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**STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTITIONERS' PERCEPTIONS OF A PERFORMANCE  
MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

I, Jim Mothapeng Jimmy Molautsi, hereby declare that this mini dissertation is my own work and that all sources used herein have been acknowledged by means of references.

I also declare that I have not submitted it before in part or in its entirety for obtaining any other degree.

.....

Mr Jim Mothapeng Jimmy Molautsi



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## **GLOSARRY**

BARS – Behaviourally anchored rating scale

BSC – Balance score card

CRP – Competency related pay

EEA – Employment equity act

HRS- Human resource system

KPA - Key performance area

LRA – Labour relations act

MBO - Management by objective

PA - Performance appraisal

PM - Performance management

PMS - Performance management system

PRP – Performance related pay

SRP – Skills related pay

TQM – Total quality management



## **CHAPTER 1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This research essay focusses on the perceptions of student affairs practitioners on the implementation of the Performance Management System at the University of Johannesburg. The first chapter entails the background to the research problem, the motivation of the study, preliminary literature study, research problem and the aim of the study. The second chapter focuses on the literature study on the emerging trends in Performance Management. Chapter 2 will be followed by chapter 3 which discusses the research design. Thereafter the data collection method and analysis will be discussed in chapter 4. The last chapter focuses on the major findings, recommendations and conclusion.

According to De Waal, Goedegebuure & Geradts (2011:1) most organisations are currently implementing performance management systems (PMS). It is assumed that implementation of PMS contributes to the achievement of better results by organisations. Performance management has moved away from focussing on the organisation's operations to a strategically focussed notion and as such strategy implementation influences PMS (Decramer, Smolders & Vanderstraeten, 2012:356). PMS is the soul of any organisation in terms of managing employees in the organisation and if employees do not perform, organisations will not continue operating (Kumari & Malhotra, 2012: 77).

A performance management system is sometimes equated to performance appraisal (Horwitz, nd). In fact performance appraisal is an annual event where employees are assessed if they have met their key performance areas. Performance appraisal (PA) does not ensure that the employees will perform at their best. Performance appraisal accentuates the evaluation of employees "strengths and weaknesses" and excludes providing employees with on-going feedback which the employee can use in terms of future development (Edinburgh Business School, 2012:1). Employees will never improve their performance if they are assessed once a year and more specifically at year end.

## **1.2 Background**

Many organisations refer to PMS as an employee evaluation exercise that needs to happen once a year (Griffith & Orgera, 1997:97). The focus of performance management is a top down approach. The employee would only receive feedback from the manager in which the focus was on competencies such as cooperation, attitude and dependability (Griffith & Orgera, 1997:9). Armstrong & Murlis (2000:242) argue that it is not helpful to implement performance management as a once off annual event. Performance management should focus on personal development of employees rather than only evaluating employees at the end of the year. Because of performance appraisal being conducted once a year, the resultant is that the process is reactive, instead of being developmental. Line managers are pressurised in fixing a problem that could have been timeously identified and rectified (Potgieter, 2005:2). Russel and Russel, (2009:10) refer to performance management as a process rather than a once off event.

In 2011 UJ introduced a performance management, development and reward process. The aim of the performance management, development and reward process was to develop employees to realise and achieve their full potential. It was expected of all employees to have performance contracts based on their work allocation on KPA's and agreed development plans (Dube, 2012:1).

The performance of each staff member was linked to a performance reward at the end of the year. The executive directors or deans have the authority to make a performance reward decision in that division or department to recognise the collective performance of employees in their division or department. The proposed research study will therefore seek to explore the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of the performance management system at the University of Johannesburg.

## **1.3 Motivation**

According to Holpp (2012:83) performance appraisal is the cornerstone of performance management and as such, should be performed quarterly and every semester. Russell & Russell (2009:10) refer to performance management as being a

process rather than a once off event. If PMS is done once a year it tends to be reactive instead of being developmental. PMS therefore needs to focus on personal development of employees rather than employees being evaluated at the end of the year (Griffith & Ortega, 1997:9).

UJ's performance management policy and process clause 2.5 indicate the following:

- Performance management is designed to enable employees to succeed;
- Rewards are transparently linked to performance management;
- The highest performance ratings from 4 (very good)- 5 (excellent) are rewarded with financial incentives and enriching developmental opportunities;
- A rating of 3 (competent) and 3.5 (achieved more than contracted) provides an opportunity to receive a small appreciative bonus; and
- Employees with ratings below 3 will not receive any performance rewards.

With the above in mind, the researcher is of the view that only high performing individuals with a rating between 4 and 5 are being offered developmental opportunities hence the researcher wants to explore the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of the performance management system at UJ. The researcher also is of the opinion that none performing or employees with a rating of 3.5 and below should be offered developmental opportunities to meet their obligations as indicated in their key performance areas.

## **1.4 Preliminary literature Review**

### **1.4.1 Performance management**

In defining performance management system, Potgieter (2005:1) defines performance management as a system of establishing common agreement between the employer and the employee about what is to be accomplished during a particular period. In establishing a common agreement, the intention is to use a performance management system to ascertain that the organisation's objectives are consistent with what the employees need to accomplish in their daily operations. Performance management should therefore specify those activities that the employees need to

engage in and the outcomes that are expected in order to effectively implement the organisation's strategy.

Armstrong & Murlis (2000:240) assert that if organisations want performance management to become a central management process in the implementation of the organisations strategy, then a holistic method should be employed rather than it being a once off annual ritual. For the process to be successful, the organisation needs to capacitate the management to manage performance for themselves and their subordinates. It is therefore imperative that a performance management system becomes a continuous process characterised by frequent reviews with the focus being on developmental planning instead of checking on progress towards the realisation of objectives only.

#### **1.4.2 Performance appraisal**

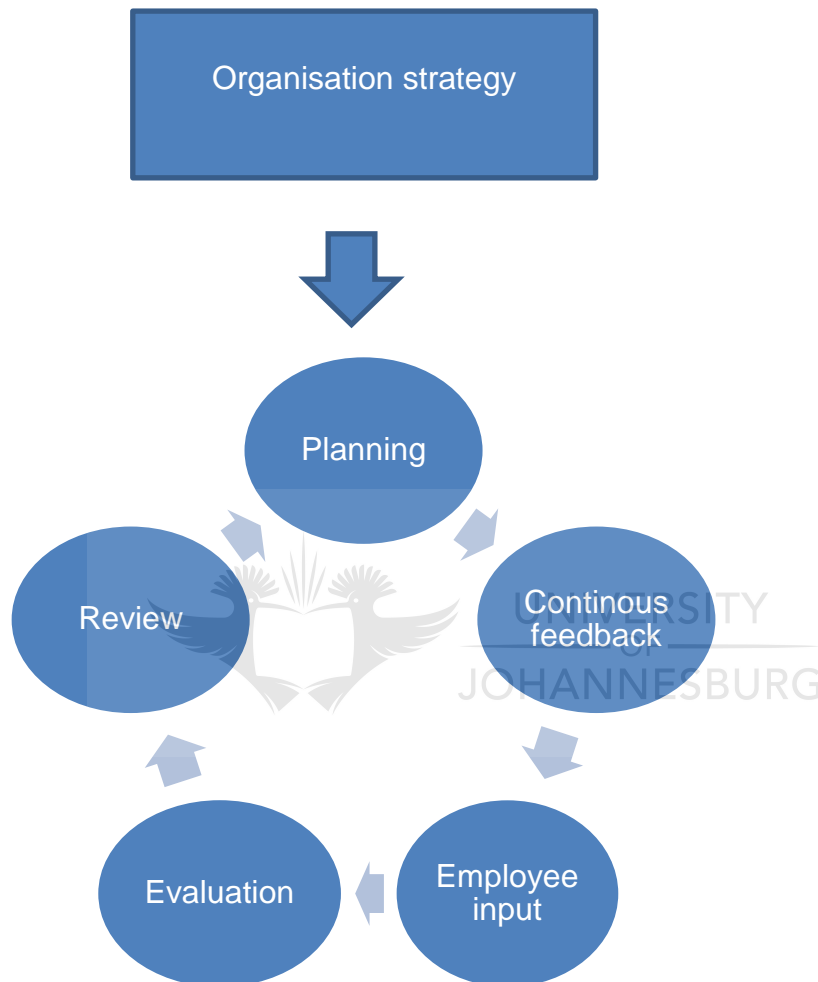
Coyle (2007:1) defines performance appraisal as one of the techniques in the performance system. It provides employers with an opportunity to assess employees and to put in place objectives that will lead to optimum levels of performance by employees. Since performance appraisal focuses on the organisation's objectives, it is therefore the responsibility of the employees to ensure that the objectives are met.

Contrary, Doleh & Weir (2007:76) contend that performance appraisal is a periodical evaluation of the employee's output and is compared to certain expectations. Doleh & Weir (2007:76) allude that performance appraisal provides support information to management when a decision is to be made in terms of wanting to increase the employee's remuneration or when a corrective action to non performing employees is to be instituted.

### 1.4 .3 Performance management cycle

A performance management cycle typically starts with an organisation articulating its strategy and therefore putting processes in place as is indicated in figure 1.1 below:

**Figure 1.1** Performance management process



**Drawing adapted from Pulakos: 2004:4**

**Figure 1.1** will be discussed in detail below:

#### 1.4.3.1 Planning

According to Pulakos (2004:4), management is supposed to assess together with employees the performance that is expected from employees when they do their job during the performance management cycle. Assessment of performance is vital in that it indicates how the employee should perform the job. Performance assessment also indicates the support that an individual employee communicates and mentors other colleagues.

Armstrong & Murlis (2000:247) assert that performance planning forms the basis of performance management in that it is an agreement that elucidate expectations between managers, individual employees and teams in the coming or current year. Russell & Russell (2009: 13), maintain that performance management identifies how individual and team performance outcomes will be measured. The outcomes should have pre outlined performance measurement that will allow both the employee and the manager to recognise if and when the outcome has been achieved. Planning helps in identifying the criteria to be used in linking the goals of an organisation and the ways in which to achieve them at different levels.

#### **1.4.3.2 Continuous feedback**

Chingos & Marwick (1997:112) states that feedback is the formal day to day process in which managers interact with work colleagues in providing support to individual employees and teams with the intention of improving performance. In the implementation of a performance management process, emphasis is placed in providing feedback and coaching to assist employees to reach their full work potential. It is therefore imperative that during the discussion on employee expectations, feedback be provided on an on-going basis whether the feedback is meaningful or meaningless (Pulakos, 2004:7). Providing feedback about the daily activities is a valuable exercise in the implementation of a performance management process; however managers are not competent enough in giving feedback. Therefore it then becomes difficult for employees to use performance feedback (Chingos & Marwick, 1997:112). Pulakos (2004:7) argue that, for performance feedback to be effective, it must be a two way communication as well as a shared responsibility between the manager and the employee.

Bacal (2007:15) mentions that performance management encompasses exchanging of information and it involves the manager getting and giving the employee information. The employee also gets and gives the information to the manager. Therefore, both the manager and employee are supposed to be trained with regards to their roles and responsibilities in the provision of performance feedback. The responsibility of the manager is to provide constructive and frank feedback timeously, whereas the responsibility of the employees is to request feedback and ensure that they comprehend how they have performed (Pulakos, 2004:7).



### **1.4.3.3 Employee input**

Employee input is a phrase used in the performance management process to denote things and structures which empower employees indirectly and directly to make decisions in the organisation (Armstrong & Stephens, 2006:18). Giving inputs in matters concerning the organisation allows employees to feel special in that their contribution is recognised towards their success and that of the organisation. According to Pulakos (2004:8) employees can make contributions or inputs by providing feedback on their performance which is then compared to that of the manager. Employees can also make inputs on their performance by being asked to write their accomplishments at the end of the performance appraisal period.

It is argued by Bacal (2007:17) that employees should be treated as equal partners in the performance management process more over during the planning and performance review stages. This is because managers have one viewpoint and employees have another. So, when both the manager and the employee share ideas, performance is easily improved in that employees would not be defensive and feel bad (Pulakos, 2004:8). Involving employees in the performance management process will not only allow the manager to utilise the given input but it will indicate to employees that their ideas are also valued and as such they become active and enthusiastic participants (Bacal, 2009:18).

### **1.4.3.4 Evaluation**

According to Russell & Russell (2009:13), the evaluation step involves deliberation between the employee and the manager in assessing whether the expectations set at the beginning of the performance planning have been achieved. Pulakos (2004:10) affirms that evaluation is the measure of employee competencies that are linked to the strategic objective of the organisation. Employee competencies should therefore be defined at the beginning of the implementation of the PMS. Defining competencies serves as a good foundation to distinguish between employees who perform better or less than others (Pulakos, 2009:13).

#### **1.4.3.5 Review**

To ascertain that PMS functions the way it was meant in achieving the goals of the organisation, it is imperative that a post implementation review be performed (Seltz & Heneman, nd: 20). The focus is to evaluate whether the employee contribution to the organisation is effective as well as being of high quality. Russel & Russell (2009:19) contend that performance review concentrates on the past performance of the employee and avail managers with an opportunity to present their assessment outcomes over a stated period of time. According to Pulakos (2009:19), a proper performance review just summarises what has taken place during the rating period and it is also a period in which employee developmental activities are planned. So those performance activities that are not met should then be classified as employee developmental areas.

### **1.4. Research aim and objectives**

#### **1.4.1 Aim**

The aim of the research is to explore the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of a performance management system at the University of Johannesburg.

#### **1.5.2 Objectives**

The following objectives are set to ensure that the aim set out about is achieved:

- 1.5.2.1** To determine the perceptions of the student affairs practitioners of the current implementation of performance management.
- 1.5.2.2** To determine the challenges experienced by student affairs practitioners in the implementation of the performance management system.
- 1.5.2.3** To establish the expectation of student affairs practitioners of an ideal performance management implementation.

### **1.5.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions were posed:

- 1.5.3.1** What is the experience of student affairs practitioners of the PM Process?
- 1.5.3.2** What are the challenges experienced by student affairs practitioners in adhering to the stipulations of the performance management system
- 1.5.3.3** What are the expectations of student affairs practitioners in how performance management should be implemented?

## **1.6 Research Design**

### **1.6.1 Philosophical Paradigm**

A philosophical paradigm implies principles and customs related to a particular type of research (Denscombe, 2010:326). It focuses on the view that research is performed according to a certain philosophy and interpretation. As such the researcher who researches within each paradigm would have a similar view about social reality (ontology) and the most appropriate method for social research (epistemology).

A deductive approach will be followed in doing the research. In order to explore the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of a performance management system, the researcher used focus group interviews as a research strategy with purposive sampling technique. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009:110), (2009:237) asserts that purposive sampling allows the researcher to select the respondents that are best positioned to respond to the research questions. The respondents in this instance are directly affected by the implementation of a performance management system and are in a better position to provide the required responses (McNeill & Chapman, 2005:50).

### **1.6.2 Ontology**

The researcher identified with the interpretive philosophical paradigm. This is because the opinions and reality as experienced by the research participants were only analysed and interpreted (Zwane, 2006:29). Also the researcher identified with

interpretive paradigm because he only wanted to explore the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of performance management.

According to Saunders, *et al.*, (2009:110), ontology refers to the assumption of the researcher in terms of how the world functions. The researcher might take an objective view when conducting the research in that the social events occur outside other social players. Saunders, *et al.*, (2009:110) further postulates that the researcher might also be subjective in conducting the research assuming that the social events are formed from opinions social players have in relation to reality. Creswell (1998:15) asserts that the researcher conducts research having numerous views and also does research subjects. Based on the assumption by Creswell, the researcher tried to be as unbiased as possible in order to make the research reliable.

