

**Educators' perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices in Gauteng  
Independent Schools**

**By**

**Olushola Olatunji**

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INVESTIGATOR

Mr Olushola Olatunji

DEPARTMENT

Education Management and Policy Studies

APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY

15 March 2017

DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

16 October 2017

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

CC

Ms Bronwynne Swarts

Dr Teresa Ogina

This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the

Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

## Declaration

I, Olushola Adebayo Olatunji, student number 15087982 hereby declare that this dissertation, "***Educators' perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices in Gauteng Independent Schools,***" is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the Master of Education degree at University of Pretoria, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources cited or quoted in this research paper are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of references.

.....

Olushola Olatunji

November 2017

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this research to my parents Mr. and Mrs Olatunji, my siblings Abiodun Poroku, Simisola Olatunji and finally my nephews Andre and Asher Poroku.

## **Acknowledgements**

To have achieved this milestone in my life, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people:

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- Last, but not the least – my best friend Olumide Okesola, thank you for your emotional and financial support. God bless you.

## **Abstract**

The element of fairness in a performance appraisal system is essential for an organisation. If the system of an organisation is not fair, it may result in an employee being dissatisfied with the appraisal system and this may lead to extremes such as employee attrition. The purpose of the study was to examine educators' perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices in selected independent schools in Gauteng Province, South Africa. The research approach adopted for the study was qualitative while the research design used was case study. Purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample for this study. The findings of the study revealed that teachers think performance appraisal was conducted properly and the process helps to improve individual teaching output. The HODs believed performance appraisal was conducted in a positive and encouraging manner. The school principals also viewed the appraisal process positively, indicating that the competence of teachers and the quality of teaching and learning taking place in the school are assessed by doing performance appraisals. The different categories of the participants namely, teachers, HODs and principals believed that the process of performance appraisal was quite fair and recommended that there should be other tools for assessing the teachers' ability. Furthermore, the teachers did not see the appraisal system as unfair, but proposed other effective ways of conducting the appraisal system. According to the HODs, the process is time-consuming and the principals were satisfied with the appraisal process but cautioned that the process would become unfair if bonuses are given to the teachers. In addition, the teachers submitted that the exercise can be unfair if assessment is based on incorrect or inaccurate information. A fair appraisal process is when all parties are open and communicate with one another, constructive and honest feedback is given as well as the use of agreed upon procedures consistently. In conclusion, to improve the effectiveness of performance appraisal practices, fair performance appraisal practices should be given utmost priority.

### **Key Terms:**

Performance Appraisal, Fairness, Evaluation, Fairness Rules, Independent Schools.

LANGUAGE EDITOR

I, Ailsa Williams, as the language editor declare that I have edited chapters 1-5 and the references of **'Educators' perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices in Gauteng Independent Schools'** by **Olushola Olatunji**

Signature: *A. Williams*

Date: *16 November 2017*

### List of abbreviations

CDE	Centre for Development Enterprise
DOE	Department of Education
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
HCM	Human Capital Management
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
HET	Higher Education and Training
HOD	Head of Department
HRM	Human Resource Management
ISASA	Independent Schools Association of South Africa
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PAS	Performance Appraisal System
PED	Provincial Education Department
PMS	Performance Management System
SASA	South African Schools Act
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
SGB	School Governing Body



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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL ORIENTATION

#### 1.1 Introduction

A Performance Appraisal System (PAS) plays a very important role in an organization. Mahajan and Raheja (2014) describe Performance Appraisal as a system that assesses the performance of an employee in an organisation. The system evaluates the work of an employee in an organization to determine the performance and commitment of its employees (Mahajan & Raheja, 2014). Performance appraisal is a vital sub-division of the general performance management process (Swanepoel, Erasmus & Schenk, 2009). The importance of performance appraisals to human resource management cannot be overstated because the ratings of the appraisal process are then used as the basis for reaching several human resource conclusions. The function of a performance appraisal is not limited to accountability and professional growth. Appraisal ratings are also connected to recognising and compensating work done. Ahmad and Azman Ali (2010) state that the usefulness of performance appraisal extends to taking decisions regarding salary increment and promotion, as well as taking disciplinary actions.

A performance appraisal system also plays a very important role in an employee's job satisfaction. Mahajan and Raheja (2014) assert that employees may leave the organisation if they are not satisfied with their performance appraisal system. The dissatisfaction expressed by workers about a performance appraisal system occurs when the employees feel that there is something wrong in their organisation's evaluation system, and this may lead to extremes such as attrition (Mahajan & Raheja, 2014). Erdogan, Kramer and Liden (2001), state that the perception of employees about the fairness of performance appraisal systems is helpful in determining the success and usefulness of the systems. Researchers such as Morrow (2011) and Abdul-Shukor, Mohd, Tang and Lim (2008) have buttressed the notion that the perceptions of the fairness of a performance appraisal are remarkably related



to the commitment of employees, their enthusiasm and their satisfaction with the organization. Performance evaluation processes conforming to fairness rules may enhance the perceptions of fairness in the appraisal techniques and procedures. Murphy and Cleveland (2005) developed several fairness rules, namely: accuracy of information, ethicality, consistency and representativeness. These rules are also backed up by other empirical investigations such as Maise (2010), Hutchinson and Burch (2011).

Appraisal ratings that are based on exact information will be perceived as fair, on the other hand when superiors consider the concerns, values and outlook of the subordinates, an appraisal system is said to be representative. Ethicality involves using procedures that are attuned to existing ethical standards and morals. Misiak (2010) states that these ethical standards and procedures include stating a goal, selecting criteria, subjects and methods that are going to be appraised, training staff members who undergo appraisal, determining how often the appraisal process will be and communicating the rules guiding the whole process.

An earlier study by Meyer and Allen (1997) found that if the performance appraisal processes are fair, employees become dedicated to their work unlike when the employees perceive the performance appraisal process to be unfair. Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter and Ng (2001) later also noted that if employees feel that the assessments are fair, they typically respond with commitment, higher satisfaction and are more eager to get involved in 'extra-role behaviour'. Researchers such as Cook and Crossman (2004), contend that the performance appraisal process will not be entirely successful if those involved in the appraisal process consider it as unfair.

Studies by Bretz, Milkovich and Read (2007) and Skarlicki and Folger (2009) have revealed that satisfaction of performance appraisal has a tremendous effect on the behaviour of employees as well as on their attitudes. An employee's drive and motivation may suffer, and truant behaviours such as absenteeism and tardiness may occur when an employee feels he is not properly evaluated, and as such the overall performance will decrease. This is why employee evaluation based on set criteria and the goals of the

organisation is expected to be done in a spirit of honesty, objectivity and fair play. Tang and Sarsfield-Baldwin (1996) advise that, management teams of organizations should make a conscious effort to improve the employees' perception of the performance evaluation because an employee's perception of performance evaluation has an effect on performance outcomes.

In order to create a system in which employees are held accountable, performance appraisal should create an enabling environment for career and professional development where certain outcomes that are developmental in nature can be appropriately identified (Bell, 2011). Organisations are required to develop strategies for improvement on the back of information gathered during the appraisal process which will be agreed upon with the teachers. The teachers are however expected to commit to these strategies. In some cases, teachers are not upgraded to the next salary level, even after they have fulfilled the training and workshop requirements. This has brought about a situation where teachers insist on getting pay bonuses rather than the conventional salary progression. Employee appraisal is at risk of losing its credibility of developing careers if performance is continually linked to pay (Beerens, 2012).

Rasheed, Aslam, Yousaf and Noor (2011) opined that when teachers trust their principal and are satisfied with him or her, they perceive the performance appraisal system as an effective administrative tool. Contextualizing teacher appraisal, Beerens (2012) is of the opinion that performance appraisal should be entirely developmental and should not be used as a justification that ultimately leads to financial implications. A good training programme enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of a performance appraisal system (Messah & Kamencu, 2011). The factors that contribute to effective performance appraisal are regular training, adequate training techniques, sufficient time and experienced trainers (Messah & Kamencu, 2011).

Despite the knowledge of the several components available to measure the effectiveness of an appraisal system, there are certain problems that have been identified as having a negative impact on performance appraisal. Ahmad and Bujang (2013) assert that leadership styles, political influence during performance appraisal as well as irregular performance appraisal may have a

negative influence on performance appraisal processes. Researchers such as Van Scooter, Moustafa, Burnett, and Michael (2007) as well as Ahmad and Bujang (2013) identified bias as a problem during performance appraisal in schools. In addition, appraiser's knowledge, participation of the employees in the appraisal process, goal setting, discussion of goals and the follow-up process are other factors that influence the appraisal process (Van Scooter, Moustafa, Burnett & Michael, 2007).

Appraisees' perceptions of fairness and their reactions to various aspects of the system have a direct correlation to an appraisal system's success or failure (Jawahar, 2007). Sharma, Sharma and Agarwal (2016) are of the opinion that accuracy and fairness can be used as indicators of effective performance appraisal procedures. The process of performance appraisal needs to be fair and accurate because the main objective of a performance management procedure is to properly align employee performance with that of the organisation, properly indicating to employees the goals of the organisation, expectations, priorities and how much they are contributing to these organisational templates (Selden & Sowa, 2011).

Behaviour of employees particularly towards their contribution to the organisations' goals can be affected by their perceptions of the fairness of an appraisal system (Messer & White, 2011). In this respect, the unfairness of an appraisal system as well as ineffectiveness of a performance appraisal can bring about certain behaviour in employees such as unproductivity and negativity towards the appraisal system. In determining the effectiveness of an appraisal system, the importance of the employees' perception cannot be over emphasised. Feelings expressed by the management staff as well as the employees about the existence of an official appraisal system can be used to determine the perceptions of the fairness of the performance appraisal. The supervisor's experience of the subordinate's performance, as well as detailed courses of action to improve areas where lapses have been identified and the consistencies of ratings are all vital in determining the effectiveness of a performance appraisal (Ahmed, Ramzan, Mohammad & Islam, 2011).

It is against this background that the researcher decided to do an empirical study that investigates the perceptions of fair performance appraisal practices in independent schools.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

Performance appraisal is about exploring the extent to which employees are meeting the organizational goals. Researchers like Sonesh, Coultas, Marlow, Lacerenza, Reyes and Salas (2015) have argued that in order to fully examine the influence of performance appraisal practices on employee behaviour, it is important to study the perceptions of the employee rather than the intentions of the organisation provided in reports, as these reports may not truly reflect employee perceptions. Principals in both the public and independent schools are of the opinion that for the development of teachers and for the performance appraisal to be successfully implemented and accomplish its objectives, schools need to be adequately equipped with staff as well as proper training for the staff members involved in the appraisal process (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2015).

The absence of set standards such as proper training of appraisers and proper appraisal tools – as was clearly evident in the independent schools - breeds a lack of mutual understanding of the professional duties of a teacher, the essential proficiency outline, or of the elements involved in creating an efficient teaching practice that will ultimately lead to learner gains. Since the purpose of performance appraisal is to create an enabling environment for teacher development, it is crucial to investigate the perceptions of the teachers regarding the appraisal system. If the system of an organisation is not fair, it may result in an employee being dissatisfied with the appraisal system and this may lead to extremes such as employee attrition. There is a gap in knowledge concerning what teachers perceive as fair and unfair performance appraisal practices. The relevant literature focuses mainly on fairness of performance appraisal and other themes such as procedural and substantive fairness. There seem to be a gap in knowledge about fairness of performance appraisal and the perceptions of fairness in performance appraisal.

Therefore, this study explored the perceptions of school principals, HODs and teachers on the fairness of performance appraisal practices in some private schools in Gauteng province.

### **1.3 Rationale**

A performance appraisal system is undoubtedly a very important element of human resource management (HRM). This element also plays a very important role in employee job satisfaction. It is a structure used to evaluate the performance of an employee in an organisation. An appraisal system is the basis on which an employee's salary is increased or decreased and the basis on which promotion or demotion is done (Mahajan & Raheja, 2014).

The element of fairness in a performance appraisal system is essential for an organisation. If the system of an organisation is not fair, it may result in an employee being dissatisfied with the appraisal system. This may lead to extremes such as an increase in the rate of employee attrition. Performance appraisal provides feedback that permits an employee to learn how well he/she is performing, enables them to determine how well they are meeting goals or objectives (which stipulate what an employee should do), makes team-building possible (which allows for participation among colleagues and their supervisors in solving problems that hamper their efficiency) and enables the offering of financial incentives that reward good performance (Gautam, 2016).

Despite the interest of researchers in job commitment, job involvement and job satisfaction as aspects of performance appraisal, there has been little research conducted on the fairness of performance appraisal systems in the education sector. In a country like South Africa with so many dynamics such as race, religious backgrounds, cultural diversity and political affiliations, there is a need to seek empirical evidence on what teachers in South African schools regard as a fair performance appraisal. Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan (2014) acknowledge that although several studies such as Sahoo and Mishra (2012), Semakula-Katende, Pelser and Schmickl (2013) have identified various outcomes of the performance appraisal (positive and negative), as well as the effects of perceptions of just processes in organisations, more studies are required to examine fairness in the performance appraisal context.

This study focuses on what makes principals, HODs and teachers perceive performance appraisal as being fair in view of the potential importance of fair appraisal in determining teachers' acceptance of appraisal systems.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to:

- Explore the perceptions of principals, HODs and teachers regarding the concept of the fairness of performance appraisal practices in their schools.
- Investigate how school principals, HODs and teachers view fairness in the performance appraisal system
- Identify what school principals, HODs and teachers regard as unfair performance appraisal practices
- Explore what makes the performance appraisal considered to be either fair or unfair
- Explore the implications of fair/unfair performance appraisal practices

#### **1.5 Research questions**

The main research question is:

How do school principals, HODs and teachers in private schools in Gauteng province perceive the fairness of performance appraisal practices in their schools?

The sub questions are:

- i. How do school principals, HODs and teachers describe their experiences of performance appraisals in their schools?
- ii. What are the views of the school principals, HODs and teachers regarding fairness in the performance appraisal process?
- iii. What do school principals, HODs and teachers regard as unfair performance appraisal practices?
- iv. Why some performance appraisal practices are considered unfair and why other practices are considered fair?

What are the implications of fair/unfair performance appraisal practices?

