Performance Management Systems (PMS): Challenges and Opportunities in the Public Sector

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Abstract

In many scholars' public institutions should have effective and efficient Performance Management Systems (PMS) in place to promote and develop the performance of civil servants. In the public sector, good management of staff performance is fundamental for efficient service delivery. The mandate of public institutions is to offer sustainable service delivery to the public; as a result, public institutions' performance is scrutinized by the public, who have higher expectations from the government. These expectations are based on the votes cast and the taxes paid by the public. Thus, public institutions should monitor and enhance each employee's performance and productivity to ensure efficient provision of public services. This article seeks to analyse the challenges encountered by the public sector in executing PMS and suggest the strategies the public sector can use to enhance staff performance. The qualitative approach was adopted to meet the objective of this study, by sourcing rich literature that speaks to the challenges encountered in the PMS implementation phase and the possible benefits of this system. The author concluded that PMS is a viable tool that can be used in the public sector to improve employee performance through recognition and rewarding of good performance, training opportunities, employee engagement, and an effective appraisal system. The most notable challenge of this system is that implementers lack the skills to effectively execute the PMS. This poses a serious threat; hence the poor implemented PMS can demotivate employees.

Keywords: *Appraisal; Employees; Performance; Productivity; Public Institutions; Service Delivery*

Introduction

The performance of the public institutions and that of their employees have been criticised and viewed as ineffective and inefficient by the public and the media at large, this is due to poor services delivery which is caused by the poor performance management in the public institutions. According to Mafini (2015), the efficiency and effectiveness of government employees has become a key concern. To

provide the public with high-quality services, government agencies must place a high priority on improving the performance and productivity of their personnel through the deployment of effective performance management systems. Mbili (2015) indicated that the development of public servant performance is essential for effective and efficient service delivery. It is therefore fundamental for public organisations to have adequate performance management systems in place to formally assess individual performance. According to Mello (2013), public institutions throughout the world are under growing pressure to provide better services with less resources. Most of the pressure comes from members of the public who are growing more aware of their democratic rights to demand improved services, which manifest itself in the form of demonstrations, which often become violent. Citizens want confidence that government institutions are doing all they can to meet complex and ever-increasing social requirements. The creation and execution of an effective PMS will go a long way toward meeting the demands of the public while minimizing waste. Therefore, the aggregate total of each worker's performance is important to the success of any governmental institution. Given the right support and resources, any organization that inspires individuals who grasp the overarching institutional objectives may be expected to perform at their optimal.

Research Methodology

The study relied heavily on secondary sources for data collection. The research was heavily based on a thorough textual analysis of the existing literature related to PMS. The effort of this approach was to find a rich literature to address the objective of the study, which is an analysis of the challenges encountered by the public sector about PMS implementations and strategies that can be used in the public sector to improve the productivity and performance of public servants.

Review of the Literature / Theoretical Framework

According to Magqadiyane (2016), performance management is a method that ensures alignment between employee activities or outputs and organizational goals. Employee productivity contributes to an organization's success by helping it reach its goals and objectives. According to Mofokeng (2017), PMS is used to comprehend and encourage the successes, further changes, values, and approaches of both employers and workers towards methods and procedures for improving organizational efficiency and performance. It serves as a guide for organizations in establishing goals, performance principles, best practices, and performance indicators that allow managers to make well-informed decisions about the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. According to Ramataboe (2015), performance management is a technique for assessing, recognizing, and developing individuals' performance by coordinating it with organizational strategic objectives. The system uses ongoing evaluation and feedback to improve employee performance. It aims to recognize exceptional performance by connecting accomplishments to the mission and goals and ensure that both the employer and the employee are aware of the importance of a particular job in achieving results. Mkhize (2017) agreed that PMS helps to communicate employee performance objectives, maintain ongoing performance conversations, and conduct yearly performance reviews. It is a tactical and methodical process that provides leaders, managers, employees, and stakeholders at various levels with a set of tools and methods to plan, monitor, measure, review, and report organizational performance in terms of performance indicators and setting goals for effectiveness and efficiency. Its mission is to improve service delivery by advancing the performance of the company and individual employees. PMS is a continuous strategy to increase employee performance by creating goals and strategically matching those goals with institutional goals. (Sisa and Naidoo, 2017). A well-executed PMS promotes employee performance while also helping the organization meet specified objectives and adapt to organizational change (Mofokeng 2017). This kind of transformation entails combining goal setting, performance review, and staff development into a single

