

**PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES IN THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR
GENERAL OF SOUTH AFRICA (AGSA), BLOEMFONTEIN, FREE STATE:
CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS**

BY

SARAH VIOLET SEBOKO

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SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR C. CHIPUNZA

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DECLARATION

I Sarah Violet Seboko, student number _____, do hereby declare that this dissertation submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State, for the degree of Masters in Business Administration, is my own independent work and complies with the code of Academic integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Central University of Technology, Free State, and has not been submitted previously to any institution by myself or any other person in fulfilment of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.



Signature of student

June 2020

Date

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Abstract

This study focuses on emerging challenges of implementing performance appraisal practices in the South African Public Services context. It develops from a consideration of existing criticism on the way several studies on performance appraisal practices and their associated problems in the public service, use developed countries as a sample. The criticism makes the insight from the developed world-based studies inadequate regarding a developing country such as South Africa. The nation of South Africa faces teething problems with service delivery and public service employees' performance. The study examines and seeks to provide an important building block for further studies and understanding of current performance appraisal practices and their difficulties within the South African public organisations, and by extension, developing countries.

Drawing on an explanatory case study design, data was collected from 16 employees of the 187 employees at the Auditor General of South Africa, Bloemfontein Office, in the Free State, using semi-structured in-depth interview questionnaire. The data was analysed manually. The key findings of the study are that: employees know and understand performance appraisal practices; employees consider the individual performance contract as part of performance appraisal practices and important for them because it contains targets and actions that contribute to the balance score card of AGSA; and that, employees experienced challenges, which have an impact on performance appraisal practices. As a result, the study recommends that performance appraisal practices should have clear objective in order for them to function effectively and achieve the service excellence needed by the organisation.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The inception of democracy in 1994 in South Africa witnessed the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) producing an integrated framework on Performance Management and Development for the Public Service. This framework was designed to cater for reforms that would improve the public service employees' performance and eventually improved service delivery. However, there exists, currently, a general outcry in the country over the poor performance of public servants. It is this outcry, which engendered an investigation on how some the public service institutions are implementing practices that promote the performance of public service employees.

1.1.1 Background of the study

Performance appraisal, which measures and manages performance of employees, is considered as one of the most praised management practices and has been used for decades in both public and private sectors (Siaguru, 2011). However, the practice has been identified as one of the least popular of human resource management functions in the public service (Bekele, Shigutu and Tensay, 2014). The unpopularity of performance appraisal practice in the public service emanates from the difficulties in implementing it, since the focus of public service work is to meet service delivery standards and not the quantification of employee's performance (Hood, 2012).

Malik and Aslam (2013) points out that the implementation of performance appraisal within the different countries' public service encounters problems such as the lack of consensus on what to appraise and challenges on the process on how to carry it out. The extent of these problems within a specific department, such as the Auditor General South Africa (AGSA), in the South African public service environment is still unknown. Nonetheless, the AGSA has a constitutional mandate, as the Supreme Audit Institution of South Africa, to strengthen the country's democracy by enabling oversight, accountability and governance in the public service. In essence the AGSA's office is responsible for assessing the effectiveness of key management processes and provides assurance on compliance with laws and regulations in all government departments.

Based on the critical role played by AGSA, as stated, it is vital to investigate its performance appraisal practices and its related challenges. This study, however, focuses

on a specific office of the organisation, namely Bloemfontein and its associated challenges, as this office and the institution as a whole, are likely to have implications on how effective AGSA can continue to deliver on its constitutional mandate.

1.1.2 Performance appraisal in the South African Public Service

In South Africa, the public service work is regulated by different policies. These policies include the Public Service Act (RSA Act 103 of 1994), White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service of 1997 and the Skills Development (RSA Act 97 of 1998). In addition, the Public Service Commission (PSC), which is the national body responsible for appraising the organisation, administration and personnel practices of the state, expects high-quality service delivery to be rendered and that the public service initiatives demonstrate that employee performance is managed and measured to improve service delivery (Kroukamp, 2011). Policies and regulations in the local government sphere of South Africa have provided guidance for the public service to develop and implement performance management and appraisal systems (Chen, 2011). However, there is a concern within the South African public service that performance appraisal practices are being influenced politically, with management and implementation of the process hampered by factors such as lack of knowledgeable leadership, as well as inconsistency in the implementation and review of the policies on performance appraisals (Rademan and Vos, 2001; Van der Walddt, 2014; Ababio and Vyas-Doorgapersal, 2010). A further concern is that there is no coherent system of systematic policy monitoring and performance evaluation existed in the South African Public Service (Rorissa, Demissie and Pardo, 2011). As a result, the reported cases of inadequate skill capacity and poor ethical values in most government departments have resulted in poor performance management systems as well as appraisal practices (Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson, 2011).

As a result, this study focuses on performance appraisals. The study will be limited to: definitions, purpose and performance appraisal practices in the public service, as well as challenges and possible implications in implementing performance appraisals in this sector

1.1.3 Definition of performance appraisal and practices

Performance appraisal is defined as part of a wider system of performance management within an organisation Several. In addition, Mone and London (2010) outline it as the formal appraisal conducted at the end of a performance period, usually annually, or continuously, on people in the workplace to determine their performance and potential for further development. According to Azman and Rusli (2010) performance appraisal is a periodic evaluation of the output of an individual measured against certain expectations. Armstrong (2012) further defines performance appraisal as “the steps of observing and assessing employee performance, recording the assessment, and providing feedback to the employee”. These definitions indicate that performance appraisal is an assessment of an employee’s work expectations according to the output that the employee has to comply with as set out by the organisation and in relation to a clear understanding of the mission and values of the organisation with regard to such activities. Performance appraisal practices are the actual methods and techniques adopted by an organisation to monitor performance of employees.

Furthermore, performance management practices in the public service have become important. The practice can affect employees’ potential purpose to sustain the positive quality of service (Ahmad and Bujang, 2013), hence this study.

1.1.4 Purpose of performance appraisal

Performance appraisal is associated with a range of outputs such as career and organisational growth. Minaar (2010) notes that performance appraisals consist of two main attributes and benefits, which are formative (taking place during the life of a task of the organisation with the intention of improving the strategic way of the functioning of the project or organisation) and summative (learning a drawing from a complete task or an organisation that is no longer functioning). In addition, performance appraisals are used for several reasons and can have a significant impact on factors such as salary administration, performance feedback, promotions, and training development (Palaiologos, Papazekos and Panayotopoulou, 2014).

It should, however, be underscored, as stated above that there are challenges pertaining to performance management in the public service of South Africa. The indication is that, performance appraisals require time, commitment and skills to fulfil the purpose of

improving service delivery within all spheres of government (Sing, 2009). As a result, the public service should take into consideration the strengths and weaknesses of the employees to achieve the purpose of the performance appraisal system and improve service delivery.

1.2 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE WORLD OVERVIEW

Performance appraisal in the public service is the most critical human resource practice and an indispensable part of every government department (Shrivastava and Purang, 2011). However, the reported practices elsewhere continue to generate dissatisfaction among employees in the public service where it is often viewed as unfair and ineffective (Dusterhoff, Cunningham and MacGregor, 2014). For example, the tool used to appraise the performance of employees with regard to quality, quantity, cost and time in Uganda's public service and the results and outcomes of the performance appraisals were kept confidential leading to abuse, favouritism and corruption (Karyeija, 2012). Generally, performance appraisal practices and processes in the sub-Saharan Africa public service have been found to lead to high levels of poor management, low productivity, low motivation and inflexible inefficiencies, which affected employees' skills, behaviour, productivity and effectiveness of the public service (Abesiga, Netswera and Zziwa, 2015).

Furthermore, a study on Pakistan's public service revealed employee dissatisfaction towards the appraisal process and other human resource decisions made on the appraisal ratings (Ikramullah, Shah, Khan, ul Hassan and Zaman, 2012). Meanwhile, research confirms that if employees are dissatisfied with the processes and ratings of their performance, they are likely to be unwilling to take active part in any improvement plans that result out of it. This and may result in low morale which in turn will affect productivity (Alfes, Shantz, Truss and Soane, 2013). Therefore, however, exists a contrast to the dissatisfaction with the process of performance appraisal in the public service as exemplified above. The process can be important in other organisations, given the fact that it might produce high-quality standards for the organisation. For example, the system used to appraise the performance of England's public service employees showed a high level of consistency among the different elements of performance framework such as good metrics for the targets and performance indicators (Micheli and Neely, 2010). In addition, performance management and its appraisal practices in China's public service have contributed to social and economic development and

improvements in human resource capacity building, performance standards and measures (Chen, 2011).

As a result, one may argue that the failure or success of implementing performance appraisal systems depends on the procedures used in appraisal practices in the public service. Understanding the appraisal practices in this sector can shed light on corrective measures that can be put in place to address challenges encountered in the implementation of performance appraisal practices in the public service to improve the results.

1.3 CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICE IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

According to Gathoni (2012), there are a number of reasons why the implementation of performance appraisal in the public service can be defective. Firstly, there might be a lack of transparency about the system, especially with regards to invalid agreements, use of ineffective criteria in assessing the performance of employees, and the application of unclear purpose procedures. Secondly, there might be unproductive feedback, and thirdly, wrong judgements being made by the appraiser.

There are other factors that undermine the implementation of performance appraisals. Darwish, Singh and Wood (2016) asserts that a lack of sufficient resources regarding the knowledge, experience, commitment, funds, technology and skills to effectively manage organisational performance yields no clear organisational performance nor development objectives and qualities. In addition, Waheed, Mansor and Ismail (2013) underline that failure also result from the reality that the objectives of the performance appraisal might not be clearly defined, poorly administered, or they might not have the acceptance of employees in general. These negative factors make the process of accountability difficult among employees.

Other global approaches in the public service have shown that performance appraisal includes a list of organisational behaviour factors, such as communication, leadership, and teamwork, which are accompanied by varying levels of competencies (Kim and Brymer, 2011). A lack of consideration for these factors has resulted in an environment marked by unfairness and less objective performance appraisals (Aleassa, 2014). According to Getnet, Jebena and Tsegaye (2014), perceptions of unfairness that often

surface from performance appraisals indicate the need for using fair procedures and establishment of fair outcomes.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Several reasons are put forth by the South African government to explain existing poor service delivery. The most popular reason given is that the public service lacks good leadership and understanding of management practices such as performance appraisal (Koma, 2010).

Kim (2011) indicates that the practice and implementation of performance appraisals is associated with both good leadership and other factors within the human resource management function of an organisation. Although numerous studies (Saffie-Robertson and Brutus, 2014) have been carried out on performance appraisal practices and their associated problems in the public service, most of these studies can be criticised for using American and European samples. To the researcher's knowledge, no investigation, if any, has been carried out, pertaining to the challenges of implementing performance appraisal systems at a regional level in the South African context. Given the teething problems of service delivery and public service employees' performance in the country, as indicated by Siaguru (2011), such an investigation will help to provide an important building block for further studies and an increased understanding of current performance appraisal practices and its challenges within the organisations under study and, probably the larger public service environment. The study will also have ramifications for public service human resource managers with regards to the need for the development of adaptable performance appraisal practices that have implications for their organisations and employees within the South African context.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to propose possible interventions that can be implemented by the Auditor-General South Africa, Bloemfontein Office, in order to effectively carry out performance appraisals. Theoretically, the study enhances the understanding of performance appraisal practices and challenges within the framework of 'justice theory' in a typical public sector institution.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do employees at the AGSA, Bloemfontein office understand the importance of performance appraisals?
2. What are performance appraisal practices are currently utilised by the AGSA, Bloemfontein office?
3. How do employees at the AGSA, Bloemfontein office understand the current performance appraisal practices?
4. What are the challenges experienced by the employees regarding the current performance appraisal practices?
5. How can the AGSA management office in Bloemfontein use or implement interventions to improve the current performance appraisal practices?

1.7 MAIN OBJECTIVES

To determine the performance appraisal practices and challenges associated with their implementation at the AGSA, Bloemfontein office.

1.7.1 Subsidiary objective

In order to achieve the main objective, the specific objectives of the study are:

1. To determine how employees at the AGSA, Bloemfontein office understand the importance of performance appraisal.
2. To explain the current performance appraisal practices within the AGSA, Bloemfontein office.
3. To examine how employees at AGSA, Bloemfontein office understand the current performance appraisal practices.
4. To identify the challenges experienced by employees at AGSA, Bloemfontein office regarding the current performance appraisal practices.

5. To determine how management at the AGSA's office in Bloemfontein can implement interventions to ensure that current performance appraisal practices are appropriately done.

1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Patton (2014) states that delimitation is the process of eliminating repetitive, inaccurate and overlapping data. The primary matter of concern for this study was sample size and the competence of people chosen for the interviews. As a result, the selection of people currently employed and working within one working environment was the central delimitation needed for drawing conclusions from for the given environment. According to Dworkin (2012) and Mason (2010), small samples are the most appropriate option for obtaining an in-depth understanding of the research subject. Based on the main objective of this study, a small sample size was also a delimitation of the current research design.

1.9 TYPE OF ORGANISATION

The study is limited to an auditing organisation within the public sector that employs 187 employees. For the purpose of the study 18 employees were interviewed depending on their availability. Yin (2014) prescribe case study as "a study in which (a) one case (single case study) or a small number of cases (comparative case study) in their real life context are selected, and (b) scores obtained from these cases are analysed in a qualitative manner." Saunders (2011), notes that some compromises may be done regarding the choice of participants, if the research addresses sensitive topics. Two participants were chosen from each centres of office of AGSA, Bloemfontein. AGSA. Office consist of eight centres where employees is working from the different auditees of either local and provincial department. Each centre consists of managers, assistant managers and training auditors and one senior manager as a line manager.

The organogram of the organisation is more likely to have a clear structure for the easy identification of the subjects of the investigation. In addition, as part of restructuring, the number of employees in the investigation became reduced as most of the employees are auditors and they are not permanently based at the office, but out in the provincial Departments and Municipalities doing audits.

1.10 GEOGRAPHICAL DEMARCATION

The data collection of the study is limited to Auditor General of South Africa, Bloemfontein Office. This organisation is situated in Bloemfontein in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

1.11 UNITS OF ANALYSIS

The study is limited to trainee auditors who are entry-level employees, non-auditors who are senior administrators, assistant managers and managers occupying supervisory positions in the middle management levels. According to Leow (2019) these levels are the ones largely targeted and affected by the process of performance appraisal practices.

1.12 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Performance appraisal

Performance appraisal is a formal system used to set work standards, assess performance, and provide feedback to employees for the purpose of motivating, correcting and sustaining them in their performance. Information obtained from a performance appraisal is used to make pay and promotion decisions (Grobler, Wörnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield, 2011).

Performance management

Grobler et al. (2011) define performance management as a process of evaluating an employee's job performance and compares it to a set of standard communication and information of the employees. Hunter (2012) states that performance management involves employee training and a developmental component, where the manager's role is one of a coach who supports and guides the people who report to him or her.

Therefore, performance management should be viewed as an instrument within the organisation that defines employee performance with the aim of improving the overall organisational performance.

Performance feedback

Performance feedback is a strategic way of measuring, evaluating and influencing employee activities in the past, presently and in the future (Mello and Maserumule, 2010).

Motivation

Motivation refers to the inner force that drives individuals to accomplish job tasks and achieve any predetermined goal, either personal or organisational (Naqvi, Khan, Kant and Khan, 2013).

1.13 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The chapter presented an overview of performance appraisal in the South African Public Service as well as the definitions, the purposes of performance appraisal practices and performance appraisal practices world overview. The challenges of performance appraisal in the public service were discussed, followed by the problem statement and significance of the study. The research questions, objectives and delimitations of the study were presented followed by the type of organisation, geographical demarcation and unit of analysis. The key concepts pertaining to this study were defined and the limitations indicated.

1.14 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The study is presented in five chapters, as follows:

Chapter One: Overview of the study

This chapter presents as introduction and background to the study and the problem statement and research questions utilised. The chapter also outlines the research aim and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature review: overview of performance appraisal practices

This chapter reviews literature on and provides an overview of performance appraisal practices. It also discusses the challenges of performance appraisal.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methods and procedures used to conduct the research study. The chapter outlines the paradigms and research design and methodologies, target population and sampling techniques. It also presents the limitations and ethical considerations utilised in the study.

Chapter Four: Presentation, interpretation and discussion on the findings

This chapter presents the findings, interpretation and analyses from the study. It also outlines and discusses both the main themes and sub-themes noted in the study analysis.

Chapter five: Summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendation

This chapter summarises the findings and conclusions, limitations, contributions and recommendations of the research. It also evaluates the research aims in relation to the derived conclusions. Lastly, the limitations of the research, its contribution to performance appraisal, and recommendations and suggestions for further studies are presented in this chapter.