## **1.6 Conceptual framework**

Fairness in the performance appraisal system plays an important part in an organization. Appraisal system that is deemed unfair may disillusion employees and this could in turn lead to extremes such as an employee leaving the job. This automatically means an increase in employee attrition and a high staff turnover (Kampkötter 2012). Reactions to a performance appraisal system have a huge influence on the effectiveness of the performance appraisal. When employees see an appraisal system as an opportunity to grow professionally, they would respond positively to the appraisal system thus improving the effectiveness of the appraisal system. The system theory will be utilised to create a better understanding of this study. The justification for this lies in the fact that independent schools operate as a system (open or closed), and this fits model fits properly with the study. The theory that guides this study is discussed in detail in chapter 2.

### **Key concepts**

#### *Performance appraisal*

Performance appraisal is a process that involves the formal evaluation of work performances, deciding on effective ways of rewarding and motivating employees, remedying shoddy performances and providing timely feedback to employees. The employees working in the organisation are promoted, sanctioned, demoted or receive salary increases on the basis of their performance appraisal results (Mahajan & Raheja, 2014). This study will explore the performance appraisal as it relates to teachers, its importance, general structure and procedures and finally its advantages and disadvantages to an organisation.

#### *Fairness*

Fairness can be referred to as the extent to which outcomes and procedures are perceived to be objective, consistent or apposite. When it comes to

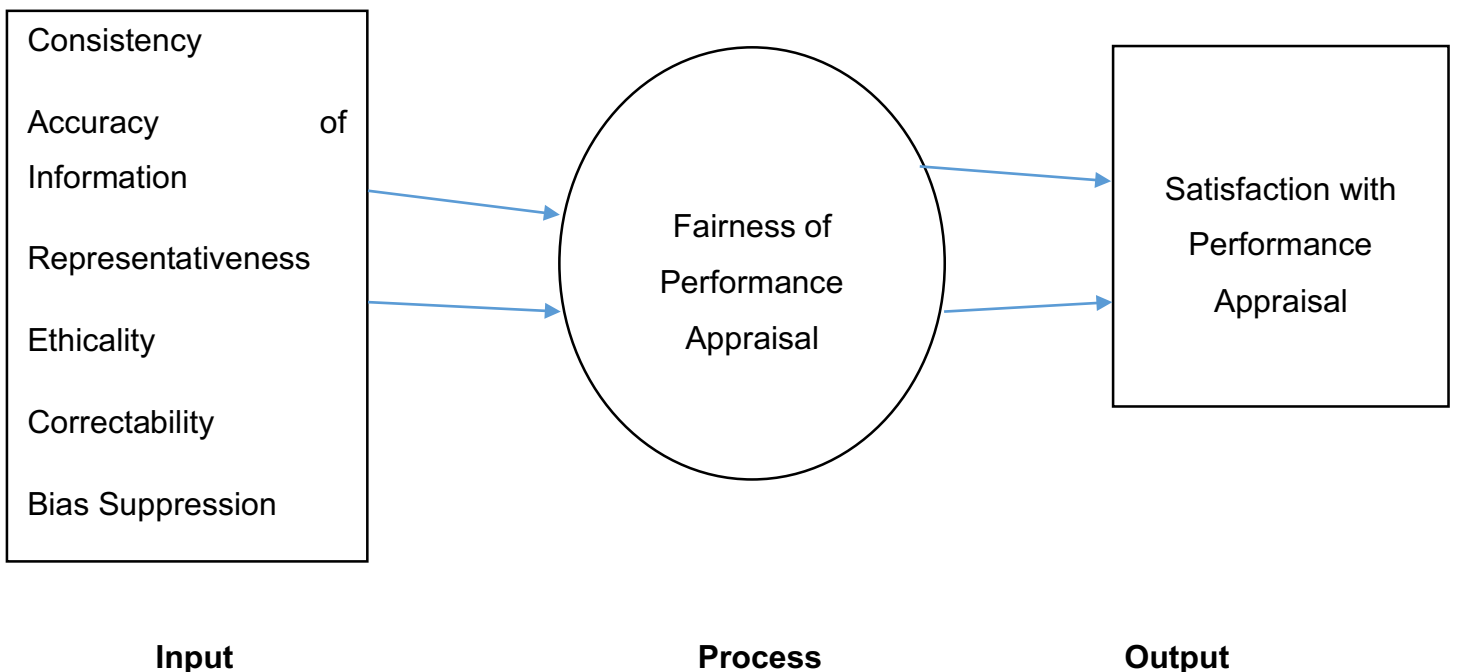
performance appraisals, fairness perceptions start from evaluating the ratings received, benefits accrued to those ratings, the appropriateness and consistency of the appraisal process, and the clarifications and feedback that accompany the communication of performance ratings (Gilliland & Langdon, 2013). This study will look at fairness in its entirety. All aspects of fairness, both procedural and distributive, will be explored.

### *Independent schools*

Independent schools are institutions owned and operated by different establishments recognized by law (South African Schools Act, No. 84, 1996). In this study Independent schools are referred to as schools that are owned, managed and financed by individuals or organisations other than the state.

Based on this, the conceptual framework that guides the present study is presented in figure 1.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework on the Fairness of Performance Appraisal Practices using the Fairness Rules**





## **1.7 Research methodology**

This section outlines the steps and procedures through which the research was conducted. It explains the research paradigm, research approach, research design, sample size and sampling technique used in this study. Data collection strategies and data analysis techniques employed in this study are also briefly discussed. The research design utilized in this study is a case study. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the sample involved in this study. The justification for this technique lies in the study itself, the researcher intends to involve only educators from independent schools. Interviews were used as the primary data collection method. The process of data analysis in this study started by transcribing the recorded interview data, the researcher then proceeded to do a rigorous and systematic reading and coding of the transcripts to identify the categories and themes that answered the research questions.

## **1.8 Trustworthiness of the Study**

Qualitative studies utilize numerous types of techniques to enhance the quality of the findings in the research. According to Creswell and Miller (2003), these strategies include credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. The details of how these strategies applied to this study are discussed in chapter 3.

## **1.9 Ethical considerations**

Ethics in research is referred to as the extent to which the licit, sociological and professional responsibilities to the study participants are followed encompassing a system of moral values (Polit & Beck, 2004). Before starting field work, the researcher applied for ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria. The researcher obtained permission to conduct the study from the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA). The researcher also obtained permission

from the school administrators, school board and school heads before collecting data.

As the participants of this research are teachers, HODs and principals, they were requested by the researcher to give consent to be participants in this study. The researcher explained and described in detail the type of study, aim and levels of involvement of the participants in the research before proceeding to obtain the informed consent from the participants involved in the study. Polit and Beck (2004), refer to informed consent as when the research participants have sufficient information about the study and the power of volition to enable them to agree or disagree to participate in a study at any point in time.

The researcher then provided all the purpose, processes, risks and the benefits of the research to the participants prior to the interview. There was no form of deception experienced by the participants during the data collection process. There was no information withheld regarding the study in trying to ensure participation.

Introduction was done by the researcher who formally introduced himself to the participants stating his name and position. The researcher then gave a complete description of the research and the significance of their participation in the study. The researcher also assured the participants that their involvement in the study was totally voluntary and there would be no repercussions should they decide not to participate. The participants were also provided with the contact details of the researcher should they need to contact him regarding their participation in the study. The participants were assured of the researcher's commitment to maintaining anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research. Anonymity is said to have taken place when the researcher himself cannot connect information given to a particular participant (Polit & Beck 2004).

### **1.10 Significance of the study**

The study was primarily focused on the general human resource element and the overall practices of independent schools when it comes to performance appraisal. The researcher anticipated the following contribution from the study:

- 1) Obtain an in-depth reflection from participants on performance appraisal practices in their schools. In accordance with this, feedback will be provided to the relevant organisations to review its current practices and place new emphasis on performance appraisal with the aim of ensuring that its benefits are maximised.
- 2) Ascertain if the current performance appraisal system is adequate, would require certain modifications or a total transformation.
- 3) Identify the causes and effects of perceptions the teachers have towards performance appraisal practices.
- 4) Provide the explicit information required to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the performance appraisal system in attaining the schools' objectives and goals.
- 5) Provide a platform for other researchers to conduct further study in this area.

### **1.11 Structure of the dissertation**

To assure a well-structured research report in which the content flows in a logical order and in which the research aims and questions are addressed, the chapters were outlined as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and background to the study

In the first chapter of this dissertation, the researcher discussed the background of the study, stated the research problem, the rationale and the research question. There is a brief discussion of research methodology, the credibility of the study and ethical issues. The significance of this study is also indicated.

Chapter 2 Literature review on performance appraisal and fair practices

This chapter focused on important aspects of performance appraisal, fairness and the schooling system in the Republic of South Africa. The researcher meticulously explored the performance appraisal, its importance, structure and

procedures, advantages and disadvantages. This chapter also discussed fairness and the South African Education system to give a better understanding of how the education system works.

#### Chapter 3: Research approach, design and methodology

In this chapter, the focus is on important aspects such as the research paradigm, research design, research approach and data collection techniques. The researcher discusses the scopes and limitations of the research design and the justification behind the selection of certain techniques.

#### Chapter 4: Findings and discussion

This chapter informs the reader of what was discovered during the research and relates to the aims and research questions on which the findings and recommendations are based.

#### Chapter 5: Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations

This chapter presents a summary of the findings in the study, conclusions and recommendations. The researcher also discusses the limitations, delimitations and gives pointers for further research.

### **1.12 Summary of the chapter**

In this introductory chapter the researcher gives the background of the research topic, the purpose of the study, the research questions and the significance of the study as well as a brief discussion of the theoretical framework. There is an indication of the research approach design and methodology in this study as well as ethical issues. The researcher also presents the strategies of ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of this study. The next chapter discusses the literature on performance appraisal and fair practices as well as system theory which is the theoretical framework of this study.

**CHAPTER 2**

**LITERATURE REVIEW ON PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND FAIR PRACTICES**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In chapter one, the researcher introduced the study and provided the background. In chapter two, the role players during performance appraisal, the fairness or unfairness of the performance appraisal process, the context of the study as well as the theoretical framework are discussed.

### **2.2 Performance Appraisal**

Performance appraisal of personnel is an endeavour undertaken by almost all organisations in the world (Parker, 2004). It is an activity that takes the shape of either a formal discussion between supervisors and their subordinates or informal encounters taking place intermittently. In a workplace, performance appraisal is perceived as synchronous formal communication between a supervisor and subordinate, which ordinarily takes the shape of an intermittent dialog (either annually or biannually), during which the work performance of the employee is evaluated and deliberated upon. In this study I align my thinking with Parker (2004), performance appraisal is a very important exercise undertaken several organisations around that world. Any organisation that is serious about the growth and development needs an effective performance appraisal system in place.

#### *2.2.1 The concept of performance appraisal*

Appraisal comes from the word 'praise' (expressing warm admiration) in a concerted effort to make the evaluation of teachers pleasant. Other words used in place of appraisal are assessment and evaluation. The performance appraisal as a system enables organisations to formally evaluate the job performance of an employee (Ahmed, Hussain, Ahmed & Akbar, 2010; Mondy, 2008). Swanepoel, Erasmus and Schenk (2009), elaborate on performance appraisal indicating that it is a process that simply has to do with officially assessing job performance, making choices regarding the efficient application

of staff motivation and remuneration, remedying shoddy performances and providing adequate feedback to staff members. Performance appraisals are undoubtedly an essential component of human resource management because information gathered from appraisals then serves as the basis for many decisions regarding human resources.

Aguinis (2007) affirms that in the performance appraisal, the main aim is to uncover employees' strengths and weaknesses and chances for improvement and skills development. Performance appraisal is also referred to as a process of formal evaluation whereby performances are reviewed over time (Armstrong 2006). This review covers accomplishments, improvements and challenges as the basis for amended personal development plans and predetermined performance agreements. Aguinis (2007) further explains that performance appraisal comprises job performance measurements, capturing vital components of the appraisal process without indicating the specific methods used during measurement.

The success of human resource management hinges on an effective performance appraisal process (Ahmed et al., 2010). Employers and organisations have always used performance appraisal practices to gauge and incentivize the performance of their employees. The performance appraisal system is used to identify beliefs, preferences and possible areas of development with regards to the goals of the organisation (Belete, Tariku & Assefa, 2014). Therefore, in order for an institution to be much more efficient and competitive, it must ensure that its employees are motivated and fully equipped with the right skills and technology in their relevant departments before critically appraising their performance.

### *2.2.2 Performance appraisal of teachers*

James (2010) defines teacher appraisal as the process of assessing the performance of teachers in service delivery. Teacher evaluation fulfils two main functions. The first function is formative in nature and serves to develop professional teaching skills while the other function is summative which serves as a basis for the selecting, grading, numerating and promotion of staff members. Turk and Roolaht (2007) highlight that in an institution, appraisal of

teachers provides an outline of the teaching quality, stimulates learning and development, elevates motivation and discipline levels, facilitates an improved understanding of the conventional duties of the teacher and ultimately enables an organisation to fulfil its goals and objectives.

An appraisal system that is effective will always remind the teachers what is expected of them (accountability), detect areas of strengths and possible room for improvement and facilitate effective teaching and learning which will in turn lead to improved performance quality education (Odhiambo, 2005). In addition, staff development is an indicator of the effectiveness of an appraisal system (James, 2010). Apart from being effective, an appraisal system is considered efficient when it can be used to reinforce teachers' learning and development and provides the teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their performance, achievements and accomplishments.

The appraisal of teachers is a function that involves human decision making by judging the effectiveness of a particular work performance making use of reports that compare the actual work performance with set performance benchmarks (Grobler, 2011). During the appraisal, the performance of teachers is measured against pre-set standards. Teacher evaluation is typically regulatory since the end product is giving value judgment and as such, explicit criteria of fairness and specific functions of the appraisal process should be predetermined. The value judgment is then weighed against these criteria.

There are several problems with the performance appraisal of teachers. Dunham (2011) identified problems such as halo effect, central tendency problem and shifting standards as major problems with the appraisal of teachers. Central tendencies occur when appraisers avoid the high and low numbers and award the appraisee numbers within range. For example, if the rating scale ranges from one through seven, many raters will tend to avoid the highs (six and seven) and lows (one and two) and put most of their check marks between three and five.

Shifting standards on the other hand is when appraisers or managers rate their subordinates using difficult standards and expectations.

### *2.2.3 Importance of Performance Appraisal*

Better practices of the performance appraisal would include the employees in the planning of how to achieve the organisational goals through the performance appraisal. In recent years, the development of adequate management information systems has rapidly increased the ability to deliver timely and qualitative feedback (Eniye, 2007; Desalegn, 2010).

