcing the behavior by linking rewards measured performance; and
- Developing desired competencies and building human capital within organizations (Price, 1997:286).

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Price (1997:287) further state that "all aspects of performance management arouse controversy, especially appraisals and performance-related pay. Critics point to weakness in the methodology and basic philosophy of these two areas. Employees are often dissatisfied with the methods of Performance Management Systems, and managers are frequently reluctant to engage in the process because of its confrontational nature. At a deeper level, it can be argued that if true commitment exists performance management is superfluous. In too many organizations, it enforces the compliance of an unhappy workforce". The author explains that employees are not comfortable with Performance Management System whiles, their managers think it creates rift between themselves and their subordinates.

> The success enjoyed by PSS is certainly impressive. But, it is by no means accidental. In fact, it can be traced to several important things that Patrick Kelly did to get PSS employees to work as hard as they could. He made sure the employees knew exactly what the company was striving for-and he rewarded them for their efforts toward achieving this mission. He also made it interesting to work at the company. The bottom line: working hard at PSS not only puts cash in your pockets but is an enjoyable activity in and of itself (Greenberg & Baron, 1997:241).

This book explains that both the employee and the employer benefit equally. The employees get rewarded for outstanding performance, while at the same time the company meets its objectives.

Marius Mayer (2007:171) explains that;

> a practical method of analyzing needs is the use of the Performance Appraisal System. A properly designed and administered performance appraisal system can be a valuable tool for identifying and developmental needs of employees in an organization. It should make provision for current performance deficiencies to be identified and agreed jointly by the employee and the manager or supervisor in a non threatening manner.

Mayer (2007) differs from Price as he believes that the manager and the employee should work free from confrontation, whereas Price thinks that performance management is confrontational. Performance management is meant to help achieve the objectives of an organisation and not to retard the organizational goals.

Spangenberg (in Meyer, 2007:172) identifies the following problems associated with the traditional Performance Appraisal System, from a Total Quality Approach:

- It confuses people with the system, assuming that the person being evaluated is responsible for results, whereas in reality the functioning of the system is beyond the control of the individual;

- It destroys teamwork, especially when Performance Appraisal is tied to individual rewards and increases;

- It could foster mediocrity, encouraging individuals to set easily-met objectives in order to meet standards;

- It focuses on short-term gains rather than long-term planning and improvement; and

- Ratings given by managers and supervisors are notoriously biased and unreliable.

Edward and Ewer (1996:6-7), also in Meyer (2007:172), add that "politics, favouritism and friendship may affect the assessment, the supervisor may be unwilling to confront poor performance". The reliability of the Performance Management System's results rests on the loyalty of the managers and supervisors. Managers are some time afraid to approach poor performers as they fear confrontation. They instead allocate them more points than they deserve.

Good managers evaluate performance of their subordinates on daily basis to make ascertain that employees are performing according to the required standard. Erasmus, Swanepoel, Schenk, Van der Westhuizen and Wessels (2008:208) contend that "in the course of their daily management activities, public sector managers ought continuously to assess on an informal basis how well their subordinates are doing their work. Such informal assessment enables the individual manager to make the necessary decision regarding the most effective use of staff, motivating those performs well, and rectifying substandard performance".

Price (1987:287) is of the opinion that:

> enthusiasts for performance assessment argue that it serves a key integrating role within an organization's human resource processes. First, it provides a checking mechanism for resourcing policies and procedures, evaluating the quality of recruits and hence the underlying decision-making process. Second, it monitors employee's commitment and the relevance of their working behaviour to business objectives. Third, provides a rationale for an organization pay policies.

Like most authors, this author also believes that in performance management there should first be procedures drawn, which should be followed by monitoring and the final stage is rewarding performance.

Erasmus et al., (2008:269) contend that Performance Appraisal when applied correctly, links up with most of the other HRM activities. This implies that Performance Appraisal should be used in an integrated and co-ordinated manner in order to accomplish institutional goals effectively. First, from an integrated perspective, notice how performance links up with the following activities:

o *Human resource planning*. In part, HR planning involves an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing workforce. This means that HR planning decisions, to a greater or lesser extent, are based on the performance levels of public sector employees;

o *Probation and promotion*. It would be impossible for any public sector employee to pass the probationary period successfully or be promoted without undergoing evaluation of his or her current work performance;

o *Merit pay increase*. One of the most common uses of Performance Appraisal is in the situation where remuneration depends on work performance. The current work performance of a public sector employee is often the most significant consideration for determining whether to give an employee a salary increase or not;

o *Employee training and development*. When it is determined that there are weaknesses in the performance levels of employees, Performance Appraisals can give an indication of where and when training and development intervention should be made; and

o *Dismissals*. Performance Appraisal information can also provide needed input for determining where to terminate (dismiss) the services of public sector employees (Dresang et al., 2002:173 in Erasmus, 2008:270).

2.11. ACHIEVING INTENDED GOALS

Employees compete in their daily performances to climb the organizational ladder. These employees are appraised if their performances achieve intended goals. Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Klopper, Louw and Oosthuizen (2004:247) define Performance

Appraisal as the process of systematically evaluating each employee's job-related strengths, developmental needs, and progress towards achieving goals, and then determining ways to improve the employee's job performance.

Hellriegel *et al.*, (2004:247) argue that an important part of Performance Appraisal involves an assessment of each employee's progress toward achieving his or her goals. To be effective, those goals must be clear and specific so that an employee knows what is to be achieved-and these goals should be challenging. However, goals alone are insufficient. For goals to lead to improved performance, employees also need feedback about how well they are doing, and suggestions for how they can improve. Regular assessment of progress towards attaining goals help employees remain motivated and solve problems as they arise. Regular feedback also encourages periodic re-examination of goals to determine whether they should be adjusted. Progress should be monitored to make sure that there is no deviation from the Memorandum of Understanding or work plan.

2.12. PLAYERS IN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Assessment of employees involves a number of people. People from within and even clients from outside the organization become involved when employees are assessed. Hellriegel *et al.*, (2004:247) state that one popular way to provide employees with feedback is the 360-degree appraisal system. The organization gathers assessments of the employee from a variety of sources, i.e., supervisors, subordinates, colleagues inside the organisation, people outside the organization with whom the employee does business, and even a self-appraisal by the employee. Usually, several people in each of these roles provide assessments. These feedbacks are communicated to the employee to improve where shortfalls has been identified.

Employees should be measured through their performance. This performance should be scaled in accordance with the individual work plans. Performance Appraisals can be invaluable aids for making many types of human resource management decisions. Decisions about the types of training and development experiences that an employee needs can be influenced by the results of Performance appraisal. Decisions regarding remuneration are another use of performance appraisal information. Many organizations try to motivate employees by basing pay, bonuses,

and other financial rewards on performance. To do so, organizations must have a method for accurately measuring an employee's performance. Performance Appraisal information also helps guide decisions about personnel movement. Who should receive a promotion? Who should be transferred, demoted, or terminated. All such personnel movements should be based on performance-related factors, not gender, race, age, or other factors unrelated to the job (Hellriegel *et al*., 2004:247).

Hellriegel *et al*., (2004:247) cite the four errors commonly committed by the managers or supervisors when assessing their subordinates as follows:

1. **Rate characteristics.** Each person engaged in rating the performance of others brings his or her own characteristics to the task. Thus a rater's characteristics often exert a subtle and indirect influence on Performance Appraisal.
2. **Leniency.** Leniency occurs when an individual rates all employees at a level higher than they deserve. Leniency is particularly likely to occur when there are no organizational norms against high ratings and when rewards are not tied to Performance Appraisals. Tying rewards to appraisals places a natural limit on the number of high ratings that a manager can give and the organization can afford.
3. **The halo effect.** The halo effect occurs when the rater's knowledge of an employee's performance on one dimension colours the rating of all others. In some cases, an equal rating on all dimensions does not reflect an error in judgement- an employee may actually perform all tasks equally well or equally poorly. However, most people do some tasks better than other tasks, so their ratings should vary from one performance dimension to another.
4. **Central tendency.** Central tendency is a rating error that occurs when a manager rates all employees "average", even when their performances vary. Managers with broad spans of control and little opportunity to observe behaviour are likely to play it safe by rating most of their subordinates in the middle of the scale, rather than either high or low on it.

2.13. WHITE PAPER ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the South African Public Sector (1997) is the guiding legislation on how service delivery should be managed. The White Paper states that the success of the public service in delivering its operational and developmental goals depends primarily on the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees carry out their duties. Managing performance is therefore a key human resource management tool that ensures that:

✓ employees know what is expected of them;
✓ managers know whether the employee's performance is delivering the required objectives;
✓ poor performance is identified and improved; and
✓ good performance is recognized and rewarded.

Performance management is an integral part of an effective human resource management and development strategy. It is an ongoing process in which the employee and employer, together, strive constantly to improve the employee's individual performance and his or her contribution to the organization's wider objectives. Since the performance of every employee contributes to the overall delivery of the organization's objectives, it follows that the performance of every employee should be managed. The performance management procedures may vary from one group or level of employees to another, depending on the nature of their work. The procedure may include group assessment and peer reviews, as well as the more traditional annual written report. Whatever the chosen methods, however, the following principles should be applied:

(a) Results orientation

An employee's performance should be assessed on the basis of a work plan covering a specified period, setting out clearly his or her responsibilities and the objectives to be achieved. These objectives should be expressed in terms of outputs to be delivered within a given timescale, and should include personal development as well as operational objectives. The work plan should be mutually agreed upon between the employee and his or her manager. The assessment process should include written assessment at no less than yearly intervals, and take remedial action where necessary.

(b) Training and development

The performance assessment process will help to identify strengths and weaknesses, and the interventions that are needed to deal with these, including the employee's future training and needs, and other developmental interventions such as career counseling, coaching and mentoring.