1.15 SUMMARY

Chapter one presented the background and problem statement to be investigated and addressed. The research problem questions, objectives, aim of the study and limitations of the study were also detailed in this chapter. The next chapter reviews literature review on performance appraisal practices and outlines that challenges of performance appraisal within the public services.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on performance appraisal practices and their challenges within the office of Auditor General of South Africa. This chapter, addresses challenges and implications of performance appraisal practices, and reviews the organisational justice theory perspective, which is proposed as the underlying theoretical framework of the study. The chapter further makes an overview of the international and South African performance appraisal practices in the public service. In addition, the chapter examines the challenges of performance appraisal practices in the public service in general and in the South African public service, in particular.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on the organisational justice theory (Thurston and McNall, 2010). The organisational justice theory refers to the degree to which employees perceive the decisions that affect employee fairness in the organisation (Lambert, Hogan, Jiang, Elechi, Benjamin, Morris, Laux and Dupuy, 2010).

The theory also describes and explains the role of fairness and justice in the workplace, the consequence thereof, or that of its lack (Dzansi and Dzansi, 2010). In this regard, the theory explains the perception of employee's behavioural indicator attitude received from their organisation and their behavioural reaction for such a perception (Imran, Majeed and Ayub, 2015). Loi, Lam and Chan (2012) confirm that employees who perceive fairness within their organisations relate strongly to the ethical assumption on how human beings are treated in the workplace. Clifton and Arman (2011) also claim that this behaviour of indicator attitude yields positive results when the outcome is fair towards the individual and this in turn enables the person to have good health and happiness, which in turn can have a positive impact on outcomes such as employee performance, job satisfaction and organisation success.

Employees who are of the view that they have been treated fairly tend to be more committed to the organisation than those who think that they would have been treated unfairly (Van Dijke and De Cremer and Mayer, 2010). Generally, the employees who consider their organisation as treating them unfairly retaliate by bringing in behavioural outcomes such as corruption, sabotage, abuse and plagiarism, low levels of job

satisfaction, with such a negative attitude causing conflict and unhappiness (Thurston and McNall, 2010). Managers at the Auditor General of South Africa need to be conscious of the perceptions about fairness and justness in their implementation of performance appraisal practices. A performance appraisal that is perceived unfair or biased inevitably leads to the distortion of the process. In fact, Ahmad and Oranye (2010) state that employees who thought that their manager manipulated the performance appraisal ratings for political reasons had a lower job satisfaction. Hence, as stated by Sudin (2011), there is need to understand fairness or organisational justice.

The perspectives about organisational justice theory, such as employee's perception of fairness and justice in the workplace, are considered an important and influential approach to understanding the performance appraisal reaction (Thurston and McNall, 2010). A performance appraisal may improve the level of performance in the workplace. A study conducted on two Pakistani public sectors to determine the fairness of the performance appraisal system found the perceived system as fair and diagnosed four factors of organisational justice theory (Ikramulla, 2011). As a result, an organisation must strive towards the perceived fairness of the appraisal system.

There are three different types of constructs relating to employee perceptions that explain the organisational justice dimensions. These dimensions are distributive, procedural and interactional or informational justice (Kim and Rubianty, 2011). All these dimensions relate to the performance of the appraisal system and can act as the antecedents of the trust that predict the overall perception of fairness in the workplace.

2.2.1 Distributive justice

Distributive justice refers to the employee's perception of what constitutes a fair distribution of resources based on the rule of equity (Gaudet, Trambley and Doucet, 2014). In equity theory, fairness is the giving and receiving that is proportional to the individual contribution (Adams, 1965). Equity is achieved when the ratio of employee inputs and output is equal and the ratio of one's outcome over one's input is equal to that of other employees. As a result, just rewards should be aligned with the equality rule of distributive justice.

Based on the above, the significance of the equity theory is clear. The theory states that employees put their time, effort, and knowledge (inputs) into work and in return receive

wages and compensation (outcomes) in the form of a reward or recognition (Pilvinyte, 2013). The inputs in an organisational setting include experience, qualification and effort, while the outcomes include pay, promotions and other forms of recognition. Hence, employees compare their own input contribution versus outcome ratios with those of others.

Distributive justice, from the performance appraisal context, relates to the perceived fairness of outcomes (rewards) of performance ratings received by employees. Aggarwal-Gupta and Kumar (2010) underscore the significance of the perceived fairness of the distribution of an outcome and its concern. According to Matlala (2012), employee perceptions on fairness and effectiveness of performance appraisal system are often shaped by the employees' views about the attitude of their managers. Thus, performance appraisal perspectives can be an effective tool in determining merit increase, employee bonuses and pay, and the decision on recruitment selection and placement (Gobler, et al. 2011)

McShane and Von Glinow (2010) consider effectiveness as performance that is appropriate. Individuals perceive appraisal procedures as most fair when control is vested in the participants. In addition, more employee control over the performance appraisal processes makes the distribution of work and rewards to be considered as fair. Performance appraisals should therefore be perceived as a just and fair mechanism seeking to evaluate performance and determine what the individual should be evaluated on.

The fairness of the distribution of work and rewards is viewed through comparisons with others and an injustice is considered if less was received (Aggarwal-Gupta and Kumar, 2010). This implies that employees who perceive injustice in an organisation develop negative experiences that result in unhappiness and the rise of behavioural emotions such as anger and resentment to the system. This worker unhappiness often results in the decline of employee co-operation and less production. These negative behavioural consequences, therefore, include late coming, sabotage, withdrawal, theft and other disruptive behaviour (Ahmed, Islam, Ramzan and Mohammed, 2011).

It is evident that a perceived unfair distribution of work and rewards in relation to the work input creates tension within the individuals. This means that if one person receives more

than what others are getting while doing the same job, they may feel that they are being treated unfairly. This unfair manner of accruing benefits by one employee is an unethical way that enables authorities to take advantage of a system. This can also be perceived as the practical implications of the unfairness of the performance appraisal that creates employee non-satisfaction with their jobs and the system. However, if employees understand the fairness of the system, they react positively to performance appraisal practices and improve variables such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Bhatnagar, 2013). An empirical study by Wang and Nayir (2010) on the impact of organisational justice on work performance indicates that underpaid employees reduce their contribution towards the organisation and decrease their performance but also increase performance if paid well.

2.2.2 Procedural justice

Procedural justice is defined as the fairness of the procedure used to decide on outcomes and it also addresses the fairness of the method, mechanisms and processes used to determine those (Cho and Sai, 2012). In this regard, Gupta and Kumar (2013) assert that procedural justice relates to the perceived fairness of the procedures used by a manager during the performance appraisal session. For example, procedural justice disputants find the perceived procedure as fair if they have process control that adequately allows them to present their case or have a “voice”.

The disputants are more likely to perceive a dispute resolution decision as fair if they feel that they have a voice or a sense of process control. The extent to which the affected participants are denied the right to exercise their voices reflects the levels of injustice in the social decision-making. A study carried out by Vasset, Marnburg, Furunes (2010) in Norway that focused on nurses' perceptions on procedural justice found that the most important element in employee perceptions on procedural justice in performance appraisal is their own ability to contribute. Hence, employee involvement in procedures is important and if they are not happy with the outcome of the appraisal interview, they should be allowed to voice their unhappiness.

Researchers (Aggarwal-Gupta and Kumar, 2010), posit that procedural justice concerns itself with the fairness of formal decision-making policies employed by an organisation to measure the outcome of an employee's contribution. Managers are thus expected to ensure a consistent application of decisions across the people. This implies that the

presence of a fair performance appraisal creates a sense of security, which makes employees to believe that the organisation is always aware of their hard work and will treat them with justice, even if they fail in their jobs due to external factors. Hence, employees will, from a performance appraisal perspective, show loyalty if they perceive the performance appraisal processes as just. According to Yuzhong and Guangming (2012), a lack of decision-making skills has negative effects on the overall performance of employees and the organisation. In addition, Aiken (2010); Cowell, Bristow and Munday (2012) suggest that compensating an individual does not always lead to an increase in policy acceptance or compliance. In this regard Wang and Nayir (2010), note that a process that is considered fair compels the individual to consider the decision made as acceptable.

A further observation by Geeta, Pooja and Renu (2011) notes procedural justice as a key factor for effective organisational change effort, while employee perceptions of procedural justice leads to a stronger level of organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Geeta et al. 2011). According to Al-Zu'bi (2010), the emphasis shifted to procedural justice as procedure determines outcomes and is more influential than the outcome itself. As a result, procedural fairness might play an important role for the employees of the Auditor General of South Africa since it may offer assurance of fairness in the performance appraisal practices regarding promotion, training needs and individual feedback.

2.2.3 Informational justice

Informational justice, defined as the fairness of description and information during the performance appraisal session, focuses on the explanation provided to people regarding the way procedures will be used and the way in which outcomes will be distributed (Muzumdar, 2012). In this regard, informational justice in the workplace concerns itself with the human organisational practices. These practices include the quality of the interpersonal relationship in decision-making procedures, whether an individual is treated with dignity and respect, and if an individual's own input (skills and ability) influences the received judgement on interpersonal treatment that is important for employee motivation (Iyer, 2011).

However, Sulu, Ceylan and Kaynak (2010) states that experiences of injustice in any organisation often result in the development of consequences and antecedences, such

as low commitment, stress, withdrawal syndrome and theft within the organisation, which can be damaging to the organisation. A study by Haines III and St Onge (2012) also observes that a performance appraisal that is conducted fairly is associated with employee recognition of the performance and eventually leads to the achievement of the organisational strategy and objectives.

This implies that, employee perceptions of the fairness of performance appraisal is a significant factor in employee acceptance and satisfaction with performance appraisal (Ahmed et al. 2011). It is therefore acceptable to deduce that a positive perception of performance appraisal creates a positive working environment in an organisation, while a negative perception creates problems for the organisation and ultimately affects the organisational performance.

2.3 DEFINITION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Grote (2011) defines performance appraisal as a formal process in which managers provide opinions on employees' quality of work in an organisation. The definition demonstrates that a performance appraisal is a process that creates work standards and then evaluates employee actual work performance relative to those standards and gives them feedback to improve performance and eliminate any identified performance deficiency.

As a result, a performance appraisal involves a manager's provision of feedback to the employees about the employee's performance. Managers have to exercise and observe the employee performance continually as an ongoing activity that evaluates the output of individuals' work (Meenakshi, 2012), in order to achieve organisational success (Cram, 2013).

Furthermore, individuals and managers are expected to indicate how well an individual is fulfilling the job demands and how they can accomplish tasks that will improve the individual's job performance. Paile (2012) concurs and states asserts that a performance appraisal is a process that provides an analysis of a person's overall capabilities and potential. The outcome of this process then allows informed decision-making from management for that particular performance.

Therefore, the performance appraisal focuses on evaluating employee performance, and identifies skills and shortages and gaps in the individual performance in order to provide feedback to the employee and use it for the organisation's development plan. This is supported by Sekese's (2011) who maintains that a performance appraisal that is done properly could be a powerful tool to increase an organisation's performance.

2.4 PURPOSE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

The performance appraisal is one of the most important human resources management practices that yield critical decisions regarding various human resources actions and outcomes (Gupta and Kumar, 2013). Effective human resources management ensures that results are received through people (Dessler, 2013). The aim of these critical human resources practices is administered in the management of the organisations, usually through performance appraisals that seek to improve employee performance in the workplace. Finally, performance appraisals seek to achieve employee development and administrative decision-making.

2.4.1 Developmental purpose

The developmental purpose serves numerous specific objectives such as employee development performance. A survey done by Osemeke (2012) reported that performance appraisal may be used by private sector organisations in Nigeria to determine adequate compensation for the workforce and explore the relationship between the appraisal and adequate compensation. As such, performance appraisals serve numerous objectives or purposes such as identifying training and career needs, as a communication tool, improving employee motivation and productivity, providing feedback, and pointing out employee strength and weakness. The developmental purposes are discussed below in detail:

2.4.1.1 Identifying training and career development needs

Training and development refer to systems and structures that an organisation puts in place to ensure that the ability and capacity of its employee is developed through a well thought of strategy. Employees who would have been recruited with the necessary skills and knowledge still require further training and development to suit a specific job. Nel, Werner, Poisat, Sono, Du Plessis and Ngalo (2011) regard development as formal

education, job experience, relationships, and assessment of personality and abilities that help employees to prepare for the future.

Wanjere, Egessa and Kagucia (2012) argues that a training needs analysis is the core to employee performance improvement, and to the development of skills and competencies that are necessary for the achievement of organisations goals. The training needs assessment (TNA) helps an organisation to identify the gap existing between the present performance and desired performance. Mutsoli, Mutua, Musiega, and Mumassabba (2015) concur that a training needs assessment enables the respondents to ascertain their weaknesses and strengths and leads to the selection of employees that need training, seminars and workshops in the areas identified during the assessment. Mutsoli et al. (2015) tied training needs identification to performance appraisal practices. Sharma, Singh, Singh and Singh (2012) also note that development is critical in linking the organisational goals and the employees' personal career goals. As a result, performance appraisal is a part of career development.

The above views underline the significance identifying of career needs for career development that is a structured process containing future professional and personal goals. Nonetheless, organisations get a sense of their employee training and development needs through the information generated from performance appraisals. The identified training and development needs should however be in line with the organisation's objective and strategic needs.

Training and development are beneficial to both the employees and the organisations. According to Adnan, Abdullah and Ahmad (2011), training and development practices prepare employees for the future work responsibilities, as well as provide them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the current their jobs. Obisi (2011) also notes that training and development activities improve both the job performance and growth in personality.

It should be stated that the identified employee challenges and career development solutions are agreed upon before the performance appraisal process is conducted. The training and development seek to sustain the advancement of human resource management through enhancing the learning capacity, human potentials and high performance in a working related environment. Ultimately, organisations that identify

employees' challenges and enhance their learning capacity can develop a core of highly qualified and skilful work force for their developmental needs (Fatma, 2016).

In contradiction to the above statement a study carried out in Malaysia by Ahma and Hii (2015) shows that the assessor of performance in most cases lacked competencies such as knowledge, skills expertise, experience, and a positive attitude behaviour to conduct performance appraisal exercises. Training and development, nevertheless, involves the improvement of self-knowledge and identity, nurturing talent and potential, building human capital and employability, and enhances the quality of life. Kaviri, Jafar Tholudin and Sharifishourabi (2013) conclude that the correct employee training and education provide big payoffs for the employer in increased productivity, knowledge, loyalty and general growth of the organisation. Therefore, the indication is that both the organisation and individual employees benefit from training and development.

This is certainly confirmed in a study conducted at the IT/ITes/ BPO companies that observed how the companies were combating the issue of attribution through innovative HRM practice (Jose, 2012), pay satisfaction and concentrating on career development practices (Monis and Sreedhara, 2011). Performance appraisal is also a crucial tool for the employee's career and succession development of the individual in the organisation (Jabeen, 2011). Succession planning of the individual is therefore discussed as part of the development of the individual.

2.4.1.2 Succession development planning

Garima, Rana and Grewal (2013) define succession planning as a process for identifying and developing internal people with the potential to fill the key business leadership positions in an organisation. It increases a pool of experienced and capable employees who are available to fulfil the duties at the next level position when it becomes available. When opportunities for promotion arise, managers use results from performance appraisals as a source of motivation or not for promotion. However, some organisations use job rotation and promotion to train, develop and retain employees as part of their succession planning efforts. Lateral transfer enables managers to ascertain and access employees' capabilities and core competencies, and thus marks the beginning of promotion efforts. Performance appraisals are crucial in succession planning (Noe, Hollenberki, Gehard and Wright, 2011).

The objective of the performance appraisal is to develop the individual. This includes linking employee activities to organisational strategy, communicating organisational expectations, evaluating progress, making employment decisions, rewarding performers as well as developing non-performers. Ultimately, the key issues that need to be addressed to achieve a successful implementation of the plan include training, development and performance appraisals.

2.4.1.3 Pointing out employee strength and weaknesses

Performance appraisal is a critical component in performance management that offers various advantages to the organisation (Cascio and Aguinis, 2011; Grote, 2011). Through performance appraisal, an organisation can describe different employee's strengths and weakness. Performance appraisals, which involve the exchange of information in order to build a relationship between the employee and the manager (Pilcher, 2012), may enable managers to make some good decisions about a wide range of matters (Ahmed, 2015; Cambon and Steiner, 2015). The process may assist the managers to identify those who are performing well and the poor performers. The performance appraisal system may, after identifying the weakness of the employee, allow the kind of support that the employee needs to better their performance.

