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Perceptions of performance appraisals amongst civilian employees of the Department of Defence

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Perceptions of performance appraisals amongst civilian employees of the Department of Defence

by

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation).

April 2021

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore civilian employees' perceptions of the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence. To achieve this objective, a qualitative case study was undertaken whereby data were collected by using face-to-face semi-structured interviews. A sample of 15 purposely selected junior and middle management civilian participants from Defence Head Quarters was done whereby participants were interviewed and data collected analysed by using thematic analysis. The themes that emerged indicated how employees perceive and experience performance appraisal.

The findings revealed that although employees understand what performance appraisal is, the management of the process remains a challenge. From the analysis, there is a lot of dissatisfaction among employees as they feel that performance appraisal is subjective, and the way performance bonuses are paid is based on favouritism and inconsistency which lead to grievances. The findings also indicated that some managers use performance appraisal to punish employees that they do not like regardless of their performance which often diminishes the morale of high performers. The absence of feedback, lack of training by Human Resource Development and lack of support and commitment by top management were also raised as challenges that impede proper management.

It is therefore recommended that the Department of Defence should prioritise offering regular and detailed performance appraisal training and workshops to managers and employees so that they both have a common understanding of the objective of the process. Furthermore, the Department of Defence should benchmark with other state institutions and implement an automated performance appraisal system with the latest technology which might reduce human errors and biasedness.

Keywords: performance appraisal, civilian, employee perception, employee performance, managers, supervisors, human resource, Department of Defence

DECLARATION

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Signature: _____

Onkemetse Gopane

April 2021

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to my late parents, Mr and Mrs Gopane and all my siblings I lost throughout this journey. I endured that pain and wanted to make you proud. Dad and Mom, you esteemed education so much and you must be delighted about my achievement. To my two most adorable children Gomolemo and Thabiso, this is to your continued support and understanding.

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I would like to thank God for having given me the grace, strength, patience, and guidance to endure through this process and complete this milestone. I encountered so many hurdles along the way, but His mercies kept me going to finish the race. I believed that despite the challenges “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”.

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My gratitude also goes to the Department of Defence for having given me permission to conduct the study and use its employees. Without your approval, this study was not going to be possible, thank you. I am also thankful to my colleagues for your support and encouragement

I was not going to finish this project without the participants. My sincere gratitude goes to all of you who took your time out to share your opinions and experiences on performance appraisals in the Department of Defence, I am humbled by your honesty and transparency.

Special thanks to my secretary, Zikhona Mema, thank you for believing in me. When I felt like giving up, you always encouraged me to say giving up is not an option, I can do this. Thank you for your relentless support.

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1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with context to the study. The first section is the background relating to performance appraisal. The background also includes how the performance appraisal process is managed in the Department of Defence. This is followed by the problem statement and the rationale of the research. Similarly, the purpose of the study, the research questions as well as the research objectives are outlined. After outlining the research objectives, the limitations of the study are presented to provide the reader with a clear understanding of what the study covered and the justifications for that. The chapter closes off by giving a summary of the structure of the research in terms of how the chapters will flow.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Performance appraisal is a significant function of human resource management in evaluating employees' performance (Biswakarma, 2017; Van der Merwe & Botha, 2019). According to Babagana (2014), human resource management includes processes that are envisioned to increase employees' commitment. One such pertains to employee performance appraisal which is used both in the public and private sectors to evaluate and develop employees' competencies in line with organisational strategy (Kuvaas, 2007; Khedkar, 2015). Performance appraisal is described as the methodical assessment of individuals and teams for job performance and potential for improvement (Biswakarma, 2017; Youssif, Eid and Safan, 2017). Performance appraisal is an essential management instrument for decision making about performance rewards, employee development as well as getting employees perspective about their work, organisation and their supervisors (Aquinis, 2007; Kim & Holzer, 2014; Kampkotter, 2016).

Performance appraisal is not executed in local institutions only but globally, in both private and public institutions (Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2006). As articulated, the performance appraisal process assists in clarifying what is expected from the employee by the institution, give progress reviews, identify developmental

needs and assist management in decision making about the incentives (Swanepoel, Botha & Mangonyane, 2014). However, its application might differ in terms of culture and the country where is applied. Various cultures have their philosophies of what the culture describes as incompetent, average, and outstanding job performance (Grobler, Warnich, Carell, Elbert & Hatfield (2006). For instance, Chinese institutions use different critical incidents technique to evaluate their employees but do not use performance appraisal as a determining factor for promotion and salary decisions. According to Chinese culture, seniority is regarded as the most significant aspect to be considered for promotion and pay increase. So if someone is not conversant with the cultural expectations, it can be very difficult to evaluate their appraisals. However, in many countries, it is job performance that matters. Conversely, in Islamic countries, the subordinate personality and social behaviour might be used for appraisal and not work performance. Various cultures and beliefs make the performance appraisal process difficult but regardless of that appraisals should take place (Grobler et al., 2006).

The performance appraisal cycle begins with allocating employees with goals and setting performance standards on which their work will be evaluated and finishes with appraisal outcome (Locke & Latham, 2002). Supervisors must give constructive and developmental performance feedback after evaluation based on the outcomes to ensure transparency of the appraisal process (Harrington & Lee, 2015). Employees generally receive the outcomes of the process positively if they perceive that the process was objective, but if they view the process to be biased the outcomes might not be well-received (Moon, Scullen & Latham, 2016). Also, continuous feedback from supervisors assists employees to overcome their weaknesses and improve performance (Alharbi, 2018). Nonetheless, there is still a drawback between how performance appraisal should work in principle and how the process works in practice. For example, if supervisors do not communicate the results of performance appraisal to employees, it can hamper employee performance improvement (DeNisi & Pritchard, 2006).

Performance feedback is an important component in any performance appraisal process and feedback provided to employees about their performance must be detailed and indicate whether the key performance areas were achieved or not and

why (Nassazi, 2013; Swanepoel, Botha & Mangonyane, 2014; Bhurtel & Adhikart, 2016). Poor performers can also be identified during the appraisal process and feedback provided on how to improve in future (Kampkotter, 2016). Organisations should work towards developing the capabilities of employees to maintain a competitive advantage and a high-performing workforce (Jain & Gautum, 2016). Workers are likely to make a meaningful contribution to the organisation when they know the opportunities involved, such as personal development, promotion, and demonstration of their skills (Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012). Therefore, managers and supervisors should carry out assessments and give employees helpful feedback as feedback help employees to develop their competencies (Kampkötter, 2017).

1.2.1 Performance Appraisal in the South African Department of Defence

The South African Department of Defence has implemented a performance appraisal system to evaluate employees' performance against set performance standards in line with organisational goals (Van der Merwe & Botha, 2019). Performance appraisal is a participatory process whereby at the beginning of the performance cycle which is twelve months starting 1 April of the current year and ends 31 March of the succeeding year, supervisors and employees sign a performance agreement with detailed key responsibility areas which the employee will be evaluated on in line with the performance appraisal policy (DOD, 2019).

Any performance appraisal process should include constant monitoring of performance and record-keeping of performance either negative or positive and come up with the plan for employee development (Khan, 2013). This is in line with the Department of Public Service and Administration emphasising that annual performance appraisals must be conducted whereby employees are given feedback on how they have performed, rewarding good performance, managing poor performance and developing employees (DPSA, 2007).

In the DOD, formal performance assessments take place yearly at the end of the performance cycle, however, supervisors are supposed to conduct three progress meetings, whereby the first meeting will be the drafting of a work plan, second meeting performance progress and the last meeting will be final assessment (DOD, 2019). The performance of employees is assessed on a scale from 1 to 4, whereby 1

is not an effective or poor performance which does not meet the set standard for the job, 2 represents partially effective performance, 3 represents fully effective performance and 4 is highly effective/outstanding performance. The ratings are assigned scores to determine the outcome. The outcome of performance appraisal is linked to rewards such as pay progression and performance bonus (DoD, 2019).

According to the Department of Defence performance management policy, supervisors should provide employees with feedback on the results of the appraisal process regarding their work to identify areas of improvement (DoD, 2019). Feedback can be described as appropriate information provided by the supervisor on employees' performance in line with the set standards (DoD, 2019). Therefore, performance appraisal remains to be of fundamental importance to the organisation and to keep employees inspired (Poursafar, Rajaeepour, Seyadat & Oreizi, 2014).

Using the Department of Defence as a case study, the study explored the civilian employees' perceptions of performance appraisal in the Department. The South African Department of Defence (DoD) Head Quarters is in Pretoria, Erasmuskloof and is one of the largest departments in South Africa with approximately 75 000 employees. The Department of Defence consists of both civilian and military employees. The civilian component of the Department is overseen by the Secretary for Defence who is the Accounting Officer, while the military component is under the command of the Chief of South African National Defence Force.

The Department of Defence (DoD) has put in place an Employee Performance Appraisal System (EPAS) for all employees to assist senior management in the department for better decision making. The main objective of the EPAS is to develop employees by evaluating the inherent key responsibility areas of the employees attached to the post. In the Department of Defence, formal employee performance appraisal takes place by the end of the fiscal year whereby the supervisor evaluates employees' performance.

Evaluating employees' performance enables the supervisor to identify satisfactory and unsatisfactory performance, provide feedback regarding the results of performance, recognition and rewarding of outstanding performance and developmental intervention for unsatisfactory performance (Department of Defence Performance Management and Development Policy, 2019). Decisions about

performance rewards, employee development and dealing with unsatisfactory performance are taken based on the outcomes of performance appraisal. As the policy emphasises employee development, managers must provide performance feedback on the outcomes of the appraisal process to recognise strong points and weak points and come up with training and developmental interventions.

The researcher works in the Department of Defence as a Director in the Financial Management Division. Due to the security and classification of information relating to both military and civilian personnel, the researcher ensured that permission was approved by Defence Intelligence before continuing with the study. The researcher concentrated on the civilian component of the Department of Defence. The researcher selected a different section to have a better understanding of the experiences and views of civilian employees on the performance appraisal process.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Performance appraisal is one of the essential human resources practices implemented globally (Bekele, Shigutu & Tensay, 2014). Despite the existing consensus about the benefits of performance appraisal in organisations, there seems to be a disjuncture between theory and practice in terms of how the performance appraisal process is implemented in various organisations which is also a case in the Department of Defence (Kim & Holzer, 2016). Though performance appraisal is implemented in most organisations to evaluate employees' performance to provide workers with feedback for performance improvement and align employees performance with organisational goals, the process has frequently left the employees disgruntled (Teckchandani & Pichler, 2015; Youssif, Eid & Sfan, 2017; Busatlic & Kilic, 2018). The literature suggests that supervisors and reviewers do not provide employees with performance feedback which might hamper employee performance improvement (Daoanis, 2012; Khan & Ukpere, 2014; Teckchandani & Pichler, 2015; Bhurtel & Adhikart, 2016).

The process is perceived to be subjective, unjust, ambiguous, lack of performance feedback, insufficient performance information and inconsistently applied in the organisations which has left many workers aggrieved, dissatisfied, depressed (Ferreira & Otley, 2009; Adler, Campion, Colquitt, Grubb, Ollander-Krander & Pulakos, 2016).

While scrutinising the important performance appraisal documents within the Department of Defence, the indication is that each year approximately five to six per cent of civilian employees launch disputes and grievances regarding the management of the performance appraisal process (DoD, 2019). The percentage of disputes and grievances launched within the entire department might be higher than the percentages indicated as the researcher will only be focusing on civilians and the military components are not considered. The civilian component constitutes a smaller percentage of the total departmental workforce which is 13%, while the military component comprises 87% of the personnel. The normal practice in the department is that disagreements should be resolved within the division by the next higher level of the employee's supervisor and the resolved disputes are not recorded in the register, only unresolved disputes and grievances are recorded. In this instance, the dispute between the Deputy Director and the Director should be resolved by the Chief Director and if is not resolved it follows the normal grievance process which is the labour relations route. The researcher undertook to understand how civilian employees perceive the management of the performance appraisal in the Department of Defence as the literature affirms that the process has often left many employees bitter, unhappy and frustrated.

Most studies on performance appraisal were carried out in the private sector setting, not ample study had been undertaken in the public sector context to understand how an individual employee would view and act upon performance appraisal within the organisation (Kadiresan, Selamar, Selladurai, Mohamed, 2017). Karu, Lapien and Tielung (2018) conducted a study from the banking institution titled “employee perception of performance appraisal system at the main branch of BNI 46 Manado”. The purpose of the study was to understand how the employees of the main branch of the banking sector perceive performance appraisal and its effects on employees.

With a few studies conducted in the public sector, little is known about the employees’ perceptions of how the performance appraisal process is managed in the public sector (Kim & Holzer, 2014). However, Van der Merwe and Botha (2019) undertook a study focusing on the South African Army with a sample of only 200 active military members. The purpose of the study was to “investigate the impact of

employees' perceived fairness of performance assessments on public service motivation using a quantitative approach". The study was limited to the members of the South African Army only and not the entire population of the Department of Defence thus the results applied to the South African Army. No previous study has been conducted in the Department of Defence focusing on civilian employees' perceptions of how the performance appraisal process is managed. It is therefore important for the researcher to undertake the study to have an understanding of how civilian employees view the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence as the literature emphasises that the process has often left many employees dissatisfied. How then do employees perceive the appraisal process is of importance to assist the organisation to improve.

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Literature indicates that research on performance appraisal has been carried out by various scholars. Nonetheless, there seems to be limited research undertaken in the public sector, focusing on employees' perceptions of how the performance appraisal process is managed in that sector as most of the research concentrated in the private sector. Performance appraisal is an important institutional function and is viewed as the pillar of employees' performance improvement hence public sector organisations are assigned with the duty to manage performance appraisals well. However, tensions normally arise between the supervisors and subordinates during the management of the performance appraisal process which leaves employees dissatisfied.

The Department of Defence has encountered challenges concerning the management of the performance appraisal process whereby civilian employees launched disputes and grievances regarding the management of the process. As indicated, only grievances that could not be resolved within the Divisions were recorded on the grievance register. According to the grievance register dated 04 September 2019, the reasons for civilian employees to lodge complaints was perceived inconsistency and nepotism in the application of the performance appraisal process (DoD, 2019). Thus, they wanted an investigation to be undertaken as part of the grievance procedure to clear their dissatisfaction. Based on this context, the

researcher explored the civilian employees' perceptions of the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence. It is anticipated that the findings of the study will be of importance by contributing to the body of knowledge in having a better understanding of the perceptions of employees towards the management of the performance appraisal process. Also, the results of this study might assist organisations to understand how employees perceive the performance appraisal process and can increase organisational performance.

1.5 RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this research was to explore civilian employees' perceptions of the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence, to have a broader understanding of how employees view workplace processes. There is limited research on this topic, which this study aims to redress by contributing to the body of knowledge on the performance appraisal process in the public sector.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.6.1 Primary Research question

Emanating from the purpose statement, the study sought to answer the following research question**: What are civilian employees' perceptions of the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence?** To unpack this question, the following research sub-questions were asked:

1.6.2 Research Sub- questions

i. How is civilian employees' performance appraisal process managed in the Department of Defence?

ii. How are civilian employees' grievances managed regarding the performance appraisal process?

iii. What challenges do civilian employees encounter with the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence?

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of this study wanted to respond to the above research questions and are outlined below:

1.7.1 Primary:

The primary objective of this research was to explore civilian employees' perceptions of the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence.

1.7.2 Secondary:

The following secondary objectives were developed based on the primary objective of the research:

i. To understand civilian employees' perceptions of how the performance appraisal process is managed in the Department of Defence.
ii. To understand how civilian employees grievances regarding the management of the performance appraisal process are handled.
iii. To understand the challenges of the civilian employees' management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence.

1.8 LIMITATIONS

The researcher acknowledges that limitations are there in all studies, and the study that the researcher undertook had its limitations in terms of location, sample size, selection of participants and the topic being explored. Yin (2014) asserts that the limitations of the study occur due to the weakness of application of the strategies employed which might include both the participants in responding to research questions. **The research is limited to exploring the civilian employees' perceptions of performance appraisal process management in the Department of Defence. The military component is excluded from the study due to confidentiality associated with military doctrine.**

The study focused on only the Department of Defence civilian employees with a small sample of 15 participants and not the entire Department as the Department constitute both military and civilian employees. Also, the study was limited to middle management and junior management employees who have worked in the department for a period of five or more years and who have gone through a performance appraisal process. Only employees who have worked in the

Department of Defence within the period were selected for interviews. The sample size was small; therefore the results could not be generalised to the entire department and conclusions based on the data were only limited to the participants who were interviewed. Performance appraisal is a very sensitive and confidential issue and due to the confidentiality between the supervisor and subordinate regarding the results of the performance appraisal, the likelihood of people being honest with their responses are high as they might be discreet to provide information.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1: Introduction

The chapter provides an overall introduction and background of the research. The problem statement, the purpose statement, objectives of the study as well as the research questions and limitations are deliberated on in this chapter. Lastly, the framework of the research report chapters is outlined.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter gives an outline of the literature studied on performance appraisal. It gives background and the theoretical framework on which the research draws on. The chapter also provides a conceptual framework related to the topic. The concepts that will be discussed include the definition of performance appraisal, the purpose of performance appraisal, and employees' perceptions of performance appraisal, performance appraisal process, advantages of performance appraisal, challenges of performance appraisal, mechanisms put in place to deal with performance appraisal grievances and performance appraisal in the public sector. The chapter concludes with a summary of deliberations.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher outlines the process that was followed in undertaking the research. The researcher introduces the reader to the choice of the methodology and the clarifications of the selected method and design. The chapter explains the research approach, research tools and their application, sampling, the process of data collection and analysis, triangulation as well as validity and reliability. Similarly,

limitations and ethical considerations will also be discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary of salient issues that were discussed.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Results

The results of the research will be presented in this chapter**.** The results will be derived from the civilian employees' perceptions of performance appraisals in the Department of Defence. From these results, themes will be derived emanating from research questions.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Results

The interpretation and the findings of the study are discussed in this chapter. The analysis is grounded on the data gathered through different techniques outlined in the research approach section.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

This is the final chapter of the study whereby the researcher concludes the research process. Also, the researcher provides recommendations in terms of the study findings and for future study.

1.10 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher introduced the reader to the background of the research. The phenomena of performance appraisal were also deliberated on. This was accomplished by clarifying the problem statement, the purpose statement, the rationale of the study, objectives of the study as well as the research questions. The study further articulated the limitations and concluded with the outline of the chapters for the report. The chapter that follows will review the theoretical framework as well as the conceptual framework about the performance appraisal.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a framework of the literature consulted on performance appraisal to come up with the research questions. The literature review begins by providing a theoretical framework underpinning the research. Also, the conceptual framework is drawn from the literature reviewed which begins by defining related concepts. The researcher begins by describing performance appraisal and outlining the purpose of performance appraisal. Also, employees' perceptions of performance appraisal, the process of performance appraisal, advantages of performance appraisal performance, challenges of performance appraisal and advantages of proper management of performance appraisal are deliberated on. The researcher intends to give an organised and meaningful understanding of these concepts by synthesising the work done by other scholars on performance appraisal. The chapter is concluded by a summary of the fundamental issues discussed related to the study and proceeds to the research methodology chapter.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The literature reviewed by the researcher demonstrated that there are various theories linked to performance appraisal. The researcher will however be guided by goal-setting theory and feedback theory in this study. Goal-setting theory is an empirically accepted theory of workplace job motivation (Locke, 1968; Locke & Latham, 1990a). The theory stresses setting objectives for employees whereby performance can be evaluated on the attainment of tasks given, goal commitment, increase employee's motivation and feedback provided, the intervention provided for non-satisfactory performance as well as rewarding good performance (Latham, Borgogni & Petitta, 2008). Also, goal setting theory is chosen to increase and sustain performance (DuBrin, 2012).

The goal-setting theory was established by Locke and Latham (1979), the importance of the theory is the link between goals and performance. A goal has been defined by various scholars as an objective or a purpose of an achievement that emphasised anticipated results from performance (Locke & Latham, 2002;

Yousueng, 2018). According to Locke and Latham (2002) when employees are assigned specific goals, their behaviour will influence the performance. Thus, the theory focuses on aspects of performance appraisal such as setting goals for employees, agreeing on performance standards conducting appraisals and providing feedback (Fletcher, 2001; David, Song, Hayes & Fredin, 2007). Supporters of the goal-setting theory postulate that employees perform well when they have clear set goals that they are expected to achieve which performance will be measured against them during their reviews (Gomez-Minambres, 2012; Catania, 2014). Therefore, performance appraisal can have a substantial effect on employee performance and institutional efficiency if there is an alignment between organisational objectives and employee's performance goals (Ayers, 2015).