unified system while ensuring that performance meets the organization's strategic goals. According to Mungiu and Warkotsch (2017), it is critical that management recognize the importance of an employee performance evaluation system as a fundamental component in human resource management before developing one. Performance must be controlled throughout the year according to the criteria. As a result, if performance is not adequately managed, it may quickly become a paper exercise, resulting in the system not meeting its goals. As a result, it is critical to monitor and analyze the process frequently to ensure that compliance levels are always encouraged and maintained at appropriate levels. Furthermore, if PMS is viewed as a means of communication between the manager and the employee about what objectives are to be met, how they will be met, and how work will progress to achieve the desired results, one would arrive at a point where PMS involves both the supervisor and the supervisee. (Ndou, 2013). According to Serban and Herciu (2019), performance management is widely recognized, but further research has indicated that many organizations continue to struggle to properly adopt systems. However, this depends on the behavioural variables of leaders and employees, as well as the strategy that employers utilize to guide their employees toward successful implementation. To achieve successful implementation, greater emphasis must be placed on performance-based behavior. This is also dependent on the behavioural variables of leaders and employees, as well as the way employers use them to guide their employees toward successful implementation. The establishment of a PMS requires appropriate knowledge and abilities for both workers and employers to profit from the system (Mashego, 2016). The former may benefit from having their abilities enhanced, with recognition and awards for exceptional performance, whilst the latter is given the chance to offer optimum services via employee performance development. To be efficient and successful, the system must relate to the employee performance development plan, the organization's vision and goal, and the yearly performance plan. Mthimkhulu and Singh (2016) agree with Mashego that for performance management to be implemented effectively, the employer must ensure that employees have the necessary work resources and skills, given that management will be held accountable if the desired results and targets are not met because of poor staff performance due to ineffective PMS implementation, putting pressure on management to monitor and evaluate staff performance. To achieve effective performance management According to Mathidza (2015), it is vital for the manager to operate as a leader who can turn dreams into realities. This is because most well-designed PMS fail because line managers do not understand how to apply them. Because line managers are directly responsible for the implementation of performance management practices in their respective departments, top management can play an important role in this regard by including performance management in their job descriptions and making them aware that this is an integral part of their position. Managers, being the main players in the institution, must be thoroughly trained and informed to implement a perfect PMS. This can only be accomplished by evaluating the value of training received through the development of training and evaluation methodologies. The inability of the manager to recognize his position in performance management would have a negative influence on staff performance since it relies on employee performance. As a result, it is critical that employers recognize exceptional performers and provide feedback, which strengthens workplace dedication and increases employee productivity. Even though most researchers adhere to a certain theoretical framework, it is common for researchers to draw from several research frameworks in order to make sense of the results of the study. This paper theoretically incorporates goal setting and expectation theories. Goal-setting theory, according to Locke and Latham (2006), is based on the notion of encouraging people to alter their performance plan. Put another way, when workers find that they are underperforming and that their intended objectives have not been achieved, they are motivated to put in more effort or modify their approach to achieve the desired goal. According to Van der Merwe and Dawes (2007), when objectives are established at a motivating level, workers perform at their best, which serves as the cornerstone of the goal-setting technique. Goals and goals, according to Smit (2003), are the beginning point of the management process and may assist an organization in realizing its vision. Employees are motivated to work better when they are aware of this, since it gives them a sense of purpose and direction.

