



## The Effectiveness of Performance Management Systems in the Workplace: A Case of Tzaneen Local Municipality

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### **Abstract**

This study examines performance management as a tool in effective service delivery of local government. The main objective of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of an institutional performance management system on a workplace with specific reference to municipalities. This study adopted a conceptual approach using qualitative research methodology and relying heavily on secondary data. It further adopted both the empirical approach and the conceptual approach relying heavily on primary and secondary data. Various countries in the developing world took a decision to join this global trend of reforming their administrative systems to meet the challenges of the 21st century, and a few policies were developed and implemented to achieve the objectives of origination. Performance Management has attained a position which is a vital link between the day-to-day duties that are performed by individuals in the organisation alongside the progression towards achieving the organisations overall strategic goals. It is a continuous process of improving performance by setting individual and team goals, which are aligned with the objectives of the organization, planning performance to achieve the goals, reviewing and assessing progress, and developing the knowledge, skills and abilities of people. This whole work system begins when a job is defined as needed.

**Keywords:** *Performance Management; Local Government; Municipal Systems Act; Integrated Development Planning*

### **1. Introduction**

Local governments in South Africa (LGs) have an important role to play in providing services to the community. However, some local governments still show relatively low performance. The importance of performance management in local governments is not only as a management and communication tool but also as an important source in the budgetary process. However, to get the benefits of the system, the local government should be careful to select applicable standards and relevant performance indicators (junali, 2015).

Ndevu and Muller (2018:4) opines that performance management is a strategic and integrated approach to deliver sustained success to the organization by improving the performance of employees and developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors. The objective, from this definition, was to improve the results at the individual, team, and organisation level. Performance management is a process that significantly affects organizational success by having managers and employees work together to set expectations, review results, and ultimately reward excellent performance. It is argued that encouraging a performance management approach in the organisation means managing results, not rules. The interest was more in achieving organisational objectives and goals rather than in monitoring how procedures and policies are implemented.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted motivation theory because motivated employees perform better than low morale employees. Badubi (2017) avers that in all enterprises, whether private or state owned, motivation plays a key role in driving employees towards achieving their goals, organisational goals, and to a certain extent the dreams of their nations. There are many theories of motivation, and they mostly give a relation or influence the outcomes of employee job satisfaction. There are three main theory categories, namely content theories, process theories, and contemporary theories, these theories include Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's motivator-hygiene (or two-factor) theory, Alderfer's Existence, Relatedness and Growth theory, and McClelland's needs theory. How motivation comes about and how it leads to satisfaction is explained by process theories; theories that fall into this category include the Porter-Lawler model and the expectancy theory of Vroom. Contemporary theories of motivation incorporate equity, control, and agency theory, as well as goal setting, reinforcement, and job design theory. The theories of motivation maybe categorized according to their definitions and purpose, but critical analysis reveal that they are all linked, they lead to serving satisfaction in employees. The use of both content and process theories must be put into practice to motivate employees effectively. In extrinsic motivation, the factors (hygiene) that satisfy lower-level needs are different from those (motivators) that satisfy or partially satisfy higher level needs. If hygiene factors (factors outside the job itself, such as working conditions, salary, and incentive pay) are inadequate, employees become dissatisfied. Instead of relying on hygiene, the manager interested in creating a self-motivated workforce should emphasize the content of the job or motivation factors. Managers do this by enriching worker's jobs so that they are more challenging and providing feedback and recognition. Rewards as the main motivation factor can also encourage retention within the organization, and the broader employment relationship and social exchange are significant. Motivation's whole idea is to provide employees with surties of job security, nice working conditions, loyalty, and belonging to the enterprise, as well as the workforce given some challenges.

