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EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS AT THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT

By

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and 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 Management)

31 March 2014

ABSTRACT

Non Profit Organisations (NPOs) are not exempt from the demands of employee attraction, retention and motivation. As NPOs seek to sustain themselves, the need to manage the performance of employees will continue to be a critical human resource management issue.

Performance Appraisals (PAs) are used as tools that help manage the performance of employees; however, there is little understanding by those who participate in their use in NPOs. The purpose of this research is to explore how PAs are used at the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) and how the employees perceive their use. Using qualitative research methods, primary data was collected through interviews and document analysis.

The main findings of the research were that, the CEPD was unclear about its objectives for conducting PAs due to poor implementation of performance management systems and that, employees' perceive the performance appraisal process as ineffective and irrelevant. There are serious managerial implications for defining the process of conducting appraisals and these include; training, selection of appropriate tools and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the process.

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 and Development Management) to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

_____

Cynthia Moeng

31 March, 2014

DEDICATION

In honour of my late father, Andrew Mogotji Moeng,

and my late sister, Nkele Anna Moeng

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their contribution to this report.

- To Dr Horácio Zandamela in the preparation of this report, in offering skilled guidance and insight, for constantly nudging me to write, write and write through especially trying circumstances. Thank you.

- The Centre for Education and Policy Development (CEPD) chief executive officer for allowing me to conduct the research in his organisation and to staff for accommodating me to interview them in their often busy schedules, thank you.

- To staff at JET Education Services who supported and kept encouraging me, I thank you.

- To my family, those alive, those who have passed on and those in different parts of the world, I am the sum of all your investments; I am forever indebted to you.

- To my sisters Onias and Mapiet and my mom Lala, who kept the boat afloat, your love and support, have remained a constant in my life.

- To my daughters Thando and Letlhasedi, who bore my absence over weekends and late evenings, thank you for letting me borrow from our precious times together.

- To everyone who has meaningfully contributed to my life through encouragement, prayers, coaching, support, through challenging me to step out of my comfort zones and face my fears, many thanks.

To God be the Glory, to Whom belongs wisdom, honour and praise, for without You I am nothing.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BARS	Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
CIM	Critical Incident Method
EEM	Essay Evaluation Method
FRBOS	Forced Ranking and Behavioural Observation Skills Graphic Rating Scale
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
ISS	Interpretative Social Science
KRA	Key Result Area
KPA	Key Performance Area
MBO	Management By Objectives
NPOs	Non Profit Organisations
PA	Performance Appraisal
PCA	Paired Comparison Analysis
PfP	Pay for Performance
PM	Performance Management
PRM	Performance Ranking Method
REC	Research Ethics Committee
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Specific
WCM	Weighted Checklist Method
360° PA	360 degree Performance Appraisal

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal (PA) is often considered one of the most crucial human resource (HR) practices in organisations. PA has become an approach to link the HR activities of assessing, developing and rewarding employee performance with organisational strategy (Kuvaas, 2007). Organisations are in constant flux and as a result there is a need for organisations to adapt to an ever-changing environment in order to sustain themselves. The use of performance management systems and tools has become a permanent feature in most organisations. The performance appraisal (PA) is one amongst other tools that organisations are employing to manage their human resources and consequently their productivity. PAs are used extensively in workplaces in South Africa and elsewhere. Usually performance management tools are private sector tools, but with non-profit organisations (NPOs) contributing increasingly to the development of the countries in which they exist, there has been a need to provide standards and perimeters for measurement of work effectiveness delivered by NPOs in general and individuals working within them in particular.

Yap and Ferreira (2010) points out that NPOs represent a substantial proportion of the economy in developing societies and the NPO sector is growing. As a result of this growth process the issue of performance management becomes important due to competition for funding by donors and demands for accountability by stakeholders. NPOs are also exposed to global events such as the financial crisis and the shortage of resources due to changing economic conditions, which place additional pressure on

NPOs and thereby increase the need for greater efficiency and effectiveness on the use of the NPO's resources. Furthermore, NPOs need to show accountability to their various stakeholders. Unlike in the private sector where the stakeholders share the same interests, NPOs are often accountable to a broad range of stakeholders which may include funders, donors, volunteers and government beneficiaries. This responsibility to many stakeholders requires that NPOs must often meet differing needs and expectations. Furthermore, this characteristic of NPOs has significant implications for the PA process, in relation to how the organisation understands, designs and implements the process, how the PA tool is structured, who the stakeholders involved are in the appraisal and ultimately on how individuals in an organisation perceive the process.

This report therefore sheds light on the perceptions of employees of the PA process and how it is implemented at the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD).

1.2 BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Legislative context

The Non-Profit Organisations Act 71 of 1997 provides for the support of NPOs to improve and maintain good standards of governance, transparency and accountability, so that NPOs can better serve the needs of the South African population. Also included in this act is support for NPOs to establish regulatory and administrative frameworks in which they can conduct their work. The Codes of Good Practice for South African Non-profit Organisations (2001) similarly encourages NPOs to maintain high standards of practice in 'good governance' and 'effective management'. The need for NPOs to measure their progress and performance is emphasized. It is against this backdrop that NPOs have to adopt these guidelines in order manage and lead their organisations in

advancing the sector. The use of performance appraisals in NPOs is therefore not isolated from the broader government policy guidelines.

According to Azzone and Palermo (2011), the use of new managerial tools such as the PA is occurring within broad public sector changes. Based on the researcher's experience, NPOs conduct performance appraisals as part of their performance management systems. NPOs on the other hand face many challenges. Some of these include limited funding and accountability to multiple stakeholders; an example of the latter is where donor organisations, governments and beneficiaries each exert different leverage and power over an NPO. NPOs play a very important role in society both as support to government and as contributors to the economy (Greatbanks, Elkin and Manville, 2010).

In South Africa NPOs have greatly influenced the nature of modern society (Swilling and Russell, 2002). It is therefore critical that NPOs appraise themselves both as organisations and as service providers.

1.2.2. Performance appraisals in NPOs

The issue of PA in an NPO setting is not as simple and straightforward as it is in the private sector. Azzone and Palermo (2011) asserts that the effective adoption of the PA in the public sector is hard to achieve. In the private sector targets are often clear and measurable, while in the NPO sector this is not necessarily the case. Furthermore, the NPO sector uses a variety of employees or varied service delivery modes, such as volunteers and other community organisations. According to the researcher's observations these pose a challenge to the issue of PA especially when 'individuals' as opposed to 'teams' are being appraised by managers and when output as opposed to impact is being measured (Greatbanks, Elkin and Manville, 2010). On the other hand, the non-profit sector like the private sector requires employees who are willing and able

to take on the job and at the same time be sufficiently skilled and prepared to take up the responsibilities associated with their job.

While research has been conducted relating to performance management in the private sector, little has been investigated in relation to the individual perceptions of those involved in PA in the NPO setting and how this process is implemented (Yap and Ferreira, 2010). The researcher has no evidence of any research on PAs that might have taken place at the CEPD previously.

PAs are important, especially if they are located within a performance management system and where they are conducted properly in an NPO setting. This importance requires an improved understanding of the reasons that necessitate their implementation as well as how employees perceive them.

1.2.3 The CEPD as an NPO

This study focuses on the CEPD for the period including June 2012 to June 2013. The CEPD is an NPO that was established in 1993 with its main function being to develop education policies for a democratic South Africa. These policies were aimed at promoting the principles of non-racism, equity, democracy, quality education and life-long learning. In 1994 the CEPD produced the African National Congress' Policy Framework for Education and Training. Many of South Africa's education policies are based on this framework. The CEPD continues to do the same work albeit in line with the changed circumstances in the country and in the Centre itself.

The CEPD currently works not only with government but also in partnership with other non-governmental organisations and private consultancies. The CEPD provides the following services in the areas of

education and training, with particular emphasis on systemic issues relating to Schooling, Further Education and Training and Higher Education, Evaluation and Monitoring, Research, Policy Development and Policy Analysis, Project Management, Conference Organisation, Capacity Building and Grants Management. The CEPD has a performance management system within which it conducts performance appraisal on an annual basis; as a result the Centre fits the profile of the requirements of this study. The study therefore sought to explore the perceptions of the PA process held by employees of the CEPD.

1.2.4 Organisational structure at the CEPD

The CEPD is made up of two divisions: one division is for managing the Administration and Finances flowing in and out of the organisation, while the other is a Research division which handles the core of the work that CEPD is doing, including research, policy analysis and project management. The two divisions have their respective managers with staff assigned to each manager/division and the managers report to the director or chief executive officer. The Research division manager also fulfils the duties of the human resource function. CEPD has a staff complement of not more than twenty people including interns. The CEPD as an organisation is managed by a board of trustees, to whom the director reports. It should also be noted that the CEPD as an NPO has a number of donors and clients, both local and international.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Organisations conduct performance appraisals although those who employ them do not always fully understand their purpose**.** There are differing perceptions about the usefulness and relevance of performance appraisals and how they should be implemented. Although research has been conducted about PA in the private sector and that these are private

sector tools, little has been reported about their implementation as part of a performance management system in NPOs and about perceptions of employees on the use and relevance of these in NPOs (Greatbanks, Elkin and Manville, 2010).

NPOs are increasingly important in the South African society since they provide an extension to the work that is done by the government and the private sector. Furthermore, NPOs are also required to account to different stakeholders who often have different needs (Azzone and Palermo, 2011). This therefore requires a specialised kind of accountability which lends itself to the use of performance management tools. The study focuses on the CEPD between the period June 2012 to June 2013 as an NPO that is uniquely based in, and serves the South African population, functioning within its own performance management system with the PA as one of the tools it employs.

Prowse and Prowse (2009) states that the PA is a key tool that organisations use to make the most of their human resources, although it is not clear how PA in practice is used in NPOs. The study intends to explore how PAs are perceived by employees at CEPD as part of the organisation's performance management system.

1.4 PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this research is to explore how employees at the CEPD understand and perceive the implementation of the performance appraisal. The study intends to examine performance appraisals and how are they are implemented within a broad performance management system at the CEPD.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the objectives of the CEPD in conducting performance appraisals?
2. How is the performance appraisal process implemented at the CEPD?
3. How do employees perceive the performance appraisal process at the CEPD?

1.6 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The outline of the report is as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction:
This chapter provides a context for the research topic and provides background information.