Schrager (2020) identified two major factors of goal-setting theory that impact employees' willingness to commit to a set of goals: the individual's performance consequences and the assurance that the goal is achievable. As a result, it is vital for management to acknowledge workers' successes and provide tools that allow people to think that their objectives are attainable. The goal-setting hypothesis, according to Lunenburg (2011), establishes a relationship between performance and goals that should be communicated to workers. Employees tend to perform better when the institution establishes precise high-performance targets that must be met, therefore, arranging favourably impacted demanding goals. The goals inspire people to design techniques that will help them perform better. Therefore, to achieve goals, workers must be motivated to perform well; otherwise, performance will not increase as expected. The basis of expectancy theory is founded on the notion that individuals have specific expectations for the anticipated results of their actions, which underlies motivation. Another assumption is that individuals have multiple wants for various outcomes; therefore, they are seen as thinking creatures capable of anticipating future occurrences. These outcomes are classified as intrinsic (results directly related to the activity, such as pay and working conditions) and extrinsic (results not directly related to the task, such as salary and working conditions) (Griffin, 2005). According to Redmond (2014), the key assumption behind expectation theory is that individuals will be motivated if they feel their action will result in the desired outcome. According to expectation theorists, motivation is frequently defined as a technique of directing choices between different kinds of voluntary behaviour, a process that is controlled by people, and hence the strength of an employee's is dependent on how certain activities effect performance. According to Park and Kim, workers have various expectations and degrees of confidence in their abilities (2017). Public institutions are enthusiastic about the tactics they will use to improve employee performance and, as a result, employee job happiness. Job happiness is impacted by the goals and expectations that workers will deliver better performance. According to Park and Kim (2017), examining employee job satisfaction in an institution is a valuable activity. The concept is that when workers are content with their jobs, it has a good influence on the institution and on each individual employee and that ensuring they are happy in their jobs will help the organization achieve its goals and objectives.

Results and Discussion

What Are the Challenges of Performance Management Systems (PMS) in the Public Sector?

Poor Communication

Ahenkan, Tenakwah, and Bawole (2018) identified poor communication as one of the challenges during the implementation of performance management systems (PMS) in the public sector. Performance management systems have different segments that must be implemented by the supervisor in conjunction with the subordinates under their supervision, effective communication is imperative for the success of the system. To Panda (2011), performance management should strive to enable an organization's ongoing communication and commitment-building process while also allowing for employee and organizational growth. Panda (2011) further stated that the organization should have a good communication and support structure in place to help employees perform better. According to Gebru (2018), consistent communication between the employer and employees promotes dedication and attitude, resulting in improved performance. Poor communication, on the other hand, has an impact on the performance management process, since the employer must explain the organization's aims and goals to the employees so that they are aware of the expectations. Because continual performance feedback to employees drives the entire system, effective communication is critical during the performance management process. For PMS objectives to be met, continuous feedback on each employee's performance is required. These findings corroborated those of Locke and Latham (2013), who claimed that performance feedback interacts with objective achievement in the same way as goal-setting theory does. Lunenburg's (2011) argument that feedback on performance helps employees achieve their performance goals because

employees can determine how well they are doing. To Staroová (2017) Communication and feedback reduce uncertainty and provide performance-related information. Inevitably, communication and feedback foster a sense of fairness, trust, and respect for the employer, who is assumed to be thinking about the best interests of the civil employees.

The Appraisal System Is Ineffective

Shrivastava and Purang (2016) also established that when an employee is subjected to unfairness during the appraisal process, it creates a negative emotional condition, whereas fairness would lead to positive emotional conditions. The major goal of public institutions should be to stimulate and reward excellent performing staff rather than to demoralize them, hence they should ensure an effective and unbiased performance appraisal process. The effectiveness of performance evaluation has revealed considerable weaknesses in its implementation, including several kinds of accuracy flaws, as well as rating errors and biases. Those responsible for rating employee performance are much more concerned with whether their evaluations would be useful in preserving good relationships and other non-performance-related purposes, so they tampered with the outcome. Staroová (2017) Employees may experience stress because of the performance evaluation system, which can damage their work-life balance. Due to some predetermined targets, the employee may feel more stressed and under pressure during the performance appraisal. Tailor, Abhishek, and Parameshwar (2021). To be eligible for a performance bonus, public officials must reach the specified goals; if the goals are too difficult to achieve, employees will become discouraged; therefore, it is critical for the employer to set realistic goals or targets. Traditional performance appraisal has been criticised for rewarding win-lose outcomes rather than win-win outcomes, in which the system encourages supportive and cooperative behaviour. (Rowland & Hall, 2012). According to Idowu (2017), when performance appraisals are conducted without clear goals, they could result in employee dissatisfaction and, as a result, a drop in productivity and organizational commitment. This is common in the public sector, where performance reviews are conducted for the sake of formality, demoralizing staff, and lowering productivity and performance.