The purpose of performance appraisals is in indeed to identify the weaknesses and strengths in the employee's performance and to determine training needs, in order to set plans for the future development. It furthermore acts as a motivator by serving as a basis for determining rewards and career feedback. This implies that there is a need to find the weaknesses so that they feed into the developmental needs and recommendations for the remedial action if necessary (Chiang and Birtch, 2010). Nonetheless, the appraisal also obtains data that is used to determine information about the relative worth of an employee to the organisation.

2.4.1.4 Communication tool

Performance appraisals provide an opportunity for formal communication between management and employee concerning the organisation's perceptions of the employee's performance. Successful communication requires two-way interaction between the people. Pichler, Varma, Michel, Levy, Budhwar and Sharma (2016) in their analysis of the social context of the performance appraisal, mention the role of the exchange of the

information between the manager and the employee, the impact of procedural justice on the performance appraisal, and the role of motivation in improving performance and establishing a better understanding of reactions regarding performance appraisal.

Communication during performance appraisal enables employers and employees to define, communicate and review expectation goals and progress regarding the achievement of the strategic objective/s. Thus, a performance appraisal is a useful communication tool for employee goal setting and performance planning for the managers. This tool assists in guiding the manager with facilitating conditions that enable the employee to define and set clear achievable goals and expectations from the employee's daily routine duties.

Most organisations use this tool to evaluate the work of their employees. Communication always require that an employee have an opportunity that provides them with feedback in order that the delivered message is understood by all parties involved. In a way, it is an element of managerial control tool that is used to communicate correctly with the employees to determine the performance standards and expectation of the organisation. This is indeed confirmed by Nel et al. (2011) in their assertion that organisations can provide and remedy the performance appraisal problems by ensuring that a two-way conversation occurs between the manager and the employee.

2.4.1.5 Increasing employee performance and productivity

Employee performance is defined as the productivity and quality of work performance by an employee (Indermun, Saheedbayat, 2013). Contextual factors, such as structure, policies and systems, have a significant role in embedding a broader approach to performance management in employee performance appraisals that increase both individual and organisational performance. Dattner (2013) concludes by highlighting the importance of considering the performance appraisal context during the constitution of effective employee performance appraisal systems. In that sense, employee performance combines skills, knowledge, ability, attitude, effort and results.

Employee performance is also an element for both managerial control and proper communication of the pre-determined performance standards and expectations. Performance appraisal is used to evaluate employee performance and ultimately to

provide information regarding the effectiveness of employees in relation to job performance.

It has increasingly become a tool to manage and improve the performance of the employees and to make valid decisions that enhance the effectiveness of the performance of the individual in the organisation (Khan, Abbasi, Waseem, Ayaz and Ijaz, 2016). In this context, the focus on the relationship between employee and manager emphasizes that the performance management system might be successful by improving the communication between manager and employee and, consequently, the performance management systems in particular organizational contexts (Pulakos and O'Leary, 2011).

Effectiveness, which is the degree to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved (McShane and Von Glinow, 2010), is very important in performance management. The effectiveness of the performance management then, relates to the social context of performance as daily behaviours and interactions have a significant role (Pulakos, Hason, Arad and Moye, 2015). It emphasises the role of the social context of performance appraisal on the approach and effectiveness of employee performance. Hence, effectiveness concerns itself with doing the right things. For example, employee performance in the South Africa public service, which has received momentous research attention (Molefe, Roodt and Schurink, 2011; Mafan and Pooe, 2013), is considered as a consisting the supply of the public service goods and services in a more effective and efficient way. In contrast, Nilsson (2010) notes that the public service organisation may find it difficult to overcome the challenge of underperformance of operations.

In view of the above, effective performance management in an organisation, particularly high levels of employee performance, is crucial for the successful accomplishment of the organisational strategy and objectives (Hainess III and St. Onge, 2012). Nonetheless, the effectiveness of a performance appraisal is questioned in cases where the implementation of an assessment of the ability of an employee not performing the routine is unstructured and becomes subjective in the workplace. A study by Sharma, Sharma and Agarwal (2016) however, states that there is a lack of clarity among the researchers on how to define constructs of effectiveness in the context of performance appraisal and indicators for measuring an employee's perception of accuracy and fairness scale.

Productivity refers to the results arising from the link between employee ability, motivation and the workplace environment (Anyim, Chidi and Badejo, 2012). Fachin and Gavosto (2010) argue that understanding the causes of productivity is an important characteristic for managers responsible for the production of goods. Muogbo (2013) is of the view that there is a relationship between monetary reward and employee performance. Productivity is also linked with performance appraisals in that an appraisal conveys information to employees about how the organisation views their performance. Finally, monetary rewards, as noted by Muogbo (2013), is a good predictor of employee's performance.

The productivity and performance of an organisation depends upon organisational commitment (Bushra, Usman and Naveed, 2011). Managers in such a context use performance appraisal to motivate, direct and develop employees to maximise productivity. For example, research undertaken on performance issues and service delivery within the public service shows that performance appraisals were done from a socio-economic perspective whereas the study sought to examine the perception of employees regarding the challenges experienced and their effect on productivity (Mafini and Pooe, 2013). This implies that managers may create the willingness to achieve organisational objectives, which will in turn increase organisational productivity.

Performance appraisal is effective in bringing about positive change in employee performance such as training development and improving the well-being of the organisation in terms of the return on investment and productivity (Wadhwa and Wadhwa, 2011). Employees with high productivity display high levels of performance (Indermum and Saheedbayat, 2013). This means that there is a clear link between productivity and employee performance. This observation is confirmed in a Malaysian study that noted that the introduction of a new performance appraisal system resulted in employees achieving a higher productivity (Phin, 2015). Therefore, employees who believe that the organisation pays attention to the quality of their work may experience more job satisfaction and show a higher level of productivity, and ultimately more commitment to the organisation (Fatt, Khin and Heng, 2010).

2.4.1.6 Employee feedback

Feedback refers to regular communication between manager and employee that provides the employee with performance results and identifies required training needs with the intention to guide and motivate the employee to improve their performance for their advancement in the organisation (Singh, 2010). In that sense feedback communicates gaps relating to employee performance and the expectations that may guide the training and development plans aiming to improve employee skills and potential that is essential for workforce planning. Finally, it should be noted that performance feedback with ratings may be given to employees after performance appraisal process is finalised.

Performance appraisals develop and enhance employee performance through the feedback that employees receive regarding their performance (Cascio and Aguinis, 2011). According to E-Scan Newsletter (2011), a good performance appraisal gives employees a constructive and unbiased feedback on their job. The Newsletter further indicates that employees viewed having to choose between giving an honest feedback and inflating performance during appraisal to get best salary increases as unpleasant. The employees also perceived appraisals as a paper exercise in order to comply with the deadlines. Three types of employee feedback, a positive and negative one and the 360-degree feedback method are discussed below.

2.4.1.7 Positive feedback

Positive feedback is given when the employee's performance meets performance expectations criteria. In an ideal situation, employees prefer positive feedback over than negative feedback. One of the most critical parts of the performance appraisal is the direct communication between the supervisor and the individual. It is important to determine factors relating to a performance appraisal in order to enhance positive employee reactions to performance appraisal and motivate employees to improve performance (Selvarajan and Cloninger, 2012). For example, an employee feels satisfied whenever a manager provides clear and adequate performance feedback in determining their overall performances. Similarly, Khan (2014) states that positive feedback from performance appraisal motivates an employee.

In addition, an effective performance appraisal should be trustworthy, credible, reliable, objective and free of error. The appraisal should also address clarity, openness and fairness, and recognise productivity through rewards. Hence, satisfaction with the performance appraisal is an indication of the degree to which subordinates are satisfied with the process and feedback received.

2.4.1.8 Negative feedback

Negative feedback refers to information that is not according to the expectation or standard that is shared in an employee's performance. Performance appraisal conveys information about the organisation's views on performance. According to Mishra and Roch (2013), communicating with employee about their performance enhances their efficiency and productivity. This tool acts as a motivation and self-efficacy belief for the employee to improve productivity. However, the manner in which performance feedback is communicated has implications for effectiveness. Thus, the provision of negative and disapproving performance feedback negatively affects employee goal setting and self-efficacy. McShane and Von Glinow (2010) define self-efficacy as a person's belief that they have the ability, motivation, correct role perception and a favourable situation to complete a task.

The regular receiving of information about performance and where they could improve is very significant to employees. Such regular feedback aims at a continued all-round development of the employee (Nel et al. 2011). Managers identify the weakness of the employee and then work with the employee to plan for the employee's development. Interestingly, Clifton (2012) claim that managers dislike giving performance reviews while employees often dislike receiving them. However, the success of the feedback depends on the acceptance of the process. Negative feedback given with the attitude of criticism might force an employee to constitute a defensive attitude and they may end up putting the blame on certain factors and other people for their performance.

In relation to performance management, organisations, as noted by Mulvaney, McKinney and Grodsky (2012) seek to provide feedback to employees, develop their competencies, enhance performance and distribute rewards through performance appraisal. This underscores the need for positive rather than negative feedback.

2.4.1.9 360-Degree feedback

A 360-degree feedback involves the sharing of data that is included from a multiple impact approach to performance assessments using a variety of rating resources such as superiors, peers, on the same level and subordinates (Rokendro, 2010). In a 360-degree process, employees receive confidential and anonymous feedback from the people who work around them. Baroda, Sharma, and Bhatt (2012) note that a 360-degree performance appraisal system was introduced to cater for employee needs for information that deals with and responds quickly to growing customers' needs and advantages on employee talent to meet the organisational objective. It also became imperative for organisations to delve deeper into performance issues such as leadership, strategic thinking innovativeness and teamwork, hence, they had to perform multiple assessments for more objectives (Meenakshi, 2012).

The 360-Degree feedback has risen to be an integral part of performance appraisal in organisations owing to its ability to provide structured and in-depth information about the current performance and what will be required of an individual in the future (Baroda, Sharma and Bhatt, 2012). The value of a performance appraisal in relation to the provision of in-depth information about the current performance, lies in providing feedback to subordinates about their performance so that they know their strengths and weaknesses. Kuvaas (2011) asserts that the 360-degree feedback is considered key for the development of the individual.

It is, thus, an effective way to bring positive change in employee performance, provide training and development and planning for the well-being of an employee and with regards to job satisfaction for the return on investment and productivity within an organisation.

A number of organisations use the 360-degree feedback method effectively. For example, the World Bank uses the method with great success to effectively evaluate their employees (Khan, Ishaq, Nawaz and Hussain, 2013). However, a study done by Wadhwa and Wadhwa (2011) shows that the Indian corporate sector used the 360-degree evaluation on the attitude of raters together with evidence and research on implementation of performance appraisal.

It was noted that the Indian corporate sector hesitated to implement the 360-degree on the assumption that the system creates confusion for employees, with performance often not linked to the corporate objectives, management tending to make verbal promises, and that there was a lack of honesty as power and politics influence the outcomes.

From the above, one can assume that while 360-degree feedback strategy is good, its implementation differs across different sectors. Within South Africa, no evidence is available on the effective use of 360-degree feedback strategy, specifically at the Auditor-General Division. Current attempt to use it are riddled with many controversies, with authors such as Fleenor (2019) arguing that, many factors can influence performance ratings. Some of these factors are discussed below.

2.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Various factors influence performance appraisal. These factors include the organisational context, disagreements between the role players, the manager-employee relationship, the rater's and rating errors (Cascio and Aguinis, 2011).

2.5.1 Organisational context

Organisational context includes the culture, climate, communication policies, accountability of managers and the performance appraisal system of an organisation. According to Botha, Bussin and De Swardt (2010), the organisational context defines what type of performance is suitable or acceptable and therefore influences the performance appraisal.

2.5.2 Disagreement between the role players

Various studies such as (leniency and subjectivity) note that there can be disagreement between the role players in the process of performance appraisal rating. Ahmed et al. (2011) state that perceptions of performance appraisal are related to both the manager and employee and as such each must be given an opportunity to express their feelings on the existence of formal appraisal system.

Therefore, a manager's opinion and judgment have consequences for an employee's personal life, which suggests that managers need to be objective and structured and use

precise appraisal methods (Cram, 2013). The nature of the treatment received by the ratee, such as the quality of the interaction in the working environment, and the sensitivity, politeness as well as respect that an employee receives from the superior, are very important (Thurston and McNall, 2010). This suggests that people who feel that a given decision is fair respond with higher commitment, satisfaction and ultimately get involved in extra role behaviour. That is why employees who have strong organisational commitment possess strong beliefs and values in the goals of their organisation (Salleh, Amin, Muda and Halim, 2013). In addition, employees who consider that justice has been done during performance feedback may contribute more positively to individual human comfort behaviour. These individual comforts also nourish the body and resulted in good health and happiness, which in turn impacts positively on the employee's performance and the organisation's success (Gaudet et al. 2014).

Performance appraisal ratings can be subjected to distortions such as subjectivity and leniency. The likely distortions arise from the reality that the designing of a fair and accurate performance appraisal system is tied to subjective human judgment, which makes it difficult to satisfy all employees. According to Brown, Haytt, and Benson (2010), a performance appraisal is a complex process that allows for variation, particularly when supervisors are required to make a subjective judgment. In addition, the measures and performance systems that are used are not free of bias.

As a result, managers must be careful of making rating errors when conducting performance appraisal. Kim and Holzer (2016) point out that if employees are hostile and reject the system, the rater might not implement performance appraisal due to the resistance. It is also important to note that raters that lack motivation to implement the process effectively may not meet the minimum performance requirements sufficient for a just and correct appraisal.

2.5.3 Rater and rating error

The person who administers the performance ratings also influences the performance appraisal (Cascio and Aguinis, 2011). Stakeholders such as the managers, employees, reviewers, senior management and the organisation influence the performance appraisal since they usually have different expectations of the performance appraisal. Such different expectations have a direct influence on the overall appraisal and employee rating results. In this regard Mntambo (2011) notes that managers are either very strict

or lenient, depending on their mood at the time of the appraisal. Boachie-Mensah and Seidu (2012) also states that the employees' perception of a performance appraisal process as biased or consisting of rating errors, and affected by subjectivity, can have a serious managerial implication for training, motivation and the provision of resources for effective performance appraisal. This is confirmed in the Choon and Embi (2012) study on the concept of subjectivity and employee perception of fairness in the performance appraisal. The study found that subjectivity in performance appraisal and perceived injustice may exist within those that would not have received what they wanted as they might consider the system to be unfair.

As a result, it is imperative that human resource management select the most efficient method for the organisation. There exists various performance appraisal methods tailor-made for different situations and organisational characteristics. This method of performance appraisal is a tool that, when properly used, can link human resource management and government performance by measuring employee job performance, identifying challenges for employees or development needs, and motivating employees to perform better by linking their job performance to appropriate rewards (Ricucci, Naff and Hamidullah, 2019). This selection of an appropriate appraisal method is important and Mulvaney et al. (2012) rightly note that the selection of an inappropriate performance appraisal method by human resource management may cause management and employee resistance to the process.

2.6 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FOR ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING PURPOSES

Decision-making refers to how important decisions are made, who makes such decisions and those who will be participating in the making of the decisions (Daft, 2010). Pertinent to this study is that performance appraisals allow management to make decisions about employees within the organisation. Thus, a performance appraisal is a crucial decision-making tool that is used by the employer to assess and develop employee performance in an organisation (Sanya, Biswas, 2014; Swanepoel, Botha and Mangonyane, 2014). It is also a tool that both the appraiser and the appraisee can use to enhance both of the performance of employee and the organisation.

However, the type of appraisal used must be congruent with the requirements and structure of the organisation in order to reap the benefits (Appelbaum, Roy and Gilliland,

2011). A performance appraisal process is initiated in an organisational context for both administrative decision-making and to improve the performance of an employee. Managers need to make decisions based on information received from communication between both parties. An organisation should use a performance appraisal as a tool to provide both the employee and the organisation with the decision-making information relating to each area of performance in accordance with their performance management. The information received from annual performance can be used to make evaluation decisions concerning the workforce and other issues such as pay increments, promotions, demotions, training development, and termination.

Rehman and Ali (2013) argue that pay performance, which is one of the most effective human resources practices, has been adopted by many organisations globally. For example, a study done by Li, Samolejová, Čech and Lampa (2016) to determine the objectives of performance appraisals in the Czech Republic and China supports the previous statement that it was noted that performance appraisal supports decision-making on pay, and informs the year-end bonus and pay variations. In addition, Du and Choi (2010) found that pay for performance is effective both at the individual and organisational level.

Hence, an employee performance appraisal may help in human resource activities such as linking employee performance to rewards, promotions and demotions, transfers, lay-offs, and decision making on recruitment, selection and interviewing (Meenakshi, 2012; Noe et al. 2011). The human resource activities of the individual are discussed in detail below.