Souders (2019) postulates that these theories of motivation are often separated into content theories and process theories. In a nutshell, content theories explain what motivation is and process theories describe how motivation occurs. There are also many cognitive theories that relate to motivation and explain how our way of thinking and perceiving ourselves and the world around us can influence our motivations. From self-concept, dissonance and mindset to values, orientation and perceived control, these theories explain how our preference toward certain mental constructs can increase or impair our ability to take goal-directed action. Theories of motivation are also grouped by the field of human endeavour to which they apply. Several theories relate to motivating employees where incentives and needs take a central stage, as well as theories used in sports and performance psychology where affect is considered a more prominent driver of human behaviour. Some of these theories are also applied to education and learning.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### **3.1 Performance Management Systems at Workplace**

The Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulation (2001:9) defines performance management as a framework that describes and represents how the municipality's cycle and performance, planning, monitoring, measurement, review, reporting, and improvement processes will be conducted, organized and managed, including determining the role of the different players in the role. Performance management is further defined by the Department of Provincial and Local Government, The Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulation (2001:24) as a strategic approach to management, which equips leaders, managers, workers, and stakeholders at different levels with a set of tools and techniques to regularly plan, continuously monitor, periodically measure, and review the performance of the institution in terms of indicators and targets for efficiency, effectiveness, and impact.

The concept of performance management has been defined by various writers from different contextual basis. In this study, performance management will be looked at from the context of local government. The Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulation (2001:9) defines performance management as a framework that describes and represents how the municipality's cycle and performance, planning, monitoring, measurement, review, reporting and improvement processes will be conducted, organized, and managed, including determining the role of the different players. in the role. Performance management is further defined by the Department of Provincial and Local Government, Municipal Planning, and Performance Management Regulation (2001:24) as a strategic approach to management, which equips leaders, managers, workers, and stakeholders at different levels with a set of tools and techniques to regularly plan, continuously monitor, periodically measure, and review the performance of the institution in terms of indicators and targets for efficiency, effectiveness, and impact.

Shane (2010:6) concurs with the above definitions by defining performance management as a systematic effort to improve performance through an ongoing process of establishing desired outcomes, setting performance standards, then collecting, analysing and reporting on streams of data to improve individual and collective performance. On the other hand, Armstrong (1995: 429) defines performance management as a means of getting better results from an institution, teams, and individuals by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards, and competence requirements.

From the above definitions, it becomes clear that performance management is a collection of various activities that should be performed by different role players to give an organisation a competitive edge. This notion is affirmed by Taticchi, Tonelli, and Cagnazzo (2009: 47) who argue that it is through the process of performance management that organisations can improve their efficiency and effectiveness. The definitions of performance management also indicate that the activities should occur as continuous and circular processes rather than being a once-off incident.

#### **3.1 Developing a Performance Management System in Local Government**

Selepe (2018: 543) avers that it is very important to develop a performance management system that is not an isolated project but is well aligned with other Human Resources Management systems within the municipal context. Typical issues that must be addressed to ensure an appropriate customised performance management system are highlighted in the following subsections.

##### **3.1.1 Pre-Design Considerations**

Selepe (2018: 543) emphasized that an effective performance management system should enable and empower line management to implement the strategies and objectives of an organization successfully.

Probably one of the most crucial aspects during the very early stages of planning the introduction of systematic performance management would be the very question of whether we want to have such a formal system for managing work performance or not. Although Human Resources practitioners might well see the value and have relevant expertise, the key is that top management team must be keen to have it. If it can be demonstrated that such a system is fundamental to the actual process of strategy execution, it should be straightforward.

### 3.1.2 Design of the System

Once the decision has been made, active participation in developing the system will commence. Input from internal or external specialists is required. Probably the most important thing is to involve the people who will be using the system. The actual essential activities must be performed to develop the system:

- **Obtaining Basic Job Information**

Job design and analysis, which form the cornerstone of gathering job-related information. The nature of the work and typical job duties and responsibilities should guide how the system should work.

- **Establishing Performance Standards and Performance Criteria**

Performance standards describe the conditions for the desired performance of the work. The system should probably be designed such that the work performance standards are mutually agreed upon by those who must do the work and those to whom they report.