### **1.6.3 Epistemology**

Epistemology focuses on what individuals have to know about the nature of existence (Huff, 2009:108). Saunders, *et.al.* (2009:112) postulates that epistemology is concerned with what comprises legitimate and acceptable knowledge in an area of study. A qualitative interpretative paradigm was used for the purpose of the research. This is because the researcher was only concerned about the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of PMS. The researcher then only attached “meaning” and interpreted the responses from the participants (McNeill & Chapman 2005:184). Humans behave in a certain manner which cannot be mechanised and as such, the behaviour is based on own interpretation (Saunders, *et al.*, 2009:116).

### **1.6.4 Research Approach**

A qualitative approach was followed in doing the research. This approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to “understand” (Creswell, 1998:15) and explore the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of performance management system. The researcher wanted to “analyse words” and to report the views of the research participants comprehensively from their natural environment. In a qualitative approach the research questions commences with “how and what” (Creswell, 1998:15). This was to allow the researcher to venture into and understand what the topic depicted. Contrary to qualitative approach questions,

quantitative approach questions ask the “why” and compare variables (Creswell, 1998:15). Creswell (2013:42) asserts that qualitative research starts with suppositions and “interpretive” background that led to the research problems and the “meaning” that the research participants assign to a human problem. The researcher intended to explore the meaning that the participants give to the problem. This was empowering the research participants to “share their stories” (Creswell, 2013:47).

## **1.7. Research method**

### **1.7.1 Data collection**

Data was collected through focus group interviews. A structured interview was used as a data collection tool during focus interviews (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992:216).

### **1.7.2 Population**

The population consisted of the student affairs executive director, the director student life and governance, director of student accommodation, director of student ethics and judiciary services, 3 student accommodations HOD's, 5 student development practitioners, 78 residence managers and one administrator. The inclusion of the student affairs executive director was due to the fact that he is the custodian of the performance management system in the student affairs division. The directors of student life and Governance and student accommodation were included because they are responsible for the implementation of the performance management system in the division and might provide useful information as to the understanding of the performance management system by the subordinates. From the population it was expected that at least fifty percent of the population would respond to the questionnaire.

### **1.7.3 Sample**

Focus group interviews were conducted on the management of the student affairs division namely; the executive director, director of student life and governance, director of student accommodation, director of student ethics and judiciary services and 4 heads of departments. The motive for using the focus group was to pilot the research and “generate preliminary information “on the research (Bloor, Frankland, and Thomas & Robson, 2001:18).

#### **1.7.4 Data Analysis**

According to Denscombe (2010:235), data is analysed to understand something better, the aim being to explain its essential parts, how it functions and to interpret its significance. From the analysis of data the researcher is able to acquire new knowledge (Gray, 2009:499).

The researcher used a content analysis method in analysing data. Through content analysis, the responses from the participant were objectively identified and methodically grouped into categories (Gray, 2009:500). The categories were then described and discussed according to themes of questions (Creswell, 2013:180). Thereafter the themes were linked to meaningful data in which relationships were identified. The researcher studied emerging themes in order to make conclusions qualitatively (Saunders, *et al.*, 2009: 492).

#### **1.7.5 Sampling technique**

A purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample. The criterion strategy was used because the participants whom the researcher wanted to investigate had “experience of the phenomenon being studied” (Creswell, 2013:155). In this instance the participants are affected by the implementation of a performance management system.

#### **1.8 Ethical Considerations**

Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee (2008:140) assert that a research project is ethical when it relates to a set of principles. Ethics assist in dissuading the researcher from abusing authority in the treatment of the research subjects. It is in this context that the research was conducted ethically and the following ethical issues as mentioned by Babbie, (2004:64-69) were subscribed to:

##### **1.8.1 Voluntary Participation**

The researcher ensured that the participants to the research participated voluntarily and were not coerced; instead an informed consent was requested from the participants to be part of the research. Participants' information was not revealed, so as not to endanger their lives nor embarrass them.

### **1.8.2 Anonymity**

The researcher guaranteed that the identities of the respondents were not revealed to anyone. In order to ensure anonymity, information such as their identity numbers and names were not revealed.

### **1.8.3 Confidentiality**

Responses to the research by the respondents were not publicised even though the researcher was able to identify the respondents. Therefore, the respondents were made aware about the research being confidential.

### **1.8.4 Deception**

The researcher made it clear to the respondents that the research was for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of a master's degree. Therefore the respondents were assured about the purpose of the research and that they were not being deceived.

## **1.9 Chapter outline**

**Chapter 2** focuses on the literature study on performance management with special focus on emerging theory, definitions, differences between performance management and performance appraisal, the importance of aligning performance management system with the strategic goals of the organisation, the characteristics of a good performance management system and performance management cycle.

In **chapter 3**, the research design section contains sections on the philosophical paradigm, ontology, and epistemology and research approach.

**Chapter 4** describes, the data collection technique used. Data collection will be done through the use of questionnaires and focus group interviews. Analysis of data will also be done by categorising the data into coded groups or themes. The chapter then describe the interpretation of data supported by the literature studied.

The last chapter summarises the aim and findings of the research. It also includes acknowledgement of the limitations of the research and gives direction in terms of future research and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the literature review on performance management is discussed. In discussing the literature, the researcher attempts to highlight what other authors have written about the topic and also to gather information that is applicable to the research problem. Topics such as: strategy implementation, objectives of performance management, performance management, performance appraisal, criteria for effective performance management, reasons for performance management systems failure, parties to performance appraisal, linking PMS with goals of the organisation, performance management cycle, performance appraisal and the Law, training of appraisers, common errors in appraisals, Linking performance with pay, performance management and motivation, performance appraisal methods, performance management and organisational culture, dealing with underperformers are also discussed.

### **2.2 Strategy implementation**

Carpenter & Sanders (2009:7) contend that performance of an organisation is linked to the quality of its strategy and skills in implementing it. A strategy is a collection of decisions and activities that enable an organisation to achieve its objectives (Jones & George, 2009:263). A strategy is used (Hicks & Moseley, 2011:41) to implement the organisations vision, mission, values, organisational goals and objectives. Hsieh & Chen (2011:11) define strategy as decision making measures in which business opportunities that result from competitive circumstances are paired with the organisations resources. Therefore managers must know which internal resources support the successful implementation of a strategy.

Strategy implementation (Li, Guohui & Eppler, 2008:3) has become the most difficult task faced by organisations. Hence, the aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of a performance management system at an institution of higher learning. Employees who communicate the strategy, organisational practices and management structures all have an effect on the implementation of a strategy. Carpenter & Sanders (2009:7) describe strategy implementation as the manner in which the strategy is effected and



determining that organisational resolutions are constant with it. If the strategy is not well defined, then a strategic map needs to be developed (Bazet, 2010:2). However, strategy formulation is 'half the battle and implementation is the other half' (Kuratko, Morris & Govin, 2011:152). Consequently, strategy implementation entails the formation of a "Fit" built around the collaboration between external dependencies and internal resources (Hsieh & Chen, 2011:11).

An organisation's vision and mission statements do not spontaneously turn into financial performance (Carpenter & Sanders, 2009:7). That is why Thompson, Peteraf, Gamble & Strickland, (2012:86) say that:

*Implementing a strategy is the most demanding and time consuming part of the strategy management process. Converting strategic plans into actions and results tests a manager's ability to direct organisational action, motivate people, build and strengthen company competencies and competitive capabilities, create and nurture a strategy-supportive work climate and meet or beat performance.*

In order to counter the above notion by Thompson, *et al.*, (2012:86), organisations are developing performance management systems that will offset the need for short term profits, with the necessity to follow long term objectives. Different methods are then used to measure the success with which implementation controls are linked with an organisations strategy (Carpenter & Sanders, 2009:7).

The most conventional method of a performance management system is the balance score card. White (2004:657) describes the balance score card as an orderly function, that strategy formulation and implementation are desegregated and on-going. Bazet (2010:2) defines a balance score card as a consistent process that converts strategy and vision into calculated measures specifying present and future performance. The balance score card is (Hicks & Moseley, 2011:42) made up of four viewpoints: Financial, internal business processes, learning and growth, and customer views. Inside each viewpoint are common criteria objectives, measures, targets, and initiatives. Boninelli & Meyer (2004:211) postulate that as with any other performance management system, the balance score card begins by interpreting the

organisations strategy. The next step would scrutinise the four viewpoints of the scorecard (Hicks & Moseley, 2011:42) by asking questions as an antecedent of setting objectives. Kaplan and Norton (1996:56) as cited by (White,2004:657) asked the following questions:

**Financial view:** Whether the financial performance of the organisation will make the shareholders pleased? The financial view indicates the commercial priorities of the organisation and how they will be achieved.

**Customer view:** How is value created for the customer? This view indicates the needs of the customer by instituting measures and initiatives focusing mostly on the customer.

**Internal business process view:** How economical are the value chain processes to our customers and shareholders? This view influences the success of the business.

**Learning and growth view:** In moving with the times will the organisation be able to improve? Kaplan & Norton (1996:56) as cited by (White, 2004:657) identify the learning and growth as a means of sharing the organisations objectives to the employees.

The next step in designing the balance score card is setting objectives, deciding on key performance measures, and establishing targets for gauging if the organisation is on track and developing initiatives to achieve the goals (Hicks & Moseley, 2011:43). Other methods of implementing an organisations strategy will be discussed further in the section under performance appraisal methods.

### **2.2.1 Setting objectives and performance**

Thompson, *et al.*, (2012:69) infer that the idea of setting objectives is to translate the vision and mission of the organisation into detailed performance objectives. The objectives should be measureable and include time limits for achievement. Objective setting serves as a point of reference in performance reviews in that they describe the behavioural expectations from employees (Armstrong, 2007:54). Objective setting increases productivity and performance (Jackson, Schuler & Werner,

2009:316). So when the objectives are linked to the strategic goals of the organisation, employees are able to comprehend their strategic direction better and realise how their performance fit in the strategy. Objective setting stipulates actions that employees need to engage in order that the organisations strategy is successfully implemented.

Objective 1.5.2.1 of the study was to determine the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of performance management. The most important component in an organisation is to ascertain that employees grasp how their actions influence the success of the organisation. Blanchard (1985:89) in (Banfield & Kay, 2008:285) articulates that objective setting is an important element of performance management and as such should be SMART: Below the SMART acronym is explained:

**S** - Specific (results should be defined)

**M** – Measurable (results should be measurable)

**A** – Agreed (manager and employee to agree on the outcomes)

**R** – Realistic (outcomes should be achievable)

**T** - Timely (by when are outcomes to be achieved?)

### **2.3 Objectives of performance management**

According to Jackson, *et al.*, (2009:315), performance management in organisations guides employees to channel their energy towards activities that are important. Employees are informed whether their performance would meet the requirements of the organisation. However, Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright (2011:217) allege that the objective of a performance management system is to serve the strategic, administrative and developmental purposes of organisations.

#### **2.3.1 Strategic objective**

A Performance management system enables the organisation to realise its strategic objective. This is done by aligning employee behaviour with the goals of the organisation (Noe, *et al.*, 2011:217). PM guides employees in terms of activities that are valuable and whether these activities meet the strategic objective of the organisation. If the organisations expectations are not met, PM will assist in

identifying corrective action or disciplinary measures to be taken. However, it is advantageous that both the manager and employee agree to the performance measures to be achieved (De Cenzo & Robbins, 2010:232). Employee motivation and productivity can also be improved through the implementation of PM (Jackson, Schuler & Werner, 2009:315).

### **2.3.2 Administrative objective**

Bohlander & Snell (2010:363), infer that PMS specifies actions that can be applied in various human resource activities. For instance, PMS correlates directly to various functions, such as promotion, transfer and dismissals. Also, the administrative objective of PMS is to provide data on the day to day decisions such as salaries, benefits and rewards programs and as such these decisions can have huge impact on the future of employees ((Noe, *et al.*, 2011:217).

### **2.3.3 Developmental objective**

Development is defined by Jackson, *et al.*, (2009:315) as those actions that are envisioned to improve capabilities over an extended time and these actions may lead to improvement in employee's performance in existing job. In relation to development, PM serves as the foundation for developing the skills and know-how of employees in that employees are made aware of their "strengths and weaknesses" (Noe, *et al.*, 2009:217).

Besides the level of employee performance, PM process highlights opportunities for discussing possible problems experienced by employees. Objective 1.5.1.2 of the research was to determine the challenges experienced by student affairs practitioners in implementation of performance management. When the possible problems are identified, both the manager and employee are able to set new goals for achieving performance standards (Bohlander & Snell, 2010:363). Two-way feedback is the cornerstone of development on employee performance (De Cenzo & Robbins, 2010:232). For if there is no two - way feedback there is a possibility that manager's risk demotivating the employee. A developmental PMS acknowledges that the manager's role is to improve employee's job behaviour and not only appraise past performance (Bohlander & Snell, 2010:363).

## 2.4 Performance management

In defining PMS, Potgieter (2005:1) defines performance management as a system of establishing common agreement between the employer and the employee about what is to be accomplished during a particular period. In establishing a common agreement, the intention is to use PMS to ascertain that the organisation's objectives are consistent with what the employees need to accomplish in their daily operations. PMS should therefore specify those activities that the employees need to engage in and the outcomes that are expected in order to effectively implement the organisations strategy. Armstrong (1994:23) in Boninelli & Meyer (2004:205) defines performance management as:

*Means of getting better results from organisations, teams and individuals by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and attributes or competence requirements*

Based on Armstrong's definition, Boninelli & Meyer (2004:205) implies that the purpose of PMS is to enhance the organisation's performance. As such the enhancement of performance should be based on the organisation's strategy. For an organisation to have a competitive advantage over rivals, it is imperative that employees' efforts are on par with the goals of the organisation (Bloisi, 2007:253).

Armstrong & Murlis (2000:240) assert that if organisations want PMS to become a central management process in the implementation of the organisations strategy, then a holistic method should be employed rather than it being a once off annual ritual. Boninelli & Meyer (2004:206) concur by highlighting that most organisations consider PMS to be a once a year process in which employee performance is appraised. Instead it is the everyday occurrence where employees are managed to produce outcomes. Based on the assertion by Armstrong & Murlis (2000:240), *it is therefore, important for the researcher to establish the expectations of student affairs practitioners of an ideal performance management implementation as highlighted by the third objective of the research.*

For the process to be successful, the organisation needs to capacitate the management to manage performance for themselves and their subordinates. It is

therefore imperative that a performance management system becomes a continuous process characterised by frequent reviews with the focus being on developmental planning instead of checking on progress towards the realisation of objectives only. Bacal (2000) in Boninelli & Meyer (2004:206) mentions that a performance management system is sometimes mistaken for performance appraisal.

## **2.5 Performance appraisal**

Coyle (2007:1) defines performance appraisal as one of the techniques in the PMS. Performance appraisal is described by Boninelli & Meyer (2004:207) as a portrait of employee behaviour and happens “once or twice a year”. Appraisal is seen as a chance by the manager as well as a chance for employees to discuss developmental opportunities with their line managers. It provides employers with an opportunity to assess employees and to put in place objectives that will lead to optimum levels of performance by employees. Since performance appraisal focuses on the organisations objectives, it is therefore the responsibility of the employees to ensure that the objectives are met.

Contrary, Doleh & Weir (2007:76) contend that performance appraisal is a periodical evaluation of the employees output and is compared to certain expectations. Wanguri (1995) in Doleh & Weir (2007:76) alludes that performance appraisal provides support information to management when a decision is to be made in terms of wanting to increase the employee’s remuneration or when a corrective action to non performing employees is to be instituted.

