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# PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES IN THE LESOTHO MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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## Abstract

An Integrated Performance Management System was introduced in the Public Service of Lesotho, in the Ministry of Social Development, to enhance public officers' performance and ultimately service delivery. The study identified challenges that impeded the implementation of the Integrated Performance Management System within the Lesotho Ministry of Social Development. The purpose of the study was to promote effective service delivery based on the implementation of the Integrated Performance Management System within the thirteen departments of this Ministry. The research established that several legislative directives and policies have been introduced to support the implementation of the Integrated Performance Management System in the Ministry of Social Development. However, challenges still seemed eminent. A case study was conducted within the thirteen departments of the Lesotho Ministry of Social Development. A quantitative approach, using self-administered questionnaires, was used to collect data. The analysis was done through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23. The research showed that challenges in the implementation of the Integrated Performance Management System revolve around (i) a lack of training on performance management (i.e. a lack of orientation on performance management, monitoring and evaluation, and laws and policies supporting the implementation of the Integrated Performance Management System); (ii) limited management involvement in the implementation of the Integrated Performance Management System; and (iii) poor communication in performance planning, reviews, feedback, and monitoring and evaluation of performance. The article highlights the need for support and leadership from managers when it comes to the successful implementation of performance management in the public service. The findings provide preliminary insight that adds to the body of knowledge concerned with the implementation of performance management in the Lesotho public service context as well as the broader service delivery environment.

**Keywords:** Performance Management System, Lesotho Ministry of Social Development, Performance management implementation challenges

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Performance management (PM) is defined as a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing the performance of individuals and

teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organisation (Aguinis, 2013:2). As a system, it serves different purposes in an organisation: it assists top management to achieve strategic business objectives; furnishes valid and useful information for making administrative decisions about employees; informs employees about their performance and about the organisation's and the supervisor's expectations; allows managers to provide coaching to their employees; provides information to be used in workplace planning and allocation of human resources; and collects useful information that can be used for various purposes such as test development and human resource decisions. According to Malefane (2016:141), appraising and managing performance serves as an indicator that the government institution intends to maximise the service delivery to its communities.

The Performance Management System (PMS) in the Lesotho Public Service has existed since 1969 and was enforced by the 1969 Public Service Regulations (Ministry of Public Service, 2005:15). This PMS used confidential reporting, often dubbed a "closed system", whereby the supervisors reported about subordinates on issues such as conduct, performance and promotion eligibility (Sefali, 2010:56–57). The assessment that was recorded on the confidential report was the sole opinion of the supervisor, who seldom consulted the appraised employees for agreement or disagreement with the contents of the report, hence its name, a closed system. This system was characterised by the absence of a transparent mechanism of feedback and communication and, as a result, the Government of Lesotho, having realised its limitations, introduced the Performance Management System Policy (PMSP) in 1995.

The PMS was reintroduced in 2000 and renamed the Integrated Performance Management System (IPMS). The reason for this reintroduction was that the PMS was not fully deployed across all government ministries, departments and agencies as was envisaged at that time. To strengthen this initiative, performance management in the public service was further captured in formal legislation, namely the Public Service Act (no. 2 of 2005), Public Service Regulations (2008), Codes of Good Practice Act (no. 82 of 2008), Basic Conditions of Employment for Public Officers Act (no. 43 of 2011) and Public Financial Management and Accountability (PFMA) Act (no. 51 of 2011), and was therefore enforced in all Lesotho government ministries, departments and agencies. Since the implementation of the ministry's IPMS, some achievements have been recognised. However, the implementation process of the IPMS was not carried out as it should have been (i) because of a lack of training on the application and implementation of a PMS; (ii) because of a lack of commitment; and (iii) because the PMS is not tied to pay (incentives, motivation and recognition) (Sefali, 2010:194–197).

The purpose of the study, as reflected in this article, was to promote effective service delivery based on the implementation of the IPMS within the thirteen departments of the Lesotho Ministry of Social Development (MSD), by

identifying challenges. Effectiveness is defined as the measure which assesses the ability of an organisation to attain its pre-determined goals and objectives. Simply put, an organisation is effective to the degree to which it achieves its goals. In a nutshell, effectiveness is the extent to which the policy objectives of an organisation are achieved, often referred to as doing the right things (Stuart, 2017).