- **Choosing the Format and the Source of Appraisal Information**

Decisions on the format of appraisal instrument and sources that should generate the ratings must again be the outcome of thorough deliberation on my factors such as the overall objectives, potential advantages and disadvantages and organisation-specific circumstances.

- **Preparation of Documentation**

The relevant policy documents should form the framework for the process and procedures that fine-tune who should be doing what and when in terms of planning and managing work performance. The actual performance appraisal forms are very important because they will form the basis for discussions as well as where we will be able to access relevant work performance related information. It is normally quite important to develop user guides together with the policies and procedures manuals for managers. Particularly important in this regard will be guidelines in relation to actual processes of assessing and discussing matters related to work performance.

### 3.1.3 Introducing and Operating the System

Selepe (2018:544) postulates that the process related to the implementation phase is mainly focused on various training sessions and introduction exercises. The contents of such training may be determined by the level of involvement of users during and the development phase, the complexity of the specific system and existing competence in performance management of the supervisors.

### 3.1.4 Maintaining the System

The maintenance of an appraisal system involves activities such as:

- Monitoring the consistent application of performance ratings.

- Reviewing satisfaction levels of managerial as well as non-management staff who are using the system and finding out about what can be done to improve the system.
- Developing and arranging and arranging training and development interventions indicated by the review results.
- Monitoring the internal and external environment for changing circumstances that may necessitate a review or adjustment of current practices; and auditing and evaluating the effectiveness of the system comprehensively from time to time (Selepe,2018:544).

### 3.2 Implementation of the Performance Management System in Local Government

Van der Waldt (2004:338) asserts that as a new requirement for municipalities in South Africa, councilors, managers, and officials must develop and implement a performance management system in terms of the requirements of legislation. Van der Waldt (2004) further asserts that the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) 32 of 2000 requires local government to establish and develop performance management systems and further establish mechanisms to monitor and review such a system.

Armstrong (2009:59) argues that the performance management system (PMS) is a set of interrelated activities and processes that are holistically treated as an integrated and key component of an institution's approach to managing performance through people and developing the skills and capabilities of its human capital, thus enhancing institutional capability and achieving sustained competitive advantage. This means that local governments should have systems and processes that develop performance management at all levels of the institution, components, teams, and individuals.

The White Paper on Local Government (1998) identifies integrated development planning, budgeting, and performance management as the powerful tools which can assist municipalities to develop an integrated perspective on development in their area. Based on this mandate, municipalities are required to develop the integrated development plan (IDP) as a 5-year strategic plan that contains short-, medium-, and long-term development objectives, strategies, and programs for the municipal area. This is a primary tool that guides and informs budgeting, management, and decision-making related to service delivery and development in a municipality. From the IDP, the Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) is developed as a one-year plan that seeks to outline how the targets will be reached by linking the available financial resources to the IDP. However, there should be a strategic congruence in which the individual goals are aligned with the unit and the organisational goals (Auquinis, 2014:20). Individual performances collectively contribute to the overall performance of the organisations, so each employee should be aware of how his own performance will fit into the performance plan of the organisations.

This strategic congruence can best be displayed by reflecting on the steps that PMS should follow as suggested by Radebe (2013:23).

The performance management system starts with managers developing and entering into performance agreements that are in line with organisational objectives. Each individual employee sets goals and key performance indicators (KPI) on an annual basis, and supervisors use the said goals and KPIs as the agenda to monitor and review performance. The targets and KPIs should be derived from annual reviewed IDP and the SDBIP (Nkuna, 2013:68).

Although acknowledging the multiple challenges encountered by municipalities, Greiling (2006:449) recommends that the performance management system, if effectively implemented, can assist municipalities in minimizing waste and adding value to the delivery of services to their communities. However, Moodley (2003) blamed the legislation for the confusion in understanding the relationship between mechanisms of public participation, integrated development planning, and performance management. The author argues that these concepts should not have been presented in three different



chapters of the Municipal Systems Act (2000) because some municipalities still fail to synergize between the IDP, budgeting process, and the PMS implementation process (Moodley 2003:27).