## **2.6 Criteria for effective performance management**

*Objective 1.5.2.3 of the research was to establish the expectations of student affairs practitioners of an ideal performance management implementation.* According to Swanepoel (2003:261), performance management can only succeed if its measuring techniques are good. The following are criteria for a successful performance management:

### **2.6.1 Fit with strategy**

The purpose of a performance management system ought to be intended at realising employee behaviour that supports the company’s strategy, goals and culture. The

appraisal methods should aim at measuring whether employees participate in those behaviours. So when the company's strategy changes, managers must evaluate how the new strategy is complemented by the change (Swanepoel, 2003:261).

### **2.6.2 Validity**

Validity means that the performance measurement technique should assess what it intends to assess. All the performance related features should be measured and the unrelated features should be omitted (Hegar, 2012:405).

### **2.6.3 Reliability**

Hegar (2012:405) posits that reliability in terms of performance measurement techniques should be consistent when used repeatedly. The significant performance measure is the inter-rater reliability, where if different raters assess the same employee, the results should be the same (Ivancevich, 2010:256). The second reliability technique is the test-retest measure which determines whether the performance of the employee will change over time.

### **2.6.4 Acceptability**

The standard of PMS should be acceptable whether the assessment techniques are valid and reliable. The managers must not have the impression that it is tedious and employees should not see it as being unfair, for employees would not apply the feedback in improving their performance (Swanepoel, 2003:261).

### **2.6.5 Sensitive**

Ivancevich (2010:256) recommends that the assessment criterion should be sensitive in terms of differentiating between high and low achievers. The assessment criterion should only reflect accurately the difference in performance between high and low achievers.

### **2.6.6 Specific feedback**

The performance feedback should be specific in terms of the employee's performance so that employees are aware of the aspects that they need to improve on. The measurement technique on the other hand should also be specific about the aspects that employees need to perform so as to achieve the company's strategy

and goals (Swanepoel, 2003:261).

## **2.7 Reasons for performance management systems failure**

A Performance management system (Boninelli & Meyer, 2004:221) should include all elements that influence employee's performance. The belief is that the right performance method cannot compensate for an incorrect performance setting and therefore becomes difficult to implement. According to Boninelli & Meyer (2004:221) the following are the reasons for performance management system's failure:

- **No constant communication**

Constant communication enables the manager to comprehend the needs of employees and obstacles they encounter. Also, the employee's performance contract becomes a living document in that results are used as a source of constant communication.

- **Poor appointments**

Employees are assumed to be raw performance resources. If unambitious employees with low potential are recruited, it will be a challenge to implement performance management system.

- **Non integration of performance management into the Human resource system**

Performance management should be linked to the recruitment, training and development, compensation and reward system. Human resource processes are important in supplementing and increasing the performance of employees. Therefore PMS should be integrated into the HRS.

- **Unpremeditated consequences of imposing compliance**

The relationship between managers and employees is of paramount importance to good performance. So if managers exploit their powers by imposing compliance to performance criteria without employee input, there is a danger of the relationship becoming strained. Therefore, the employee may be tempted to leave the organisation or resorting to a go slow.



- **Inability to detect performance problems**

In most instances, managers blame employees for poor performance without properly identifying the causes. So it is imperative that managers analyse and identify the basis of performance failure. It is therefore essential that managers and employees openly speak about performance related issues to make the system work.

## **2.8 Parties to performance appraisal**

According to Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert, Hatfiel (2004:293) the following are parties to a performance appraisal:

### **2.8.1 Immediate manager**

The employee's, immediate manager is better suited to assess' performance. The manager regularly monitors the behaviour of the employee to ascertain if company goals have been realized (Grobler, *et al*, 2004:293). A manager is conversant of an employee and as such has the best opportunity to truly monitor employee performance daily (Nel, van Dyk, Schultz, Sono & Werner 2004:478). However, sometimes managers do not work in immediate environs as their subordinates, as a result are unable to directly observe their subordinate's performance. The resultant performance appraisal of the employee (Ivancevich, 2010: 257), is therefore likely to be biased.

### **2.8.2 Peers**

The employee's co-workers or peers who are not in a competitive work setting may also be best suited to appraise their fellow co-worker. Peers are able to give information that the manager is unable to get, based on the indirect contact between the manager and the subordinate, (Grobler, *et al.*, 2004:293). Peers also provide appraisal results that are different from the employee's immediate manager, but the feedback is likely to be biased and influenced by friendship (Nel, *et al.*, 2004:478). Also, there should be a level of trust between peers in that if co-workers are in direct competition, the appraisal might not be valid because of biasness. But if the tasks in the division require that there be a regular contact, the peer assessment will be beneficial (Ivancevich, 2010: 257). Managers also prefer not to appraise their subordinates because of the potential face-to face confrontation when there is a

disagreement (Pynes, 2009:227).

### **2.8.3 Subordinates**

According to Nel, *et al.*, (2004:478), in bottom to up evaluations, subordinates rate their manager. When performance appraisal is related to leadership, training and development, managers are best assessed by their subordinates who have regular contact with them (Pynes, 2009:227). However, a manager may resist if the results of the appraisal is going to be used for promotion purposes rather than developmental purposes (Ivancevich, 210:257). There are limitations in terms of subordinates rating their managers in that subordinates may not be truthful because of fear of backlash from their managers. Sometimes subordinates lack the necessary appraisal skills which might disadvantage the manager.

### **2.8.4 Self-evaluation**

Companies do sometimes require their employees to evaluate their own performance. Managers and employees complete separate appraisal questionnaires and then come together to compare the results. Differences in the results are then explained and strategies for future improvement are then discussed (Pynes, 2009:227). This method of appraisal is unconvincing in that the employee's selfishness might overshadow the true objective of the evaluation (Ivancevich, 2010:257). Self-evaluation is more inclined to be biased in favour of the employee (Nel, *et al.*, 2004:478). Managers are also more likely to change their ratings positively if they discover that the employee's ratings are higher than the manager's (Grobler, *et al.*, 2004:295).

### **2.8.5 Client evaluation**

An employee's internal or external clients can also evaluate the employee's performance. The internal client can be the end user of divisions the employee engages with. The clients are able to give a more precise overview of the employee than managers and peers (Nel, *et al.*, 2004:479).

## **2.9 Linking PMS with goals of the organisation**

Bacal (2007:9) contend that for a performance management system (PMS) to be implemented effectively and not become obsolete, the mission, goals and objectives

of the organisation should be consistent with the objectives of the employees. The objectives of the organisation should be aligned to those of employees and be explicitly stated. PMS process is crucial in enabling the organisation to succeed in an unstable environment (Griffith & Orgera, 1997: 97). PMS allows organisations to establish and express the mission and performance objectives that are meaningful. Individual goals and objectives are described in relation to PMS process by giving feedback. Feedback will then serve as a guide through which individual weaknesses of employees can be rectified. Edinburgh Business School (2008), assert that PMS serves as a developmental tool in providing feedback and establish training requirements to employees in relation to their weaknesses.

The employee weaknesses can only be rectified by identifying employee developmental needs that relates to the organisation's appraisal system. Markus (2004:6) adds that employees should be made aware as to how their inputs add value to the realisation of the organisation's objectives. Employees are able to select personal objectives that are consistent to those of the organisation when they are aware of the importance of their contributions. PMS is implemented to encourage employees to add value to the organisation without wasting resources (Holpp, 2012:10). Therefore employee objectives should then originate from goals of the organisation.

Bacal (2007:25) concludes by saying that organisation's should preferably start by designing a strategic plan that has clearly defined targets. The targets are then allocated to different departments. Departments then design their targets in terms of goals and objectives that individual employees must realise. The logic according to Bacal (2007:26), if every individual employee realise their goals and objectives, the department will realise the goals entrusted to it and ultimately the entire organisation will realise its targets or goals.

## **2.10 Performance management cycle**

The performance management cycle is discussed below:

### 2.10.1 Planning

According to Pulakos (2004:4), management is supposed to assess together with employees the performance that is expected from employees when they do their job during the performance management cycle. Assessment of performance is vital in that it indicates how the employee should perform the job. Performance assessment also indicates the how an individual employee communicates, supports and mentors other colleagues. Performance planning validates the goals of an organisation, the technical and expected employee capabilities used to determine performance (Chingos & Marwick, 1997:102).

Armstrong & Murlis (2000:247) assert that performance planning forms the basis of performance management in that it is an agreement that elucidate expectations between managers, individual employees and teams in the coming or current year. Russell & Russell (2009:13), maintain that performance management identifies how individual and team performance outcomes will be measured. The outcomes should have pre outlined performance measurement that will allow both the employee and the manager to recognise if and when the outcome has been achieved. Planning helps in identifying the criteria to be used in linking the goals of an organisation and the ways in which to achieve them at different levels.

### 2.10.2 Continuous feedback

Chingos & Marwick (1997:112) states that feedback is the formal day to day process in which managers interact with work colleagues in providing support to individual employees and teams with the intention of improving performance. In the implementation of a performance management process, emphasis is placed in providing feedback and coaching to assist employees to reach their full work potential. **(Note; a dated source was used in the above sentence because the researcher felt that the information was still valid)**. It is therefore imperative that during the discussion on employee expectations, feedback be provided on an on-going basis whether the feedback is meaningful or meaningless (Pulakos, 2004:7). Providing feedback about the daily activities is a valuable exercise in the implementation of a performance management process; however managers are not competent enough in giving feedback. As such it then becomes difficult for employees to use performance feedback (Chingos & Marwick, 1997:112). Pulakos (2004:7) argues that, for

performance feedback to be effective, it must be a two way communication as well as a shared responsibility between the manager and employee.

Bacal (2007:15) mentions that performance management encompasses exchanging of information and it involves the manager getting and giving the employee information. The employee also gets and gives the information to the manager. Therefore, both the manager and employee are supposed to be trained with regards to their roles and responsibilities in the provision of performance feedback. The responsibility of the manager is to provide constructive and frank feedback timeously, whereas the responsibility of the employees is to request feedback and ensure that they comprehend how they have performed (Pulakos, 2004:7)

### **2.10.3 Employee input**

Employee input is a phrase used in the performance management process to denote things and structures which empower employees indirectly and directly to make decisions in the organisation (Armstrong & Stephens, 2006:212). Giving inputs in matters concerning the organisation allows employees to feel special in that their contribution is recognised towards their success and that of the organisation. *Because the aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of performance management system at the University of Johannesburg,* Pulakos (2004:8) say that employees can make contributions or inputs by providing feedback on their performance which is then compared to that of the manager. Another way of allowing employees to make inputs in their performance is by being asked to write their accomplishments at the end of the performance appraisal period.

It is argued by Bacal (2007:17) that employees should be treated as equal partners in the performance management process more over during the planning and performance review stages. This is because managers have one viewpoint and employees have another. So when both the manager and the employee share ideas, performance is easily improved in that employees would not be defensive and feel bad (Pulakos, 2004:8). Involving employees in the performance management process will not only allow the manager to utilise the given input but it will indicate to employees that their ideas are also valued and as such they would become active and enthusiastic participants (Bacal, 2009:18).

#### **2.10.4 Evaluation**

According to Russell & Russell (2009:13), the evaluation step involves deliberation by the employee and the manager to assess whether the expectations set at the beginning of the performance planning have been achieved. Pulakos (2004:10) affirm that evaluation is the measure of employee competencies that are linked to the strategic objective of the organisation. Employee competencies should therefore be defined at the beginning of the implementation of the performance management system. Defining competencies serves as a good foundation to distinguish between employees who perform better than others (Pulakos, 2009:13).

#### **2.10.5 Review**

To ascertain that a performance management system functions the way it was meant in achieving the goals of the organisation, it is imperative that a post implementation review be performed (Seltz & Heneman, n.d:20). The focus is to evaluate whether the employee contribution to the organisation is effective as well as being of high quality. Russell & Russell (2009: 19) contend that a performance review concentrates on the past performance of the employee and avail managers with an opportunity to present their assessment outcomes over a stated period of time. According to Pulakos (2009:19), a proper performance review just summarises what has taken place during the rating period and it is also a period in which employee developmental activities are planned. So those performance activities that are not met should then be classified as employee developmental areas.

Performance appraisal (PA) can however have a harmful effect on employees rather than helping them. This is because PA could sometimes neither exhibit distributive nor procedural fairness (Boninelli & Meyer, 2004:207).

#### **2.11 Performance appraisal and the Law**

Swanepoel, (2003:377) infer that performance appraisal results are used to make decisions on promotions, employment equity and rewards. The results of appraisals to a certain degree are subjective in that they depend on the judgement of managers (Ivancevich, 2010:259). Because of subjective judgements by managers and the results of appraisals used to determine promotions and rewards; it is therefore not coincidental that appraisal results are subjects of legal disputes involving employers

and employees. Many appraisal errors easily occur (Noe, *et al.*, 2011:282) and managers are accused by subordinates for being biased or unfair (Bernardin, 2010:223). Performance appraisal system should therefore, be tested against the relevant law such as Labour relations Act (Swanepoel, 2003:377).

It is imperative that Human resource practitioners and managers responsible for appraisals consider how appraisals are implemented. Even though dismissals due to poor work performance are permissible in terms of the Labour Relations Act (LRA) no 66 of 1995, the process in appraising employees should also be procedurally and substantively fair in relation to the Employment Equity Act (EEA) no. 55 of 1998 in order to avoid lawsuits (Nel, *et al.*, 2004:485). This is because the appraisal results determining employee work performance play a significant role in making dismissal decisions (Grobler, *et al.*, 2004:268). Appraisals results that demonstrate evidence of incongruent influence must be authenticated as any other system (Denisi & Griffin, 2011: 231).

### **2.11.1 Guidelines for protecting a company from lawsuits due to Performance Appraisal challenges**

According to Grobler, *et al.*, (2004:268), the following are suggested guidelines that will assist a company from being sued due to unfair performance appraisals:

- Written appraisals must be performed for all employees and they should never be backdated.
- All appraisers should be comprehensively trained in appraisal techniques.
- Appraisal standards should be applied consistently, unambiguously and related to the work.
- Rater and leniency errors ought to be monitored for biasness.
- Potential problem areas must be identified and recorded.
- After identifying problem areas, appraisers should set a schedule and specific goals for improvement.
- Employees should be allowed a chance to respond to negative feedback.
- Employees should be requested to acknowledge in writing that they have been appraised.
- Appraisal results should only be available to relevant people because making

the results public might lead the company being susceptible to lawsuits.

- Before dismissing an employee for poor performance, past performance appraisals should be examined to determine if the employee's appraisal was coherent with the stated reasons for dismissal. Also that the employee was given a reasonable chance to remedy poor performance.

## **2.12 Training of appraisers**

Kurakto & Hornsby (2003:164) contend that, as soon as the appraisal standards have been identified, managers should receive training in conducting effective appraisals. This is because managers are not certain of their competence to perform appraisal interviews and as a result depend on paperwork. Some have little understanding of what appraisal demands and especially if they have no experience (Fletcher, 2006:79). Unless managers or anyone conducting appraisal receives training, the process will lead to doubt and disagreements (Mondy & Noe, 2005:272).

Training is necessary to decrease rating errors and will improve accuracy (Kurakto & Hornsby, 2003:164). Hence, Fletcher (2006:79) proposes that training should be arranged to make sure that the appraisers have ample time to realise if they can perform a good assessment. In this way, raters are able to do practice runs in which they familiarise themselves with the rating scales. Raters then receive feedback on the "practice ratings" in order to know which employee behaviours to judge when assessing (Bernadin, 2010:237).