(c) Rewarding good performance

It is important to recognize and reward employees who perform exceptionally well, and whose skills are particularly valued, in order to encourage them to maintain the high standard they have achieved, and to encourage others to strive for improved performance. The most obvious way of achieving this is by awarding incremental increases in pay. The development of new remuneration systems within the Public Service will include the provision for systematic pay increments based on performance.

(d) Managing poor performance

When performance has not matched the requirements in the work plan, the assessment, both written and verbal, should be focused on identifying the reasons for this, and also on reaching mutual agreement on the steps that need to be taken to effect improvement. Such steps may include interventions like career counseling, teaching, mentoring, retraining, developmental opportunities and re-deployment. If the desired improvement could not be effected, dismissals on grounds of inefficiency can be considered.

(e) Openness, fairness and objectivity

An employee should be given a copy of the written assessment, and also be given the opportunity to comment on it. An employee has the right to appeal against an assessment that he or she believes to be unfair. The reporting manager's written assessment should be reviewed by his or her own immediate manager in order to ensure that reporting standards are objective and uniform.

2.14. MALADMINISTRATION AS AN OBSTACLE TO PERFORMANCE OUTPUT

Most scholars of Public Administration support the notion of appraising the internal personnel by appointing them in higher positions and filling the entry positions with the external advertisements. Cloete's (1994:179) perspective about this argument is that:

> In South Africa public sector promotion has special significance because of the general policy to recruit outsiders for the lower posts and to fill the higher posts by promoting serving officials who have, through experience and in-service training, acquired the necessary knowledge and skills.

However, this situation has changed since 1994. Senior posts are often filled by new entrants into the public service. This state of affairs requires new approaches to evaluating the management quality of managers in senior posts.

Cloete (1994:179) further expressed his argument by stating that: "Nowadays, it is accepted that officials should not be promoted merely on the grounds of seniority, but that they should be evaluated (appraised) carefully to ascertain their suitability for promotion". The author maintains that promotion should be achieved through performing certain tasks that will qualify an employee to be found suitable for promotion/appraisal. He is of the opinion that effective measures should be used to select and award best performers as it is currently the case with performance evaluation.

2.15. AN ONGOING PROCESS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2003:260) are of the same contention with Armstrong when they write that, "Performance Appraisal (PA) is the ongoing process of evaluating and managing both the behaviour and outcomes in the workplace. Organisations use various terms to describe this process. Performance review, annual appraisal, performance evaluation, employee evaluation and merit evaluation are some of the terms used". Grobler *et al.*, use the word ongoing, whilst Armstrong prefers the use of the word continuous, which could be used interchangeably as the meanings are synonymous.

Performance Management System of appraisal flows in a cycle. The cycle starts by developing and signing an agreement, the second phase is monitoring progress and finally evaluating performance which is an annual performance report. Armstrong (2006:508) explains that:

perhaps one of the most important concepts of performance management is that it is a continuous process that reflects normal good management practices of setting direction, monitoring and measuring performance and taking action accordingly. Performance management should not be imposed on managers as something special they have to do. It should instead be treated as a natural function that all good managers carry out.

2.16. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CYCLE

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │ performance and │
         ┌─────────▶│  development    │──────────┐
                    │   agreement     │          │
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  ┌──────────────┐                      ┌──────────────────┐
  │ Performance  │                      │    managing      │
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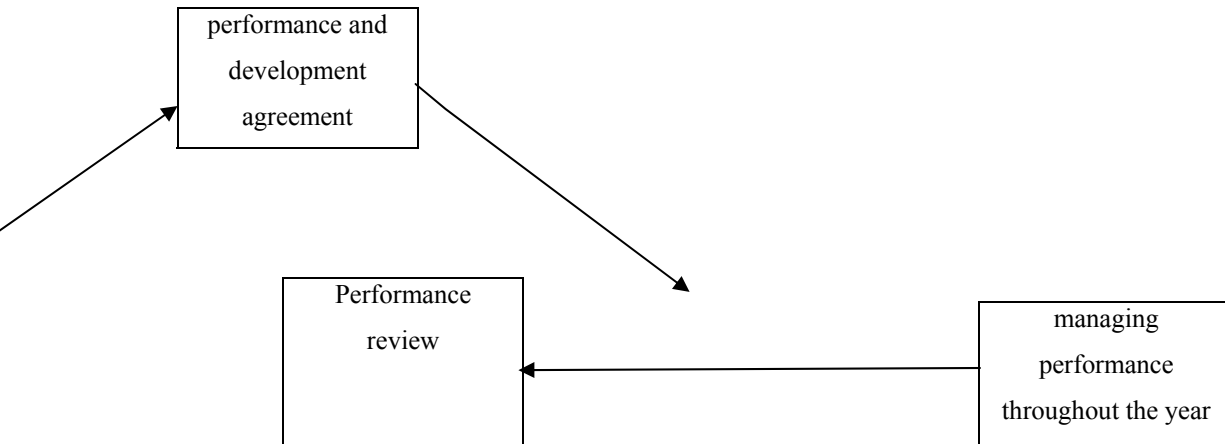
According to Armstrong (2006:504), the performance management cycle includes the following characteristics:

-*Planning*: concluding a performance and development agreement;

-*Acting*: managing performance throughout the year; and

-*Reviewing*: assessing progress and achievements so that action plans can be prepared and agreed and, in many schemes, performance can be rated.

Performance management is the responsibility of both managers and subordinates.

Managers are mostly not quick to deal with the Performance Appraisal of their subordinates. Sometimes it goes to an extent that the subordinates lodge complains before their cases are resolved. Gerber, Nel and Van Dyk (1987:169) are in support of this opinion by stating that "Many managers simply do not like the idea of apprising their subordinates and sometimes put it off until the last minutes". This observation is relevant to the situation that prevails in the Department. In the beginning, and during the year, some officials do not complete the work

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plans, and the monthly and quarterly reports. At the end of the year, it becomes a serious issue as they have to be ready if they want to be rewarded for excellent performance.

"It must be emphasised, however, that even with the best intentions, Performance Appraisal can never be fully objective and accurate. The most important reason is that people have a limited ability to process information" (Gerber, *et al.,* 1987:169). It is true that people alone will not be able to meet the required measure of performance. Management must develop a strategy to monitor and evaluate each subordinate's performance regularly. The officials, without a strict supervision, could neglect their duties when Performance Appraisals are to be submitted.

Gerber *et al*., (1987:171) are of the opinion that following requirements should form the criteria against which performance is measured:

✓ The criteria must be linked to the goals of the organization. If, for example, the organization (in the private sector) aims at increasing market penetration, output data on sales figures and customer satisfaction will be important in Performance Appraisal;

✓ The criteria must be linked to the job. Job analysis and job descriptions form the basis for the development of measuring instruments. Performance standards should be attainable and, as far as possible, measurable; and

✓ The criteria must take employee's needs into account. Employees are interested in how the employer experiences their performance, but also want to know what their future with the employer will bring. Feedback about performance provides information on an employee's potential for promotion or further development, but also offers employees an opportunity to communicate how they feel about their work, work groups and their interest in further training or promotion.

Performance management should be a team process between an employee's manager and top management. Top management and managers must manage performance in order to achieve their organizational or institutional goals. Armstrong (2006:502) writes that to ensure that a performance management culture is built and maintained, performance management has to have the active support and encouragement of top management, who must make it clear that it is regarded as a vital means of achieving sustained organizational success. He further states that

they must emphasize that performance management is what managers are expected to do, and that their performance as managers will be measured by reference to the extent to which they do it conscientiously and well.

It is a fact that individuals need to regularly be monitored in order to achieve a set objectives. It is human nature that some of the individuals will need close supervision if management really wants to sustain its objectives. Robbins (2000:175) writes that it may sound manipulative, but managers seek to control their employee's behaviour. He further warns as follows: Remember, managers accomplish goals by integrating the work of other people. Managers depend on these people to achieve their unit goals. These managers are accountable for the results, or lack of results, that those people achieve. For the managers to ensure that employees are performing as they are supposed to, managers rely on a wide range of behavioural control devices. This author merely cites that managers need not just rely on their subordinates to perform without been frequently checked. The responsibility of achieving these goals should be a team work.

2.17. PERFORMANCE REVIEW MEETING

Armstrong (2006:509) is of the opinion that although performance management is a continuous process it is still necessary to have a formal review once or twice yearly. This provides a focal point for the consideration of key performance and development issues. This performance review meeting is the means through which the five primary performance management elements of agreement, measurement, feedback, positive reinforcement and dialogue can be put to good use. In terms of the Limpopo Manual for Performance management for non Senior Management Services (SMS), there must be a review in each quarter of the financial year. These reviews must be accompanied by the pre-review-discussions (PRD).

The review should be rooted in the reality of the employee's performance. It is concrete, not abstract, and it allows managers and individuals to take a positive look together at how performance can be improved in the future, and how any problems in meeting performance standards and achieving objectives can be resolved. Individuals should be encouraged to assess their own performance and become active agents for change in improving their results. Managers should be encouraged to adopt their proper enabling role i.e., coaching and providing both

support and guidance (Armstrong, 2006:209). Dedicated individuals perform self evaluation of their daily performances to check whether they are in line with what is expected from their performances. This style helps them to be always on target than to realise later during evaluation that there has been some deviation from the agreement.

2.18. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Performance Appraisal is often confused with performance management. Performance Appraisal essentially entails the measurement and ranking of performance in the organization, whereas performance management comprises the management of all performance-related activities within the organization, of which Performance Appraisal is only one of those activities. Furthermore, performance management entails not only determining how performance is appraised (i.e., who does the appraising, how the process happens and establishing performance standards), but also what happens after an appraisal process has been completed. Performance management further entails putting organizational procedures in place in order to determine what will happen to the Performance Appraisal information (Fisher, Katz, Miller & Thatcher, 2003:74).