In order to achieve this objective, the article identified challenges that impeded the implementation of the current IPMS in Lesotho MSD, and proposed strategies to be employed by managers within the ministry's thirteen departments for improving the implementation of the IPMS and ultimately promoting effective service delivery.

## **2. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

Performance measurement in the public sector started around the early 1900s, mainly in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK). Government administration was seen as a profession and a science in itself, with the principles of scientific management including functions such as planning, specialisation and standardisation. The measurement of employee performance was largely a response to the context of industrialisation, poverty, social instability and governments afflicted by corruption (Yosinta, 2016:12). Performance budgeting emerged in the USA through the Hoover Commission (1949), and required a budget to be an expression of government objectives in terms of work to be done. This development was a result of the growth in government in the 1930s and 1940s and aimed at holding government accountable with the focus on performance and service delivery. The initiatives by governments to improve performance and performance management (around the 1970s), was replaced by an era where policies, legislation and executive actions were intended to enhance the performance of the public sector (Van Dooren, Bouckaert and Halligan, 2015).

By the 1980s the public sector started to consider the application of private sector business models to improve performance (measuring efficiency and effectiveness to become more competitive), rather than the traditional public administration approaches characterised by merely measuring inputs and outputs (Van Dooren *et al.*, 2015:176). During the 1980s performance measurement emerged as a key aspect of public management in the UK, with the focus on the measurement of outputs and performance (Van Dooren *et al.*, 2015). A significant development was the introduction of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (Malefane, 2016:138). Against these influences, the 1990s was the era of New Public Management (NPM), characterised by a move to improve management of performance. Performance information not only informs future policy and budgeting processes but all other processes, such as organisational design (Nankervis, Cooke, Chatterjee and Warner, 2013). The emphasis rested on outputs, outcomes, transparency, accountability, performance measurement and service quality. Unfortunately, NPM led to

fragmentation in the public sector and service delivery (outsourcing services and the decentralisation of responsibilities) (Halligan, 2010). Greater public accountability was therefore sought through monthly, quarterly and annual reports and a greater focus on performance evaluation and quality assurance (Halligan, 2010).

The mid-2000s saw a change toward requiring public service departments to provide advice based on outcomes (Halligan, 2010) and, according to Meynhardt, Gomez and Schweizer (2014), on creating public value. Public value here refers to benefits to individuals and their families and society as a whole, and to the notion that policy development and service delivery takes place through a process, namely (i) debate, (ii) dialogue/negotiations and (iii) action/marches/strikes. The public should therefore be convinced that the public sector is giving them value for money in return for the taxes paid. The management of performance in this respect became extremely difficult, as it often involved political debates about agendas and priorities (Meynhardt *et al.*, 2014).

## **2.1 Implementation of performance management system in the public sector**

Performance Management (PM) implementation is best managed using numerous models, most of which focus on a predictable set of variables. There is usually a sequence of activities such as performance agreement, goal setting, performance monitoring and facilitation, performance appraisal and feedback, and improved performance (Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson, Arad and Moye, 2015). Zigarmi, Nimon and Shuck (2014:17) propose three standard activities during the implementation of PM: (i) performance planning, where goals are set and standards established; (ii) day-to-day coaching, where leaders monitor performance and facilitate progress through coaching and feedback; and (iii) performance evaluation, which is the traditional annual performance review where employee performance is evaluated against yearly goals (also supported by Van der Waldt, 2014).

The term "Performance Management Programme" (PMP) refers to a department's activities to ensure that employees' work aligns with strategic objectives and priorities and that goals are consistently met effectively and efficiently (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2014). Hence, whether there are three (Zigarmi *et al.*, 2014:17), eight (Pulakos, 2009:38) or ten activities (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2014) to implementing a PMP, a strong support basis is of utmost importance to ensure effectiveness. Pulakos (2009:102) proposes that such a support base system includes (i) sufficient leadership support; (ii) buy-in for all staff; and (iii) an effective communication strategy. Literature further contends that when the PM tools and processes have been designed, additional implementation steps are necessary. These include automating the tools and processes, such as developing the Human Resource Information System, pilot testing the PMS,

training staff on using the system, and evaluating and subsequently improving the system (Pulakos, 2009:103).