Bernadin (2010:237) indicates that rater errors can occur involuntarily or intentionally as a result of managers' efforts to allocate incorrect ratings. Managers exaggerate ratings because of "leniency, halo error" and inability to allocate enough time in conducting appraisals. So a manager who is very lenient or very strict can rate every employee as average or be influenced by external circumstances (Kurakto & Hornsby, 2003:164).

In the following section, common errors in appraisals are discussed.



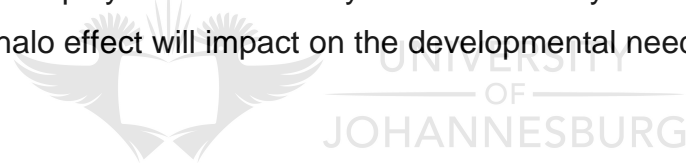
## **2.13 Common errors in appraisals**

### **2.13.1 Managers influence in the appraisal process**

Line managers have considerable influence in the appraisal process. The reason is that, managers are mostly responsible in appraising their subordinates (Armstrong, 2010:248). Managers are prone to making mistakes when rating employees (Kulik, 2004:93). There are elements that can influence managers to judge or appraise their subordinates accurately. Managers' personal biases can lead to subordinates being assessed severely or positively without the manager being aware (Holpp, 2012:49).

### **2.13.2 Halo effect**

A manager is said to have applied a halo effect when he/she disregards an employees' poor performance because the employee has performed better in other areas (Holpp, 2012:501). The appraisal process loses its credibility when managers 'commit the halo error'. This is because one is not certain as to whether the performance of an employee is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. As such the managers' commitment of a halo effect will impact on the developmental needs of the employee (Kulik, 2004:93).



### **2.13.3 Horn effect**

The horn effect happens when a manager has a negative view about the employee and therefore gives the employee a lower rating whereas he/she deserves a positive rating (Lepak & Gowan, 2010:272). When an employee performs well in other areas, this is sometimes deliberately toned down by the manager because the employee has underperformed in other areas (Holpp, 2012:501).

### **2.13.4 Recency effect**

According to Kulik (2004:94), a manager evaluates an employee based on the outcomes of a recent performance. In terms of the appraisal system, most organisations perform an appraisal once towards the end of the year and as a result the employees' performance at the beginning of the year is overlooked and only the performance that happened towards the end of the year is remembered. The employee is therefore disadvantaged because the manager would consider the performance that is latest on his or her mind (Holpp, 2012:501).

### **2.13.5 Central tendency effect**

In terms of central tendency effect, managers are reluctant to rate employees higher or lower than the expected rating (Lepak & Gowan, 2010:273). The reason for this behaviour according to (Holpp, 2012:501) is that managers are afraid to evaluate employees more negatively or positively in order to avoid giving explanations.

### **2.13.6 Similar to me effect**

Sharing of similarities between the manager and the employee boosts performance in that employees receive a more positive rating from the manager because of the connections they have (Lepak & Gowan, 2010:273). The increase in employee rating by the manager is to boost performance and as such having similar traits with the manager does have an influence on performance rating (Kulik, 2004:94).

### **2.13.7 Fairness as an influence in the appraisal process**

The fairness of the appraisal and reward system has become a contentious issue encountered by the implementers' of PMS. The uneasiness regarding the fairness of appraisals result after the assessment of outcomes received, the manner in which the outcomes are given as well as the manner in which decisions are communicated (Shrivastava & Purang, 2011:132). Bol (2008:1555) says that the perceived fairness of PMS play an integral part on employee remuneration. Employees are not only worried about how much they are remunerated, but also worry about how their performance ranking equals their anticipated expectations. Employees also worry about how their performance ranking relates to that of their colleagues.

Opinions on the fairness of PMS are based on comparisons. According to Markus (2004:5), employees compare their efforts, work performance and remuneration to that of their fellow employees. For employees to feel that remuneration is fair, it is important that they are assured that the procedures used to allocate remuneration are fair. As such, when employees feel that the PMS process is unfair, they will put less effort in their work and receive no value, while the employer receives no revenue. But if employees feel that the PMS process is fair, they are most likely to put more effort in their work and receive value and at the same time the employer will receive revenue (Burney, Henle & Widener, 2006:8). The perceptions of fairness by employees are central to the success of the PMS in that fairness acts as the

intercessor of the correlation between PMS characteristics and PMS success (Dewettinck, 2009:12).

## **2.14 Linking performance with pay**

### **2.14.1 Performance Related Pay**

Perkins & White (2011:168) describe Performance Related Pay (PRP) as a system where the progression of an employee through the ranks, is depended on the appraisal of performance by the manager. The idea behind PRP is that when compensation changes, there should also be changes in performance (Mathis & Jackson, 2011:363). Employees, who perform better, receive higher compensation than their average counterparts. PRP focuses on linking the individual employee's performance to financial rewards. For instance, the employee's pay rise is calculated according to the measure of performance during a given work cycle and may be awarded annually or during other intervals (Banfield & Kay, 2008:310).

According to Bussin (2011:59) the following are the objectives of PRP:

- To intensify the link between performance and rewards
- To cascade company strategy implementation to individual employee level
- To retain high performers and rewarding them for excellent performance
- To instil a performance culture into the organisation
- To remove poor performers from the organisation

The advantage of a successful PRP system is that, there is a probability to create a motivated workforce in that employees realise the connection between "how well they perform to how much they are paid" PRP is influenced by motivational theories such as reinforcement theory, expectancy theory, goal setting theory, equity theory and agency theory (Perkins & White, 2011:168).

The approaches to PRP are discussed in the following sections:

#### **2.14.1.1 Merit pay**

In terms of merit pay, the employee's basic salary increase is influenced by performance (Fletcher, 2006:35). Increase in merit pay is usually given once a year and is based on performance for the past 12 months (Kurakto & Hornsby, 2003:219).

However, realistically, merit pay is an increase in the cost of living, which from the employers' perspective; it is an increase in employee base pay. This also means that employees receive an extra sum each year irrespective of future performance levels (Mondy & Noe, 2005:304, Dessler, 2011:464).

#### **2.14.1.2 Variable Pay**

Mondy & Noe (2005:304) articulate that bonus pay is the most popular type of variable pay and is a worthwhile one time award. A bonus is a lump sum amount awarded to an employee for realising performance standards over a period of time. The focus of a bonus award is on the current bonus performance phase without taking into account the future best interest of the organisation (Kurakto & Hornsby, 2003:219). Payment of bonuses does not result in many problems for the organisation in that only a handful of employees qualify for such awards (Fletcher, 2006:38).

#### **2.14.1.3 Piecework**

With a piecework payment system, employees are remunerated according to the number of units they manufacture (Kurakto & Hornsby, 2003:219). The prerequisite for piecework is that standards for output be established for the job of each employee. The standards can also be established for a group of employees where the average output per hour is set for all employees in a group. A rate is then attached to the average output which is then divided by the average number of units manufactured to determine pay per unit (Mondy & Noe, 2005:304).

#### **2.14.2 Skills related Pay**

Armstrong (2003:689) insinuates that skill related pay (SKP) is a payment system that is associated with the type and complexity (2005:305) that employees, who are more knowledgeable, are valued more in the organisation and as such are entitled to reward for their endeavours in developing new skills. Therefore, SRP systems use skills as the core of pay. All employees start at the same remuneration level and progress to the next level when they acquire and master the new skills (Gomez, Balking & Cardy, 2010:355). Paying for skills is interpreted by Bernadin (2010:340) that qualifications add value in performance of individuals in the organisation.

According to Gomez, *et al.*, (2010:355) skills related pay has numerous advantages:

first, a more adaptable staff that is not constrained by job titles is created. Secondly, cross training is encouraged resulting in the reduction of employee absenteeism and throughput which may interrupt the meeting of targets. Thirdly, it eliminates the necessity of many management layers leading to a lean organisation. Lastly, employees are encouraged to take charge of their remuneration in that they understand beforehand the kind of performance to be displaced in order to receive a pay increase.

### 2.14.3 Competency Related Pay

Byars & Rue (2006:275) describe competency as attributes that an employee should possess in order to perform their job satisfactorily. Competency related pay (CRP) is employee related rather than job related (Regis, 2008:300) and job actions are not assessed to determine pay. CRP is a reward system (Mondy & Noe, 2005:306) that pays employees for their demonstrable skills, motives, attitudes, knowledge and values that facilitates performance.

In CRP, the standard of performance expected from an employee is outlined, and the actual performance achieved is then compared to that standard. The assessed competence can be articulated on a scale in terms of exceeding the required competency, not yet competent, or competent. The results are then interpreted into a pay increase (Armstrong, 2008:687). The competency criteria to be assessed can also be expressed in the following way as stated by Mondy and Noe (2005:306) in table 2.1:

**Table 2.1: Competency criteria, Source:** (Mondy & Noe, 2005:306)

Heading	Criteria
Team centred	Builds positive working relationship inside and outside the organisation
Results driven	Puts effort on attaining key objectives
Innovation	Creates and implement new designs, thoughts and viewpoints
Fast cycle	Is firm in making decisions

## **2.15 Performance management and motivation**

According to Vroom (1964) and Skinner (1974) in St Onge & Haines (2011:1160) employee recognition and rewards is based in the theories of motivation. Companies embrace employee recognition and rewards systems to strengthen the actions of employees in a manner that they expect. In offering behavioural results that support the anticipated behaviour can in a way improve the success of PMS implementation.

Therefore motivation theories explain how PMS works (Buchner, 2007:65). The motivation process encourages employees to apportion their energy to behaviour in a manner that would increase their needs satisfaction (Denisi & Pritchard, 2006: 262). As such employees are able to dedicate energy to their work at any particular time and are more likely to put more effort and time to increase the satisfaction of their needs.

Boxall & Purcell (2003:146) state that performance happen when employees decide to use their competencies with equal effort and consistency. So companies need motivated employees to perform their work in order to incentivise them. This holds true in that employees that are motivated perform better than non-motivated employees.

The rationale for merit pay is to inspire employees to perform at their peak. Merit pay is instituted to reward employees for the contributions they make in doing their work. Therefore if employees function at their optimum best, it is easy for the organisation to succeed. If pay is equated to performance, the motivation for employees to perform will then increase. The tenets of merit pay are based on three motivational theories, namely the reinforcement theory, expectancy theory and equity theory (Seltz & Heneman, nd).

### **2.15.1 Reinforcement theory**

According to Denisi & Griffin (2011:286), reinforcement theory assumes that results occur because of human actions. Improved performance is a result of motivation brought about by monetary outcome. When monetary rewards for good performance are identified beforehand, employees will be rewarded better as a result of good performance (Seltz & Heneman, nd). It is therefore suggested by Denisi & Griffin

(2011:286) that employees respond to the impetus of what they expect will materialize. In other words employees will perform better when they perceive that the rewards are going to be great.

### **2.15.2 Expectancy theory**

In terms of expectancy theory, motivation focuses on the expected satisfaction of needs that arise when employees receive results. It is the expected satisfaction of needs that determines how employees perform in a work environment (Denisi & Pritchard, 2006:264). On the other hand Boxall & Purcell (2003:154) postulate that expectancy theory of motivation does not provide information in terms of “the contents of human motivations” such as pay and status. Instead expectancy theory asserts that employee motivation at work is based on what their expectations are and if the expectations will ever be realised. So expectancy theory positions the employee as the decision maker (Denisi & Griffin, 2011:290) and as such decide whether to apply more effort or not. The decision to apply more effort in the employee doing work will then be based on the magnitude of outcomes and whether needs will be properly satisfied.



### **2.15.3 Equity theory**

Denisi & Griffin (2011:292) suggest that the equity theory of motivation is based on the employee’s perceptions of inputs in a work environment and the results that will be realised from the work done. Seltz & Heneman (n.d), indicate that employee rewards must be central to an increase in remuneration. It is assumed that rewards that lead to an increase in remuneration may be interpreted as a fair outcome for employee performance effort. So, the more the employee contributes to the organisations, the more the reward. However employees will be motivated if they believe that they are being treated fairly if the input outcome ratio is equal when compared to other colleagues in similar environments (Denisi & Griffin, 2011:292).

If the input-outcome ratios are not equal amongst employees working in similar environment, then, the employee whose ratio is below par will feel disappointed (Bol, 2008:1555). So, there is a positive link between incentives and performance (Burney, *et al.*, 2006:2), but there is a caution that employees might put more effort in one field and neglect the other. Also above average performing employees would

be dissatisfied and demotivated if they are remunerated as non performing employees.

## **2.16 Performance appraisal methods**

### **2.16.1 Management by objective**

According to Dessler (2013:326) Management by objective (MBO) is an all-inclusive and official organisational appraisal programme focusing on goal setting. The goals flow down from the top level strategic goals to operational level. With MBO, managers and subordinates come together at the beginning of the appraisal period and set goals (Lepak & Gowan, 2010:269). The goals are then converted to measurable objectives which the subordinate has to achieve during the performance period (Michaelree, 1979:48).

As such MBO does not focus on the subordinate; instead the focus is on the performance. With the utilisation of MBO, the manager is able to examine whether the set objectives are achievable (Carmen, Croucher & Leigh, 2008:231) and during the monitoring the subordinate has an opportunity for self-evaluation. The manager on the other hand is able to provide feedback during the process. So there is an element of on-going meeting between the subordinate and the manager. At the end of the performance period, the subordinate is evaluated and assessed to determine whether objectives were achieved or not. If the objectives are met, the subordinate will receive a positive feedback and if the objectives are not met the subordinate will receive less favourable feedback (Lepak & Gowan, 2010:269).

### **2.16.2 360 degree feedback**

Gomez, *et al.*, (2007:218) indicate that a 360 degree system of appraisal gives a clear indication of an employee's performance in that it offers various viewpoints. This is because 360 degree system involves managers, peers, subordinates and even clients of an organisation. By using assessments from superiors, peers and subordinates, the manager is able to get an all-inclusive evaluation (Greer, 2001:229). The 360 degree assessment can be done by completing an online evaluation on the employee. The results are then compiled into a report which can be used for developmental purposes. The employee is most likely to increase performance when the feedback received denotes that change is necessary. The



360 degree system becomes sincere when subordinates are aware that the intention of appraisal is not done for reward and promotion purposes (Dessler, 2013:315).

### **2.16.3 Balance scorecard**

Metawie & Gilman (2005:5) posit that the balance score card (BSC) was created by Kaplan & Norton in the 1990's. Its major focus is to decipher the organisations strategy into unified series of measurements. It is more than an impromptu "financial and non-financial measures" (Miah & Hossan, 2012:16). The balance score card measures performance in four key areas: (a) financial, (b) internal business, (c) customer and (d) learning and organisational growth. BSC considers learning as the area in which an employee and organisational development could be plotted.

However, for BSC to be effective, the performance of individuals in the organisation should be linked to the strategy (Kaplan & Norton, 1996) in (Miah & Hossan, 2012:16). The individual goals and objectives should be linked to the whole organisational strategy. This basically means that employees should have a scorecard that corresponds to the corporate scorecard. However, some individual's scorecard will not have "objectives in all four quadrants" rather they will have objectives, measures, targets and initiatives. The initiative specifies how performance targets will be achieved (Boninelli & Meyer, 2004:214-215).