Most students of management do not differentiate Performance Appraisal from performance management. They do not see any different as stated by James Fisher and the others. The difference is that Performance Appraisal is the process of evaluating performance while performance management is the management of those processes. Armstrong (2006:500) also indicates that, it is sometimes assumed that Performance Appraisal is the same function as performance management, but there are significant differences. Performance Appraisal can be defined as the formal assessment and rating of individuals by their managers at usually, an annual review meeting. In contrast, Performance Management is a continuous and much wider, more comprehensive and more natural process of management that clarifies mutual expectations, emphasises the support role of managers who are expected to act as coaches rather than judges, and focuses on the future.

Fisher et al., (2003:75) indicate that clearly Performance Appraisal is an integral part of performance management, but Performance Appraisal is only a measurement exercise without the framework of performance management. Performance management is usually based on the

premise that performance in an organisation would improve if it were managed better. The book here simply indicates that management is the passport to success. If monitoring and evaluation are not done, performance management will not succeed. Management should be the pillar and strength of success. Management should be the drivers of the set objectives of the organisation.

2.19. CONCLUSIONS

It is evident through many learned scholars that performance management is a managerial function. If management does not own the system, it is obvious that the system will collapse. The system could easily be manipulated by employees. Performance management must be treated as ongoing or continuous, rather than to deal with it only during submission period. Management should always support their subordinates through training. They should always assist them in order that there should be no outstanding reports on performance. Performance evaluation is critical for management to easily realise its organisational goals.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology that will be followed in the research process. The chapter unpacks the concept(Southern Africa) research so that the relevance of the techniques employed herein could be understood. The difference between qualitative and quantitative research is scrutinized so as to clarify and understand the meaning of each of the words. The chapter also identifies the target group, sampling method and size of the population and the research technique.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Brynard and Hanekom (1997:28) are of the opinion that;

> Research methodology, or methods of collecting data, necessitates a reflection on the planning, structuring and execution of the research in order to comply with demands of truth, objectivity and validity. Hence, research methodology focuses on the process of research and the decisions which the researcher has to take to execute the research project.

These authors imply that research methodology is a strategy or format which one has to follow when he/she has to achieve an objective. A Research Design is literally a map that has all the detailed directions that lead to the final destination of the journey of the researcher.

In the human science research, observation and analysis are important for the researcher as he/she should concentrate on the human behaviour. According to Brynard *et al*., (1997:29) "in the human science two basic methodological research methods or methodologies can be distinguished: qualitative and quantitative methodology or methodological models". Bless *et al.,* (2000:37) contend that qualitative research relies on measurement to compare and analyse different variables. In contrast, qualitative research uses qualifying words or descriptions to record aspects of the world. In simple terms, quantitative use numbers to determine the score or the results of a research problem whilst qualitative explains the situation as it is in words.

Mouton (1996:107) is of the opinion that; "a well-defined research problem is a precondition for any study. The development of a research design thus follows logically from the research problem. A research design is defined as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem". The main function of a Research Design is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decisions should be so as to maximise the validity of the eventual results. A Research Design may be associated with a programme of events which must logically take place at certain time.

In the analogy between research and travel, researchers compared the Research Design of a project to a journey planner or itinerary. If we consider what goes into the planning of a journey, we get some idea of the functions of a Research Design. On having decided on the destination, one must, as a traveler, consider the best route by means of which to research it (Mouton, 1996:107). The author recommends that the researchers must be able to select the best design for the research. The Research Design must indicate step by step what the project is all about, i.e., where it originates from and its destination.

Mouton (2001:55) defines Research Design as a plan or blueprint of how one intends conducting the research. Mouton (2001:55) further explains that researchers often confuse "research design" and "research methodology" but these are two very different aspects of a research project. According to Mouton, a design is what a researcher thinks or plans to do and methodology is how to implement the whole blueprint. Research Design is, therefore, according to Mouton, a direction of what really is to happen or what a researcher intends to do while methodology is how to do it.

3.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the study is to investigate the application of the policy on Performance Appraisal of the supervisors and managers in the Department of Agriculture in the Sekhukhune District by doing the following:

✓ to gather different perceptions of both managers and supervisors on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Performance Appraisal process;

- ✓ to identify whether there are challenges pertaining to the implementation of Performance Appraisal System;
- ✓ to study the impact of the Performance Appraisal System on the employee's motivation; and
- ✓ to suggest measures of improvement on the overall Performance Appraisal System in the district.

The objective of this research is to contribute in bringing improvement of the Performance Appraisal System in the Department of Agriculture, Sekhukhune District.

3.4 AREA OF STUDY

The study area is the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture in the Limpopo Province. The district is made up of one district office and five municipalities, each operating to service the local community of the district. Each municipality is headed by a manager on level 12. The district has eleven managers, five heading municipalities whilst six are heads of divisions strategically placed at the district office. All the eleven managers report to the District Senior Manager who is in the district office. The Department of Agriculture has offices in each of these five municipalities. The officials are, according to the basic conditions of employment, entitled to move up the leader if their performance is acceptably recognizable. The district office is situated in Lebowakgomo, whereas the municipal offices are in Tubatse, Fetakgomo, Makhuduthamaga, Elias Motsoaledi and Mable Hall.

3.5 POPULATION

Welmer, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:52) state that the population of a study consists of individuals, groups, organizations, human products and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed. Welmer *e, al.,* (2005:52) further indicate that a research problem therefore relates to a specific population and the population encompasses the total collection of the units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions. The population in this study are 42 permanent staff of middle managers on level six to level eight and seven managers.

Brynard et al., (1997:43) state that "for the purposes of sampling, 'population' does not refer to the population of a country but to objects, phenomena, cases, events or activities, i.e., all the objects, events, phenomena, activities or cases which the researcher wishes to research in order

to establish new knowledge". Organizations or institutions, such as commercial banks or government departments or universities, serve as examples of population. The Limpopo Department of Agriculture, Sekhukhune District was the point of departure.

These 42 middle managers report to seven managers who are on salary level 12, and two managers based at the district office heading human resource services and finance divisions who are both on level 11. Sekhukhune District comprises five municipalities each headed by an agricultural specialized manager. The selection of these managers is supported by the fact that they supervise the target population. A questionnaire was distributed to this target group to complete. Interviews were also administered to clarify some of the issues.

3.6 SAMPLING METHODS

As a result of the size of the target population, it is usually not practically and economically feasible to involve all its members in a research project. Consequently, the researcher have to rely on the data obtained from a sample from the population (Huysamen, 1994:37). A group of people reflecting the whole population is selected to serve as a sample in the research project to provide a real behaviour of the total population. The results of the research will then give the picture of the whole population, including everyone even if they were not all involved in the sampling.

In everyday life, 'sampling' is pretty much equivalent to 'selection'. Although researchers often work on the assumption that sampling in everyday life is reliable, that it represents the 'population' from which it is selected, this is often not the case. Sampling, in everyday life, is usually haphazard and unsystematic and hence often results in decisions being based on inaccurate information (Mouton, 1996:132).

Mouton (1996:133) states that, "In contrast, the aim of research is often to study a representative number of events or people with a view to generalizing the results of the study to a defined population or universe. Typical examples are experimental studies, comparative studies and various kinds of sample surveys". Claire Bless and Craig Higson-Smith (2000:83) are also of the same opinion when they contend that "Without doubt, if one wants information about a group of persons or objects, the best strategy is to examine every single member or element of the group.

But it is also possible to reach accurate conclusions by examining only a portion of the group".
Basically, sampling, according to this author, is the selections of information from a sizable
number of persons selected out of a big group of people and thereafter make conclusions that
will be presumed to represent the real behaviour of the whole group.

Brynard *et al.,* (1997:44) contend that "A sample should be representative of the large group
(population or universe) and should include all elements of the population". For example, if a
researcher wants to determine how much time an employee spends on specific activities during a
working week, the sample should include all the activities (elements) which make up the work of
the employee.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS
Data analysis is done by firstly determining the norms applying to performance management.
Thereafter the views of the respondents are tested against the norms to establish the extent to
which the performance appraisals are carried out by middle managers and their managers. A five
point scale is used to determine the level of acceptance of the processes and their perceived
effectiveness in establishing the performance of staff by middle managers and managers.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION METHODS
According to Brynard and Hanekom (1997:27), explain that;

> Research methodology is the how of collecting data and the processing thereof within the
> framework of the research process. Two basic methodologies for collecting data can be
> distinguished, namely, quantitative and qualitative methods. Both methods make use of
> specific techniques to collect data, *inter alia*, literature reviews, interviews,
> questionnaires and direct observation.

Research methodology, or methods of collecting data, necessitates a reflection on the planning,
structuring and execution of the research in order to comply with demands of truth, objectivity
and validity. Hence, research methodology focuses on the process of research and the decisions
which the researcher have to take to execute the research project (Brynard, 1997:28).