Lin and Kellough (2019) raised the following concerns in relation to performance evaluations:

1. Bias based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, or handicap status.
2. A lack of knowledge regarding an employee's performance when supervisors are not constantly with subordinates, or their contact is not consistent. Therefore, the supervisor may not have sufficient knowledge to properly assess performance.
3. a lack of time, which frequently occurs when supervisors are preoccupied with various issues and duties that need their attention. Significant supervisory time is required for the formulation and determination of the ratings, as well as review sessions with the personnel, for effective performance evaluation to take effect.
4. Lack of training to evaluate employee performance. Supervisors must be taught in the performance assessment process to ensure fairness and prevent mistakes of judgment.
5. Lack of authority. Supervisors' success depends on the authority granted to them; They must be given power to lead, assess, and monitor employee performance, as well as authority to define staff performance targets.
6. Employee comparison or contrast impacts, when workers are graded relative to one another rather than against specified criteria and standards.

Supervisors and Managers Lack Skills to Implement the PMS

Miruka (2014) indicates that the failure of a PMS is due to a lack of training, as public officials are not well trained throughout the process. Due to the lack of training in the public sector, those who are trusted to implement the system, as well as their subordinates, are clueless, resulting in the system being

ineffective and low staff productivity and performance. Falola, Osibanjo, and Ojo (2014:161) illustrated that the key variables in the execution of performance management are communication and the availability of training opportunities. The research by Mntonintshi and Mtembu (2018) found that all parties engaged in the design and implementation of PMs, including managers, lacked the necessary knowledge and capacity to properly execute PMS. Senior management must be well-versed in the PMS through training, and managers must explain the standards up front, allowing everyone to engage in the conversation. Transparency is essential to ensure that people are aware of what is expected of them as soon as possible. Kalman (2016) People must be trained as part of the performance management implementation process to ensure that the organization's mission and vision are realized by working toward its goals and objectives. (Tukwayo,2018). Managers are the important actors in establishing and promoting performance in the organization, thus, they must be well-trained and knowledgeable to execute a PMS properly. This can only be accomplished by evaluating the training that was received and developing training and evaluation strategies. Because it depends on employee performance, a manager's inability to recognise their position in performance management has a detrimental effect on staff performance (Ramulumisi, Schultz, and Jordan, 205).

What Techniques Can Be Used to Ensure That PMS Improves Staff Productivity?

Motivation

Desimone and Werner (2012) describe motivation as a basic component of human behaviour that determines individual employee performance and explains how effort is created and channelled. Work motivation should be considered as mainly voluntary. Employee behaviour indicates thought about the perceived consequences of their decisions, even when they think they have no choice. Employee motivation, skill development, and experience, all of which contribute to good job performance, affect the success of any company, according to Dina and Olowosoke (2018). The existing relationship between motivation, job satisfaction, and effectiveness is crucial in achieving the institution's aims to improve employee performance. According to Warnich, Carrell, Elbert, and Hatfied (2015), workers want their performance to be correlated with the benefits they get from the organization. Employees establish expectations for incentives and remuneration if specified levels of performance are met. These expectations define future goals or levels of achievement.

Employee Engagement

According to Shumi and Begun (2017), organizations use employee engagement to increase performance by ensuring that employees are satisfied with their jobs. When an organization establishes an acceptable work environment and ensures that individuals have sufficient resources to carry out their responsibilities, effective performance management occurs**.** Employee engagement, according to Arifin, Nirwanto, and Manan (2018), entails employees' pleasure and desire for their jobs. Employee involvement boosts their enthusiasm for their work and strengthens their strong relationship with the organization, as well as their focus on the work. Employees work more passionately and feel a strong connection to their company when they are involved in decision-making. Those who are not engaged in their work are said to be "sleepwalking" during their workdays, idling away their time because they lack motivation and energy to do their tasks. Employees who are fully engaged will be inspired to accomplish their responsibilities with zeal, caring about the company's future. They devote their efforts to ensuring that the organization meets its goals. (Endres & Mancheno-Smoakis, 2008).