Chapter Two: Literature Review:
This chapter focuses on the discourse around the use of PAs in NPOs and explores existing and new themes that arise from the discourse.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology:
This chapter focuses on the data collection methods that were used, the research approach, and sampling.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation:
This chapter presents the data that the researcher has collected from primary and secondary sources and demonstrates how the data is organised.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis:
The chapter provides an analysis of data collected and methods used.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations:

This chapter summarises conclusions on the findings of the research, lessons learnt and makes recommendations for future research on the topic.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The implementation of performance appraisal tools in the NPO sector has become a subject of much debate. The usefulness and relevance of such performance management tools continues to be debated by scholars and researchers. Literature shows that the issue of performance appraisals has gained popularity in organisations and while studies examining performance management and measurement have been conducted in the private sector, there has not been extensive research done into PAs in the NPO sector (Yap and Ferreira, 2010). It is in this context that this study is positioned to add to the body of knowledge regarding PAs in the NPO sector. The CEPD presents a set of circumstances which might be similar or different in certain aspects to other NPOs, particularly because the CEPD conducts performance appraisals. It would therefore be useful to assess how the employees of the CEPD understand and perceive the PA process. Although the literature covers many themes around PAs in NPOs, this literature review will focus on the following ten (10) themes;

2.2 Definition of Concepts
2.3 The Concept of Perceptions
2.4 Human Resource Management
2.5 The Purpose of Performance Appraisals
2.6 Performance Appraisal Types and Tools
2.7 Performance Appraisals within a Performance Management System
2.8 The Social Context in which PAs are conducted
2.9 Non-Profit Organisations
2.10 The use of Performance Appraisals in Non Profit Organisations

2.11 A Critique of the PA process in Non Profit organisations.

2.2 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

In order to enhance understanding of this research it is important to clarify some of the concepts used.

Non-Profit Organisations (NPO):

The term Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) is used interchangeably with Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). Swilling and Russell (2002) mentions some definitions from the Non-Profit Organisations Act of 1997; however, for purposes of this research, the following definition was selected:

> *A private/independent, voluntary self-governing, non-profit distributing association of persons established for the purposes of promoting wellbeing, circumstances or prospects of the public or addressing the concerns and issues that detrimentally affect the public.*

Performance Management (PM):

This is defined as follows:

> *PM is the process where steering of the organisation takes place through a systematic definition of mission, strategy of the organisation, making these measurable through critical success factors and key performance indicators, in order to be able to take corrective action to keep the organisation on track* (De Waal, Goedegebure and Geradts, 2011).

Performance Appraisal (PA):

According to Palaiologos, Papazekos and Panayotopoulou (2011),

> *The performance appraisal is a systematic process of identifying, observing, measuring, recording and developing the job relevant strengths and weaknesses of employees*.

2.3 THE CONCEPT OF PERCEPTION

This paper focuses on the issue of perceptions of employees towards the appraisal process. It is therefore important to discuss this concept in order to understand its relevance in the PA process. In psychology, the term perception refers to a process which involves the recognition and interpretation of information which registers on the senses (Rookes and Willson, 2005). Information can be interpreted in various ways, positively or negatively or both ways, and this interpretation of information determines how people perceive what they are observing. Perception is therefore an action that goes beyond sight, to how people make sense of occurrences.

Palaiologos, Papazekos and Panayotopoulou (2010) asserts that employee perceptions are important in determining the long term effectiveness of PA systems, which includes a PA process that is fair and consistent, and provides a link between the employee performance and organisational goals and satisfaction of employees. Similarly, Walsh and Fisher indicates that employees and managers may have differences in the perception of satisfaction with the appraisal process. Satisfaction of employees has been cited as important for organisations to reach their goals. They further emphasise that not only do managers and subordinates differ on what should constitute an effective PA process but they also differ on what causes the process to be ineffective. Appraisees believe that managers are the key to the success of the PA process if they plan properly, provide on-going feedback and provide better performance monitoring. They also found appraisals to be useful when managers were specific and focused, planned and well prepared and when they had more control over the process (Palaiologos, Papazekos and Panayotopoulou, 2010).

According to Prowse and Prowse (2011), subordinates view the PA process as being of no value because it is often undertaken by managers who lack the proper skills. Furthermore employees (both managers and subordinates) found the individual performance pay divisive and led to reduced willingness amongst subordinates to co-operate with their managers.

Kuvaas (2007) asserts that the implementation of objective HR activities may not be perceived as such by employees. Furthermore, he indicates that there are individual differences at play when these activities are implemented and administered. PAs are conducted by line managers (appraisers) with their subordinates. There are differences in relation to how each stakeholder experiences the appraisal process and consequently how they interpret and react to it. Shrivastava and Purang (2011) points out that the perceptions held about the PA process will affect employees' reactions. They also assert that procedures used to appraise performance and how performance related information is communicated plays an integral role in shaping employee satisfaction with the PA process. This is important to consider as an organisation's success depends on how productive its employees are and it is generally understood that satisfied employees are more productive than those who are unhappy or disgruntled. Perceptions are therefore important to understand as they shape how people will react, particularly to their work. As a researcher it is of interest to see how the perceived purpose of PAs at the CEPD contributes to worker commitment towards the organisation.

2.4 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

People are recognised as one of the most important resources of an organisation. It is also recognised that the management of human resources people must be appraised effectively (Venclova, 2013). The PA of employees is considered one of the most important ways of doing this

and thus forms an integral part of a Human Resource (HR) system (Fisher and Walsh, 2005; Kuvaas, 2007). The PA is therefore seen as a Human Resource Management (HRM) tool. It is argued that the appraisal is a process of on-going improvement in the quality of HR in an organisation. The understanding of HR processes and practices is important for this study because the results of PAs inform and are used as a basis for many HR decisions. Furthermore, organisations invest a large amount of time and resources on PA (Brown, Hyatt and Benson, 2010).

2.5 THE PURPOSE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

PAs are intended to measure an employee's performance while at the same time encouraging individual development and growth. According to Walsh and Fisher (2005), PAs are conducted for many reasons, with the most basic one being to improve employee performance. Schuler and Jackson (2006) argues that PAs enhance employee motivation and productivity, and that they facilitate change and strategic planning within an organisation while ensuring compliance and fair treatment for all those who are involved. They also assert that PAs are very important for evaluating the success of a change initiative in an organisation, for example a change initiative to attract more talent in the organisation. It is also indicated that PAs are useful for detecting organisational systemic deficiencies such as a need for training programmes.

Wilson (2002) notes that there is a general belief that PAs have a unifying purpose between the employer and employee and that they enhance employee motivation. Annual PAs are important as they make supervisors feel honest with their subordinates while making the latter know what is expected of them, highlighting their personal strengths and areas which need further development (MacNamara, 2010). Randell, in Prowse and Prowse (2009, p.70) argues that the purpose of PA is that of providing a

systematic evaluation of an individual's performance linked to workplace behaviour and/or specific criteria.

The purposes of PAs are as many as those who seek to understand them. Indeed there are differing purposes of PA as highlighted above. It is worth noting that most of the purposes mentioned view the PA as a powerful tool for managing human resources. There are references of PA as relationship builders between employers and employees; as maintaining organisational effectiveness, identifying developmental gaps and training needs. Some of the claims made about the purpose of PAs are questionable; for example, that the PA ensures fair treatment for all those involved and that PAs have a unifying purpose.

Conversely, Law (2007) sees the use of PA as serving as an external form of control which is ineffective and inefficient as they ignore system inadequacies which affect performance, and because they undermine teamwork and erode personal working relationships. The research therefore examines how employees perceive the PA process at the CEPD and how their perception shapes their reaction to their work.

2.6 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL TYPES AND TOOLS

An important issue in the discourse about PAs is the PA tools. According to Schuler and Jackson (2006), there are different types of PA tools, some electronic and others paper-based. They further make a distinction between 'Norm Referenced tools (which compare performance of the individual to others) and Absolute Standards Tool (which assess performance in relation to specified criteria and do not make comparisons among employees). The latter tools are criticized in that they lack clarity and definition.

Schuler and Jackson (2006) furthermore states that when the criteria are unclear and the rating accuracy is not enforced then a variety of errors can occur during the rating process. On the other hand, the rating is based on language that tends to polarize performance; for example, 'performance of an exceptional standard' and 'performance of an unacceptable level.' Brutus (2010) additionally states that PAs focus a lot on rating scales and too little on the narrative content; he further argues that there is a big difference between agreeing to performance related statements by ticking a box and writing a statement about someone's performance. It is also argued that these rating scales save time since the appraisal process is burdensome for the managers or appraisers.

There are various types of PA tools. Eleven of them are mentioned here, including the Critical Incident Method (CIM), Weighted Checklist Method (WCM), Paired Comparison Analysis (PCA), Graphic Rating Scale (GRS), Essay Evaluation Method (EEM), Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS), Performance Ranking Method (PRM), Management by Objectives (MBO), 360 Degree Performance Appraisal (360°PA), and Forced Ranking and Behavioural Observation Skills (FRBOS). Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages. For purposes of this paper the focus is on three somewhat popular tools of the PA, including the GRS, BARS and MBO (HR Management, 2010).

2.6.1 The Graphic Rating Scale

The Graphic Rating Scale (GRS) tool is considered the oldest and most popular tool for assessing an employees' performance. In this style of PA, management does checks on the performance of their staff in relation to the quantity of work, quality of work and their attitude. The system also uses rating scales, for example, unsatisfactory, fair, good, or outstanding. The advantage with this tool is that it is less time consuming and allows for quantitative comparison; the disadvantage is that different managers can

use the same graphic scale in different ways, thus the validity of this tool is questionable (HR Management, 2010).

2.6.2 The Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS)

This PA tool is based on rating behaviours or sets of indicators to determine effectiveness or ineffectiveness of work performance, where each behaviour or indicator can be rated extremely poor, poor, average, below average, above average, good and extremely good. This tool is described as effective, although the disadvantage is the measurement of abstract concepts such as “good” (HR Management, 2010).

2.6.3 Management by Objectives

Management By Objectives (MBO) is described as a PA tool in which managers and employees set a list of objectives and make assessments of employees’ performances on a regular basis and provide rewards based on the achievement of results. Objectives are classified as corporate objectives, functional objectives, and individual objectives, and these must satisfy the SMART conditions (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time Specific). The advantages of the MBO tool are that it is based on the assumption that the employee knows more than anyone else about their own capabilities and that it focuses more on the future than the past. The disadvantage is a failure to articulate between the three above objectives that renders the SMART conditions ineffective (HR Management, 2010).

Consequently it becomes clear the choice of suitable and appropriate PA tools is more complex in the NPO as compared to the private sector. In the latter, targets are clear and measurable; for example, if one is required to ‘sell X number of insurance packages by the end of each month’ this is relatively easy to measure as compared to ‘change the attitudes of

teachers towards the implementation of inclusive education,' since such a target is not easily measurable and it is somewhat complex to codify indicators for such a target. Furthermore, the targets might take longer to achieve than the PA cycle provides. It therefore becomes a challenge to design an appraisal tool which can capture both the quality and quantity of work delivered by NPOs.