The following data collection methods were used for the study:
  a. Documentary sources: such as the registers for submission of Memorandums of
     Understanding and quarterly and annual reports: the policy documents; and other

documents relevant to Performance Appraisals, were be scrutinized by the researcher. The permission to see these documents had already been obtained from the district head. Only documents belonging to the target group were perused.

b. Observations or participants observation

Bless *et al.,* (2000:104) contend that simple observation, also called non-participant observation, is the recording of events as observed by an outsider. For example, an observer placed at a road junction can, e.g., observe traffic and record the number of cars passing or pedestrians crossing the road, the speed of the cars, and the number and causes of accidents, and so on. The author clearly explains how observation takes place. In observation or participant's observation, a researcher records every activity or phenomenon that is relevant to the research topic. In this case, the researcher observed the behaviour of the participants at their workplace which is the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture. The researcher spent part of the fieldwork observing the systems, processes of the middle managers and managers in the relevant municipalities including the district office.

c. Questionnaires:

✓ A simplified questionnaire was prepared and handed to all the targeted individuals to complete. Open-ended questions leave the participants completely free to express their answers as they wish, as detailed and complex, as long or as short as they feel is appropriate. No restricting guidelines or suggestions for solutions are given (Bless *et al.,* 2000:118);

✓ Closed-ended questions are preferred because the answers are standard and can be compared from person to person. The answers are much easier to code and analyse. It is easier for respondents to respond, because it is a choice question;

✓ Structured questions

Structured questions indicate a range of possible answers. They give a choice of answers (for example, multiple-choice questions) or guidelines on the procedures to follow (for example, ranking questions). Sometimes, only two possibilities are given (such as "Yes/No", or "Agree/Disagree"), which allow for very little differentiation. Adding a third neutral possibility likes "No opinion" or "Not

applicable" increases the flexibility of the answer somewhat (Bless et al., 2000:18); and

✓ Unstructured face to face interviews were conducted with the targeted group of people on levels six to eight, and municipal managers and managers of divisions at the district office. The interview took place at the workplace of the target group. It took at least ten minutes per person and it took place where greater flexibility and freedom were encouraged. The basic principles of interviews will be strictly adhered to. They are respect and courtesy, acceptance and understanding, integrity, individualism, honestly, sincerity and confidentiality. Neuman (1994:245) explains that the advantage of face-to-face interviews is that it has the highest response rates and permits the longest questionnaires. He further states that they have the advantages as interviewers can observe the surroundings and can use non verbal communication and visual aids.

3.9 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Once data collection and checking have been completed, the researcher should begin the process of analyzing the data. This analysis is conducted so that the researcher can direct consistent patterns within the data, such as the consistent covariance of two or more variables (Bless *et al.*, 2000:137).

3.10 RESEARCH CHALLENGES

One of the distinctive features of the social sciences is that, to a greater or lesser degree, the participants in social research are aware of the fact that they are objects of investigation (Mouton, 1996:141). People are sometimes difficult to deal with as some will act differently to a simple question. Brynard *et al.,* (1997:36) contend that antagonistic individuals could even be told that the study will continue irrespective of their cooperation, and that it would as such be advantageous to them to cooperate without having to compel them to participate. Compelling them to respond could result in distorted responses.

The research problems or challenges that prevail are lack of cooperation from some of the managers. Out of the seven managers, only five returned the questionnaires. One of the two managers who did not return the questionnaire asked how much was going to be paid to him to

complete the questionnaire. This respondent announced that, if there was no price, then there was no response. The respondent added by saying that if there was nothing in return, then there would be nothing forthcoming from him. The effort to try and convince this employee by indicating the importance of this information to the department fell on deaf ears. The second one, who also did not return the questionnaire, did not even bother to provide any reason why she was not returning the questionnaire. Some of the supervisors also did not return the questionnaires. Most of the supervisors were hostile and not willing to provide information as they thought that researchers are benefiting from this information without any compensation in return. One of the supervisors did not accept a questionnaire as she claimed that it would delay her work as she had a lot of work to do.

3.11 MECHANISMS USED TO ADRESS RESEARCH CHALENGES

The researcher ascertained the target group that the interview is anonymous, as such they must not fear that the results of the research will contain their names. They were told that everything would be kept under lock and key, and no personal particulars are required. No action will take place as the aim of the study was basically for administrative purposes and not political. The intention of the study is to improve the appraisal system that has, ever since its inception, became a challenge to most of the employees in the public service. Those employees with unexpected problems were informed that the study is aimed at solving their long standing appraisal problems. They were told that the intention of the study is to investigate the obstacles regarding the implementation of the system that seemed to be a problem to the users. To those who were uncooperative, the researcher produced a proof of access to information in a form of letter which has been obtained from the district head.

3.12 CONCLUSIONS

Transformation is a difficult term to understand. Most employees do not accept change as they are perceived that they associate it with retrenchment. If one wants to bring change in a form of improvement, people become hostile and unnecessarily uncooperative.

Participants are reluctant to provide information. Other than being polite to them, one will not receive the information that the researchers require for the study. Some of the participants are of

the opinion that information is money, if one wants it, he/she needs to pay a price to get it. The major problem in the district is that in the previous year, all the employees did not receive any performance bonus as the district was disciplined for not submitting the reports on time. These complaints were mentioned by all the employees who were interviewed. These issues make the employees hostile to Performance Appraisal.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the deliberation is as described by Mouton (2001:124), where by attention is focused on the following;

- ✓ Documenting the results gathered during fieldwork;
- ✓ A discussion of the sample and its characteristics to ensure that the findings of the research were understood;
- ✓ A summary of the description of the main results that were obtained making use of tables and other visuals such as graphs and figures; and
- ✓ A discussion of the main trends and patterns in the data, with specific reference on the research questions.

In conclusion, the main findings are interpreted, with some highlights on either the positive or negative aspects of the main results.

4.2 SAMPLE PROFILES

The population of this study was based on the 42 middle managers on salary levels 6-8 and eleven managers on salary levels 11 and 12 of the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture. These middle managers and managers are scattered all over the district, which is made up of five municipalities and a district office that serves as the main or headquarters. The proportional Stratified Random sampling design was used for obtaining a sample, with the district office and five municipal offices forming the different strata. The researcher conducted the interviews in six workplaces of five municipalities, viz., Makhuduthamaga, Mable Hall, Elias Motsoaledi, Fetakgomo, Tubatse and the district office in Lebowakgomo.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The use of structured self-administered questionnaires, structured telephonic interviews and semi-structured focus group interviewing, together with records kept in reports of the Department of Agriculture Sekhukhune District.

The information on the questionnaire covers a large range of information about the profile of the individual's interviewees which included, e.g., the age, educational qualification, tertiary education and gender. Although the questionnaire covers a large scope of factors, care was taken when sifting takes place. Much concentration is given to the subject matter rather than age, education qualification, tertiary qualification and gender. Knowledge and understanding of Performance Management System is measured in this study.

First, the research looks into the research questions. The research questions are a guiding factor in this study. This chapter focused on the responds from the respondents on levels 6-8, including the eleven managers employed by the Department of Agriculture in Sekhukhune District. These managers include the Manager: Financial services; Manager: Corporate services; five Municipal managers; Manager: Value chain; Manager: animal production and health; Manager: Land and agrarian; and Manager: agricultural specialized services. Seven of these managers are stationed at the district office. Some of these managers do not have subordinates at the district office. Their subordinates are deployed in the municipalities where their services are required. These managers operate from the district office, attending to employees in all the five municipalities.

It is important to document the results gathered during fieldwork. Fifty three questionnaires were distributed to the equal number of respondents. Out of fifty three, only fifty one questionnaires were returned and two are not returned due to the reasons already alluded to in Chapter three. The questionnaire aims to establish whether the employees are familiar with the new appraisal system and also to test their take on it. After responding to the questionnaire one was be able to deduce what the employees whether the system is effective or not.

4.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. Why the Performance Management System is failing?
2. Is the system acceptable to the employees?
3. Does the system have an impact on human resource development?
4. Does the system allow for participation of all the employees?
5. Does the system get a proper monitoring and evaluation?

6. Is the control system in place?

7. Does the system respond to its mission/objective?

4.4.1. WHY IS THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FAILING?

The undermentioned are the reasons why the Performance Management System is failing in the Sekhukhune district. The respondents have different views about this meritocratic system.

✓ Employees are of the opinion that there is no adequate training offered for the under performers. Management is not doing enough to see to it that under performers receive assistance in as far as work empowerment is concern. These lead to having more employees not understanding how the system works. It is also indicated that some of the managers also do not understand or rather are not conversant with how the system should operate. Some managers are recruited from the private sector whereas some are from teaching field, and all of them do not possess the knowledge within the public sector and, instead of delivering, they are messing up. These managers are said to often score their subordinates high because they rely on them for training as they also do not understand the system given that they are new in the system. This type of action creates unfairness to the whole system of Performance Appraisal. The reason being that, whilst the new manager is inflating the scores on his/her subordinates, the other competent manager is scoring his/her subordinates accordingly, and they are getting appropriate scores that are far less than those of the manager who depends on his subordinates on everything, even if they are poor performers.

   ✓ Performance Management System requires that there should be continuous monitoring and evaluation of the employees. Most employees indicated that there is no monitoring at all, and, in most cases, employees are not completing the performance management documents as required by the policy.

   ✓ The system fails because the managers are not fair in their scoring of their subordinates. Employees claim that supervisors score their peers on personal reasons rather than on the actual work performed.

   ✓ The inconsistent payment due to the budget constraint contributes to the failure of the system. Sometimes, the budget favours non performers as opposed to the good performers which will discourage the good performers to continue with their good performances. If the good performers do not have adequate budget to pay their staff, it will mean that

production will drop. No one will want to work hard if there is nothing to encourage them to do so.

✓ The policy on Performance Management System prescribe that the system is developmental. This notion to the system makes the system to be difficult to adapt to as it develops all the time. It is said that it is always changing, as such it is not easy to understand as when you think you are conversant with, it changes again and again each year. This fact also makes the system to fail. It is also alleged that it has many different formats and one does not really know which one is the correct one.

✓ The system of awarding performance bonuses seems to be a free for all as every employee receives the performance bonus award, even those who do not qualify for it. The reason being that the control systems are not in place. There are no proper systems to check and identify good performers from non-performers**.**

✓ The system is easily manipulated as employees are not complying with the rules but yet they are able to go away with murder. The system requires that each and every employee of the State should have a performance instrument duely signed by both the supervisor and the subordinate from the first of every April month to the end of March the following year. This rule is ignored by most employees and their supervisors. Most employees sign their performance instruments together with their quarterly reports during the preceding financial year.