### 3.3 Performance Management Objectives

- To help clarify organisation goals, directions, and expectations.
- To help organizations learn how to achieve goals more effectively.
- Communicate the priorities of the organization.
- To support strategic planning by linking broad statements of direction to specific operational outputs and outcomes.
- To support budgetary planning and resource allocation processes.
- To monitor the operation of programs and to make continuous improvements.
- Motivation for public servants and restoration of pride within the public service that it is making a positive contribution.
- To enable citizens to make better informed decisions about the use of public programmes.
- Restore public confidence that they are receiving value for money in public spending.
- Assess whether the organisation is achieving its expected goals; and
- Strengthen internal administrative and external political accountability (Thomas, 2004:8).

From these aims, it becomes essential that local government should implement PMS because this is the instrument through which an organisation can measure how it performs towards achieving its goals and objectives (Van der Waldt, 2004:39).

### 3.5 Performance Management Systems as a Management Tool

PMS provides an opportunity for employees and performance managers to discuss development goals and strategies to achieve service delivery, moreover because underperformance is seen as one of the critical challenges facing South African municipalities (Bogopa, 2013:114). Van der Waldt (2004:42) indicates that “clear performance management should enable the organisation to deliver on its promises to customers or the public more consistently by converting customer or public needs into workable plans of action. Van der Waldt (2004) highlighted that PMS is a prerequisite for effective service delivery. The author further stresses that performance management is necessary for improving performance and for assuring the public that they are receiving value for money from public programmes and public organisations,

Performance in local government is a legitimate concern of politicians and officers at all spheres of government (Curtis, 1999, 47). This means that local governments will always be judged on their performance in service delivery, and it is the responsibility of all role players to play their part. Fourie (2012:126) further supports this argument by stating that the performance management system is often used as a management tool to implement a better strategy to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, this means that local government, like all other spheres of government, cannot ignore the essence of performance management in facilitating achievement of goals within local government. An effective performance management system facilitates the delivery of quality service by public entities and through the efficient and effective performance management system the individual and team performance in public organisations can be improved (Radebe, 2013: 272).

To improve its efficiency and effectiveness, the municipality should have the capacity to implement a performance management system. This means that suitable and qualified people should be recruited to drive municipal programs forward, yet municipalities still fail in this regard (Bogopa: 2013:113).

Nkuna (2013: 66) concurs by citing that manager should have decisive leadership and should also have the expertise to understand what a performance management system is and what it seeks to achieve. This means that the performance management system should be owned by the line management and driven from the top of the organisation. However, the study by Radebe (2013) on the 'Impact of a performance management system on service delivery in the Metropolitan Municipality of Johannesburg City' reveals that some employees were not involved in the development of key performance indicators and were not part of the evaluation of the performance of the municipality. This created a situation where daily operations in the municipality did not comply with its strategic goals.

Municipalities across the country are obliged to implement the performance management system to review their progress. An effective PMS will result in fair and fair consequences and rewards because performance would be measured at all levels and in a consistent way. (Warnich, Carrell, Elbert, 2006: 263)

For PMS to be effective, all political and administrative structures within the municipality should inculcate a culture of performance within themselves. The culture of performance can be instilled by each municipality developing its own PMS framework or policy as mandated by sect. 7 (1) of The Municipal Planning and Performance Management regulations of 2001. The PMS policy will outline the purpose of PMS and the objectives that the municipality wants to achieve with the system. The policy is also intended to reflect the specific model that the municipality wants to use to link its performance with its goals and the role players in the performance management system (Van der Waladt, 2004: 292).