2.7 PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS WITHIN A PMS

The competition for funds and demands for greater accountability by NPOs has raised the importance of performance management within NPOs (Yap and Ferreira, 2010). They assert that PM helps guide organisations towards achieving their vision, mission and goals. Yap and Ferreira (2010) mention a PM framework which was developed by Ferreira and Otley (2009). The framework identifies twelve themes of PM. The definition of PM stated earlier in this paper shows that PM is a function of the whole organisation as a system rather than individuals. However, it is also worth noting that PA exist within a defined PM system. The PM framework denotes three themes that relate to measurement of performance. The first theme focuses on the key performance measures which reflect on what the organisation has achieved and whether it is related to the organisation's strategy. The second theme focuses on setting PM targets. The third theme deals with the different types of evaluation activities to assess performance at the individual, group and organisation levels.

These three themes demonstrate that PA exists within a PM framework but also that the performance measurement aspects of this framework follow a particular system which involves reflection on the broad goals of the organisation, setting of targets, and assessment of each category of work organisation.

2.8 THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

Levy and Williams (2004) argues that an understanding of the social context in which appraisals are taking place is important in how respondents react and to the development of effective PA processes. The context refers to both the organisational structure and the culture. The structure refers to how work is organised within the different departments, line functions and designations whereas the organisational culture refers to the relationships between the members of a particular organisation. Similarly Walsh and Fisher (2005) argue that the relationship between the employee and manager or appraiser and appraisee creates a strong social context which impacts on the content of the PA and how the employee reacts. They point out that PAs that are conducted where the manager and employee have a good working relationship will provide a more participative experience than PA discussions where the employee and manager had a poor relationship.

2.9 NON PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

NPOs have contributed tremendously to the development of South Africa. Swilling and Russell (2002) track the development of NPOs in South Africa from during the days of repression until post-apartheid times. They observe that NPOs are expected by government to act as monitors of the 'public good,' and safeguard the interests of the disadvantaged. This role therefore requires that NPOs be transparent and accountable. The element of public good is thus central to the operation of an NPO although the public is not the sole role-player in the life of an NPO, and other role-players include the government and funders. The CEPD as an organisation therefore operates under the same set of circumstances where there is a broad range of stakeholders which include donors and clients, and this organisation has to account for its work within the context

of other competing agencies and demands while maintaining its own survival as an organisation.

Ebrahim and Raghan (2010) points out that NPOs are under increased observation to demonstrate their impact and improve their accountability to the public by providing detailed information on their operations, including methods used to evaluate the outcomes of programmes. It is under these types of circumstances that NPOs find themselves compelled to monitor their internal performance management and measurement systems. The Code of Good Practice for South African NPOs (2001) indicates that an NPO governing body should, amongst other things, measure its own performance using minimum criteria against which performance can be measured. The question then becomes what measures or tools are appropriate for use in the NPO Sector, and whether these can be applied as they are or be modified to suit the needs of NPOs.

2.10 USE OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TOOLS IN NPOs

It has been indicated elsewhere in this paper that PAs are performance management tools which are largely used in the private sector. The use of PAs in NPOs continues to be a contested subject; many researchers point out that PAs are historically private sector tools. Lloyd and De las Casas (2005) observes that more resources are being channelled into NPOs and as a result it has become imperative that NPOs are able to show accountability to their stakeholders. NPOs are under increasing pressure from government to demonstrate impact and accountability to the public so while this is the case the efficacy of applying the PA in NPOs is questioned (Greatbanks, Elkin and Geradts, 2002).

The financial audit procedures used in the private sector fail to capture the true value of activities within the non-profit sector. Yap and Ferreira (2010) similarly points out that the success of private organisations is generally

measured by financial measures which rely largely on profitability, whereas in NPOs success is understood by how much and how well services are being provided, and the latter is far more complex than calculating profits. Similarly, Greatbanks and Elkin (2002) observes that the Balanced Scorecard as a performance management tool has been adapted for use by NPOs but they report a general lack of understanding of this tool. The difficulty arises in measuring the intangible social aspects of NPOs.

Becker, Antuar and Everett (2011) warns against the importation of private sector performance management tools into NPOs without regard for the particular context of the NPOs. They also observe that while NPOs have recognized the need for their employees and volunteers in the delivery of services, managing their performance has been avoided by their managers.

Ebrahim and Rangan (2010) identifies two basic tensions which confront non-profit managers, first NPOs that focus on measuring results (inputs and outputs) risk being seen as failing to be accountable to their funders and citizens that they are making a difference. Secondly, for measurement to influence performance it requires explicit staff skills and organisational capacities ranging from research and analytical skills to processes for quality management, benchmarking and learning, yet the very same capacities are underfunded. They argue that these tensions point to a need for research on designing performance measures and systems when the problem of causality arises. Measures which will disaggregate causes as a result of the NPO's intervention and causes as a result of other variables, for example; eliminating crime is affected by a number of variables that cannot be easily disaggregated.

2.11 CRITIQUE OF PA PROCESS IN NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

Critics of the PA system refute the view that PAs will lead to improved performance and motivation. Law (2007) asserts that PAs represent an external form of control and as a result of this they are inefficient and ineffective. PAs are ineffective because they focus on individual performance and fail to consider system inadequacies which affect performance; and they are inefficient because they undermine teamwork and erode personal working relationships. Law (2007) further argues that in order to improve performance there needs to be a focus on internal control mechanisms. This is further emphasized by Armstrong (2006), who notes that the process of PA is largely seen as bureaucratic and as a means of exercising managerial control. He further points out that employees have resented the PA process because it is conducted by managers who lack the necessary skills and are only following protocol. On the other hand, managers resent it because it is time-consuming and seen as irrelevant.

Wilson (2002) makes an observation that research on PA shows that PAs are conducted outside the context in which they occur and writing about it is usually done from a managerial perspective, without paying attention to the views of those being appraised. She further argues that writing on the PA makes it appear as an objective process, but this ignores the context, impact and outcome of those who are involved in it. Wilson (2002) mentions a number of dilemmas involved in the appraisal process, namely that appraisals being used as power assertion tools, and may be influenced by gender issues or the relationships between appraiser and appraisee. Furthermore, appraisers manipulate and twist the appraisal for their own reasons; and they may use them as a source of power and regulation for the employee.

Wilson (2002) highlights that there are gender issues in the appraisal process, noting that research shows that women, as opposed to their male counterparts, tend to underestimate their own performance. The appraisal process therefore disadvantages women more than it does men. On the other hand, the closeness of the relationship between the appraiser and appraisee also influences the outcome of the process, since the more distant the worse the outcome and the more close the better the outcome. There is also a 'central tendency' issue where a manager rates all criteria in the middle rating point in order to avoid conflict.

Another challenge that continues to be debated in PAs is the issue of pay for performance. Prowse and Prowse (2009) indicates that employees become reluctant to confide their limitations if they perceive that their current performance might impact on their merit-related award or promotion.

2.12 SUMMARY

The literature review points to some key issues in the PA process. There is a growing discourse around the purpose of PAs and in the main PAs are seen as vital to measuring individual employee progress. In relation to personal growth and improved performance, it is yet to be established how employees perceive this process. Furthermore, the uniqueness of the NPO and the employee who functions within it requires that the PA process be contextualised, with special reference to tools that are appropriate for the NPO setting.

While accountability is imperative to stakeholders such as donors, the development of appropriate systems that respond to the requirements of the NPOs needs to be gradual and contextual. The PA process, on the other hand, should be viewed holistically as part of an organisation's total performance management system and all staff members in an

organisation need to see and understand this holistic approach. The use of PAs in NPOs is a complex issue, and while this literature review has argued about the implementation and other variables at play in the processes of conducting Pas, it is clear that there are more plausible reasons for employing PA processes. However, there needs to be a systematic development of appropriate tools and processes.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to fulfil the purpose it is intended for, or to answer questions or explain phenomena; the applied research methods in any particular study, have to be relevant and appropriate. This chapter will discuss elements of the research methodology which include the research approach, research design, data collection, primary data, secondary data and sampling methodology. The purpose statement explains that the research seeks to explore how employees at the CEPD, as an NPO, understand and perceive the implementation of PA processes in their organisation. The actual research examined the various practices which include policies, organisational strategy, PA tools/interviews and job descriptions, that inform the PA process among the different levels of employees at the CEPD, including the director; senior managers and junior staff.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Due to the qualitative nature of the study the researcher utilized the interpretative social science (ISS) approach. Neuman (2011) in his expansion of the ISS approach posits that the ISS studies meaningful social action, that is, action in which people attach subjective meaning. He explains that a researcher who employs this approach should understand a social actor's reasons and social context. Unlike the positivist approach which is able to operate independently of the social and cultural forces affecting human activity, the interpretive approach holds that social life is based on social interactions and socially constructed meaning (Neuman, 2011). Creswell (2003) confirms this by stating that qualitative research is fundamentally interpretative.

NPOs and the CEPD in particular, like other workplaces, has a number of social interactions, and among these good performance is regarded as of utmost importance. However, the context and reasons for the organisation's actions should be taken into account. As in other organisations various performance management tools are used and it is important to understand, for example, why the particular tool used at the CEPD was chosen above other tools and whether it is suitable for the particular needs of the organisation.

Of particular interest for the researcher is the use of PAs at the CEPD; the focus of this research is on how employees understand or give meaning to, and interpret, the process of PAs within the context of social interactions between managers and employees. The importance of following this approach is to explore how individuals understand the PA process, and their thoughts and feelings about how the PA process is implemented in their organisation.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This is an exploratory research which was done through the use of qualitative methods and in particular took the form of an in-depth case study of the CEPD as an NPO, what Yin (2009) defines as the "case" or "unit of analysis". A case study is relevant for use as this research addresses a descriptive or exploratory question, and also allows one to make direct observations and collect data from natural settings (Green, Camilli and Elmore, 2006, p.12). Similarly, Yin (2009) indicates that a researcher uses a case study in order to understand in depth a real-life phenomenon within its particular contextual conditions. In this case, the research undertaken at the CEPD was of an exploratory nature because it sought to understand at first-hand the perceptions of employees.

The research also employed triangulation as a method of collecting data. According to Neuman (2011), triangulation refers to observing something from multiple viewpoints. In this instance data was collected by means of interview schedules, whereby the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with three (3) senior managers, four (4) middle managers and three (3) junior staff members. It should be noted that the middle managers, even though they are professional staff, have no employees who report directly to them but they report to the divisional manager and so do the junior employees**.**

Two (2) types of questionnaires or interview schedules were constructed, one for senior and middle managers and one for junior employees. The reason for this design approach is that job responsibilities for managers differ from those of junior employees and also that managers play a role of appraiser during the PA process where junior employees are the being appraised. It is assumed that perceptions might differ as a result of the different roles.