✓ Employees are of the opinion that the system is difficult and not understandable. It is believed that, because the system is not understood, all the staff needs to be trained regularly until everybody could independently do it for themselves.

✓ The other reason why the system fails is the fact that even if there are some measures to deal with offenders in the public service, nothing happens to the employees who do not comply with the system.

✓ It is alleged by some of the employees that some of the supervisors judge their subordinates on personal issues rather than work related issues. The other employee concludes that the supervisors practice unfairness during Performance Appraisals.

4.4.2. IS THE SYSTEM ACCEPTABLE TO THE EMPLOYEES

This is one of the study questions that was answered by the respondents from the population to this study. It is imperative to establish from the employees whether they are satisfied with the system of performance appraisal. The following are the responses obtained through interviews and through the responses on the questionnaire that has been administered to obtain data:

✓ When conducting research, one realizes that most employees are saying that they are completing the documents for Performance Management System only for the sake of compliance. They say that they do this job only because it is compulsory and required by the statute. They have lost interest in the system at all;

✓ The employees state that the system does not encourage the best performers as all employees are awarded on a uniform percentage irrespective of whether they performed good or poor. Poor performers are not differentiated from good once during the awarding stage. The system does not have a mechanism to address poor performers;

✓ One employee states that performance management causes trauma to many employees when it comes to awarding, as there is no standardized method of judging subordinates. This employee feels that some managers are unfair and biased in their allocation of scores to their subordinates. Some managers are presumed doubtful about their knowledge of the system and are, as such, afraid to score their subordinates correctly as they fear intimidation and confrontation;

✓ Employees also consider the system not acceptable as it is difficult to understand because it seldom changes from time to time. They claim it causes confusion as one will never be sure that he/she understands the system. It is added that forms used for completion of the performance management cannot be understood by ordinary employees as they are only written in English and most of the employees are illiterate;

✓ Another employee is of the opinion that employees respond to the Performance Management System because it is a question of compliance which is none negotiable;

✓ The other reason why the system is not acceptable is that it places a fixed number of how many employees should be rewarded thus, leaving many employees frustrated and disillusioned. This is because of the reason that only 5% of the total personnel expenditure should be utilized to award performance bonuses of the employees. The

budget plays a major rule in as far as how many employees should be rewarded. This condition makes the system not to be acceptable to many employees;

✓ There is also a belief that the system is being abused by some of the employees, together with their supervisors. Allegations are that, if a supervisor and a subordinate are having a good relationship, the subordinate will always be awarded better scores, even if he submits his documents after the closing date;

✓ Employees are saying that the system does not have a plan to address/deal with the employees who are not complying with the policy on Performance Management System;

✓ The other reason cited is that completing the performance management documents is complicated and time consuming and therefore does not fit the standard of the public sector; and

✓ Another employee's respond is that the system must be replaced by another system where employees will have equal opportunities. The idea here is that Performance Management System is somewhat biased and does not guarantee equally opportunity for all employees. This employee's opinion is that the system is able to sideline other employees and only favours a certain group of the employees. It is, therefore, suggested by this respondent that this system should only be utilised for managers, and a new system be introduced for the rest of the employees.

4.4.3. DOES PERFORMANCE HAVE AN IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT?

This is one of the questions that need to be addressed fully as human development is the major boost on the economic and wellbeing of the employees. In addressing this question, one needs to recall that when compiling the performance instruments, each and every employee should indicate which competencies need to be developed. Before indicating which competencies need to be developed, one must first indicate the competencies which he/she is competent at. The following are some of the arguments advanced by the employees of the Sekhukhune District of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture:

✓ One of the employees thinks that employees should be workshopped frequently until they are fully acquainted with the system. It is also said that most managers need to be trained as they lack skills in as far as the work and the system is concern;

- ✓ Competencies required are not being followed by the human resource development division as it is supposed to be its competency to arrange training for all the employees;
- ✓ An employee from the department says workshops are conducted by different people with different information on the same matter;
- ✓ It is alleged that underperformers are left to their own without help. This employee goes further to allege that underperformers are punished as they are not assisted so that they also could improve their standard of performance;
- ✓ It is alleged that some of the employees do not get training even though they indicate their skills gaps which need to be developed on their individual performance instruments.
- ✓ One respondent alleges that the major challenge of addressing training needs is inadequate budget. The budget does not cover all the fields the human resource development sections want to develop. The budget is cited as a constraint for employee development; and
- ✓ One employee complains that he/she needs training but they are not given the opportunity to be trained. Training is done on cascading levels, and not all levels are trained as there is no enough money to train all the levels.

4.4.4. DOES THE SYSTEM ALLOW PARTICIPATION OF ALL THE EMPLOYEES?

The intention of this question is to find out whether or not the system encourages working relationships between supervisors and subordinates. The question needs to establish if there is a mutual relationship in the workplace.

- ✓ The response of one of the employees on this question is that the system allows for participation because the supervisor and the manager sit down together when doing the evaluation and where they do not agree they discuss the issues until there is an agreement. This employee is optimistic that the system allows for participation between supervisors and subordinates.
- ✓ Another respondent says managers always support their subordinates because their performance affects their performance. For the managers to achieve their own goals, they should encourage their subordinates to perform hard.
- ✓ A respondent claims that managers appears to look down on the system as the tool to evaluate their subordinates. In other words, they undermine the system because they

think it delays their performance as they are supposed to continuously evaluate their lazy subordinates who are always not satisfied with their correct scores.

✓ A respondent thinks managers do not give support to their subordinates because of time and number of staff employees working under them.

✓ One respondent thinks that managers only need the work to be done and once done they do not even comment or appreciate the efforts performed by their subordinates.

✓ The other view is that some managers are visiting poor performers to discuss their weaknesses and give more courage to good performers.

✓ Other employees perceive that Performance Management System improves communication between managers and their subordinates.

✓ It is alleged that managers instead of assisting their subordinates, they refer them to the officials dealing with Performance Management System at the human resource division for further clarification. This action by the managers proves that managers lack capacity and skill on Performance Management System. Subordinates lose credibility of their supervisors and starts to depend either on themselves or on other people from other divisions in the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture.

4.4.5   DOES THE SYSTEM GET A PROPER MONITORING AND EVALUATION?

The policy on Performance Management System requires that after completion of the performance instruments/work plans, all work performed should be continuously monitored for compliance by both the subordinates and the supervisors. These processes assist both the subordinate and the supervisor to see whether or not they are in line with their departmental goals.

✓ It is reported that some managers view Performance Management System as a compliance issue rather than a tool to monitor the performance of individuals with an aim to achieve the departmental goals.

✓ Allegations are that the system is checked only when it is the submission period. The argument here is that during the year, there is no activity taking place in relation to Performance Management System. Employees only become active when annual reports are to be submitted for awarding of bonuses.

- ✓ Some managers do not even know the system properly. Subordinates are more supportive than managers as they understand the system much better than them.
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation are only done during the final evaluation of a particular financial year. Employees and managers neglect their responsibilities of doing monitoring and evaluation continuously throughout the assessment period.

4.4.6. ARE THE CONTROL SYSTEMS IN PLACE?

It is emphasized by the policy on Performance Management System that employees should continuously implement the system by monitoring and evaluating the performances of their fellow employees. The work plan indicates which responsibilities need to be performed to achieve the organizational objectives. These responsibilities should be monitored daily to make sure that no deviation takes place in as far as meeting the targets.

- ✓ Employees contend that they only complete their work when it is needed for awarding of bonuses and pay progression. There is no mechanism to detect that they are manipulating the system. For that reason, the system will never be implemented according to the policy.
- ✓ The control systems are not in place as there is no method to deal with those who do not comply with the contents of the policy on Performance Management System.
- ✓ Poor performers are not getting assistance from their supervisors.
- ✓ Some employees do not submit their documents on time and nothing happens to them. This promotes a culture of not complying at all as there is no mechanism to deal with non complying officials.
- ✓ Control systems are not in place at all.

4.4.7. DOES THE SYSTEM RESPOND TO ITS MISSION/OBJECTIVES?

In answering this question, one understands whether or not the system responds to its mission and objectives. This question informs the researcher whether or not the objectives are achieved.

- ✓ Some employees perceive that the system do not respond to its mission as employees regards it as a payment tool not a performance instrument.
- ✓ Late submission of the performance instruments, quarterly reports and annual performance reports is an indication that the system does not respond positively towards its mission.

4.5. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

During the interviews with some of the respondents, a question of staff development has been continuously raised. The opinion of some members of the population under study is that the system needs to be filtered down to all the employees in the department so that everyone could be able to deal with it independently without hassles. Training is suggested to be one important tool or method that could help to save the situation as it is claimed that even the managers are not knowledgeable on how to implement the Performance Management System. Although some of the respondents are of the opinion that training is required, some think there is no extra training needed. They claim the system is straight forward.

The study focuses on the performance in terms of the salary levels. A number of respondents on different salary levels is looked at. The questionnaire has been developed to answer a choice question. Alternative answers are already given the respondents are expected to make their own choices on which of the answers best responds to their knowledge on the subject matter. The "agree" and "disagree" questions were used to find out whether the population "agrees" or "disagrees" with the Performance Management System policy. All the "agree" answers are in line with the policy for Performance Management System whereas the "disagree" once are opposite to the interpretation of the policy. If the employee disagrees with the statement, it shows that he/she does not have the knowledge of how the system functions.