2.6.1 Linking employee performance to rewards

A well-designed and functional reward system is an efficient way to increase employee motivation. Rewards are defined as incentives provided by an employer for the time, skills and efforts made available by the employee in fulfilling job requirements aimed at achieving an organisational objective (Snelgar, Louw and Chanza, 2013).

In addition, an appropriate reward is developed in accordance with the organisational strategies and policies. In this instance the objective of a reward system is to attract, motivate and retain adequate and highly qualified workers in order to comply with the legislative regulations, collective bargaining and to compensate workers for the labour

services they render to their respective organisations. According to Daoanis (2012), an employee has always been motivated to finish his/her work if given recognition and rewards for doing an excellent job. Hence, a motivated employee contributes by increasing the productivity and profits of the organisation (Dobre, 2013). However, as noted by Lillian, Mathooko and Sitati (2011), the information gathered during performance evaluation provides the basis for proper rewarding of performance among employees.

There however, exists views, which run contrary to the above, a study by Stokes, Moore, Brooks, Caulfield, Wells, Rowland and Hall (2013) on management learning, performance and reward, established that performance management systems were used to determine the type of rewards offered to employees. The use of money to recognise achievement was perceived as unreliable and irrelevant. Nevertheless, it might be challenging to find the right way to combine the organisation's integrated policies and practices with the employee contribution, skills and competencies (Nel et al. 2011).

2.6.1.1 Extrinsic and intrinsic rewards

Extrinsic reward is defined as the preference of the worker to carry out work in order to get some benefit. Catania and Randall (2013) suggest that the extrinsic motivates the employees to the extent that they will exert more effort if they receive tangible benefits. These benefits, which cover the salary and all the financial rewards, here are a key to some workers. Danish and Usman (2010) notes that financial benefits are a recognition of the worker's achievements and aspirations, and reinforce desirable work behaviour as well as inform workers what is actually valued or not valued in the organisation, just as they highly tangible strategies for recognising their worth and to improve their self-esteem and gain the esteem of others.

It should be stated that financial rewards have a large impact on the workers. Danish and Usman (2010) argues that the motivational value of financial rewards is greater than that of non-financial rewards since their potential meets various human needs advocated by the theory of Maslow (1943).

For example, people may not work for money (financial rewards) but take away the money (financial rewards) and the question will be how many would come to work? In that sense, financial rewards are a primary motivator in any employment relationship.

The view is also confirmed by Igbokwe-Ibeto and Agbodike (2015), who note that the link between rewards and employee performance to the organisational performance can be a success and motivates on achieving outcomes such as staff development, improved communication and the discovering of hidden talent possessed by the individual in the organisation.

Therefore, an organisation has an obligation to use financial rewards to attract, motivate and retain workers. Financial rewards play a significant role in a worker's decision to join or leave an organisation (Redmond, 2010). In addition, inadequate financial rewards can be a major source of dissatisfaction and migration amongst the workers (Holbeche, 2010).

2.6.1.2 Intrinsic reward

An intrinsic reward is defined as the motivation to execute the job in order to gain pleasure and satisfaction in the absence of monetary reward (Dysvik and Kuvaas, 2010). Intrinsic motivation includes aspects such as reward, and the use of a non-financial incentive, such as promotion, training and development, annual leave, maternity leave, sick leave, housing, company car, good working environment, club membership, annual award ceremonies to recognise employee's contribution, praise, delegation of work, job enrichment, job enlargement, participation in decision making, appreciation for personal contribution, giving employees a new or improved job title, celebrating the anniversary of their joining the company and a handwritten thank you note, as a primary motivator to an employee (Snelgar et al. 2013).

In addition, an intrinsic reward plays a huge role in motivating positive work behaviour and building feelings of confidence and satisfaction amongst workers. Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory outlines the various motivators and these include achievement, recognition, increased responsibility, growth and development or advancement.

Osman and Galang (2011) confirm that employee's respond more positively to rewards and compensation when provided training and development and ultimately react positively to the organisational performance. Aworemi, Mundhra and Jacobs (2011) argue that intrinsic rewards are generally rated as better motivators than extrinsic rewards. Regardless of which postulation is subscribe to, it seems that non-monetary

motivators are an important catalyst in achieving high employee motivation (Aworemi et al. 2011).

2.6.2 Promotions

Chang, Tsai and Tsai (2011) assert that employee promotion involves assigning an employee to a job of higher rank, and it comes with superior responsibilities, status and higher wages. Promotion is an organisational practice that is used to acknowledge employee performance by appointing an identified employee to a higher position with increased pay, responsibilities, benefits and autonomy (Tuwei, Matelong, Boit and Tallam, 2013). Yang, Janssen, Pfeifer and Backes-Gellner (2013) claim that while employees benefit from promotion through monetary gain and high reputation, employers could use promotion for efficient job assignment.

The above definitions and claim suggest that promotion is important for both the employee and the employer. For example, a performance appraisal is one of the crucial means that a supervisor uses to rate, make a promotion decision, identify training development needs and motivate individuals. Grobler et al. (2011) cautioned that organisations should guard against discrimination during promotions and advocate that opportunities should be provided equally to all. Therefore, a promotion can also be a useful tool for the public service in their quest to improve challenges in performance appraisal.

2.6.3 Decision-making on transfers, layoffs and retrenchment

Boachie-Mensah and Dogbe (2011) are of the view that jobs with performance-related pay attract high calibre motivated workers and require great effort. This view confirms the link between rewards, employee performance and organisational performance and success. Nonetheless, high-flyers or outstanding performing employees are usually spared the cut by the organisation when the management decides to retrench. According to Flamholtz (2012), the use of performance rates in retrenchment decision-making is widely used in many organisations globally. Hence, management uses performance appraisals when making retrenchment decisions in the same way as they use performance appraisals in recruiting and selecting or promoting job candidates.

2.6.4 Decision on recruitment, selection and interviewing

Public services face, in the current context of a knowledge-based economy and one characterised by a more competitive environment, the challenge to attract and maintain high performing employees (Melchor, 2013). The lack of a highly skilled and qualified labour force leads to an average performance within an organisation. Therefore, processes, such as decisions on recruitment, selection and interviewing, should be used to assess the skills and experience of interviewees in order to ensure that the right candidates are selected among qualified candidates. Each of these processes is discussed in detail below.

2.6.4.1 Recruitment

Recruitment is a process through which organisations attract potential and suitable applicants for employment opportunities so that the organisation goals are achieved (Rahmania, Akheter, Chowdhury, Islam and Haque, 2013). Recruitment and selection to fill a job opening within an organisation takes place after a job analysis has been conducted. The job analysis draws on the job specifications and the need to choose applicants with the experience and qualifications to fill in the available position.

In addition, recruitment goes hand in hand with selection. Van Rensburg, Basson and Carrim (2011) note that recruitment and selection collectively represent one of the significant human resource management practices in the organisation. Anyim et al. (2012) claim that recruitment generates a pool of applicants who have a desire to be employed by an organisation and from which a suitable candidate will be selected. However, performance appraisal results may be used during the recruitment and selection process and the scores of the individual candidate might be used to earmark the employee for promotion or another position. Mohsan, Nawaz, Khan, Shaukat and Aslam (2011) assert that committed employees who possess a high level of job quality and productivity are the most important assets in any organisation, and vital to quality and productivity improvements in the organisation, hence they must be recruited.

Motsoeneng (2011) notes that recruitment is about making sure that qualified people are available to meet the employment needs. He asserts further that ineffective recruitment precludes any chance of effective candidate selection, because when recruitment falls short, selection must proceed with a pool of poorly qualified candidates. This means that

it is crucial for an organisation to have the right people with the relevant qualifications, experience and skills to ensure that relevant people are hired and ultimately improve the organisation's performance. An assessment of the number of employees in a department, skills, abilities and competencies and needed capacity should be carried out to determine the required appointment. Nonetheless, various recruitment and selection techniques are at the disposal of recruitment officer and the methods differ from region to region with such decisions dictated by labour legislation and policies such as Employment Equity Act of (1998).

Coetzee and Schreuder (2011) postulate that there is an increase in the use of technology inter alia in the recruitment and selection process. These sources of recruitment are of importance for selection because organisations attract various candidates and therefore need appropriate means to identify and evaluate applicants. Madia (2011) and Turker (2012) also note that recruitment begins with the advertisement of existing vacancies to attract the suitable candidates. Recruitment sources include radio, television and Internet (e-recruitment) as well as job boards.

E-recruitment or online recruitment uses web-based tools such as company internet site or its own intranet to recruit staff. E-recruitment also involves job postings on company homepages and curriculum vitae (CV) uploads to the central databases. The current technology advancement enables methods of recruitment via Twitter and cellphones. Madia (2011) and Turker (2012) are of the opinion that e-recruitment will soon be surpassed by Twitter and cellphone recruitment. Finally, Madia (2011); Zibarras and Woods (2010) support the tendency of European and American companies to increase use of technological advance media to attract and select suitable applicants of quality.

Therefore, one can conclude that recruitment is a staffing process intended to attract potentially suitable employees with necessary competencies. In addition, an employee should be attracted by and match and share the values and vision of the organisation so that they easily fit in.

2.6.4.2 Selection

Selection is a process of choosing a suitable candidate, from a group of job applicants, for a particular position in an organisation based on selection criteria (Abbotte and Meyer, 2014). For example, Nzukama and Bussin's (2011) research conducted in South Africa

posits that the oversupply of unskilled applicants demands that employers may have to be very careful before selecting any applicants. In addition, the survey results released by Statistics South Africa, STATS SA (2012) show that the unemployment rate in South Africa stayed unchanged between the first quarter of 2011 (25.0%) and the quarter 2012 (25.2%), yet the same period witnessed the Eastern Cape experiencing a higher unemployment rate of 26.9%. According to Worku (2011), the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga are the poorest provinces with regard to socio-economic resources, education and monetary income. Therefore, like in any other part of the country, the pool of suitable workers, especially the talent of Black people, is limited by equity legislation and the emigration of skilled workers (Nzukuma and Bussin, 2011).

Finally, several factors, both internal and external, can influence the recruitment process. This function involves a variety of human resource activities including the analysis of the labour market, interviewing and testing.

2.6.4.3 Labour market (External factor)

Human resource management is a strategic integrated and coherent approach to employment, development and well-being of people working in organisations Boxall and Purcell (2016). Its strategic focus involves human resources planning, forecasting, growth, perspectives on contracting possibilities and thinking ahead for recruiting more people, downsizing, and employing people with new skills and competencies. Human resource management plays a crucial role in the organisation, as the procurement of a suitable labour force is part of an organisation's business strategy. Therefore, the effectiveness of the organisation depends on their employees.

The analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of a person's capabilities and potential allowing informed decisions may cover such matters as the national and local reputation of the organisation. It also includes the pay, employee benefits and working conditions, intrinsic interest of the job, security of employment, and opportunities for education and training. Nevertheless, the conditions of the labour force affect the availability of staff since the organisation has to ensure that it has the right people with the right skills. The retaining of quality workers is challenging owing to skill shortages, employee mobility, and the expected retirement of baby boomers in the near future (Masibigiri and Nienaber, 2011).

2.6.4.3 Organisational policy (internal factor)

The content of an organisation's recruitment policy determines the institution's recruitment process. The statement of intent in the policy is the one that dictates the parameters of recruitment effort. The employer needs to rethink the current form of practices and adapt to the changing organisational needs, and expectations of the current and potential employees in order for them to keep up with the information society.

A result, the human resource management's involvement in the process of recruitment, selection and retention of a new and current employees suggests that it can play a significant role in maintaining a competitive advantage in the knowledge-based market.

2.6.4.4 Interviews

An employment interview is defined as a social interaction seeking to evaluate the social connection, social skills and personal loyalties of applicants (Rodríguez, 2010). It is also one of the popular methods used for the selection of suitable candidates for a specific job, which often represents face to face interaction with the candidate before hiring decisions are made (Huffcutt, Culbertson and Weyrauch, 2013). Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff and Mishra (2011) view interview as a valid tool for predicting employee job and training performance, and that they are a base of the job analysis, job description and information as provided by job incumbents. Finally, interviews are often the only method used to assess applicants for employment, with the process involving a two-way exchange of information mainly designed to assist the selection committee to form an opinion about the candidate and the candidates about the institution (Van Niekerk and Blignaut, 2014).

Despite the above, due care and consideration has to be placed, in view of the evidence that employment interview performance cannot be linked to an employee's performance on the job, neither can it be used during performance management or appraisal process to rate the employee, as so many factors can influence job performance (Linna, Elovainio, Van den Bos, Kivimäki and Pentti, 2012). have low organizational commitment.

2.7 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE- A GLOBAL OVERVIEW

The contemporary business world is competitive and often witnesses organisations trying to out-compete rival's innovation and management of the human resources. As a result, performance appraisals become an important process in the organisation together with the development and improvement of the individual (Mensah and Seidu, 2011).

The global use of performance appraisals shows that the practice continues to be a subject of importance and interest amongst human resources specialists (Siaguru, 2011). Performance appraisals provide valuable information for personnel decisions, such as salary increases, and influences promotions and demotions as well as transfers and termination (Pillay, 2012). The appraisals also play a crucial role in meeting expectation and influencing employee perceived organisational support and justice, job satisfaction and motivation (Festing, Knappert, Dowling and Engle Snr, 2012).

Various international studies have been conducted on performance appraisal within the Public Service. The purposes of and nature of performance appraisal practices vary significantly between countries.

For instance, a study on employee perceptions on their performance appraisal system conducted in Ghana, Boachie-Mensah and Seidu (2012) revealed that employees were not well informed about time, process, and the purpose of the performance appraisal. Employees pointed out that they only participated in the appraisals because they were required to and not because they understood its significance to their work life. Najafi, Hamidi, Vatankhan and Purnajaf's (2010) study on performance appraisal and its effect on employee's motivation and promotion in Australia noted that the appraisal methods in the Health Care Systems are not effectively implemented, and the appraisals hold little effect on employee perceptions on issues such as the observation of justice and fairness and the provision of timely feedback.

Further studies are of significance here like a study by Selvarajan and Cloninger (2012) that evaluated the relationship between performance appraisal characteristics such as performance appraisal purpose, appraisal source and feedback richness and employee perception of appraisal accuracy and fairness, in Mexico. The study's findings were that

multisource performance appraisals have a positive relationship with the perception of distributive, procedural and interactive fairness.

The multisource context performance appraisal was however linked associated with negative perceptions on the accuracy of appraisals. A study by Shrivastva (2012) on “performance appraisal practices in Indian Banks” that sought to understand the role of performance appraisal as one of the key factors for enhancing organisational ability, reveals that appraisals are one of the key factors that review past behaviour and provide an opportunity to reflect on the past performance of the bank employees. Finally, Rahim’s (2012) study on performance appraisal systems in the Private Bank of Bangladesh of Mercantile Bank Limited, reveals the institution’s suffering from an inconsistent application of the policy as in some branches employees were evaluated by the head of the respective department whereas in some the head of the branch evaluated employees.

The above studies indicate that performance appraisals are one of the important components of job satisfaction. Hence, employees are only satisfied with the process if the system is fair and free from errors during the implementation and if those who conduct the process exercise fairness during the procedures.

2.8 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICES

It is every organisation’s desire to have a motivated workforce that that will ensure a sustainable achievement of organisational competitive advantage. A well-executed performance management system that is supported by effective performance appraisals is one of the basic requirements. A performance appraisal should act as a yardstick to assess the performance of an employee. In addition, the appraisal method should help in identifying the employees who require development to improve performance in their daily work and make a valid decision that will enhance the effectiveness of the organisation.

Managers may use a performance appraisal system to identify performance gaps within the employees and thereafter introduce training to close the identified gap. A study by Manyaka and Sebola (2012) asserts that the effective management of employee performance in the South African public service is linked directly to the effectiveness of

the public service delivery. This is because the management of employee performance falls under the legislative framework whereby the department is expected to manage and streamline employee performance.

However, current performance appraisals represent internal and external factors, such as structure, policies, and system, which have a significant role in enhancing both individual and organisational performance. There are several documents and laws pertaining to the ethos of the performance appraisal's implementation in South Africa.

For instance, legislation such as the Public Service Act (RSA Act 103 of 1994) stipulates that the Executing Authority is required to finish the appraisal of the person first before promoting them to any post. This piece of Legislation plays a key role in the provision of services in the public services. Therefore, a performance appraisal system must be aligned to the country's legislation.