### **2.16.4 Behaviourally anchored rating scale (BARS)**

BARS is an appraisal method in which rating scales are attached to specific behaviours that an employee needs to accomplish (Dessler, 2013:322). The BARS method is more than a graphic rating scale in that, instead of choosing a 'below average' and 'average' ratings, the rater links specific examples of tangible behaviour that illustrate "below average", "average" and "above average" (Lepak & Gowan, 2010:268). Because the behaviours are specific, it is therefore easy for employees to see in which behaviours they need to engage or which behaviours to avoid if they are to perform satisfactorily. As a result, it makes it easier for managers to be definite in giving feedback (Gomez, *et al.*, 2007:214).

According to Kulik (2004:98), organisations require managers and subordinates to agree on what represent "below average", "average" and "above average" in a

particular job. This will enable the subordinate to be compensated on the agreed standards and not compensated if there is a deviation from the standard. The assessment of standards may be done using a very reliable and valid instrument (Aldakhilalla & Parente, 2002:41). The reason for using a reliable and valid instrument is to reduce errors in assessments and subordinates are less likely to be defensive (Greer, 2001:228). In using the BARS method, the rating scale may be connected to a ranking varying from one to five to give the overall rating (Carmen, *et al.*, 2008:230), it provides enough rating points (Pulakos, 2004:14).

#### **2.16.5 Forced distribution**

Bhattacharyya (2006:279) posit that the forced distribution method is used to appraise employees' performance based on a pre-set distribution scale. In this way, managers are forced to rate some employees in different groupings. For instance a certain percentage of employees will be rated as very good, another as average and the rest as below average (Denisi & Griffin, 2011:226). The performance ratings of the employees in a particular group are then distributed along a "bell shaped curve. However, in small groups the rating of employees may not adapt to the bell curve and as such might lead to leniency biasness by managers (Mathis & Jackson, 2011:348). The forced distribution method is designed in a manner that non performing employees are kicked out of situations that are not advantageous to them. By being forced to group employees into different classes, managers are able to avoid central tendency bias in that employees would not be grouped into the middle performance (Collins & Wood, 2009:201).

According to Mathis & Jackson (2011:348), forced distribution may lead the managers to resist classifying employees in the "very good" or "below average" category. From an organisation's point of view, if employees are compensated with a merit pay, forced distribution guarantees how much is paid on merit pay (Denisi & Griffin, 2011:226).

#### **2.16.6 Ranking**

Mathis & Jackson (2011:343), contend that the ranking method focuses on the ranking of employees that are assessed, from the "highest to the lowest" position in relation to their performance. The employee who is ranked highest is interpreted as

being the best performer, whilst the second ranked employee is treated as being the second best and so on. However, by ranking employees in terms of their performance, managers do not provide sufficient information about what differentiates employees ranked differently (Denisi & Griffin, 2011:225). As such ranking regards only the employees' level of competence in relation to others (Bhattacharyya, 2006:277). It is therefore assumed by Mathis and Jackson, (2011:343); that through ranking, somebody must be last and as such, the possibility that the last ranked employee may be ranked highest in a different setting or group is ignored.

### **2.16.7 Benchmarking**

Benchmarking as a performance management approach accentuates identifying performance best practises that a company wants to imitate through continuous improvement (Amos, Ristow, & Pearse, 2008:65). Benchmarking is an endless process of measuring performance against other companies that are leaders and as such allows the company to assess its performance. A company can either benchmark internally by comparing systems amongst different departments or divisions. A company can also benchmark against other companies to establish best practice within (Boninelli & Meyer, 2004:65).

### **2.16.8 Total Quality Management**

Grobler, *et al.*, (2004:298) asserts that Total Quality Management (TQM) is based on the assumption that quality products and services are a result of the system in which they are generated. All activities in a company are performed within the context of a system. TQM evaluates employee performance as well as the employee work environment (Noe, *et al.*, 2011:273). When the system does not allow good work, employees will not be capable of improving their performance. Therefore, the quality of PMS will only be certain if employees have the power over variables that influence their performance. The performance system should then be able to sustain the implementation of quality management (Nel, *et al.*, 2004:487). The performance measurement feedback in TQM is both subjective and objective. The subjective feedback includes feedback from managers, peers and clients on the employees' qualities, whereas the objective feedback focuses on the work processes. So, the feedback on the work process may influence the change in work processes instead

of focusing on the challenges faced by employees.

## **2.17 Performance management and Organisational culture**

Nel, *et al.*, (2004:475) infer that performance management is a conduit for culture change. A good performance is influenced by a strong culture in that a progressive culture enables an employee to perform optimally and unenthusiastic culture demotivates leading to overachievers to underperform. Organisational culture therefore plays a crucial part in performance management (Mujeeb & Ahmad, 2011:52).

Organisational culture is defined as a mutual understanding between employees in an organisation in terms of how things are done. Organisational culture is a set of beliefs and customs which employees share and as such enables a sense of commitment and belonging. It is therefore important that organisations implement performance management systems that nurture a culture essential for realising organisational objectives (Swanepoel, 2003:29)

### **2.17.1 Cultural traits that influences organisational performance**

There are four cultural traits that influence organisational performance namely: (Mujeeb & Ahmed, 2011:52) and (Chan, Schaffer & Snape, 2004:22), involvement, consistency, adaptability and mission have a positive impact on performance management.

#### **2.17.1.1 Involvement**

According to Schaffer, *et al.*, (2004:22), performance management improves work and commitment on employees, provided it is supported by organisational culture. Performance management that is agreed to by both the management and employees not only creates a feeling of ownership but also improves performance of employees. At least both employees and management feel that they had contributed to performance decisions that are related to realising goals of the organisation (Mujeeb & Ahmad, 2004:53).

#### **2.17.1.2 Consistency**

Consistency forms a key component of performance management in that if PM is properly implemented, the relationship between management and employees could

be strengthened (Chan, *et al.*, 2004:22). Also organisations are able to be successful because of the existence of a strong culture that is consistent and cohesive (Mujeeb & Ahmed, 2004:53).

### **2.17.1.3 Adaptability**

Organisations that are adaptable are risk taking and learn from their mistakes. While such organisations apply their performance appraisal systems consistently to accomplish real business performance, they also need to be adaptable. Appraisal systems that are inflexible can be an obstacle to the realisation of high performance. However, flexible appraisal systems result in well-motivated employees (Chan, *et al.*, 2004:22).

### **2.17.1.4 Mission**

Mujeeb & Ahmad (2011:54), infer that organisations that are productive have clear direction in terms of strategic objectives and vision. These organisations are also certain on how the organisation would look like in the future. So, when the organisations mission changes, other changes also ensue in the organisational culture. It is therefore imperative that the appraisal system is incorporated in the organisations mission in order to restrain the effects of short term survival. Therefore organisational culture restrains the effects of human resource processes on the organisation's performance (Chan, *et al.*, 2004:22). It is through the influence of the cultural traits that performance management is positively affected.

## **2.18 Dealing with underperformers**

Employees will in most cases likely refute that they are underperforming. So if managers are not ready, they may devote most of their time arguing and debating as to whether the employee is underperforming or not (American Management Association International, n.d). Therefore, managers should understand that some employees take time to learn things. As such managers should have the zeal and allow slower learning employees time to reach set standards (Miah & Hossan, 2012:22). Because performance improvement is part of a continuous process of PMS, it is therefore imperative for managers to praise success and forgive employee failure. Instead failure should be taken as an opportunity to learn and be based on positive feedback (Armstrong, 2009:634).

In addressing poor performance by employees, Amos, *et al.*, (2008:299) suggests that the following steps be followed:

**Step1: The manager and employee must agree that there is a problem**

The manager and employee should agree that there is a performance problem. The employee's performance should have been assessed. There should also be proof of poor performance by the employee.

**Step 2: Identify reasons for poor performance**

The employee should be urged to identify the reasons for poor performance. At the same time the manager should not blame anyone for poor performance. The manager should then differentiate between the reasons given by the employee and the real causes of poor performance.

**Step 3: Agree on remedial action**

If poor performance is related to capability, then the manager may consider training and development as an intervention. Also consideration may be taken in terms of redesigning the work to suit the employee's capability or moving the employee to a different work environment. However, dismissal should be a last option.

**Step 4: Implement remedial action**

The managers can then implement remedial action and allocate the necessary resources to correct employee poor performance. Alternatively, an agreed upon intervention can be considered to be implemented.

**Step: 5 Monitor progress**

The employee's performance during the intervention period should be monitored and appropriated feedback be given. The employee should also be encouraged to monitor his or her own progress and detect additional intervention that can assist in remedying poor performance.

## **2.19 Summary**

In this chapter, the literature review on performance management was discussed. The objectives of performance management, criteria for effective performance management, performance management, the performance management cycle, reasons for performance management systems, failure of performance appraisal, parties to performance appraisal, alignment of performance management with strategy, performance appraisal and the law, guidelines for protecting a company from lawsuits due to performance appraisal challenges, common errors in appraisals, linking performance with pay, performance management, motivation and performance appraisal methods, performance management and organisational culture, dealing with underperformers were articulated.

The next chapter focuses on the research methodology.



### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the research methodology used in exploring the perceptions of student affairs in implementation of performance management at UJ is explained. The emphasis will be on the philosophical paradigm, ontology, epistemology, research approach, data collection, data analysis, population, sample, validity, reliability and ethical consideration.

#### **3.2 Philosophical Paradigm**

According to Babbie (2010: 32), a paradigm is defined as a belief influencing how researchers organise explanations and thoughts. A paradigm outlines the researcher's opinion of the world and informs researchers of what amounts as genuine knowledge and how difficulties should be handled (McNeil & Chapman, 2005:181). Researchers are generally guided by certain assumptions about what the natural world is like. A philosophical paradigm implies principles and customs related to a particular type of research (Denscombe, 2010:326). It focuses on the view that research is performed according to a certain philosophy and interpretation. As such the researcher who researches within each paradigm would have a similar view about social reality (ontology) and the most appropriate method for social research (epistemology).

Zwane (2006:29) infer "that there are three kinds of research paradigms" namely interpretivism, positivism and constructivism. So the researcher in this instance identified himself with interpretivism in that he was only exploring the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of performance management system.

A deductive approach will be followed in doing the research. In order to understand the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of performance management system, the researcher used focus group interviews as a research strategy with purposive sampling technique. Saunders, *et al.*, (2009:237) asserts that purposive sampling allows the researcher to select the respondents that are best positioned to respond to the research questions. The respondents in this instance



were directly affected by the implementation of the performance management system and were in a better position to provide the required responses (McNeill & Chapman, 2005:50).

### **3.3 Research Approach**

A qualitative approach was followed in doing the research. This approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to “understand” and explore the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of performance management system (Creswell, 1998:15). The researcher wanted to “analyse words” and to report the views of the research participants comprehensively from their natural environment. In a qualitative approach the research questions commences with “how and what” (Creswell, 1998:15). This was to allow the researcher to venture into and understand what the topic depicted. In qualitative research, data is “no numerical” and can be gathered using semi structured techniques (Biber & Leavy, 2004:3). Qualitative research is also depended on the description attached to the meaning of words and how concepts are developed. Data in qualitative research depends on the interpretation of participants (Walliman, 2011:72).

Creswell (2013:42) asserts that qualitative research starts with suppositions and “interpretive” background that led to the research problems and the “meaning” that the research participants assign to a human problem. The researcher intended to explore the meaning that the participants give to the problem. This was empowering the research participants to “share their stories” (Creswell, 2013:47).

Contrary to qualitative approach questions, quantitative approach questions ask the “why” and compare variables (Creswell, 1998:15).The researcher in quantitative research depends on statistical data to test interactions between variables (Maree, 2007:255). Quantitative researchers standardize their data collection method and are fascinated by ‘causalities’ (Flick, 2011:10).

#### **3.3.1 Population**

Walliman (2011:94) define a population as a joint term describing the number of things which are the topic of an investigation. A Population is described by Cooper and Schindler (2006:402) as the entire group which a researcher can make

presumptions. However, McNeill & Chapman (2005:47) define a population as “all those people who could be included in the study”. UJ has approximately 5000 staff members but for the purposes of the dissertation, only the employees of the student affairs department will be the subject of the research. By student affairs, the researcher refers to the following division, student life and governance, student accommodation and residence life as well as student ethics and judiciary services.

The population consisted of the student affairs executive director, the director student life and governance, the director of student accommodation, 3 student accommodations HOD's, one student ethics and judiciary HOD (Head of division), 5 student development practitioners, 78 residence managers and one administrator. The inclusion of the student affairs executive director was due to the fact that he is the custodian of the performance management system in the student affairs division. The directors of student life and governance and student accommodation were included because they are responsible for the implementation of the performance management system in the division and might provide useful information as to the understanding of the performance management system by the subordinates. From the population it was expected that at least fifty percent of the population would respond to the questionnaire.

### **3.3.2 Sampling**

According to Skott & Ward (2013:64) a sample is defined as a subgroup of the population or a subgroup of a societal trend (Payne & Payne, 2005:200) to be studied from the greater space to 'which they belong'. A sample may or may not be a true reflection of the population subject to the intention of the research (Seale, 2011:592). A population is selected with the intent of producing the utmost information about the experiences of that which is studied. Therefore a sampling technique is applied in choosing a sample (Merriam, 2002:20).

Remler & Ryzin (2011:145) describe sampling as a procedure of choosing a subgroup from a population to be studied. Sampling is used by researchers because of having inadequate time or resources to study the whole population. Conclusions on sampling are made by researchers with the intention of gaining the 'richest possible source of information to answer the research questions' (Maree, 2007:79).

A purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample. The reason was that the participants whom the researcher wanted to investigate had “experience of the phenomenon being studied” (Creswell, 2013:155). Also purposive sampling was used because the participants were appropriate rather than representing the whole population (Payne & Payne, 2005:210). In this instance the participants were affected by the implementation of the performance management system and had experience in performance management (Merriam, 2002:98).

### **3.3.3 Data collection**

In order to address the objectives of the research study, the researcher collected data through focus group interviews. Focus groups comprises of individuals who are knowledgeable about the topic (Walliman, 2011:99). The emphasis was on the research topic and involved a shared discussion between the participants (Saunders, *et al.*, 2009:347).

The student affairs population consisted of the student affairs executive director, the director student life and governance, director student accommodation, 3 student accommodations HOD's, one student ethics and judiciary HOD (Head of division), 5 student development practitioners, 78 residence managers and one administrator making a total of 90 people. The initial plan was to split the population into seven focus groups. However, only sixteen individuals accepted the invitation and as such they were grouped into two focus groups. The target was that 50 percent of the population would participate in the research, instead only 18 percent participated.

The motive for conducting the focus group interview on the management of student affairs division namely; the executive director, the director of student life and governance, the director of student accommodation, and 4 heads of departments was to pilot the research and “generate preliminary information “on the research (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001:18). The interview was tape recorded with the participant's permission. In conjunction with recording the interview, the researcher also took notes. The purpose of taking notes allowed the researcher to review the interview and asked further questions (Maree, 2007:89). The researcher did not attempt to ‘summarize or correct bad grammar’ (Babbie, 2010:277). A written transcript of the interview was made for data analysis purposes.

### **3.3.4 Data Analysis**

According to Denscombe (2010: 235), data is analysed to understand something better, the aim being to explain its essential parts, how it functions and to interpret its significance. From the analysis of data the researcher is able to acquire new knowledge (Gray, 2009:499).

The researcher used a content analysis method in analysing data. Through content analysis, the responses from the focus group interviews were objectively identified and methodically grouped into categories (Gray, 2009:500). The categories were then described and discussed according to themes of questions (Creswell, 2013:180). Thereafter the themes were linked to meaningful data in which relationships were identified. The researcher studied emerging themes in order to make conclusions qualitatively (Saunders, *et al.*, 2009: 492). The analysis was done manually as opposed to electronically because of the small size of the focus groups. The themes that emerged from the analysis will further be discussed in the following chapter.