It is critical for each municipality to complete the exercise on identifying the stakeholders for its performance management system to be effective (Seemela, 2005, 49). Each of the stakeholders must play a different role in the development, implementation, and use of the performance management system, so the municipality must acknowledge and plan the participation of these stakeholders in their framework. This framework could also provide a link between the legislative framework and the operational institutionalisation of it in the municipality. The framework must be the driving force for the implementation of performance management in an organisation-specific manner and the devolution of the system to include all levels of staff and all employees.

Numerous studies have been conducted on PMS, some focusing on the various spheres of government in the public service system, and others focusing on either implementation or efficacy of PMS. However, what remains crucial is that PMS is yet to be seen to improve the performance and productivity of the public service.

Seemela (2005) argues that what needs to be considered as an effective municipality is the one rendering competitive using performance indicators, performance targets, and benchmarking. The author further recommends that the following steps be taken to develop a PMS framework:

- Select the process to benchmark and build support from management.
- Determine current performance through self-assessment.
- Determine where performance should be by choosing potential benchmark partners.
- Determine the performance gap by subtracting where a municipality should be from where it is at the present point in time.
- Design a detailed, achievable, and goal-oriented action plan; and
- Continuous improvement begins with continuous monitoring and evaluation.

Although acknowledging the fact that PMS is a specialised field that requires expertise and skills, the study by Seemela (2005) makes no mention of the capacity municipalities should have to effectively implement PMS. The author also falls short of the importance of training PMS officials. The study also

concedes that organizations perform well because of their personnel and not because of the sophisticated strategic plans and programs that they develop. The author is, however, commended on bringing in the systems theory into the performance management scenario. The systems theory supposes that in the process of converting inputs into outputs, environmental factors will always be the influencing factor (Van der Waldt and Du Toit, 1999:64). Therefore, this presupposes that, as we judge the performance of municipalities, contextual factors should also be taken into cognisance.

Munzhedzi (2011) conducted a study on 'Performance Management System and Improved Productivity: A Case of the Department of Local Government and Housing in Limpopo Province' to meet the requirements for a master's degree in administration with the University of South Africa. The research sought to understand how PMS in the Limpopo Department of Local Government and Housing (DLGH) contributes to improving productivity as intended. This study also aimed to understand the implementation of PMS in the public service. Munzhedzi (2011) highlights that there is generally a poor understanding of PMS in the public service and in the DLGH. The author reflects that there are several challenges that hinder the effective implementation of PMS in the public service, and these are amongst others; a challenge of biased ratings or subjective assessment and a setting of unrealistic performance targets which employees fail to realize. The study concluded that although it plays a significant role in improving productivity, PMS has not contributed to improving DLGH productivity in Limpopo Province.

Even though Munzhedzi (2011) study is on the provincial level of the government rather than the municipal level, it is worth noting if indeed PMS can contribute towards the organization being productive. In concluding the findings of the study, Munzhedzi (2011) recommends, among others, that officials should be made to understand that low individual performance may lead to a low departmental performance and productivity and that compliance should be strengthened by ensuring timely submission of performance instruments. The author also recommends that the performance goals of both the individual employees and the organization be clearly defined. These recommendations, as cited by Munzhedzi, would apply even in the sphere of local government because implementation of PMS follows the same pattern.

Another empirical study on PMS was conducted by Kgwefane (2014), who investigated the effects of the Performance Management System on service delivery in the Mbombela Local Municipality as a partial fulfillment of the Master of Public Administration degree. The study was intended to examine the effects of the approved Performance Management System for the Mbombela Local Municipality on service delivery and to determine ways to improve the achievement of performance targets in the municipality. The study findings recorded that the introduction of PMS in the Mbombela Local Municipality has not led to positive changes in the delivery of services because municipalities tend to focus mainly on complying with the legislative requirements of having an integrated development plan (IDP) and PMS, other than implementing the IDP and PMS to improve the delivery of services to the community. The study further revealed that there is a general lack of knowledge in relation to the legislative requirements underpinning PMS and setting performance targets and that there is noncompliance with the approved PMS and Municipal Finance Management Act no. 56 of 2003 in relation to conducting quarterly performance reviews.