The next section introduces the research design and data collection techniques. The results are then presented and the findings discussed. The results obtained will be reported in three categories, namely responses relevant to training, responses linked to management and, finally, responses linked to communication. The article concludes with a brief synopsis of the most important conclusions and recommendations for the study.

### **3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

An empirical design choice of this study was to use a case study comprised of the thirteen departments (Administration, Operations, Procurement, Human Resources, Planning, Finance, Legal, Children's Services, Disability Services, Elderly Services, Information, Audit and Information, and Technology) within the Lesotho MSD. A questionnaire survey (quantitative method) was used for data collection. A pilot study using a draft questionnaire was conducted on five respondents with similar characteristics. Based on feedback and observations from this pilot study, adjustments were made to the final questionnaire. The information collected via the aforementioned methodology was supported by a comprehensive literature survey (qualitative method) incorporating models and theories supporting the implementation of PM, completed theses on PM and PMSes, legislative directives and policies guiding the implementation of PM in Lesotho.

A stratified random sample was used. The sample for the study comprised public officers on salary Grade E and above within the thirteen departments of the Lesotho MSD. All officers concerned were targeted (100% sample), amounting to a sample size (N) of 79. Forty-six of the officials responded, giving a 58% response rate. The questionnaire responses were coded and analysed using the Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. The results were presented in the form of graphs and tables. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the results in terms of frequencies and percentages for categorical variables.

Efforts were made to ensure both the validity and reliability of data. Literature related to the research topic was consulted, and thorough planning was done before constructing the questionnaire. This ensured that the questions were relevant and formulated to obtain the desired information. A structured questionnaire, which was completed by the respondents, was used and care was taken to avoid intrusive questions. During the data collection process, the questionnaires were hand delivered to the respondents and collected from them by the researcher after completion to prevent a low response rate. It further appeared that of the thirteen departments that were identified to participate in this study, ten did, and this ensured the validity of the responses.

## 4. RESULTS

Of the 46 respondents, 22 (47.8%) were males and 24 (52.2%) females. The majority of the respondents (n=26) fell in the age group 30–40 years. Seven respondents indicated that they were younger than 30, eight respondents were older than 40 and five respondents were older than 50.

### 4.1 Responses relevant to training

Respondents were asked to rate their knowledge of Lesotho Public Service acts and regulations, which support and guide the implementation of the IPMS across the MSD. These acts incorporate the PM policies within the national political-legal frameworks and are therefore imperative in the implementation of the IPMS in the MSD. The responses are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Responses to knowledge of Lesotho Public Service acts and regulations

LESOTHO PUBLIC SERVICE ACTS	Poor/ none	Moderate	Very good	Excellent
Codes of Good Practice (no. 82 of 2008) (n=45)	6.7%	28.9%	57.8%	6.7%
Public Service Regulations (no. 38 of 2008) (n=46)	8.7%	34.8%	50.0%	6.5%
Public Service Act (no. 2 of 2005) (n=46)	8.7%	39.1%	41.3%	10.9%
Basic Conditions of Employment for Public Officers Act (no. 43 of 2011) (n=44)	11.4%	40.9%	38.6%	9.1%
PFMA Act (no. 51 of 2011) (n=46)	21.7%	39.1%	37.0%	2.2%

*Highest percentage within the response category of that particular act/regulation*

It is evident from Table 1 that the respondents had a moderate to very good knowledge of the respective acts and regulations. In the response category *very good* (column 4, Table 1), the Codes of Good Practice (no. 82 of 2008) (57.8%), the Public Service Regulations (no. 38 of 2008) (50.0%) and the Public Service Act (no. 2 of 2005) (41.3%) received the highest percentages. In the response category *moderate* (column 3, Table 1), the Basic Conditions of Employment for Public Officers Act (no. 43 of 2011) (40.9%) and the PFMA Act (no. 51 of 2011) (39.1%) received the highest percentages. There were few responses in the excellent category for knowledge regarding the mentioned acts and regulations (the lowest percentage being 2.2% and the highest 10.9%). This implies that only a few of the respondents indicated that their knowledge was on an exceptional level with regard to the mentioned acts and regulations. What is worrisome, is the high percentages received in the *poor/none* (21.7%) as well as moderate (39.1%) categories for the PFMA Act (no. 51 of 2011). This is one of the most important acts and guides all government spending units on how to account for funds allocated to them by Parliament.