The objective of performance appraisal is to evaluate and develop employees, hence employees must enter into a performance agreement with the employer. In the public sector, every employee should have a job description with key responsibility areas and a performance contract which must be signed at the beginning of the financial year. Employees get appraised at the end of the financial year based on the key activities agreed upon. During performance contracting goals and performance standards must be set in line with organisational objectives against which employees' performance will be evaluated and developmental areas identified. Setting goals has demonstrated to have a history of achievement and performance improvement in a variety of settings by ensuring that what needs to be achieved is clear (Locke & Latham, 2002; Latham, 2004, 2009; Locke, 2004). Well defined goals help employees to understand what the employer expects from the workers (Latham, Borgogni & Petitta, 2008). Therefore, when setting goals they must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound. Employees get motivated to perform better when they see how their performance contribute to the achievement of organisational goals (Wright, 2001).

Notwithstanding the benefits and robust empirical context of goal setting theory, scholars have discovered some possible challenges in its application which include but not limited to narrowing of the employees focus to be merely on the attainment of goals (Staw & Boetter, 1990; Latham, 2004). Also, goals that are too difficult and

beyond employees' capabilities might create difficulties while trying to achieve them, for instance, if employees do not have the necessary competencies to perform the work, then goal-setting might not succeed and can harm employees' performance (Larrick, Heath & Wu, 2009; Latham & Locke, 2013). By the same token, organisational goals that are linked to a reward system might have unplanned consequences which can affect the organisational culture, makes workplace conflicts, and can result in unethical conduct (Duska, 2000; Bonvin & Dembinski, 2002).

In the case of performance appraisals, the supervisor and employee may intentionally agree on setting low goals or performance standards so that during the assessment period the employee is scored high marks to get the rewards. This improper behaviour might create conflict in terms of those employees who are favoured by the supervisor and those that are not favoured as the former will always benefit from the supervisor later. Lastly, the organisational goals can conflict with the managerial goals which can have a negative result on performance (Locke, Smith, Erez, Chah & Schaffer, 1994; Locke & Latham, 2002). Although goal setting is used globally and has demonstrated to increase performance in various situations and cultures (Locke & Latham, 2002, 2004; Latham, 2009), the components of the theory may not essentially be generalised across institutions and cultures (Gelfand, Erez & Aycan, 2007). Different cultures apply the theory differently based on their beliefs. Also what is evident of the theory is that it motivates employees to be committed to the attainment of the goals due to the monetary reward system put in place (Catania, 2013).

In the South African context, the essential components of goal-setting theory such as job achievement, priority, commitment, feedback, and reward have proven to be applicable. South African public institutions utilise performance appraisal to evaluate employee's performance which contains the elements of goal-setting theory as a policy to provide public goods to the people whereby employees are evaluated on key responsibility areas agreed on and rewarded accordingly (Khotsa[1] & Sebola, 2020). Rewards are based on employee's job performance and not necessarily on age, gender, and culture.

Feedback theory has related like the goal-setting theory. The proponents of feedback theory advance that just like giving specific goals, providing feedback assists in giving clarity of what is expected of the employees (McCalley, 2006; Pat-El et., 2012). Nonetheless, feedback theory varies from goal-setting theory in the sense that feedback takes place during and after an agreed job while goals are set before the beginning of the job (Hon, Wilco & Chan, 2013). With performance appraisal, organisations put a performance appraisal system in place to evaluate employees and provide feedback hence it is important to communicate the outcomes of the appraisal process (Swan, 2012). Consistent evaluation of progress towards the attainment of goals at least biannually is essential to assess if employees have accomplished the objectives set (Welch & Welch, 2009). Many organisations assess performance annually to ensure that employees are provided with feedback (Cascio & Aguinis, 2011). Attention is now given to conceptual clarity.

2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Flowing from a theoretical framework, a conceptual framework for this study is developed. The theoretical framework assists the researcher to come up with concepts and constructs as all the phases of the study from the problem statement, research questions and research purpose are anticipated to link to the theoretical framework (Adom, 2018). The researcher consulted various scholars on the topic of performance appraisal to come up with concepts related to the topic. Consulting different literature allowed the researcher to define the concepts in the study. The researcher started by defining performance appraisal and thereafter debated on other concepts related to the research.

2.3.1 DEFINITION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

The notion of performance appraisal has been described by various academics. Performance appraisal is defined as a logical and standardised system used to evaluate employees' performance to understand their developmental needs, growth and productivity about the set performance standards (Bhatia & Patel, 2018). Youssif, Eid and Safan (2017) define performance appraisal as an organised official interaction among a supervisor and subordinate which takes place yearly or biannual periodic review to scrutinise the subordinate's performance to identify weaknesses,

strengths, opportunities for improvement and skills development so that organisational goals and objectives are attained. According to Kim and Holzer (2014), performance appraisal means assessment by public managers of their subordinates' work performance to manage and improve individual performance.

Evaluation of employees' performance includes a comparison with the key performance areas described at the beginning of the appraisal period (Lillian, Mathooko & Sitati, 2012). Performance appraisal is an instrument used to achieve organisational objectives, such as participation of employees in goal setting, to develop the performance of employees by constant communication and feedback amongst the employee and the employer (Bekele, Shigutu & Tensay, 2014).

Various appraisal approaches are used by managers or supervisors to evaluate employees' performance such as graphic rating scales, management by objectives or critical incident (Lunenburg, 2012). Irrespective of the method used, supervisors or managers should communicate the performance results to the employee. The idea here is that constructive feedback relays what work was well done and clarifies what needs to be improved (Lillian, Mathooko & Sitati, 2012).

2.4 THE PURPOSE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

According to DeNisi and Pritchard (2006); Boswelljohn and Boudreau (2000) the fundamental purposes of performance appraisal are evaluation and development. The other purpose of performance appraisal is the alignment of employees' performance with the organisational goals which is affirmed by goal-setting theory (Noe et al, 2008). Evaluation purpose helps the managers to come up with decisions about salary administration and rewards such as bonuses, promotions, demotions, dismissal, retentions, and transfers, while developmental purpose focuses on providing employees with feedback, identifying training and developmental needs to improve employees' performance, improving communication, as well as career development (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2012; Battaglio, 2015).

Likewise, performance appraisal can be a useful tool to improve employee motivation and assist employees to modify the way they perform their duties to better accomplish organisational goals (Ayers, 2015; Rubin, 2015). If performance appraisal is implemented and managed correctly, it can have a major positive effect

on employee performance and organisational success. Its success rests on the principles of goal- setting theory whereby employees' goals are linked to the objectives of the organisation (Locke & Latham, 1990). Equally important, if performance appraisal is to be a useful instrument by which employees are inspired, procedures and methods used must be understood and accepted by both the supervisors and employees (Longenecker & Nykodym, 1996; Levy & Williams, 2004; Walsh& Fisher, 2005; Iqbal, Akbar & Budhwar, 2015).

Although these purposes are broadly acknowledged, opponents of performance appraisal believe that performance appraisal can create animosity in the organisation making employees unhappy (Deming, 1986). Deming sees the performance appraisal system as a harmful disease in institutions and proclaimed that the system "leave employees hostile, crushed, hurt, unhappy, feeling inferior and others even depressed and unfit for work for weeks after receiving their rating" (Swanepoel, Botha & Mangonyane, 2014,p.3).

Ideally, a performance appraisal should be an unbiased process yet is seen to be worthless by some scholars and has yielded undesired outcomes due to perceived unfairness and inaccuracy (Javidmehr & Ebrahimpour, 2015). If employees perceive that the decisions taken about the outcomes are biased, it can affect their level of work satisfaction, lose faith in management, and cause them to contest against the organisation (Bekele, Shigutu & Tensay, 2014). This has proven to be true in the case of the participants who were interviewed for this study. It will be discussed in more detail in chapter five, interpretation of the findings.

2.5 EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

Employees' perceptions of objectivity of performance appraisal have been researched as an important aspect in measuring the satisfaction and reception of performance appraisal (Karu, Lapian & Tielung, 2018). Perception is how an individual analyses the circumstances to make sense and understand the environment (Crane, 2008). Amongst the most critical perceptions that affect organisational practice are the opinions that employees have about management processes (Zeffane, 1994). Every organisation needs to understand how the

assessors, as well as individuals who are being appraised, perceive performance appraisal (Bekele, Shigutu & Tensay, 2014).

Boswell and Boudreau (1997) posit that employees' views might differ depending on opinions of how performance appraisal is utilised within the organisation. If employees understand how the appraisal system is used in the organisation, they are more probable to accept, favour, being dedicated to the organisation as well as having greater satisfaction with the appraisal system (Karu, Lapian & Tielung, 2018). Conversely, if employees do not understand how the performance appraisal system works, employees are likely to feel dissatisfied with the appraisal system, develop a negative attitude and resist the system which might lead to work-related distress (Kim & Holzer, 2016).

For employees to have confidence about the performance appraisal, the assessment should be done regularly, supervisors should be knowledgeable about the appraisal process, set objectives at the start of the assessment phase, and employees should be allowed to appeal their assessments (Awosanya & Ademola, 2012). Furthermore, organisations should have a strategy of dealing with poor performance and not only focusing on good performance (Bekele, Shigutu & Tensay, 2014). Employees need to be assigned with goals on which their performance will be appraised and will normally accept the appraisal system if they view that the processes are objective and will reciprocate their performance to the achievement of organisational goals (Kadiresan et al, 2015). It is therefore essential for organisations to understand how employees view the performance appraisal process as the information gathered might assist organisations to improve their performance (Akhtar & Khattak, 2013).

2.6 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS

Performance appraisal is a multi-phase process whereby communication is very critical for the effectiveness of the process (Olabode, Adebayo & Abayomi, 2013). Craig et al (1986) came up with an eight-phase approach to the performance appraisal process discussed below:

a. Setting the performance standards

The first stage in the performance appraisal is coming up with performance standards which will be used to evaluate employees' performance. The performance

measures set should differentiate between outstanding and poor performance (Gaba, 2017; Olabode, Adebayo & Abayomi, 2013). Also, the performance standards should be clear, easy to understand and be measurable.

b. Communicating the performance standards

Performance appraisal involves both the supervisor and the employee. The supervisor evaluates the employee performance based on the set standards. The supervisor must communicate the performance standards to employees to understand their roles and in terms of what is expected of their work. Performance standards can be adjusted during this phase based on the employees' feedback; this ensures that employees are involved in their standards (Gaba, 2017).

c. Planning

At this stage, the supervisor plans how performance standards will be achieved, arrange for the enabling resources needed for the achievement of the set goals (Olabode, Adebao & Abayomi, 2013).

d. Monitoring performance

Performance appraisal is an ongoing process that requires continuous feedback. Although performance is evaluated yearly, it must be monitored daily. When performance is monitored continuously, it assists the supervisor to recognise difficulties which can then be resolved on time (Olabode, Adebao & Abayomi, 2013).

e. Evaluating

This stage is whereby the supervisor evaluates actual employees' performance on the work done over some time. It requires the supervisor to document performance through observation, reports and written communication (Olabode, Adebao & Abayomi, 2013).

f. Providing feedback

Feedback plays an important part in every appraisal process. An employee performs better when they know how they are performing, it is, therefore, essential that supervisors communicate and deliberate on the outcomes of the appraisal to reassure employees of the objectivity of the process (Bhurtel & Adhikart, 2016). Feedback should be given constructively and serve as a motivation for the employee

to improve performance. During the feedback session, challenges and potential solutions are discussed to resolve problems, conflicts and reaching an agreement (Gaba, 2017).

g. Decision making

Based on the outcomes of evaluation and feedback, managers can decide on rewards, promotions, and demotions. Also, the appraisal results must be used for employee professional growth (Olabode, Adebao & Abayomi, 2013).

h. Training and development

This is the final step of performance appraisal and it involves providing employees with training opportunities to advance their capabilities and professional connections (Obeidat et al., 2014). Supervisors can encourage their employees to take part in professional seminars or to advance their educational level in a specific field (Riaz, Idrees, & Imran, 2013).

2.7 ADVANTAGES OF PROPER MANAGEMENT OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Effective performance appraisal is intended to evaluate and improve employees' performance and increase their prospects by adding value to the organisation, consequently, the effectiveness of any process or system rests on how is properly done or implemented (Daoanis, 2012). Daoanis (2012) further asserts that performance appraisal assists in identifying employees' weaknesses and help supervisors to come up with interventions for employees' performance improvement. Also, employees' strengths are acknowledged, and rewards made according to employees' performance. Other essential factors of appropriate management of performance appraisal include setting goals, provision of feedback, and enhance employees' performance by providing training needs as well as proper rewards allocation for an excellent performance. These aspects are deliberated below:

2.7.1 Goal setting

Setting goals for employees that are aligned with the organisational goals on which employees' performance will be measured and provision of performance feedback by

supervisors' (Kampkotter, 2016). Setting goals clarifies employees' roles and responsibilities, employees understand what is expected of them and get motivated to perform to achieve organisational objectives (Locke & Latham, 2002). Goal setting also ensures that employees execute their responsibilities at a higher level when measurable and thought-provoking goals are set (Bipp & Dam, 2014).

2.7.2 Provision of feedback

Providing employees with feedback is regarded as one of the greatest aspects for an organisation to have performance appraisal in place (Swan, 2012). Providing employees with constructive performance feedback enhances employees' job satisfaction, work commitment and career opportunities (Jawahar, 2006; Sommer & Kulkarni, 2012). Swan (2012) further emphasises that the performance appraisal process helps employees to identify what they did during the performance cycle, where they are lacking, which areas need improvement, employees can then use that data to improve on their future performance.

Similarly, the provision of feedback through performance appraisal also allows the employer to communicate what is expected of an employee (Idowu, 2017). Feedback is therefore considered an important instrument for increased employee motivation and morale, especially affirmative feedback stimulates the employee to perform better (Idowu, 2017). In instances where employees' performance was lower than the set standard, constructive criticism from the feedback assists in addressing the underperformance for improved performance (Cardy & Leonard, 2011).

2.7.3 An appropriate performance reward system

Another aspect of proper management of performance appraisal includes appropriate performance rewards allocation system for excellent performance (Idowu, 2017). Emmerik, Schreurs, and Peters (2012) debate that performance appraisals can be utilised to reward employees by increasing their salaries and promotions in acknowledging the work done outstandingly. Further, Herzberg's theory posit that these rewards can be used to increase employee performance (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005). Thus, this kind of rewards sends a message to other

employees who might not have received promotions and pay increases that hard work pays off, which might be a motivating factor (Maana, 2008).

Nonetheless, the way the performance appraisal process and rewards are implemented in the public sector is that at the beginning of the performance cycle, the supervisor sits with the employee to agree on goals and performance measures on which employees' performance will be assessed. By doing so, the employee gets to understand what is required of them and how their performance will be evaluated (Cascio, 2012). Then both the supervisor and the employee sign a performance agreement which stipulates what needs to be done and how the assessment will be conducted, either half-yearly or annually.

During the assessment period, the supervisor rates the employee on a scale of 1 to 4, on each key responsibility area where 1 indicates underperformance and 4 denotes exceptional performance. Based on the outcomes of performance appraisal, incentives can be given to government workers which can either be financial or non-financial (Kim, 2011). However, in public service, the common form of incentive for public sector personnel is a monetary reward which is normally called "performance-related pay" (Kim,2011). The financial rewards are allocated to employees whose average performance score is 3 by a way of pay progression and notch increase. Employees who score 4 get a performance bonus as well as a notch increase. By increasing the notch of employees their salaries automatically increase as it moves from one notch to the next which also increase the total cost to the employer.

2.8 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

While evaluating performance has numerous benefits for workers and organisation, there seem to be countless possible difficulties encountered by managers and supervisors when conducting performance appraisals (Kampkotter, 2016).

Lin and Kellough (2019) postulate that judgement errors are also most prevalent in many organisations and involve the following mistakes:

a. The "halo effect" is whereby the supervisor sees a subordinate performing one activity well and rates that individual high on all key responsibilities areas. The halo effect can be viewed as favouritism whereby the supervisor gives high

marks to those employees that are favoured and low score to unfavoured ones. The opposite of this also holds, where the supervisor observes an employee performing the tasks badly and rate that official low on all the assigned tasks.

b. "First impression error" occurs when the supervisor has made a certain impression with an employee and the rating is determined by that first interaction.

c. The "similar-to -me –effect" occurs when the employee is rated higher by the supervisor because that employee displays similar behaviours as the supervisor.

d. Worker "comparison or contrast effects" happens when officials are scored comparatively to one another instead of employees' specific performance standards as per employment agreement.

e. "Central tendency error" happens when employees are rated at the central point of ranking scales employed by the organisation to evade extremely higher or lower scores. This occurs when supervisors are not conversant with the subordinates' work and have inadequate supervisory capability.

Despite these judgement mistakes, other performance appraisal problems which may be encountered might be due to the design of the appraisal system or how is operated (Lin & Kellough, 2019). For instance, there may be a lack of support by top management to supervisors or lack of time and sufficient information to conduct appraisals. Over and above these difficulties, performance standards may be inaccurately defined. The researcher further debates on potential structural and operational problems identified in the appraisal process below:

2.8.1 Flawed performance standards

Performance standards are the yardstick by which employees' performance is measured and therefore must be aligned to the organisational goals (Lin & Kellough, 2019). However, performance measures are frequently difficult to explain and inconsistent which often results in the subjectivity of the supervisor. Thus the bias nature of the supervisor rating can render the appraisal process untrustworthy and may hurt how employees perceive the process and its management – particularly if performance standards are not satisfactorily developed (Iqbal et al., 2015).

Another challenge about the standards of performance might be different standards or rating scales levels not being sufficiently clear. For example in the public sector employees are scored on a 5- point Likert scale ranging from “unacceptable performance” to “exceptional performance” without clear behavioural descriptions (Battaglio, 2015).

2.8.2 Rater’s bias

Rater’s bias happens when a rater deliberately twists the scores of unfavoured employees to low marks and give higher scores to the favoured employees which result in partial and incorrect ratings (Bekele et al., 2014). Another drawback of rater’s bias may be because of supervisors having individual differences to a particular religion, race or sex which might be damaging to employee morale and can end up in high litigation costs against the organisation (Bekele et al., 2014). When evaluating employees’ performance, managers should be cautious to avoid making mistakes so that the appraisal process can be objective and minimise grievances and disputes (Bekele et al., 2014).

2.8.3 A history of inflated performance ratings

Inflated scores are the results of orderly bias in performance appraisal which leads to incorrect scores (Lin & Kellough, 2019). Inflated ratings normally occur when supervisors intentionally allocate high scores because supervisors hate giving low scores even when the scores are warranted. This intention is done deliberately by the supervisor as supervisors avoid constructing though documentation that justifies low scores (Lin & Kellough, 2019). However, this deliberate behaviour of the supervisors make it difficult to come up with authentic personnel decisions about promotions, pay increase and development (Jawahar & Williams, 1997; Guralnik, Rozmarin & So, 2004).

Over and above, supervisors avoid giving low scores as they do not want to deal with dissatisfied employees who might be denied promotions and pay increases should low marks be allocated (Murphy & Cleveland, 1991; Jawahar & Williams, 1997; London, Mone & Scott, 2004). According to Jawahar and Williams (1997), supervisors inflate the ratings when performance appraisal is used for administrative

purposes such as elevations, payment rises and retention instead of developmental appraisal such as employees training. Numerous studies conducted show that performance appraisal results are seldom used for developmental, as a result, inflated scores are often seen in the process (Daley, 1992; Slaughter & Greguras, 2008).

2.8.4 Lack of information about employees' performance

In organisations where performance appraisal occurs once per annum, it might be difficult for supervisors to recall the performance of the employees due to long gaps (Felman, 1981; Heneman & Wexley, 1983). As a result of this long-time gap, inaccuracy in the appraisal may happen as the supervisor might no longer remember exact employee activities (Heneman & Wexley, 1983). Additionally, supervisors are not all the time in close vicinity with the subordinates they supervise, and if there is no frequent interaction between the supervisor and the subordinate, there might be insufficient information for supervisors to evaluate employees' performance sufficiently (Lin & Kellough, 2019).

2.8.5 Lack of time by supervisors

Lin and Kellough (2019) suggest that supervisors are always busy with numerous matters demanding their attention. Nonetheless, effective performance appraisal dictates that supervisors allocate time for the preparation and determination of scores and assessments with subordinates. Even though supervisors must allocate time to performance appraisals, some scholars discovered that some supervisors' views the time spent on appraisals as unpleasant and an interruption on other supervisory responsibilities (Heneman & Wexley, 1983). Until such time that supervisors take performance appraisal serious as part of their functions and not see it as a burden and dedicate their time to objectively evaluate employee's performance, the quality of the assessment will continue to be questionable.