The questions are simple and are based on the basic practical implementation of the Performance Management System. Every employee can respond easily to these questions as they are based on daily practice of the Performance Appraisal. This notion of the system being practical is derived from the fact that every employee of the State is compelled by law that he/she must complete and sign a performance instrument together with his/her supervisor at the beginning of every financial year. The performance instrument becomes his/her daily work plan where he/she must refer daily on what to be performed. Employees are obliged by the policy to consult with their work plans on daily, monthly and quarterly basis. Their performance must be monitored daily to make sure that there is no deviation from the objectives of the department. Monitoring must be done by both the supervisor and the subordinate. At some stage, even the public is required to evaluate the standard provided by the employees through Customer Survey forms which are

unanimously placed in the suggestion boxes throughout the district. Below is the graph that indicates the different responses on different levels.
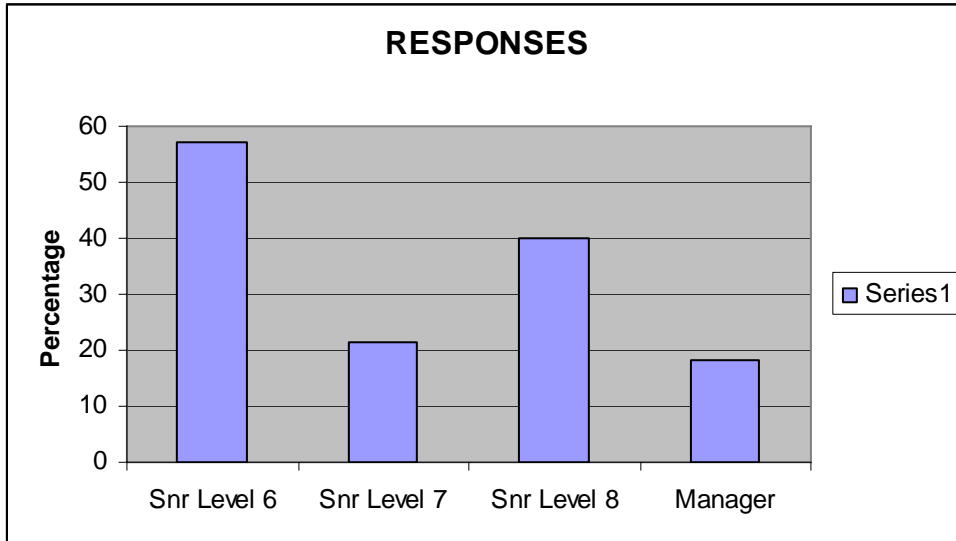
Figure 1: Total number of respondents per level

Figure 1 indicates the number of the population, in terms of levels, which has been utilized as a sample for this study. One will realize that there is a large number of participants on salary level 6, which is 57%, followed by salary level 8 with 40%, then followed by salary level 7 with 22% and the least population is on the level of managers, which makes 18% of the population. All these employees were given equal opportunity to indicate their perception about the performance management policy and its implementation in the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture.
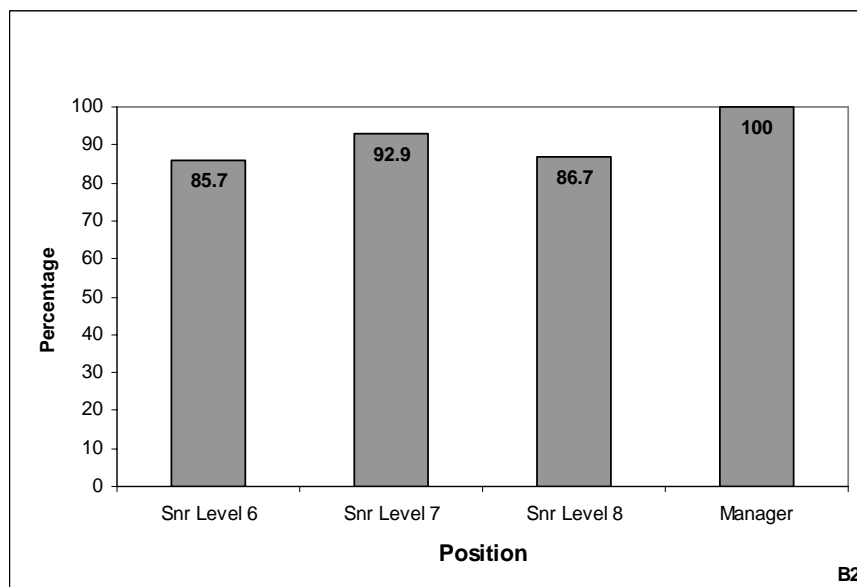
Figure 2: Agree and disagree responses

The above mentioned graph represents the agree and disagree responses to the questions on the questionnaire. The graph indicates that almost all the respondents agree with the policy on Performance Management System. The results show that 85,7% of the employees on salary level 6 agree with the system; 92,9% of the employees on salary level 7 agrees with the system; 86,7% of the employees on salary level eight agrees with the system; whilst 100% of the managers are also agreeing with the system of Performance Management System. These results prove that the system in its own is highly acceptable by a large number of employees in the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture.

The response to the questionnaire indicates that Performance Management System is well understood by the majority of employees in the Sekhukhune District. It is evident through the response that only a minority needs development on the system. This result supports the response by some of the employees who claim that, when there is a workshop, not every employee does attend.

On the question of whether or not employees were ever introduced to the system, only a minimum number of the respondents claimed that they were never exposed to any training on

Performance Management System, but the results prove otherwise. The other reason cited that could have an effect on the little percentage of respondents claiming that they were never trained, is that workshop attendees are not monitored and employees have the choice to attend or not to attend. Some respondents indicated during the interview sessions that there is no programme for workshops. They say that workshops are organized haphazardly without consideration of other programmes. They claim that this arrangement of training makes the workshops to clash with other important activities; this makes individuals to choose where to go. In the case such as this most employees will attend to their individual branch programmes and leave out those of the other branches.
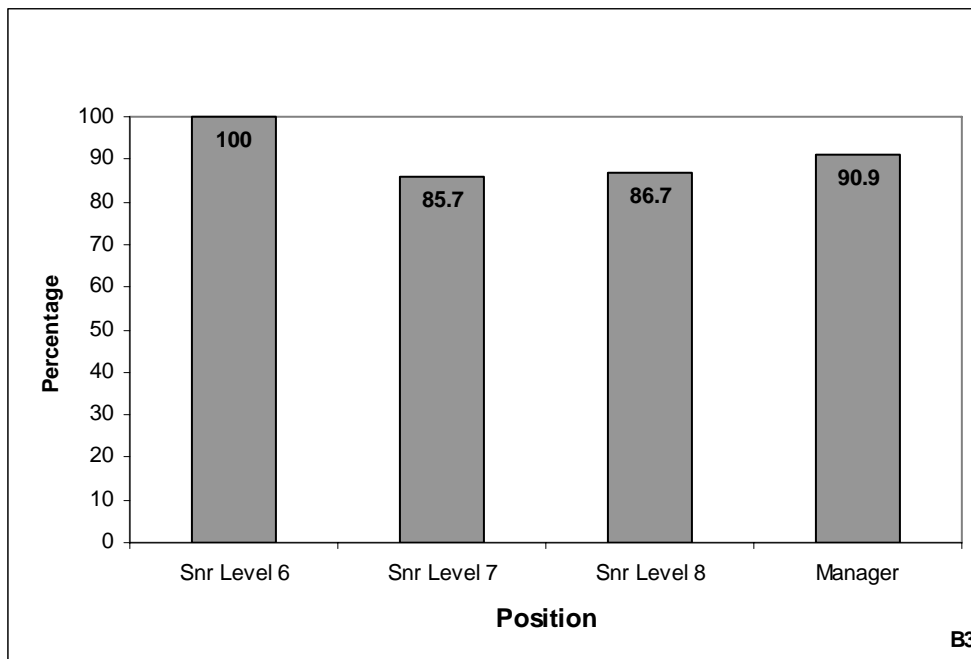
Figure 3: Positive and negative responses

Figure 3 represents the response to the choice statements with "positive" and "negative" responses. The result shows that almost all the employees have responded positive about Performance Management System. If you look at the graph, you will realize that all employees on all salary levels responded positive on the performance system. These results indicate that only few employees on levels 7, 8 and managers need a little attention. The respondents on salary level six performed excellently on this category of responses. The percentages are all good, showing a positive reaction towards Performance Management System.
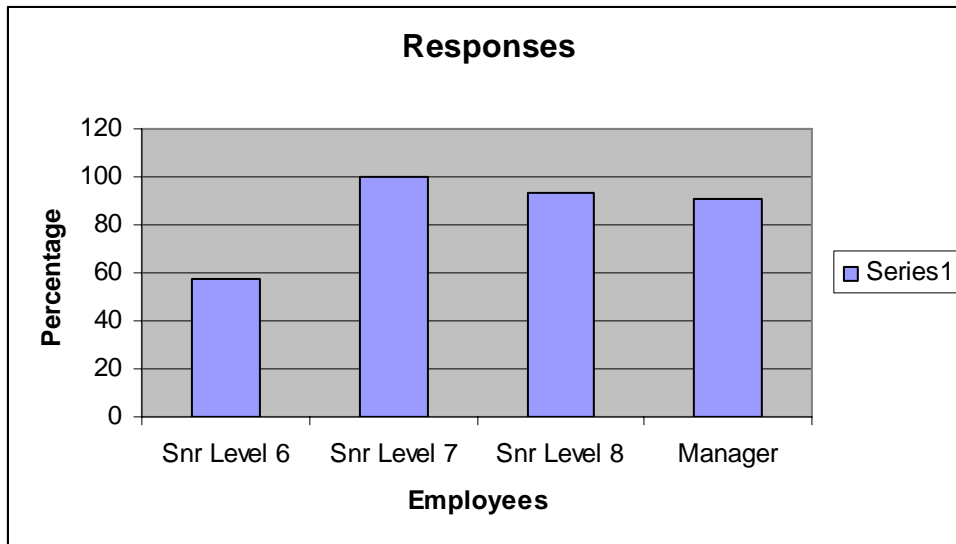
Figure 4: Skills and knowledge of Performance Management System

Figure 4 represents the knowledge or skill of employees towards Performance Management System. It is evident that employees on level six are the lowest performers in as far as their knowledge is concerned regarding the Performance Management System. Percentage wise, one would realise that employees on salary level six, although they are the lowest, their percentage is average as they scored 59%. Generally speaking, all the groups performed well as their scores are all above 50%. The employees on salary level 7 scored 100%, followed by those on salary level 8 with 92%, and the managers scored 90%. It is however surprising to have a score like this which is contrary to the implementation of the Performance Management System in the district.