An open-ended question was asked to allow respondents to motivate their responses if they selected the response category poor/none. Responses included, amongst others: “Have not come across the situation where I have to apply the Act”; “I have not come across the PFMA Act”; “Have never had access to them”; “Some have not come across but current I'm reading PFMA”; “I only know the existence of the first three Acts. I did not know about the existence of the last two until I read this questionnaire” and “To tell the truth, I have not read any of the Acts listed above. My focus has mainly been on the policies and strategies that govern our work/activities” [sic].

The respondents were also asked to rate their knowledge and understanding of the PMS policies, which are vital in the implementation of the IPMS. These policies guide public officers on how to carry out and implement the IPMS. Therefore, knowledge and understanding of these PMS policies help in managing employee performance and attaining the desired levels of performance in the MSD. The responses are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Responses to knowledge of policies

PMS POLICY	Poor/none	Moderate	Very good	Excellent
Reward and Recognition (2009) (n=46)	54.3%	30.4%	13.0%	2.2%
PM and Development Policy (2010) (n=46)	47.8%	34.8%	15.2%	2.2%
PMS Policy (2005) (n=46)	45.7%	43.5%	8.7%	2.2%
PM and Development Policy (2009) (n=46)	45.7%	41.3%	6.5%	6.5%
Draft PMS Policy (2013) (n=46)	43.5%	41.3%	15.2%	0.0%

*Indicates the highest percentage within the response category of that particular policy*

From Table 2 the highest percentages (all above 43%) appeared in the *poor/none* response category, indicating that their knowledge was below the required level (column 2, Table 2). Nearly the same responses occurred with regard to the response category *moderate* (indicating that their knowledge is at a required level) (third column, Table 2). The highest percentage (54.3%) was allocated to the Reward and Recognition Policy (2009) (second column, Table 2). In all four response categories, this percentage was the highest. In the excellent response category (indicating that their knowledge was on an exceptional level), the lowest percentages were recorded, with 0% for the Draft PMS Policy (2013).

The respondents were asked to motivate their answer if they selected the response category poor/none in the previous question. Twenty-four respondents (52.17%) replied. From the responses captured, it could be concluded that respondents did not have access to the policy, whether through poor or an absence of training and induction, or in some form of communication. These high percentages in the category poor/none imply that

the implementation of the PMS is ineffective. The study further found that the MSD's respondents seemed to have moderate knowledge and understanding of PMS policies with the PMS Policy (2005) at 43.5%, the Performance Management and Development Policy (2009) and Draft PMS Policy (2013) at 41.3%, respectively, the Reward and Recognition Policy (2009) at 30.4% and the Performance and Development Management Policy (2010) at 34.8% (column 2, Table 2).

Against this background, it seemed relevant to determine the training respondents received on the PMS to be able to comprehend the relationship between knowledge of the PMS and PMS implementation. Seven response options were listed: (i) Introduction to the PMS, (ii) Lesotho Public Service Acts, (iii) Lesotho Public Service Regulations, (iv) PMS Policies, (v) PM for Project Management, (vi) PM Software and (vii) Automated PMS. The highest percentages were obtained on training in the Lesotho Public Service acts (63%) and Lesotho Public Service regulations (57%). The results show that 46% of the respondents attested to receiving an introduction to the PMS. Lower percentages prevailed on the following: PMS Policies (33%), PM for Project Management (26%), PM Software (13%) and Automated PMS (9%). An open-ended question was asked so respondents could indicate any other PM/PMS training acquired. Nine respondents (19.56%) replied with answers such as "Induction course"; "Didn't receive any training"; "There has to be structured training and take reasonable time to make everyone understand"; "None"; "I have never attended any PM/PMS training", "PM software"; "So far, I have not been trained on any of the above subjects/topics"; and "Development of the Performance Contracts for PS" [sic].

The Lesotho Public Service acts (63%) and Lesotho Public Service Regulations (57%) scored the highest percentages. Although most respondents scored below 50% in all the PM training cited, with the exception of the Lesotho Public Service acts and Lesotho Public Service regulations already mentioned, the PMS implementation was indeed promising.