Job Satisfaction

There is a link between employee contentment and their behaviour, which the employer can use to improve the company's performance. Employees who are happy in their jobs are more likely to stay

with their employer and fulfil their duties with enthusiasm (Kosteas, 2011). The favorable impact of a happy employee's performance on the institution's ability to meet its goals and on attitudes about work responsibilities is significant. It is influenced by organizational and personal factors, both of which have a reactive effect on organizational commitment. (Malatjie, 2019) Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to perform well and have a positive experience at work. If your well-being is prioritized, you will be promoted and experience less emotional discomfort. Employees that have a high level of job satisfaction create a passion for their profession and even devote their personal time to their workplace (Veingerl, Herzog, & Macek, 2020).

Performance Evaluation System That Is Well-Implemented

Selvarajana, Singh, and Solansky (2018) claim that evaluation is increasingly regarded a technique for managing performance management due to its significance in increasing staff performance. As the values of merit and fairness drive workers, the goal should be to encourage staff to improve their performance. The underlying factors include an interaction between the supervisor and the supervisee that affects the working relationship as employees evaluate performance. Performance evaluation is seen by Lin and Kellough (2019) as a technique to increase employee motivation and help them adapt their working methods to the institution's goals. Performance evaluations can improve both organizational effectiveness and employee performance. It is a technique to increase performance by bringing together personal and business objectives. Many institutions' incentive systems, according to Karahan and Kurtulmus (2017), are founded on performance evaluations created by management. To achieve the company's goals, motivated employees will improve their performance by being more efficient both in quality and in quantity. Ahuja, Padhy, and Srivastava (2018) claim that performance reviews improve relationships between staff members and their supervisors by opening a line of contact for ongoing feedback.

Personal Development Plan

Beausaert, Segers, and Grohnert (2015) The plan can be utilized to highlight future changes and learning opportunities in order to improve staff performance. A plan with a development goal, rather than an assessment goal, is the best way to improve performance and learning. Learning will play a vital role in performance development practice when performance management plans are implemented for professional growth. The degree to which it contributes to professional development and is carried out with the goal of driving staff development is described as effectiveness. Employees should be motivated to learn and improve their performance with this technology. Performance management is seen as a method of carrying out strategic goals while simultaneously managing employee growth to gain and maintain a competitive advantage, according to Greenan (2016). Institutions must prioritize staff development so that employees can focus on enhancing their aptitudes, competencies, and expertise. As companies require workers to become more adaptable and flexible, personal development programs have become more and more popular. Every organization needs employees to function. The effectiveness of the workforce influences the success or failure of the business. Public and commercial organizations alike are therefore investing heavily in staff development. Employee development is the process of enhancing both an individual employee's and the organization's overall capabilities. Employee development, thus, encompasses both individual and organizational growth, since when a company is developed by its people, it thrives, and employee performance rises. Therefore, the relationship between employee development and performance is undeniably present. More mature workers are happier and more dedicated to their work and their performance increases as a result. Employee performance increases, as does the effectiveness of the company (Hameed and Waheed, 2011).