Although significant progress has been achieved in many areas, there still exists a sense of frustration with the Public Service. A few achievements such as level of satisfaction as well as competency of human resources by investing in attracting and placing human talent and this has resulted in a wide range of initiatives and programs focusing on improving organisational performance (Julyan, 2011). The interventions and the strategies designed to improve performance in the Public Service have achieved limited desired outcomes or adequate results (Saravanja, 2010; Sharp, 2013). Thus, South African organisations are under pressure to transform and attain improved performances. A performance appraisal is a crucial decision-making tool used by employers to assess and develop employee performance in an organisation (Sanyal and Biswas, 2014; Swanepoel et al. 2014). The tool guides the manager and employee in their definition of clear and achievable goals expected from the employee's routine job duties.

The appraisals have thus become a significant tool in organisations. They assist in the management and improvement of employee performance, in decision-making, and in enhancing the effectiveness of the organisation and its overall performance. For example, managers use the appraisals to determine salaries and whether an employee can be promoted to a higher-level responsibility in the organisation.

In this regard, performance appraisals aim at establishing a high-performance culture in which individuals and teams take responsibility over the continuous improvement of work processes, own skills and make a contribution within the framework provided by effective leadership. However, the challenge is that it is not easy to measure the input and output variables for efficiency or productivity analysis as the public service provisions are complex and have multiple inputs and outputs. Boyne, Entwistle and Ashworth (2010) note that appraisals that would not have been properly implemented, monitored, and evaluated, can yield undesired results. Hence, performance appraisals do not always increase productivity.

A number of studies have focused on performance appraisals conducted during the past five years within the South African Public Service. Research conducted by Singh (2015) to evaluate the performance management system for senior managers in the Public Service reveals that the management does not have individual goals that link with the organisational goals. Management seems to lack clearly specified and defined action for the poor performers; therefore, employees do not understand what is expected of them. In addition, employees do not understand their expectation since there is no clear objective criteria to measure performance and are therefore likely to get away with poor performance.

Research conducted by Sekese (2011), which explored the perceptions of employees from selected districts of the Free State Province with regard to the effectiveness of performance appraisal in the Department of Social Development, reveals a correct theoretical system and an incorrect implementation as the appraisals are based on individual understanding. It further shows that employees viewed performance appraisals as unfair because the department compiled performance plans and key responsibilities without giving the employees the opportunity to participate and set their own performance goals based on their job description.

Further studies reveal the different contexts and difficulties evident in the public service performance appraisals. Maluleke's (2011) study on the knowledge and attitude of operational supervisors on the performance management system at the Mopani District Hospital in Limpopo, shows that the introduction of performance appraisal was not effective and that no evaluations have been done since its implementation.

A negative attitude associated with poor manager planning and implementation of the performance appraisals resulted in conflict between the supervisor and employee. In addition, Glaser (2019) study on the implementation of performance management and development system at the Department of Education in the Gauteng North District shows employee lack of training as one of the challenges affecting the Department's performance appraisal processes. The study noted that an effective performance appraisal may benefit the Department by recognising future potential and identifying poor performers that need remedial action and assistance towards achieving better performance. It was also observed that managers, on the one hand, need to improve the way they conduct the processes and follow procedure when implementing performance appraisal. Employees, on the hand, need to familiarise themselves with the performance appraisal policy and its requirements so that they can question any decisions taken by the manager should they be dissatisfied.

Finally, a study conducted by Radebe (2015) focusing on a manager's perceptions of performance appraisal in the Local Municipality of Gauteng Province, observed inconsistencies on the appraiser's and appraisee's side during participation in the performance appraisal process. It was also observed that the managers were not trained to handle difficult interpersonal situations, especially when the feedback is negative. The employees and the managers are concerned about the performance appraisal process and the way in which the information is handled, such that any distortion of the performance appraisal policy and document leads to difficulties regarding the execution of the performance appraisals. Nonetheless, some of these policies established by organisation are unsupportive of the employees (Mazerolle and Eason, 2013).

From the above discussion it is clear that an employee constitutes the most important asset of an organisation and that an organisation without employees might not achieve its goals. According to Baghaei (2011), management's responsibility is to provide appropriate opportunities and an environment for the employees to satisfy their needs. An organisation needs to create an atmosphere of commitment and co-operation through an alignment of the policies that can facilitate employee performance and enable them to achieve the set goals (Parvin and Kabir, 2011).

However, in some contexts, ineffective managers allow poor performers to get away with poor performance and fail to consider the system factors responsible for variations within the organisation, which can lead to lower levels of performance.

In most cases, managers resist giving honest feedback and inflate performance ratings in order to avoid friction, especially if such an employee is assertive and most likely to contest the feedback.

2.9 CHALLENGES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICES

Performance appraisals seek to enhance overall organisational performance. However, the performance appraisal process can create challenges between the individual and the organisational performance. Bhatanagar (2013) states that, although performance appraisals were devised to facilitate a better functioning of organisations and to provide critical decisions on issues such training, developmental needs, compensation and benefits, existing global reports about the practice indicate that the appraisals continue to generate dissatisfaction among the employees and are viewed as unfair and ineffective. For instance, research by Sharma (2016), which evaluated the Asset and Facilities sector in comparison to the Department of Human Resources, found that the scores of performance appraisal were significantly low at the Department of Human Resources, which is a potential source of frustration for the workers exposed to numerous appraisals. The frustration and dissatisfaction with performance appraisals have compelled human resources practitioners and researchers to evaluate the efficiency of performance appraisal (Choi, Wan, Ismail and Rasid, 2013). Therefore, employees perceive their performance appraisal to be ineffective and unfair.

Other studies on performance appraisals provide further insight in the matter. A study by Mulvaney et al. (2012) indicates that a performance appraisal that is viewed as unfair often leads to dissatisfaction among employees, which ultimately causes resistance to the system. This indicates that, although a performance appraisal system can be acceptable in its structure and design, employees choose to resist the process and performance owing to a human resources management's poor selection and handling of the performance appraisal, which eventually renders the process ineffective.

Nonetheless, critics of performance appraisals present several arguments against its use (Singh, 2015). The points of criticism are that individual performance appraisal assumes a false degree of measurement accuracy, and that it encourages dysfunctional employee conflict. The following challenges are encountered when carrying out performance appraisal:

2.9.1 Poor planning by management

Management's poor planning of the implementation of performance appraisals leads to conflict between the manager and the employee, especially with regards to unclear roles and responsibilities of the employee job description. The major challenge that is faced by the public service is that management fails to link job descriptions with the performance appraisal practices. In addition, management fails to align employee activities with the departmental strategic plans. Hence, as noted by Prawitowati (2011) rightly note that organisations should have a job plan that they can use as a working guide, standard or benchmark during the assessment of employee performance.

In addition, Jose (2012) states that a performance appraisal that is designed in accordance with the employee's job description makes it easier for the employee to know their duties and responsibilities. In this regard, evaluators (managers) must acquire the required expertise and knowledge that will assist when deciding on the accurate criteria that needs implementation. Thus, managers should have the experience and training necessary to carry out the appraisal processes objectively.

2.9.2 Job resource adequacy

A lack of job resources influences employee perceptions of the performance appraisal processes in a negative way. Job resource adequacy is the degree to which individuals have as the means at hand to perform the job. These include tools, equipment, materials and suppliers, who enable one to do their work, and complete the work-related goals of the organisation (Rousseau and Aubé, 2010). Adequacy indicators measure the resources invested in a job to accomplish certain outcomes that are defined in the policy statement.

Indicators of adequacy focus on the service's sufficiency in relation to the basic resources needed to deliver the service. A scenario of a manager situated in a noisy office is

provided here as a good example. This manager's office also has outdated technology, no professional development budget, nor deadlines and thus typifies a context of inadequate job resources that is beyond an employee's control and most likely to make the employee feel frustrated and powerless. Therefore, holding such an employee accountable for the job performance may lead to a negative reaction to performance appraisal processes. Research evidence (Evans and Stanovich, 2013) shows that an employee who has an organisational aggressiveness would have an intuitive negative reaction to the performance process. Hence, a performance appraisal can also be a bitter process, which can create emotional pressure and stress and adversely affect the morale of the workers.

2.9.3 Designing of performance appraisal

The designing of performance appraisal is a complex process that involves multiple aspects and varying interests in the evaluation outcomes amongst different individuals. One of the shortcomings associated with the design of performance appraisal forms is the lack of a performance agreement, which is a concern for effective criteria to use for assessing individual performance (Chiang and Birtch, 2010). The multi aspects include the incorrect methods used to measure individual performance appraisal. The use of incorrect methods in the evaluation of performance is thus most likely to generate false results and lead to an inaccurate organisational decision-making. Hence, Makamu and Mello (2014) suggest that the criteria used to evaluate the performance, its purpose and practice, must be designed and tailor-made in accordance with the methods matching the employees and organisational characteristics and qualities.

2.9.4 Lack of clear and effective performance appraisal criteria

The notion of whether a performance appraisal can be objective indicates that the identification of an appraisal criteria is one of the biggest problems faced by top management. A lack of clear understanding of organisational goals and objectives ultimately reflects the inability and non-commitment of managers to cascade the organisational goals downwards. For example, an employee in a high performing organisation should clearly understand clearly the mission, strategies and objectives of the performance appraisals.

This involves the clarification of what needs to be done in order to support organisational goals and objectives. In this instance, the objectivity of the performance appraisal may not be achieved unless the reaction to the performance appraisal gives rise to a discussion between the manager and employee. Such a discussion should, therefore, set objectives, outline and put forward an individual developmental plan in order to assist the affected employee (Chen and Eldridge, 2012).

Swanepoel et al. (2014) point out that the challenge lies with the need to be objective during the definition of a measurable performance criteria and the effects, such as attracting, selecting, developing and rewarding or retaining employee competencies. Thus, an employees' failure to understand the relationship between their performance and the achievement of organisational goals may demotivate some individuals as they might feel as if they do not belong to the organisation. Nonetheless, a criteria of effective performance appraisal includes transparency, employee trust on the organisation, accountability and integrated development and training. In this regard, an organisation has to ensure that the framework is fair and consistent and that the system providing performance criterion links employee performance with the organisational objectives.

2.9.5 Subjectivity

Individuals fall into subjectivity when they start to judge their evaluation process. This means that the raters' subjectivity and bias may lead to unreliable data on the performance appraisal of the employee. In the context of performance appraisal, it's purpose is to evaluate the employee to determine their strengths and weaknesses, to compare their performance with the standard set by organisation, and to determine their level of performance in comparison with their peers while perceiving whether the subjective judgment of their performance is accurate, consistent, and rational. This means that an inaccurate or inconsistent process might lead to challenges arising from the use of ambiguous criteria and subjective weightings by supervisors.

The issue of subjectivity also arises from the inconsistency in the evaluation process and employee disgruntlement with the implementation process. The performance appraisal process is such that the supervisor records details about the performance of the subordinate and have room to distort the ratings, whereas the objective has less chance of distortion in the ratings (Brown et al. 2010). However, during the implementation of performance appraisal, the appraisal becomes subjective even though documented

would be objective. Choon and Embi (2012) show that the rater faces challenges regarding the evaluation of the objective and accurate assessment due to the influence of subjectivity caused by cognitive factors and internal motivation.

Performance appraisal processes provide employees with accurate, relevant and correct rating performances. In addition, performance appraisal programs that are structured appropriately can have their effectiveness diluted by an improper use of subjectivity measures. No matter what type of appraisal method and system is used, problems that lessen the accuracy of the rating can arise (Appelbaum et al. 2011). Therefore, raters must strive towards accuracy, consistency, and rationality, while making performance appraisal judgements, for the implementation to be perceived as fair by ratees.

2.9.6 Organisational communication inadequacy

The management's failure to communicate with the employee can lead to communication inadequacy. According to Dattner (2013), the profile or size of the organisation ought to promote its own customised approach in designing and implementing employee performance that focuses on informal feedback, such as start-up, as part of the structured system. Under such circumstance, communication adequacy contributes to employee's social cognition to an overacting organisation. It is a characteristic of the organisation's psychological climate.

It includes timely flowing of information up and down the hierarchy and the communication channels (Verbos, Miller, Goswami, 2014). Hence, one of the most important organisational components is that the employees must have a voice regarding the issues affecting them.

An organisation that has high-quality communication is highly likely to have employees that understand better the process of performance appraisal. Effective communication between employer and employee is very important. As a result, performance appraisals enable employers to understand and accept the skills of subordinates, while the subordinate can also create a trust and confidence in their superiors.

In addition, high preparation time provides enhancement and communication adequacy increases. In this regard, an employee can respond to issues that arise before the

performance appraisal and be more confident during the performance appraisal interview. In contrast, low quality performance appraisal experiences are associated with reduced job satisfaction, weaker organisational commitment and increased intention to leave (Brown et al. 2010). Thus, an organisation whose employees encounter low quality performance appraisal experiences may have lower job satisfaction and high turnover rate (Darehzereshki, 2013).

2.9.7 Role management

There is need for effective management and guidance of employees during their process of performance period. Mntambo (2011) asserts that a high degree of commitment is required from management in order for a performance appraisal to be successful. Management may ensure that there is a link between the development capabilities of their own employees and organisational growth. Hence, the need for management in establishing customised performance appraisals that are aligned to the organisational context and where employee performance takes place in order to define different expectations for different job task (Kaur and Kaur, 2017)

2.9.8 Providing feedback to the employee

A lack of adequate performance feedback from managers to employees has debilitating effects. Performance appraisal may turn into a negative experience for the employees if their seniors or management do not provide feedback about the performance or over emphasise recent and past employee performance. This negativity might cause resentment and employees become bitter towards the management and ultimately the organisation (Youssef-Morgan and Luthans, 2013).

Instead, the feedback should provide information regarding the changes that might improve the performance of the employee in the organisation. Employees need feedback on whether they are able to do the work that is assigned to them as well as what they are assigned to and work-related behaviour. Hence, management should not be too positive or negative in their feedback but rather provide employees with the constructive suggestions for steps to improve on their deficiencies as needed (Brown et al. 2010). Management must also set organisational tone and objectives. It must state openly and clearly, the culture they want to establish for the organisation, and the values they want to promote. This will set an example for others and enable a positive environment for the

provision of feedback to employees. Waters, Rao and Ramasubramani (2015) posits that the employee and the manager must reach a conclusion regarding the purpose and their understanding of the process of appraisal. It is in this context that standard communication enables the employees to be aware of what is expected of them.

2.9.9 Leniency error

Leniency is one of the common rating errors in performance appraisal (Rothwell, 2012). It refers to the inflation of the marks during the conducting of a performance appraisal interview. It also involves the provision of underserved high-performance appraisal ratings to an employee. For example, more favourable performance ratings would be given to employees and thus inflating the ratings of the employee (Botha, Bussin and De Swardt, 2011). Thus, a strict manager gives a lower rating than what the employee deserves, while a lenient rater gives higher ratings than what the individual deserves. Therefore, a manager's failure to provide a critical and objective evaluation of employee performance can result in an invaluable performance appraisal.

2.9.10 Strictness error

Strictness refers to a situation whereby a manager tends to give lower ratings to employees, while a lenient one would give higher ratings to the employee. Such situations are characterised by an unduly critical evaluation of employees' work performance.

The strictness-leniency bias presents less of a problem when a standard and result-oriented approach to performance appraisal is used. Once it happens, the organisation may not be able to give an objective view of employee performance.

2.9.11 The halo error and horn effects

The halo error occurs when the manager gives an employee a favourable rating while the horn effect refers to a situation where the manager provides an employee with an unfavourable rating (Botha et al. 2010). Rating a person high on all items for performance in one area occurs when a manager judges an employee on the first impression. Thus, a manager applies a favourable rating to an employee who is perceived to behave in a way similar or likeable to the manager and give a low score to those who demonstrates attributes different to the manager.

2.9.12 Central tendency error

Central tendency refers to a situation where the manager gives an employee an average rating, which then causes the manager to cluster all the performance ratings around the middle of the rating scale (Cascio and Aguinis, 2011). A common error in performance appraisal occurs when employees are incorrectly rated near the average or middle of the scale.

2.9.13 Rater biased error

A rater-biased error occurs when the rater's values or prejudices distort rating. Mensah et al. (2012) show that employee perceptions of performance appraisal bias or errors occur when the performance appraisal is affected by the subjectivity influenced by some major errors. The research notes further that the implication can have a serious managerial implication for training, motivation and the provision of resources for an effective performance appraisal.

2.9.14 Lack of agreement concerning the effective criteria for assessing performance appraisal

The lack of a signed performance agreement, between the employee and the manager, on the employee's performance that will be assessed at the midyear or year-end level affects the effectiveness of the appraisal performance. According to Birtch and Chiang (2010), performance appraisals involve the purpose of the appraisal as an important aspect, which is an aspect that is often poorly articulated and misunderstood by the participants in the process of the performance.