When perusing the records from human resource, one realises that most employees do not receive performance bonuses as their documents are never submitted on time. Records prove that the district always submits the schedule for payment of bonuses late after the cut-off date, and this results in being penalised by not honoring them. The reason for late submission is said to be caused by the late submission of the employees.
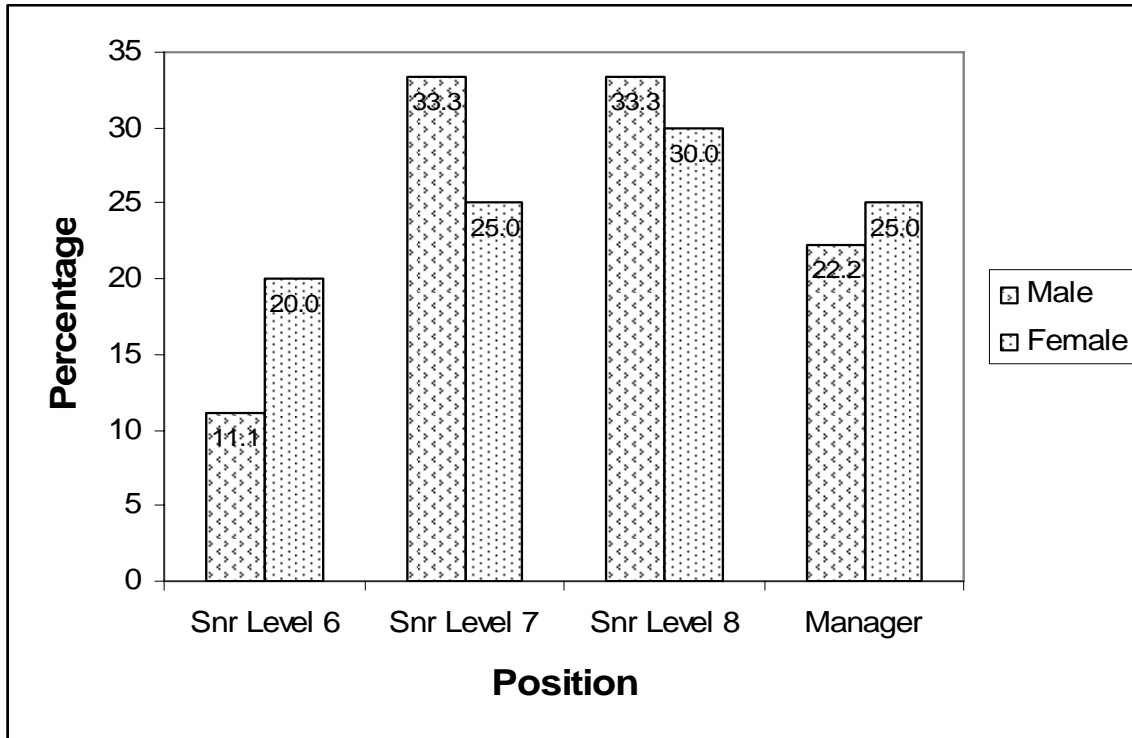
Figure 5: Responses according to gender

Females are dominating levels 6 and 12, whilst 7and 8 are dominated by male employees. This graph shows that there are more females employed on salary levels six and twelve. Salary levels seven and eight are clouded by male employees than females. This ratio indicates that employment equity is still lacking behind in the department. The department is not yet transformed as there is no balance in terms of gender equity. The district has few posts on levels six and twelve. The whole district has only twelve managers. These make supervision impossible as one manager has a large number of subordinates to supervise. Managers are mostly occupied in management meetings and other job related responsibilities that take much of their time than to sit down and look into their junior's daily performances.

4.6. POLICY IMPACT

According to this policy, all employees must have performance instruments to have the work going on. This is a pre-requisite of employment. All employees' performances should be evaluated against what is on the performance instruments and what they practically do or do not do. Evaluation is a measurement of performance based on the performance instruments and the

actual work performed during the evaluation period. Anderson (2006:255) is of the opinion that policy outputs are the things actually done by agencies in pursuance of policy decisions and statements.

As the policy guideline is clear of what should be done regarding the Performance Management System the practice as observed in the Department of Agriculture in the Sekhukhune District is as follows:

- o The files that have been perused indicate that managers and employees are not serious about the policy guideline as the employees are doing the opposite to what the framework requires;
- o The performance instruments are not thoroughly completed. Those that are completed are signed after the due dates;
- o The quarterly reports are all signed in the last quarter of the year as the dates indicate the last quarter of the year;
- o In most cases all the documents are signed on the day of the submission of the annual reports;
- o During the interviews, some of the employees claim that they do not know when the performance and quarterly reports must be completed;
- o Managers and supervisors are not supporting the process as they do not follow the programme of the system. Submission of the quarterly reports is not in accordance with the time table in terms of the policy;
- o Most employees are scored high even if their reports were not available during the auditing of the system. The system is easily manipulated as the employees are never punctual with their submissions;
- o Records prove that workshops on performance management are conducted by the head office personnel and the district champions;
- o Regardless of the number of workshops conducted for the employees, there is still no improvement;
- o It has been established that not all the staff attend this workshops. Some staff just sit back in their offices during the workshops;

- Some employees claim that the system changes every year, and this makes it impossible to cope with the changes;

- Management claims that there is no enough time to give assistance to every individual employee.

- Some of the employees agree with the system and maintain that most employees are just not ready to support the system;

- Some employees claim that they have been long within ranks and the system is not doing enough to address their long stay in one position;

- Some state that the system has a limited budget that does not cover everyone and those not covered becomes demoralized and reduce their imputes;

- Some say the budget allocation system applied for the awarding of bonuses does not detect good performers from bad ones as employees are mostly paid at a flat rate, even where the scores differ;

- Records indicate that payment of bonuses is always done in October of every year even though the cycle of the system ends in March of every year;

- The attendance of workshops is not compulsory and this makes people to choose to attend, thus making the system to look not worthwhile to all employees;

- Records show that the time-table for submitting the performance instruments, quarterly reports and annual reports is not adhered to; and

- Monitoring is not effective as managers and supervisors are not working together.

Deadlines are not honoured and the head office is said to always demand that all employees submit their reports, which delays the reports of those who complied with the time frame. In this case, it is reported that no payment will be effected before every employee submits his/her reports. These open channels for manipulation of the system by those who do not do their work on time.

4.7 CONCLUSION

Chapter four dealt specifically with data analysis, graph descriptions, and discussions of the survey data. It presented basically a discussion of the examination of a number of the present research questions. It also examined the impact of the Performance Management System. It dealt

with the perceptions of the employees towards the evaluation process which is been implemented in the public service.

The survey study revealed that there is some mixed feelings about the implementation of the Performance Management System. The system was launched in 2002 but till today, six years later, it is still not effectively implemented. Employees have different opinions about the system. The main reason observed about the system is that employees do not want change or rather they are difficult to change to the new democratic patterns of doing things. Some employees think there is nothing wrong with Performance Management System whilst some say it must be changed as it does not equal the standard of the public service. The survey revealed that employees are theoretically good with the system, but practically they are performing worse than expected. It has been revealed by the available record that since 2006 till to date, there has been less people paid bonuses on performance. The reason has been that not all employees adhere to the time frames, rules and regulations. Their reports were submitted late and they were, as such, declared null and void by the office dealing with performance management.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The intention of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Performance Management System as a tool for Performance Appraisal. After the 1994 general elections, which brought about democracy in South Africa, the Department of Public Service and Administration, together with the Department of Labour and other stakeholders, decided on the new meritocratic system that would replace all the existing merit systems. Before 1994, there were a number of administrations from a number of different homeland states, independent states and the central government. All these government states had their different ways of dealing with the promotion of their public servants.

This new evaluation tool was launched in 2002 with the aim of doing away with all the systems that were implemented earlier on by the different administrations. The main aim was to have a uniform system that will be used by all the civil servants in South Africa. This system looked like it has some problems. The reason why the system has problems is because employees were complaining about the Performance Management System. They always say that their performances were not paid like their counterparts in other workplaces in the same department. This notion required a study that would help in finding out what the users of the system think about it, and also to find out whether or not they were implementing the system correctly as required by policy.

Some provinces call it Performance Management Development System whereas in Limpopo it is called Performance Management System. This study has been conducted in the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture. The district is situated some sixty kilometers south of Polokwane. The district is made up of five local municipalities. All the five municipalities are along the Mpumalanga Corridor.

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the survey findings and to arrive at an informed position about what the people feels about this new system of service delivery.

5.2 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter one

Chapter one covered the introduction, background and the intention for conducting the study. It explained the reason why this topic has been selected as a problem to be investigated. This chapter has clarified the objective of the selection of this topic. It also clarified the research problem and also providing the problem statement. This chapter has brought forward the picture of what is taking place in the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture. This chapter also contains the definition of terms that has been used to make the study easily understandable to the reader. The concepts were defined in a simple language. The research question has also been provided in this chapter.