The author concludes that Mbombela Local Government has serious capacity issues in ensuring that plans are implemented accordingly in line with the annual and strategic plans. Taking into account these findings, Kgwefane (2014) recommends that Mbombela Local Municipality should enhance their PMS by implementing, among other recommendations, the following:

- PMS must be cascaded to all levels of employees in the municipality to create a performance culture and also ensure that all employees work towards achieving the vision and strategy of the municipality.



- The approved PMS needs to be fully implemented by ensuring that all the different committees which include monitoring and evaluation convene and perform their respective functions.
- The political leadership and management must ensure alignment and integration of the following processes IDP, budgets, and PMS.

Kgwefane (2014) agree that the implementation of PMS remains a serious challenge to both employees and their supervisors. They further agree that non-compliance to PMS policy provisions such as timeous submissions of performance instruments and conducting quarterly reviews by some individual employees is also a challenge. These two scholars also stress that training employees on PMS is not adequate and promotes the link between personal and institutional performance. Training and development of employees in an institution helps employees reach their full potential in the performance of their responsibilities.

The gap in their studies remains unclosed because they do not go deeper to identify the performance management tool that is being used in their identified organizations of study. Studies reveal that most organizations prefer the Balanced Score Card as a performance management tool. However, what emerges from Radebe's (2013) study is that employees do not know how the Balanced Scorecard functions, often resulting in inaccurate measurement of employee performance and incompatible allocation of rewards. Radebe (2013:42) defines the balanced score card as a tool used during the performance measurement process to measure individual or organisational performance on four perspectives (financial, customer, learning and growth, and internal processes indicators). Organisations that employ the Balanced Scorecard as a performance measurement mechanism can facilitate change in their business environment. However, Sharif (2002:63) recommends that the Balanced Scorecard requires managers at all levels of management in an organisation to generate discussions about the vision of an organisation and open channels of communication across an organisation. Nkuna (2013: 72) promotes the balanced scorecard as a set of measures that provide organisations with the invaluable information of viewing performance in various areas simultaneously.

Linking the balanced score card with the systems approach, Kihn (2010:474) suggests that the system approach integrates all components of a performance management system and the perspectives of the balanced scorecard to ensure that they are related to each other.

Except for Munzhedzi (2011) and Radebe (2013), Kgwefane (2014) has not considered the importance of key stakeholders in determining the efficacy of PMS. Simmons (2008:469) contend by stating that stakeholders should be role players in the development and implementation of a performance management system in municipalities and these role players are managers, employees, customers, and suppliers.

Radebe's (2013) study concludes by stating that the performance management system in a municipality is not often geared toward the effective delivery of services. Similarly, Kgwefane (2014) found that the introduction of PMS in the Mbombela Local Municipality has not led to a positive change in the delivery of services. The question that remains is how effective PMS can be towards the municipality receiving clean audit opinions, hence the relevance of this study on the effectiveness of performance management system in The Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality.

#### **4. Methodology**

The research methodology helped us to understand why such a study has been undertaken, how the research problem is defined, the use of data, and the method used. However, it is also critically important to understand why certain methods or techniques were used during data collection (Malatji, 2017:28). The research methodology focuses on the steps, procedures, and techniques that the researcher

will follow to implement the research design. Brynard and Hanekom (2014:38) define research methodology as a system through which a researcher can collect, analyze, and interpret data in order that research aims, and objectives can be achieved.

### **Conclusion**

The study briefly discussed the theoretical framework with specific reference to motivation theories because motivated employees' performance is refined and improved. The study also gave an exposition of the performance system, the appropriate development of the performance management system within the municipal environment, and the implementation of the performance system. It is evident that this study revealed that the performance management system, as implemented in the Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality, is not geared towards enhancing the performance of the municipality and the improvement the future audit results as well as provision of services. The performance management system was merely implemented to comply with the legislative framework of both the individual performance management system and the institutional performance management system with the local government context.

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