2.8.6 Lack of training on rating employees' performance

For supervisors to conduct performance appraisals effectively, supervisors must get training on the performance appraisal process to be impartial during assessments

and avoid judgement errors like the “halo-effect, similar to me effect, central tendency error and first impression error” (Lin & Kelloug, 2019). The likelihood is that when supervisors are empowered, their acceptance level of performance appraisal system might increase and improve employee performance appraisal (Roberts & Pavlak, 1996; Martin & Bartol, 1998; Reinke, 2003). On the contrary, if supervisors are not sufficiently trained, the challenges in the performance appraisal process might continue to escalate and render the process ineffective and not achieving its intended objective (Herbert & Doverspike, 1990; Roberts, 2003). Unfortunately, most organisations neglect supervisory training in performance assessment as is normally seen as low managerial importance (Daley, 1992; Reinke, 2003). Therefore, supervisors must undergo performance appraisal training if the process must achieve its objective.

2.8.7 Lack of support from top management

Effective performance appraisals require support for supervisors from top management as emphasised by (Tyer, 1983; Ammons & Condrey, 1991). Top management needs to give supervisors support in all phases of the performance appraisal process to affirm supervisors that they have upper management backing during the decision making about employees’ performance and taking necessary actions based on employees’ performance as well as resources allocation or withholding (Ammons & Condrey, 1991). Additionally of importance, robust support from higher management sends a strong message to workers that performance appraisal plays a significant role in the organisational operation and achievement of organisational objectives (Mohrman, Resnick-West & Lawler, 1989). Inadequate support from top management might result in performance appraisal failure which could destabilise the whole appraisal process (Lin & Kellough, 2019). It is therefore crucial that higher management backup the process for it to be effective and accepted by employees.

2.8.8 Documentation requirements

The performance appraisal process can be very difficult for both the employee being assessed and the supervisor who is conducting the assessment (Lin & Kellough, 2019). Globally, supervisors and employees do not like performance appraisal as

they view the process to be a burden to the organisation with little significance and fails to achieve its intended purpose (Cappelli & Conyon, 2018). Notwithstanding the challenges that come up with the process, the process still needs to have integrity, therefore everyone involved in the process must ensure that proper documentation of the performance is kept justifying the scores allocated (Lin & Kellough, 2019).

Accurate records start with a well-constructed and proper work description outlining individual employee's key responsibilities in terms of what is expected of the employee (Lin & Kellough, 2019). Therefore, supervisors should have a well-organised system where they regularly record employees' performance when employees' meet or go beyond the set performance standards as well as when they fail to meet their responsibilities. These records play an important part during annual employees' performance appraisal. However, it is labour intensive as it requires a considerable amount of time for it to succeed (Daley, 1992).

Performance appraisal should not be a once-off event whereby supervisors sit once per year with their subordinates to complete the rating sheet and review employees' outcome (Lin & Kellough, 2019). For performance appraisal to be effective, a performance appraisal should be an ongoing process that necessitates consistent and detailed documentation of each employees' job performance. Conversely, the need for records might put a burden on the supervisors which can be a hindrance for operational performance appraisal (Lin & Kellough, 2019).

2.9 MECHANISMS PUT IN PLACE TO DEAL WITH PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL GRIEVANCES

A grievance is any disgruntlement or disappointment rising from emotion or a conviction of unfairness felt by a worker or group of workers about work environment practices (Opatha, 1994). Grievance in the workplace arises due to the dissatisfaction of employees by the employer which might be in the form of perceived unfair organisational processes, discrimination, and inconsistency in the application of workplace procedures (Devonish, 2017). This often leaves an employee despondent. However, to mediate the complaint, grievance management procedure has been put in place in many organisations to deal with workplace conflicts and disagreements arising from the employment contract between the employer and employee (Gamage & Hewagama, 2007). Employees participate in the process to

draw the attention of the management to workplace problems and to ensure that they get fair labour practice. Conflict resolution through grievance procedures is regarded as the major achievement of industrial relations by various scholars (Peterson & Lewin, 2000). Therefore, organisations must use effective grievance settlement procedure to deal with discontent raised by the employees to promote objectivity and to evade disagreements.

Grievance settlement procedure intends to resolve conflicts peacefully and encourage effective management of labour relations matters in the workplace to promote justice (Gamage & Hewagama, 2007). If the process is applied correctly, it might leave employees satisfied which in turn may increase the morale and escalate employees' performance and the delivery of services (Bagraim, 2007). Management must ensure that employees know the grievance procedure practised within the organisation as the grievance procedures assist both the employer and employees (Nurse & Devonish, 2007; Devonish, 2017). For employees to have a better understanding, such processes should be documented and communicated to employees so that they know which way to follow should they feel that they were unfairly treated by the system (Devonish, 2017).

Furthermore, for the grievance procedure to be successful and effective, it must follow an operative system with the following characteristics: formal procedure, speedy settlement, and acceptance, the settlement at the lowest level, perceived justice, simplicity, and training.

The table below gives the procedure for effective grievance management.

Table 1: Procedure for effective grievance management

Dimension	**Description**
Formal Procedure	The availability and use of grievance procedures which provide a formal opportunity for employees' voice to be heard thus resolving workplace and organisational conflicts (Peterson & Lewin's, 2000).
Speedy settlement	This denotes the time taken by employees to lodge a complaint and the period taken by management to resolve the grievance raised (Devonish, 2017).

	Employee's complaints must be resolved as quickly as possible and for this to take place, competent officials must be in place to deal with grievances.
Acceptance	In a unionised environment, grievance processes should allow employees' the rights to be represented by unions and to appeal against the disagreement of decisions made which they feel are biased (Nurse & Devonish, 2007).
The settlement at the lowest level	If possible, conflicts should be resolved at the lowest level and without third party intervention (Knight, 1986). It is therefore important that disputes be resolved between the employee and immediate supervisor which promote positive workplace relations and trust. The voice of employees should be listened to in the office.
Perceived Justice	If employees view the processes involved with the system to be impartial and objective, the likelihood is that they will see the results to be reasonable even when they are not favoured by the outcomes (Peterson & Lewin's, 2000). This is in line with procedural justice which emphasises the impartiality regarding procedures, instruments and approaches used by the organisation to determine the outcomes (Folger & Cropanzano, 1996).
Simplicity	The grievance procedure should be clearly defined to employees and avoid ambiguity, employees must understand the steps to be followed when they complain and should not be frustrated by the unclear process (Adikaram & Rupasiri, 2007).
Training	Managers and supervisors must be trained in handling grievance to gain improved understanding and skills in handling grievances successfully (Peterson & Lewin's, 2000). Enhanced capabilities

	might bring employees confidence in the management of the grievance procedure.

Source: Adapted from (Gamage & Hewagama, 2007)

Concerning employees' perceptions of the performance appraisal process, if employees feel aggrieved about the outcomes of the process the procedure outlined above still applies. Grievance procedure can be viewed in terms of procedural justice that an employee follows relating to how the performance appraisal process was conducted. The grievance procedure allows an employee the chance to look for the justice they trust that they were deprived of when the biased treatment occurred during the process (Devonish, 2017). Procedural justice allows the employees to raise their complaints which promote their "voice" to be heard by management (Konovosky, 2000). Employees may follow the grievance management processes should they feel that the appraisal process was not objective. Management must ensure that employees' grievances are handled in an opportune manner and decisions for grievance resolution are taken appropriately (Devonish, 2017). The suitability of the grievance process is viewed through procedural justice inscribed in the appraisal process.

2.10 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

In the public sector, performance appraisal is central to organisational performance enhancement and accountability (Makhubela et al., 2016). Employee's performance is aligned with the organisational goals by using performance appraisal, employees get inspired to perform their responsibilities by contributing to society at large (Jensen & Vestergaard, 2017). Studies have shown that performance appraisal is a significant management instrument for performance measurement, providing feedback, motivation for employees, employee development, reimbursement for performance incentives and reinforcement of the relationship between the supervisor and subordinate (Harrington & Lee (2015; DeNisi & Murphy, 2017; Sharma & Sharma, 2017; Cappelli & Conyon, 2018). Regardless of these benefits, the application of performance appraisal is perceived negatively in the public sector and its usefulness, objectivity and credibility remain to be questionable which has resulted in a lack of confidence in the process (Kim & Holzer, 2016).

Public sector employees have a negative perception of performance appraisal because of the discrepancy between implementation and theory. Consequently, this negative perception results in a lack of motivation, low morale and various behaviour patterns by employees whose capabilities are important to public sector improvement (Arnaboldi, 2015). Supervisors are viewed to be lacking the adequate skill to implement the system properly, vague goals which are politically influenced by role players and complexity of public sector organisations are challenges for the process to be implemented appropriately (Rainey & Jung, 2015; Makhubela et al, 2016).

2.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed the extensive literature on performance appraisal as well as the framework that underpin the study. The significance of performance appraisal in the organisation regarding goal setting and feedback theory was debated. Performance appraisal is acknowledged as the significant human resource management instrument through which employee performance is evaluated and employees' developmental needs are identified in line with the set goals. Through performance appraisal, supervisors are provided with relevant decision-making information about rewards, developmental interventions and offer employees a better understanding of career opportunities.

Communication plays a central part in providing employees feedback, as employees' values honesty and transparency about the outcomes of the process. Despite performance appraisal being acknowledged as the vital human resource tool that can be used to achieve the organisational goals through employee's performance, the process is also faced with numerous challenges and is viewed by employees as being subjective and has left many employees frustrated. The subjectivity of the process continues to make it lose its objectivity. Therefore, the study explored civilian employees' perceptions of the management of performance appraisal in the Department of Defence through a case study to have better insights. The following chapter deliberates on the methodology that the researcher followed to undertake the study.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology shows the rationale of the process or the procedural context in which the study was undertaken (Haradhan, 2018). Therefore, this chapter outlines the methodological approach that was adopted by the researcher to explore civilian employees' perceptions of performance appraisal in the Department of Defence. This chapter also gives the justification of the qualitative method adopted for this study. The following aspects will also be discussed, research paradigm, research approach, research tools and their application, sampling, triangulation, the process of data analysis. Equally, reliability and validity as well as limitations, feasibility and positionality will also be deliberated. Lastly, ethical considerations will be discussed in terms of how human matters are treated during the research process as a prerequisite by the Belmont Report (Friesen, Kearns, Redman & Caplan, 2017). The chapter concludes by summarising significant issues that were debated and move to the next chapter which is the presentation of study results.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The qualitative nature of this research locates it within the interpretivism paradigm. The philosophy behind the interpretivist paradigm advocates understanding people's experiences as the study takes place in the participants' natural setting and assumes that reality is socially constructed (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Wagner, Kawulich & Garmer, 2012; Neuman, 2013). The researcher depends on the participants' opinions of the phenomenon being studied, thus there is a continual interaction between the researcher and participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Also, interpretivism believes that knowledge is subjective, therefore the researcher cannot separate the truth of what the participants are undergoing daily to understand the situation holistically (Punch, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The researcher is the main data gathering instrument during the research process; hence the interpretive paradigm was considered appropriate for this study. The researcher interacted with the participants to get their views about how the performance appraisal process is managed in the Department of Defence. Thus, the philosophical perspective of the interpretive paradigm holds for this study as it

enabled the researcher to engage with the participants to understand their experiences with the phenomenon and the process. Interviews were used as the data collection method, also the researcher observed the participants when they responded and took field notes to triangulate data. As the researcher was the main instrument in data gathering, the responsibility to analyse and interpret data also rested solely on her to give meaning to what was discovered during the interviews. Consequently, the interpretative paradigm was most appropriate for the study as it demonstrated all the features associated with qualitative research. This is asserted by (Creswell and Poth, 2018) that qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study followed a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research was adopted to provide the researcher with an opportunity of collecting rich data from a small number of individuals in the organisation to get an in-depth understanding of participants lived experience regarding the topic being studied (Bryman, 2012). Also, qualitative research was chosen as it focuses on the quality, nature and crux of the phenomena being studied. Data gathered is detailed and generated via interaction between the researcher and participants (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). The researcher engaged participants to reflect on their lived experiences in their work environment.

A qualitative approach was appropriate because this is an exploratory case study that seeks to get an in-depth understanding of employees' experiences about how the performance appraisal process is managed in the Department of Defence. Combined with the richness and in-depth exploration as well as providing descriptive data, the strength of the qualitative study is the capability to "to create a coherent story as seen through the eyes of those that are part of that story" (Wagner et al., 2012, p.126). Also, a case study was chosen because it is allowable for the researcher to get a complete understanding of the phenomena under study which was to explore perceptions of performance appraisals amongst civilian employees of the Department of Defence and answering the research questions. In attempting to answer the research questions, each interview was started with this question: What is your understanding of performance appraisal? Rich and detailed responses were given by participants on what they understand performance appraisal to be.

The researcher became the main source of the data gathering tool and analysis by entering participants work environment and interacted with them. Data collection for a case study can be in the form of document analysis, participant observation or interviews (Creswell, 2013; Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). The researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect data. The advantage of using semi-structured interview was that the researcher would ideally get richer information about participants' experiences on the topic. As expected by the researcher, rich and detailed answers were given by the participants about their understanding of performance appraisal. The researcher also had an opportunity to search for clarity needed where there was a misunderstanding during the interviews.

This exploratory case study assisted the researcher to learn various thoughts and experiences that were anticipated to gain an understanding of how civilian employees perceive the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence. It is for this purpose that the interpretative/ constructive paradigm holds that "truth is context-dependent" in the sense that the phenomenon is influenced by the context in which it takes place (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Wagner et al., 2012, p.54). In this case study, it was the individual perceptions of the management of civilian employees' performance appraisal process that was important to the research objectives.

3.4 RESEARCH TOOLS AND THEIR APPLICATION

3.4.1 Primary data

Interviews were the primary data collection tool; therefore data were collected by conducting face-to-face and one-on-one semi-structured interviews with purposively selected participants. Before the actual interview with the selected participants, the researcher piloted the interview with one of the participants' peers to test the instrument, detecting misunderstanding of some of the questions and allowing timely recognition of errors to make the necessary adjustment (Khairul, 2008). The researcher adhered to coronavirus pandemic rules during the interview by ensuring that both the participants and the researcher wore masks, kept a required social distance and hands sanitised.

Interviews were conducted at a neutral and more relaxed place chosen by the participants and at the participants' convenient time. Data were collected by adhering to university human research ethics (non-medical) procedures. The advantage of the interviews was that they allowed the researcher to probe and get clarity from the participants in case of ambiguity. Participant information sheet (Appendix A), a consent form (Appendix B) and a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix C) were sent to participants by email before the actual interview could take place as a way of familiarising themselves with the documents. Before the real interviews could proceed, the researcher introduced herself to build a rapport and read out loud the participant information sheet (Appendix A) to the participants, though the appendices were sent by email to participants before the actual interview could take place. Reading out the participant information sheet proved to be crucial as one of the participants was blind and could not read but could hear what was said. A consent form (Appendix B) was also handed out to the participants to give a consensus that they are agreeing to take part in this research project.

A semi-structured interview guide (Appendix C) was used to conduct interviews with 15 selected civilian employees of the Department of Defence. Semi-structured interviews were used because they allowed the researcher enough flexibility to approach participants differently but still covers similar areas of data gathering. Interviews were conducted in English and continued for approximately 45 minutes. During the interview, the researcher could observe participants non-verbal gestures and took field notes. A digital recording device was used during the interview to record pertinent information that might have been omitted during the interview so that both the audio recorder and field notes could be reconciled. The recorded information was coded and de-identified. The coded data were de-identified for the confidentiality of participants and pseudonyms were used during data analysis. Confidentiality was used to make sure that participants' identity was not recognised. The actual names of participants were not used in this research and pseudonyms such as "Audi, Bentley, Chevrolet, Diesel, Eagle, Ferrari, Golf, Honda, Infiniti, Jeep, Kia, Lamborghini, Mazda, Nissan and Opel".

Data were saved in a locked cupboard at the researcher`s residential address in a location that can only be accessed by the researcher. All electronic material was

stored on a password-protected computer whereby the password is only known by the researcher. All materials will be destroyed after five years of finishing the research.

3.4.2 Secondary data

Secondary data means data that has already been gathered and analysed which constitute peer-reviewed journals, government reports such as annual performance plans and demographic survey reports (Kumar, 2014). The researcher also used secondary data for this study by scrutinising the Departmental Performance Appraisal Policy and other related Human Resource documents to gain an insight into the performance appraisal process in the department.

3.5 SAMPLING

This study used a purposive sampling technique and participants were selected based on the research objectives. In the current study, sample members were purposely selected based on their knowledge and experiences regarding the research topic being studied, which is perceptions of performance appraisals among civilian employees in the Department of Defence. The study focused on middle management and junior management to have their point of view on how the performance appraisal process is managed in the Department of Defence as such study was never conducted in the department. A sample of 15 participants was selected and eight semi-structured interviews conducted with participants. The sample was representative from each category, middle management and junior management were selected for the study which made up fifteen participants. A sample of 15 participants was chosen to allow the researcher to get detailed information about the subject being studied and allowed for the emergent of new themes.

Participants for this study consisted of both males and females. The identified participants were all above 18 years of age, and have worked in the Department of Defence for a period of five successive years (2014 to 2019) and more as they were expected to have information about the performance appraisal process in the department. All participants have gone through the performance appraisal process and their work was assessed for approximately five or more performance cycles.

This was important to get different views of employees over the specified period. Participants were chosen from the Defence head office as such study has never been conducted at the headquarters of Defence. Furthermore, the Defence Secretariat which constitutes civilian employees is mainly located at Defence headquarters as the focus of the research is on civilian employees. Defence head office was most appropriate to be considered for this research. The Defence offices located outside the headquarters are mainly military bases for military members who were not part of the study.

A mixture of convenience and snowball techniques was used to get participants. The researcher contacted three different employees who were willing to participate in the study who in turn referred others and that is how the sample grew from three to 15. The researcher contacted participants who were referred telephonically to inquire about their willingness to take part in the study. All contacted participants were eager to take part in the research. Before interviews could start, the researcher sent out the participant information sheet (Appendix A) to the participants which gave them a background to the study and how the interviews will proceed. Consent forms were signed by all 15 participants, which made up the sample. The researcher contacted potential participants through a telephone call to set up a meeting. Having deliberated on sampling, the reader is now introduced to triangulation.

3.6 TRIANGULATION

Triangulation refers to the use of several approaches to study similar phenomenon to ensure that the research findings are credible and trustworthy (Wagner, Kawulich & Gamer, 2012). In the present study, the researcher used both interviews, observation, and field notes to triangulate data. The researcher observed non-verbal communication of participants such as facial expressions suggesting a specific feeling linked to the response provided and took field notes during the interviews to capture some pertinent information that must be taken into consideration during the process of data analysis.

3.7 PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data gathered during interviews were transcribed by listening to the audio recording and then captured on the spreadsheet. Once the data were captured,

coding was done according to emerging themes. The researcher used coding by placing labels, names beside parts of data, revising field notes and then separating them by giving them meaning (Punch, 2014). The researcher used thematic analysis to analyse data from evolving themes. Themes were distinguished after coding by taking note of resemblances, replications. The researcher looked into recurring words, phrases and various topics discussed by participants during the interviews and came up with themes. The advantage of thematic analysis is that it assists in reducing and simplifying data by scrutinising and categorising data into themes, patterns or concepts. The following sections deal with validity and reliability.

3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity and reliability in qualitative research are focused on trustworthiness (Creswell, 2014; Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). Trustworthiness explains how rigorous the process was followed by the researcher to conduct the study in terms of the methodology, data collection and analysis (Connelly, 2016). Therefore, the researcher made every effort to ensure the trustworthiness of the research by adhering to trustworthiness indicators such as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. These features are discussed below:

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research includes several strategies such as participant engagement, persistent observation, triangulation and participants checks (Connelly, 2016). To enrich credibility for this study, the researcher had a lengthy engagement with the participants during the interviews to get an in-depth understanding of their perceptions about the management of performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence “as qualitative research explores people’s perceptions, experiences, feelings and beliefs” (Kumar, 2019, p. 277). The researcher probed the participants to get more information, observed participants persistently as they responded and also took field notes to triangulate data. Kumar (2019) further asserts that credibility includes establishing that the qualitative study outcomes are reliable or acceptable from the viewpoint of the research participants. Therefore, the research credibility was further improved by continuously verifying with the participants on their views about performance appraisal to avoid changing what they have highlighted as

participants are considered to be better positioned to judge if the research answers reflected their views.

3.8.2 Transferability

This criterion denotes the extent to which the outcomes of the study might be generalised or transferred to another situation (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007). The researcher had one-one face-to-face interviews with the participants whereby semi-structured questions were used to get rich data from the participants. Semi-structured interviews allowed the flexibility of probing and free-flowing conversation that allowed the participants to express their views easily. The results that came out of the interview are transferable, but cannot be generalised to other employees of the Department of Defence.