Chapter two

Chapter two has concentrated on the literature review by summarising the literature consulted in order to determine the theories on which the research was to be based. It is important to consult what is already in the literature in order to compare and find a good solution to the problem. The chapter provided the theoretical framework for the research problem as it links to available literature. Where possible, the website was also visited to have a wide scope of investigation into the problem.

Chapter three

This chapter paid attention to the research methodology applied during the investigation. This chapter dealt with the pilot study; research design; aim and objectives; area of study; population; sampling methods; data analysis; data collection methods; methods of data analysis; research challenges; and the method used to address research challenges. The research methods applied during data collection in the research survey were both qualitative and quantitative.

The questionnaire and the interviews were used to gather data from the targeted group of employees on different salary levels in the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture.

Chapter four

This chapter concentrated mainly on the presentation of the analyses of the survey data in terms of the frequencies, percentages, tables and graphs, for easy interpretation of the survey results. The information from the record kept by the human resource section has been perused to compare it with the responses given by the target group on the questionnaire and also the notes of the survey collected from the individuals. This chapter carried the information of the practical implementation of Performance Management System in the Sekhukhune District of the Department of Agriculture. In short, this chapter contained the in-depth presentation and detailed discussion of the data or information collected during the study. In this chapter, data had been analysed in a way of converting it into an understandable form. The research question has been dealt with within this chapter. The findings of the research have been discussed fully in this chapter.

Chapter five

Chapter five contains the summary of the main conclusion of the study. It addressed the main conclusion of the study. It dealt with the interpretation of the main conclusions. Finally, the chapter provides a recommendation for further study or review of the available prescripts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

Based on the critical information obtained from the study, the following recommendations are made for the attention of the Department of Agriculture particularly Sekhukhune District.

Recommendation A:

According to the survey's findings, it appears that some employees were never trained on how the system on performance management operates. It is thus advisable that all employees in the district be trained. It is again advisable that these trainings be made compulsory and

the reason for not attending should be approved by the district head. The attendance of these trainings should not be optional. Disciplinary action should be taken against those who do not toe the line, as some of the employees have already indicated that nothing is done to those who are not following the policy. A record for training should be administered by the district performance management champion.

Recommendation B:

The survey of the findings reveal that employees do not adhere to the rules and regulations pertaining to the planned programme of dealing with the requirements of Performance Management System. It is evident through the results of the survey that a high percentage of the respondents responded positively about their insight of the system, although practically what is performed is the opposite. Performance Management System should be seen as a joint exercise for both the supervisor and the subordinate. Management should keep a proper time table for submission of the performance instruments, quarterly reports and annual reports. Managers must monitor their subordinates continuously and make sure that all their performance evaluation documents are correctly done and submitted according to the policy framework. All documents submitted after the due date must be accompanied by a written reason that must be considered by only the head of the department. There is a culture of laziness discovered in the public service. The Department of Public Service and Administration has embarked on a programme to transform the public service by work shopping all the employees on Change Engagement Programme. This programme aim at helping in uplifting the people's moral. It is suggested that all employees be workshopped on these programme so that they could regain their strength of performance.

Recommendation C:

The survey of the findings proved that some of the employees on the lower levels are illiterate while some do not understand any second language. A proposal is here submitted that the policy be translated into the local provincial languages so that those employees who only know how to write in their home languages could be able to participate in completing and compiling their own work plans and reports. These employees complain that their supervisors do not complete their documents on time. They believe that if this policy could

be translated into their home languages their reports will never be late as they will self complete their documents on time without having to wait for the time when their supervisors are free to assist them.

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ANNEXURE A: LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

P.O Box 1122

CUENESPOORT

0745

22 June 2007

The Senior Manager

Private Bag X01

CHUENESPOORT

0745

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN YOUR DITRICT

I am a bursary holder employed by the Department of Agriculture stationed at the district office. I am a student enrolled with Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership. I am studying for a Masters in Public Administration (MPA). I started the course in 2006 and I am presently in the second year of my studies. The main requirement for success in this study is conducting a research which includes the writing of a thesis. The Department has already approved my topic for research which is, An evaluation of performance appraisal for supervisors in the Department of Agriculture Sekhukhune District Limpopo Province. This study is specifically based in the Sekhukhune District.

Your office is thus humbly requested to grant me permission to interview employees on level 6-8 and 5 Municipal heads and also to peruse some documents which the contents will be treated as highly confidential. The study will not be published without the permission of the Department of Agriculture. The study could in future serve as a source for reference for the district.

………………………………….

TLOWANA MP

Approved/Disapproved

…………………………………………………

 SENIOR MANAGER SEKHUKHUNE

ANNEXURE B: QUESTIONNAIRE

A: QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire should only be completed by the middle managers on salary levels 6-8 and 5 district municipal managers on salary level 12 and two managers for Human Resource and Finance both on level 11.

✓ The aim of this questionnaire is to evaluate the impact of the Performance Appraisal System adopted by the State.

✓ Answering of this questionnaire is voluntary.

✓ Participation in answering this questionnaire could be withdrawn by the interviewee at own will without prejudice.

✓ Personal details are not required, all questionnaire are unanimously treated.

✓ Information supplied will be safeguarded by the researcher as highly confidential and will not be published.

A. Personal particulars

1. SEX: a. Male   □

     b. Female   □

2. Educational qualification: a. Standard 10   □

            b. Degree/ Diploma   □

            c. Senior Degree/Diploma   □

3. Age: a. 20-29   □

     b. 30-39   □

     c. 40-49   □

     d. 50-59   □

     e. 60-65   □

4. Present position occupied: a. Senior clerk level 6   □

            b. Senior clerk level 7   □

            c. Senior clerk level 8   □

            d. Manager   □

B. QUESTIONNAIR ITEMS

1. Please indicate with an **X** against the statement which best suit your perception about the Performance Appraisal in your organization.

2. Performance Appraisal gives employees confidence of understanding their work objectives.

        a. Strongly agree   □

        b. Agree   □

        c. Strongly disagree   □

        d. Disagree   □

        e. No opinion   □

3. The first stage of Performance Appraisal is the completion of the management plan.

        a. Strongly agree   □

        b. Agree   □

        c. Strongly disagree   □

        d. Disagree   □

        e. No opinion   □

4. Performance Appraisal affords employee opportunity to make adjustment of their planned activities.

        a.   Strongly agree   □

        b.   Agree   □

        c.   Strongly disagree   □

        d.   Disagree   □

        e.   No opinion   □

5. Performance instruments are completed by the supervisees and supervisors every year.

        a. Strongly agree   □

        b. Agree   □

        c. Strongly disagree   □

        d. Disagree   □

        e. No opinion   □

6. Performance Management System allows employees to give their inputs about their perception of their work.

      a. Strongly agree   □

      b. Agree   □

      c. Strongly disagree   □

      d. Disagree   □

      e. No opinion   □

7. The Performance Appraisal assists in developing a healthy relationship between supervisees and supervisors.

      a. Strongly agree   □

      b. Agree   □

      c. Strongly agree   □

      d. Disagree   □

      e. No opinion   □

8. The Performance Appraisal facilitate the discussion on employee development.

      a. Strongly agree   □

      b. Agree   □

      c. Strongly disagree   □

      d. Disagree   □

      e. No opinion   □

9. Performance Management System is a communication tool between the employee and manager.

      a. Strongly agree   □

      b. Agree   □

      c. Strongly disagree   □

      d. Disagree   □

      e. No opinion   □

10. Performance Management System improves efficiency and competition.

      a. Strongly agree   □

b. Agree □

c. Strongly disagree □

d. Disagree □

e. No opinion □

11. Performance Management System encourages independency and innovativeness.

a. Strongly agree □

b. Agree □

c. Strongly disagree □

d. Disagree □

e. No opinion □

12. Performance Appraisal is easy to understand and it does not require intensive skills to implement.

a. Strongly agree □

b. Agree □

c. Strongly disagree □

d. Disagree □

e. No opinion □

C. QUESTIONNAIRE NO 2

NB. All reasons provided for supporting the yes or no answers are regarded as positive or negative in the report

1. In your opinion, do you think there is a need for Performance Appraisal in your organization?

   Yes □ / No □

   Please support your selection...

   ....

   ....

2. Do you in your opinion think that Performance Appraisal is effectively implemented in your organization?

   Yes □ / No □

Please support your choice...

....

....

3. Do your think the Performance Appraisal has some shortcomings or challenges?

       Yes   □ / No   □

Please give reasons to your answer...

....

....

4. Does the employees' like the Performance Appraisal System?

       Yes   □ / No   □

Please support your selection..

....

....

5. Is the Performance Appraisal easily adapted by all the stakeholders?

       Yes   □ / No   □

Please support your selection..

....

....

6. Was the Performance Appraisal officially explained to you and all the employees?

       Yes   □ / No   □

If your answer is yes, explain the method used to publicize the system......................

....

....

7. Do you think the system needs some improvements?

       Yes   □ / No   □

Please support your answer..

....

....

8. Do the results of the annual report reflect the actual performance performed by the employees?

       Yes   □/ No   □

Please support your selection...

....

....

9. Do managers and supervisors continuously give support regarding the performances of their subordinates?

              Yes   □/ No   □

Please support your choice...

....

....

10. Do performance appraisal identify skills gap and encourages training for those shortcomings?

              Yes   □/ No   □

Please support your selection...

....

....

11. In your pinion, does performance management response positively to the organizational objectives?

              Yes   □/ No   □

Please support your selection...

....

....

12. Do managers and other supervisors evaluate their supervisees, impartially, so as fairly, equitably without bias?

              Yes   □/ No   □

Please support your selection...

....

....

13. Do managers allocate same scores to supervisees whose performance differs to avoid confrontation from the less performing employees?

              Yes   □/ No   □

Please support your selection...

....

....

14. Does the employer award the employees according to their achievements?

                Yes   □/ No   □

Please support your answer...

....