The respondents were asked to indicate the training they would like to receive. The following responses relevant to training were captured: "Conducting change management meetings/workshop" and "Recruitment of Instructors with the ability to teach the deaf and visually impaired persons i.e. Sign Language and Braille at Ithuseng Vocational and Rehabilitation Centre". Four respondents mentioned a need for orientation regarding the PMS and monitoring and evaluation for all MSD staff. Other responses included training in managerial skills, counselling and vocational work for instructors.

## **4.2 Responses relevant to management involvement in the PMS**

The respondents were asked to rate the involvement of MSD managers in PM, and the results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Responses to managers' involvement in PM

MANAGERS' ACTIVITIES	Poor/ None	Moderate	Very good	Excellent
Develop operational plans (n=46)	0.0%	22.2%	44.4%	33.3%
Performance planning (n=45)	0.0%	26.7%	44.4%	28.9%
Budget framework paper preparation (n=41)	0.0%	14.6%	36.6%	48.8%
Performance budgeting (n=39)	0.0%	23.1%	28.2%	48.7%
Prepare progress reports (n=45)	0.0%	33.3%	31.1%	35.6%
Develop performance agreements (n=45)	2.2%	44.4%	31.1%	22.2%
Attend performance review meetings (n=45)	6.7%	44.4%	40.0%	8.9%
Provide feedback on performance (n=45)	17.8%	40.0%	31.1%	11.1%
Redressing poor/non-performance (n=45)	20.0%	46.7%	28.9%	4.4%
Accountability on the PMS (n=43)	16.3%	48.8%	20.9%	14.0%
Skills in implementing the PMS (n=43)	11.6%	44.2%	32.6%	11.6%

*Indicates the highest percentage within the response category of that particular action*

The results indicate a zero percent in the response category 1, Poor/none, in the following five management activities: developing operational plans; performance planning; budget framework paper preparation; performance budgeting; and preparing progress reports (column 2, Table 3). Managers in these five PMS activities were moderately to excellently involved in PMS implementation. These high percentages signify that at least respondents appeared to be satisfied with managers' involvement in the selected PMS activities (Table 3), which appears good for the IPMS implementation. An open-ended question was asked to allow respondents to indicate any motivation for their responses. The respondents replied with: "Managers need to be trained more on PMS"; "There are no sound performance measurement systems in the Ministry"; "The reason why I selected 1 three times is that ever since I joined the Ministry of Social Development in 2013 there have not been any performance review sessions between section heads and their staff"; "Even though plans are made and reports written; we do not know their linkages with PMS and no feedback"; "I have no idea what manager's skills levels are in the implementation of the MSD's PMS" [sic].

Although the responses in the poor/none response category (column 2, Table 3) were not that significant, the respondents had the opportunity to make suggestions on how to improve managers' involvement in the implementation of the IPMS in the MSD. The following responses relevant to management involvement in PMS implementation were recorded: "making the environment conducive in order for services to be delivered effectively"; "monitoring employee performance regularly"; "provision of adequate budget to execute

ministerial activities”; “developing annual plans aligned to national development priorities”; “commitment in the development and use of the PMS”; and “regular review of employees’ performance, providing feedback and coaching” (n=4) [sic].

An open-ended question was put to respondents to identify challenges that impeded the PMS implementation in the MSD in order to achieve both ministerial and national goals and objectives and ultimately promote effective service delivery. Sixty-two responses were captured. Although several challenges were identified, it was interesting to note the high number of responses with regard to the management involvement when it came to the IPMS implementation. The variables of training and communication were mentioned, this time as challenges.

It was noted that the inability of managers was identified as a challenge. Managers were said to be unable to “conduct change management meetings”; “appreciate or understand the work done by Instructors”; and “put the system in to place” [sic]. These challenges could be ascribed to the challenge of the absence of structure with regard to the IPMS implementation. Responses included, amongst others: “Ambiguous directives from senior management”; “Ministerial data are scattered and thus hinder progress to go in line with national goals hence lead to ineffective service delivery”; “Changing PMS models frequently”; “No clear chain of command from top management to middle management”; “Lack of clear and detailed work plans”; and “Poor reporting” [sic].