This research followed a non-linear research path in the sense that the researcher continuously reflected on the research process. Neuman (2011) describes a non-linear research path as research that is cyclical and iterative, and the researcher continuously reflects on the data, asking analytical questions and writing memos throughout. The non-linear path that this research took was relevant as unexpected things which could not be foreseen by the researcher surfaced, as will be seen in the data presentation chapter. According to Tanggaard (2013), the role of the qualitative researcher is much more that of searching for associations between people and between people and things revealing themselves.

Neuman (2011, pp.152-153) notes that opportunities for being biased, dishonest and unethical exist in any research and maintains that both the qualitative and quantitative designs of research emphasize different ways

of ensuring honesty. He further notes that researcher integrity is central to qualitative research. Whereas quantitative researchers rely on objective measures the qualitative researcher emphasize the trustworthiness of the researcher as a parallel to objective measures. The design of this research followed a system of checking what other people were saying, looked for confirming evidence, and checking for internal consistency.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

According to Pandey (2009), there are two methods of collecting data from field-based studies; one is the quantitative approach which collects data by means of numerical terms; the other is the qualitative approach which gathers data on perceptions of people, contexts and processes involved in social activities. Data collected in this qualitative research comprised primary data, which included face-to-face interviews and document analysis. The data collected in this research was collected through observation, listening and taking notes; the latter was done through audio recordings and filed notes. Neuman (2011) indicates that these three activities are necessary and important in data collection.

3.4.1 Interviews

Primary data collected was by means of open-ended interviews through an interview schedule which the researcher constructed and administered face-to-face with the research respondents. An interview schedule is a set of questions read to the respondent by the interviewer, who also records the respondent's answers (Neuman, 2011). The research questions were largely open-ended as they were intended to elicit views and opinions from the employees (Creswell, 2009). The interview was useful for this research as the research sought to understand employees' perceptions without forcing them to take a particular position. According to Creswell (2009), this method also allows the researcher to control the line of questioning.

Furthermore, Brenner in Green, Camilli and Elmore (2006, p.357) states that, “the open-ended interview gives the respondent space to express meaning in his or her own words and to give direction to the interview process; as a result both the researcher and respondent are engaged in an on-going process of making meaning”. To further capture useful information, the researcher audiotaped the interviews and took interview notes. The researcher requested from each respondent permission to use the laptop recorder to audio-tape the interviews and explained to them that this was important for accurate capturing of data. Each of the research participants agreed to the recording of the interview. The researcher also informed and assured the respondents that the recordings would not be shared or distributed to any third parties including other CEPD staff members.

3. 4.2 Document analysis

The researcher planned to collect further data as outlined in Table 1 below. Green, Camilli and Elmore (2006) warns against relying on a narrow evidentiary base, and they advise that a researcher should use multiple sources of evidence. It was expected that document analysis would provide further evidence which would complement the interviews. The researcher therefore studied CEPD documents related to the study.

Table 1: Document Analysis

Document Type	Source	What to look for?	Question
PA tool PA records from preceding year of study (2011-2012)	HR Manager at CEPD	Appraisal tool Type of rating used Link to Job Description	What is the type of tool used in the PA process? What type of rating provided? Is there a clear link with the job description?
Job Description	Employees/ Respondents	Key performance areas(KPA)	Are the KPAs reflected in the PAs tool?
Annual Report Organisation's Mission and vision.	HR Manager	Strategic focus of the organisation	Does the Job Description and PA tool reflect in the organisation's strategy

3.4.3 Secondary Data

Different types of books and journal articles were used as part of the secondary data for this research.

3.4.4 Sampling

Qualitative researchers, unlike quantitative researchers, are concerned with finding cases that will enhance what a researcher learns about the process of social life in a specific context, whereas quantitative researchers are concerned with accuracy (Neuman, 2011, p.219). The researcher used the purposive sampling which is a qualitative sampling procedure. The rationale for using this type of sampling is that the

researcher is interested in deepening understanding about the process of how employees perceive PAs at the CEPD.

The reason for the type of sampling chosen was not to draw inferences but to explore and understand how people perceive and interpret the process of PAs. Initially the researcher intended to interview twelve (12) employees, that is; four (4) from each category, namely four (4) senior managers, four (4) middle managers and four (4) junior employees. However, the researcher interviewed ten (10) employees, three (3) senior managers as there are only three (3) senior managers at CEPD. There were also interviewed four (4) middle managers and three (3) junior staff. It is worth noting that junior staffs at CEPD include interns whom the researcher did not interview as they do not undergo PA processes. This was unforeseen as the researcher had assumed that the CEPD is a large organisation, and while this is true of its mandate, it employs not more than twenty employees including interns. This finding did not, however, jeopardise the quality of the data obtained.

The criterion for selection of employees was ideally to choose employees who had been permanently employed and have been with the organisation for two or more years. The rationale for this selection is that the PA processes happen at least twice a year at the CEPD and as such, interviewing newly appointed employees would not yield much information as they had not undergone appraisals or were still on probation.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The research took the form of qualitative data analysis. In contrast to quantitative methods in which the researcher begins the data analysis after collecting the data, a qualitative researcher starts looking for patterns and relationships while they are still collecting the data (Neuman, 2011). In qualitative data analysis the data is diffuse, context-based and can have

more than one meaning; furthermore, the researcher develops explanations or generalizations that are close to concrete data and contexts (Neuman, 2011, p.459).

The researcher conceptualized the data in order to make sense of it and organized data by means of structuring themes according to the existing literature review and adding new themes where necessary (Neuman, 2011, p.460). Thereafter the researcher read through all the data to obtain a general sense of what the respondents were saying and reflect on the meaning thereof. This process involved writing and recording general thoughts about the data.

The next step in the analysis of the data was the coding; this involved organising the data into segments and putting those segments into what Neuman (2011) terms, 'conceptual categories' and labelling those categories with a term. Coding is important for this study because it provides meaning for the different themes that were examined in the study. For example, themes included the 'appraisal process', 'PAs in an NPO' and the 'Appraisal Tool', amongst others. Following this step the next step presented themes by conveying descriptive information about respondents such as, for example, job currently employed in, length of service, whether they have ever been promoted in the duration of their employment, and the last step that of data interpretation. This step highlighted lessons learnt by the researcher and meaning derived from information gathered in the literature.

3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Dependability and authenticity comes from a range of data sources and measurement methods so that a balanced account of people's views is obtained (Neuman, 2011). According to Eisenhart in Green, Camilli and Elmore (2006), validity is the demonstration by a researcher that the data

they are reporting and interpretations they are making are accurate. Creswell (2009) observes that validity refers to checking accuracy and credibility of findings. Reliability on the other hand means dependability or consistency in the findings (Neuman, 2011; p.196); he further asserts that qualitative researchers want to be consistent but there is a challenge that they study processes that are not stable over time.

In order to address issues of validity and reliability, the researcher sourced primary data which consisted of interviews and document analysis data of internal CEPD documents, such as the HR Policy and the PA tool. These different data sources added to the validity of the study. Table One shows the various sources of data which complemented the interviews conducted with the CEPD employees. The researcher documented procedures of the case study and documented as many of the steps as possible, for example, planning for the interviews, the compilation of research documents (consent letters, interview schedules), process of collection of data, coding of data according to themes, sub-themes, writing and presentation of data. The researcher also ensured that there are no shifts in the meaning of the codes during the process of coding (Creswell, 2009)

3.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Research needs to be significant in order for it to be of any value to interested parties. Regardless of the growth and importance of NPOs as part of a sector that contributes to the development of society, research focusing on performance management practices is still lagging behind. The CEPD provides a useful case study as it is an important NPO in South Africa, its function within society is equally important and as a result its optimal function relies on its human resources as indicated elsewhere in this paper. It is deemed that this research will be of significance in particular to the CEPD and that it will reveal the existing understanding of the performance appraisal process, and an understanding of the CEPD's

objectives for using the PA. In general this research might assist in helping other NPOs in the evaluation and/or development of their present practices in PAs. The study is also significant for informing policy around performance management systems in NPOs. The research could also be important for examining, identifying and adapting PM systems which are relevant for the NPO sector, and fostering consensus about the purpose and necessity of PAs.

3.8 LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.8.1 Limitations

The research described in this report has several limitations. The main limitation is that the research concerns a case study in which only one organisation has been a subject of the investigation. It can therefore not be established if the results of this research can be applied to another organisation.

The research project would have been enhanced if all the documents for analysis were available. The researcher was only able to access a part of the performance management policy, which included a copy of the PA tool, the annual report and a sample job description. A completed PA tool for the period under review was not available at the time of this research.

It is also worth noting that the CEPD does not have an HR line function, and the presence of someone dedicated to the HR function would have assisted in sourcing of other relevant documentation. It would also have been useful to interview more employees at the CEPD, but the staff complement and nature of the work at the CEPD did not allow for this, since there were fewer staff members than the researcher had anticipated. There was not enough time to spend with the respondents to consolidate

the data received as most CEPD staff members do field work and thus access to them was limited to when they were at the central office.

The researcher, on the other hand, works for an NPO and has been involved in many appraisal processes and as such her own experiences could constitute bias in the research. The researcher was conscious of this fact and treated the NPO in question as a unique entity, with unique qualities both at the individual level of employees and the organisational level.

3.8.2 Ethical considerations

The institution at which the researcher is studying, like most other universities, requires that the researcher should seek ethical approval from the respondents before undertaking any research. Neuman (2011, p.129) warns that researchers need to prepare themselves and consider ethical concerns as they design a study so that sound ethical practice is built into the study. The ethics usually involve issues relating to confidentiality and seeking the informed consent of the respondents.

Macfarlane in Savin-Baden and Major (2010) argues that the issue of confidentiality stems from the belief by researchers that if subjects are not promised confidentiality then they would less likely want to participate in the study and also that respondents are perceived as vulnerable and less powerful than the researcher and as such need to be protected. He further argues that the research ethics committees (RECs) in institutions of learning, in seeking ethical approval are doing so because they want research to be predictable, linear and less risky, whereas qualitative research by its nature is non-linear, and more risky as the research parameters in dealing with human subjects tends to be less predictable. Furthermore, for some respondents, confidentiality is not always important because some respondents may even be more powerful than the

researcher and may have no problems of being named. The issue of gaining informed consent may also work in the opposite manner in that it can create suspicion, affect respondent responses and even make them unwilling to participate (Macfarlane in Savin-Baden, 2010). Macfarlane therefore proposes an alternative to seeking ethical approval and argues for a reframing of research ethics, since real research ethics consist of facing moral challenges in the field. Macfarlane proposes what he terms 'virtue ethics' which include courage, respectfulness, resoluteness, sincerity, humility and reflexivity.