3.8.3 Dependability

In the qualitative study, dependability is achieved by providing an audit trail coupled with triangulation of techniques employed in the study (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). In this study, the researcher enhanced dependability by evidently outlining the research methodology, research approach, data collection process and process of data analysis. The assumption is that should the same process be followed, the same results could be obtained. In terms of the audit trail of documentation, the researcher ensured that detailed records of field notes and transcripts were kept in a lockable cupboard for replication and should a similar study be undertaken under the same conditions, the same conclusions could be reached. Should other researcher wish to embark on the same study, the whole research process will be available in the archives of Wits School of Governance.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability denotes the level at which the findings of the research could be confirmed by other participants, also that the findings were derived from what happened and not only constructed by the researcher (Kumar, 2019). This is to show the truthfulness of the research by indicating that data and the results, i.e. employees' perceptions were derived from what happened and not constructed by the researcher alone (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). The researcher confirmed

the results with participants before the final submission of the report to the school to ensure the credibility of the information. Confirmability is related to reliability in quantitative research.

3.9 LIMITATIONS, FEASIBILITY & POSITIONALITY

The study only focused on the Department of Defence civilian employees with a sample of 15 participants. Furthermore, the study was limited to middle and junior management employees who have worked in the department for five years or more and who have been on the receiving end of a performance appraisal process. Military members were excluded from the study as the researcher aimed to explore how civilian employees perceive the management of the performance appraisal process. The sample size was only 15 members and as such, the results could not be generalised to the entire department and conclusions based on the data were only limited to the participants who were interviewed. Due to the confidentiality between the supervisor and subordinate regarding the outcomes of the performance appraisal, there were assumptions that participants might be reticent to give information, however, most participants were more willing to respond and give detailed information as they felt betrayed by the process.

The researcher works for the Department of Defence (Director in the Financial Management Division) which has both advantages and disadvantages. As an insider-researcher one had an advantage in terms of the rapport that was already established. Another advantage of an inside researcher was the accessibility of participants and data collection which was done during working hours at a time convenient to participants. Participants were interviewed at a neutral place and more relaxed place selected by the participants and at their convenient time. The interview guide was clarified to participants and the researcher explained to them that participating in the interview was voluntary should they wish to not continue with the interview their decision would be respected.

Being an inside researcher could also have disadvantages such as bias, subjectivity, conflict of interest and power balance when collecting data and there was a risk that some participants may tailor their responses. To mitigate bias, the researcher used a

different division and not her current one to get their views on how the performance appraisal process is managed in the Department of Defence.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics in research relates to doing what is moral and evading harm which can be achieved by applying proper ethical values (Neuman, 2013; Punch, 2014). It is therefore the responsibility of the researcher to adhere to appropriate ethical behaviour when conducting social science research to ensure that human subjects are protected (Neuman, 2013). The researcher adhered to this requirement by following proper ethical requirements by ensuring that participants for this study were not harmed during the process.

The researcher is an employee of the Department of Defence. At the departmental level, ethics was taken into consideration by requesting permission to conduct research in the Department which was approved (Appendix F). Ethics are in place to ensure that research participants' rights were not violated. Approval to research the department was to ensure that all essential information and participants were accessed procedurally. The researcher also applied for an ethical clearance certificate from the Wits School of Governance Human Research Ethics Committee (WSG HREC) before continuing with the study. This was to guarantee that participants were protected and not exposed to any harm. The ethical clearance certificate was issued which meant that the researcher could then proceed with data collection.

After receiving both the approval to research the department and ethics clearance from the Wits School of Governance, the researcher contacted potential participants telephonically to request them to take part in the study. The request was received positively, and the researcher emailed the participants the participant information sheet (Appendix A) and consent form (Appendix B). Also, the interview guide (Appendix C) was emailed to ensure transparency of the process on what kind of questions will be asked during the interview. The participant information sheet introduced the researcher and clearly outlined the purpose of the research, the procedure to be followed for the interviews. The information also included time allocated for the interviews and that participation was voluntary and should they wish

to withdraw or feel uncomfortable to continue, they were free to do so at any time and the researcher would organise a substitute if necessary.

The researcher gave participants a relevant counselling facility in the consent form to contact in case they felt distressed during the interview so that they could get proper treatment. Participants were requested to sign the consent form as a way of agreeing to take part in the research project. The researcher requested consent from the participants to record the proceedings during interviews by using an audio/ voice recording device and this was agreed upon. In cases where the participants did not agree to be recorded, the researcher took written notes. Two participants did not agree to be recorded so the researcher took written notes.

To ensure privacy and confidentiality during data collection, pseudonyms or fictitious names were used to protect participants' identity. Participants were assured that the data collected will remain confidential, and coding was used to ensure that their individuality remained unidentified. The data gathered were saved in a protected place and electronic documents were protected by a password. Data collected will be destroyed after five years of finishing the research.

3.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a detailed description of the research methodology that was used to explore civilian employees' perceptions of performance appraisal in the Department of Defence and the reasons why it was preferred. The chapter also discussed the research paradigm, research tools and their application, sampling, triangulation, the process of data analysis. The researcher then deliberated on reliability and validity as well as limitations, feasibility, and positionality. Furthermore, ethical considerations were also discussed. The following chapter is the presentation of the study findings.

4 CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the researcher discussed the research design and the justification for using the qualitative method. This chapter focuses on the presentation of the research findings. The purpose of this research was to explore the civilian employees' perceptions of the management of performance appraisal in the Department of Defence. A qualitative research method was used in conducting this study. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants of this study to get first-hand information about their views on the topic being studied.

The chapter begins with an overview of the Department of Defence. Subsequently, the schedule of interviews conducted, and a profile of each participant is provided as a way of introducing participants whose perceptions of performance appraisal was obtained. After the background of each participant, empirical findings from the interviews conducted for this study will be presented in the form of themes. The participants in this study consisted of both black and white, males and females.

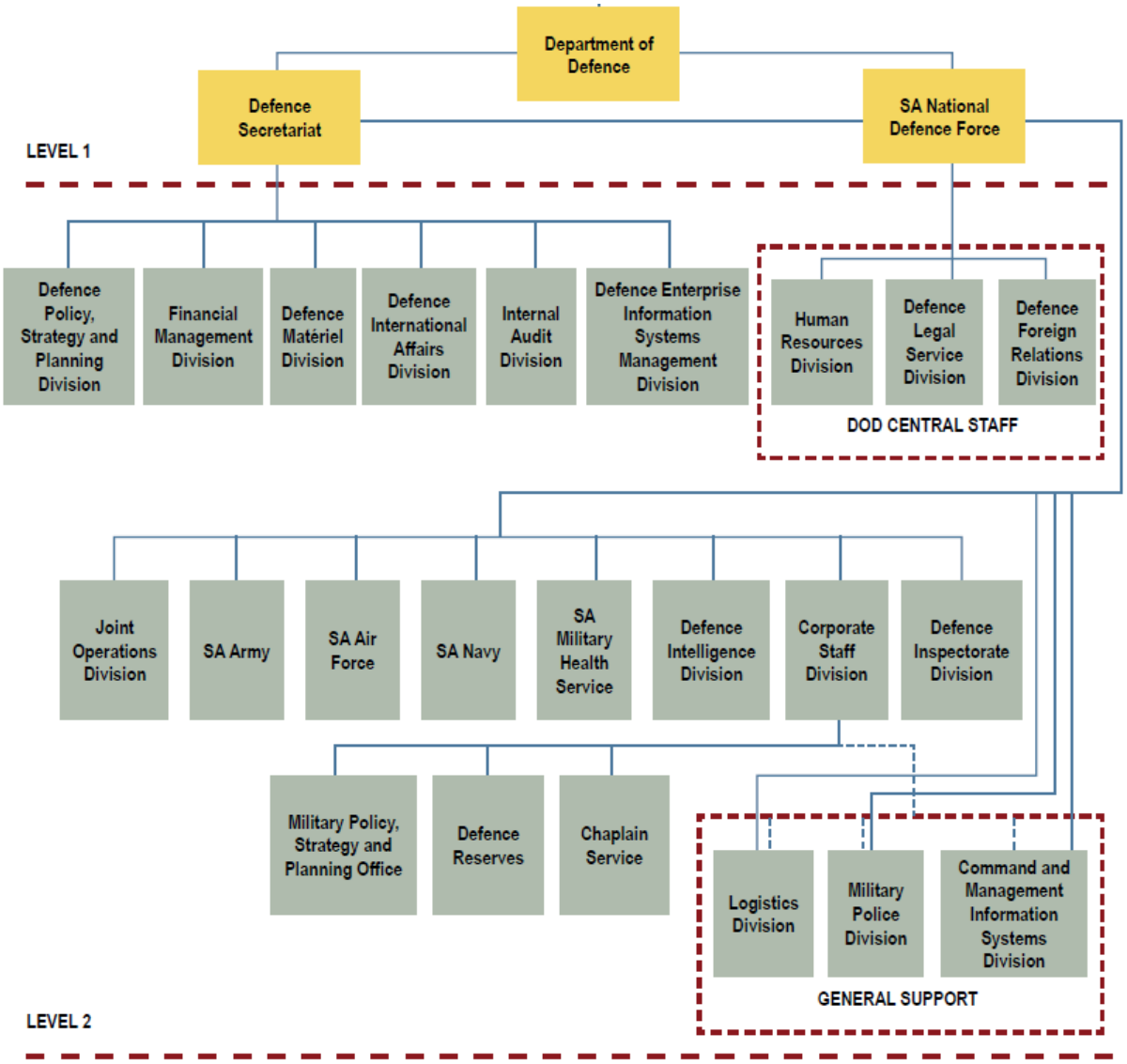
4.2 OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

The Department of Defence derives its mandate from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and the primary purpose of the department is to "defend and protect the RSA, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the international law that regulates the use of force" (DOD, 2019,p.15). The political head for the Department of Defence is the Cabinet Member who is the Minister. The Department of Defence is a civil-military organisation that comprises both civilian and military personnel. The civilian component is overseen by the Secretary for Defence who is the Accounting Officer (Head of Department), while the military section is under the control of the Chief of South African National Defence Force.

The responsibility of the Minister is to give policy direction and ensure compliance with the regulatory framework. To make sure that the Minister carries out her responsibilities, she is assisted by both the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of South African National Defence Force. The Secretary for Defence's functions includes advising the Minister on Defence Policy matters, the execution of policies,

prepare, implementing the departmental budget, monitor, control, and reporting on the allocated budget. However, the Chief of the South African National Defence Force is responsible to advise the Minister on military issues and ensures combat-ready forces are available for employment.

Figure 1: The organisational structure of the Department of Defence



Source: Department of Defence, 2019

There are six divisions under the Defence Secretariat which are overseen by the Deputy Director Generals reporting directly to the Secretary for Defence and help her to carry out the responsibilities of the Department. These are Defence Policy, Strategy and Planning, Financial Management, Defence Materiel, Defence International Affairs, Internal Audit and Defence Enterprise Information System. The Chief of South African National Defence Force is supported by, Human Resource,

Defence Legal Services, Defence Foreign Relations, Joint Operations, South African Army, South African Air Force, South African Navy, South African Military Health Services, Defence Intelligence, Corporate Staff and Defence Inspectorate, Military Police, Logistic Division and Command and Military Information System. The Division responsible for the management of the performance appraisal process falls within the military component which makes it very complex for civilian employees as policies are viewed to favour military members above civilian personnel. Therefore, the researcher will focus on civilian workers to understand their opinion about the management of the appraisal process in the Department.

4.3 SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

All the sampled participants were willing and available to be interviewed as scheduled. However, due to unexpected circumstances, some interviews had to be rescheduled. The researcher lost her mother during the process of the interviews on 25 October 2020 and as such the interviews could not continue. Nevertheless, after the bereavement period, the researcher had to continue with the interviews. The interviews were conducted in English and took place at the time and place convenient to the participants. To be more precise, interviews took place in the researcher's office as the participant felt that her office was secluded.

The interviews were conducted based on the research instruments attached as Appendix C. The researcher used electronic audio recording devices (Samsung smartphone and the laptop used as a backup) to record the interviews. Only two interviews were not recorded but the participants provided written response. The recorded interviews were transcribed fully verbatim, and the direct remarks of the participants will be cited appropriately. The participants will be referred to alphabetically starting with alphabet A, the participant (A) will be referred to as (Audi) to the participant (O) who will be referred to as (Opel). The table below indicates the interview schedule of the interviews conducted.

Table 2: Schedule of interviews conducted, and pseudonym used

No	Pseudonym	Date	Division	Rank	Salary Level

1.	Audi	20 October 2020	Defence Policy Strategy and Planning	Deputy Director	12
2.	Bentley	20 October 2020	Defence Secretariat	Assistant Director	10
3.	Chev	20 October 2020	Defence Secretariat	Assistant Director	10
4.	Diesel	21 October 2020	Risk Management	Deputy Director	12
5.	Eagle	21 October 2020	Defence Secretariat	Assistant Director	10
6.	Ferrari	21 October 2020	Human Resource	Assistant Director	10
7.	Golf	22 October 2020	Risk Management	Assistant Director	10
8.	Honda	23 October 2020	Defence Policy Strategy and Planning	Deputy Director	12
9.	Infiniti	20 October 2020	Defence Policy Strategy and Planning	Deputy Director	12
10.	Jeep	16 November 2020	Defence Corporate Communication	Assistant Director	10
11.	Kia	16 November 2020	Defence Policy Strategy and Planning	Assistant Director	10
12.	Lamborghini	16 November 2020	Defence Policy Strategy and Planning	Assistant Director	10
13.	Mazda	17 November 2020	Chief Defence Materiel	Deputy Director	12
14.	Nissan	18 November 2020	Defence Secretariat	Assistant Director	10

15.	Opel	24 November 2020	Defence Secretariat		10

4.4 PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

AUDI: Audi was recommended by one of the participants to take part in this research project and had agreed. Audi is a laid-back adult male who was born and raised in Venda, Limpopo province. He has been working in the Department of Defence since 2005 as a Deputy Director within the Defence Policy Strategy and Planning environment. Audi has got 15 years' experience in the Defence Policy Strategy and Planning environment. Audi asserts that he enjoys working in the Department of Defence as the department has empowered him a lot, he has done some courses overseas which are rare in other departments. His main task is to ensure quality assurance and advice on all the departmental policies before being approved by the Secretary for Defence (Accounting Officer) and Chief of South African National Defence Force.

BENTLEY: Upon sending out a request to possible participants for this study, Bentley was not hesitant and outrightly said "I will participate". Bentley was very assertive and outspoken and one of the participants whom we engaged for a long time approximately 44 minutes and 32 seconds almost 45 minutes scheduled for the interview. She is very detailed and articulate when answering questions. She holds a Political Science Degree and states that her ambition was to become a teacher, however, things did not turn out the way she wanted. Anyway, she is happy that she has got a job and can provide for her family. She is a government employee for a couple of decades but joined the Department of Defence in 2011 as an Assistant Director. Her job entails assisting National Conventional Arms Committee by doing inspections and verifying compliance with the Act for the Defence Industry. She affirms that she is enjoying her work and passionate about it because she is making a difference in the Defence Industry as a whole.

CHEV: Chev was very relaxed during the interview and politically enlightened. He is an adult male who grew up in Mamelodi, a township in the eastern part of Pretoria.

He affirms that growing up in Mamelodi was not easy, life was too fast, and he was driven by political awareness of what was happening in the country at a young age. Chev had to relocate to Garankuwa which is also a township in the North-Western side of Pretoria so that he could focus on his schoolwork. He is an Assistant Director also assisting the National Conventional Arms Committee with audits and ensuring compliance with the National Conventional Arms Control Act. He feels that the military environment is all about “ranks”.

DIESEL: Diesel is an adult white male who has been working in the Department of Defence for 40 years and due to retire at the end of December 2020. He seems to be more relaxed and matured when answering questions and at the end of the interview, he was more than willing to refer another participant who happened to be his Assistant Director. He started working as a soldier within the Air Force Military Academy and had to demilitarise to be a civilian member in 1998. Diesel has been a Deputy Director Audits for 10 years and his responsibilities comprise of handling both internal and external audits queries raised by the Auditor General of South Africa.

EAGLE: Is a forthright adult coloured male born in Pretoria but due to his father’s vocation had to move a lot around South Africa. Diesel schooled in Johannesburg most of his life. The family relocated to Cape Town in 1987 for two years. Just like Chev, Diesel was exposed and involved in political activities in South Africa at a very young age (18/ 19years to be exact). He joined the Department of Defence post-apartheid in 1994. He was amongst the first intakes of the South African Air Force post-apartheid, he considered himself as the Air Force “born-frees” where he was employed in the projects environment. In 1998 he demilitarised with mixed feelings from a soldier to a civilian. He has been an Assistant Director since 2010. His responsibilities include monitoring compliance verification of arms on the Defence Industry and report to the National Conventional Committee which consists of all security cluster Ministers. He is very thorough when responding to questions and portrays a positive attitude.

FERRARI: Ferrari was bold, eloquent and did not beat around the bush. He seemed more energetic and wanted to start the interview without any waste of time as the area that was researched is within his scope of work. Ferrari was referred by Honda and was eager to participate in this study. He is a 35-year courageous male who was

born in Seshego, Polokwane, Limpopo and currently staying in Pretoria due to work opportunities. He is an academic and holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration, Honours Degree in Labour Relations, BTech in Human Resource Management and National Diploma in Human Resource Management. He vows that the Department of Defence is not for academics and he says that "if you are an academic in the Department of Defence you will be frustrated". Ferrari has got 12 years of Public Service experience in training and performance management. He has been in the Department of Defence for 8 years as an Assistant Director of Performance Management and Skills Development. When asked if he is enjoying working for the Department of Defence he laughed and said, "I cannot say that I am enjoying but I am happy that I have a job it pays the bill, but have reached expiry date in the Department of Defence". The department is very complex and has different Acts for military and civilians, civilians are not recognised.

GOLF: Golf was referred by her manager to take part in this study and could not resist as she wanted to share her experiences with the topic that was explored. She seemed calm and frank about the issues. Golf is a young optimistic female who has been in the Department of Defence for 13 years. She joined the department through its youth development programme and has progressed through the ranks as she is now an Assistant Director of Risk Management for the past 5 years. She said that she joined the department with the only matric and the department has given her career growth, she started working as a clerk and now she is an Assistant Director. Through the department's funding, Golf had managed to advance her studies by completing her Bachelor of Commerce Degree as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Accounting. She has enjoyed working in the Department of Defence as is the only department that gave her a breakthrough.

HONDA: Is a middle-aged male who is very forthright and do not mix his words when responding. He willingly volunteered to participate when the researcher sent out the request to possible participants and has referred to a lot of other participants. Honda says that he has been in the Department of Defence for a very long time since 2005. He is currently a Deputy Director. He confirms that he is not necessarily enjoying but at least he is not in the same position, "I have moved along the ranks, career development-wise" proclaims Honda. He further states that although he has

progressed career-wise, he has also experienced a lot of negative low levels in the department. He confirms that the Department of Defence does not do its work like any other department, is on its own, complex organisation, they are doing their own thing in a little corner and not following what other Public Service Departments are doing which is frustrating.

INFINITI: Is an older white female who has worked in the Department of Defence for 32 years. She was prepared to participate in this study when asked by the researcher and had willingly referred her Assistant Director as well who also agreed to take part. She is got nine years' experience as a Deputy Director within the Directorate Strategy and Planning. Her core functions include compiling Strategic Plan, Annual Performance Plan and quarterly performance plans for the department. She is very passionate about her work and always willing to go the extra mile. Although Infiniti agreed and signed consent forms for the interview to be recorded, things did not go according to plan. Her interview was scheduled to take place on 26 October 2020; however, the researcher lost her mother on 25 October 2020 which changed the whole plan. The participant then provided the written response upon the researcher returning to work as she also lost her father during the process. Her responses were enlightening in that they could relate to the literature review.

JEEP: Jeep is a straightforward female who was born and raised in Mokopane, Limpopo. She was recommended by Honda and did not hesitate to take part in this study. She can communicate very easy, and her responses were in-depth and could sense in her voice that she is frustrated about how things are done in the department. She studied BA in Communication Science and Honours Degree in Integrated Organisational Communication. Jeep is an Assistant Director from 2009 and is working as a Communication researcher in the department's Corporate Communication section. She is passionate about communication but since she has been in that environment for a long, in her own words she says, "I can't say I am still enjoying working there, truly speaking I wish I can change because there is no growth". The Department of Defence is not the same as other departments, there is a "silo" mentality kind of environment, no teamwork, no skills development, and no skills transfer amongst colleagues.