The attitude of managers towards the IPMS implementation also appeared to be a challenge. It was mentioned that there appears to be a lack of “cohesion from top management to bottom staff”, “commitment in the PMS”, “accountability in the PMS”, and adherence “to procurement requirements and functions” [sic]. The challenge of attitude might be related to the “change of government”, and “political interference regarding the services provided by the MSD”. One respondent suggested, “changing the mind sets and attitudes of managers and officers to view PMS positively” [sic]. Other challenges mentioned were the “shortage of staff (with specialised skills)” and that the “Ministry’s structure which is not approved by the Ministry of Public Service created work load as more positions are not filled” [sic].

### **4.3 Responses relevant to the role of communication in the PMS**

These responses were captured from nearly every open-ended question in the questionnaire. All of them relate to the manner in which information about PM is treated from the top to the bottom. Responses relevant to communication in PMS implementation included: “organogram of the ministry should be clear”; “set roles and responsibilities of officers”; “departments to agree on activities, set key performance indicators for each programme and set performance standards for staff and work toward their attainment”;

“develop and publicise a clear communication strategy so that information is timeously disseminated across departments and districts”; and “avail material resources on time i.e. transport, offices, communication facilities, ICT equipment, internet and assistive devices” [sic].

Six respondents suggested that the MSD should provide enough material resources such as transport, office accommodation, communication facilities, ICT equipment, internet and assistive devices in its efforts to promote effective service delivery.

## 5. DISCUSSION

A study conducted by Cardona and Morley (2013) found that the most efficient way of improving Russian employees' competencies, motivation and performance was through training and performance appraisal. Employees were best motivated by career progression, compensation and communication. The study also revealed a synergistic effect between employees' motivation and compensation – the effect of employees' joint influence is greater than the results of an individual employee (Cardona and Morley, 2013:142). It is clear that employees should be rewarded according to their performance. Employees also expect managers to be transparent, coherent and consistent in their behaviour and communication (Cardona and Morley, 2013:150–151).

The Indian government has centralised PM systems with a view to assuring institutional productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. The government has implemented and integrated performance management systems under the NPM umbrella. In particular, the Centre for Good Governance (within the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances) has declared that all institutions should move away from measurement of input usage for programmes and appraisal of process compliance to assessment of outcomes and impacts through a well-designed system of performance management (Nankervis *et al.*, 2013:100).

Although formal PM systems are widely used in large Chinese institutions, certain challenges are experienced: considerable dissatisfaction with the lack of employee participation in the process, minimal feedback on performance, forced ranking systems and subjective performance reviews (Mak, 2003:4, 9). However, the Chinese government, through its state-owned Assets Supervision and Administration State Council, is using “enterprise performance index systems” to assess the effectiveness of PM systems in the former state-owned enterprises sector. It has also encouraged the reform of associated vocational training (Rieger, 2008:15).

With regard to Lesotho, the qualitative and quantitative analyses lead to the conclusion that challenges in the implementation of the IPMS within the thirteen departments of the Lesotho MSD revolve around (i) a lack of training

on PM; (ii) poor communication in performance planning, reviews, feedback, and monitoring and evaluation of performance; and (iii) limited management involvement in the implementation of the PMS.

Any attempt to promote effective service delivery, based on the implementation of the IPMS within the thirteen departments of the Lesotho MSD, should be supported by comprehensive training for staff as well as line managers. The benefits of training in PM are significant and not only assist an employee in the performance of his or her job, but also enable and skill them in other social and political roles that society demands from them (Nankervis *et al.*, 2013). It could be concluded that the MSD is challenged by a lack of not merely sufficient, coordinated as well as ongoing training with regard to the IPMS. Training in this particular case appears to be, first of all, technical of nature, that is, all the role players need to know which form(s) to complete, what they need to report on, how to make a valid judgement using the measurements provided, when to report, to whom to report, *et cetera*. During these training sessions, the contents of the relevant documents need to be mastered.

The second aspect of training relates more to the interpersonal relationship between an assessor (most probably the manager) and the assessed official. The approach or outlook of managers was clearly a visible aspect mentioned in this study. Often it is not what is said that stays with an employee but rather how it is said. Here the manager needs to take charge and set an example of “doing the right things” (being effective), as well as “doing things right” (being efficient) (Pulakos *et al.*, 2015; Stuart, 2017). Setting clear and meaningful PM objectives in line with the IPMS and strategic plan of the MSD should be the point of departure. These strategic directives should be communicated by top management with a willingness to commit to the effective as well as efficient implementation thereof. The absence of commitment and buy-in from managers will have a direct influence on all efforts aimed at improving the delivery of public services. Hence, Seotlela and Miruka (2014:180) recommend that careful attention should be paid to communicating the benefits of the PMS to employees when it is introduced to counter any resistance to change.