Courage might be interpreted in different ways but generally relates to the researcher's bravery in challenging and questioning one's own beliefs and assumptions about the world. In some cases the research may be controversial and in extreme cases the researcher might risk professional or public vilification. Courage also refers to being free to admit when research does not go according to plan. Respectfulness involves respecting others including those who are vulnerable, and being aware of the temptation to take advantage of others and abuse organisational, social or intellectual power over others. Resoluteness on the other hand refers to being transparent about circumstances when the extent of data collection has been compromised from original intentions. Lastly, sincerity refers to ensuring that the results of research are not skewed to meet any particular stakeholder's needs or expectations, and that the results of the research are based on accurate data and being aware of the temptation to exaggerate or conceal results in order to gain some advantage, either materially or reputationally.

While the researcher agrees with Macfarlane's argument for virtue research ethics, especially in view of the research topic of PAs, the researcher deems these virtues as being indispensable in any research. Neuman (2011) points out that a researcher is ethically and morally obligated even when subjects are unaware of or unconcerned about

ethics; the researcher still adheres to the faculty requirements of confidentiality and consent, in terms of ethical considerations of the study.

The researcher observed this consideration through sending a letter to the CEPD with a supporting letter from the university faculty requesting permission to conduct the study. Also attached were copies of interview schedules and consent forms; the researcher did this to create transparency and accountability about the study. Respondents were informed of their right to anonymity. Respondents' identities were protected through the use of alphabet letters.

It was extremely important for the researcher to observe ethical issues relating to confidentiality because the topic under discussion was sensitive. Furthermore, there were power relationships among the employees (manager/subordinate) at the CEPD and a breach of confidentiality would affect working relationships among the employees on each side of the spectrum. The respondents' names in this study will therefore not be disclosed but they will be referred to as A_1, B_2, C_3 in order to preserve their anonymity. Copies of CEPD documents for analysis were requested from the CEPD while observing strict confidentiality, meaning these documents will never be published, shared or distributed to any third parties.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The data which will be presented here consists of primary and secondary data collected from the CEPD. The data was collected through the use of semi-structured interview schedules which the researcher compiled and administered to the respondents face-to-face. It should be mentioned that the collection of this data was somewhat difficult as research respondents were often not available for the interviews; this was partly due to the nature of their work which is largely taking place in the field. The researcher will integrate both the interview data and document analysis data as guided by the themes under discussion.

The data presentation in this chapter is informed by the initial research questions and these inform the themes that are presented. The main research questions are:

1. What are the objectives of the CEPD in conducting performance appraisals?
2. How is the performance appraisal process implemented at the CEPD?
3. How do employees perceive the performance appraisal process at the CEPD?

The data presentation follows from the problem statement and is guided by the five main themes of the research, which are as follows:

1. Understanding PA at the CEPD;
2. Performance Management at the CEPD;
3. Employee Perceptions of the PA Process at CEPD;

4. The PA Tool used at CEPD; and
5. Training of Managers in the PA Process.

4.2 PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Ten respondents were interviewed in total; of these, eight were female and two were male. The age of the respondents was not reflected as it was not considered a variable in the study. However, the number of years in which an employee was in the organisation was considered. Three senior employees of the CEPD had been with the organisation for ten years or more and all other employees had been with the organisation for more than two years.

The research respondents as indicated earlier were divided into three categories: senior managers including the chief executive officer (CEO) of the CEPD, professional staff/middle managers and junior staff. The interview schedule for the CEO, senior managers and professional staff/middle managers was similar and the schedule for the junior staff was different from those of the two other job categories. This is an important distinction as the roles and responsibilities of either employee in each category are varied. The interviews took place at the CEPD as this was easily accessible and feasible for both the research respondents and the researcher.

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the respondents by means of a semi-structured questionnaire and the interviews lasted 30, 45 and 60 minutes. All the interviews were recorded with permission from the respondents. The recorded interviews were transcribed in addition to the notes taken by the researcher during the interviews. Care was taken to assure the respondents that they would not be identifiable in the subsequent report and that the recorded material would on completion of the research be destroyed.

4.2.1 Understanding of Performance Appraisal process at CEPD

The understanding of the PA process was explored as this informs perception of the process. Both senior managers and junior staff had a similar understanding of the performance appraisal process. Their explanations of what PAs are included the following: *"Assessing where people are in terms of job deliverables, reviewing goals and considering good performance"*.[1]

One respondent referred to PAs as, "*A developmental, growth plotting process which involves setting targets and measuring performance".*[2]

Another respondent stated that the PA process, *"… is for monitoring progress on what needs to be done and identifying capacity development needs".*[3]

In addition, another respondent pointed out that, *"… the PA process provides support where employees might be experiencing difficulty in their work in order to grow and excel".*[4]

Furthermore, one respondent stated that the, *"PA process is a system that allows for reflection between the manager and employee to review performance against the period under review".*[5]

The following are the responses from interviewees in terms of the three (3) job categories of the employees interviewed at CEPD;

[1] Interview with research subject C_2 (13/09/2013)
[2] Interview with research subject D_3 (22/10/2013)
[3] Interview with research subject A_2 (22/10/2013)
[4] Interview with research subjects B_1 (03/09/2013), C_1 (13/09/2013)
[5] Interview with research subject D_2 (22/10/2013)

Junior Staff Members

One (1) staff member indicated that they understand PA as a way of monitoring progress and identifying capacity development needs of employees,[6] another respondent indicated that PA are used to see if one is achieving objectives as set out in their job description.[7] The other respondent indicated that PA were a system for ensuring that staff perform their jobs well and it is a process that involves both the manager and staff member.[8]

Middle Managers

On the other hand middle managers stated that the PA is a growth plotting process, where individuals set targets against which their performance would be measured, one (1) respondent indicated that PA involve processes whereby employees are supported and where identification of difficulty in achieving good performance are addressed in order to allow the individual to grow and excel in their job.[9] Another respondent indicated that PA processes are implemented in order to guide employees in building their careers and another said that the PA is a system that allows for reflection between manager and employee with a view to check performance against set objectives for the period under review.[10]

Senior Managers

Two (2) senior managers indicated that the PA is a system for assessing where people are at in terms of development in their jobs, they should be developmental in nature and that PAs are for reviewing and rewarding

[6] Interview with research subject A_2 (02/09/2013)
[7] Interview with research subject B_2 (03/09/2013)
[8] Interview with research subject C_1 (13/09/2013)
[9] Interview with research subject B_1 (03/09/2013)
[10] Interview with research subjects A_3 (02/09/2013) and D_2 (22/10/2013)

good performance.[11] One (1) respondent indicated that PAs are a monitoring of performance tool and that it is used for promoting staff who perform optimally.[12]

From the above responses it was clear that all the employees had a general understanding of the PA as a system of assessing, reviewing and reflecting on performance and that it is essentially developmental in nature, significant issues that arose out of these responses included, measurement of performance, capacity development, and career building among others.

Although the researcher did not ask a question about the origins of the PA, none of the respondents mentioned its origin, and all seemed to have a shared understanding of the process. It is worth noting that all respondents understood and could articulate the vision of their organisation, the CEPD, and they also understood how their jobs were a major variable in sharing that vision.

Conversely, when respondents were asked whether there was a link with the PA to the organisational strategy, respondents reported that there was no evident link between the two. One senior manager reported that there was, *"a disjuncture between the appraisal system and the organisation strategy until recently as the organisation had a strategic planning workshop where this matter was discussed".*[13]

4.2.2 Performance Management at CEPD[14]

[11] Interview with research subjects C_2 (13/09/2013) and D_1 (22/10/2013)
[12] Interview with research subject A_1 (02/09/2013)
[13] Interview with research subject D_1 (22/10/2013)
[14] Background information sourced from CEPD documents these include, PA tool, Job Descriptions, Annual Report 2010/11 and HR Policy

Secondary data was collected from documents which the CEPD kindly provided to the researcher. Documents received included the CEPD's annual report for 2010/2011, the performance appraisal policy, a PA tool and a sample job description. It should be noted that most employees at the CEPD could articulate the vision and mission of the organisation.

The CEPD has a performance management policy within which exists the PA. The policy clearly outlines processes to be followed with regard to appraisal of employees, both for newly appointed employees and existing employees. The PM policy addresses the entry appraisal process for newly employed employees and a bi-annual appraisal for existing employees; it also provides a copy of the assessment tool. The researcher did not see the entry appraisal for newly employed interviews and this was not necessary as the researcher excluded newly appointed employees from the sample, based on reasons mentioned earlier. The bi-annual appraisal tool confirms what was established from the interviews –that in practice PA usually takes place twice a year at the CEPD. It is worth noting that the CEPD has a policy for payment of performance bonuses (CEPD Performance Management Policy, 2004).

4.2.3 Employee perceptions of the PA process at CEPD

Human resources or employees are one of the most important resources in an organisation. An exploration of perceptions of employees of the appraisal system at CEPD was important in understanding the processes that take place during the PA process and essentially how employees perceive and interpret the process. Within this discussion would also emerge the purpose of conducting PAs at the CEPD.

The PA process at CEPD takes place twice a year, and at each cycle both the manager and the appraisee jointly develop performance objectives based on the employee's job description, since each employee has a job

description. At the conclusion of each cycle the manager makes an assessment of the employee based on the agreed objectives. Discussions with an employee are conducted in order to monitor work and determine whether a promotion is necessary. It is worth noting that the PA tool at the CEPD does not use a rating scale and is also not linked to pay.

When respondents were asked about their perception of PAs at the CEPD, six employees, including some senior managers, indicated that the PA process at the CEPD is an activity which is conducted for compliance purposes, and is flawed. Some respondents also indicated that it is irrelevant.[15] One respondent pointed out that, *"… the PA process at CEPD has no value as it does not assist one in mobility regarding career progression";*[16] another mentioned that, *"this PA process is time consuming and if given an opportunity I would not play any role in it".*[17] This observation confirms that a low quality PA experience can adversely affect the willingness of the employee to fully engage in a subsequent evaluation cycle. Similarly, two respondents indicated that they recognize that, *"the PA at CEPD is not done appropriately and as a result needs to be reviewed and that employees need to be incentivised for the sacrifices they make in working for CEPD".*[18]

One respondent reported that*, "there is no policy framework and as such the goals for PA are unclear".*[19] The same respondent suggested that the CEPD could hold bi-annual reflective meetings for addressing developmental issues relating to individual performance.