The essence of a performance appraisal system is to generally improve the overall level of performance in an organisation (Landy & Farr, 2012). Partington and Stainton (2003) identify two main functions of performance appraisal: to show several aspects of an employee's performance and to inform the employee on the areas of improvement that are required in any aspect in which he/she is weak. The appraisal is also the assessment of the past and present, potential, skill, resources and capability of employee's performance and to select employees who need additional training and identify those employees who deserve promotion (Dunham, 2011).

The performance appraisal gives employees the opportunity for self-development and is also perceived as a source of incentives that could improve performance. Groeschl (2011) postulates that the performance appraisal provides a platform for an employee to become development oriented, as it allows subordinates and their supervisors to identify roles, targets, tasks and training plans that will enable the organisation to achieve its developmental goals.

The appraisal process provides the employees and supervisors an opportunity to figure out a career plan. Once a supervisor understands the employee's personal long term goals, he/she can outline a plan to help further the employees' goals (Dessler, 2008). According to Lawler (2012), intermittent assessments help managers gain a better understanding of employees' individual abilities. The objective of the appraisal process is to acknowledge accomplishment, to assess progress on the job, and design training for additional development of abilities and skills.

In addition, Murphy (2012) posits that appraisal enhances the process of creating and strengthening the chain of administrative control. When it comes



to taking punitive decisions and reinforcements like examining efficiency decisions, employee promotions, termination of contracts and pay raises, the performance appraisal can be a powerful and influential tool. It is expedient to note that the training of appraisers should be a key aspect of a productive appraisal process. It is an important issue in the light of the fact that employee appraisal should not be seen as a customary routine or a formality that should be done annually or biannually.

Performance appraisals perform a host of functions, such as developing careers and accountability. Some of the functions are also linked to recognising and compensating the job performance of employees. They are also utilised as a part of disciplinary measures and decisions regarding promotion and salary increment (Ahmad & Azman Ali, 2010). The definite objectives of the process of performance management include properly affiliating the performance of individual staff members with the organization's performance, indicating the objectives, goals, priorities and expectations of the organisation to the employees and the various ways they need to meaningfully contribute to these (Selden & Sowa, 2011).

The performance appraisal is an asset to any organisation when it comes to identifying candidates for promotion. Supervisors can draw up promotion programmes for competent employees (HCM, 2013). In the same way, incompetent employees could be laid-off or demoted as the case may be.

#### *2.2.4 Performance appraisal procedures and structure*

Appraisal is an important mechanism in human resources management. If performed properly and logically, organisations can get their personnel to realize their focus (Rezghi, 2010). DeNisi and Pritchard (2006) indicate that performance appraisal could be an isolated formal event authorised by an organisation that would characteristically occur not more than once or twice a year with explicitly detailed performance criteria and scope clearly indicated.

In addition, performance appraisal is quantitative in nature and is structured in a way that scores are used in evaluating the performance of employees. Most scores are allocated on the basis of the level of the employee's job

performance according to the rating scale used. These scores are then shared with the employee in the form of feedback and for the purpose of engaging with the employee regarding his/her performance (Armstrong 2009).

In the performance appraisal system there are several steps to be followed. According to Girma (2012), to achieve the objective of the appraisal, the procedures should include processes to determine a need for promotion, transfer and/or training. The objective is to acknowledge good performance and correct any problems through training. This is appropriate as long as the approach to the appraisal is specific. The main goal of appraisal is to improve performance, rather than just evaluating it. The process begins with establishing job expectations. This process involves properly communicating what is expected of a staff member on the job. Generally, what is expected here is a discussion between the supervisor and the subordinate in order to review the main duties contained within the job description. Employees should only be allowed to start a job when they fully understand what they are expected to do.

The next step is to design the appraisal programme. The key points to be stipulated in designing an appraisal programme are: the staff members to be assessed, what should be assessed, when the evaluation should take place, identifying the appraiser, the possible problems that will be encountered, the solution to those problems and the methods to be used for the appraisal process. Time allocation should also be part of the programme. In most cases the performance appraisal exercise takes place quarterly, half yearly or once a year. Whatever the case may be, it should be planned with time intervals.

The method of appraisal should also be pre-determined before the process commences. Determining the appraisal method to be used is referred to as the last step in the appraisal programme design. It is basically devising several methods to be used to measure the quantity and quality of a job done by an employee (Girma, 2012). According to Cooke (2011), appraisal methods include the collection of data on the performance and appraisal interview and self-appraisal. Self-appraisal is an assessment of one's own teaching performance (Mahapatro, 2010). It involves a reflection on one's work, results

and development needs. This technique can encourage feedback from staff members involved in the performance appraisal process to share the responsibility of personal growth as well as self-improvement. This will offer appraisers with secondary data.

Lesson observation is another method of performance appraisal done by observing the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. This activity is very important and fundamental in understanding a teacher's effectiveness. Lesson observation can be arranged for a few times over the year. Before lesson observation, the teacher ought to inform the appraiser of the lesson objectives and schemes of work. The teacher and appraiser should also agree on the focus of observation and the criteria to be used in the appraisal process. After the lesson observation, the appraiser should complete the lesson observation report based on his/her observation.

The other method involves scrutinizing portfolios such as Work schemes, Lesson Plans and Grading Examination papers and exercises. A portfolio can be referred to as a collection of information about a teacher's practice. Portfolios may include action research, scholarly writings, records of career growth activities, systematized ideas on practice and teaching objects (such as worksheets, tasks, project directions and learners' work). The portfolio will show the accomplishments of a teacher or lack thereof after some time and across a scope of practices.

Other sources of data include formal or informal interviews and discussions, record of non-teaching duties, daily observation, students' academic achievements and progress, stakeholder survey (learners' surveys, parent/guardian survey), documentation of learners' punishments and awards, record of additional curricular exercises and procedures of appraisal interview. A performance appraisal interview presents an opportunity for a candid dialogue. It allows for an exchange of information between the appraiser and the appraisee concerning the appraisee's performance throughout the appraisal period (Mahapatro, 2010).

### *2.2.5 Advantages and disadvantages of performance appraisal*

Staff members often ask the reason why organizations conduct performance appraisals. Anyone who has been on the receiving end or has administered a performance appraisal might claim there are several reasons why they think a performance appraisal is an unproductive routine and a total waste of time (Selden & Sowa, 2011). Successful organizations appreciate the importance of integrating performance appraisals into their performance management process and policy (Ahmad & Azman, 2010). Ahmad and Azman, (2010) identified that the advantages of a performance appraisal include:

- Being able to provide a record of the performance of an employee over a particular period of time.
- It creates an environment where supervisors can meet with their subordinates and discuss their performance.
- A performance appraisal provides supervisors with an avenue to give feedback to their subordinates about their performance on the job and examine how well the employee's goals were realized.
- It provides a systematized method where employees and their supervisors can have discussions about expectations and seek clarification on certain grey areas in organisational objectives.
- It helps employers in developing employee goals.
- Also streamline the planning process for the subsequent years and, by creating a good reward system, motivating and rewarding excellence.
- It serves as a major contributor to employee motivation.

The disadvantages of performance appraisals are that if not done properly they can be a negative experience; they can be time consuming and can be overwhelming for managers with many employees. A major flaw is that they may be based on assessment practices that lead to subjective tendencies, errors and bias. If not done correctly, they can be a complete waste of time without making a difference to the work of the employees. Performance appraisals may also lead to a stressful work environment for those involved in the process.

Lastly, performance appraisals will only be as good as the administrative framework in which they operate. Organizations involved in the appraisal process just for the sake of it are literally just wasting their time (Ahmad & Azman, 2010). However, when it is integrated with organizational goals and strategic plans, it provides an edge to an organisation in accomplishing its goals.

### **2.3 Performance appraisal - whose responsibility?**

One of the important issues in the appraisal system is the question of who is supposed to be designated to make the actual appraisal. The designation of the appraisal is determined by the purpose to be served by the appraisal system. In some organizations, the human resource management department is responsible for conducting performance appraisals. Nonetheless, there are various suggestions with regard to who should assess an employee's performance. One of the possibilities is that the immediate supervisor could conduct the performance appraisal as he/she is regarded to be in an appropriate position to assess an employee's job performance. In higher educational institutes, more often than not, there is a culture of faculty members (subordinates) participating in the assessment of department heads and deans.

In a school setting, the appraiser should be someone who truly knows the teacher, the pupils and the classroom reality. It is imperative to note that the appraiser must be a person who has respect for the feelings of teachers. As a matter of principle, the appraisal is more likely to take place in a spirit of mutual confidence if teachers are fully involved as partners in the appraisal process (Mulu, 2011). The teachers should be treated as stakeholders in the educational process, working in a collaborative way. They are then more likely to be motivated to improve their performance if they feel a sense of ownership. Since the evaluation of teachers is done to improve teachers the appraisers should have experience in teaching. The appraisers must be competent in their jobs, and must be conversant in the fields of curriculum, teaching methodology as well as human behaviour. In most cases, the people who are responsible for appraisals of teachers are the principal, the vice principals, team leaders, and department heads.

The appraisal of teacher performance should not be the responsibility of individuals remote from the teaching profession (McNeil, 2009). Something else that should be taken into account is the issue of the knowledge of the appraiser as this has implications on who should appraise whom in the school system. Most teachers have argued in favour of being appraised by someone who has a close knowledge of their everyday activities, and who works closely with them. In addition, the appraiser should have sufficient knowledge about the person being appraised. Some staff believes that the appraiser should be a member of staff with whom the teacher can identify. A person who is too distant from the teacher being appraised might not be able to empathize with their particular predicament and school challenges. Wossenu (2008) mentions that using peer performance appraisal is beneficial in that there are no formal status differentials, no formal power relationships, and no competition for rewards. It is a useful time saving mechanism for school managers who have to facilitate material and training for the better accomplishment of the system's objectives.

Montgomery and Hadfield (2009) assert that appraisers who were not skilled, were unintelligent, and obsolete when it came to educational developments, made subjective judgments, spent only a limited amount of time with the people being appraised, were greatly resented and in turn brought the whole process into disrepute. Appraisers ought to be trained on the best way to improve skills such as guiding dexterities and documentation, in order to avoid errors and issues related to performance appraisals (Byars & Pynes, 2010). Appraisers should be trained to be open minded, fair, positive and skilful in tending to employees' capacities and competencies.

In general, by virtue of his responsibility for the selection of teachers, is it the manager's obligation to assess his teachers? The agent or agencies for evaluating and measuring teacher efficiency are numerous. Teachers are evaluated by boards of education, by their supervisors, by their pupils, by the school patrons, and by the public in general (Cooke, 2011). The evaluators themselves must have some knowledge of evaluation. In the event that the evaluator is ignorant of the strategy or is not knowledgeable about its utility, the evaluation will be impractical. Byars and Rue (2012) are of the opinion that training arrangements for those involved in appraisals will not just enable them

to perform a better job, but will also highlight to them the seriousness attached to it. Performance appraisal must be amply thought out and prepared; it must be conducted by adequately trained and dedicated individuals and must be clear about its aims and objectives.

Having reviewed the concept of performance appraisal and the people involved in the process, the next section will review the concept of fairness and what employees perceive as fairness in a performance appraisal.

## **2.4 Fairness**

Literature reveals that the perception of fairness about several dimensions of performance appraisal systems has very serious implications not only for the educators, but also for the education institution (Bernardin & Beatty, 2004; Latham & Wexley, 2004). For example, Mullins (2007) asserts that if a performance appraisal system is a useful source of feedback, employees will be supportive and receptive to such a system as they believe it will help them to improve their performance. Likewise, if they perceive that their management is trying to use the performance appraisal system as a perverse attempt to exert control and exercise harsher regulations over them, various results such as dissatisfaction, truancy and attrition may occur in the organisation.

### *2.4.1 Fairness in performance appraisal*

Due to the importance of fairness in performance appraisal systems, it has attracted a great deal of interest among investigators in the field of organizational psychology. The just and unjust nature of performance appraisal systems has become a bone of contention among scholars (Boyd, 2004). An integral part of any organisations human resource system is performance appraisal and employees want this system to be fair. Variables relating to fairness in performance assessment include: knowledgeable overseers, opportunities afforded to employees for communicating their feelings relating to the appraisal process and lastly the consistency of the appraisal process in a rating year (Landy, Barnes & Murphy, 2008). If organisations provide employees with the chance to participate in the process of their assessments or to avail themselves of the right to voice their concerns about assessments that they deem unfair, then this may likely improve their perception of the fairness of

the performance appraisal system (Cawley, Keeping & Levy, 2008; Gabris & Ihrke, 2001).

Blau (2006) also argues that the perceived fairness of appraisal systems is connected to employees' satisfaction with the different aspects of an appraisal system, like target setting and feedback. Similarly, Gilliland and Langdon (2008) argue that employees' perception of fairness in performance appraisal systems significantly affects the acceptance of performance appraisal assessment. This may also have an effect on employees' satisfaction with the performance appraisal procedure and organizational commitment. According to Cawley, Keeping and Levy (2008), the outcomes that employees receive from an organisation such as decision making processes, treatment from the organisation and its administrators, freedom of information are greatly dependent on the employees' perception of fairness.

Thomas and Bretz (2011) further indicate that some organisations are ultimately concerned with the perceived fairness of the appraisal systems. Procedural fairness that comprises both assessing the outcomes received and a proper judgment of processes that discern the outcomes (distributive fairness) are important to employees (Thomas & Bretz, 2011). Positive perceptions can only be achieved by applying rules that are considered fair and consistent and allocating rewards appropriately on the basis of merit without personal bias.

#### *2.4.2 Procedural fairness*

Procedural fairness is conceptualized to judging the reasonableness and the objectivity of the social standards that deal with how choices are made and how employees of an organisation are treated by their supervisors and other stakeholders (Lind & Tyler 2005). It is expedient to note that this concept is much more extensive than previous concepts that recommend that the most imperative elements of extraordinary procedural fairness are contributed by those who will be affected by those choices. The concept of Lind and Tyler (2005) includes elements and other values of procedural fairness such as bias suppression, ethicality, correctness, consistency and accuracy of information.