### **3.3.5 Quality criteria**

#### **3.3.5.1 Trustworthiness**

According to Gray (2009:194), trustworthiness is more important than the interest around checking for validity and reliability. Trustworthiness of the research is comparable to the rigours of the research in that it shows the way in which integrity and competence is demonstrated (Tobin & Begley, 2004:390). Tobin and Begley (2004:390) assert that trustworthiness demonstrates the legitimacy of the research process because without it there is a “danger that research may become fictional journalism worthless as contributing to knowledge”. In order to address the trustworthiness of the research, it is imperative that the research is credible, dependable, confirmable and transferable (Tuckett, 2005:34).

#### **3.3.5.1.1 Credibility**

Credibility focuses on the ‘fit’ between the opinions of the research participants and how these opinions are portrayed by the researcher. In order to demonstrate credibility, it is better to have member checks, peer debriefing and audit trails (Tobin & Begley, 2004: 392). The researcher in this instance ensured credibility through the



tape recording of the interviews and transcribing it verbatim in this way the accuracy of the research was therefore ensured (Tuckett, 2005:33). The other way of ensuring credibility of the research was through purposive sampling in that the researcher selected participants on the assumption that they would most likely share their experiences truthfully.

#### **3.3.5.1.2 Dependability**

Trustworthiness of the research study must be dependable and can be achieved through the utilization of audit trails (Gray, 2009:194). The researcher therefore was able to ensure trustworthiness of the research through the description and documented process of the research data collected, data analysis, the methods, interpretation of the findings and the end product, (Torbin & Begley, 2004: 392).

#### **3.3.5.1.3 Confirmability**

The researcher was able to ensure confirmability of the research study through audit trails that indicate the link between data and the researcher's interpretation thereof (Gray, 2009:194). The link in this instance is established through the tape recording of the interview, transcription and the analysed data (Finlay, n.d: 8).

#### **3.3.5.1.4 Transferability**

According to Torbin & Begley (2004:390) transferability denotes how generalizable the research is. Description of the research enables transferability of qualitative research study, which in this case the researcher was able to do (Tucket, 2005:33) in that information about the research participants, data and interpretation are described. However, it is up to the receiver of this research study to generalize and decide which aspects of the research can be applied to new contexts.

### **3.4 Summary**

In this chapter the research methodology used in conducting the research was discussed. It included the research paradigm, research approach, population, sample data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability and ethical consideration.

In the next chapter, data analysis and findings are dealt with.

## **4. Data analysis, Research results and Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the analysis of data, results and findings of the research. As mentioned in chapter 3 that data is analysed to understand something better, the aim being to explain its essential parts, how it functions and interpret its significance (Denscombe, 2010: 235). With the analysed data, the researcher is able to acquire new knowledge (Gray, 2009:499). Data was collected through the use of focus group interviews by means of a questionnaire (**see appendix A**) and was tape recorded with the respondents' permission. The recorded data was therefore transcribed verbatim for data analysis purposes (**see appendix B**).

As mentioned in chapter three that the student affairs population consisted of the student affairs executive director, the director student life and governance, director student accommodation, 3 student accommodations HOD's, one student ethics and judiciary HOD (Head of division), 5 student development practitioners, 78 residence managers and one administrator making a total of 90 people. The initial plan was to split the population into seven focus groups. However, only sixteen individuals accepted the invitation and as such they were grouped into two focus groups. As a result, instead of a 50 per cent of the population participating in the research, only 18 percent participated. Two groups of student affairs practitioners were interviewed comprising a sample of (n=16):

### **4.2 Data analysis**

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a content analysis method was used in analysing data. Through content analysis, the responses from the focus group interviews were objectively identified and methodically grouped into categories (Gray, 2009:500). The categories were then described and discussed according to the themes of questions (Creswell, 2013:180). The themes were linked to meaningful data in which relationships were identified. From the research questions three themes emerged which are:

- Performance management experience;
- Challenges experienced by student affairs practitioners; and

- Expectations of student affairs practitioners.

Next in this chapter is the presentation of the results:

### **4.3 Presentation of results**

#### ***4.3.1 Experiences of participants on performance management***

##### **Question 1**

***Tell me about your experiences on the implementation of the performance management system?***

One of the focus groups responded that when performance management was implemented, they were informed that it was for developmental purposes. However the issue of it being linked to bonuses makes its objectivity to be compromised. If performance management was not linked to bonuses; it was going to be a good tool for development. As such it does not do much in terms of staff development.

Another responded that performance management was used to monitor progress in terms of whether the goals of the institution have been achieved or not and was not linked to bonuses. It was established again that from the respondents that performance management is a good idea because through it, individuals that perform were rewarded. The biggest challenge was the lack of clear criteria in measuring performance.

One group responded that performance management establishes a contract between an employer and employee and another group indicated that it was a negotiation process which is unfair to other employees.

##### **Question 3**

***Do you know what a performance management cycle is?***

Both groups were not clear about the performance management cycle but their assumption was that it was from January to December.

## **Question 5**

***Describe how you are being appraised?***

Appraisal is a one on one process. Employees were appraised on the job that they have performed and the appraisal was not developmental. The line manager only asked clarity seeking questions on certain issues and evidence that employee has performed. Employees felt not being trusted when the line manager questioned them. The appraisal process was not adequate in that employees input and output were both measured. The system was ineffective because employees were appraised once a year. One focus group responded that the line manager asked employees to assess and rate themselves, after that the manager would indicate whether employees have performed or not.

### **4.3.2 Challenges experienced by student affairs practitioners**

## **Question 2**

***What specific challenges do you encounter in terms of performance management?***



One respondent reported that they needed training in the implementation of performance management as this was not provided. The challenge then was that line managers and staff interpreted PM differently. The linking of PM to bonuses was a challenge as this can be abused by both the employees and line managers. The system was viewed as being unfair because subordinates are measured on whether they have done their job or not. There was no proof as to how the job was done. There was no feedback in terms of interventions when an employee has underperformed. It seemed that no one cared when employees underperform.

## **Question 6**

***Are you comfortable with only your line manager appraising you? Motivate your answer.***

There must be a second person that was independent from the line manager during assessments, said one group. This was to minimise victimisation as people in power



would want to show employees who is the boss. However, the other group felt that it was an advantage to be assessed by only the line manager and no one else. The other issue raised was that even though it was advantageous for employees to be assessed by the line manager, would managers be fair in assessments?

#### **Question 9**

***Which would you prefer merit or skills related pay?***

One group assumed that merit pay related to output and skills pay related to input as such, the two were supposed to be balanced. Employees were supposed to be recognised for both their skills and their outputs.

#### **4.3.3 Expectations of student affairs practitioners**

#### **Question 4**

***Are you satisfied with being assessed only at the end of the performance management cycle?***

One respondent indicated that assessment depended on the agreement between employees and the line manager on when assessment would take place. One group reported that they were assessed continuously but the other one responded that they were assessed once a year and as such were not satisfied. Ideally they would want to be assessed every three months; this was because being assessed once a year was interpreted as being reactionary.

#### **Question 7**

***Would you allow students being part of the appraisal interview team? Discuss.***

The groups responded that they would allow students to appraise them. This was because student's feedback would guide the groups in terms of what the expectations of students were. However, a concern was raised about students being objective as they would want to "deal with" student affairs practitioners. By having students appraising the staff, this would encourage staff to do their jobs better.

### **Question 8**

***How do merit and skills related pay differ?***

Both groups responded that they were not clear about the differences between merit and skills related pay. One group mentioned that it needed to be trained on merit and skills related pay. This group presumed that merit relates to outputs and skills related to inputs. As such the group proposed that they should not be paid on outputs only and their skills are not appreciated.

### **Question 10**

***Explain how performance management is able to motivate you.***

Both groups said that performance management was demotivating. This also depended on the individual. However, one group reported that performance management was meaningless because one was employed to perform.

### **Question 11**

***Do you think line managers are properly trained in conducting performance appraisals?***



Both groups responded that managers were not trained to implement performance management. They only depended on what the policy stipulated. Some felt that the performance management system did not need line managers to be extensively trained. Instead the question that needed to be asked was whether “managers were fair in implementing the policy not that they were sufficiently trained”.

### **Question 13**

***Would you suggest an alternative to the current performance management system?***

One respondent indicated that they would prefer a 360 degree performance assessment. The other group was not sure but proposed a system that is not linked to pay.

## 4.4 Findings

### 4.4.1. Experiences of participants on performance management

#### 4.4.1.1 Performance management experience

The respondents expressed different views in terms of what their experiences were in relation to performance management. One of the focus groups responded that when performance management was implemented, they were informed that it was for developmental purposes. However, the issue of it being linked to bonuses makes its objectivity to be compromised. If performance management was not linked to bonuses; it was going to be a good tool for development. As such it does not do much in terms of staff development. That is why Jackson, *et al.*, (2009:315) defines development as the actions that are envisioned to improve capabilities over an extended time and may lead to improvement in employees' performance in existing jobs.

Performance management serves as the foundation for developing skills and knowhow of employees, in that employees are made aware of their strengths and weaknesses (Noe, *et al.*, 2009:217). A developmental performance management acknowledges that the role of managers is to help improve the employee's job behaviour and not only appraise past performance. It is therefore imperative that the notion of performance management contributing to the improvement of employee behaviour be stressed to the employees.

Another responded that performance management was used to monitor progress in terms of whether the goals of the institution have been achieved or not and was not linked to bonuses. That is why Jackson, *et al.*, (2009:316) alludes that when the strategic goals of the organisation are linked to employee performance, employees are able to comprehend their strategic direction better and see how their performance fit in the strategy. Performance management enables the organisation to realise its strategic objective by aligning employee behaviour with the goals of the organisation.

It was established again that from the respondents that performance management is

a good idea because through it, individuals that perform were rewarded. The biggest challenge was the lack of clear criteria in measuring performance. According to Swanepoel (2003:261), performance management can only succeed if its measuring techniques are good and hence recommend that PM should fit with the strategy, be valid, reliable, acceptable, and sensitive and that employees be given feedback that is specific which was not the case in this instance.

Performance management establishes a contract between an employer and employee. Russell & Russell (2009:13) concur with the respondents that performance management is an agreement that elucidate expectations between managers and employees and it identifies the outcomes that will be measured. In this instance respondents understood very well that they entered into a contract with the employer when they agreed with the terms of performance management. Hence, Potgieter (2005:1) postulates that performance management is a system of establishing common agreement between employer and employee about what is to be accomplished during a particular period. The intention is to use PMS to ascertain that the organisation's objective is consistent with what employees need to accomplish in their daily operations. It was therefore advantageous that the respondents agree with their line managers the performance measures to be achieved.

“It is also a negotiation process which is unfair to other employees” said one respondent. This takes the researcher back to Dewettinck (2009:12) that the fairness of the appraisal and reward system has become a contentious issue encountered by the implementers of performance management. The perceptions of fairness by employees are central to the success of a performance management system in that fairness acts as the intercessor of the correlation between PMS characteristics and success. So when employees feel that PMS is unfair, they will put less effort in their work and receive no value, while the employer receives no revenue. However, if employees feel that PMS process is fair, they will most likely put more effort in their work and receive value and at the same time the employer will receive revenue (Burney, *et al.*, 2006:8).

#### **4.4.1.2 Performance management cycle**

When the respondents were asked whether they knew what the performance management cycle was, both groups indicated that they were not clear what the performance management was about. One group assumed that the performance management cycle was from January to December. The researcher's assumption was that the respondents were never conscientised in terms of what the performance management cycle was and what it entailed. It is therefore imperative that both the line managers and the respondents have a discussion in relation to what the performance management cycle was all about, when does it starts and when does it ends. The discussion should also include aspects such as planning, employee input, giving and receiving feedback, evaluation and performance review as recommended by Pulakos (2004:7).

#### **4.4.1.3 Assessment process**

There were a lot of disagreements between the respondents in terms of how they are being assessed. For instance some indicated that assessment was a one on one process conducted one a year and others indicated that they were being assessed throughout the year and the assessment done at the end of the year was just a consolidation of what happened during the year.

The process involved the line manager asking the respondents what they have done during the year and questioning the evidence produced by the respondents. One indicated that the line manager asked the respondents to asses and rate themselves thereafter the manager will give feedback. The researcher could therefore infer that there were a lot of inconsistencies in terms of how the respondents were assessed.

It was therefore important that the organisation capacitate the line managers to manage performance for themselves and their subordinates by making performance appraisal a continuous process characterised by frequent reviews focusing on development instead of checking progress towards the realisation of objectives only (Boninelli & Meyer, 2004:206). Armstrong and Murlis (2001:240) explain that if organisations want PMS to become a central management process in the implementation of the strategy, then a holistic method should be employed rather than appraisal being a once off annual ritual.

## **4.4.2 Challenges experience by student affairs practitioner in the implementation of PMS**

### **4.4.2.1 Encountered Challenges**

The respondents were asked to mention the challenges that they have experienced in terms of performance management and one of the responses was that they both the respondents and managers needed training in the implementation of performance management as that was not provided by the organisation. The issue of managers and employees needing training was due to the different interpretation of the performance management and whether should PM be a continuous process or a once off appraisal system.

Kuratko and Hornsby (2003:164) contend that as soon as the appraisal standards have been identified, managers should be trained in conducting appraisals. Unless managers or anyone else conducting appraisals receives training, the process will lead to doubt and disagreements (Mondy & Noe, 2005:277). Training is necessary to decrease rating errors and will improve accuracy in instances where managers are not certain of their competence to perform appraisal interviews. Hence the researcher was of the opinion that both the line managers and the respondents interpreted performance management differently because of a lack of training.

The respondents interpreted the performance process as being unfair as the respondents were measured on whether they have performed or not but as to how the job was done no proof was not required. Hence, Shrivastava & Purang (2011:132) assert that employees do not only worry about how their performance rating equals their anticipated expectations. If employees feel that performance results are fair, it is important that they are assured that the procedures used are fair (Markus, 2004:5).

Feedback in terms of intervention when the respondents did not perform was not given. It seems “no one worries when we do not perform” said one respondent. Markus (2004:7) postulate that feedback is the formal day to day process in which managers interact with work colleagues in providing support with the intention of improving performance. In this instance, if the respondents are assessed once a

year how would the feedback received from the line manager assist them because they would have not time to remedy their actions in the current year? But if feedback is received continuously as highlighted by one responded then the feedback in terms of non-performance would be implemented. In implementing PMS, emphasis should be placed on providing feedback and coaching to assist employees to reach their full potential and should be provided on an on-going basis.

Managers should understand that some employees take time to learn things (American Management Association International, n.d). Performance improvement is part of a continuous process of PMS, it is therefore imperative that managers praise success and forgive employee failure, but failure should be taken as an opportunity to learn and be based on positive feedback (Armstrong, 2009:634).

#### **4.4.2.2 Assessment by line manager**

All respondents gave opposing views in terms of being assessed by the line manager only. One group responded that they would feel comfortable by having a second person independent from the line manager assessing them. The reason given was that they wanted to minimise being victimised by the line manager. The other respondents felt comfortable being assessed by the line manager only.

Line managers have considerable influence in the appraisal process and are mostly responsible in appraising their subordinates (Armstrong, 2010:248). Sometimes managers are prone to making mistakes when appraising employees (Kulik, 2004:93) and as such they may be influenced by other elements that can influence them when assessing their subordinates accurately. Manager's personal biases can lead them to assessing their subordinates severely or positively without being aware of it (Holpp, 2012:49).