In contrast, two respondents indicated that, *"the PA process at CEPD was good*".[20] There were evident individual differences about how employees at

[15] Interview with research subjects B_1 (03/09/2013) C_1 (13/09/2013) and D_3 (22/10/13)
[16] Interview with research subject A_3 (02/09/2013)
[17] Interview with research subject A_1 (02/09/2013)
[18] Interview with research subject D_1 (02/09/2013)
[19] Interview with research subject C_2 (03/09/2013)
[20] Interview with research subjects B_2 (03/09/2013),D_3 (22/10/2013)

CEPD perceived PAs. The respondents who indicated that the PA was good had been promoted previously in the organisation. It was interesting to recognise that for respondents who have seen progression in the organisation, PAs were perceived as positive tools whereas for those respondents who felt they had not progressed, PAs hold no value.

Another important issue which emerged was that some managers see no need to appraise employees who do routine work as their job specifications never change. For example, people who are in finance whose job is to ensure that finances and accounting matters are in order cannot use the same tool as employees who do research work as this type of work changes as projects differ. Also of note was that, *"for these routine jobs there are no pathways for incentivising the employee through promotion unless someone leaves the organisation".*[21] Therefore the PA process was seen as ineffective.

In terms of the various job categories, of the three (3) junior staffs interviewed two (2) indicated that the PA process at CEPD was pointless and that it is only done as a routine.[22] One (1) respondent pointed out that if the PA is conducted but does not result in any reward given to employees, then it is pointless.[23]

Three (3) middle managers on the other hand, indicated that they were unclear as to what the purpose of PAs goals at CEPD is, and they deemed it irrelevant, unclear, poor, and flawed.[24] Only one (1) middle manager indicated that they saw the PA as a positive thing and indicated that the goals of the PA was for quality improvement of work and ensuring that

[21] Interview with research subject A_1 (02/09/2013)
[22] Interview with research subjects A_2 (02/09/2013) and C_1 (13/09/2013)
[23] Interview with research subject B_2 (03/09/2013)
[24] Interview with research subject A_3 (02/09/2013), B_1 (03/09/2013) and D_3 (22/10/2013)

work performance is at an expected level and contributes to the bigger goal of the organisation.[25]

One (1) senior manager indicates that there is no policy framework and as such the goals of the PA process at CEPD are unclear, another indicates that the process is subjective, not implemented appropriately and as such needs to be reviewed.[26] Another senior manager states that it is irrelevant and time consuming.[27]

While the literature mentions issues of perception of fairness in the appraisal process, respondents at the CEPD did not mention any issues relating to the fairness of their appraisal process, except when they mentioned using the same tool across functions. This was raised in relation to the goals and relevance of the PA process. This does not mean, however, that the process is fair or unfair but could point to a systemic problem in the PA process at the CEPD.

It was interesting to observe the various responses relating to the PA at the CEPD. What was noteworthy was the seeming consensus that the organisation is unclear about its purpose for conducting PAs.

4.2.4 The Performance Appraisal tool used at CEPD

Elsewhere in this paper the researcher makes mention of the importance of triangulation as a source of gathering supporting information regarding the PA process. One way of getting further information from multiple sources about the appraisal process at the CEPD is to look at the PA tool that is being used.

[25] Interview with research subject D_2 (22/10/2013)
[26] Interview with research subject C_2 (13/09/2013)
[27] Interview with research subject A_1 (02/09/2013)

The PA tool being used at the CEPD leans towards the MBO tool. While there is a set of objectives outlined in the CEPD tool and progress is checked against objectives, this tool lacks the rating scales found in the BARS and the GRS. One respondent indicated that ratings are necessary in order to measure performance.[28] The absence of rating scales confirmed the absence of a link of the PA tool to rewards in the form of pay or promotion, which some respondents alluded to.[29] Furthermore, one respondent indicated that it was pointless to conduct PAs if there are no rewards.[30] In contrast, another respondent indicated that the PA tool was linked to promotion.[31] It is unknown whether the decision not to include ratings in the tool was deliberate, since the PA process is not linked to rewards.

In terms of the three job categories, all job categories indicated that the tool was linked to their job descriptions, however one (1) senior manager indicated that one tool is being used across all divisions and that, whereas the tool is easier to administer for project staff it is not for routine job employees.[32]

The tool does not outline the key KPAs of an individual as outlined in the job description. Additionally, the tool is used across all functions at the CEPD, namely the Finance and Administration division and the Research division. Consequently, a division which provides support functions is likely to face difficulties; for an example, an objective for the finance department that says; “reducing cost”, this would depend on factors such as the interest rate prevailing for the period under consideration or the creditworthiness of the organisation and each of these is a component of other factors, none of which are under the control of the person being appraised. As a result, clear measures are important in the PA.

[28] Interview with research subject B_1 (03/09/2013)
[29] Interview with research subjects A_1 (02/09/2013), C_2 (13/09/2013) and D_2 (22/10/2013)
[30] Interview with research subject B_2 (03/09/2013)
[31] Interview with research subject A_2 (02/09/2013)
[32] Interview with research subject C_2 (13/09/2013)

During the interviews, the researcher noted that there are other tasks at the CEPD which are implemented by teams. However, it was noted that there was no provision for appraising work achieved in teams in the PA tool. One respondent indicated that they think there are benefits for team appraisal but that they do not know whether the organisation has the time or resources to consider utilizing these.[33] The tool leans more on individual objectives thus risking errors or ignoring achievements that might have been achieved as a result of teamwork.

While the PA tool at the CEPD leans towards the MBO model, it does not clearly articulate the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound) conditions outlined in the use of MBO. The CEPD PA tool is divided into categories against which each employee has to indicate achievement of objectives, the quality of the achievement, objectives not achieved and why these were not achieved. The tool has the following categories:

1. Task-related objectives set at previous appraisal;
2. Additional tasks undertaken in period under review;
3. Objectives for the forthcoming period;
4. Self-Development objectives set at previous appraisal; and
5. Self-development objectives for the forthcoming period.

It should be noted that the previous period PA records which the researcher had indicated would form part of the document analysis were not available at the time of this study. Although some respondents indicated that there was a link between their job description and the PA tool,[34] no evidence of the completed appraisal tool was available to compare the job description with the completed PA at the time of the

[33] Interview with research subject D_2 (22/10/2013)
[34] Interview with research subjects B_1 and B_2 (03/09/2013), D_2 and D_3 (22/10/2013)

study. The researcher also noted that the tool had no space for provisional feedback. One respondent indicated that feedback is given immediately after the tool has been administered or after the appraisal meeting.[35] Respondents indicated that if an employee is found to be under-performing, there are measures which are taken; for example, an employee can be supported to go for further training.[36] The general feeling from most respondents was that there is a need to review the PA tool.[37]

4.2.5. Training of managers in the PA process

Training and capacity-building of managers in understanding and administering the PA is important as it is for employees. In the case of the CEPD, the researcher established that none of the senior and middle managers has undergone training on PA, and consequently no employee has received training on PA. The tool that is being administered was constructed by one of the staff members and has never been engaged with by the other members of the organisation, reported another respondent.[38] The organisation reported that they had recently attended a strategic planning session where they discussed, among other things, the review of the PM systems.[39]

[35] Interview with research subject B_2 (03/09/2013)
[36] Interview with research subjects C_2 (13/09/2013), D_2 (22/10/2013)
[37] Interview with research subjects A_1 and A_3 (02/09/2013), C_2 (13/09/2013), D_1 (22/10/2013)
[38] Interview with research subject C_2 (13/09/2013)
[39] Interview with research subject C2(13/09/2013), D_1 and D_2 (22/10/2013)

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The data presentation is comprised of inputs provided by employees of the CEPD and the data is presented as group data. Employees belonged either to the Finance and Administration division or the Research division. The analysis of this data is informed by the literature review and the primary data collected from interviews and document analysis. The main focus of this research was to explore perceptions of employees towards the performance appraisal process at the CEPD. Subsequent to this, the study will highlight areas which need attention in the appraisal process.

The respondents to this study comprised senior managers, professional staff/middle managers and junior staff from both the Finance and Administration division and the Research division; all of the respondents had served at the CEPD for a minimum of two years while some had worked there for thirteen years and had undergone performance appraisal processes during their term.

As a result of the data presented in chapter four, two themes emerged and will be discussed in this chapter. These are “Challenges in Implementation of PA at the CEPD” and “Choice of PA tool (as it relates to the various functions)”.

5.2 CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PA PROCESS AT CEPD

5.2.1 The PA process and its purpose at CEPD

Most respondents when interviewed reported that the PA process at the CEPD is flawed and irrelevant and is conducted by management merely for the sake of compliance. The respondents further indicated their own understanding of the PA process but were not sure about the reason for the CEPD's implementation of PA. There was a sense that respondents understood the purpose of PAs, and what the process of PA should entail but did not know how this should be implemented. For example respondents mentioned that PAs are a developmental process for plotting growth, assessing, reviewing, monitoring, setting targets, rewarding performance and for career-pathing,

There was no clear articulation of purpose shared between the respondents; this is alluded to by Walsh and Fisher (2005), that there is no consensus in literature on the purpose of PA. Furthermore, respondents were not saying the same thing about the number of people involved in the process, nor what the third person's role was. Some respondents indicated that the PA at the CEPD involves three people: one appraisee and two appraisers. Other respondents reported that the third person in the PA is an observer; this also poses a challenge inasmuch as there is no clarity about the involvement of a third person.

Venclova (2013) indicates that appraisal is an important factor for development and that it is necessary to appraise employees effectively. However, where systems are unclear the PA process becomes a contested terrain. Prowse and Prowse (2009) points out a number of purposes for conducting performance appraisals; one is that PA are conducted to motivate staff, clarify and set clear objectives for the future,

with provision for training and development needs. Another reason is for assessing past performance and distributing rewards based on past performance. It is not clear whether the CEPD is achieving any of these purposes. One respondent emphasized the developmental aspect of the PA but was unsure whether the CEPD was achieving this purpose.

Davila and Elvira (2007) in their study of PM in Mexico note that at every stage of the PA process, supervisors and subordinates negotiate area and individual objectives. An element worth noting in the CEPD PA process is the negotiation of objectives between the manager and the subordinate. This is a positive aspect which the organisation is implementing.

5.2.2 Human Resource Function Vacuum at CEPD

Research in HRM shows that the role of the HR functions in organisations is indispensable. Moreover, it is changing and as a result organisations are striving to make the HR function more 'strategic'. The term 'strategic' here refers to the contribution of the HR function to the improvement of employee and organisational performance (Francis and Keegan, 2006; Ulrich, Younger and Brockbank, 2008; Buller and McEvoy, 2011).

The importance of the HR function has been recognized as an essential support activity and necessary for the achievement of the organisation's goals (Buller and McEvoy, 2011). Similarly, Akingbola (2013) indicates that research on HRM has emphasized HR challenges as being problematic in organisational capacity issues in NPOs. He points out that these HR problems are not only limited to the attraction and retention of staff but they also relate to the lack of expertise in the HRM function in NPOs.