Procedural fairness incorporates both result and non-result based effects, and both hypotheses are required to elucidate their impacts. The self-interest model by Lind and Tyler (2005) can be used to clarify those effects which are result based and can be attributed to the utilization of fair procedures predominantly with the end goal of attaining fair outcomes. Alternatively, the group value concept (Lind & Tyler, 2005) is useful for clarifying the emotional effects which are well beyond those owing to the accomplishment of fair outcomes. Examples of these effects include the positive disposition an individual may harbour towards the organisations and the heads of the organisation arising from organisational practices that enhance the person's dignity as a member of the organisation with full status.

#### *2.4.3 Importance of fairness in performance appraisal*

Performance appraisal systems should aim at enabling employees to improve at their work and be committed to achieving the organizational goals and vision. Tyler and Bies (2015) refer to fairness in performance appraisal as a personal assessment of managerial conducts in relation to ethics and morality. They argue that fairness in performance appraisal has the ability to generate prevailing benefits for both the employees and the organisations. These benefits include fostering better commitment and trust, valuable job performances, healthier citizenship behaviour, better customer satisfaction, and reduced disagreements.

Walsh, (2005) identifies the five benefits of performance appraisal as explaining and communicating decisions regarding pay, providing the employee with development support and information, fostering collaborative definition of tasks and projection of future work goals, documenting and recognizing the employee's performance and finally allowing the employee to communicate feedback regarding work definitions and management. Employees can realize these benefits if the performance appraisal is perceived as 'fair'. The effectiveness of a performance appraisal system could shrink if the methods that determine the rating are perceived as unfair (Flint, 2010). Employees may only be pleased with a performance appraisal system if the criteria of 'fairness' is fully expressed with regards to organizational justice. Furthermore, an aspect of the performance appraisal process that brings about inconsistencies

between anticipated and concrete performance evaluations adds to unhappiness with the system.

Messer and White (2006) point out that the perceptions of employees about the fairness of an appraisal system could have an effect on their conduct, particularly with regards to their commitment to the goals of the organisation. In this case, unproductivity and employees showing negativity towards an appraisal system is remarkably identified with the perceived unfairness and ineffectiveness of the Performance Management System (PMS). The role that the perceptions of employees play in determining the effectiveness of an appraisal system cannot be over emphasised.

Over the years, researchers have sought to apply the theory of organisational justice to performance appraisal. Perceptions of the fairness of an appraisal system are often defined by the positions (autocratic, democratic etc.) communicated by both employees and the management staff about the presence of an official appraisal system, the adequate information the supervisor has about the performance of the staff member, the presence of a detailed action plan to remedy performance flaws and the regularity of these appraisals (Ahmed *et al.*, 2011). Employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment and tendencies to hunt for other jobs are remarkably related to performance appraisals; hence it is incredibly vital for organisations to understand fairness in performance appraisal procedures. Warokka, Gallato and Moorthy (2012) state that fairness at work is a growing concern among many employees in organisations these days. This issue is particularly associated with fairness in performance appraisal processes and the dynamics of the various performance points received by each employee. The issue of fairness is critical to the management of labour as well as performance managements as, in most cases, employees will strive to restore equity if they perceive disparity. In addition, employees tend to balance their work efforts and skills (input) against the outputs they receive (pay, privileges) when they want to evaluate the fairness of their performance appraisal systems.

According to Ikramullah (2011), the perceptions of fairness regarding several elements of appraisal systems have serious ramifications to both the

employees and the organisations. If the staff members of an organisation are afforded the opportunity to change their ratings or have been given the right to raise several exceptions against assessments which they perceive as unfair, this will result in fair perceptions of the performance appraisal system. Similarly, fairness of a performance appraisal system is remarkably related to the satisfaction of employees with several aspects of a performance appraisal system such as setting of targets and feedback.

Employees' perceptions with respect to targets, results and the way performance appraisal results are utilized can be an equally important subject to various elements. For instance, employees will most likely be receptive and supportive of a performance appraisal system they see as a valuable source of feedback which will enable them to enhance their performance (Mullins, 2007). With that said, employees will probably embrace and contribute expressively to a performance appraisal system if they consider it to be an opportunity for promotion, a way of developing personal opportunities, a chance to be noticeable, an avenue to demonstrate their skills and abilities and an opportunity for networking with other employees in the organization.

#### *2.4.4 What is considered as a fair performance appraisal*

There are several attributes that contribute to a fair performance appraisal. For this study, these attributes will be referred to as *fairness rules*. According to Maaniemi and Hakonen, (2011), there are six items that characterize fair procedures. These items can be understood in the context of performance appraisal as the following;

**A. Consistency:** This has to do with maintaining a consistent performance standard over time and among employees.

**B. Bias suppression:** Involves confining self-interest by reviewing performance expectations and incongruities.

**C. Accuracy:** Involves training supervisors and employees to document performances correctly throughout the period and to use this record to prepare and validate performance assessments.

**D. Correctability:** Has to do with instructing supervisors to listen to the opinions of employees and if necessary change the evaluation procedure.

**E. Representativeness:** Involves discussing the concerns of the employees and supervisors through each stage of the process.

**F. Ethicality:** Involves using procedures that are attuned with existing ethical standards and morals.

In the context of performance appraisal, the people doing the rating are required to provide the employees being assessed with performance standards the reasons for using the set standards is to explain why it is imperative that they meet these standards and to provide adequate and consistent feedback on performances. It is more likely for employees to accept and be satisfied with allocated performance ratings if they have been provided with adequate notice about the appraisal and afforded the opportunity to contribute to the appraisal process (Taylor, Tracy, Renard, Harrison & Carroll, 2012).

The principle of fair hearing places a significant amount of importance on a formal appraisal dialogue, where employees are notified about their performance ratings and how the appraiser came to arrive at the ratings. The appraisers are required to observe employee performance throughout the cycle of the rating procedures and have sufficient knowledge of the employee's work. The employee should then be given the opportunity to appraise themselves and contest ratings allocated to them by their supervisors that they deem unfair. Erdogan (2012) pointed out that before allocated ratings are decided upon, the employee involved should be allowed to provide their contributions and present explanations.

Looking at it from the perspective of due process, judgment derived from evidence also influences fairness perceptions. Evidence driven judgment requires consistent performance benchmarks across employees without distorting results through corruption and prejudices and applying the principles of honesty by supervisors. Employers of labour should strive to ensure that they provide their employees with an option to appeal performance ratings they deem unsatisfactory, provide them with clarification about the ratings and award them accordingly. Solid performance appraisal techniques and training

of appraisers can be a very effective tool in reducing the problem of bias when allocating ratings (Poon, 2014).

Folger (2011) highlighted various elements that ensure that a performance appraisal system follows due process. These elements are formal discussions between employee and supervisor about the policies, processes and structures of the system. Several facets of due process are planning, observation and feedback. The process of observation assesses the adequacy of the experience the supervisor has of his subordinate's performance over time. Findley, Giles and Mossholder (2000), referred to feedback in performance appraisal as the extent to which supervisors and subordinates discuss issues relating to the performance of the latter. Communication between supervisor and subordinate creates an avenue where the opinions and input of the employee are respected. It also conveys respect for the employee's input and opinions and enhances a hands-on approach by the employer (Folger 2011). In other words, communication improves the perception employees have about their appraisal system. Previous research findings (Eniye, 2007; Desalegn, 2010) identified erratic communication of appraisal feedback to employees, lack of clarity on the purpose of performance appraisal, inconsistency in the timing of performance appraisal, lack of opportunity to improve around their work and the inability to make suggestions about the appraisal system as unfair practices in performance appraisal.

#### *2.4.5 What is not known about fairness in performance appraisal*

In South Africa, despite the efforts of government and the interventions of the private sector, the overall quality of teaching is poor as demonstrated in the troublingly low levels of learner performance in nationwide assessments and global comparative surveys (CDE, 2017). Improving teacher effectiveness is thus a pressing national issue. Research has stated that one of the most important factors that determine student achievement is effective teachers (CDE, 2015). All around the world, countries have prioritised the evaluation of teachers as a useful means of gauging and enhancing teacher effectiveness, and consolidating teachers' professional development through accountability. The report of the CDE (2015), indicated that despite the efforts of the private

sector and government geared towards improving the quality of teaching in South Africa, the overall teaching quality is still poor.

Performance appraisal is a strategy through which the competencies and effectiveness of teachers can be determined. It is increasingly obvious that improving the effectiveness of teachers has become a nationwide issue making performance appraisal an important process as part of teacher development (CDE 2017). The ability of appraisers to create an atmosphere for effective discussions becomes crucial for an effective and successful appraisal system (James, 2010). Teachers who are being appraised may find themselves in a difficult position if they do not trust their appraisers; thus, trust and respect are an important factor in conducting an effective performance appraisal. Appraisers should be competent, fair, credible, report the appraisee's strengths and weaknesses, the appraiser should be able to make logical and fair recommendations for assisting and improving the appraisee's future performance (To, 2007).

Kuvaas (2007) is of the opinion that researchers and practitioners differ on opinions about performance appraisal systems. On one hand, the practitioners place a great deal of importance on the effects performance appraisal has on the relationship between the appraiser and the employee, while researchers on the other hand tend to place more emphasis on ensuring that the performance appraisal procedures become more accurate and beneficial to the employees as well as the organisations. In order to ensure that the performance appraisal processes are effective, appraisal ratings need to be accurate.

Practically speaking, there are several things that could go wrong with a performance appraisal process such as errors and bias. It is no coincidence that these errors are usually blamed on the appraisers. In essence, the objectivity of the appraisal process is negatively impacted. Dunham (2011) identified the halo effect as one of the most common errors in performance appraisal. According to Moats (1999), the term 'halo' stems from the distortion that the ratee, like an angel with a halo over its head, can do no wrong. However, one can conclude that this type of bias applies to the friends of the appraiser and is not necessarily job related. The appraiser awards the

subordinate with grades that do not reflect the performance. More often than not, a subordinate may possess a peculiar characteristic that may influence supervisor's observation of other qualities of the subordinate. With what employees perceive as fairness in performance in mind, the next section the researcher discusses is the overall schooling system in the Republic of South Africa.

## **2.5 Schooling system in South Africa**

The South African educational system generally consists of three (3) elements:

1. General Education and Training (GET): This starts from grade R to grade 9. It encompasses the mandatory age of schooling, (Grade R – which is not part of the mandatory schooling year but the reception year.)
2. Further Education and Training (FET): This starts from grade 10 up to grade 12. It comprises the further academic schooling, intermediate vocational education at technical institutions, community colleges and private colleges.
3. Higher Education and Training (HET).

The focus of this study is on independent schools, and to create a better understanding of the phenomenon, it is important to explain the general schooling system in South Africa.

### *2.5.1 Primary education*

Pre-school education is the entry level in the South African education system. There are very few crèches in South Africa, and a large portion of these crèches are in the private sector. All crèches are required by law to register with their local authorities. Children may start attending crèche when they reach the age of 3 years. From pre-primary the learners gain admission to primary school.

From the year children reach the age of 7, the learners are required to start their primary education. There are 2 phases in primary education: the foundation and the intermediary phase. The foundation phase starts at Grade R and lasts 4 years. Essential skills such as reading and writing, language skills

development and basic arithmetic are the major focus at this level. Children are also introduced to a second language in this phase. The intermediate phase lasts for 3 years starting at Grade 4. During this phase, the focus is centred on the development of the learners' speaking and reading skills in both the home and second language. The children also study mathematics, history, geography, general sciences and handcrafts. On completion of this phase, the learners are not awarded any certificates. The STATSSA (2015) report states that the Republic of South Africa has more than 15,000 primary schools, 5,000 secondary schools and a total of 5,000 intermediate and combined schools. Out of these, independent schools account for a total of 1,400 schools. The teacher-pupil ratio in government funded schools is 1:30, while the ratio at independent schools is said to be at 1:17.

### *2.5.2 Secondary education*

There are two phases involved in the secondary education namely: the senior phase which starts from grade 7 up to grade 9 and the further education and training phase that starts at grade 10 up to and including grade 12. The General Education and Training Phase is concluded at the senior phase. A pupil may decide not to attend school anymore after completing this level of education. Certificates are not awarded.

The senior-secondary level of the secondary education is under the further education and training level. Programmes that are vocationally-oriented within the pedagogy also fall within this scope. On completion of grade 12, learners are then required to sit for the *NSC (National Senior Certificate)* examinations. At the NSC exams, subjects are divided into various fields namely: Business, Commerce, Human and Social Sciences, Computer and Life Sciences, Arts and Culture, and Agriculture, Management Studies and Services, Engineering and Technology (DOE, 2014).

Within the structure of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), *NSC* is placed at the level 4 and 130 credits representing a total of 1300 national learning hours are accrued to it (DOE, 2014). In order to obtain a *National Senior Certificate (NSC)*, pupils are required to notch up a minimum of 40% in 3 subjects, a language at the home language level excluding life orientation, as



this is not seen as a subject that is examinable. A minimum of 30% in 4 other subjects is also required, or an evidence of completion in respect to any subject the learner failed.

The *NSC* also has requirements that apply to it, these requirements are listed as: one language at the home language level; an extra language also at the home language level or at the first additional language level; literacy in mathematics; life orientation; and 3 non-voluntary subjects (DOE, 2015). Students are however not permitted to choose 2 subjects that have common characteristics for example, mathematics and mathematical literacy. In addition, students are also not allowed to select the same language at multiple levels for example; Afrikaans at both the home language and first additional language levels (DOE, 2014).

### *2.5.3 Admission to higher education*

In the Republic of South Africa, the general requirements for admission into higher education are clearly spelt out in the nation's Higher Education Amendment Act No. 39 of 2008. The *NSC* specifies that before a candidate gains admission into a higher education institution, these requirements are to be met.

Obtaining a National Higher degree requires that a student attain a minimum *NSC* score of 30% in the language of education of the higher education institution. In order to gain admission into a National Diploma programme, a student must achieve an *NSC* 'achievement rating' of 3 (this is referred to as moderate, as it falls between 40% and 49%) in four (4) 20-credit subjects, as well as 1 official language at a home language level excluding Life Orientation. In addition, a student must notch up a minimum score of 30% in 2 more subjects, which may include Life Orientation. Furthermore, the language prerequisite set by the particular higher education institute for admission must be met as well. Extra information about the success rating can be found under Assessment Systems (DHET, 2015).