KIA: Kia was recommended by Honda and accepted the invitation to participate in this study. She is a middle-aged black female who speaks with authority and very elaborative. She joined the Department of Defence in 2014 as an Assistant Director whose main task is to evaluate and check the effectiveness of the risks in the division. She alluded that she is enjoying working in the department but is difficult for employees as there is resistance to change. It is a civilian vs military environment so, if you have any idea to bring change is very difficult it will take three years to implement that especially if the initiative is coming from the civilians to the military. And then because the initiative is from the civilians, the military will tell you that this is not how we do things. The word that comes repeatedly from her mouth is “but is difficult”, even documents need to be signed by both civilians and military so going straight to implement change is not easy. Kia reckons that even approval of a policy can take up to two years because of the number of committees that it goes through, which is very challenging. “I am enjoying my job, but is very challenging” that’s her closing remarks.

LAMBORGHINI: Was recommended by Infiniti to take part in this study and welcomed that invitation. She is a middle-aged white female who is very relaxed and soft-spoken. She started her working career as a soldier but later demilitarised to be a civilian. Lamborghini joined the Department of Defence at the age of 18 years and went to the Army College to do basic military training as an Intelligence Officer. She says that she had travelled a bit, she began working in Potchefstroom and came back to Pretoria, went to Durban and back to Pretoria again. She was deployed for a year in the Democratic Republic of Congo and has worked at various levels. She has 23 years of service in the department, six of which has been civilian. She has been an Assistant Director for the past six years. She enjoys working in the planning environment because she likes structured things, although you do the same thing every year each year brings its challenges.

MAZDA: Upon contacting Mazda telephonically and requesting her to participate in this study, she jumped into that opportunity. Mazda is a laid back white female who joined the Department of Defence in 1999 as a soldier. Just like Lamborghini, she demilitarised in 2014 to be a civilian member and has a total service of 21 years in the department, six of which is civilian. She is a Deputy Director, and her primary role

is to draw the plan for the Division and every quarter report against the plan to check if everybody achieved what they were supposed to do. She emphasises that she is enjoying her work, although when she started being a planner, she was uncomfortable but have since been accustomed to it. Her answers are short but informative as they confirm what other participants have highlighted.

NISSAN: Nissan agreed to participate in this study after being contacted by the researcher. He is direct and his responses were of that person who needs change and is tired of how things are done in the department. He was born in 1973 and started working in the Department of Defence in 1994 within the South African Navy as a soldier. He worked in the Navy for 14 years and was based in Simonstown, Cape Town working in the ships. In 2011, Nissan demilitarised and relocated to Pretoria. He was appointed as an Assistant Director and his key responsibility is to manage and regulate the Defence Industry. He holds BTech in Public Management and echoes that Government encourages young people to go to school to be better leaders and managers of tomorrow. He needs a new mindset in the department.

OPEL: Opel reckons that the department has given her opportunities to grow in her career. She joined the Department of Defence in 2012 and has moved through the ranks. She has been an Assistant Director of Administration since 2014 and holds a Postgraduate Degree in Human Resource. She did not agree to be recorded but provided a written response. I respected her wish not to be recorded and the responses she provided were very helpful in answering the research questions. She was the last participant to be contacted.

4.5 FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

The researcher used the interview schedule (Appendix C) to interview the participants of this study. The interview guide consisted of eight questions that were asked across all 15 participants. The first four questions wanted to know what participants understand about performance appraisal, how the process is managed if there are mechanisms to deal with disputes and grievances and the process of feedback. The last four questions were mainly on their viewpoints about the challenges encountered with the process, the benefits of appropriate management of the process and any improvement suggestions that can enhance the process. The

last question was for participants to add if they feel that there might have omitted some valid information when they responded.

Various themes emerged during the interview and rigorous analysis started when the researcher transcribed the interviews from audio to text. Data was reduced by reading the interview transcriptions repeatedly to find the common recurrence of words used. As such, the following themes emerged in line with the interview questions that were asked and will be discussed according to participants' responses.

4.5.1 Theme 1: A management tool

This theme came up whereby participants were asked about their understanding of performance appraisal and illustrated their understanding.

Diesel (21 October 2020) described it as:

> *"… well…I see it as a management tool used to evaluate people and also to provide feedback to them …with regard to their performance and maybe some areas where they can better themselves, identify training needs and so on…so…in my opinion is a very useful tool if used correctly"*.

This was further affirmed by Kia (16 November 2020) by saying that:

> *"…is a tool that is being used to evaluate or review the employees' job performance and also…that performance is going to contribute towards the organization". … they will be able to check if the employees is satisfied, if the employee is lacking some training and then as well as the skills and the achievements"*.

Equally of importance Ferrari (21 October 2020) stated that:

> ***"**I think it is a tool…that is used to measure performance of each and every individual…bear in mind that…each and every person when they get in an environment or in an institution they need to sign a performance agreement…which will determine what are your key responsibility areas, what is it that you need to perform and which targeted date…so…the appraisal comes at the end of each and every quarter for an individual to be assessed…to indicate if you have performed against what was set for you to*

perform at the given time…and…this is coupled with the measurement…your agreement should be able to be measured and there should time frame against each and every key responsibility area".

Honda (23 October 2020) declared that:

"Is a system to review the performance of employees in the organisation and it also assist in rewarding good performance, excellent performance…and…it also assist where there is a gap on employees which might have a negative impact on their performance…so empowerment to those areas…performance appraisal also assist in that".

Nissan (18 November 2020) agreed and expressed that:

"I suppose performance appraisal is about organisational thing…organisational development…where …deserving candidates need to be recognised for promotion…need to be recognised for the efforts that they are putting within their jobs even doing more than what they are supposed to be doing…and basically says that if this person have been performing good or excellent…therefore, when it comes to performance assessment and performance bonus can be eligible for salary increase, maybe a promotion in that environment which they operate in".

Golf (22 October 2020) concurred that:

"Is the evaluation of employees performance…that's where you compare what the employee has achieved compared to what was expected from the employee…and also you will be able to identify the gaps if there are areas of improvement that an employee need…and…another thing is that you will be able to identify if you have to send the employee for training".

According to Lamborghini (16 November 2020), performance appraisal is:

"Is basically for me a way that they measure your performance…that's how I see it…the work that you put in and what you get out at the end of the day. Performance is measured against your key performance areas, what you are responsible to do basically your performance agreement. I think is a good

system that they have got…it does have some loopholes as well yes. You can really be measured on your performance as well as attributes".

Audi (20 October 2020) indicated that:

> *"To my understanding is how you as an employee or individual perform and how they rate your performance is either quarterly or yearly… is mostly based on your duties your main objectives you are doing here, your KRA's (Key Responsibility Areas), what are you specifically doing here in the department, so is my understanding of appraisal"*.

Also, other participants see performance appraisal as a mechanism to reward good performance. Infiniti (20 October 2020) highlighted that:

> *"Is a method by an institution to reward a member for work service delivered above the normal working requirement*".

Bentley (20 October 2020) articulated that:

> ***"****It is supposed to add value to the division, to identify where there are challenges and to add value to whoever is being assessed…that would be the ideal answer…that is not the case"*.

Some of the participants understand performance appraisal as doing their work according to the duty sheet. Mazda (17 November 2020) stated that:

> *"Is much like the type of work that I do…in the beginning you have the duty sheet…then there is certain amount of work that you must do during the course of the year and then…the formal performance appraisal…we must have it twice per year…you must record this you can submit proof of what you have done and the supervisor check if you did what you were supposed to do for the quarter and if she can see you didn't do it…what remedies are being put in place to help, guide or train you to perform better during later part of the year until the final performance appraisals is done. I see it to motivate good performance, to reward good performance and rectify bad performance"*.

Jeep (16 November 2020) agreed and said that:

"If I am working as a communication researcher…I must perform my work according to the standard set by the department to say…you must do 1, 2, and 3… according to the duty sheet".

Eagle (21 October 2020) had this to say:

"You are appointed to do a specific job…you get your job description which is detailed in your job profile. …we used to sign a service level agreement with our employer which should be your Director also to confirm that …you have consensus of what you are supposed to do…what you are paid for… so now…which naturally comes to the conclusion that you need to be assessed on your job performance…. what you have done during that period… something like a financial year we have an assessment period".

However, Chev (20 October 2020) view performance appraisal as a service delivery mechanism and had this to say:

"Performance appraisals…especially for our government the intention is more based on service delivery because we are here to deliver a service…so…it is important now for government to come up with these policies…so that we are able to deliver to the masses".

4.5.2 Theme 2: Formal process

This theme conveyed the message of how participants view the management of the performance appraisal process.

Infiniti (20 October 2020) elaborated and said that:

"Approved performance agreement must be in place between the member and immediate supervisors for a specific period normally (01 April to 31 March of the following year). This performance agreement must include all the functions (Key Performance Areas) with specific targets, timelines and weights. Included in the performance agreement is the member's personal development plan aimed at developing skills to address the shortfall. The performance agreement must be signed by both the member and the supervisor. Performance appraisal must be in line with performance agreement and each key performance area must be scored. The scores must be agreed upon by both the member and the supervisor".

Diesel (21 October 2020) highlighted that:

> *"Is a formal process …administered by Human Resource. I guess Human Resource gets prescriptions I suppose from another government department and there is very rigid timelines that we have to adhere to and …and the formal forms that we have to complete and submit. Is captured on the system…Persol system…and there is moderation committees, final scores been allocated"*.

By the same token, Lamborghini (16 November 2020) articulated that:

> *"Well… according to me when… I have to sign my letter of appointment…it says there in your contract that basically what is expected of you".*

Golf (22 October 2020) emphasised that:

> *"I will say…firstly you sit with your manager to discuss what is it that is expected of you…or…you review if you have been working there for a long time what is it that is expected of you…and then throughout the quarterly we are expected to have those one-on-one meetings to review if you are still in track or if there is something more that you have to do".*

Similarly, Kia (16 November 2020) agreed to say that:

> *"Is done between the subordinate and the immediate supervisor"*.

Ferrari (21 October 2020) uttered that:

> *"…the process is not different to the uniform members…is one and the same. We are assessed on a quarterly base…although…on a quarterly base on the template according to the Department of Defence is not assessment, is only a meeting…whereas…other department…they are doing it differently…you need to be scored at the end of the financial year they combine all those scores…but with the Department of Defence, they just have a meeting…which is not a meeting per sè because the supervisor will just say …now is that time…this is what I wrote, you can just sign…without any interaction"*.

Mazda (17 November 2020) agreed and said:

> "*I found it to be exactly the same as for uniform members…so we follow the same process … so basically you've got your outputs and then measure if it*

was done in the middle of the year, corrective action taken and measure it again at the end of the year".

Similarly, Chev (20 October 2020) stated that:

> *"I don't think is managed properly …because if people like I said they refer to these policy guidelines and of importance the constitution in terms of…because that's the first one you know…we won't be having this problem of policies not managed properly because is as a result of the implementation which may lead to wrong interpretation of these policies"*.

4.5.3 Theme 3: Compliance

Though participants are aware that a performance appraisal is a formal process administered by Human Resource whereby each employee must have approved performance agreement in place, the process is only done for compliance's sake and not properly implemented and managed.

Ferrari (21 October 2020) said:

> *"Generally in the Department of Defence…they just comply…it's not …it's not a well-oiled system…if I may put it like that…we doing it for compliance and submit even subordinates, people who are being assessed they just sign and say…as long as I get my monthly salary I don't care about the assessment…so is not properly managed….if I may put it like that way. Is just for compliance…not the proper management of performance…so the process is not well done…in paper we do have a process to say…on the last month of the quarter you need to be assessed…where there will be a supervisor and a subordinate…sit down, discuss the progress for the quarter and then you sign…so…that is the process that is on paper…but…implementation is not well done"*.

Honda (23 October 2020) agreed and said:

> *"I am not sure if that system is being followed outside but I doubt…I think this is the system developed entirely for the Department of Defence and what they do is just a compliance…is just a compliance issue of ensuring that the documents are completed and then they just submit the documents…because even the moderation…they do the moderation but there is no communication coming*

back to whoever to say this is what happened, this is the outcome of your appraisal all that…nothing of that sort".

Lamborghini (16 November 2020) had this to say:

> *"…I think we are all doing it for the sake of doing it…complying…but I don't think we use the tool to motivate or to bring the change…I don't think we do… because… the person doing the job and the person not doing the job they both are measured in the same way…but now the person doing the job might not get the incentive for doing the job while the person not doing the job gets it…so I would say the system is there but is not being utilized effectively…you know in building morale"*.

Ferrari (21 October 2020) concurred:

> *"We are doing it…because…currently what we are doing…we are doing it just for the sake of compliance…it doesn't serve the purpose"*.

4.5.4 Theme 4: Grievance procedure

Seemingly, most of the participants are aware of the mechanisms that are put in place to deal with disputes and grievances despite their differing views. Some participants believe that the process only exists on paper, but implementation never happens. This theme emanates from the responses as articulated by different participants.

To this end, Diesel (20 October 2020) stated that:

> *"It is a formal grievance procedure… I am not sure if the people utilise it all the time….but I think initially they will engage with the Director, the chairperson who managed the process and have a discussion with that person, sometimes there will be accessible other times not, if not they will follow a grievance procedure"*.

Honda (23 October 2020) agreed and said:

> *"Yes…you can be able to put a grievance…they call it a…normal channels of command in this department… [laughs]…so in short it means you can write to the superior of your supervisor to put a grievance there or lodge a complaint…and if you are not satisfied with that you go the different levels up until such time you can be able to reach a ceiling which is …the Accounting*

Officer. I know that there is also a grievance board. Yes, there is a process that one can follow. Though, there is a process in place I don't think even people here at Head Office know that there is such a process that you can follow with regard to grievance or to lodge a complaint. They don't care about any other thing, they just want to know if they are going to get money, so…they don't read and even if they get the document…they don't read".

Kia (16 November 2020) concurred and said:

"… there are…but even though I have never been in the dispute with my supervisor…but there is an Instruction that shows that if you are having a complaint what you need to do Human Resource Instruction 16/2020 Performance Management and Development System in the Department of Defence officials other than Senior Management members. So, maybe if for example for myself I have never been in a dispute…then should I follow the Instruction, is clearly indicating what must I do…where must I go… for my dispute to…maybe…to be satisfied. Is saying, if it happens that I have dispute with my supervisor it must firstly be presented to the Officer Commanding for resolution and then the Officer Commanding must rule according to the aspects in the performance …work plan…and then here in the Officer Commanding to me as saying to my Director…remember…my supervisor is reporting to my Director, it means I can go to the Director and say…I don't agree with my supervisor…I rated myself "4" he reduced it to "2" or he reduced it to "3" whereas I am having something in writing or I am having a proof why I have rated myself "4".

Chev (20 October 2020) highlighted that:

"Okay…like I said…in South Africa we have all these beautiful policies…like for example in the Public Service there is a grievance procedure…is a policy is there… with all the time frames and everything you know…but like I alluded to the fact that those who are presiding…if they don't you know…acquaint themselves with the provisions of these policies… you know…even the grievance procedure… or a grievance process…there won't be any compliance…because with the grievance procedure we have all these time frames to say if I am aggrieved…then I present my grievance in writing you

know…and there are with time frames…and you find that if you have a person up there who is ignorant of all these procedures, the grievance is meaningless…it won't help… people use their own personal vendettas to come up with outcomes that might not be conducive to service delivery within the Department of Defence".

Lamborghini (16 November 2020) added that:

"You can follow grievance procedure wherein you can have an appointment with the Director and if they cannot sort it out for you…you can take it further…yes…so I am aware of that yah".

This is further supported by Audi (20 October 2020) said:

"…I think there is, they need to put a grievances first, after that the supervisor will see what the next step is thereafter, there are certain procedures to be followed. But mostly they advise us that we must firstly do this internally before we go outside. Which means, my supervisor and I need sit together so that I point out my dissatisfaction. If the dispute is not resolved between the employee and the supervisor the matter can be escalated to the next level which in this case is the Chief Director as my supervisor is a Director".

In the same way, Infiniti (26 October 2020) responded by saying:

"Any disputes about the nature of performance assessment, whether it relates to key responsibilities and methods of assessment between the members for example Deputy Director and Director shall be mediated by the Chief Director as the Chief Director is the next higher level of supervision. If this mediation fails, the dispute resolution procedures will apply".

However, Ferrari (21 October 2020) highlighted that the process is only on paper:

"In paper…they are… [laughs]…in paper…but in reality…in day to day work is not there…unless if you find people who are brave enough to take it…because the mechanism that are there is…if me and my supervisor are not agreeing to the score…when it goes to the monitoring review board…the performance monitoring board…they need to say…this is not signed…what is the problem? They need to appoint the person to go and do the investigation between me

and my supervisor…me as the subordinate I need to produce an evidence to say… I am scoring myself "5" for the fact that this is what I have, he needs to say…he is not deserving "5" because this is what he did not produce…that is evidence…and then the appointed person will take the decision, answers coming from us and take it to the board…should the board not reach the agreement…then that needs to go to our labour relations because it gets escalated to the dispute and grievance board…which falls under the labour relations. I think we have people who tend not to understand their rights when it comes to performance appraisal".

This sentiment is further supported by Nissan (18 November 2020) who said:

"I suppose …in paper there should be…there are mechanisms in paper…however…this comes in handy when…if you have meetings…because there is a place where you have to have meetings with your supervisor…that is catered for in the policy…but …implementation of that is not feasible…because that never happens…is never the case…where if you are not happy you escalate your problems to your supervisor and if not resolved it must be taken up to the next higher level".

Mazda (17 November 2020) said:

"…the Department of Defence has some mechanisms put in place…I am speaking under correction now because I have never been through such a process where there were disputes and grievances. But how I understand the process is …the employer and the employee or the supervisor they sit together and if the employee is not satisfied with the mark that he get...he can on the comment space on the performance appraisal document write it…and then it goes to the moderating committee and there they can discuss it, if the outcomes there is still not satisfactory to the member… I think he can put it in writing and goes through the Human Resource process and employee has the legal right not to be discriminated against because he is not happy…he has the legal means to push it further…but I also think with the legal right he has…he has the responsibility to be able to prove his supervisor wrong…if the supervisor was also accusing him of …not doing his work".

Golf (22 October 2020) further agreed:

"I think it is there…you have to discuss it with your manager and then if…like…what I did…if your manager doesn't have a glue of what happened…you have to take it up with Human Resource…because Human Resource are the ones who are coordinating…so I think you have to take it through HR…that's when they can intervene because that's the process I used…because I didn't want to say the chairperson or whichever manager because I didn't know in entirety of what happened…so through Human Resource you can put your grievance. But I am not sure if the employees are aware that they can contest such things…because most of the time you will find that you receive your performance and they will say come and sign here for your final results…then you sign and you file it…so I don't know if is effective 100% or it still needs some work".

Bentley (20 October 2020) aggrieved said:

"…okay, when you get assessed for the first time you have the option to say that you are not happy, and at that point that same instance where I have an objection to a certain evaluation, you get a point where you can …object and it get evaluated to a higher level, but then eventually it get to the moderating committee where they decide yes or no whatever the case maybe. Then the moderating committee decides whether they agree or disagree with the evaluation. Now what happens is people are placed in the moderating committee that do not necessarily have an understanding of what they are doing, they do not have Human Resource background, and they are making decisions… and influencing people's careers by decisions. But as a Public Service and Administration Personnel member you're thrown into the Department of Defence…but the Department of Defence is not really catering for Public Service and Administration Personnel members ….and they ignore the grievance process… It's a joke to me…is an absolute joke…they do not comply to the regulations at all…silence… my experience. So you can understand the frustration of a grievance for Public Service and Administration Personnel member in our section… is either they try to swap it under the carpet or ignore it…so for me performance assessment...process you feel defeated… if you have a problem what do you do? Where do you turn to? Labour relations is part and parcel of the ignorance, they ignore us… they…you submit your

grievance… and then maybe six months later you find a letter that says that your grievance has been forwarded to the grievance board. Nothing ever comes out of the grievance process. It actually takes guards to take on the Department because civilian members are not taken seriously… the grievance process are being ignored or squashed especially for civilian personnel and labour is not assisting…and that is why performance assessment means nothing…employees are disgruntled".

4.5.5 Theme 5: Subjectivity

While participants are cognisant that a performance appraisal is a tool used to evaluate employees, performance based on the job profiles, to reward good performance and come up with interventions for bad performance, the process also has some challenges. Some of the participants view the process to be biased, inconsistently applied in the department and used for other reasons rather than its intended purpose.