Data collected at the CEPD pointed to an absence of the HR function, meaning that there are no dedicated HR personnel at CEPD. One

respondent indicated that they are playing the HR role as there is no HR manager. Additionally, the document analysis revealed the HR gap that exists at the CEPD. Davila and Elvira (2007) observe that the role of HR in PA is not only managing HR practices but also coaching line managers in the implementation of these practices. One could argue that though there is skilled personnel at CEPD, it is vital to have the HR function dedicated to addressing issues of PM within which issues of PA process and training of managers could be addressed.

While there is a distinct performance management policy which implicitly links with the organisational strategy and consequently the PA process, respondents were not sure about the link between the PA, organisational strategy and the PM policy. This is one of the roles that could be played by the HR function or manager, to mediate the links between organisational strategy and the PA process. This HR role is what Ulrich, Younger and Brockbank (2011) refers to as, “Embedded HR”; these are HR professionals who, amongst other things, clarify strategy and deliver supportive strategies and these could include PA processes.

5.2.3 Pay For Performance

The PM policy at CEPD outlines clear criteria about what constitutes performance of an excellent nature which can be compensated; this is found in the Job Evaluation Policy and not in the PA. It was not clear whether this was an error of omission or whether it was intended. However, the fact that there are no rewards related to the PA process at the CEPD could be a potential strength as the literature has pointed out problems in attaching performance to rewards. Bradl and Güttel (2007) points to an important factor in pay-for-performance (PfP) within NPOs, and argues that PfP systems reward the achievement of goals. Whether this could be used depends on whether objectives can be defined and measured. In the case of the CEPD, the document analysis pointed to

unclear and undefined measurements in the PA tool. Furthermore, they argue that in NPOs while employees are familiar with the mission of their organisation, in practice the implications for employees' work are unclear.

Greatbanks and Elkin (2010, p.574) argues that in NPOs impact measures are considered more appropriate than measures of input. They call the former "social measures" and note that these align more closely with activities of NPOs. Similarly Azzone and Palermo (2011) argues that it is hard to achieve effective appraisal systems in public sector organisations and that the complex setting of the public sector may obstruct the actual adoption of PA and reward systems. It can be argued that in an NPO like the CEPD the structure and organisation of work is complex and as such the adoption of PA and reward systems would need careful consideration. Without training and understanding of those involved in the PA, and without clear standardized outputs and measurable targets, there exists some potential for misuse of the system.

Conversely, Nickols (2007) argues that it is impossible to achieve an objective assessment of performance, and indicates that the quantum of funds available to reward personnel is usually limited; as such not everyone can receive a reward. This implies that the ratings which qualify for a reward or pay must fit within the limits of the funds available.

In their research of PfP and Non-PfP NPOs, Bradl and Güttel (2007) recommends that there are important conditions which need to be met by NPOs in order to implement an effective PfP system and these point to "clear objectives", "professional leadership" as well as organisational values which support "performance differentiation". The choice for or against a PfP system at the CEPD would therefore require careful consideration of the organisational context. Below are several issues within the PA process at the CEPD which are worth noting.

5.3 CHOICE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL TOOLS

The CEPD as indicated earlier uses an MBO type tool, except that it has no SMART conditions which provide criteria for good performance. Respondents when asked about the PA process at the CEPD indicated that the same tool was used across all functions in the organisation and this was viewed as a deficit, since the tool seeks to assess different things using the same measures. For example, it was viewed as illogical to assess finance staff with the same tool that assesses developmental work like field research projects. Bolar in Sudarsan (2009) argues that MBO was advocated as a system to manage organisations and business units and not individuals.

Kondrasuk (2011) identifies a host of problems associated with the PA process, with two problems in particular relating to the PA tool. One is that the PA does not fit within the existing system of the organisation, particularly the administrative and development functions; at the CEPD one PA tool is used for both administrative and development staff. Elsewhere in this paper, respondents indicated this shortcoming of the PA tool. The second problem mentioned is the inaccuracy of the performance measures. Some respondents indicated that the tool had no rating scale; similarly observation of the PA tool used at the CEPD reflected an absence of a rating scale or conditions of performance. While staff members view the absence of rating measures as an irregularity, literature which looks at PA in NPOs discourages the use of rating scales for the NPO sector. Shaw and Allen in Greatbanks and Elkin (2010) observes that it is inappropriate to use audit-based approaches which can only value the work and outputs of NPOs in financial terms.

When questioned further, the respondents were not sure why the particular tool was chosen and were unclear as to its suitability to the CEPD above other PA tools. The PM policy within which the PA exists did

not make mention of the type of tool used or its relevance to job functions at the CEPD. Another respondent advocated for a developmental tool which all stakeholders in the organisation would jointly construct.

Observation of the PA tool does not clearly reflect how feedback is provided. Interviews with the respondents indicated that feedback is provided immediately in the appraisal meeting. The question then becomes, "When does the manager and appraisee reflect on the meeting?" There is also no mention of an appeals procedure, nor is space provided for in the tool in the event that the employee does not agree with the outcome of the appraisal.

The challenges mentioned above are reflective of an ineffective process which creates room for malpractice which could undermine the harmonious relationships amongst employees of the CEPD. The choice of the PA tool should be informed by the purpose or goals of the PA process, whether for administrative purposes of employee retention, promotion and compensation or development goals such as behaviour and attitudes (Kondrasuk, 2011). Relevance of the tool is therefore extremely important considering the manner in which work is organised at the CEPD.

5.3.1 Individual differences

There are various differences in how individuals perceive PAs. Some respondents viewed the PA process at CEPD positively, while other employees viewed it negatively; this applied to both junior and senior staff members. The researcher observed different perceptions of the PA process at the CEPD although at times there were similarities. While some respondents found the PA process at the CEPD ineffective and saw no reason for implementing it, other respondents felt that it was flawed but that it could be improved. Some respondents stated that the PA process was unnecessary as it was not tied to any career development prospects

and does not lead to promotion, while others indicated that it was important for the personal development of employees and the organisation as a whole. Sudarsan (2009) points out that there are differences between people and this is as a result of the system in which they work. Additionally Bachie-Mensah and Seidu (2012) points out that perceptions of employees towards PAs does not differ in terms of age. Although age was not used as a variable in this research, the researcher observed that there were no age differences in perceptions of the PA process at the CEPD . Conversely, Brown, Hyatt and Benson (2009) reports that employees who have poor PA experiences are more likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs as opposed to those who have had positive PA experiences.

This is further confirmed by Fletcher in Kuvaas (2010), who warns that not all employees react in the same way to the PA process, and the assumption that this can be achieved is unfounded. He argues that individual differences play a major role in how people will react to appraisals. The observations above point to a need for aligning the purposes of PA processes with due consideration of the individual differences of the employees. While there are differences at the CEPD in relation to perceptions of the PA process, a variable in the discussion is that of feedback, which is addressed below.

5.3.2 Feedback

Kondrasuk (2011) mentions a number of problems relating to the provision of feedback in the appraisal process. These include feedback being provided only during PA meetings, that often the feedback is complicated or irrelevant, and the appraiser is unable and/or unwilling to provide negative feedback. As indicated in the data presentation some respondents pointed out that at the CEPD feedback is given immediately after administration of the PA tool. Respondents indicated that usually the feedback would focus on past and future implementation of objectives by

an individual; others indicated that there usually has not been any resistance to the feedback provided by managers to employees. Levy and Williams in Kuvaaas (2010 p.125) indicates that the feedback environment of an organisation is an important variable in the PA process. They further argue that the perceived credibility of the source, frequency and quality of feedback affects appraisees' attitudes and behaviours. Similarly, London in Levy and Williams (2004, p.895), argues for a "feedback culture", which refers to a culture which is characterized by managers and employees who feel comfortable about both providing and receiving feedback.

The feedback process is important to the PA process and is affected by the organisation's feedback culture. Levy and Williams (2004) present a type of feedback known as multi-source feedback. This type of feedback, they argue, unlike the traditional feedback which is feedback between a manager and an employee, has been used by organisations as a means of providing developmental feedback for employees. The multi-source feedback is based on three assumptions: one is that each source provides unique information about the appraisee. The second is that these multi-source ratings provide increased validity, and the third is that multi-source feedback will increase an appraisee's self-awareness and consequently impact on behavioural change.

Scullen (2011) advocates for "developmental feedback," which is feedback provided on a regular basis rather than feedback on performance which is provided once or twice in a year. He asserts that this type of feedback would be less intimidating to both participants.

Feedback as mentioned earlier is an important variable in the PA process. Also of importance is how the feedback is provided and which feedback system is used. These factors relating to feedback impact on how employees, and in particular CEPD employees, perceive the PA process. The feedback issue cannot be more strongly emphasized as it will

ultimately affect how employees react to the PA process and whether their behaviour will be positively changed. The choice of a feedback process will also have to be considered in relation to the developmental needs of the appraisees and the social context of the organisation.

5.3.3 Teamwork

While respondents indicated that there are tasks that they implement as teams, there is no PA of teams at the CEPD. One respondent said they actually think that team appraisal would be appropriate at the CEPD. However, they also indicated that they do not know how this would be implemented in practice. According to Sudarsan (2009) the more a person's effectiveness is dependent on others the less she or he can be held responsible for the outcome of her or his efforts. Levy and Williams (2004) suggest that doing team-based PA is complicated; firstly, it is important that the team appraisal system balances the individual and the team because both are important and emphasizing one over the other, would result in an ineffective system. Secondly, the PA system needs to be broad enough to include the non-traditional performance criteria such as teamwork and co-operation. Thirdly, they report that getting feedback from each team member is as important as getting feedback from the beneficiary or customer.

The PA tool and PM Policy at the CEPD does not make provision for teamwork appraisal, something which Nickols (2007) alludes to, in that the classic PA puts more emphasis on individual performance of tasks as opposed to team performance. Kondrasuk (2011) suggests a 360° appraisal, which begins with managers and employees developing the goals and at the other end having input from others. The aspect of team organisation cannot be ignored if the CEPD wants to conduct an effective PA process. The researcher notes, however, that such a system would

require a skilled person to implement it while taking into consideration the investment of time and cost.

5.4 SUMMARY

Chapter four presented data collected from interviews with employees and documents provided by the CEPD. Some data analysis was presented, arising from the themes that emerged, and these themes were again discussed in this chapter. The theme addressing the implementation of PA at CEPD went deeper into sub-themes that highlighted areas where gaps were identified. These are issues relating to PA process and its purpose at the CEPD, Teamwork, Individual differences, The HR vacuum at the CEPD and Pay for Performance.

The analysis of the interviews and document analysis linking it with the literature review points to an undefined and disorganised PA process. The seeming lack of linkage between the PA process at the CEPD and the overall link to the organisation's PM system evident in the tools renders the process ineffective and irrelevant.