Gaining admission to a bachelor's degree programme, requires that prospective students must attain a minimum *NSC* score of 30% in 2 subjects complemented with an achievement rating of four (4) (referred to as adequate,

between 50% and 59%) in 4 subjects from the following: Accounting, Business Studies, Engineering Graphics and Design, Dramatic Arts, Economics, Agricultural Sciences, Geography, History, Consumer Studies and Information Technology, Languages, including the language of instruction at the institution as well as 2 other recognized language subjects, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Mathematics, Visual Arts, Music, Religious studies and Mathematical Literacy (DHET, 2015).

In the Republic of South Africa, the Matriculation Board is tasked with the responsibility of administering the minimum requirements for admission to bachelor degree programmes based on the *NSC*. Universities nonetheless do have their mandate to set further requirements for admission to specific programmes. From the year 2005, there have been numerous changes to higher education. South Africa at the moment boasts a number of 11 universities, 6 universities of technology and 6 comprehensive universities bringing it to a total of 23 public higher education institutions. There are Universities of Technology which are professionally oriented universities that offer study programmes that are considerably more practical and concentrate on a variety of fields, which incorporates experimental or work integrated learning. Research conducted at the BTech level is centred on application.

There are Comprehensive universities of which some are fairly new, and are a composite of the conventional academic universities and universities of technology. These institutions offer professionally-oriented programmes which are technical in nature, in addition to the variety of study programmes they offer. Lastly, there are universities that are considered as typical convention academic institutions. Their programmes are much more academic in nature. Their programmes generally include bachelors, honours, masters as well as doctoral degree programmes. These institutions focus more on pure research.

Additionally, the Republic of South Africa also has National Institutes of Higher Education located in the 2 provinces that do not have universities, Northern Cape (Located in Kimberly) and *Mpumalanga* (located at the capital of *Nelspruit*). These institutes also have arrangements with existing universities and offer affordable programmes to the residents of the provinces. Private institutions also offer higher education, although they do not receive funding

from the government. They are owned and funded solely by companies and individuals. These institutions are required to register with the Department of Higher Education and Training. Their programmes must also be accredited by the Council on Higher Education (DHET, 2015).

#### *2.5.4 Different schools in South Africa*

According to Hofmeyr (2000), the current Funding Norms and Standards of 1998 as well as the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 were passed with a specific end goal of dividing the different schools into categories in post-apartheid South Africa. These categories are the public and independent (private) schools. Efforts were also geared towards decentralising greater authority to schools and channelling government funding to independent and public schools that are poor. In any case, the truth is that independent and public schools have become much more varied. The schools act was postulated with a model of what neighbourhood schools should be and seems to have been undermined by the unique migration patterns of pupils in the metropolitan areas. Additionally, the financial resources of many urban schools have become more diverse. It is however predicted that many of these schools will become individual cost centres. Unfortunately, these realities present significant challenges for governing schools and funding at provincial levels.

Establishing independent schools and access to basic education are rights enshrined in the South Africa Bill of Rights (1996). The South African Schools Act (1996) and the National Education Policy Act (1996) provide the essential guidelines for South African schools' funding and governance. In summary, these legislative templates form a policy outline for schools with these attributes:

- Independent (private) schools and public schools (which are also referred to as government schools) are the two types of schools recognised. Accordingly, all other types of schools from the apartheid era have been collapsed into only these two categories.
- The introduction of School Governing Bodies to Provincial Advisory Councils to ensure inclusive governance. The SGB involves a representation of stakeholders at every level of government.

Consequently, at high schools, the School Governing Body (SGB) has a 51% majority representation by the parents of the learners, with the other 49% consisting of the teachers, pupils, management and the local community.

- Provincial and National legislation has been passed to severely limit the rights of public schools to regulate their own admission policies. This excludes underage pupils, over-age pupils, feeder areas for schools with first responsibility to children whose parents/guardians live or work in the same proximity have also been clearly outlined. The fundamental belief behind this notion is that children in the local area of the public schools must be allowed access to those schools. Discrimination of any kind in both government and private schools is expressly prevented in the South African Constitution (1996).
- The intention behind this legislation is to decentralise extensive amounts of governing authority to the schools and to fulfil site-based administration and control of delegated budgets, on the established ability of a school to perform its functions.
- The primary source of state funding for public schools is through apportioning provincial subsidised posts for teachers based on a pupil-teacher ratio that has been agreed upon.
- Only the non-personnel expenditure is affected under this New Funding Norm and is allocated from the national Department of Education which guides **how** funds from the state should be disbursed to schools and **not how much** should be spent. This is because the Constitution empowers provincial legislatures to apply their disposition over education budgets.
- The focal point of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (1998) is redress and equity. Provincial education departments are required to divide state-owned schools into different socio-economic strata from the richest to the poorest. This is to ensure that most of the funding from the provinces can be aimed at the poorest schools.
- This is also similarly applicable to Independent schools, as the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (1998) require that provincial

departments also divide independent schools into socio-economic categories from the richest to the poorest based on their fees. Subventions from the provincial departments must then be allocated to independent schools on a descending scale, exempting schools whose fees on average exceed the 2.5% per capita expenditure of the provincial department. Additionally, for independent schools to qualify for a subsidy from the provincial department, certain management criteria such as pass rate and repetition rate have to be met. Independent schools that are profit oriented are also exempted from any type of subsidy from the provincial department.

Public schools are allowed to charge fees, but specific democratic procedures which involve mostly the parents must be put in place. This would be responsible defining of the levels of the fees. Additionally, exemption from school fees is also available to families that can substantiate their claims for financial need. The new Funding Norms (1998) allow for full exemption for households whose total annual parent income is ten (10) times greater than the annual school fees, and partial exemption available to those whose total income is thirty (30) times the annual school fees. No student may be excluded from a public school for failure to pay school fees, but the school may decide to take legal action against defaulting parents.

#### *2.5.5 Independent schools*

The right to establish independent educational institutions is protected in the Constitution, provided they have the resource to maintain these institutions and ensure the standards are not below what the state-owned schools provide. Section (29); subsection (3) of the South African Constitution allows anyone to establish an independent institution provided that they:

- a) will not discriminate on the grounds of race;
- b) must register with their local authorities;
- c) ensure that the standards are on par, above and definitely not below the standards obtainable at government owned institutions.

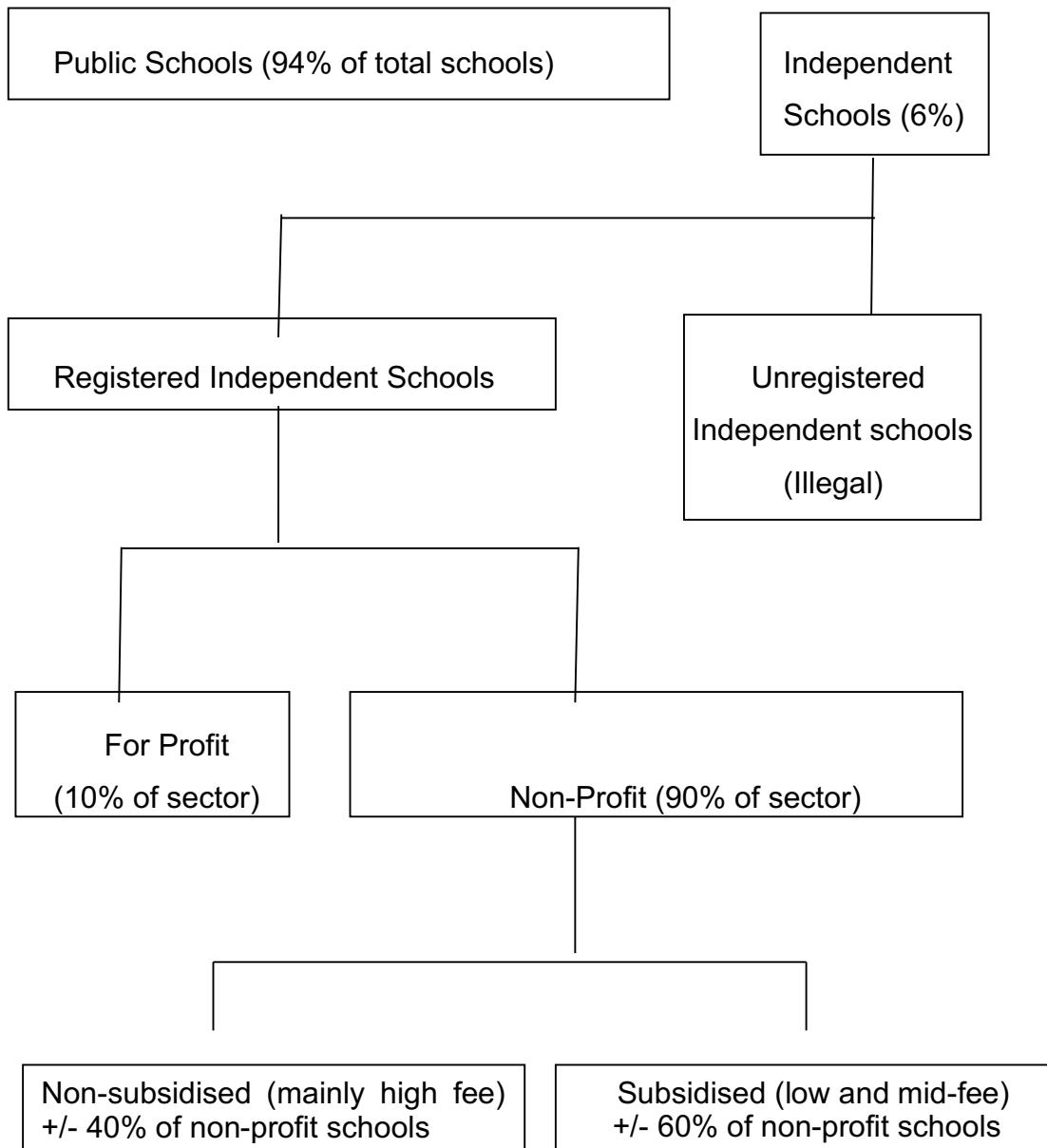
The standards at independent schools should at no point be inferior to the standards of public schools (SASA, 1996). According to SASA, there are two types of schools in South Africa which are public schools: Government funded schools and the independent schools, which are owned, operated and managed by different individuals/organisations. In addition, independent schools are further broken down into two separate categories namely: subsidised and non-subsidised independent schools.

Independent schools are only allowed to operate after registering with the provincial education department in which they are situated. The Provincial Education Department (PED) is required to develop rules and guidelines that will guide the registration process. In line with fairness in administrative justice, certain conditions were included for the registering and deregistering of independent schools. This was developed after adequate consultation with independent schools.

Over the past decade, there has been a global impetus, by developed and developing countries, to exploit market subtleties in order to address the gulf in the educational sector. Several organisations and entrepreneurs are increasing access, developing innovative ideas and providing numerous choices to middle class and working class families when it comes to affordable private schooling. Obviously in the Republic of South Africa this trend has emerged and as such the independent schooling sector now caters for poorer people. An overview of private schools according to official figures is presented in the diagram below:

**Figure 2: South African School Sector 2013**

Source: ISASA 2013



Registered and unregistered independent schools represent the key portion in the sector. All independent schools are by law required to register with the relevant PED in order to legitimately operate; nonetheless many unregistered schools are still operating illegally. Unregistered schools exist for a plethora of reasons; one such reason is the fact that many of them have never tried to register, another reason is the complex regulatory environment that has discouraged others from registering. The second key shows a sector divided

into two groups consisting mainly of non-profit schools and a much smaller group of schools that is driven by profit. It must be noted that the latter is ever increasing. The third aspect divides the non-profit schools on the basis of their fees charged into schools that are not subsidised and state-subsidised schools.

According to the Department of Basic Education (2009), 1,571 independent schools make up 6% of all the schools in the Republic of South Africa and 4% of the total pupils in South Africa. The figures recorded a minimal growth of 1.4% in student enrolment in public schools from 2000-2010 but recorded a 75.9% growth in the number of students enrolled in independent schools (South Africa Survey, 2012).

In a period of 3 years precisely (2012 to 2015) an additional 158,000 pupils registered at independent schools. Consequently, the number of pupils in the public schools has dropped. The decade 2005 to 2015 saw the number of learners in public schools decline by 9%, while the number of students in independent schools grew at a considerable rate of 44% (STATSSA (2015).

As is very familiar with developing countries, official databases tend to be plagued by inaccuracies and are also very outdated. Hence, many associations and experts see these official figures as significantly undercooked. ISASA estimated that as at 2013 the number of independent schools grew to 2500. The body responsible for ensuring quality assurance (Umalusi), just recently estimated that 3500 independent schools needed to get accreditation and ensure that they meet the quality assurance standards (Umalusi, 2013).

As at 2013, ISASA which is the largest independent schools' association in South Africa, had in its category of the lowest fee paying schools with an annual tuition fee below R7400, some donor schools that charged no fees at all and one school that charges as little as R2,500. These schools were established to reach poorer families, but families with some sort of financial stability to enable them to afford the fees and for those families for which it means a significant financial sacrifice. More often than not, the only affordable schooling option for the very poor is unregistered low-fee schools (CDE, 2010).

While the records and statistics point to a significant growth of low-fee private schools in South Africa, by international standards they actually do not cater to



the very poor. As it turns out, low-fee schools are affordable to many middle and upper class families (CDE, 2010). However, they are above the reach of the poorest families. In South Africa, very low-fee schools charge in the range of R7,500 or less per annum whereas in countries like India budget private schools charge annual fees of R2,000 or less (ISASA, 2013). That is more than double what South African low fee schools charge. This is apparent when we compare the high costs of input and the meagre subsidies. Although the various and unique independent schools in South Africa serve a vital purpose, the fundamental task at hand is to brainstorm and come up with creative options and new ways to ensure that fees are lowered to serve the poorest of the poor.

#### *2.5.6 Characteristics/unique features of Independent Schools*

Independent/low-fee private schools are institutions that offer schooling options in places where government schools are sometimes not available in poorer communities, however even when public schools are available, it is often not a desirable option for parents (Hofmeyr, McCarthy, Oliphant, Schirmer & Bernstein, 2013). In most cases, parents are either looking for a different schooling philosophy and/or an improved quality of instruction alternative. Before the CDE (2010) released its research the low-fee private schooling phenomenon was pretty much unknown. There was very little information on its magnitude and the quality of such schools. A significant number of new developments have since emerged. Some of these developments have arisen as a result of the efforts of the CDE to underscore the importance of the sector.