To this end Honda (23 October 2020) has this to say:

"I don't think the system in the department is a fair system…because there are lot of gaps…there is no monitoring of the system…there is a lot of nepotism…there is a lot of favoritism…people who are doing the job are not being rewarded accordingly as per the system…the gaps that are there unfortunately they don't enjoy the benefits that is supposed to be performed by performance appraisal. Now, you find other cases whereby similar people are rewarded every year, time and again, and other people who are very sure that they are doing the job accordingly …but they don't get rewarded…so…in that instances, those people morale gets affected negatively and at the end of the day it affects the organization's objectives".

Similarly Ferrari (21 October 2020) agreed and said:

"The whole process…the whole performance appraisal system as it is…I think is more of favoritism, is not accurate and it doesn't even boost morale…it doesn't…cause I know…who is the favorite person that will get bonus each and every year…so…that's why you find other people who are just doing it…as long as they get their pay progression and…their salary…they are fine with that…they are not even looking for performance incentive…even though you

can see that this person is performing…but for the fact that he or she is disadvantaged in the unit or section…they don't even take it further".

Also, Diesel (21 October 2020) uttered that:

> *"In some cases you find that people are using it…for other devious purposes, for instance if they don't like somebody, then they will give tem low scores instead of being objective. Some people use it correctly and adds a lot of value, … other people use it for their own purposes to keep people down…and maybe other people give high scores to whom they like not necessarily that they perform well… we will always have that element of subjectivity".*

Bentley (20 October 2020) also agreed and expressed that:

> *"Is rather in my in my personal opinion being used as a punishment or a measuring stick, how to use against individuals, and is not just…is across the board…the whole department is doing that…is being used by individuals as a measure to victimize individuals, you are either my buddy or my bowl and if I like you I am gonna give you a good assessment, if I don't like you I am gonna nip pick…and is not a true reflection of adding value to the department or the directorates"*.

Furthermore, Eagle (21 October 2020) stated that:

> *"There is no justice in the system, just to start from the beginning about the injustices of the system".*

Correspondingly Chev (20 October 2020) stated that:

> *"Sometimes performance appraisal is used to seek revenge you know…they are used now to punish others".*

Lamborghini (16 November 2020) said that:

> *"Sometimes you don't get much … [laughs]…if you are not one of the lucky one"*.

Audi (20 October 2020) further said:

> *"Is like … there are lot of people whom we know that from year one until year six they always get performance bonus, is like there are others who own this, is*

for them, there are those special ones who always get bonuses, performance bonuses we know them year in year out, but we even if you perform is the same …it raises some eyebrows. This is affecting the morale badly, our morale is negatively affected…"

Mazda (17 November 2020) articulated that:

"…the gap that I foresee is that it may be very subjective…because a three…if the score is out of five… a three for you may be that you did your work and you did it good…so three is good…so I would say no…that is actually a four…so is a very subjective scoring mechanism…so … I know some supervisors could use this as a way to get you...I don't like you so I am gonna give you a two… that for me personalities may play a role… and scores…three for one person may not necessarily be a three for another person…subjectivity".

Kia (16 November 2020) emphasised and said:

"Okay…the main challenge here… [laughs]…I need to be honest here …biased and then discrimination as well".

Ferrari (21 October 2020) also agreed and said:

"…the fairness…the process on its own is not fair…the communication is not flowing…the understanding of the whole process…cause if I understand what is it that I need to do as the supervisor…it tends to be easy for the subordinate to understand what they need to do…so… lack of implementation plan if I may put it like that…silence…so those are the challenges that we have".

Nissan (18 November 2020) echoed that:

"There is mixed reactions about the performance appraisal because one would perform over and above but will not be recognized and then you find one that does not perform and that person get recognized and gets salary increase and promotion and that cause frustrations among people that are actually working. Managers are to blame because they are the ones who have favorites among a group of people…you know…and you find that certain people get bonuses yearly…throughout…incentives throughout…and those that are working and people knows that they are working never receives a cent…so it becomes

unbalanced…you talk performance appraisal people become angry…we do it every time but nothing happens…just a waste of time…the process is not objective is subjective in a way".

4.5.6 Theme 6: Inconsistency

There seems to be an agreement among participants that although the Department has a performance appraisal policy in place, the process is inconsistently applied.

Golf (22 October 2020) stated that:

"The fact that….there is no…what can I say?...there is no consistency…to say all the managers…this is how you are going to do this performance appraisal…you understand…which means…in the department as a whole there are other people who are going to gain because maybe the environment that they are in…maybe they are doing that rotation…you understand….and there are other people who are going to suffer because of the system that is being used… you understand".

Audi (20 October 2020) added that:

"…the main challenge which I feel is like there is no consistency and professionalism". Other sections or divisions have an idea of rotating, they say somebody got performance bonus this year, you can't get performance bonus from year one to year ten alone hence rotation so that everyone gets an opportunity".

Jeep (16 November 2020) agreed and said:

"*Another thing that kills the issue of performance appraisal in the Department is the issue of rotation…they will tell you that because it involves money it must rotate…rotation of the performance bonus…why must it rotate? Because if I am not performing why must I get performance bonus".*

Bentley (20 October 2020) articulated that:

"I just think that the fact that we have a dual system where Public Service and Administration Personnel and Military are boxed in one system becomes a problem… and sometimes the Human Resource… when is suites them they want to use the Public Service and Administration Personnel regulations and when is not

convenient they want to use the Defence regulations… especially when it comes to the whole performance assessment and the grievance process…so if there could have been a proper process that makes it clear when is Public Service and Administration Personnel related".

4.5.7 Theme 7: Absence of feedback

It appears that most of the participants agree that they do not receive feedback especially after the moderation committee, or if provided it is verbal communication which they feel is not professional. They would have preferred feedback to be written communication with facts because with verbal communication the message often gets distorted and loses its meaning.

This is asserted by Honda (23 October 2020) who said:

> *"You know what …the short answer to that question is that there is no feedback…if one wants feedback…you have to go to the system…and ask whoever has access to the system to check if you are maybe going to get a bonus or if you are going to get pay progression… but no feedback at all…even from the moderation committee there is nothing that you are going to get"*.

Ferrari (21 October 2020) emphasised:

> *"Okay…we hardly get feedback…if I may put it that way…me and my supervisor will sit down and do our agreement, our appraisal…and whatever that we agree on there is fine…when it get to the monitoring board…if they feel that …this is high…you need to take it down…or if they feel this is low you need take it up…you don't even get results…they will just change it and they require you to sign…so…the feedback on its own is not proper…the feedback it ends between you and your supervisor…but…going forth…you not getting feedback in terms of how did the monitoring board goes. Is just their board and it ends there, so there is no proper feedback …we end up making peace with all the wrongdoings that are happening in this environment… [laughs]. We honestly…honestly…end up making peace with the wrongdoings in this department"*.

Diesel (21 October 2020) agreed and said:

"The employee will first complete his part how he sees himself and how he scores himself, then the supervisor will do his/her part, then they are supposed to have one on one where they agree with the scores before is sent to the moderating committee, and after it has been moderated…feedback is supposed to be given to the employee again and he is supposed to sign that form in acknowledgement that he saw the new scores allocated if it has been changed. That is not happening as it should be especially after moderation".

Golf (22 October 2020) said:

"I don't think there is feedback…why I say so…because I said you first agree on what is expected of you…you work throughout the year…but no one will come and have that one-on-one meeting with you…to say yes…you are doing a good job or no…this area we can improve…or…as an environment as a whole this is where we are lacking…this is where we can improve…so in that sense I don't think there is feedback…again…after the final rating if your score has been improved or decreased…because you will never know…someone can say this person has performed…let's take up the score…there is no explanation to say…this key activity area…that's where they thought they improve and this is the activity area where you still have to do more…so I think…I think…there is no feedback".

Furthermore, Kia (16 November 2020) concurred:

"I have never got any feedback… no…we have never received any feedback coming from the moderation committee…the only time you see the feedback it will be the pay progression, that's the only feedback that we get…other than that there is no formal feedback from the moderation committee…of which I think is not fair".

Infiniti (26 October 2020) responded by saying:

"Lack of proper feedback, especially after the moderating committees".

Eagle (21 October 2020) agreed and said:

"I met with supervisor for the assessment, we agreed…she was happy…as the Director she took my appraisal for adjudication at the moderation committee

and…you know. I can say communication was there…she gave me feedback timeously…although when she came back from the moderating committee, I think I was despondent because the moderation committee down mark me…the moderating committee should have developed a developmental plan and you know a contingency to direct me where I failed and what I should do to get up to speed. You know…the feedback was very clear from my supervisor but the moderating committee feedback was not clear…and in fact it was verbal…by word of mouth which was not very professional because is my supervisor…she verbally deliver it. I was despondent, I was very disgruntled".

Chev (20 October 2020) indicated that:

"We do get feedback…but I have a problem where feedback is given verbally…according to my understanding it should be written… so that when I respond to that in terms of if I am not happy then I have to make a reference to whatever that is written to me you know".

However, Nissan (18 November 2020) said:

"You never know because it never happens… [laughs]…there is none. Is a one way tool...one way up…it never comes down…you sign, you submit is gone".

Mazda (17 November 2020) had this to say:

"I think it might differ depending on the level where you work…in the DoD……there is the right way of how is supposed to happen but the reality of how it happens is something else".

Audi (20 October 2020) indicated that:

"We don't get feedback from the moderating committee because they were supposed to indicate why they reduced our marks they don't even explain…that's the problem we don't get feedback not even a note explaining why we are reducing because of this and this and this. So for the sake of sanity, peace we just accept it we leave it like that cause is like the way things are done in this Division. I no longer complain, I don't put a grievance, I felt that … …somewhere, somehow is better to keep quiet and leave them like that…I felt

reluctant to create animosity unnecessary, I felt that anyway…if they reduce it as long as is not below average…I just felt that is okay".

Lamborghini (16 November 2020) confirmed and said:

"...you know what …usually there is nothing…usually after you fill in the forms, then the committee sits, then the committee decides…okay…this person can get a bonus…and that one…and this one...and that one…and usually you are not informed…you know that you gonna get a bonus or you didn't receive a bonus this year because we expect of you to do this…but is not there…they don't give us feedback like that…silence…. But to be honest it would be nice…if they can sort of give you feedback…but in our organization really there is not much".

Bentley (20 October 2020) further asserted that:

"… when we get feedback… the assessment basically is done …we are supposed to have half year assessment during October, but usually that is a very rushed process where quickly…quickly…we have to write something just to be on par with the schedule…then you get a quick assessment that sometimes doesn't make sense…but you just sign to get it done with whether it makes sense or nor just to get done over it then at the end of the year you get another assessment that you must comply with to say this is your assessment…then whatever gets through goes to the moderating committee…whatever the moderating committee accept…is been verbally communicated…you get a verbal communication back it would have been more helpful if there was a written feedback…if something is downgraded, why was it downgraded…gives a valid reason, a valid explanation because it creates confusion…especially when …you hear the rumours that you hear… so…it would have been helpful and I am speaking not only of my experience the negative experience… I am talking about across the board… so a written feedback to an employee irrespective of negative of positive would have been appropriate".

4.5.8 Theme 8: Monetary reward

There seems to be a consensus amongst the participants that the objective of performance appraisal is misunderstood by both employees and management as

being a financial reward, which shows the lack of understanding. This theme emanated from reconciling the participants' responses in trying to understand the other challenges experienced with the management of civilian employees performance appraisal process.

Honda (23 October 2020) had this to say:

> *"I think the employees would have understood the objective of this system…but now they don't understand…everybody here thinks that this system is actually for rewarding…you get what I am saying. This system is being utilised for wrong reasons…which is financial rewards… and that's not supposed to be like that. I think management created perception that, this system is for financial reward, now…the employees adopted that and they ran with it…which is wrong. According to me the system is not working at all because it even affect the morale of the employees…you can just imagine if that happens the productivity of the organisation gets affected"*.

This is further affirmed by Jeep (16 November 2020) who said:

> *"We don't look at it as something that's gonna build us as employees or something that's gonna help us outgrow the levels where we are in our careers …we see it as bonus, money and of which it must not be like that…we must see it as something that is gonna help us shape our careers …and help us to be something else tomorrow without looking at it as this thing if they score you like this you gonna end up getting a pay…performance bonus…something like that…so…I think the issue of money is what is the challenge"*.

Diesel (21 October 2020) affirmed:

> *"Is the thing about coupling monetary value to the performance appraisal…causing people to score themselves higher in order to get performance bonus…instead of being objective. …they are looking at the monetary outcome… they score themselves straight through on the highest mark"*.

Also, Kia (16 November 2020) said:

"Remember the purpose is to review employees' performance…remember when I am here…I am here to help the Department of Defence to achieve its mandate, its objectives that's the reason why I am here…and with the appraisals the intention was not for money…but the people are using it for money…they are no longer using it to help the organisation to achieve its mandate".

Golf (22 October 2020) articulated that:

"I *think that the mistake that was done …is to link the performance appraisal with money…that's the biggest mistake we made…why?... because now we are no longer putting our minds when we do the appraisals… you understand….is a matter of "I want money" … and even when the managers are assessing they can still say…because I favour X…. I am going to give X because I like her regardless of other members who are performing… so I feel like that linking performance appraisal with money is not a good approach"*.

4.5.9 Theme 9: Lack of involvement by Human Resource Management

Some participants are of the view that enormous challenges experienced with the performance appraisal process is due to Human Resources not participating adequately as the key drivers of the process.

Bentley (20 October 2020) had this to say:

"*Human Resources is not involved like they are supposed to, Human Resource not assisting the managers… I am speaking up to the highest level, a moderating committee where I feel Human Resource should be part and not Chief Directors, if the moderating committee is sitting, the chair should not be the Chief Director it should be someone like an Human Resource professional that knows what is about…silence… because is about performance and is supposed to be related to the Human Resource and performance as an individual, it should not be…a divisional…silence…this is where …sorry…where victimisation comes in and personal issues and egos comes in, that is one of the challenges how I see it personally…Human Resource is not involved enough"*.

This is further supported by Golf (22 October 2020) who said:

"I feel like Human Resource is not doing more in order to protect or to educate the employees to say…performance appraisal is not about money…but is about…improving the employee, improving the working environment…you understand…that is where you are able to identify the gaps…checking if your environment as a whole are you meeting the expectations…you understand…if you are not…what is it that you are supposed to do…but what we are looking at now is money…that's the challenge that I feel that Human Resource should also play a part…maybe they should do workshops…training…just to remind everyone to say…this is not about money…is about the development of the person…is about improving the environment…because Human Resource the only part where they get involved is at the end of the year for the performance bonus…which is not entirely the purpose…because now is like we are focusing on the money…than the objective of why we have the performance assessment".

4.5.10 Theme 10: Lack of knowledge by managers

Another theme that came out is the lack of knowledge by managers to conduct performance appraisal.

Golf (22 October 2020) had this to say:

"I feel that there is more that Human Resource still needs to do…maybe in terms of educating management on what is the purpose of performance appraisal…because the way I see it…managers they are not entirely involved in this performance appraisal…why I say so? Is because…yes you will have your agreement with your manager to say this is what is expected of you".

Bentley (20 October 2020) articulated that:

"Performance appraisal is not done the way is supposed to be done in all honesty. I think it is a combination of either is purposely ignorance, incompetence, is a little bit of all of that… a mixture… because in a way some of the managers don't really know how to do the assessment, the Human Resource is not very forthcoming with the information. Human Resource is not keeping up with that, so you are left with managers that doesn't understand what to do with the process, you are left with Human Resource that doesn't communicate with the manager, then you have got managers that have got

personal issues on their own… you have got levels …of the whole performance programme that is not efficient or sufficient…so no…I don't think is working at all".

Chev (20 October 2020) concurred and said that:

"I think to some extent is ignorance because once you are put in a position…you need to acquaint yourself with necessary policies…you know…because that will serve as a guidance".

Ferrari (21 October 2020) expressed that:

"The training for performance appraisals should be starting from the Chief Directors going down …up until level eight…I think that will be fair…and…we can maintain continuity from there".

4.5.11 Theme 11: Lack of support from top management

Management plays a critical role in any organisation to ensure that goals are achieved, however, some participants feel that management is not supporting the performance appraisal process as they should which has left many employees unhappy.

Honda (23 October 2020) despondent said:

"…you know this performance appraisal process is a frustrating exercise to tell the truth because there is no value add at the end of the day…you know you complete the document to say, this is where I want to be …but unfortunately you don't get support from either the management or the department…they don't necessarily use that document for your own benefit. As I said earlier is just for compliance as soon as the document is completed they take it to the cabinets, gather dust and they forget about it and then you start again the process again for the new financial year, so is not adding value…as I said is one exercise that one doesn't enjoy talking about…there is nothing else to say except to say… is not working and which is the truth".

Jeep (16 November 2020) added that:

"Management must be able to monitor what the subordinates are doing… so they don't do that because our management sometimes are very busy with

meetings but is like you are busy building someone else house whereas you don't renovate your house is what is happening in the Department. Management must be able to understand their subordinate duties… you know…don't just say the employee is managing the website but they don't know what is entailed… at least understand what that person is doing yes".

Additionally, Nissan (18 November 2020) concurred:

"*Management most of the time go to the meetings, you come out you sit, you are called for another meeting… as a result you end up not conducting those one-on-one interviews or one-on-one meetings with your subordinates as a supervisor or manager"*.

4.5.12 Theme 12: Motivated employees and higher morale

There appears to be an agreement amongst the participants that appropriate management of performance appraisal could bring about higher morale and motivated employees which in turn might increase productivity in the organisation.

Mazda (17 November 2020) said:

"It would motivate people to continue doing good work and to work hard…the morale will be higher if we see that your good work get rewarded. The level of satisfaction will increase and also that feeling of somebody sees you…what you are doing…recognition".

Similarly, Lamborghini (16 November 2020) expressed:

"Well… you will definitely have a higher morale, people would want to work…I would say a higher morale…people will be motivated to work…yes".

Also, Golf (22 October 2020) agreed and said:

"You will have the employees who are motivated...because they know that they know that the process is fair".

Kia (16 November 2020) stated that:

"*It will better the morale within the employees, like I have explained that, if I am not doing the things right and you correct me on time then I will improve, I will really know that I really deserve not to get "4" because I have done 1, 2, and 3.*

It will give me the motivation to wake up every morning looking forward to work".

Ferrari (21 October 2020) articulated that:

"There will be higher morality… and you will have a happy staff… is a happy environment. So…should this be implemented correctly…the morale of people will be very high…when I got here when you say are you enjoying…I will say…definitely!!!We both laughed (hahahahaaa)".

4.5.13 Theme 13: Improved organisational performance

The participants seem to agree that appropriate management of performance appraisal could increase service delivery and bring about better productivity in the organisation.

Chev (20 October 2020) said:

"I think of importance is that …you know…with this performance appraisal…if they are managed better…that will improve service delivery…you know".

By the same token Ferrari (21 October 2020) articulated that:

"There will be higher productivity… and higher service delivery… and joyful environment which will create a higher productivity in the workplace… because I know that the institution is looking after me. I can even compromise my own time to serve the organization because I know that the organization is looking after me…they value my opinion…they value my hard work…they recognize me…they see it…but if they don't see it…and it doesn't have to be monetary…they don't have to give me money for me to be happy…I know it plays a biggest role in our country…but show me appreciation, value me".

Kia (16 November 2020) articulated:

"It will increase the performance of the organization as well and then it will increase my level of job satisfaction".

4.5.14 Theme 14: Training and development

Training and development also came out as another theme for appropriate management of performance appraisal.

Golf (22 October 2020) said:

> *"You will have employees who are trained, because those who are lacking will receive training…and then you will have an environment that is improving…and also meeting its expectations…so managing the performance appraisal properly, it will help the organization as a whole to improve"*.

In the same token Diesel (21 October 2020) asserted that:

> *"You will have skilled, competent workforce…where needs…training needs are identified timeously…and then people are happy because they are been managed properly…they feel they are been looked after….and you train them…they fit into the bigger organization and assist them to move up towards those positions… they get very angry if people are appointed in those position from outside, they feel that the actually deserve those positions"*.

Ferrari (21 October 2020) uttered that:

> *"In a working environment make me glad…regular workshops to understand the process…and take me to school, I don't have money to pay my fees…but take me to school…take me to training to empower me…take me to study tours that will teach me about the Department of Defence…equip me with skills, knowledge, it doesn't have to be necessarily a monetary value…if I am happy…if I don't get incentives at the end of the financial year but I know that I have benefited my Masters through study at state expense…I will be fine…if I know that there is this training that will enable me to do my work and you as my supervisor you allow that…is a bonus…tomorrow when I look at you…I will say …my supervisor is looking after me…my supervisor wants my development".*

Honda (23 October 2020) had this to say:

> *"Closing of gaps…career development of employees"*.