Literature review of the PA indicates that a PA process should be purposeful especially because the PA process is largely a private sector tool; it should accommodate the different dynamics of an NPO setting, considering the themes mentioned above. Some writers argue that the link between PA and pay makes the issue of PA even more complex. It is noteworthy that the CEPD does not link PA to pay. The importance of feedback and its role in the PA process cannot be ignored. A positive observation of the CEPD is that management is aware of the problems relating to its implementation of the PA process and they are seeking ways of addressing these. It would be beneficial that while management considers a review of the PA they should involve their employees in the process.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This research has explored how employees perceive PAs at the CEPD, issues around procedure and tools for conducting these and consequently how these are crafted and implemented. The research sample that was selected consisted of full-time employees of the CEPD. The study described the CEPD as an NPO and its use and purpose for PAs.

The minimal knowledge around the perceptions of employees on the use of PA in NPOs prompted the study within the context of NPOs as public sector organisations using private sector tools. Here the various functions of the organisation, namely the Finance and Administration division and the Research division, were explored.

Research questions were developed in order to achieve the objective of the research and illuminate the practice of PAs in an NPO. The researcher developed semi-structured interview schedules for various staff members in relation to their position at the CEPD. The aim of these interviews was to obtain answers to the three main questions:

1. What are the objectives of the CEPD in conducting performance appraisals?
2. How is the performance appraisal process implemented at the CEPD?
3. How do employees perceive the performance appraisal process at the CEPD?

Data collected, data presented and the literature reviewed gave rise to the five themes:

1. Understanding PA at the CEPD;
2. Employee Perceptions of the PA Process at the CEPD;
3. Performance Management at the CEPD;
4. The PA Tool used at the CEPD; and
5. Training of Managers in the PA Process.

The abovementioned themes were further narrowed down when the data was analysed and included:

1. Challenges in the Implementation of PA Processes at the CEPD;
2. Choice of the PA tool; and
3. Training of Managers in the PA process.

This chapter concludes the research by presenting conclusions and recommendations based on the preceding discussions.

6.2 CONCLUSION

Data collected for this study as presented and analysed in chapter four and five provides insight as to how the processes of the PA are being implemented at the CEPD and how the employees perceive them. It is important to note that most of the employees at the CEPD view the PA as a compliance practice, which is flawed and irrelevant. This perception confirms the views by other writers such as Kuvaas (2007) and Sudarsan (2009).

6.2.1 Purpose of the PA at CEPD

For the better part of this research paper it is clear that the purpose of PAs at the CEPD is unclear, and while employees seemingly share similar perceptions, the organisation itself is not sure about why it conducts PAs. For PAs to be effective in an organisation, all stakeholders must be aware of their importance and understand why they need to be implemented. However, this cannot be achieved if the organisation is not clear about why they are conducting them.

6.2.2 Individual differences and teamwork

The CEPD management must take into consideration individual differences and contextual factors affecting employee performance when designing and reviewing their PA process. While individual differences should be observed, the structure of work should also be clearly understood. For example, projects which require teamwork should be accommodated and provision should be made for their appraisal.

6.2.3 Human resource vacuum

The absence of an HR function is a critical issue not only for PAs but for the smooth running of the HR function, which is of utmost importance in any organisation. The CEPD needs to create and institutionalize an HR function so that matters of human resources can be dealt with adequately by a person or people skilled and dedicated in the HR field. The PA process at the CEPD opens itself up to challenges and problems if it continues to be a function that is shared by various divisions.

6.2.4 Training

The absence of training around the issue of PA, especially for managers, poses a threat in the context of labour disputes which can be taken outside the organisation by disgruntled employees, causing the organisation to pay high costs in order to settle these disputes.

In conclusion, the use of the system of PA at the CEPD needs to be carefully managed, critical issues as raised by the themes need to be addressed and methods of implementation should be reviewed in accordance with the organisational culture and context.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3.1 Purpose of the PA at CEPD

The collection and analysis of data and the review of documents of the CEPD suggests that the management needs to undertake a total overhaul of the current PM system. If the CEPD sees a need for continuing with the practice of appraising its employees, the CEPD needs to clarify for its staff members what the purpose of the PA is. The CEPD needs to do some introspection and ask, “Why are we doing PAs and if we continue doing them how can we improve the manner in which we conduct them, within the broader purpose of performance management within the organisation?” This purpose should be arrived at in consultation with employees of the CEPD and in the context of the work that the CEPD conducts. The PA should fit within the purposes of the CEPD and not vice versa. The PA experience by employees at CEPD might yield different and mutually enriching perceptions by all employees.

6.3.2 PA Tools and Training of Managers

On the other hand, the manner in which work is structured should inform the choice of the tools that are going to be used. A number of tools were mentioned earlier in this paper. However, the choice of tools should be an independent activity which is informed by how work is structured, noting the various divisions and job functions and by management and employee needs of the CEPD. Once the tools are developed, managers need to be trained on how to administer them to staff members.

6.3.3 The Role of the Human Resources Function in PA Processes

The role of HR in the PA process cannot be ignored as HR is the central function that should ensure that PA process are conducted fairly and consistently and ensures that managers receive the necessary training to perform these. The HR vacuum at CEPD needs to be filled by a competent person who will not only review the tools and train the managers but someone who will be able to facilitate a policy framework for PA processes for the organisation. It is to be commended that at the time of the study, the researcher was informed that this issue of HR function is already under scrutiny by the management of the CEPD and is being addressed.

6.4 FURTHER RESEARCH

This research has highlighted that employees are not passive recipients of interventions in their organisations and that some of the systems being implemented are often irrelevant and ineffective. The research has also revealed that there are contextual issues such as individual differences which are at play during the PA process and that the structure of work in NPOs is different, suggesting that the tools used to appraise employees

need to be contextualized. Individuals interpret these processes similarly and differently all the time, hence the issue of PAs is contested.

It would be useful to conduct a longitudinal study to see what the planned changes with regard to HR and PM would yield at the organisation. The study would inform other NPOs about the intricacies of PA and how best to conduct them in this setting.

The CEPD as an NPO is a very important organisation, to the community, its stakeholders and to the South African society in general. The CEPD has commendably demonstrated an openness to constructive criticism and introspection about their PA process and this provides a foundation for further growth of the organisation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR SENIOR MANAGERS AT CEPD

1. What is the vision of your organisation?

2. How long have you been working at CEPD

3. What is your understanding of the performance appraisal process?

4. Within 1 year how often do you carry out the performance appraisal process in your organisation?

5. How is the process of performance appraisals linked to the organisational strategy?

6. What are the goals of the performance appraisal process in your organisation?

7. Personally what do you think about the performance appraisal process in your organisation?

8. In view of the organisation of work at CEPD, are the current systems of performance appraisal processes adequate?

    If yes why do you think so?

    If no, how best could the process be conducted?

9. What are performance appraisal processes in your organisation linked to? Pay, Promotion

10. When in the performance appraisal process do you administer the performance appraisal tool?

11. Who sets the performance objectives in the appraisal process?

12. How many employees are you managing?

13. Does the performance appraisal tools link with job descriptions

14. When do you provide feedback for appraisals to junior employees?

15. How do you provide feedback to junior employees regarding the appraisal process?

16. What happens when employees have performed 'poorly'?

17. Have you received training on how to conduct performance appraisals? If so what was the training's focus?

18. What kind of performance tool do you use?

Why?

19. What do you think about your employees' perception of the performance appraisal process and

Why?

20. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the PA process at CEPD?

Appendix B

SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR JUNIOR STAFF AT CEPD

1. Kindly state your position in the organisation?

2. What does your work entail?

3. How long have you been working in the organisation?

4. How long have you been working in your current position?

5. What is the vision of your organisation?

6. What is your understanding of the performance appraisal process?

7. Within 1 year how often do you undergo the performance appraisal process in your organisation?

8. What are the goals of the performance appraisal process in your organisation?

9. Personally what do you think about the performance appraisal process in your organisation?

10. What are performance appraisal processes in your organisation linked to? Pay, Promotion

11. When in the performance appraisal process do you receive the performance appraisal tool?

13. Who sets the performance objectives in your appraisal?

14. Does your performance appraisal tool link to your job description

15. When do you receive feedback for your appraisal?

16. How do you receive feedback regarding your appraisal process?

17. What happens when your performance has been rated as 'poor'?

18. Is there anything else you would like to share about the PA process?

Appendix C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

QUESTIONNAIRE ON EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS AT CENTRE FOR EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Dear Participant

I am conducting research on employees' perceptions of the performance appraisal process at the Centre for Education Policy Development. Your voluntary participation is requested so I may learn more about perceptions held by employees in relation to the performance appraisal process. The interview is based on the questionnaire which will take approximately 45 minutes.

Your name will not be recorded on the questionnaire and your responses will be anonymous. You will only be identified by a special number code.

Knowledge gained through this research will be used to understand and inform the use of performance appraisals in non-profit organisations

Again, your participation is voluntary and you may choose to not answer all of the questions on the questionnaire even after signing the consent. If you are willing to participate, please sign this form.

Thank you for your assistance.

I have read and understood this consent form, and I agree to participate in this study.

Participant Signature

_____

Date

_____

Appendix D

REQUEST LETTER TO CEPD

18 June 2013

[redacted]
Block B, First Floor
Empire Park
55 Empire Road
Parktown

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Dear _____

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your organisation. I am enrolled in a Masters of Management in Public and Development Management (MM P&DM) programme at the Wits University Graduate School of Public and Development Management and am in the process of writing my Masters Report. The study is entitled; "Employee Perceptions of the Performance Appraisal Process in a Non-Profit Organisation". This research will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Horacio Zandamela (Wits School of Management, South Africa)

I hereby seek your permission to conduct face to face interviews with 4 senior managers, 4 middle managers and 4 junior employees at your organisation. Employees who volunteer to participate will be requested to sign a consent form (copy attached). The research results will be used for the research report only and results of this study will remain absolutely confidential and anonymous.

I have provided you with a copy of the request to conduct research letter which I received from Wits University Graduate School of Public and Development Management. Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide the Centre for Education Policy Development with a bound copy of the full research report.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call on Friday the 05th July 2013 and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 083 735 6712, Fax: 011 339 7844 E-mail: cmoeng@jet.org.za. Thanking you in advance for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Cynthia Moeng

Appendix E

JOB TITLE LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AT CEPD

Senior Management:

- CEO
- Head of Research/ Acting HR Manager
- Finance and Admin Manager

Middle Management

- Senior Bookkeeper
- Researchers x 2
- Senior Researcher

Junior Employees

- Personal Administrator to CEO
- Project Administrator
- Junior Researcher