In 2008/2009, six (6) areas were surveyed by the CDE in South Africa. These areas accounted for an average of fifty (50) percent of the population living in poverty. It turned out that more than thirty (30) percent of the schools in these areas were private. These figures eclipsed the 2008 official estimate which was put at 4.3%. Additionally, more independent schools were established between 1994-2009 and there was every indication that independent schools were growing at an alarming rate - much faster than public schools. In many cases, it turned out that innovative black entrepreneurs were the founders of many of these low fee private schools in the poorest parts of the country (CDE, 2010).

Taking all these facts into account, these schools accomplished more preferable outcomes than the public schools and gained the support of local parents who saw the need to pay fees rather than send their children/wards to public schools that were performing poorly (CDE, 2010). Parents moved their children frequently to low-fee schools in search of quality education. These schools and the parents worked closely together, and effectively utilized the support they got from the parents and the community.

Research has shown that low-fee private schools aim to address several issues in the education sector. For example, maximizing professional development to inspire learner success, ensuring teachers are motivated by bringing in good leadership and finally addressing the issues of capacity in the education sector. In South Africa, there are expected learning outcomes and assessment standards that must be met by independent schools. These standards have been prescribed by statutory policy documents such as National Curriculum and Assessment, Policy Statement for General Education and Training (GET,2014) and the Further Education and Training (FET,2014).

Independent schools have the freedom to decide what their curriculum will be and set their examinations as long as they meet the requisite standards that have been set by the National Curriculum Statement (2005). In selecting a specific curriculum, independent schools are free to pursue a particular ideology or methodology such as Montessori, ACE and Waldorf. Independent schools may choose between the public examinations and the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) examinations. Many independent schools opt for the public examinations while some write the IEB examinations.

Furthermore, the option is also available for independent schools to write international examinations. It must be noted that these examinations do not fall under the control of Umalusi, but the Higher Education Department of South Africa approves them. Examples of these examinations are the O and A levels, Cambridge examination from the United Kingdom or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) from the United States and the International Baccalaureate. In subsidised schools, specific phases have limits to failure rates. These limits have been set by the Norms and Standards for Schools Funding (Department

of Education, 2008). Consequently, this means that the Provincial Education Departments (PED) have the authority to monitor retention rates in subsidised schools. Non-subsidised schools however, are free to apply their professional judgment in making promotion and retention decisions in line with the appropriate policies.

Legislation like the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and The South African Schools Act (1996) require independent schools operating in South Africa to maintain standards similar to what is obtained at government schools, and definitely not inferior. Independent schools may also choose to surpass these standards by setting practical standards higher than those recommended in policy. Fundamentally, the best practice should be that learners' promotion and retention should be on the basis of good records of progress or lack thereof and evidence to ensure that the decisions taken are in the best interests of the learner. Transfer of learners between public and private schools occurs frequently, and as such an understanding of the minimum requirement for promotion in public schools is required.

In a bid to exceed the minimum standards set by the state, a private school's requirements may be more rigorous. Independent schools are required to keep schedules about promotion and retention; however, they are not required to keep them in the same way public schools are directed to. In order to ascertain their existence, the PED may ask to see the schedules of independent schools. In any case, schools are not obliged to enter discussions about specific cases, as decisions taken on promotion and retention are the prerogative of each independent school.

There are four major characteristics at the core of independent schooling. These characteristics are held in high esteem by parents and are: Accountability, Independence, Commitment to quality and a Strong value base.

According to ISASA (2013), one major characteristic that independent schools have is their 'autonomy'. They have the liberty to follow their own unique missions, such as a particular type of philosophy or faith and to choose their curricula and examinations. Independent schools have the freedom to determine their governance, finances, staffing admission and promotion

policies as well as administrative operations. In other words, they have more flexibility and a range of choices as opposed to state schools when it comes to introducing teaching and learning approaches that are innovative, developing and testing novel educational ideas, responding to the ever changing and dynamic needs of learners, employers and the general society.

In as much as independent schools treasure their freedom, they are required to demonstrate accountability to their communities and the general society. Independent schools have an obligation to meet the requirements set by the government with regards to registration and accreditation. They must be able to show that the standards maintained at their schools are not inferior to the standards of government schools. The very existence of independent schools is centred on delivering on promises made to their clients (ISASA, 2013).

Independent schools that are rich in values are often the preferred destination for parents. Schools that provide sound discipline in learning environments that are structured, schools where pupils are taught the importance of hard work and diligence, personal responsibility, shared norms and good citizenship. When parents are paying for their child's schooling they expect nothing less than quality education. Independent schools are expected to provide teachers that are of a high quality, professionals as well as teachers that are committed to motivating learners to succeed. Independent schools are expected to produce academic standards that are of a high quality (ISASA, 2013).

In South Africa for example, a study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council in 2005 showed that independent schools produced a much higher percentage of senior certificate passes and university exemptions than their counterparts in state-funded schools. This is as a result of smaller classes and more individualized attention for pupils.

#### *2.5.7 Reason for choosing Independent Schools*

All over the world, there has been a sharp increase in independent/private education and this is directly tied to the demand from parents. Countries like Nigeria, India, Chile, Ghana and Kenya are where the most dramatic growth in private schooling has been recorded. However, in developed countries like

England, independent schools have seen their enrolment rates increase by more than 10% since 1985 (ISASA, 2013).

Contextualising it to the Republic of South Africa, where the independent schooling sector has enjoyed monumental growth since the 1990s, it is expedient to note that while there were only about 500 registered independent schools in 1990, over a decade later the number has snowballed. According to official statistics there were 1681 registered independent schools in South Africa in 2014 with 538,421 learners. According to Draper and Hofmeyr (2015), the number of independent schools is probably much higher at around 3500, as an unknown number of schools are unregistered and thus not counted in official statistics. Furthermore, it must also be noted that most of these new independent schools are low fee schools that serve mostly black communities and charge fees from below R8,500 annually. With the advent of democracy, opportunities and choices opened up for black South Africans changing the entire dynamic of independent schools (Draper & Hofmeyr, 2015).

In 1990, independent schools were predominantly high-fee and catered to mostly white learners. Over two decades later the dynamic has changed to accommodate over 70% black learners (Tooley & Longfield, 2014). On the basis of the expansion of independent schools in South Africa, the researcher decided to carry out this study in independent schools since they can determine how they will be governed, financed and staffed, can decide their learner admission and promotion policies, and manage their administrative operations in ways that best suit them.

Additionally, very little is known about the performance appraisal practices and human resource components in private schools. Independent schools in South Africa do not have a blanket policy document that binds them in terms of performance appraisal practices. It is against this background that the researcher decided to use independent schools in South Africa.

## **2.6 Theoretical Framework - System Theory**

The theoretical framework chosen to guide this study is premised on the view that independent schools operate as a system. Despite functioning as organizations, schools generally can be considered as a social system because

of their systematic arrangement and the order with which their entities interact socially and professionally. However, it is argued that a school is much more than a social system with several entities existing interdependently and interacting with the external environment. Hence the adoption of system theory for this study.

According to Ahrweile (2011), the system theorist posits that a system could be either opened or closed. A closed system is a system that has all its practical purposes operate as self-sustaining. In other words, a closed system does not interact with its environment, therefore transmitting all its knowledge and interaction within. An example of a closed system is corporate management, where bureaucracy rules the day. Corporate managements hold control and efficiency in high regard.

An open system on the other hand obtains their vital inputs from or dispenses their outputs to their environments. All schools are typically considered open systems, although the level of interaction with their environment may vary from school to school. Open systems are essentially made up of five (5) fundamental elements, these are namely: inputs, process, outputs, feedback and finally the environment (Norlin, 2009). In this study, the researcher discussed each of these five elements of social systems in relation to educators' perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices. The open system's view of schools provides also an excellent framework for analysing the process of education and the role the school administrators and supervisors play in the process.

According to Norlin (2009), schools are a social system in which two or more persons work together in unison towards a collective goal. When we are looking at the several important features of schools, this definition is not only useful, it is also very important. First and most importantly, schools consist mostly of people; secondly, they are generally goal driven; thirdly, these goals are achieved through some form of coordinated effort; and finally they interact with their external environment. With that said, an important feature of schools is not covered under this definition, and that is the fact that all schools are open systems, although the level of interaction with their environment may vary.

Scott (2008) affirmed that schools need to be structured to deal with the forces in the world around them, and as such they are constantly interacting with the world around them. The same unfortunately cannot be said about the closed system. Closed system theorists view schools as adequately autonomous to resolve most of their problems through their internal forces, without interacting with their external environment. In an organisation, system theory operates on both the inside and outside to fully anticipate and understand the significance of any decision (Ahrweiler, 2011). Scott (2008) also reinforced this view, stating that schools are an open system consisting of five basic elements: inputs, transformation process, outputs, feedback and the environment.

### *2.6.1 Inputs*

There are four kinds of inputs that typically drive a system such as a school: (1) human resources such as labour, administrative talent and staff; (2) financial resources such as capital for funding both short and long term expenditure; (3) Physical resources such as materials, equipment and supplies; (4) Information, including knowledge, data utilised by the school, and curricula. Contextualising these in this study, human resource wants fair dealing in a performance appraisal system which is an important component of an organisation's human resource management. These fair dealings in performance appraisal come in the form of the fairness rules which are the input. They are consistency, accuracy of information, representativeness, ethicality, correcting wrong impressions gained and bias suppression (Scott 2008).

### *2.6.2 Transformation Process*

The job of a principal/administrator involves combining and coordinating various resources to reach the goals of a school. In essence, the interaction between teachers and their supervisors, teachers and learners forms a major part of the learning process. According to Shaw (2006), some kind of work is done in the system to produce an output and the system then adds value to the work in progress.

The technical competence of principals and supervisors, the ability to swiftly adapt to change and the tasks performed by the staff members within the school will ultimately affect the school's output. However, the performance

appraisal is a function that combines both human decision making and making use of reports that compare actual work performance. In other words, teachers' appraisals should utilise the fairness rules and human decision making by judging the effectiveness of a particular task.

### 2.6.3 Outputs

The principal is tasked with securing and using inputs for the school, transforming them to produce outputs. Outputs in the social system involve reaching the goals and objectives of the school, and these are represented by end results such as accomplishments and outcomes of the system. These outputs would typically vary with the specific school but they often include the following; student enrolment/dropout rates, employee performance and turnover, job satisfaction, growth and achievement levels of the students. As Herzberg (2009) clearly states, a school must provide its staff members with satisfaction beyond physiological needs. Schools must strive to also provide for their employees need of acceptance, esteem, affiliation and possible self-actualization.

Linking the above to this study, the outcomes that employees receive from an organisation such as decision making processes, treatment from the organisation and its administrators, and freedom of information are greatly dependent on the employee's perception of fairness. Utilizing the inputs of fairness rules and transforming them into a practice would ultimately improve the perceptions of fairness of an appraisal system.

### 2.6.4 Feedback

The success of a school's operation is hugely dependent on feedback. All feedbacks have their usefulness. For example, a negative feedback can be used to correct deficiencies in the input of transformation process which will in turn affect the output. Consequently, operating an appraisal system in a school where there is no collaboration and relationship between the appraiser and appraisee would be considered unfair. Erratic communication of appraisal feedback to employees, lack of clarity on the purpose of the appraisal, inconsistency in the timing of the appraisal, lack of opportunity to make improvements around their work and the inability to make suggestions and



recommendations about the appraisal system would be considered as unfair practices in the performance appraisal (Norlin 2009).

#### 2.6.5. Environment

In the study, the environment surrounding the school refers to the political and economic forces that impact on the school. Contexts such as political, economic and social in which school administrators work are marked at the local, state and federal levels. As such, school administrators as a matter of necessity need to juggle internal operations and also monitor the environment, anticipating and responding adequately to external demands.

Principals are faced with increasing pressures to deliver good results in the performance of students, while simultaneously dealing with an increasing number of management duties such as performance appraisals of teachers. An inability to manage all these responsibilities effectively may reflect poorly on both the school culture and the performance of both the teachers and the learners.

The system theory essentially reminds of the value of integration of parts of a problem. Problems can never be solved if they are considered in isolation from interrelated components. Contextualising the system theory to this study, every organisation (system) has its inputs either human or financial inputs. Every organisation also has its output. It is safe to assume that an organisation can be evaluated by determining its output results in the achievement of its objectives. Feedback is required for a system to be effective and efficient. Finally, every organisation is influenced by its environment either internally or externally.

### **2.7 Summary of the chapter**

From the literature reviewed, it was evident that the appraisal should be based on results obtained by the employee's job performance, not on the employee's personality characteristics. In measuring skills and accomplishments, a performance appraisal can achieve this with reasonable accuracy and consistency. It also offers ways of helping to ascertain possible areas of improvement, enhance performance and also foster career growth. Literature also suggests that in order for employees to be satisfied with a performance

appraisal process, the 'fairness' criteria needs to be fully expressed along the lines of organisational justice. Additionally, dissatisfaction with the appraisal system arises when there are incongruities between the expected and actual performance assessments. In order to mitigate this, there needs to be training of the staff members involved in the appraisal process. In the next chapter the researcher discusses the research methodology of the study in detail.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH APPROACH, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented a literature review on performance appraisal, fairness in performance appraisal and the research context. This chapter outlines the steps and procedures which the researcher used when conducting the study. The researcher explains the research paradigm, research approach, research design, sample size and sampling technique. Data collection strategies and data analysis techniques employed in this study are also discussed.

### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

A research paradigm encompasses four major dimensions namely: ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Wilson, 2001). A paradigm can be referred to as a set of beliefs about the world and gaining of understanding that guides the actions of researchers on how they will go about their research (Silverman, 2013). Ontology is a belief in reality and it is what the researcher believes is real in the world. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge and what we can know about our world. Wilson (2001) explains that Research Methodology involves how the researcher uses ontological and epistemological beliefs to gain knowledge of phenomena. Axiology is a set of morals or ethics that guide the researcher.

The researcher decides on the research paradigm that informs the study based on the purpose of the study (Silverman, 2013). A Social Science study often uses an interpretive paradigm lens to observe and analyse data generated in such studies (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The researcher in this study believes that knowledge is socially constructed and that there are multiple realities. Wahyuni (2012) states that in an interpretive paradigm, subjective meaning that the participants attach to their experiences is acceptable knowledge about the phenomenon. This study is located within the interpretivist paradigm as it contains multiple realities, involves a more personal and

interactive mode of data collection, and the data collection will be through interviews and reflective sessions. The researcher decided on an interpretive paradigm because the experiences of the participants in the study regarding fair appraisal processes may be different but collectively, conclusions can be drawn on the common factors and themes identified in the data. The researcher interacted with the participants and gained insights, views and understanding of their experiences of the appraisal process.