Kia (16 November 2020) agreed and said:

> *"It will also help me identify the areas I am lacking and then it will improve the performance as well".*

Chev (20 October 2020) put emphasised and expressed:

> *"I think we need to have like…awareness campaigns for both the employees and the employer so to speak…so that we are on the same wavelength when it comes to this performance appraisal because you know… I can tell you a lot of people are mad…they are crazy about… so yah…training is very important…yes…for both the employee and the employer/supervisor/manager… once there is proper training…the implementation…you won't have problems when it comes to the implementation because everybody will be on the same wavelength".*

4.5.15 Theme 15: Withdrawal of financial rewards

It looks like some participants are of the opinion that financial rewards should be de-linked from the performance appraisal process as some employees receive preferential treatment from their supervisors and get performance bonuses every year. Participants communicated their thoughts below.

Bentley (20 October 2020) stated that:

> *"I personally feel that monetary bonuses should be scraped anyway … I don't feel that monetary bonuses should ever have played a role in the system at all. I have never felt in my life that monetary bonuses should have ever been a measurement…maybe I am an old school… but …being a performer should have been a goal from the beginning. So since the system is flawed at the moment, I don't see value at all…no…it doesn't add value"*.

She further suggested that other methods of incentives could be used to reward a person:

> *"Or there should be another way of giving credit to an individual, it shouldn't be with money…it could be with giving a person credit extra day of leave, or another way of acknowledgement…it doesn't have to be with money. That's my opinion…other people might differ…give a person a credit where is due…give a person acknowledgement to say well done, rather put another incentive in place"* (Bentley, 20 October 2020).

Golf (22 October 2020) further added that:

> *"I feel like you must de-link performance appraisal with money… because at the end of the day you want to improve your environment…you want to improve your organization…so put the money aside…you understand…check the performance of an employee…does this employee needs training. If the focus can be more on developmental and de-link the monetary reward from the process because the challenge is money…when they say performance…someone is thinking of money…that's the challenge…there won't be favouritism because now you have got work to do. This process is so frustrating"*.

Kia (16 November 2020) lamented that:

> *"This thing of performance bonuses it must be cancelled all together…people must know that we are not here for money. We mustn't see performance appraisal as money…we need to see performance appraisal as achieving the objectives of the organization". so the money should be scrapped out… and that's where the reality will come in… because, sometimes they will even give somebody who doesn't deserve to get performance bonus…that discrimination…or just because you like me…. even though I don't deserve it, but I get it…the real people that are doing the job…they don't get it…because they are not a favourite…favouritism… being biased"*.

She went ahead and proposed that other means can be employed to recognise good performance:

> *"You know what they can do instead of giving performance bonus money…they can make a nice certificate signed by the Minister saying we appreciate and then maybe buy me a watch or something that I can place somewhere…is something…is appreciation…is not that actual money that people (they) are looking for…yes….I think even giving the certificate I will be proud showing my kids…saying…you know I was a dedicated employee in my times…nice one with the frames…nice message coming from the Minister, signed by the Minister, is a token of appreciation…yes…"* (Kia, 16 November 2020).

Ferrari (21 October 2020) suggested that:

"*We can just scratch this performance appraisal because is not serving its purpose if it was for us to decide…we can just remove the incentive part from it because that's the problem…[laughs]…the process on its own is okay…but the money…because everyone wants that money without even looking at other things"*.

Diesel (21 October 2020) emphasised and said:

"De-link the monetary value from the performance appraisal…people must not complete these appraisal forms with the expectation that they gonna get the money…and you will find that they will be more objective and using the tool for what it was designed to do…the moment you bring the money in…[laughs]…you corrupt them…or not corrupt them as such but they will not be objective…honest. Developmental aspect of performance appraisal is not been taken into consideration…and is been overshadowed by the money thing…sometimes people can get angry because they are not on the right level of where they should be performing, so you mark them low with the aim of developing them and train them, but they see it as you are taking their money away from them…and then there's anger, there's conflict…which wouldn't be the case if the money wasn't there in the first place".

Infiniti (26 October 2020) had this to say:

"Provision of certificates, period of leave as additional appraisal incentive to be considered".

4.5.16 Theme 16: Automated performance appraisal system

Some participants felt that an automated system would be a fair presentation of their performance and had this to say.

Lamborghini (16 November 2020) uttered that:

"…you see is like our department is still in the old ages…I want to be managed…not micro-managed…I want to have a system where I can log into the system and say what I must do A, B, C, D, E activities that I have got or the areas are all linked to this…at the end of the day it can be cool if the system that measure you automatically and is not a person that measure your performance. Like an automated system...I would say then that is much fair

grade because maybe it might be more honest view of a person's performance…because how can one person measure another person's performance? Is exactly that thing that she doesn't like me I am not gonna get a good mark".

Nissan (18 November 2020) agreed and said:

"We are living in the Information Technology (IT) world where things are moving… [laughs]…the Department of Defence is the only department that still uses paper costly so…we generate paper every day. The 4th Industrial Revolution (IR) is key….if you go to other state institution like South African Revenue Service…you log on the system…it says this time you started working and when you locks off… it monitors how many people you see over that period of time…is their monitoring too…if you go on a smoking break…you press there stop it counts the time and the minutes that you left your desk…when you come back and you press start again then all those minutes and hours you spent away from your desk are calculated automatically and it gives you report at the end of the day to say…you had hundred people and this is the time you spent away from your desk and these are the number of people you helped out of 100…and…4th Industrial Revolution is the way to go. The Department of Defence must benchmark with other state institutions and move with times".

4.6 CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was on the presentation of the study findings whereby the researcher explored the civilian employees' perceptions of the management of performance appraisal in the Department of Defence. The researcher worked on a stable location to collect data which is Defence Head Quarters. A summary of the Department of Defence was discussed to give the reader an overview. Also, the schedule of interviews conducted as well as the participants' profile was presented. The study findings were presented in themes that emanated from interviews conducted, whereby transcribed data were analysed to come up with emergent themes. Sixteen themes emerged from the data collected amongst 15 participants who took part in this study. Participants' responses sought to provide answers to the research questions in this chapter.

Participants in this study perceive performance appraisal as a management tool used to evaluate employees' job performance and to provide feedback. However, judging from the tone and the themes that emerged from the research questions, it is evident that employees are disgruntled with the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence. Some participants think that managers use performance appraisal to punish those employees that are not preferred and give performance bonuses yearly to their preferences. Furthermore, the grievance process that is in place to deal with complaints is not assisting them as civilians are not taken seriously in the Department and their grievances are normally brushed off under the rug. Consequently, employees do not see any value in doing the performance appraisal because the process is full of nepotism, lacks objectivity and has left many employees resentful. The following chapter will deliberate on the interpretation of research findings.

5 CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented the findings in line with the method outlined in chapter three. The purpose of this study was for the researcher to understand how civilian employees perceive the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence. This was realised by conducting a qualitative case study using semi-structured interviews with 15 intentionally selected participants. Participants were selected from lower management and middle management only from various divisions within Defence Secretariat. So, this chapter focuses on the key findings of the study to address the research problem as outlined in chapter one. The analysis will be done in the form of themes that emerged during the data presentation.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this study will be analysed based on the themes that evolved in line with the conceptual framework. Also, the research objective which was: to explore civilian employees' perceptions of the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence will serve as the basis to unpack the findings. In answering the research questions the researcher could sense a lot of despair from the participants' responses regarding the management of the performance appraisal process.

5.2.1 Conceptual Framework

The researcher chose the goal-setting theory and feedback as the theoretical framework for this study. The goal-setting theory emphasises setting goals, providing feedback, giving intervention strategies for non-acceptable performance and provision of incentive for good performance. According to theory, it is important to set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound goals against which

employee performance can be assessed on given responsibilities. Therefore, supervisors should establish work plans together with employees at the beginning of the financial year with key performance areas against which employees' performance will be measured. Scholar suggests that allocating clear goals to employees motivate them to accomplish what is expected of them (Alharbi, 2018). The goal-setting theory also put much emphasis on employee development and feedback rather than monetary reward which the results of this study agree with. This agrees with the findings of this study where some participants stressed the issue of training and development as one of the key aspects that can be used to improve the performance appraisal process, which might also increase organisational performance. They further said, "it doesn't have to be monetary value but in a work environment, take me to school, equip me with skills and knowledge, empower me, take me to training" alluded Ferrari.

Also, the importance of feedback cannot be overemphasised as the literature suggests that the success of performance appraisal is rooted in appropriate feedback which is important for employee improvement (Bhurtel & Adhikari, 2016). Feedback assists employees to identify developmental areas that they must work on. As some participants indicated that they do not get feedback, it is therefore important that in the appraisal process the assessors should provide employees with constructive feedback. The answers received from the participants gave the researcher assurance in the theories selected.

5.1 UNDERSTANDING OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

The findings of this study indicate that participants understand what performance appraisal is. This understanding is confirmed by the responses they gave to the research questions that were asked. The first theme that emerged from the research findings indicated that participants understand performance appraisal as a management tool used to evaluate or review employees' job performance in the organisation in line with the key responsibility areas, providing feedback, identifying training needs to improve employees' performance, as well as rewarding good and outstanding performance. The participants' understanding of performance appraisal aligns with Grote's (2002) and Armstrong's (2006) concept of performance appraisal which proclaims that performance appraisal is an organised process that is used to improve the performance of the organisation by developing employees' performance.

This is achieved by establishing individual job description and objectives, identifying clear work expectations, providing feedback and training where needed (Hillman, Schwandt & Bartz, 1990). “Performance appraisal can be a very useful tool if used properly” highlighted Diesel. Although participants were aware of performance appraisal as a beneficial instrument to evaluate employees’ performance, the study found that some were of the view that the process was not properly managed, was done for compliance and still had implementation challenges.

5.2 MANAGEMENT OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

The participants also highlighted that performance appraisal is a formal process that is driven by Human Resource. It is a prescribed process whereby at the beginning of the financial year each manager/supervisor must sit with their subordinates to agree on the key performance areas for the financial year. The performance agreement must be in place which normally runs for twelve months (01 April to 31 March of the next year). The performance agreement and work plans must include all the key responsibility areas, with target dates as well as the employees’ development plan. Though according to the regulations, the supervisor is supposed to evaluate employees’ performance at the end of the quarter to check if they are performing according to the set standards.

The results revealed that while performance appraisal is a structured and formal way of evaluating employees’ performance, the way the process is done in the Department of Defence is for compliance to meet the submission date. The process is not well managed because is always rushed whereby the employees will be told to sign the forms without that proper one on one discussion of the employee progress with the supervisor. Ferrari said, “the process is on paper, but implementation is not well done”. Participants reiterated that they are just doing it for compliance and that the process is there but not being utilised fully and therefore does not serve its purpose of developing and empowering them.

5.3 MECHANISM PUT IN PLACE TO DEAL WITH DISPUTES AND GRIEVANCES

5.3.1 Grievance procedure

The findings revealed that almost all participants acknowledge that there is a formal grievance process that one can follow to deal with disputes and grievances regarding their performance appraisal. On this theme, Audi, Chev, Diesel, Eagle, Ferrari, Kia,

Infiniti and Mazda emphasised that the process is well detailed as an Instruction in the Department on how one should go about should they be aggrieved. Also, this is a public sector-wide policy on how one should go about when they want to put a grievance and with all the timelines on when the dispute should be finalised. It is a normal channel of command whereby when an employee does not agree with the scoring of their performance, they can write to the senior of their supervisor to complain and if not resolved it can be escalated further until the labour relations level. While the process is well documented, its practical application remains a challenge. Some participants believe that the process only exists on paper and its implementation never takes place because of the complexity of the Department of Defence.

Human Resource and labour relations fall within the military wing of the Department and as such implementation of public service regulations of which grievance process is one of them is normally ignored as mentioned by one participant. Bentley feels that the Department is military compliant, and civilians don't necessarily get the same treatment as military personnel especially when it comes to the grievance process. Although, the grievance process is in place participants don't think that is helpful as the process has left many employees frustrated. Also, the labour relations is not assisting as their last resort, employees often feel that they are failed by the system which leaves them disgruntled. They don't see the value in the labour relation process and just make peace with the way things are done.

5.4 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESSES

5.4.1 Subjectivity

The findings discovered that although performance appraisal is a tool used to assess employees' performance based on their job descriptions however the way that the process is applied by managers in the Department is not fair, is full of nepotism. Participants stated that the outcomes of performance appraisal are often not an accurate reflection of individuals' performance but depends on the relationship between the supervisor and the subordinate. Employees who are the preferences of the supervisors will get incentives in the form of a performance bonus every year while those who are hardworking and deserving but not favoured by the managers are not rewarded accordingly. This nepotism does not boost morale and hurt those

employees who are high performers and deserve to be rewarded affects the morale of high performing employees negatively which in turn affects the organisational objectives because once employee's morale is low they don't see value in putting more effort.

Chev, Diesel and Bentley highlighted that some supervisors use performance appraisal as a punishment against those employees that they don't like whereby they will give low scores instead of being objective and give high scores to those they like. This is in agreement with Reeves (2016) in Dauda (2018, p. 205) asserts that "practitioners who don't have faith in performance appraisal proclaim that performance appraisals are subject to the personal preferences of managers who use it to frustrate staff they do not like and skew their reports in favour of those they like". The findings are congruent with what the practitioners affirm. "In some cases, you will find that people are using it for other devious purposes, for instance if they don't like somebody, they will give them low scores instead of being objective" stated Diesel. Bentley agreed and said "Is rather in my personal opinion used as a punishment or a measuring stick, how to use against individuals. Is being used by individuals as a measure to victimise individuals". "Sometimes performance appraisal is used to seek revenge you know…they are used to punish others" declared Chev.

When performance appraisal is used for other deceitful purposes, it defeats its purpose and therefore employees might be demoralised to perform their tasks to the best of their abilities as they will see no worth in doing that. This favouritism makes the performance appraisal process lose its meaningful role in both the employee and organisational improvement. Some participants feel that performance appraisal is just a waste of time due to its subjectivity and they don't see any reason for doing it. Confirmation from previous studies demonstrates that preferential treatment diminishes the justice and trustworthiness of the performance appraisal process in the entire public sector institutions (Kellough & Nigro, 2002). This is in agreement with one Eagle's response who said, "there is no justice in the system".

5.4.2 Inconsistency

The findings had shown that although there is a prescribed procedure in place on how performance appraisal should be conducted, the process is not applied

consistently across the Department. Other participants indicated that when it comes to the issue of performance rewards, the standard practice differs from one Division to another. Some Divisions will use rotation on who gets a performance bonus in the current cycle. So, regardless of your performance whether you qualify to get a performance bonus or not, if the person who qualified to get performance rewards received it in the previous cycle, then it will move to the next one who did not get it so that everyone gets an equal opportunity. This system is not a true reflection of the employees' who are always striving to achieve their goals. Participants felt that performance appraisal is no longer based on merit but on money which dampens the morale for high performers because when it comes to incentives their efforts are not recognised. The process often leaves employees unhappy, and other participants think that the system does not add any value to them.

The inconsistency in the application of the legislation also was highlighted as another problem. So both the public service regulations and the military are applied depending on which one is favourable to the issue especially when it comes to performance assessment and grievance process. "The fact that the department has a dual system where civilians and military personnel are put in one system creates more problems especially when it comes to the grievance process" mourned Bentley. It could have been better if there was a clear process on how to handle civilians' issues and the soldiers to alleviate unnecessary disagreements.

5.4.3 Absence of feedback

Another theme that came out loud from the findings was that participants mutually agreed that they do not receive feedback, especially after the moderating committee had finalised the scores. However, some participants expressed that they do get feedback from their immediate supervisors but when their scores are reduced by the moderating committee nothing comes up to explain why they were reduced, moderating committee just change the scores without communicating. This is not a good practice in terms of the management of the performance appraisal process, because any changes to the employee's scores must be communicated and the affected individual must sign for that. On the same breadth, participants indicated that in the absence of feedback they just end up making peace with all the wrongdoings in the Department and accept whatever marks have been allocated. This utterance can be viewed as employees having lost confidence in the system,

cause if they know that there is a process that they can follow to register their dissatisfaction but just accepting the wrongdoings indicates loss of hope in the process.

On the other hand, some participants indicated that if they get feedback is normally verbally communicated which is not professional. They would have preferred feedback to be written with valid reasons why their scores have been downgraded if that is the case. “A written feedback whether negative or positive would have been appropriate” alluded Bentley. This statement agrees with the literature reviewed that supervisors should provide constructive and progressive feedback based on the outcomes to show the objectivity and transparency of the appraisal process (Bhurtel and Adhikari, 2016).

5.4.4 Monetary reward

According to the findings, Diesel and Golf highlighted that one of the main challenges is the linking of performance appraisal with money. As a result, employees are no longer objective when they score themselves during the annual assessment, they just want to make sure that their scores qualify them for performance bonus and pay progression. Put simple, performance appraisal is now seen as a money-making scheme. Also, Honda and Jeep believe that management created a wrong perception that performance appraisal is about financial reward and employees adopted that and ran with it. Because money is involved, the process tends to be biased in a way because even supervisors make sure that they give a high score to their cronies so that they get performance bonus and pay progression. This wrong practice ends up affecting the morale of those employees who are not the associates of the supervisors but performing well as they tend to be disadvantaged when it comes to financial rewards. Some participants indicated that employees do not see a performance appraisal as a tool that can help them to improve their performance and gives them career growth because the money has clouded the developmental aspect. The system is being utilised for financial rewards and not for the betterment of both employees and organisational growth.

5.4.5 Performance appraisal awareness workshops

The other issue highlighted by participants was the lack of involvement by Human Resource Management as the key drivers of the performance appraisal process. The

findings indicated that Bentley and Golf are of the view that Human Resource Management is not doing enough to educate management and employees about the performance appraisal. They are of the view that some managers do not know how to conduct the assessments and Human Resource is not forthcoming to assist. There is usually a misunderstanding between the employees and the managers which normally end up in unnecessary conflicts. The findings indicated that the only time when human resource comes into the picture is at the end of the performance cycle when rewards are being finalised which is not assisting. Participants suggested that Human Resource should conduct workshops to train both the employees and managers under one room so that they have a common understanding. Regular workshops especially before the beginning of the performance cycle to remind both employees and supervisors about the performance appraisal process and its purpose before contracting might assist in alleviating a lot of complaints. Irrespective of how well the process is well designed if the implementers are not adequately skilled, challenges will always be there.

5.4.6 Lack of support from top management

The other concern that was raised by participants is the lack of support by top management. Honda, Jeep and Nissan believe that managers are not involved in all stages of the performance appraisal process. Once the performance contract is signed at the beginning of the performance cycle, nothing happens during the year, there is no monitoring until the end of the performance cycle where you are told to sign the final assessment. Participants argue that management should be able to monitor the subordinates' work as outlined in the job description, but that is not happening. Participants emphasise that management is always busy in the meetings and as a result, they do not conduct the performance reviews meetings as scheduled until the end of the performance cycle. At the end of the performance cycle, employees are told to sign the assessment forms which is not the proper way of conducting a performance appraisal. Participants believe that management is not committed to the process and performance appraisal, the process is only done for malicious compliance with the policy, which is frustrating employees as they have to go through the same process every year. Managers need to ensure that employees perform optimally in case gaps are identified during the performance process proper

interventions are taken. As a result, management should monitor employees' performance continuously to identify any shortcomings and remedies.

5.5 BENEFITS OF APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

5.5.1 Motivated employees and higher morale

The results also revealed that Mazda, Lamborghini, Golf, Kia and Ferrari believe that if performance appraisal is managed or implemented properly, there could be higher morale and motivation amongst employees which might increase organisational output. Also, the findings indicated that the level of job satisfaction will rise if employees realise that their good work is being recognised and valued. The other issue is that employees will be happy and motivated to wake up every morning looking forward to going to work. Participants indicated that once employees are happy, and the working environment is a joyful place to be then the workplace turns into higher productivity. Similarly, when employees are glad, they will be motivated to perform their duties exceptionally well which in turn will enable them to achieve organisational goals. It will enhance staff development and assist in achieving organisational objectives. Participants emphasised that they should be appreciated and valued for their efforts by the Department as they are the engine through which the organisational goals are achieved.

5.5.2 Training and development

The other issue that came about was that when performance appraisal is appropriately managed, it will enhance employee development and assist the organisation to improve holistically. Training is an important aspect to develop the employees' skill to have a competitive advantage in the employment market and career advancement. Golf, Diesel, Ferrari, Honda, Kia and Chev feel that training helps to identify the arrears where they are lacking to close the gaps as a result the organisation will have a skilled and competent workforce. Training and development is a key aspect of the performance appraisal process to improve employees' performance. Most of the participants asserted that in a working environment regular workshops, training and study tours are necessary to empower them so that they can perform better.