2.10 CHALLENGES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICES

There is mounting pressure in South Africa and other parts of the world for the Public Service to provide efficient services to the people (Radebe, 2015). It has been observed that countries that have effectively implemented performance appraisals within the Public Service have witnessed an efficient delivery of services. Organisations face economic difficulties, which pose further challenges on the reward practices and strategies, hence, human resources managers within South Africa face pressure in their attempts at contributing towards the success of the organisation (Grobler et al. 2011).

While most criticism of the public service performance appraisal process might be seen as flawed, the manner in which it is developed and implemented in some organisation is often flawed. Some of the criticism is more radical. Nonetheless, although performance appraisals have a positive effect on rewards and employee self-efficacy, they also have negative side effect. According to Hope and Player (2012), people deeply dislike performance appraisal and think that they are essentially flawed yet these are entrenched management process in most organisations. Furthermore, an improvement of staff efficacy and effectiveness is only possible in the light of performance appraisal (Torabi and Sutodeh, 2010). It is against this background that performance appraisals have been introduced into the Public Services, yet they are not effectively developed and are in some cases non-existent (Nikpeyma, Abed_Saeedi, Azargashb and Alavi_Majd, 2014). The potential problems experienced include:

2.10.1 Lack of time and commitment devoted by management to the process

Some employees feel anxious while being assessed and appraised during their performance. Most of the anxiety that emerges through performance appraisal arises from a lack of time and commitment from management. It is, therefore, essential that management devotes time and commitment to the successful implementation of the performance appraisal process. Leaders and managers who have an insight on the factors that are relevant to justice in an organisation might be able to eliminate labour disputes that arise from employee's perceptions of organisational injustice in its policies and practices. It is therefore necessary to examine the factors that determine employees' perceptions of organisational justice with the view to promote positive labour relations between the public services sector and its employee (Ledimo, 2015).

2.10.2 Lack of sufficient resources to perform the duties

There also exists a challenge that arises from a lack of sufficient resources needed to perform duties. These tools include management support, technological tools (such as computers), training of employees and adequate human resource activities that assist employees in their duties. The Public Service Commission stipulates that having the right tool for a given job is a fundamental and important aspect for the successful implementation of performance management in an organisation. Ironically, Werner et al. (2010) observe that technology is rapidly changing and thus impacting on the ability of

the employer to measure where and what the employees say and do, as well as the results that they produce.

Therefore, performance appraisals are an essential part of human resource activities and employee development. The appraisals are also an essential part of any company's attempts at being globally competitive. In addition, one of the positive results of performance appraisals is to identify the employees' strengths and weaknesses and to encourage them to perform better in the future (Gichuhi, Abaja and Ochieng, 2013).

2.10.3 Employee resistance towards the process of performance appraisal in fear of negative rating

Employees may resist the process, especially after receiving a negative rating feedback. In this instance, the employees' feeling would be that the management performance appraisal process sought to harm them and as a result they may contemplate that they would be fired, retrenched from their work or lose their positions. Another aspect of employee anxiety over appraisals is the fear of subjectivity in the process and that of personality traits that are focused on the performance appraisal rating rather than the results. A lack of effective communication and that of effective management also creates employee resistance. A study conducted by Hlengane and Bayat (2013) that focuses on the Cambridge Police Station in East London located in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, indicated the lack of effective communication as a problem and that the implementation of the performance appraisals was not well administered. Even though the implementation of performances is the responsibility of the line manager, the feeling from the employees is that there is a lack of commitment from the managers to manage the performance of the employees and that managers do not seem to care about how the employees perform.

2.10.4 Inadequate management training on the process

The failure of the appraisal system is mainly attributed to a lack of managers with the necessary qualifications and skills to evaluate their employees (Akbari Haghghi, Zeraati, Karimi, Arab and Akbari Mousaabadi, 2011). Managers (supervisors) who are not cooperative and not trained to conduct the performance appraisal processes are a major challenge.

Inadequate manager or supervisor training can lead to a series of problems during the completion of performance appraisals. In this regard Makamu and Mello (2014) notes that a manager appointed towards the end of a specific year can create a challenge for both management and employees, since they would not have undergone training to familiarise themselves with the programme, or the intention of such a programme.

2.10.5 Unclear strategic objective linking regarding organisational job performance

Unclear strategic objectives can link the employee to the organisational job performance processes in a negative way. Daoanis (2012) mentions that “the most valuable strategy implementation and delivery of organisational strategic target is best accomplished through high performance people and it is development of these people which performance appraisal seeks to advance”. Performance appraisal enables employers and employees to define, communicate and review expectations, goals and progress in achieving the strategic objective. One of the purposes is to improve the way employees contribute to an organisation’s goals and job performance (Dusterhoff et al. 2014).

2.10.6 Unclear job analysis information

Job analysis determines job content and those attributes that are necessary to master the job. This means that an employee must acquire skills and identify the task, duties, knowledge or activities particular to a given job. An unclear job analysis can frustrate a hired employee’s attempts at performing his/ her duties. Job analysis refers to a process whereby one identifies and analyses information in accordance with the employment and employee duties in the working environment. In addition, it is initially a process of human resources management systems, which creates job descriptions and job specification for the workforce plan, performance appraisal and employee development and remuneration processes. Hence, it is crucial to align each employee’s performance with the expectation of the organisation in order to achieve organisational goals (Venter and Holtzhausen, 2010).

A study carried out in the Department of Education in Gauteng - North West District found that, supervisors and managers encounter challenges when the managers who measure and appraise performance lack an understanding of what performance entails. As a result, these managers are compelled to conduct performance appraisals that they are unsure of. In addition, employees in the organisation have different job descriptions,

which means that, a manager cannot appraise all the employees accurately since all the employees' jobs are different (Makamu and Mello, 2014).

2.11 SUMMARY

This chapter presented what is construed as performance appraisal, linking the practice in the public sector to the theory of justice in organisations. The chapter highlighted that the purpose of performance appraisal is to improve employee performance, while pointing out some of the practice as exemplified in the public section in South Africa and some other parts of the world. The challenges associated with performance appraisal practices such as errors in rating and inadequate management training are pointed out. The next chapter presents the methodology followed in conducting out the study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodological procedures used in this study. The chapter is subdivided into the following sections: Paradigms, research approach, research design, population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations and limitation of the study.

3.2 PARADIGMS

This research's concern with understanding performance appraisal practices led to the adoption of an intersubjective stance towards that reality (Tsai, 2014). The study did not focus on understanding applicable laws and rules and was therefore situated in the interpretive research paradigm with a specific focus on people's experiences and the interpretation thereof (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2012). The participants in an interpretive study bring their own personal experience to the study, hence, the aim of the researcher in this study was to have an understanding of the participants' subjective experiences of performance appraisal practices and to create an interpretation thereof (Bertram and Christiansen, 2015). Therefore, the methodology was relevant to be used to explore some of the challenges of performance appraisal practices. The interpretive paradigm aligns to qualitative methods and approaches as indicated below.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative research methodology was used because this interpretive study aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of performance appraisal practices. (Henning et al. 2012). Qualitative research provides a complex and detailed understanding of a phenomenon, and its purpose is to empower the participants to share their experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Another characteristic of qualitative research is that it is flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the information is captured and purposefully aims to produce rich and detailed data (Mason, 2017).

Qualitative research is based on a constructivist epistemology and it explores what it assumes to be a socially constructed dynamic reality through a framework that is value-laden, flexible, descriptive, holistic and context sensitive such as an in-depth description of the phenomenon from the perspectives of the people involved (Kaya, Yilmaz, 2013).

The qualitative approach, in the context of the present study, entailed interviewing employees who had worked for the organisation (AGSA) long enough to have experience with the performance appraisal process. The use of a qualitative approach enabled the researcher to develop an understanding of individuals and events in their natural setting of understanding performance appraisal practices, to uncover and explore the perceptions, beliefs, and emotions of the employees pertaining to performance appraisal practices in the organisation.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan that outlines how data will be collected, the data gathering methods, instrument to be used, how the instrument will be administered as well as how data will be organised and analysed (Leedy and Ormond, 2010). Therefore, the study employed an explanatory case study design. Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery and Sheikh (2011) define an explanatory case study research as a study design that provides in-depth understanding, with reason thereof, of complex issues in a real-life context, in this case, performance appraisal perceptions in the AG's' office in Bloemfontein.

Two reasons drove the choice of this design. Firstly, it is useful for drawing accurate conclusions and making recommendations based on personal experiences and a comprehension of the research subject within a particular environment. Secondly, it is appropriate for analysing situations and behaviours affected by the external environment instead of the researcher (Yin, 2014). The research questions as indicated in chapter one, further pointed to the suitability of the qualitative research method for the reason that it underlines the importance of the interviewees' personal histories while also hinting at the research objectives (Agee, 2009). Yin (2014) assert that a case study is designed to illuminate decisions, why they were taken, they were implemented, and what resulted from the decisions. Yin agrees with Crowe et al. (2011) suggests that case studies investigate contemporary phenomena in-depth and within a real-world context.

Thus, case studies complement qualitative research since they provide an understanding of the issue at hand and are most effectual when exterior factors, not the researcher, trigger the actions and responses of research participants (Yin, 2017). In other words, a case study is a natural choice when the focus of the research is on investigating current subjects that are affected by transformations in their environments (Yin, 2017).

3.5 POPULATION

Population in research refers to the total number of objects, individuals, groups, organisation or human products in a study (Perks, 2010). In addition, Gomez and Jones (2010) state that the target population is a group possessing similar defining characteristics important for scientific query. The main expectation for the study population is that it must answer the question in line with the research topic (Sauders and Lewis, 2012). For the purpose of the present study, the population amounting to one hundred and eighty-seven (187), consisted of full-time employees at the office of Auditor General of South Africa, Bloemfontein. This organisation was chosen because the researcher is an employee at this office and it was convenient for her to conduct the study. In addition, the researcher's experience within the organisation indicated some anecdotal evidence of problems associated with performance appraisals.

3.5.1 Sampling

Sampling is a process whereby some elements are selected from a population (Schurink, Fouche and De Vos, 2012) states that sampling involves a group of people selected from the target population based on the researcher's belief that they are representative and their experience is generalizable. A convenient purposeful sampling technique was used to identify appropriate people for the study sample. The basis of convenient purposeful sampling is the assumption that only those who are willing and have adequate background and level of knowledge about the issue under consideration should become respondents (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014)

It must be stated that the convenient purposeful sampling technique is one of the most frequently used in qualitative research owing to the specific attention the research may pay to respondents' personal experiences and its ability to make a researcher draw conclusions from the rich data (Palinkas, Olin, Chor, Um, Jeong, O'Connor, Horwitz and Hoagwood, 2015) In the case of the present study, those sampled were willing and had two or more years' experience in performance appraisal within the organisation under study.

3.5.2 Sample size

The employees of the Auditor General of South Africa, Bloemfontein office formed the primary unit of analysis in the study seeking to understand the nature of performance

appraisal practices. Such an understanding was best obtained from employees who had participated and are knowledgeable about the performance appraisal system in the organisation and who could attach their own varied appraisal experiences and meaning. Thus, a total number of 16 willing participants, who had at least two years' experience of performance appraisal were selected, two from each of the 8 bands of employees in the organisation, (B, C, D, E1, E2, E3, F, and G). Employees of AGSA, Bloemfontein office are clustered into bands according to the positions in the organisation. Selection of participants was guided by Opong (2013) and Khan (2014) who emphasise that it is impossible to collect information from all members of the targeted population of a research inquiry. According to Braun and Clarke (2014) stated that researcher using interpretative phenomenological analysis can use 3 to 16 participants for a single study. Guest, Namey and Mitchell (2013) highlight that a minimum number of participants help to understand the occurrence of events in their natural settings.

The adoption of the interpretivist paradigm for this study meant that the sample size issue was not really of concern because the aim was to obtain quality, in-depth personally lived experiences and opinions from the respondents. There are no hard rules in terms of sample size in qualitative research. Researchers usually start with a small sample and add new participants as long as saturation point is not yet reached (Padgett, 2016). Pertaining to this study, a small sample was therefore, beneficial to an in-depth understanding of the issue under consideration. It was furthermore appropriate to conduct the individual interviews necessary to collect enough information to achieve the research objectives (Hesse-Biber, 2016).

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

Flick (2014) emphasises that the qualitative researcher needs to make the correct choice of relevant research data collection methods that yields good results. Data collection for this study was done over a period of three weeks using a semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide or schedule had an introductory section which introduced the researcher and the purpose of the study, as well as a brief on ethical issues to be observed. The other section had themes related to each research question, with sub-questions under each broad theme. For example, theme one was on: Understanding the importance of performance appraisal; and the question asked was:

'What do you know about the evaluation of employees in the workplace? [Probe on

what should be evaluated, importance frequency, and feedback type, if not mentioned].

The last section of the schedule had items soliciting for the demographic characteristics of the participants. The motivation for selecting a semi-structured interview over other data collection tools lies in its usefulness for estimating and analysing different perspectives on a single issue. The semi-structured interview also allows for the examination of numerous aspects of reality and working conditions within one environment (King, Horrocks and Brooks, 2018). In this study, multiple data collection research methods were used to maintain credibility of the results (Creswell, 2013). For justification of the instrument, semi-structured interviews and observation are outlined below.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews aimed at better understanding of individual experiences and discovering trends in the field of performance appraisal (Bertram and Christiansen, 2015). Semi-structured interviews enabled me to obtain information from the participants through face-to-face engagement. Flick (2014) states that qualitative research considers that participants have different viewpoints and practices because of their different contextual life experiences. In this study, interviews were regarded as a suitable instrument to explore the challenges facing employees on performance appraisal practice. Semi-structured interviews also provide flexibility on the part of the researcher (Baumbusch, 2010). Patton (2014) reiterates that a semi-structured interview allows the exchange of views between two people, the interviewer and the interviewee.

In this study, the researcher commenced the interviews with an introduction to make the participants aware of the purpose of the research study. The designed interviews included open-ended questions that did not limit the respondents' reflections nor hinted at the correctness of an answer (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Open-ended questions represented the research objectives and questions, hinted at the subjectivity of answers, and focused on obtaining information on personal experiences and perceptions about performance appraisal. Even though the interview followed the protocol (set of pre-determined questions), participants were allowed to illustrate, give examples and expand on their answers. The questions were used following the structure of the discussion. Questions were asked following the order in which they were written, however, the sequence of questions was driven by the participants' responses. The new issues that emerged from the interviews were explored by probing questions. All interviews were

recorded using a digital voice recorder. Interview duration ranged from 20 to 30 minutes and each interview was completed in one session.

3.6.2 Observations

Johnson (2014) defines observations in qualitative research as watching human actions with the purpose of understanding the reasons for those actions and their influence in real-life situations. Through observation, the researcher was able to judge such behaviour and to gather information about the phenomenon and record the outcome (Martella, Nelson, Morgan and Marchand-Martella, 2013).

In this study, the behavioural patterns were to understand challenges of performance appraisal practices in the organisational context. The phenomenon of interest was to identify, through observations, the challenges that influenced effective performance appraisal practice in the organisational contexts. Studies (Bertram and Christensen, 2015; Johnson, 2015; Yin, 2014) shows that observations as an important source of evidence for collecting information in natural settings to strengthen the data collected from the interviews.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis refers to the manner in which the understanding of the data is captured (Henning et al. 2012). The researcher was the primary instrument in collecting and analysing data. In qualitative research, once the data is collected, it needs to be transcribed, analysed and interpreted. Thus, for the study, data were analysed manually, by codifying content (content analysis) in order to establish the themes and sub-themes.

Each interview transcript was read to identify concepts or statements related to the sub-themes. The next step was to review the identified themes, where data emerged that resulted in the development of new themes. These concepts or statements were copied from the transcript and pasted under each sub-theme. The transcript code and page number from which the statement or concept was copied were placed at the end of the statement or concept for ease of reference. The format (Participant 1= PT1) was used for reference purpose. The data analysis based on the above procedure allowed for the indication of. The data analysis based on the above procedure allowed for the indication of similarities and differences.

The researcher assessed the quality of the data and rigour of the process to ensure that the generated findings were credible, transferable, dependable and conformable (Schurink et al. 2012), as indicated below.

3.7.1 Credibility

Research will be credible if it produces believable findings (ODonovan, Kang, Meyer, Höllerer and Adalii, 2012). According to Anney (2014), the researcher needs to adopt some credibility strategies when conducting a project, such as prolonged field experience, sampling, triangulation, member checking and peer examination. Therefore, the credibility of the study increased by engaging participants to verify the truthfulness and correctness of the collected data (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell and Walter, 2016). As a result, the researcher adopted the approach that validity in qualitative research is based on the credibility of the research findings as the researcher and the participants of the study describe it (Creswell and Clark, 2019).