### **3.3 Research approach**

The research approach in this study was qualitative. Qualitative research is mainly concerned with developing explanations of a social phenomenon and aims at understanding the social world in which we live and why things are the way they are (Beverly, Schatzman & Strauss, 2009). Qualitative research is a process of inquiry in which the researcher develops a complex and holistic picture, conducts the research in the participants' natural setting, provides detailed views of the participants, examines the data and presents the findings in words (Creswell, 2007).

Qualitative research focuses on reports of experiences or data which cannot be adequately expressed numerically (Beverly et al., 2009). A qualitative approach was suitable for this study because it ensured that the issues the researcher intended to investigate were explored not through one lens, but through a variety of lenses, ensuring that multiple facets of the phenomenon were revealed and analysed. The reason for using a qualitative approach for this study was that the researcher intended to explore and describe the opinions and perceptions of principals, HODs and teachers on the fairness of performance appraisal practices in their schools.

### **3.4 Research Design**

Yin (2017) defines a research design as an action plan for moving from the initial set of questions to be answered to some set of answers or conclusions. The research design in this study was case study. The justification for this is because the researcher is looking to investigate the phenomenon of fairness in performance appraisal in independent schools. Creswell and Creswell (2017) refer to a case study as a plan of inquiry in which the researcher investigates a

programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals in depth. A case study is also referred to as an empirical enquiry that explores an existing phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between the phenomenal context are not evident, using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2017). According to Yin and Davis (2007), a case study can be used to understand a real life phenomenon thoroughly; however, such understanding comprises important contextual conditions because they are highly relevant to the phenomenon being studied. A case study is an approach to research that allows for exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Case study research design has its strengths and weaknesses. According to Maree (2014), one major advantage of the case study method is that it makes use of several techniques and sources in the data collection process which in turn enhances data credibility. A disadvantage of the case study method is its dependence on a single case which allows for criticisms that it is incapable of providing a generalizing conclusion (Maree 2014). Yin (2017) posits that, although problems such as bias and lack of rigour are common in other research methods, they are more frequently encountered and less frequently overcome in case study research. In this study, the researcher did not aim at generalizing findings from this study but aimed at finding the meaning of what the participants involved in this study give to their experiences of fairness of performance appraisal practices.

### **3.5 Sample size and sampling technique**

A sample is a unit or a sub-group of the population. It could be described as part of the population that the researcher can access to inform the data (Kalu, 2007). Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the sample for this study. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique in which the researcher selects a sample that has the potential to generate information relevant to answer the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Purposive sampling is used in specific situations where sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind. A sample of three (3) principals, three HODs and seven teachers making a total of 13 participants were involved in this study. All the participants were selected from 3 private schools. The researcher used

both the purposive and snowball sampling technique to select 7 teachers from different departments and the HODs of the department. The principals of the schools were also involved in the study. The rationale for using both purposive and snowball sampling lies in the fact that the researcher was looking for HODs and principals, HODs and teachers who have been appraised specifically in the last six months (July 2016 to January 2017). The researcher anticipated that there might be difficulty gaining access to some of the schools. In order to overcome possible limited or lack of access, the researcher used the snowball sampling technique to get referrals from participants involved in the study. It was the assumption of the researcher that, since data collection would be done in May/June of 2017, schools would have done some sort of performance appraisal for their staff members in the early months of the year. This was to ensure that the participants selected would be able to give a vivid recollection of their experiences of performance appraisal.

The researcher selected 2 teachers, each between 25 and 50 years old from different unitary subject departments where they had been appraised in the previous six months, from 3 private schools in Tshwane South (for example Mathematics and English departments). The researcher decided to select two independent primary schools and one independent high school. The researcher also selected the HODs of the departments from which the teachers were selected. The principals of the schools where the participants work were also involved in the study. The justification for choosing the two schools is that the researcher wanted to get the holistic view from different schools about the experiences of the appraisal process. The principal as the head of the school was selected because of the leadership in the appraisal process, the HODs were selected due to their direct role as line supervisors to teachers, the teachers were involved in this study because they are the ones at the receiving end of performance appraisal. The data from the different category of the participants were generated for comparison of the different experiences of the system being applied in school.

The researcher gained access to the schools after having obtained the relevant permission from the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA).

### **3.6 Data Collection**

Interviews were the primary form of data collection. Maree (2014) refers to an interview as a two-way dialogue where the investigator asks the participant questions with the sole aim of collecting data and learning more about the participant's beliefs, ideas, opinions, views, and behaviour. Interviews, like other data collection methods, have advantages and disadvantages. According to Doody and Noonan (2013), the major advantage of the interview as a data collection method is the fact that it is useful for gaining insight into the context of the study. Interviews also give the participants an opportunity to answer the research questions in detail and describe what is important to them. The researcher established a rapport with the participants before and during the interviews.

According to Harrell and Bradley (2009), interviews can be placed on a continuum from unstructured interviews to highly structured interviews, and this can be determined by how much control the researcher wants to have over the interaction. The type of interview that was used in this study was semi-structured. Longhurst (2010) defines a semi-structured interview as an oral interchange in which the interviewer attempts to extract information from the participant by asking pre-determined questions. In this study, the researcher proposes to use semi-structured interviews to be able to probe the responses of the participants for clarity and depth on their perspectives regarding the fairness of performance appraisal practices (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston 2005).

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a process of thoroughly searching and organizing sources of information to enable the researcher to come up with findings (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). In the interpretive paradigm, researchers prefer to use the inductive data analysis process. Inductive analysis can be referred to as an approach that mainly uses detailed analysis of raw data to gain concepts and themes through interpretations made from raw data by the researcher (Thomas, 2016). The main purpose of inductive analysis is to condense extensive raw data into a brief summarized format.

The process of data analysis in this study started by transcribing the recorded interview data; the researcher then proceeded to do a rigorous and systematic reading and coding of the transcripts to identify the categories and themes. The researcher started a systematic organization of the data by identifying segments of the interview transcript and coding the information. The researcher then merged the codes into categories and the categories into themes. The relationship between the categories and the similarities and differences of the data from the different participants was determined by the researcher.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness of the Study**

In a qualitative study, several possible strategies can be used to improve the quality of the research findings. According to Creswell and Miller (2003), these strategies include credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

#### *3.8.1 Credibility*

Researchers such as Polit and Beck (2010) state that credibility refers to the value and the level of authenticity of a study. It involves being able to conduct the research in a believable manner demonstrating its credibility. In this study, the researcher used several steps to enhance the credibility of the study. The first step was *prolonged engagement with the participants in the field*; the researcher spent sufficient time in the field to gain a full understanding of the phenomenon he was investigating. The researcher also triangulated data from different participants to enhance the credibility of the study. Mason (2016) argues that the main purpose of triangulation is to confirm the data and ensure that the data is complete. To do this the researcher used multiple methods to get data to study the phenomenon.

The researcher also used peer debriefing to enhance the credibility of the study. This was done by sharing his data analysis and the conclusions from the study with colleagues and other peers regularly to seek their critical views. The researcher also liaised with his supervisor and colleagues regarding the analysis of data. The researcher determined the correctness of the qualitative findings by taking the final report and specific themes back to the participants to determine whether the participants felt that the findings were accurate and a true reflection of their experiences. This process is referred to as member



checking.

### 3.8.2 *Dependability*

Polit, Moule, Ellis, Burns and Holloway (2014) refer to dependability as how stable the data is over time and over conditions. In other words, it ensures that the findings in the study are consistent and could be repeated. On the dependability of the study, the researcher kept an *audit trail*. The researcher outlined the decisions made throughout the research process from the introduction to the conclusion of the study, providing a rationale and justification for all the methodological judgments done in the study. The researcher maintained comprehensive notes relating to the background of the data and the rationale for all the methodological decisions made. Each process in the study was documented to enable an external researcher to repeat the steps and get similar results. The justification for this is to enable other researchers to understand the methods and their effectiveness.

### 3.8.3 *Confirmability*

Confirmability is how neutral or objective the data is (Polit & Beck, 2008). This means the research findings are the result of the study and not the assumptions of the researcher. Holloway and Wheeler (2002) are of the opinion that an audit trail on the decisions made and the processes used in the research can confirm the findings of the data. To ensure the confirmability of the study, the researcher documented every step of the data collection from the pilot phase all the way to the analysis and conclusions, auditing every step of the research process under the guidance of his supervisor. By doing this, the path to arriving at the themes and their interpretations can be followed.

### 3.8.4 *Transferability*

Transferability is very similar to generalizability. Transferability is when the findings of the research project can apply to similar situations or participants (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). On the transferability of the study, the researcher provided a thick description of the study, the participants and the method of data collection. This allows data and descriptions to speak for themselves, to allow the reader to decide whether or not the findings of the study can be transferred to other contexts.

### *3.8.5 Ethical Strategies*

The data collection in this study was done personally by the researcher, after getting the necessary ethical clearances. The researcher developed a semi-structured interview schedule for the purpose of this research. This schedule was used to conduct interviews with fifteen (13) staff members at three (3) independent schools (two primary and one high school) in the Guateng Province.

The researcher explained in detail the type of the study, aim and level of involvement before proceeding to obtain informed consent from the participants. The researcher then provided all the purpose, processes, risks and the benefits of the research prior to the interview. No form of deception was used to obtain data from the participants. The researcher did not withhold any information from the participants in trying to ensure their participation.

The researcher ensured total anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research.

### **3.9 Summary of the chapter**

In this chapter, the research strategy and techniques applied were reviewed. The underpinning philosophical and theoretical assumptions of the research methodology were discussed in-depth. Finally, the researcher also discussed the research design for this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the steps and procedures through which the research was conducted were highlighted. This chapter presents the analysis of the data generated from the field. Data was generated through Interviews which is the primary data collection method. The aim of this study was to examine educators' perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices in Gauteng independent schools. The responses of the participants to the research questions asked during the interview sessions were analysed (See the tables that follow).

#### **4.2 Social and demographic profile of the research participants**

This section gives an insight into the profile of the participants interviewed on their respective backgrounds in terms of age, gender, educational qualifications and work experience. Table 4.1 presents information about the participants:

**TABLE 4.1: Biographical information of the participants**

S/N	School	Participant	Age	Gender	Years of experience	Performance appraisal intervals	Teaching subject
1.	School A	PRINCIPAL 1	59	F	19	Yearly	English
2.	"	HOD1	51	F	19	"	Business Studies
3.	"	TEACHER 1	30	F	7	"	English
4.	"	TEACHER 2	27	F	3	"	Mathematics
5.	School B	PRINCIPAL 2	60	F	32	Yearly	Economics/Mgt. Sciences
6.	"	HOD 2	60	F	21	"	Mathematics
7.	"	HOD 3	54	F	25	"	Business Studies/ Accounting
8.	"	TEACHER 3	30	M	6	"	Technology
9.	"	TEACHER 4	34	M	5	"	Natural Science
10.	School C	PRINCIPAL 3	39	F		Half Yearly	English
11.	"	TEACHER 5	41	F	5	"	Life Orientation
12.	"	TEACHER 6	65	F	20	"	Nursery Class
13.	"	TEACHER 7	46	F	10	"	Grade 1

Table 4.1 includes thirteen (13) participants, consisting of three (3) Principals, three (3) HODs and seven (7) teachers from three (3) different independent schools in Gauteng province of South Africa. All the participants are adults; the youngest participant is twenty-seven (27) years old while the oldest participant (teacher 6) is sixty-five (65) years old. Amongst the thirteen (13) participants interviewed, there were two (2) male participants and eleven (11) female participants. Among the female participants there were three (3) Principals, three (3) HODs as well as five (5) teachers. All the participants had more than

three years' experience of teaching. The oldest teacher was (Teacher 6) with the longest work experience of twenty (20) years. The justification for selecting participants within this age group is because educators that fall within the age bracket that are generally have the professional teaching experience and may have be appraised in one way or another. Newly appointed teachers were not part of the sample because they have limited experience of the appraisal process.

### 4.3 Research findings and discussions

**TABLE 4.2: Analysing and discussing the themes for research Question One (1)**

Research Question	Themes/ Sub-Themes
<p>1. How do school principals, HODs and teachers describe their experiences of performance appraisals in their school?</p>	<p><u>Participants' general experiences of performance appraisal.</u></p> <p>What is evaluated during the performance appraisal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes</li> <li>• Classroom interaction</li> <li>• Lesson preparation</li> <li>• Learner assessment</li> <li>• Learner feedback</li> </ul> <p>How is the performance appraisal conducted?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constructive criticism</li> <li>• Peer support during appraisal</li> <li>• Teacher motivation</li> <li>• Identifies areas of weakness and what needs to be improved</li> <li>• Teacher victimization</li> </ul>

	<p>Perceived value of the performance appraisal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves teaching and learning through reflection on one's practice</li> <li>• Teachers feel appreciated</li> <li>• Promotion – moving to other positions</li> <li>• Reduces staff turnover</li> </ul>
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#### 4.3.1. Theme 1: Participants' general experiences of performance appraisal.

This section presents the findings on the overall participants' experiences of the performance appraisal. The researcher asked the participants to describe their experiences of the performance appraisal according to how it was conducted, what was evaluated during the process and the value of a performance appraisal on their professional work. The experiences of the participants were identified as mostly positive. In some cases, there were narrations of negative experiences such as age discrimination and politicking with the appraisal process. The following section presents the sub-themes on the overall experiences of the performance appraisal as narrated by the participants.

##### 4.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1: What is evaluated?

The participants described what was evaluated by the appraiser during the performance appraisal process as teachers' files and learners' books, learner interaction during the lesson, lesson preparation, and learner assessment and feedback. The participants said the following:

*“When it comes to performance appraisal of the teacher, I have to look at how are they teaching in the classroom, how is their prep work? How is their marking and how is their overall presentation as a professional ”*  
(Principal 3).