#### **4.4.2.3 Performance and motivation**

The question on motivation asked the respondents if the implementation of performance management motivated them. The researcher found conflicting responses in that some respondents indicated that performance management was demotivating because different divisions implemented it differently. Both respondents indicated that the implementation of performance management did motivate them.

According to Haines & St Onge (2011:1160) employee recognition and rewards is based on theories of motivation. Organisations embrace employee recognition and rewards systems to strengthen the actions of employees in a manner that they expect. Motivation processes encourages employees to apportion their energy to behaviour in a manner that would increase their needs satisfaction (Denisi & Pritchard, 2006:262). Organisations need motivated employees to perform their work in order to incentivise them. Employees that are motivated perform better than non – motivated employees (Boxall & Purcell, 2003:146). However, Burney, Henle and (Wiedener, 2006:2) caution that employees might put more effort in one field of their work and neglects the other fields. Also high performing employees would be dissatisfied and demotivated if they are remunerated as non performing employees.

#### **4.4.3 Expectations of student affairs practitioners**

##### **4.4.3.1 Perceptions on appraisals**

Assessment depends on the agreement between the employees and the line manager on when they were to be assessed. One of the respondents indicated that they were continuously assessed, but the other respondents reported that they were assessed once a year. Ideally the respondents wanted to be assessed every three months. Coyle (2007:1) defines appraisal as one of the techniques in the PMS and is described by Boninelli & Meyer (2004:207) as a portrait of employee behaviour and it happens “once or twice a year”. If this is how Boninelli & Meyer (2004:207) describe performance appraisals happening once a year, then the question in the mind of the researcher would be what will happen to employees who improve their performance if feedback was given at year end. Appraisal provides the employers with an opportunity to assess employees and to put in place objectives that will lead to optimum levels of performance by employees.

##### **4.4.3.2 Appraisal by students**

The respondents were asked if they would allow students to appraise them. Both the respondents agreed that they would allow students to appraise them. The reason given was that the feedback received from students would be used to identify what the students’ expectations by the student affairs practitioners. There was however a concern about the students being objective.



According to Grobler, *et al.*, (2004:293), the employees' immediate manager is better suited to appraise subordinates in that managers regularly monitor the behaviour of the employees. A manager is conversant of an employee and as such has the best opportunity to truly monitor performance which the students are also able to do because of their daily interactions with the student affairs practitioners. This is corroborated by Nel, *et al.*, (2004:479) by explaining that an employee's internal clients (which in this instance are the students) can evaluate the employees' performance. Clients according to Nel, *et al.*, (2004:479) are best able to give a precise overview of the employee than managers and peers.

#### **4.4.3.3 Merit and skills related pay**

The question on merit and skills related pay asked the participants if they knew the difference between merit and skills related pay. The researcher found that both respondents were not clear about the differences between merit and skills related pay. One respondent assumed that merit relates to outputs and skills relate to input and as a result employees needed to be recognised for their skills and output at the same time. In terms of merit pay, the employees basic salary increase is influenced by performance (Fletcher, 2006:35) and is usually given once a year and is based on performance for the past 12 months (Kuratko & Hornsby, 2003:219). However, skills related pay is associated with the type and complexity of skills that employees acquire and use in their job (Armstrong, 2003:689). Skills related pay uses skills as the core of pay since employees who have more knowledge are valued more in the organisation and are entitled to reward for their endeavour in developing new skills.

#### **4.4.3.4 Training of line managers**

The participants were asked if they thought line managers were properly trained in implementing performance management. One respondent indicated that managers were not trained in the implementation of performance management and that they only follow the prescripts of the policy. That is why Kuratko & Hornsby (2003:164) indicate that managers should receive training in conducting effective appraisals as soon as the standards have been identified. Managers are not sure of their competencies in conducting performance appraisals and as such depend on paperwork and what the policy say.

Training of managers is necessary to minimise errors and will also improve the accuracy of appraisals (Kuratko & Hornsby, 2003:164). There is also a proposal by Fletcher (2006:79) that training of managers should be arranged in such a way that appraisers have sufficient time to realise if they can do good assessments. Appraisers should also be allowed to do trial runs in which they acquaint themselves with the rating scales and be given feedback in order to know which behaviours to assess (Bernadin, 2010:237).

#### **4.4.3.5 Alternative system**

The participants were asked to suggest an alternative to the current system of performance management. One group suggested the 360 degree performance system and the other group proposed a system that is not linked to pay. From the responses, it was clear for the researcher that the respondents did not want a system that is linked to pay. The respondents also indicated that they would support a system that is developmental and includes various individuals in the assessment team. Gomez, *et al.*, (2007:218) postulates that a 360 degree system of appraisal gives a clear indication of an employee's performance in that it offers various opinions. The reason for this is because a 360 degree performance system involves managers, peers, subordinates and even clients of the organisation. The results from the 360 degree assessment can be compiled into a report which can be used for developmental purposes. Dessler (2013:315) asserts that a 360 degree system becomes sincere when subordinates are aware that the intention of the appraisal system is not done for reward and promotion purposes only.

#### **4.5 Summary**

When performance management was implemented at the University of Johannesburg, the respondents had the impression that it was for developmental purposes. However, the emphasis was placed on getting bonuses at the end of the work year. All the respondents agree that performance management was going to be a good tool for development if it was not linked to bonuses.

Performance management was supposed to be used to monitor progress in relation to whether the University of Johannesburg's goals were achieved or not. Instead performance management was not being used to monitor employees' progress in

that the reviews were mostly done at the end of the year.

There were no clear criteria as to how the employees were to be evaluated. This is because the respondents indicated from the interviews that no performance meetings were scheduled between them and the line managers as to what was expected of the employees. Most respondents were not clear as to the meaning of the performance management cycle and when does it starts and does it ends.

The process of conducting performance assessments was not clear to the respondents. Some respondents indicated that they were asked what they have done throughout the year and others were asked to rate themselves before the line manager gives them feedback. Because there was a lack of continuous evaluation of employees, it was then difficult for the respondents to be developed in terms of where they were lacking.

Performance management was seen as a negotiation process between the employees and the line manager and as such was interpreted as being unfair. There were a lot of inconsistencies in terms of how employees were evaluated in that some indicated that they were evaluated once a year and others were evaluated throughout the year which was a bit problematic to others.

There was clear evidence that both the respondents and line managers were not trained in the implementation of a performance management system. Both parties interpreted it differently. The researcher found that managers were not properly trained to assess or conduct performance appraisals and as such they only follow what the performance management policy said. This was a major concern in that if managers were not properly trained to assess performance, how then could they be partial. In terms of underperformers, there was no guideline as to how underperformance was to be addressed.

The respondents felt comfortable with the line manager assessing them; however the majority was willing to allow their clients (students) to evaluate them. Questions were however raised with regards to the objectivity of students during evaluations of the respondents.

The implementation of a performance management was motivating to the minority of the respondents more over since it was linked to monetary rewards such as bonuses. The majority of respondents felt that monetary rewards should not be only motivating factor. Instead development of employees should be the emphasis of performance management.

This chapter focused on the analysis of data, the research results and findings. The next chapter will then focus on the final conclusion and the recommendations.



## **Chapter 5: Final conclusion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the recommendations for the University of Johannesburg, recommendations for future research as well as the final conclusion.

### **5.2 Recommendations for the University of Johannesburg**

UJ should train line managers and employees in the implementation of performance management. This was informed by the fact that the participants indicated that they were never trained and instead relied on what the policy said. Because of this, the participants were not sure if they interpreted the policy correctly.

A clear criterion should be set in the divisions as to what performance is going to be evaluated and how performance will be evaluated. The impression received from the participants was that they were not sure of the criteria used in the evaluation of performance.

Emphasis should be placed on employee development and not on monetary rewards at the end of the year. The participants did not view performance management as having a developmental value. Instead the focus was on receiving a bonus at the end of the year which was problematic.

Performance evaluations should at least be done quarterly to give employees who underperform an opportunity to improve themselves. If performance is evaluated at the end of the year employees would not have time to improve.

Clear guidelines as to how under performance by employees would be addressed should be included in the performance management policy. Interventions in terms of what underperformers should engage in should be clearly spelt out so as to capacitate them and redress poor performance.

A very inclusive evaluation system is implemented rather than only line managers to evaluate subordinates. This is to discourage biasness or victimization of subordinates by the line manager. Instead of relying on opinions of line managers

only in rating employees, other stakeholders might offer a broader perspective.

Employees should be conscientized as to how their performance contributes to the overall achievement of the University's goals. Only one respondent articulated how their performance contributed to the University achieving its goals. This was in contrast to the responses of other participants.

### **5.3 Limitations**

The aim of the research was to explore the perceptions affairs practitioners in the implementation of performance management system at the University of Johannesburg. Data was collected by means of focus group interviews. The focus groups were to be made of student life and governance employees, student accommodation and residence life as well as student ethics and judiciary divisions. Only the student life and governance and student ethics and judiciary employees were interviewed. No respondents from student accommodation and residence life were interviewed as they did not honour the interview invitation. As such the research study cannot be generalisable.

### **5.4 Recommendations for future research**

The researcher recommends that future research on performance management that involves all departments at UJ be done. This is because the study only focussed on the student affairs department and as such might not be applicable to academic and other departments.

The researcher felt that the objectives of the research were reached through the responses of the participants; however this might not be true to the reader. This is because only one data collection method in terms of focus groups was used in collecting data. For, if mixed methods were employed different outcomes might have been reached. The other reason for recommending future research is because the size of the sample was small. Not much literature is available on the evaluation of student affairs practitioners and for this reason maybe other researchers might want to explore the topic further.

## 5.5 Conclusion

The aim of the research study was to explore the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of performance management at the University of Johannesburg.

A literature study on performance management with a special focus on emerging theory, strategy implementation, objectives of performance management, differences between performance management and performance appraisals, criteria for effective performance management, reasons for performance failure, parties to performance appraisals, linking performance management with goals of the organisation, performance appraisal and the law, guidelines for protecting a company from lawsuits due to performance appraisal challenges, training of appraisers, linking performance with pay, performance and motivation and dealing with underperformance were discussed.

Data was collected through the use of focus groups interviews with the help of a structured questionnaire. The interviews were recorded with a tape recorder and transcribed verbatim. Data was analysed through content analysis and the findings integrated with literature. From the research question, three themes emerged and all aspects of the questions in the questionnaire were grouped to answer the relevant research questions below:

- What is the experience of student affairs practitioners of the performance process?
- What are the challenges experienced by student affairs practitioners in adhering to the stipulations of performance management system?
- What are the expectations of student affairs practitioners in how performance management should be implemented?

From the responses to the research questions, the researcher was able to contextualise the perceptions of student affairs practitioners in the implementation of performance management at the University of Johannesburg. As such the researcher can conclude that the research questions were all answered and that the research objectives were also achieved

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## APPENDIX A

- Tell me about your experiences on the implementation of performance management system?
- What specific challenges do you encounter in terms of performance management?
- Do you know what a performance management cycle is?
- Are you satisfied with being assessed only at the end of the performance management cycle?
- Describe how you are being appraised?
- Are you comfortable with only your line manager appraising you and no other person? Motivate your answer.
- Would allow students being part of the appraisal interview team? Discuss.
- What are the differences between merit and skills related pay?
- Does the implementation performance management is able to motivate you?
- Do you think line managers are properly trained in conducting performance appraisals?
- Would you suggest an alternative to the current performance management system?

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Transcript

#### Question 1

***Tell me about your experiences on the implantation of performance management?***

#### Group 1

With me, which have observed when performance management started we were told that it is for developmental purposes, but I see it as something which is causing problems. It is now linked to bonuses and it makes its objectivity to be compromised. Because every time you do performance management with your boss or with your other colleagues, a bonus is at the back of your mind. So I think that is what I have seen and that compromises the development aspect and if there was no link between bonus and performance management, it will be good tool for development. So that is my expectation that for development it is not doing very much because it is done with a bonus at the back of the mind.

In my environment, you know I am pretty new, so in terms of performance management, where we monitor our progress and we are able to measure whether we are arriving at the goals we set, because sometimes we can set the goals that do not seem realistic. So therefore with our view from this side of our environment, it is just to say we have set goal one, for instance, linking it with the University's broader goals and objectives that, how can we reach that point, but it is still under its testing phase and we are still looking into whether it is going to be realistic or not. We have not linked it yet to bonuses. The majority of the colleagues that I work with are still temporary. Temporary staff in this University I think that they do not get bonuses. I am the only one as a contract employee that would be eligible for a bonus but my discussion with my boss is not with performance management, It is whether I have achieved my goals or not.

#### Group 2

I think it is a good idea intending actually to reward those who perform but the challenge with those who are evaluating are having is that you are expected to make

certain promises at the beginning of the year or at the beginning of the evaluation session. However you do not get much leverage to indicate that I would perform better if I get one, two and three resources to help me. What comes at the end of the year when it is time for you to be evaluated, you are not allowed to use those excuses that you did not get the resources to do certain things. That is why I could not succeed in reaching certain targets. At the end of the day you end up being told that you need to learn with whatever resources that you have. Certain resources actually play a certain part in most cases but for us human resources you end up doing more work.

Something that is challenging to us is that you have to sort of negotiate with your line manager the person who is evaluating you that I think I have performed better and you do not know that you did one two and three. There is no pre-set checklist, I think if there was a pre-set checklist to say that for you to pass you must get fifty and to get fifty you should have answered so many questions.

It is like you are going to be evaluated but you really not sure what is the criteria that is going to be used at the end, it boils down to what you can actually present.

Interviewer asking: anyone else?

I think following up on what my colleague has been saying, I think we find ourselves in a crisis whereby you are both using qualitative measures and quantities measures to measure up one process, which I think it will work best if we choose one process. But that is going to be a little odd especially given the kind of jobs we do.

I think this kind of process works better for instance in sales jobs because then you have ten eggs, you supposed to sell all those ten eggs at the end of the day. It is much easier to weigh performance in that you either have sold ten eggs or not.

In our kind of jobs like my colleague has been saying there is no clear criterion, it becomes one of those negotiating process whereby if you are an individual and you have talk for yourself, unfortunately. So I think my point then is that the challenge is that we find ourselves using two measures which is qualitative and quantitative but at the end of the day we end up quantitative measures to rate and it is not necessarily

fair because then again I will use the ten eggs example whereby it would be much easier if you have ten eggs and say all of us have to sell those eggs. When we have to do performance management it is very simple in that we use a quantitative measure you either have sold them or you have not

In our job descriptions it is a little bit of a negotiation process and with negotiation process you know at the end of the day settling to what your superior says as oppose to what you say and it that itself it is an unfair process.

I have a totally different view on performance management more especially on the contract part of it. I mean when one accepted the job offer from my employer, you enter into a contract with an employer or obviously you would then be performing. Then the performance management which is used here, I am not sure what is the intention of that particular performance management that we are doing here, because I would have thought it would also assist in terms of appraisals which it does not.

You enter into a contract with your employer and at the end of the year you scored three, you scored four, five and that is a routine. It is a routine thing and there will not be any tangible outcomes out of it besides being told that you have performed and this is how much you will get as your bonus.

Mine is a difficult one because I am still new in the department. But It enlightened me to know exactly what my responsibilities are and where did I go wrong. Though I have a problem understanding what my colleague has said in terms of qualitative and quantitative because I may do everything in terms of what I am given to do but then it is not up to me to make sure that It becomes a success. It is up to a particular group of students that they turn out or decide it is not on for them, for me I think it becomes a challenge in that sense.