3.7.2 Reliability

The reliability of a study refers to the detail of changes that occur during the study with emphasis on the process of data collection (Rossman and Rallis, 2016). A study is reliable if it can be repeated (Strydom and Delport, 2011). Nonetheless, the researcher did not expect to obtain the same results in the present study, but rather anticipated differences in behaviour and opinions that were expressed (Strydom and Delport, 2011). Finally, the researcher ensured reliability by maintaining consistency during the data collection process by asking every participant in the study the same research interview questions.

The reliability of the study was also ensured by using the purposive sampling method, which enabled the collection of data from participants willing and with experience on the phenomenon under investigation.

3.7.3 Validity

Validity within qualitative research refers to the accuracy of the research data (Creswell and Clark, 2019). This means that a researcher's data can be valid if the results of the measurement process are accurate. Thus, it is important for the researcher to document the experiences of participants correctly if the data is to be credible. Although some

qualitative researchers, such as Marshall and Rossman (2014), argue that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research, researchers have realised the need for some kind of qualifying check or measure for the research. Therefore, it is necessary that the participants of any study pre-confirm that the findings are credible (Rossman and Rallis, 2016). In addition, the researcher made use of participant checking in order to establish credibility of the data and findings, by presenting the findings and requesting participants to determine their accuracy and, therefore, a credible account of their view during the in-depth interviews (Babie, 2010).

3.7.4 Transferability

Transferability methods are used by the researcher to enable a reader of the research to draw conclusions from the research that relates to their own situation and contribute to the quality of the research (Delpont and Fouche, 2012). The transferability of the study was ensured by providing detailed descriptions of both the research methodology followed and the findings obtained.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The ethical considerations are strongly emphasised in qualitative research as a qualitative researcher intrudes into peoples' lives (Khan, 2014; Ludwin and Frideres, 2014). Therefore, these principles were applied when understanding challenges of performance appraisal practices to obtain the study results. The study was conducted in the most ethical manner as possible. For example, permission for employees to participate in the study was requested before commencing with the interviews. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants to ensure informed consent. The rights of the participants and their privacy were considered and protected by assuring them that the data was confidential.

In addition, permission was sought from the participants to record the session and giving each of the 16 participants a code. Code assure the anonymity of the participants. The codes were created based on the order in which the participants were interviewed. For example, participant one would be given a code such as [PT1], which means Participant 1].

No participants were forced to participate, and they were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time when they felt that they could not to continue. Finally,

the participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses prior to the interviews. The researcher also explained that data would be used for the study intended for the completion of the researcher's academic requirements and be kept by the researcher and supervisor for at least five years.

3.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research methodology and its components were discussed in detail. These components included the qualitative research approach, research design, population data analysis, data collection methods, sampling and ethical considerations. The reasons for selecting these components were discussed in terms of how they were used in constructing evidence to support the study to answer the research question on the challenges of performance appraisals practices. How the components were used in constructing evidence to support the study to answer the research question on the challenges of performance appraisal practices. The next chapter presents results, their interpretation and discussion of the results.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study objective sought to understand performance appraisal practices at the office of the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA) in Bloemfontein and present the challenges and implications of the practices in order to make recommendations. This chapter presents a description of the participants and results of the study. A discussion of the findings emerged from the presentation and interpretation of data description from the literature and theoretical framework guiding this study.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.1 presents a summary of the participants with regard to gender, age, racial group and number of years as an employee. The interview number refer to the sequence in which the interviews were conducted. The verbatim evidence is written up in a way that ensures a proper reference to each participant and the racing of data as for example noted in the participant identified as 'PT' in the interview data. The findings were integrated with the literature to explain the data and to indicate their relevance in relation to the current literature review.

Table 4.1: Biographical information of the sample

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	8	50%
	Female	8	50%
	Total	16	100%
Age	22-30	12	70%
	30-40	2	20%
	40-50	1	10%
	50-60	1	10%
	Total	16	100%
Racial group	African	13	70%
	Whites	2	20%
	Coloured	1	10%
	Total	16	100%
Number of years as an employee at AGSA 1-2 years 3-4 years	1-2 years	3	
	3-4	9	
	5-7	2	
	17	1	
	26	1	
	Total	16	100%

4.2.1 Biographical interpretation

The study sample consisted of 50% males and 50% female participants. These demographics suggest that males and females in the organisation participated equally in the performance appraisal process. In addition, Table 4.1 also indicates that 70% of the respondents fell within the 21-30 years' age group. The reason could be because AGSA recruitments university graduates and trains them as auditors. The table also shows that 45% of the sample has 3-4 years working experience with AGSA. Research (Huber and Lewis, 2010) shows that years of experience at work provides an employee with enough understanding of the dynamics of an organisation. Thus, the years of experience enabled the participants to understand the performance appraisal practices.

4.3 PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This section of the chapter presents the findings from the interviews conducted with participants. Four main themes were identified, and each discussed in line with the research questions. The subsequent sub-themes are also discussed and supported with evidence from verbatim quotations and paraphrased statements.

Table 4.2. shows the content of the analysis of the transcripts pertaining to the performance appraisal practices. The content analysis resulted in the formulation of main themes and sub themes as found in the data. The themes are (1) understanding of performance appraisal practices (2) performance appraisal practices (3) opinions about the current performance appraisal practices (4) challenges of performance appraisal practices.

Table 4.2 Understanding the importance of performance appraisal

Themes	Sub-themes	Issues raised
Understanding the importance of performance appraisal	1. Developmental purpose.	Participants mentioned that performance appraisal is solely used for growth and improvement of an individual and that employees get rewarded through bonuses.
	2. Frequency of performance appraisal	Participants mentioned that the appraisals are done twice annually.

4.3.1 Discussion of sub-themes

4.3.1.1 Developmental purpose

The sub-theme, developmental purpose, emerged from the main theme 'understanding the importance of performance appraisal practices'. Here, 75% of the participants indicated various reasons accounting for the importance of performance appraisal. These reasons include personal development, promotion, salary increase and that it serves as a motivation for the employees.

One participant indicated that:

“The importance of it ideally should be for growth, improvement of the employees’ works but also it is important because of the talent plotting that we use in the organisation, the scoring that one gets in the organisation, it is the one that is solely used for promotion, it is solely used for performance-based bonuses, it is solely used for employee annual salary increase percentages as well. So, it is important for the employee’s performance currently and it is important for employee’s performance for the next position, it is also important for employee’s personal financial growth.” PT6

In line with what the participants have said about the importance of performance appraisal practices, Cascio and Aguinis (2011) note that a performance appraisal will be effective if it serves strategic, and developmental purposes, facilitates communication with the employee, provides feedback to the employee, and if that information derived from the process is used for employee decision-making. In addition, Joarder and Ashraf (2012) agree that performance appraisal is a key to providing incentives to the talented personnel, in ensuring that they are with the organisation and to enable that they experience growth. Finally, a study conducted by Shrivastva (2012) reveals that performance appraisal is one of the key factors that enable an organisation’s ability to grow and so a review of past behaviour of employees against set targets, provides an opportunity to reflect on past performance of the employees and give them some monetary rewards and opportunities for growth. Rewards are important and linked to appraisals.

One participant stated the following about rewards:

“Performance is like a reward that the employer gives to motivate employees to perform better as a positive way just to say that they are appreciating the work that they have done.” PT2 (Participant 2).

Rahim and Daud (2012) indicate that bonuses are a payment that employees get based on their performance. According to Absar, Azim, Balasundaram and Akhter (2010), compensation is important for both employers and employees, in terms of attracting, retaining, and motivating employees after good performance. Nel et al. (2011) and Phonsanam (2010) assert that total compensation of good performance includes monetary and non-monetary rewards, and direct and indirect rewards. This means that performance appraisal is part of the process of determining the individual's work behaviour and whether their skills meet the organisational strategies and goals. In addition, Milkovich, Newman and Gerhart (2011) state that, rewards can play a significant role in influencing employees' attitudes and perceptions of work, while Grobler et al. (2011) support the view that performance appraisals can be an effective tool in determining merit increases, employee bonuses and pay.

The effectiveness of rewards lies in the fact that they represent anything that is valuable and meaningful to the recipients. This means that appropriate reward strategies, development strategies and plans, training, feedback, communication and coaching as well as career planning should be implemented after performance appraisals.

One participant indicated that:

“I understand that it is a process that helps the employer to understand where they are in terms of performance and also for the employee basically to understand where they are at, how the employer sees them. And then for the employer, it is a process to say okay where do we need to identify our staff now, those that we can take to the next level to use for succession plan and all of that” PT10 (Participant10).

Based on the above responses of participants it is clear that the participants understood performance appraisal as a tool for motivation, reward and development.

4.3.1.2 Frequency of performance appraisal

Another sub-theme raised by the participants from their understanding of the importance of performance appraisal was the frequency of conducting performance appraisals. Fifty percent (50%) revealed that performance is done twice in a year and that it is an ongoing process. For example, one of the participants mentioned that:

“Evaluation of employees in the AGSA workplace is done twice in a performance period which coincide with the financial year so there is a mid-year and the final one, and the evaluation is solely for performance and behavioural aspect of employees” PT6 (Participant 6).

Grobler et al. (2011) concur with the above and view that performance appraisal is an on-going process that is solely used for the evaluation and development of an individual. To evaluate means to pass judgement or determine the worth of something Grobler et al. (2011) and it should be done on a regular basis. This view means that performance appraisal is an on-going process where the performance of the individuals and teams are identified, measured and developed for career planning as well as to ensure that the organisation's performance is improved through enhancing an individual's capability (Cascio and Aguinis, 2011). This highlights the fact that this process integrates an individual's development in order for the organisation to achieve its strategic objectives goals. Islam and Siengthai (2010) support the above-mentioned view that a performance appraisal is a continuous process and not just a year exercise., It is a time-to-time evaluation and the individual will receive feedback at the end of each evaluation process.

4.4 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES

The second main theme (performance appraisal practices) is derived from the research question two: 'What are performance appraisal practices currently utilised by the AGSA, Bloemfontein office?'

The sub-themes that emerged and issues raised are: individual performance contract (IPC), and 360-degree feedback, as indicated in Tale 4.4 below.

Table 4.3 Performance appraisal practices

Themes	Sub-themes	Issues raised
Performance appraisal practices	1. Individual performance contract (IPC)	Agreement of the strategic goals
	2. 360-Degree feedback	Peer review of subordinates

4.4.1 Discussion of sub-themes

4.4.1.1 Individual performance contract (IPC)

The individual performance contract (IPC) The individual performance contract (IPC) is one of the sub-themes that emerged from the theme ‘performance appraisal practices’ used by employees of AGSA at the Bloemfontein Office. Most of the employees (80%) agreed that they use performance appraisal practices in which individual performance contract is viewed as an agreement between the line manager and the employee. In addition, the expectations from the performance appraisal practices is that an individual will contribute to the balance score card of AGSA.

One participant mentioned that:

“First, in the beginning of the financial period of the performance of the evaluation period we do contracting. Contracting is whereby you need to agree with your line manager on the goals that you as an individual on your IPC performance score card to say this is my contribution to the whole organisational business score card. So you do the initial contracting and agree to terms of the goals you are setting for yourself that will contribute to the business unit and ultimately to the organisation. Thereafter, the contracting will go to through the stages of approval to ensure that every employee is in line with organisational objectives. Once that is done, then the work allocation, the work assignment, the stretch assignment based most of the time on the previous performance period, evaluation and the scoring, and where you state whether you need the stretch assignment, help or not. The evaluation will kick start with the financial period. When it comes time for the mid-year performance evaluation the first step is the contracting, then is the mid-year performance evaluation. But the first step of the initial contracting goes along with the PDP (personal development plan) for people that need the developmental areas that will be outlined in the previous performance cycle. Then the second one, like

I said will be the mid-year performance, at the mid-year performance you will evaluate yourself based on the substituted of the evidence of what you did from April until the end of September and by so doing you will give yourself scores. And for behavioural aspect you will score yourself, but you will ask colleagues, superiors, internal and external stakeholders to score you on the behavioural component, which mostly comprises of either five to ten percent of total scoring that you have. Once that is done, the line manager will score you and after they score you the scores go for moderation. The scores are moderated so that maybe they can align the process of evaluation from different centres, managers and all of that. After the moderation of the scores, those are the final scores that are then given to you as an employee. The feedback that you ask earlier from the line manager and the same process that happens in the midyear happens at the end of the financial year which is around March and April" PT6 (Participant 6).

The above statement illustrates that employees within the organisation understood the performance appraisal practices to also encompass the way in which they sign performance contracts with their senior managers. The issue of performance contracts is emphasised by Sliwka and Kampkötter (2014) who state that they are the most critical tool that can be used to monitor employees' contribution to organisational goal attainment. Jain and Garg (2013) reiterate by stating that contracts are essential to gauge employees' effectiveness.

4.4.1.2 360-Degree feedback

360-Degree feedback is the second sub-theme that emerged from the theme "performance appraisal practices" that are used at the AGSA, Bloemfontein Office. Mello and Maserumule (2010) highlights that performance feedback is a strategic way of measuring, evaluating and influencing employee activities in the past, present and future. Appraisals seek to channel employee behaviours in the appropriate direction towards performance objectives that are consistent with the work and this can be achieved through the provision of appropriate and detailed feedback. Aggarwal and Thukur (2013) note that 360-degree feedback depends on the input of an employee's superior, colleagues and subordinates in order to provide people with information about the effect of their action on others in the workplace. This is confirmed by the study participants as noted below.

One of the participants mentioned that:

“The 360-degree is now part of the development performance contract. If you are a trainee, then you are doing it in two months because part of the program is how well you do your soft skills and preferably the technical skills. If you are an employee and you don’t study and you only have the individual performance contract, then there are the six-monthly assessments. Doing your 360 evaluation is just an opportunity for you to solicit input on how well you communicate and adapt to the team. So those are the things- who are there, which of the trainee the employee should pass. It is not negotiable and that is the one thing that must be done, out of that also the outcome of this assessment usually results in a plan that you are going to work on still” PT5 (Participant 5).

Some of the participants indicated that they prefer to use the 360-degree feedback because it can be used for personal development, communication and the improvement of one’s technical skills.

4.5 OPINIONS ON CURRENT PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES

Table 4.4 presents narratives on the theme, opinions on the current performance appraisal practices. The theme is drawn from the research question three ‘How do employees at the AGSA, Bloemfontein office understand the current performance appraisal practices?’. It is important because it brings out the factors that employees considered when using performance appraisal practices. The sub-theme is: unfairness of performance appraisal processes as well as performance appraisal inconsistency measures.

Table 4.4 Opinions on the current performance appraisal practices

Themes	Sub-themes	Issues raised
Opinion on the current performance appraisal	1. Unfairness of performance appraisal processes	Performance appraisal process is not fair and it is a punishing tool
	2. Inconsistency of measures of performance appraisal	Contradiction of performance ratings

4.5.1 Discussion of sub-themes

4.5.1.1 Unfairness of performance appraisal process

The unfairness of the performance appraisal process is a sub-theme that emerged from the main theme “opinions on the current performance appraisal”. Seventy percent (70%) of the participants noted that the current performance appraisal is not fair, not a reflection of the work done, does not identify the right people and that it is a punishing tool.

Two of the participants stated that:

“My opinion is that I don’t think it is fair. Someone that you work with..... like let’s say there is some manager that don’t like you and they will just say that this person doesn’t deserve. I don’t think it is a fair and true reflection of your work because its someone who you even haven’t worked with. I am not saying this because I am not clued up of how it works, but I still feel it is not fair” PT15 (Participant 15).

Another participant said that:

“I think it is not a good tool. It does not help the initial reason why it should be done. It doesn’t identify the right people and doesn’t put the right people where they are supposed to be. It actually punishes. It is a punishing tool, okay. If I like you I will get you there, I know I will get you there. If I don’t you will not get your bonus or whatever” PT10 (Participant 10).

The above views do not agree with More and Miller’s (2011) point that performance appraisals are perceived as a mechanism that honestly evaluate the performance, to know exactly who is responsible for doing what, and how the job has to be done. In addition, Colquitt (2012) documented fairness as the perception and reactions of the employee towards the organisational context. Studies by Frederiksen, Lange and Kriechel (2017); Harari and Rudolph (2017) also indicate that impacts associated with unfair evaluations of employee performance are due to favouritism linked with personal managerial preference and this factor contributes to unfair performance appraisal system ratings. Finally, Sudin (2011) argued that the perceived fairness is an imperative instrument that affects the motivation level of employees.

From the above, it can be argued that performance appraisals are controversial and, according to Park (2014), they are one of the most disliked activities within an organisation. Despite best efforts to improve the process, performance appraisals remain a constant source of criticism and complaint. The literature claims that the process is meaningless, nerve-racking, and unfair, which only contributes to bad reputation (Iqbal, Akbar, and Budhwar, 2015; Kaylor, 2017; Selvarajan and Cloninger, 2012) hence, the noted participant's responses that it is unfair to use the performance appraisal practices as one of the employees' evaluation processes.