Both employees and the supervisors should be trained so that they are both on the same level of understanding the whole performance appraisal process suggested by one participant. Once everyone is properly trained, the organisation will have a competent workforce to deliver on organisational goals. Also, empowering employees will give them a sense of fulfilment that the Department is taking good care of their personal development. Training and development are much better than financial incentives as development can give an employee better career prospects, while money has a temporary fulfilment. The Department must ensure that every individual has an equal opportunity for training and skills improvement in line with the performance appraisal policy.

5.6 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

5.6.1 Withdrawal of financial rewards

It is evident from the findings that Bentley, Golf, Kia, Ferrari, Diesel and Infiniti are of the view that financial rewards should be cancelled from the performance appraisal process as the objective of performance appraisal has now been reduced to money. According to the responses, participants indicated that other employees receive preferential treatment from their supervisors and therefore get a performance bonus every year while the deserving individuals don't get rewarded. By the same token, participants expressed that monetary reward should have not formed part of the appraisal process instead other methods should have been put in place such as giving a person a day off, acknowledgement, provision of certificates signed by the Minister. These are other forms of appreciation but not money but recognising a person makes them feel worth and celebrated by their employer.

The other issue that came up was to de-link monetary value from the performance appraisal. The participants indicated that the process on its own is good but because everyone wants money the appraisal process end up not being objective. The tool is not being used for its intended purpose, the developmental aspect is overshadowed by money and people are no longer objective when they complete the appraisal forms. Other participant emphasised that more focus should be placed on skills development to check if the employees need training and come up with intervention. Therefore, the Department should come up with other innovative methods to appreciate the good and excellent performance that will motivate employees to even go the extra mile.

5.6.2 Automated performance appraisal system

The findings revealed that Lamborghini and Nissan believe that an electronic system can be a solution to the problems encountered. With minimal human interference, the presentation of their performance outcome might be impartial. The participants argue that the world is living in the Information Technology space and the Department of Defence must move with times. An automated system will be effective because it will monitor each activity that an individual is performing and at the end of the day gives the productivity report. To implement such a system, the Department of Defence must benchmark with other state-owned institutions that have implemented an electronic performance assessment system. This might reduce the issue of human errors and biasedness.

5.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the analysis of the research findings was presented. Also, the answers to the research questions have been provided. The findings from the study have made it clear to understand the challenges experienced with the management of civilian employee's performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence. This assertion is based on the findings that have been analysed in line with the purpose statement as well as the literature reviewed. Some of the findings were backed by literature to support the participants' views. From the findings, there are perceptions from most of the participants that performance appraisal is not objective, a flawed process and very frustrating.

The next chapter provides a summary of conclusions as well as recommendations.

6 CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The earlier chapter presented the analysis of the study findings. The purpose of this study was for the researcher to understand how civilian employees perceive the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence. Thus, this chapter gives a summary of the research chapters as well as conclusions and recommendations on the study entirely.

The researcher has tried to realise this purpose by conducting a qualitative case study using semi-structured interviews with 15 purposely selected participants. Participants were selected from lower management and middle management only from various divisions within Defence Secretariat. Although the results discovered that there are proper policies and procedures in place regarding performance appraisal, there seem to be challenges of proper management and implementation of the process which has left most employees demoralised and unhappy. Issues such as nepotism, discrepancy, performance rewards, communication of performance appraisal outcomes and lack of knowledge by managers were highlighted as shortcomings impeding the appropriate management. Therefore, the Department must still attend to these issues for performance appraisal to achieve its intended purpose.

6.2 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter one provided an introduction and background to the research about the performance appraisal process. The objective of chapter one was to give the context and significance of the study. The concept of performance appraisal was explained to give the reader an understanding as well as how the performance appraisal is applied in various cultures both globally and locally. The chapter also provided the problem statement, the rationale for the study, research purpose which was to

explore civilian employees' perceptions of the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence. The research questions were also raised, the research objectives as well as the limitations. This chapter concluded by providing a framework of the entire research chapters to give the reader a preview of how the study will unfold.

Chapter two critically engaged the current literature on the topic of performance appraisal deemed to be appropriate for the research. The researcher attained this by synthesising prior studies conducted by various scholars which gave her a better understanding of the performance appraisal process and theoretical framework underpinning the study. The goal setting and feedback theory were studied to develop the conceptual framework. The literature reviewed defined performance appraisal according to different researchers.

The purpose of performance appraisal was also discussed. The results revealed that there seems to be a misalignment between policy and practice which might be due to a lack of understanding by managers as well as subordinates. The purpose of performance appraisal includes both evaluation and development of employees. However, the findings suggest that the performance appraisal is focused mainly on evaluation which is about performance rewards while the developmental aspect is neglected.

Additionally, the literature review deliberated on employees' perceptions of performance appraisal process, performance appraisal process, advantages of proper management of performance appraisal, challenges experienced with the management of performance appraisal and mechanisms put in place to deal with performance appraisal grievances. A discussion on performance appraisal in the public sector concluded this chapter.

To realise the specified research objectives, chapter three provided the research methodology that was employed by the researcher to undertake the study. The methodology outlined the research paradigm, the approach, data collection method and the process of data analysis, addressed validity and reliability, limitations, feasibility, and positionality as well as ethical considerations.

The main purpose of chapter four was to give a presentation of the study findings which emanated from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the participants.

The chapter gave an overview of the Department of Defence. The schedule of interviews and participants profile was also presented. Themes were used to present the findings.

Chapter five analysed and discussed the research findings. Analysis and discussion were done in the form of themes that emerged during the presentation of research findings. The literature backed some of the findings to support validity. From the analysis of the findings, the researcher could clearly understand the employee's perceptions of the management of the performance appraisal process and the challenges encountered with the management of civilian employee's performance appraisals. Also, the mechanisms put in place to mitigate the disputes and grievances were taken into cognisant.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

Performance appraisal is one of the important instruments of Human Resource Management practice used in most institutions to assist to evaluate the employees' performance as well as to make the decision about the incentives and training interventions needed (Karu, Lapian & Tielung, 2018). Several scholars researched the performance appraisal system, however, not many studies focused on the employee's perceptions (Sharma et al., 2016). Kim and Holzer (2016) assert that to effectively use performance appraisal to achieve organisational goals, it is important to understand how employees' views the appraisal system. Lack of understanding by management might pose a challenge as any negative opinion might cause resistance to the process.

This study was conducted mainly because the researcher wanted to have an understanding of how civilian employees of the Department of Defence perceive the management of the performance appraisal process. As a result, a qualitative case study was undertaken to achieve that purpose. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the intentionally chosen participants located at the Department of Defence Head Quarters from different divisions. Participants were junior and middle management employees who have worked in the Department for a period of five years i.e., from 2014 to 2019 and more and who had experience with the performance appraisal process. The interviews were recorded using electronic devices, Samsung smartphone and the laptop as a backup. The data collected were

transcribed and thematically categorised for ease of analysis to get answers to the research questions below:

- How is civilian employees' performance appraisal process managed in the Department of Defence?
- How are civilian employees' grievances managed regarding the performance appraisal process?
- What challenges do civilian employees encounter with the management of the performance appraisal process in the Department of Defence?

The researcher critically analysed the data collected and the conclusions could be made based on what the findings revealed. Findings discovered that although most of the participants acknowledge performance appraisal as a formal process and a beneficial tool used by management to assess employees' job performance, reward excellent performance and identify training needs to develop employees' performance which is in harmony with the literature review. If used properly it can bring enormous change to the employees' performance and organisation. Conversely, participants' perceptions are that the process is not managed properly, done for compliance with the policy and have implementation challenges. The process is just on paper, but implementation is not done properly, as a result, it does not serve its developmental role. This statement agrees with the literature reviewed which affirms that regardless of the existing benefits of performance appraisal there seems to be a disjuncture between theory and practice (Kim & Holzer, 2016).

Similarly, the findings revealed that while performance appraisal is a valuable instrument utilised by management to evaluate employees' performance, the process is faced with numerous challenges. The process is seen to be subjective, inconsistently applied and lacks authenticity. The results of the appraisal process are usually not a true picture of individual performance because it is dependent on the relationship between the supervisor and employees. The participants are not happy about how performance incentives are paid. The favourites receive performance bonuses every year, while the disliked are being disadvantaged despite their performance warranting them to get financial rewards. Furthermore, performance appraisal is used as a penalty against the employees that are not preferred by the supervisors which have often left them dissatisfied and with diminished morale. This biased approach makes the process lose its significant role of authentically

evaluating employees and coming up with the interventions if employees are not performing according to the set standards. Performance appraisal should be conducted with caution and objectively due to its sensitive nature to employees.

Also, it is evident from the results that there is no proper feedback of the outcomes from the moderating committee or if provided it is normally verbally which is in contrast to the literature reviewed. The literature emphasised that supervisors should provide constructive feedback based on the results of the appraisal process to show the objectivity and transparency of the process. The absence of feedback might be due to a lack of knowledge by managers to effectively implement and manage performance appraisal. This requires Human Resource Development to conduct performance appraisal workshops. Both supervisors and employees should be empowered about the performance appraisal process which might mitigate the conflicts that normally arises between the supervisor and employees. The evidence also shows that top management does not support their employees and does not give employees performance the attention it deserves. Managers spent most of their times in meetings and do not review employee's performance as it should be, as a result, they must comply with the submission dates without critically engaging employees about their performance. Without an adequate commitment from top management, the employees don't see any value in doing the appraisals because they believe that top management should take the lead on the process.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that there is a formal grievance process in place that can be followed to lodge performance appraisal disputes. Although the process is acknowledged to be in place some view it to be just on paper its practical application and implementation is not realised due to the compound nature of the Department. The Department of Defence has both military and civilian workers, Labour relations dealing with grievances fall within the military which makes it difficult for civilian complaints to be resolved on time if ever they get to. Employees have given up on the grievance process as they feel that the system has failed them and there is no value in the labour relations process because nothing ever comes out of that.

Lastly, the results have validated the researcher's assumption that there might be several, socially constructed truths about how civilian employees perceive the

management of performance appraisals in the Department of Defence. The participants outlined how civilian employees' performance appraisal process is managed in the Department of Defence, the challenges experienced with the management of the process as well as the mechanisms put in place to deal with disputes and grievances. Therefore, it is concluded that employees view the process to be a significant process but not appropriately managed, as just a tick of a box and do not see any value in doing it. The process has left many workers aggrieved hence some of them have lodged a dispute. The research has attempted to achieve what it intended to do as outlined in chapter one.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings identified by the researcher on civilian employees' perceptions of the management of performance appraisals in the Department of Defence, the following recommendations are made to mitigate the challenges:

6.4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- The Department of Defence should apply the performance appraisal policy consistently in line with its intended purpose to reduce issues of partiality to make sure that Departmental goals are achieved.
- The Department of Defence should have different policies that deal with civilian issues and military issues. Using the same policies to handle military and civilian matters have proven not to be effective as the policies are more military inclined.
- The Department of Defence (Human Resource Development) should prioritise offering regular and detailed performance appraisal training and workshops to managers and employees so that they both have a common understanding of the objective of the process. The department must ensure that every employee gets an equal opportunity for training and skills development in line with the performance appraisal policy. During the workshops, Human Resource Development must extensively discuss performance appraisal.
- It is also recommended that Human Resource Development should form part of the performance appraisal moderating committee to make it certain that any misunderstanding by the committee members is addressed timely.

- Also, after the final moderation committee, Human Resource Development should provide detailed written feedback with appropriate documentation to employees so that employees get the outcomes of their performance.
- Both managers and employees should be trained on labour relations matters, this might enable them to handle conflict, disagreements and grievances professionally and resolve them amicably.
- The performance bonus should be cancelled from the performance appraisal process and other forms of incentives to be implemented, such as the provision of the appreciation certificate by the Minister and a day off from work in acknowledgement of good work.

- It is further recommended that the Department of Defence should benchmark with other state institutions and implement an automated performance appraisal system with the latest technology which might reduce human errors and biasedness.

6.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Research on performance appraisal has been done by various academics, nonetheless, there are still some arrears that still require to be explored. The researcher recommends the following:

- The research of similar nature could be undertaken in the Department of Defence focusing on another division outside of Defence Head Quarters that were not covered in this study with a bigger population to make the research more broadly. Also, the military component at Defence Head Quarters should be investigated as this study merely concentrated on civilian employees.
- Research can also be conducted in another government department to understand how employees experience the process to have a comprehensive view.
- Further, research can also be undertaken to understand the impact of subjectivity on appraisal results.
- Another area that can be discovered could be the effect of training and development on employees' performance.

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8 APPENDIXES

8.1 Appendix A: Participant information sheet

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Onkemetse Gopane and I am a Masters student in Management in the field of Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project. I am investigating the perceptions of performance appraisals amongst civilian employees of the Department of Defence under the supervision of Dr Poltera and Prof Van Nieuwkerk. This research project aims to explore civilian employees' perceptions of performance appraisal in the Department of Defence. To have a better understanding of how employees view the management of performance appraisal in the workplace.

As part of the project, I would like to invite you to participate in an interview. This activity will involve answering questions and will take approximately 45 minutes of your time. With your permission, I would also like to record the interview using a digital device. The recorded information will be transcribed and stored in a secured password protected device.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project. You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, and there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The interview will be completely confidential and anonymous as the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. Further, all responses will be de-identified in the report. I will be using a pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final research report. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any time in this process, we will stop the interview. Free counselling services contact number has been provided should you want to speak to a professional about your distress.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. The data collected from this research project will be stored in a password protected electronic device, known only by the researcher.

Thank you for taking part in this interview, please feel free to ask me any questions if you need further clarification. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the Wits School of Governance (WSG) Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) or my supervisor, Prof Van Nieuwkerk Poltera, email Anthoni.VanNieuwkerk@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely

Onkemetse Macphonia Gopane

Researcher name: Onkemetse Macphonia Gopane
Email: 1777248@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisor name: Prof Van Nieuwkerk
Email: Anthoni.VanNieuwkerk@wits.ac.za

8.2 Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Title of project: Exploring perceptions of performance appraisals amongst civilian employees of the Department of Defence

Name of researcher: Onkemetse Gopane

I, …….. agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

	(Please circle).	
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES	NO
I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being	YES	NO

obtained.

Counselling contact : 0861 322 322

…… (signature of participant)
…… (name of participant)
…… (date)

8.3 Appendix C: Interview schedule

1. What is your understanding of performance appraisal?

2. How is the performance appraisal process managed for civilian employees in the Department of Defence?

3. If employees are not satisfied with the results of the performance appraisal process, what mechanisms are put in place to deal with disputes and grievances?

4. How is the performance appraisal feedback process managed in the Department of Defence?

5. In your opinion, what are the main challenges experienced with the management of civilian employees performance appraisal process?

6. What are the benefits of appropriate management of the performance appraisal in the Department of Defence?

7. Based on your experience on how the performance appraisal process is managed in the Department, what do you suggest can be done to improve the process?

8. Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

Thank you for your participation.

8.4 Appendix D: Ethics Approval

Research Office:
Sithembile Xaba
Tel: 011 717 3133
Email: Sithembile.Xaba@wits.ac.za

Research Director:
Prof Pundy Pillay
Tel: 011 717 3501
Email: pundy.pillay@wits.ac.za

23 September 2020

Dear Ms Onkemetse Macphonia Gopane

Title: Perceptions of performance appraisals amongst civilian employees of the Department of Defence
Student Number: 1777248
Degree: Masters in Management in the field of Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation
Ethics Clearance Number: *WSG-2020-06*

All candidates must satisfy the University's ethical standards for research. Your ethics application has been received and reviewed by the Wits School of Governance Human Research Ethics Committee.

Your ethical clearance has been approved subject to you getting permission to conduct research from all sites where research is conducted. The letter(s) of permission to undertake research must be submitted to the WSG Research Office and kept on file with your final proposal and other ethics documents.

You may commence your data collection under the guidance of your supervisor. In the event that the

scope, methodology or nature of the research changes, you are required to submit another ethics application reflecting the changes.

The onus is on you as the candidate, with support from your supervisor, to ensure your research complies with university human research ethics policies and protocols at all stages of the research process.

It is recommended that you keep this letter in a safe place as you are responsible for ensuring you have proof of ethics clearance and have lodged the ethics clearance / protocol number with Faculty before final submission of your research report. If you do not have an ethics clearance number, you are not permitted to graduate.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely



Professor Pundy Pillay
Research Director

8.5 Appendix E: Approval to conduct research (Part one)

defence

Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Telephone: 012-355 5808
Facsimile: 012-355 5852
Enquiries: O.M. Gopane

Defence Secretariat
Financial Management Division
Private Bag X175
Pretoria
0001
September 2020

Dear Sir

Request for permission to conduct research in the Department of Defence: 88006341CA O.M.Gopane: Director Budgeting.

I am studying for a Masters of Management in the field of Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation at the University of Witwatersrand School of Governanace (WSG), Johannesburg. I am seeking permission to do research in the Department of Defence.

I am conducting research on "Perceptions of performance appraisals amongst civilian employees of the Department of Defence".The research will entail collecting data from purposively chosen participants in the Department to get their sense about performance appraisals. Face-to-face interviews will be used as a data collecting technique. Data will be collected by adhering to university human research ethics (non-medical) procedures. Ten participants both males and females will be selected to take part in this study. The interview will be conducted during working hours in English and at the most convenient time for participants. The interview will run for approximately 45 minutes. A voice recording device will be used during the interview to ensure that any omitted information is properly recorded and transcribed.

Participants will be asked to give their written consent before the research begins. To ensure that the research will comply with the highest ethical standards are upheld, participants' responses will be treated confidentially, and pseudonyms will be used to protect their identity. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written

Request for permission to conduct research in the Department of Defence: 88006341CA O.M.Gopane: Director Budgeting.

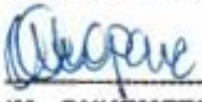
data resulting from the study. Public information currently in the public domain and which is publicly available on the Internet pertaining to the Department of Defence will be cited in the research. The results will be communicated in a dissertation.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study. All research data will be destroyed after three years of finishing the research.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research in the Department of Defence. The permission letter should be on the department's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely



(Ms ONKEMETSE MACPHONIA GOPANE)
DIRECTOR BUDGETING

Date 17 September 2020

Email address: 1777248@students.wits.ac.za
Contact number: 079 896 3235

Supervisors' details
Dr Jacqui Poltera and Prof Van Nieuwkerk
Email: Jacqui.poltera@wits.ac.za and Anthoni.VanNieuwkerk@wits.ac.za
Contact number: 011 717 3807

Request for permission to conduct research in the Department of Defence: 88006341CA O.M.Gopane: Director Budgeting.

SUPPORTED/ ~~NOT SUPPORTED~~

(Ms N. TYIBILIKA)
CHIEF DIRECTOR BUDGET MANAGEMENT

Date 2020/09/17

RECOMMENDED/ ~~NOT RECOMMENDED~~

Supported & Recommended

(MR E.S. SOKHELA)
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL

Date 22/09/2020

APPROVED/ ~~NOT APPROVED~~

94682440PE
BRIG GEN T.G. BALOYI

(MR J.M.NYEMBE)
CHIEF OF DEFENCE INTELLIGENCE: LIEUTENANT GENERAL

Date 13/10/2020

8.6 Appendix F: Approval to conduct research from (Part two)

defence intelligence
Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DI/DDS/R/202/3/7

Telephone: (012) 315-0660
Fax: (012) 326-3246
Enquiries: Col J. van Wyk

Defence Intelligence
Private Bag X337
Pretoria
0001
13 October 2020

AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE (DOD): MS O.M. GOPANE

1. A telephonic conversation between Ms O.M. Gopane of the Defence Secretariat Financial Management Division and WO1 K. Skweyiya of the Defence Intelligence (DI) on 25 September 2020, as well as a request letter dd 25 September 2020 with a Research Proposal attached as per requirement is acknowledged.

2. Permission is hereby granted from a security perspective to Ms O.M. *Gopane* to conduct research in the DOD on the topic entitled **"Perception of Performance Appraisal amongst Civilian Employees of the Department of Defence"**, as a precondition for an attainment of a Master's Degree in the field of Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation under the tutelage of the Wits School of Governance.

3. After the completion of the research, the final research product must be forwarded to Defence Intelligence (DI), Sub-Division Counter Intelligence (SDCI) for a final authorisation before it may be published or distributed to any entity outside the DOD.

4. Access to DOD information is however granted on condition that there is adherence to inter alia Section 104 of the Defence Act (Act 42 of 2002) pertaining to protection of DOD Classified Information and the consequences of noncompliance.

5. For your attention.

(T.G. BALOYI)
DIRECTOR DEPARTMENTAL SECURITY: BRIG GEN
KS/KS (Ms O.M. Gopane

DSTR

For Action

Chief Director Budget Management (Attention: Ms O.M. Gopane)

File: DI/DDS/R/202/3/7