The respondents also identified communication as a challenge. It was noted in the literature, as well as in practice, that communication was vital in the PMS implementation, particularly during performance reviews (*i.e.* planning and feedback). The results showed that the MSD was challenged by poor communication, and this aroused fear that progress reports of various programmes within the MSD were not properly disseminated and that officers were not informed as to what other departments were doing. Even the dissemination of policy initiatives requires a well-planned communication strategy so that information is timeously disseminated across the thirteen departments.

The respondents proposed that managers should engage in the following activities in an effort to improve the PMS implementation and promote service delivery:

- Hold departmental performance evaluation meetings at the end of the financial year, improve communication channels, make the organogram clear, set roles and responsibilities of officers, departments should agree on activities, set key performance indicators for each programme and set performance standards for staff and work toward their attainment.
- Provide material resources on time, such as transport, offices, communication facilities, ICT equipment, internet and assistive devices.
- Set and implement a clear monitoring and evaluation plan and strategy.
- Make the working environment conducive to PMS implementation.
- Monitor employee performance regularly, compare individual work plans against performance, and change mindsets and attitudes of managers and officers to view the PMS positively.
- Review employee performance regularly and provide feedback and coaching.
- Review and put in place MSD's organisational structure to fill positions that are critical to promoting the mandate of the ministry.

The MSD should show the courage to investigate the incorporation of innovative principles in the management of the PMS in the future. It should also strive to learn PMS theories as it will assist in the application of the PMS in the workplace. Future research, therefore, could investigate the extent to which the findings of this study can be generalised in other sectors. A cross-sectoral study is thus recommended as it will enable a comparative analysis in different sectors.

The study makes the following four major recommendations:

Training is necessary in PMS implementation, policies and legislative frameworks. Training will assist in selling PMS initiatives, application of the PMS, creating capacity and willingness to change, particularly at the implementation stage. However, it is of the utmost importance that innovation and technology should be used to train and develop employees. Traditional training and training methods are often still used within government departments. This might just be the reason that service delivery is not meeting the basic needs of citizens. In addition to training, an automated PMS is needed in order to track performance online and correct underperformers. Second, PM should be underpinned by effective leadership and competencies from senior management. The MSD should embrace a continual monitoring, feedback, and dissemination of information. Third, strengthening of communication channels will ease performance planning,

performance review, and monitoring and evaluation. The dissemination of policy initiatives requires a well-planned communication strategy. An improved communication strategy could help disseminate information for effective PMS implementation and delivery of public services. Finally, management involvement in the PMS implementation is crucial as they execute the mandate of the organisation.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the research have established that training in PMS implementation was poor, particularly regarding PMS policies. The reasons advanced by the respondents were that policy initiatives were not properly disseminated. Hence, the majority of PMS policies and some acts and regulations received ratings in the poor/none category. The respondents also indicated that they had not received PM training due to insufficient budgets. Another challenge that impeded the PMS implementation was the lack of a monitoring and evaluation plan and strategy. The results of the study indicate that monitoring and evaluation of performance was critical in organisations for attaining the highest desired levels of results.

The findings of the research revealed that communication channels in the MSD were poor and that this impeded the successful implementation of the PMS. The results indicated that poor communication in policy dissemination hampers effective implementation of the PMS and service delivery. Communication forms a vital tool in performance planning, review, and monitoring and evaluation. Communication strategy tools assist in disseminating information timeously across the departments and districts in the MSD. They also help in the implementation of the Ministerial Strategic Plan 2014/15–2016/17, which is a component of the PMS. It is therefore concluded that the MSD should develop its own communication strategy for promoting effective service delivery.

The final challenge that impedes the implementation of the PMS in the MSD could be linked to management challenges, as indicated earlier. Other researchers contend that PM models and best practices depend largely on the management and how management start the change management process, including training of employees prior to implementation of the system.

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