4.5.1.2 Inconsistency of measures of performance appraisal

Another sub-theme that was raised by the participants on the opinion of the current performance appraisal is the inconsistency of measures of ratings.

One participant noted that:

"I am not happy at all. I feel like there is no consistency with the measures used and staff, because like I said I have participated in the mid-year one in which I didn't have ITC and took lot of days to prepare for my ITC.

So I still have those two issues of recoverability and studies were not looking good, but still my overall score was still three point something but then when we go to the final one I still don't have ITC and I still have two point something. So I was a bit shocked because I felt like things are still the same from the mid-year, I don't have this and this and so what makes the score to be reduced now" PT14 (Participant 14).

In line with the above statement regarding inconsistency of performance appraisal, Hsu and Wang (2012) indicates that the lack of an appropriate framework for evaluating organisational performance can be a source of crisis during performance evaluation. In many instances the appraiser seems to be familiar with all aspects of an employees' work but fails to set standards that will accommodate all the parties involved. There is confusion about performance levels in employees' current positions and that poses a question if the appraiser has a good knowledge of the key performance areas of employees. There is inconsistency in the whole process, and it shows that supervisors lack knowledge about the system and as well as the fair application thereof.

4.6 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED FROM USING PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES

Table 4.5 presents a summary of the theme, “challenges of performance appraisal practices” which was established from the research question four ‘What are the challenges experienced by the employees regarding the current performance appraisal practices?’. The response indicates that there are challenges that employees experience when using performance appraisal practice. Table 4.6 below indicates the sub-themes, and issues raised.

Table 4.5 Challenges experienced when using performance appraisal

Themes	Sub-themes	Issues raised
Challenges experienced when using performance appraisal practices	1. Subjectivity 2. Leniency or strictness 3. Biasness	Fairness of the process, inconsistency, managers becomes too personal. Favouritism by giving either low or high performance ratings. Perceived judgement.

4.6.1 Discussion on sub-themes

The sub-themes generated from the research interviews from the participants are subjectivity, leniency, strictness, and biasness discussed below in detail.

4.6.1.1 Subjectivity

Subjectivity is another sub-theme that emerges from the theme ‘challenges experienced from using performance appraisal practices’. The study observed that performance appraisal practices are influenced by personal feelings, assessment process inconsistencies, and favouritism. These concerns are confirmed by two of the participants who pointed out that:

“I think from the conversation you read what I have now, you have picked up that I have a big problem with personal feelings overriding professional responsibility. So it is very

subjective. That is why I say it is not consistent, the assessment process should be on an objective something. I think the organisation tries to bring in the element of objectivity by having those benchmarks and everything but subjectivity is something that you cannot ignore, it is there and it is one of those things that you need to accept” PT13 (Participant 13).

Another participant mentioned that:

“That I have mentioned, favouritism is something that is in a human element in the organisation, especially when comes to talent plotting, and evaluation of performance. This is because some people have worked with one another for more years, and some people have worked with one another to an extent that they are more than colleagues and now family and you find that one is a line manager and one is the one who is being appraised so that in itself it is very subjective it is not objective” PT6 (Participant 6).

Available literature agrees with these participants' views. Cram (2013) indicated that managers' opinions and judgments affect employee, and therefore, they need to be objective and use systematic, structured and precise methods when doing performance appraisals. In addition, a study by Mugwe (2010) reveals that a negative perception of performance appraisal in all areas is linked to the ineffectiveness of the performance appraisal process.

4.6.1.2 Leniency or strictness

Leniency is another sub-theme formed from the main theme “challenges experienced from using performance appraisals practices”. Participants indicated that they face challenges such as favouritism and nepotism from some of the managers when performing performance appraisal. This is confirmed in the following participant's views that:

“They definitely do, and going back to what I said earlier on where it is very unfortunate where your assessor is someone that hates you as an example. I think it is an honest example if the person hates they are going to be strict and to find fault in everything that you do. The other side of the coin is if this person is your friend that means it is not necessarily assessment and it is just scoring yourself and the approver approves your score” PT13 (Participant 13).

In concurrence with the findings, Botha and Bussin (2010) found that favourable performance ratings will be given to employees and the rating of the employees will then be inflated. As a result, this error can result in a performance appraisal that holds little value.

4.6.1.3 Biasness

Biasness is another sub-theme formed from the main theme “challenges experienced from using performance appraisal practices”. Participants showed that the power of some of the relationships formed may cause errors in the evaluation process. A participant’s views here are indicative:

“Like I said the relationships, people that have the relationships for a very long time and seem to work together as the senior manager and manager and assistant manager are more lenient to the weakness of each other and their mistakes. They are more biased because of the power of the relationships created in the organisation, so those are the challenges that I outlined, they are correctly there” PT6 (Participant 6).

This observation is confirmed in literature. Park (2014) state that rater biasness can affect a rater’s judgment and, as a result, that can cause errors in the scoring of an employee during a performance appraisal. For example, a rater may assign higher score based on familiarity of the ratee, which can miss the interpretation and credibility of the performance indicated by the scoring process. Therefore, if the process is not accurate, it may result in dissatisfaction, lack of motivation and resistance, especially on the part of the appraiser/employees (Giangreco, Carugati, Sebastiano and Tamimi, 2012).

4.7 SUMMARY

The chapter presented and discussed the findings from the analysis of the data that was collected from face to face interviews with sample employees from the AGSA, Bloemfontein office who had experiences of performance appraisal. The findings reflect that employees seems to have knowledge of performance appraisal practices. The findings further highlight the knowledge the employees have of the performance appraisal practices within their organisation. In addition, the findings indicate that there are key challenges, such as biasness and subjectivity, that the employees consider to be hindering the smooth practice of performance appraisals within the organisation. The

findings show that there are certain performance appraisal practices such as the use of performance contracts, are mostly used at AGSA, Bloemfontein office. that they mostly used at the AGSA, Bloemfontein office. The next chapter will present the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the results of the data analysis and the discussion thereof. This chapter summarises the research findings and draws conclusions from the findings. It also presents the recommendations and suggestions for further research studies.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The main objective of this study was to investigate the performance appraisal practices at the Auditor General of South Africa, Bloemfontein office. These four sub-subsidary objectives from the employees' perspectives were the focus of the study. These objectives were:

1. To determine how employees at the AGSA, Bloemfontein office understand the importance of performance appraisal.
2. To explain the current performance appraisal practices within the AGSA, Bloemfontein office.
3. To examine how employees at the AGSA, Bloemfontein office understand the current performance appraisal practices.
4. To identify the challenges experienced by the employees regarding the current performance appraisal practices.

The findings from the study are summarised below in line with these objectives.

5.2.1 Objective 1: To determine how employees at the AGSA, Bloemfontein Office understand the importance of performance appraisal.

The research findings show that the employees of the Auditor General located at the Bloemfontein office understand and have knowledge of performance appraisal practices. They understand how the process of performance appraisal works as well as the criteria of the process and what the process and the way it is conducted.

Finally, most of the participants specifically pointed out the frequency with which the appraisal was carried out in the organisation while focusing on the performance and behavioural aspects of an individual employee.

5.2.2 Objective 2: To explain the current performance appraisal practices within the AGSA, Bloemfontein office.

The performance appraisal practices used by employees of AGSA include an individual performance contract (IPC) and 360-degree performance feedback. Findings show that employees considered the individual performance contract as important because it contains targets and actions that contribute to the balance score card of AGSA.

Most of the employees stated that the performance appraisal in the organisation uses the 360-degree feedback as part of performance feedback practice. The 360-degree feedback is used mainly for employee development, technical skills, and the improvement of employee's communication skills with teams. The employees indicated that they received anonymous feedback from subordinates and peers for personal development purposes.

5.2.3 Objective 3: To examine employees' opinions on the current performance appraisal practices at the AGSA, Bloemfontein Office.

The results revealed that the employees were of the view that the process of performance appraisal is not fair and not a true reflection of the work done. Some of the participants, however, mentioned that the performance appraisal is fair because it is aligned to the strategies of the organisation.

5.2.4 Objective 4: To identify the challenges experienced by the employees regarding the current performance appraisal practices.

The employees highlighted that they experienced some challenges when using performance appraisal practices. The findings showed that these challenges include subjectivity with employees also noting that managers were not consistent when allocating rated scores of the performance.

The study also revealed that managers who are either lenient or strict managers are also one of the challenges experienced by employees. Some of the employees indicated that

it is difficult to accept results of performance appraisal because of the managers who are sometimes lenient or strict in their appraisals. Finally, the results also indicated that employees experienced biasness during performance appraisal.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON FINDINGS

It can be concluded from the research findings that employees at the office of AGSA, Bloemfontein have an understanding and knowledge of the importance of performance (Objectivity 1). In terms of current performance appraisal practices, one can conclude that employees regard performance contracts as an important tool, which is used by the organisation to determine individual performance against the set organisational goals. Similarly, it can be concluded that 360-degree feedback is used by the organisation for the benefit of employees (Objectivity2). A further conclusion is that employees feel that the whole performance appraisal process is not fair (Objectivity 3). Finally, it can be concluded that there are challenges that might need attention when it comes to the performance appraisal practices within the organisation under study.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRACTICE

The following recommendations, based on the findings of the study, are suggested:

Recommendations based on findings from objective 1

The organisation should conduct performance appraisals on a quarterly basis instead of twice in a year. This will lead to consistent performance appraisal practices that will cultivate the spirit of performance excellence and harmonious behaviour within the organisation.

The performance appraisals are employed for two main reasons, which are for the administrative and employee development purpose. Therefore, management should design transparent performance appraisal practices in order to give the best results.

Recommendations based on findings from objective 2

Management should use performance appraisal practices to align employee's behaviour with organisational goals or strategy. The managers can use the 360-degree feedback and should focus on open communication to assist employees with the performance measures and to prepare them for the performance appraisal process. The adequate

feedback that the employees receive about their performance helps them understand the gaps, reduces grievances and allows them to prepare for the process of the performance appraisal practices.

Recommendations based on findings from objective 3

Inconsistency and unfairness when using performance appraisal practice should be avoided. Managers should be consistent when dealing with issues of performance appraisal. It is also suggested that process should be transparent in order for the performance appraisal process to be fair.

Recommendations based on findings from objective 4

- Training programmes should be initiated for the managers who perform employee evaluations to avoid performance appraisal errors.
- In order to minimise subjectivity as a challenge, managers must be clear and provide narrow descriptions of the performance appraisal. They need to be more specific and objective.
- Performance appraisal practice should have measurable procedures for employees to avoid bias.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study was limited to the office of AGSA, Bloemfontein in the Free State. The research sample that comprised of 16 employees was limited for generalising the findings of this study. The research findings should not be generalised to other offices contexts since challenges differ from office to office.

Data gathered was limited to the information provided by the sampled participants and observations from the sampled office. Despite this observation, some of the selected employee's appeared to be knowledgeable about the content of performance appraisal practices but they were not comfortable in sharing the challenges they experienced in the office. This helped researcher in understanding why people act and behave the way they do. As a result, both limitations not therefore completely compromise the value of the study.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study highlights the performance appraisal practices at the AGSA office in Bloemfontein. The sample used was relatively small, and consisted only of employees within this particular office. The study could be extended in future to include samples of managers who are involved in appraising employees as well, for triangulation purposes.

Further research could explore the understanding of employees with regards to performance appraisal practices across the regional offices in the country to compare compliance with organisational laid down standards. It is further recommended that, because performance appraisal is a controversial practice within any organisation, further studies could compare the challenges experienced in the public sector to those in the private sector, for benchmarking and learning from each other's best practices. Lastly future research could also involve a number of methodologies, to avoid relying on one approach to research.

5.7 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings of the study, in line with the initially stated objectives. From these findings, a summary of the conclusions was proffered, which then guided the recommendations for practice. Every study has limitations, and these were also highlighted in this chapter. Finally, suggestions for further studies were provided.

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APPENDIX A

Semi-structured interview guide on performance appraisal practices

My name is Sarah Seboko. I am currently completing my Master's Degree Business Administration at the University of Technology Free State. In order to conduct my research project, I will need to obtain access to a sample of staff of AGSA Bloemfontein office. This letter is asking for permission to be granted access to use information obtained from the staff of AGSA.

The study focuses on performance appraisal practices, challenges and implications. Participation in this research will help to understand whether there are any challenges towards performance appraisal practices at Auditor General of South Africa, Bloemfontein office. This information will form the research portion of the M-Tech Business Administration degree. However, this information may be used in further academic papers within the field of Business Administration. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Purpose and function of this study request participation in an interview on the experiences on performance appraisal. This research involves a personal contribution from the an individual. Interview will take approximately 30 minutes to participate on the questions. Participation is voluntary, however be assured that data will be solely being used for academic purpose and all the information contained from this interview will remain strictly confidential and anonymous. No duplicate copies will be made and only the overall statistics will be discussed in this report. The interview will be conducted in a boardroom at the company office or any venue that is convenient for you.

The following questions will be addressed:

Understanding the importance of performance appraisals

1. What do you know about the evaluation of employees in the workplace? Probe on what should be evaluated, importance frequency, and feedback type, if not mentioned]

Performance Appraisal Practices

2. Tell me more about the way in which employees are evaluated in this company [Probe on practices, if not mentioned]

Opinions on current performance appraisal practices?

3. What are your opinions on the current practices of evaluation employees' performance in your company?

4. What knowledge have you gained from the performance appraisal practices currently utilized by the AGSA Bloemfontein office?

5. Which areas of performance appraisal practices do you like best?

Performance Appraisal Challenges

6. In your own opinion, what are some of the challenges associated with the current practices used to evaluate employees? at AGSA?

7. In your view, how best can performance appraisal practices be improved?

8. Is there any comment you would like to make regarding the evaluation of employee practices at AGSA? management to improve the current performance appraisal practices?

Participants/ demographic profile

Age	Gender M-Male F- Female	Racial group	Number of years as an employee at AGSA	Which section the employee works at?
22-30				
30-40				
40-50				
50-60				

APPENDIX B



Central University of
Technology, Free State

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE
SENTRALE UNIVERSITEIT VIR TEGNOLOGIE, VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI E BOHARENG YA THEKENOLOJI, FOREISTATA

**FACULTY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
COMMITTEE FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT
SCIENCES**

RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

Date: 2019-07-23

This is to confirm that:

Applicant's Name	Sarah Violet Seboko
Supervisor Name for Student Project	Prof C Chipunza
Level of Qualification for Student	M. Tech Business Administration
Title of research project	PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES IN THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF SOUTH AFRICA (AGSA), BLOEMFONTEIN, FREE STATE: CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS

Ethical clearance has been provided by the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee in view of the CUT Research Ethics and Integrity Framework, 2016 with reference number **[ETHICS NUMBER: SVS/2019]**.

The following special conditions were set:

None

Specific conditions

The following specific conditions apply: None

Please inform the committee of any changes to your study

Wish you success with your research project.



(FRIC Deputy Chairperson)

APPENDIX C



Central University of
Technology, Free State

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE
SENTRALE UNIVERSITEIT VIR TEGNOLOGIE, VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI E BOHARENG YA THEKENOLOJI, FOREISTATA

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT AUDITOR GENERAL OF SOUTH AFRICA, BLOEMFONTEIN OFFICE

**TITLE: PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES AT AUDITOR GENERAL OF
SOUTH AFRICA, BLOEMFONTEIN OFFICE, CHALLENGES AND
IMPLICATIONS**

Sarah Seboko

Cell no: 0832547227

Email address: sarahse@aqsa.co.za

Date: 10 October 2017

Dear Mr Duda

Your permission is herewith requested to allow Sarah Seboko, a student registered in the MTech in Business Administration at the Central University Free State, Faculty of Management Science to conduct academic research in your organisation.

Your company has been selected to participate because she is an employee of AGSA, therefore it will be convenient for her to conduct an interview research study in this organisation.

The purpose of the study is to investigate how to determine whether there is any challenges and implications of performance appraisal practices.

The study will entail:

1. Credibility
2. Transferability
3. Dependability
4. Confirmability
5. Ethical consideration
 - a) Confidentiality
 - b) Informed consent

c) Action and competence of the researcher

Your organisation participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however choose not to participate and you may also withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal with your approval. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.

Please contact my supervisor, Professor Crispen Chipunza, cchipunza@cut.ac.za if you have any questions or comments regarding the study. Please sign below to indicate your willingness to participate in the study.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Seboko

I, O. Duda herewith give my permission for the study to be conducted in Auditor General of South Africa, Bloemfontein Office.



Signature

20/11/2017

Date