Discussion

Poor communication during the performance management process has a significant negative impact on the system's success; the lack of information flow between the supervisor and supervisee prevents the PMS from achieving its goal and objectives, which include increasing employee productivity and improving organizational performance. According to Salvation (2019), lack of clarity frequently leads to misunderstanding and disagreement over who performs what and when, causing delays in job completion and affecting employee performance and predictability. According to Mbonambi (2016), there should be more and better communication about performance management deadlines that must be met on time. Employees will have enough time to complete all performance management processes on time because of this. Performance management goals, according to Stredwick (2014), are to exert control over staff and ensure that performance targets are met. Employees are directed toward the organization's goals and objectives when clear guidance is provided, which is a key type of communication in relating the organization's goals to each employee's individual performance. The PMS involves numerous steps, and in the public sector, it is completed quarterly; thus, excellent communication is critical to the system's effectiveness. In the public sector, the implementation of an appraisal system has been fraught with difficulties, with severe consequences for employee productivity and performance. According to Dibekulu (2020), managers are rarely held accountable for providing inaccurate feedback or making mistakes. If a person remains silent in the face of incorrect feedback from his immediate boss, no one will ask the supervisor about the basis for the incorrect input. When a query comes from an individual, the supervisor is usually asked, this affects the credibility of PMS and demoralised employees. To Taye (2020) Some supervisors have a practice of frequently giving their workers negative or high evaluations. Strictness and leniency mistakes are two kinds of error. The strict rater provides lower evaluations than the subordinate deserves. This strictness error penalizes superior subordinates. According to Shrivastava and Purang (2016), when an employee experiences injustice throughout the appraisal process, this results in bad emotional conditions, and employee productivity and performance decline, whereas fairness results in positive emotional situations. According to Nikpeyma, Saeedi, Azardashb and Majd (2014), performance evaluation does not always increase productivity, since it could be biased, imprecise and unaccepted by workers. Employee unhappiness and lack of motivation have been associated with performance assessment. Another noteworthy element of the PMS is the problem of supervisory and management incompetence when it comes to system deployment, as managers and supervisors need training. Mbonambi (2016) discovered that PMS failure occurred mainly because training was not transmitted to public institutions to enable successful implementation. Training is essential because it helps managers and other staff understand the concept behind PMS, what it is attempting to achieve, and how it is organized and performed. Because role players are critical to the success or failure of the performance management process, it is critical that they be successfully taught throughout the process. According to Ramulumisi, Schultz and Jordan (2015), managers must be well trained and knowledgeable to adopt PMS. Sunahwati and Maarif (2019) agreed that well-trained personnel are critical to attaining optimum organizational performance and that staff development is required to improve organizational performance. There are methods that can be used to ensure that the PMS increases the productivity and performance of the staff. Employee engagement, work satisfaction, an effective assessment system, motivation, and a personal development plan are some of the approaches that public sector organizations might apply, according to the study results.

Concluding Remarks

Without a doubt, a well-implemented Performance Management System (PMS) is a critical tool to improve employee performance, productivity, and organizational performance. The public sector must do a lot to ensure that the system is implemented to accomplish the intended goals rather than just for the sake of compliance. Since performance management is a continuous process that involves planning,

reviewing, rewarding, and developing performance, public sector institutions must ensure that the process is started effectively in such a way that all aspects of the process are explained to all employees and it is determined if all employees are on board from the beginning, as a result, during the financial year, the process of effective communication will be developed and translated to all phases of the system. Because the PMS is ineffective because no continuous feedback is offered, the system is only a formality, management must ensure that the quarterly meetings between the supervisor and subordinates are facilitated and recorded. If meetings are not facilitated, managers must ensure that the supervisor and supervisee accounts; thus, these meetings provide the supervisor and supervisee with the opportunity to discuss employee performance and adjust as needed. It is on this premise that this paper finds communication to be a crucial tool in the PMS, even though it is underappreciated by the employees who are responsible to implement thy PMS in the public institutions. There is a need in public institutions to ensure fairness in the appraisal system; the system was designed to reward good performing employees, recognise, and motivate them. The system was not designed to frustrate and demoralise the employees. The public institutions need to design the rating system which will be fair to all employees, those who are to be awarded for good performance must be judged according to the statists collected and complied for the warding committee. Appraisal systems are supposed to by offering a route for regular contact and feedback, it enhances the link between employees and their employers. The employees responsible for implementing the PMS process must be properly trained so that the system can be implemented correctly. It is unacceptable that those charged with implementing the PMS in public institutions are completely unaware of what is going on. Not to mention the fact that these managers and supervisors are responsible for training their subordinates, their ineptness poses a severe threat to employee development and productivity. Without adequate training, the government should not grant permission to implement the systems. As a result, the system has been considered a formality rather than a critical tool for the organization to achieve its goals and objectives. As of this study, employee engagement, job satisfaction, an effective evaluation system, a personal development plan, and motivation are some of the techniques that public sector institutions can use to develop and enhance employee performance / productivity, and this will be beneficial to service delivery. The PMS was created with the goal of identifying the training needs of employees using performance development plans, motivating employees through evaluation systems, and developing their productivity through continuous feedback on performance and identifying areas to improve by doing so. The service delivery is promoted through the enhancement of the productivity and performance of the employee; therefore, the PMS is a crucial tool, not a formality, and must be monitored by management in public institutions.

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