## Question 2

### ***What are your challenges in terms of performance management?***

#### *Group 1*

From our side it is that we there must be a formal training of some sort. What we are saying is for everything that you got to work with there must be sort of formal training. What is it for, that introduction was never given to us. So, the interpretation will vary from one person to the other. If for instance as my colleague has said that it is not supposed to be linked to what we call bonuses but rather the development of that particular employee such as looking into the strengths and weaknesses. But if you have not received that scope it will link with bonuses, so that is the major challenge why are we doing this performance management in the first place. So those are the questions that we need to answer.

My observation is its immediate link of performance to bonuses, it has got to me that it is very suspect to observe in that it can be abused by both parties, by employees, by their bosses because there is money linked to it and so that is a big challenge for me and my take would have been performance management should not be linked to bonuses.

Bonuses should be linked to what we have achieved. You know just what we do cannot be translated in a financial manner, but like companies, if they make a turnover of three million they will say you know we have achieved. But with us if we could have one linked to bonuses we have achieved but performance management should be a developmental strategy that would work.

#### *Group 2*

My challenge for instance is if they say I must organise a financial literacy workshop and I do everything and then in terms of communicating it in advance to the people who are supposed to be there but only to find out that the turnout is not as expected. It may look bad at me to say that I did not do my work only to find that I did everything.

I also felt when it comes to performance management, I felt it is unfair, you are measured on it is probably whether you have done the job or not but as how did you do it you are not asked. The person who is sitting with you does not really have proof of how the job was done.

You know sometimes I feel like putting so much effort on what you do but at the end of the day where does it go, who sees it. You do not have proof that in this project, this is where I gave my best, where I gave my all, maybe looking on this what happened but with us you are only being asked whether did you do this. If you did everything, it means you have done your job but as whether was it done or was it executed properly or was it successful? At the end of the day sometimes, I just feel like it does not really matter, nobody sees it.

You know my colleague has raised something else that I think all of us end up that we do not care as long as we get the money. The university wants to see me performing but what is it that I have benefitted except money because I do not think we have to look at money. Where a person failed, managers do not make any recommendations of certain training, it is like you scored less please improve next year.

But you have picked up that I am sick, send me somewhere for me to get some help. But it seems as if this performance evaluation is not intended for that. What it is intended for is to reward us financially and it seems more rewarding. Even, I would get angry if they do not send me for a course. I would become angry if I am told, you will not get money. So if next year I do the same mistake, score the same numbers, if I get five hundred rands, I would have received something at least. But nobody worries about improving me, for me to score more.

### **Question 3**

***Do you know what a performance management cycle is?***

Group 1

I am not clear but with me I just interpret as it is from January to December and this is my thinking.

Interviewer to other participants: what about yourself?

I am not clear since you know if you are given a template but not a scope but what are you supposed to do with this template, you have to literally thumb suck a few things. How can you give a performance type of arrangement with a temp it is very difficult.

Group 2

I think that is something we have problem with, this cycle for it is repeated. If for example I have been scoring three for the past three years, what are you supposed to do as a line manager in that cycle? I have seen the policy; it does not suggest anything, except the issue of rewards or finance. It does not say if someone has scored five, the person has reached the roof, where to from there. So I think if they had something like if someone has scored four, this is one, two and three steps you need to do. If someone scored three this must be done. It talks about three; you got so much money, four so much money.

It only talks about two and a half, you did not do well and you need to be told that you need to go for some training. I think even if you scored four or five you did not do well but it keeps quiet. Because I know that if you scored less than three you do not get money. It seems it makes emphasis on that. You do not get money because you scored two and a half and you need training. Those who qualify for money, it does not say anything about where from here.

The sad reality is we work for money, which is the sad reality. Again the sad reality is we sell our labour to the employer and the only weapon the employer has for us to be motivated is through his pocket you know.

The point I am trying to bring home is, when you develop your own performance contract and you get three, it says you have done what you are supposed to do. It does not say next year I want you to get this and this is what I am going to do to make sure that you get four.



Bringing us to another element of your employment, when you get employed, this is what the union is saying there are notches within your level of rewards. For instance you are on eleven; there are notches and the management does not say because you have performed more than you were contracted, for now we are going to push you to another level, they do not do that. They say we are going to give you so much once off. You know that is another element that I think performance management should be addressing.

### **Question 3**

***Are you satisfied being assessed only at the end of performance management cycle?***

#### Group 1

I would not be satisfied; my understanding of performance management maybe should be done in a quarterly manner. You know after three months I am assessed, I am being given feedback with what I am doing. But now you know the difficulty of that is because it is linked to bonuses. You see, you do the assessment and instead of a person seeing it as a development and say you did not do one, two, and three. People are tempted to say I did not do it in March and I will do it in June because if I do not do it, it means I do not get a bonus. So that is, is a problem but I would want to be assessed every three months.

#### Group 2

We have said that it is a continuous process and it just depends on the agreement between you and the line manager on when are you going to be assessed but according to the policy it should be continuous. That is how it should be but it is not. I and my line manager have an agreement that we would continuously evaluate my performance to say this is what has been done.

I think the challenge is this, as much as my colleague has said it seems performance evaluation is done annually rather than periodically or within a certain period of time. It is true to me even though during the year there are some assessments which are done but are not extensive. To me it is much more of a reaction and it is like crisis management.

## Question 5

### ***Describe how you are being assessed?***

Group 1

The way we are being assessed is my worry. We are being assessed on what we have done and which to me I feel it has no developmental element. If people say what have you done and I say I have organised an event and I have done this and they say that is good. It has not developed me; you just ticked a mark to give me a bonus.

At the beginning of the year you set your goals and say you collect that document and HR would come and would need a report on what you have done, but that is not a progress type of assessment.

Interviewer probing: Basically it is like just giving a feedback on what you have done?

Exactly



Group 2

It is a one on one process. I think then it is supposed to have been the issue of us submitting our portfolio of evidence and then the line manager assessing that. But at the end of the day, you end up being with the line manager asking for clarity on certain issues. The evidence that I have produced ends up being questioned and it is like you are no longer trusted.

I think the territory needs to be negotiated in a different way in order to be much clearer by the time you sign the contract and told that this is your contract and this is how you will be evaluated. If you negotiate and score more, it will be worrisome if there are instances where you do not do much and score more. There are instances where I did not perform much and I scored higher and this makes me not to trust the system. You end up saying that you are not employed for a performance bonus but if one receives it, it is fine.

Generally speaking, I think the evaluation process is not adequate. We are not targeting returns, we are service oriented. We are simply being measured according to the services that we provide and not according to the return. So that is why I am saying it is not adequate because we would be measured in both input and output .I think we should be measured only on the input because if you do like what colleagues have just said now, that you do everything and we make sure that you have the venue, you have students and everything but students do not show up. So that is going to be deemed as a failure and you are not going to say but I have done ninety per cent of the job.

I think the other thing that I would like to add is I am not sure if the system calls for the assessment to unfold on certain level. But I would like to think that in our department it is ineffective in that you are assessed once a year. It then goes down to what the colleagues were asking what the aim of the system is. The aim is not staff development. You know if I want five hundred rands, then I would work towards getting that and not to develop myself. When I develop myself, I develop my employer as well you know. So it is done in December then what is the point.

Participants argue: I am not sure if it is done in December. In our department it is done in December. Well I am doing it through the year. I think in December it is consolidation part. To me it will be done almost on everything that we are doing, the line manager will call a meeting and you have to report back that you had this particular meeting, one two and three and this is where the challenges are , how do we address that. To me that is performance management and at the end of the year it is just to evaluate what you have done, you are no longer speaking about performance management now. We are just assessing everything and consolidated to say this is what we have done and you are getting your money.

During assessment, my line manager will ask me to assess and rate myself. He will also assess me and tell me if I have performed.

Interviewer seeking clarity; basically what you are saying is, instead of being evaluated at the end of the year, performance measurement is continuous?

Well it is a continuous thing because it is done on a quarterly basis. The aim is to check where you are excelling. They only check on where you are lacking and if you

do not add value to your colleagues or the people you are working with. I can say in terms of if you are doing very well, it should say organise a seminar where you are going to teach your colleagues to do this better as well but they just concentrate it on where you are lacking. When you lack there are no development, the system should want you to reach here and this is where we are going to do.

Truthfully speaking we work from January until October or November. After that the students are busy writing exams and if students are not there we do not work.

### **Question 6**

***Are you comfortable having just your line manager assessing you and no other person?***

For fear of victimisation, you must have a second opinion. I think there must always be a second person that would be independent between the line manager and that certain employee because in some cases it happens in all environments at home and work, even at church people have differences and whoever is in power will say that I will show you when the time arrives that who am I. You know you must always avoid such things.

Interviewer probing: Basically, it is like power play.

Exactly, with me fortunately from this year, it has not started but this year I would be assessed by about sixteen to seventeen people. I will be assessed by my superiors, or my line manager and other superiors and then I would then be assessed by my peers and then I would also be assessed by subordinates and also people we call partners. Partners are from other divisions who I once worked with and they will also assess. I think this year what is going to happen to me I like it, because, I personally want to take it as a development. It is very difficult for people to tell you to improve on one, two and three you are lacking. But when you are having sixteen people assessing you, few will tell you to say hey man here you are lacking, please develop your skills. So I think I am excited about that. Yes, as being assessed by your line manager only as a colleague has indicated it tends to be a power play. You are at my mercy, I give you a bonus or not, it is that type of attitude.

Group 2

When you manage me you know that what is expected of me and automatically you are qualified and competent to evaluate me, unlike someone from Human resources just comes and evaluates me. I think it is advantageous for line managers to assess our performance and not any other person. But are managers fair in implementing the policy?

### **Question 7**

***Would you allow students to appraise you?***

Group1

Yes, I would allow students to appraise me. Yes, I know that students at most they would not be trained on how to go about appraisal but at least it would give me a sense of feedback with regard to students' expectations and if I am meeting those expectations. So I would allow.

Group 2

I think actually, they are supposed to be playing a part in assessments because I think if you have a service provider and you are employed in that entity, you are supposed to be assessed by your line manager and again assessed by your clients. When I am saying your clients in my case I mean students and departments who complain. For instance staff from other departments assesses me when I have done something bad and they complain and this is used against me. So that becomes an indirect assessment. When I get thank you emails and I present them during assessments they do not count but bad emails count.

Based on what the colleague has said, my challenge then would be objectivity because you will find that students will assess you and not be objective. They will want to deal with me as an individual for simply doing my job. Because students want you to do things according to how they want it to be. But when I implement things according to my job description then I am on the wrong side. Then it will raise the question of objectivity. I think it will assist me having students evaluating because it will assist a lot in terms of improving and having to do my job. I mean these are the people that you deal with every day.

I want to back up what my colleague says in that having students assessing us will most likely help in making the staff member liable and responsible. This is because we will tend to take the staff contract seriously. But at the same time how do you interpret student assessment as being fair and objective. I think that will be the only challenge.

Perhaps that is just a complex thing because I mean how are students in a position to be able to deal with my job because in the beginning they do not know what my job is.

Participant asking: If they know you are a student development practitioner, do the students know the details of your job?

Interviewer clarifying: For instance I know when we do society training; there is somewhere where we tell students what our division is about and what our job description is. Students are then able to deduce what our job descriptions are.

I think I get what you are saying. But I am accountable to my line manager and of course a client can comment on what I am doing. A client can say I have requested one two three and four and it did not happen that on its own may constitute non-performance. I can account to the line manager to say yes, the client requested this and that and it was not possible to deliver. So the client will think I did not perform but the line manager will say you performed but you did not give the client what they wanted because of other reasons.

### **Question 8**

***What are the differences between merit and skills related pay?***

Group 1

You know let me answer this way. With me I would or in terms of clarity everybody has got a responsibility to assess and to be a line manager, I think everybody must be subjected to serious training because most of the time we tried to find our way. There must be an intensive or extensive training so that we can know how to do this thing. For example between merit and skills related pay, it is not very clear and in

that sense most of us I think we need also to be trained on that.

### **Would you then prefer merit or skills related pay?**

I will not be able to answer that one because even if it is merit or skills it highly depends on the line manager in that environment on how you are going to do that. For skills type if you get your masters or PhD, how does that therefore reflect in terms of your day to day job? It is very acute; it is very difficult to put your finger on it. I would concur with my colleague in that we need a vigorous training to understand. To add to my response this is not an institutional definition, I am just thinking at what it means. I think merit relates to outputs and skills relates to inputs. So if my thinking is correct, which one would I prefer/ I would prefer the balance between the two. We should not be paid solely on outputs and our skills are not admired or solely on our skills and our outputs it is not looked at. It should be balanced. I think we need to be recognised for skills at the same time are recognised for the output that will be my view.

#### Group 2

That question depends on the environment you are in. For instance the skill I have might not be relevant to what I am doing. Most of us here are paid on merit not on the skill we have.

### **Question 9**

#### ***Does the implementation of performance management motivate you?***

#### Group 1

It demotivates than motivates. Different divisions implement it differently and it ends up depending on the individual. It does not motivate that much except the one that is going to implement it.

I am excited about how I am going to be assessed this year. But you know previously the way we were assessed, I do not think it motivates much or because some people are tempted to say I asked for coffee you did not make me coffee and which is not linked to anything and then you are dealt with, so for now I think it does

not motivate but it is a start.

#### Group 2

I would say the issue about the current system motivates depending on one's goals. But if I am happy with the bonus I receive then it motivates me. But if I look at the bigger picture why does it not be linked to promotions because promotion is not necessary money. However promotion is more of personal development than doing the same task. If I want to paint my house in December and I receive a bonus I will celebrate. At the beginning of the year I will be performing the same task that I am doing now and if I do not score high I will still be in the same place. So I think it depends on an individual in terms of what you want to achieve at the end of the year.

I think it is meaningless because I am employed to perform and that what I do.

Honestly, I am scared of performance management contract because it limits me to the extent that I feel like I am wearing blinkers. I cannot be creative because I am scared that at the end of the year I will be told that I did not perform. On the other hand it does motivate me in a sense that at the end of the year I will be happy that I have scored high and have performed more than I was contracted for. It motivates me but I do not think that it is effective.

#### **Question 10**

***Do you think line managers are properly trained for conducting performance appraisals?***

#### Group 1

I would say no.

#### Group 2

I will answer this based on the fact that to some individuals I am a line manager and I have never been briefed. What makes matters worst is that I do not know of someone who can brief or train me. Still I want to integrate policy which on its own does not say much. Even if managers are trained to implement performance management, will be done based on a policy that is not clear. The policy defines the intention of what it wants to achieve. So, if it was clear for people to interpret, it is all



about training because there are lot of things which we do right and we are not being trained.

I am saying managers are not trained to implement performance management. As a peoples manager you must know human behaviour. I think line managers are depended on what the policy say. If for instance the policy says something about performance management contract and at the end of the year we evaluate, we stick to what the policy says that is adequate training for me.

I know of an instance where a line manager was rated three by his superior and she rated her subordinates three. So there question to be asked is if the managers are fair in implementing the policy not that they are sufficiently trained.

I think it is little complex than that and I would agree with my colleague when he says that, when you are a line manager you are qualified to asses me. Personally I would say yes and no because of the following example: As a line manager you know that my job is to bring up two editions in a year. According to you that is face value knowledge that I have performed, but you may overlook the fact that, was it quality. I think performance management is a system that does not necessary need extensive training.

#### **Question 11**

***What alternative would you suggest to the current system?***

My alternative would be 360°; they call it the 360° performance assessment, but not linked to pay or benefits. Not linked, I think we are not yet ready to link this to pay because it is still confusing. If it is for developing staff and get feedback of how we are doing that is great. I would certainly recommend 360°.