*“Yes you have your presentation of the file of all the relevant information like your term planners and all your information is in the file, you compile it and then you send it to them at the end of each term and they make sure everything is in there and also your book control, there you give three books to your HOD so one of the weak child {academically} then a middle child and then your academically strong children, and then they will go through it and make sure you mark regularly and that you comment on the work, that you don’t just sign, that you support the children if they need any kind of support ” (Teacher 2).*

*“So the last performance appraisal I had was the book control and yeah they are very supportive, like they always try to point out something, like your strengths, something that they appreciate what you do, you know? Sometimes they see that you are putting effort in. We also have our principal or HODs looking at our files making sure that our files are one hundred percent right and that the students’ books are fine” (Teacher 5).*

*“If I am being correct you fill in your form, you look at what the educator does and there is so little time, you look at the books of the learner you look at the lesson prepared and beforehand you warn the educator that you are coming to do the appraisal” (HOD 2).*

Drawing from the responses of the participants, there seems to be greater emphasis on how teaching is done and the tools utilised in the teaching process. While it may appear that there is accountability on teaching and learning, the researcher observed that there is no mention of evaluating the primary goals of teaching which is transfer of knowledge (from the known to the unknown). This could be a possible flaw in the performance appraisal system adopted by the independent schools involved in this study. It implies that the appraisal system does not necessarily evaluate the holistic dynamics of teaching and learning and in turn might influence the perception the staff members have regarding the outcomes of the performance appraisal results, and this might in turn lead to demoralization and job dissatisfaction.

#### 4.3.1.2 Sub-theme 2: How performance appraisal is conducted.

The responses of the participants on how the performance appraisal was done show that the participants experience the process as positive, friendly, supportive and developmental. They described their experiences as follows:

*“Well we get class visits and we get a feedback and the nice thing about that is there is constructive criticism so where you can improve and also obviously your positive part of it, that is what you are good at, and that’s that and obviously our files and things get checked, the text books and all of that is then recorded, and giving us our criticism and the good parts too and a lot of it is oral and that I think is what makes the school amazing” (Teacher 1).*

*“I find it to be quite a positive appraisal process, it’s not about what I cannot do, it is about how well I have done and what I could do, and this may be something that I could work on. So it’s very much more positive with some here is where I think you could improve” (Teacher 7).*

*“The principal and the CEO they come for the class visits so they sit in on a lesson that you present, and then they will give you a written out feedback on how you did, and the other one is your presentation of the file of all the relevant information like your term planners and all your information is in the file, you compile it and then you send it to them at the end of each term and they make sure everything is in there and also your book control, there you give three books to your HOD so one of the weak child {academically} then a middle child and then your academically strong children, and then they will go through it and makes sure you mark regularly, that you comment, that you don’t just sign, that you support the children if they need any kind of support” (Teacher 2).*

*“It is done in an encouraging way, you do not let a teacher feel that she is not good enough because then you find that the teachers are unable to function, everybody thrives with being acknowledged for what you do well, and then you find that they will go that extra mile because they realise that you are there to help them and not to break them down and*



*to find faults all the time, but that together we can actually reach the standard that we need and required for the learner to be able to flourish” (HOD 1).*

Another positive experience is that other teachers were also involved in the appraisal process and this was a form of peer support as experienced by the participants:

*“...the first thing that we do is that we have a staff member or colleague come and sit in on our lessons, so it’s not a principal or a HOD that is going to make you feel uncomfortable, it’s one of your colleagues, you can choose who you want to have come and sit in your class, they basically complete a form, there are certain questions to answer and you basically reciprocate, you don’t have to do for that person, you can do it to any other person you want to. So yes! It’s friendly so you don’t feel nervous when you are teaching and from what I have seen from other teacher I have had to appraise; no one is uncomfortable with it so you carry on like normal” (Teacher 5).*

The negative experiences of performance appraisal revealed in this study were in the form of victimization, the scoring system that was not a true reflection of the performance of the teachers and the use of ineffective assessment tools. These experiences are evident in the following quotations:

*“We have an HOD who has been here for quite some time but ever since she doesn’t even have a subject head for life science, so they look at things like age as well which I think is not fair, I think your age shouldn’t determine whether you are able to do something or not or how long you have been at a particular institution, they should actually be looking at you as a professional and if you are capable of having that portfolio or not. Sometimes they tend to look at a person’s previous profession from other schools, I am not saying they shouldn’t, they tend to look at how long a person has been in the particular school for them to get a particular position. In that sense I think it is not fair” (Teacher 4).*

*“To me, it is very subjective. I feel it’s quite subjective, I don’t know. We must get something else to appraise what the educator does. So, for me there must be some other tools that we can use to do this” (HOD 2).*

*“You know there are a lot of our staff who are basically on threes, and if they go up to 4, they would have to provide all some sort of evidence to justify it you know, but there is no incentive, people are getting the same scores year after year because they are good and to get a four for example in the first four performance standard which is classroom observation, you’ve got to sort of produce an amazing portfolio of things, I honestly think it is a stagnant system and it needs to be revised as I think it has outlived its usefulness to be honest” (Principal 2).*

It seems from the responses to the question on how the performance appraisal was done that this plays a major role in how the fairness of the process is perceived. Most of the participants did respond positively to how the appraisal system is conducted by acknowledging their involvement in the process. The responses of the participants show that the appraisal system in independent schools is an inclusive process that involves all the stakeholders in the process. Another aspect that seemed to contribute to confidence in the appraisal process was dialogue on the outcome of the appraisal and the sensitive way in which the appraisal was done. Interpersonal relationships between the appraiser and the teachers seem to influence the teachers’ views of the appraisal process, because when an appraisee and appraiser share a healthy working relationship, the appraisee tends to see the appraisal process as fair. When an appraisee feels the appraiser is unrealistic; there is likelihood that the appraised person feels he/she has been unfairly appraised. The findings in this theme also show that an appraisal system can be perceived as fair if it leads to professional development as a result of timely and valuable feedback on the performance of the teachers.

There were also negative responses regarding the performance appraisal process. The subjective responses from the appraisers and the views of the lack of effectiveness of the performance appraisal were some of the concerns of the participants. The perception of the participants on the performance

appraisal being ineffective implies that the appraisal system at these schools is not being reviewed regularly and that there is a lack of structure to assess the consequences of the appraisal. This in turn can lead to several defensive rebuttals from appraisees' in an organisation in the short term and on the long term disillusion among staff members. The participants also seem to experience the performance appraisal as a significant process that brings about change and development in their professional career.

#### 4.3.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Perceived value of the performance appraisal.

The findings of this study show that some of the participants subscribed to the fact that the performance appraisal has added positive value to their overall professional work. The appraisal is seen as a means of identifying teachers for promotion, recognizing their potential and appreciating the work that the teachers are doing. The participants described the value of the performance appraisal as follows:

*"I think it's fair because they do consider the fact that you have been teaching that subject for a couple of years before you are considered for a particular position"* (Teacher 6).

*"We run an appraisal system that doesn't destroy the passion of the staff member, you don't want somebody to lose their passion and desire for something they are really passionate about, so it's a case of you need to, like I said you give them credit where credit is due but at the same time taking into consideration that they might not have all the experience in that area and you might not score them as high as you would score somebody else but you have got to realise that is how they learn, and that its not to their detriment if you know what I mean"* (HOD 1).

*"...and giving us our criticism and the good parts too and a lot of it is oral and that I think is what makes the school amazing, things like thank you for doing that, thank you for being there, we appreciate you, that's what builds a person that's why the staff turnover is extremely low in this school"* (Teacher 1).

*“I find it to be quite a positive appraisal process it is not about what I cannot do, it is about how well I have done and what I could do, and these may be something that I could work on. So it is very much more positive with some here is where I think you could improve” (Teacher 7).*

In addition, the performance appraisal process is also used in identifying the needs of the teachers in order to provide the needed support. The participants said:

*“It’s very nice because if the performance appraisal is done in the right way you can learn a lot about who you are, you learn a lot about your strengths and your weaknesses and where you can improve and if the performance appraisal is done in such a way that you can benefit from it you know?” (Teacher 6).*

*“The teachers have the opportunity of expressing their concerns and asking for specific assistance or needs that they have got in their classroom. And what we also do in planning the next year we give them a wish list, and on the wish list they are allowed to ask. So if they really need certain things for their classrooms, they are allowed to ask for it and we do make it provisions for it as far as it is possible” (Principal 1).*

For the purpose of this study, ‘value’ refers to growth and development. An effective appraisal makes it easy for both the supervisor and the subordinate to easily compare past and present performance levels. When an appraisal system is seen as an opportunity to develop professionally, staff members would naturally embrace the process. The participants involved in this study seem to perceive the performance appraisal as a learning opportunity that also provides the support required for their overall professional development. There seems to be a perception that there is balance in the appraisal process between acknowledging the efforts of the teachers and the skills that still need to be developed. They also seem to provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice and identify areas that need improvement.

**TABLE 4.3: Analysing and Discussing the Themes for Research Question Two (2)**

Research Question	Themes
<p>2. What are the views of the school principals, HODs and teachers regarding fairness in the performance appraisal process?</p>	<p><u>Participants' views regarding the fairness in the performance appraisal process.</u></p> <p>What makes the performance appraisal fair?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Justification of awarded scores</li> <li>• Involving all stakeholders</li> </ul> <p>How fair is the performance appraisal at their school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate tools</li> <li>• Constructive</li> <li>• Generality</li> </ul>

*4.3.2. Theme 2: Participants' views regarding the fairness in the performance appraisal process.*

In conducting the interviews, the researcher sought to understand the views of the participants regarding the fairness of the performance appraisal process. The aim of the question was to get a better understanding of what makes the performance appraisal fair in independent schools as well as how fair the appraisal system is. The participants described both positive and negative views regarding the fairness of performance appraisal processes. The following section presents the sub-themes on the experiences of the participants.

#### 4.3.2.1 Sub-theme 1: What makes the performance appraisal fair?

The educators identified the process of providing collective feedback as an opportunity for all stakeholders involved in the appraisal system to talk about the performance. Such opportunities were perceived positively and as fair practice. The participants described their views as follows:

*“I think it’s fair in the sense as it is not only done by me or by the CEO, it is a combined process where the HODs together with myself and the CEO compile the document or the final document and we all sign it and when we have the interview with the teachers we also give them the opportunity of giving us feedback in writing” (Principal 1).*

*“I would regard a fair performance appraisal as one in which you are able to discuss your pros and cons, your weakness and strengths, and you are acknowledged for your strengths and given constructive criticism for your weaknesses so that you can better yourself. Not to try and put somebody down, make them feel good about themselves and still be able to push themselves to the level where they can improve it should be done in a way where they don’t have to feel bad about themselves” (HOD 2).*

*“Hopefully what I have instituted, if a teacher comes back to me and says they want to add stuff or they are not happy being appraised on that or if I find someone who has a better menu than what I have put together, I am always willing to develop and grow, so it’s not that I believe that mine is the golden plated verdict, not at all, I have tried to be very fair, what I do find that helps me is in the performance appraisal at the end I say to them the suggestions of the staff member for the principal. So I ask them to appraise me, ok? Where they have a chance to say what they would like to change at the school, what would they like to change in the way I am doing things, so it gives them an opportunity to give as good as they get” (Principal 3).*

*“...constrictive criticism as well as positive feedback, you know that motivates you. I would definitely say good balance in that” (Teacher 1).*

In addition, the participants also identified developmental contributions and support as part of the process that makes the performance appraisal fair. The participant noted that:

*“A fair performance appraisal is done to basically ensure that the teachers are aware of the fact that if they do have any weaknesses that they are encouraged to improve in that area and if there are mistakes they do rectify them. It is done in an encouraging way, you do not let a teacher feel that she is not good enough because then you find that the teachers are unable to function, everybody thrives with being acknowledged for what you do well, and then you find that they will go that extra mile because they realise that you are there to help them and not to break them down and to find faults all the time, but that together we can actually reach the standard that we need and required for the learner to be able to flourish” (HOD 1).*

From the responses of the participants, a fair performance appraisal system seems to include encouraging representativeness, providing constructive criticism and allowing the subordinate to appeal and ask for justification for their appraisal scores. The findings in this theme suggest that when there is some form of synergy between all involved in the appraisal process, there is freedom to discuss the appraisal, transparency and justification of the appraisal outcomes. The participants in this study seem to regard a fair appraisal system as one not used for punitive measures but a self-reflective and developmental process. A fair performance appraisal process should identify the strengths of the staff and acknowledge them as well as identifying weaknesses and giving constructive criticism.

#### 4.3.2.2. Sub-theme 2: How fair is the performance appraisal at the schools?

The participants were of the opinion that the performance appraisal at their schools is fair. The process was objective and fair due to the fact that there are tools in place for appraisal; the process was largely constructive and consistently applied to all teachers. The participants described their views as follows:

*“I think it is fair, well I can’t really comment on that because I don’t really know because it is very confidential so it is not opened, but to me the appraisal I get I think it is very fair, I really see it as very constructive, they see your strong side and also see your weak side and they want to help you to build and make you stronger” (Teacher 1).*

*“No I think it is fair, and I think it is fair because it applies to everybody, I think everyone is judged in the same way and I think that’s fair. I do think however, that good teachers maybe don’t get the recognitions that they deserve because that weighting are not always correct but asides that it is generally fair” (Principal 2).*

*“I think it is fair because there are tools in place, and for me I think as far as the HOD does not go out of those prescribed rules in the appraisal form, it’s fair” (Teacher 3).*

*“I’d like to think the fact that we use the tools that we do, the fact that they are allowed to choose the staff member that they want to come into their classroom to asses them, so already the playing field is levelled, because it is not that I am going to tell you that a staff member that you don’t like is coming into your classroom to asses you, it is often staff members that enjoy each other’s company and so when they assess each other they are quite relaxed and that’s an equal playing field” (Principal 3).*



A participant also stated that the performance appraisal process at the school is fair because it looks at the holistic performance of the staff members before ratings are awarded. The participant had this to say:

*“To me, a teacher is not measured by comparison; a teacher is measured by her own strengths. Because you do get a teacher that is an excellent administrator, their admin abilities are strong, and it runs like clockwork, so you cannot fault them on that, but you also get the compassionate teachers that are not necessarily strong admin wise, but the compassion and empathy that they show in teaching let them rise a nudge above the others, so I feel that you need to look at the teacher from all sides before you just label them”* (Principal 1).

The negative experiences of the performance appraisal revealed in this study were in the form of bias, and a participant also remarked that low scores are given for casual dressing without considering the context in which the teacher works. These experiences are evident in the following quotation:

*“I think it’s not really fair, sometimes I look at the reasons why they run things in a particular way, they would consider somebody who has been for example a subject head or an HOD just looking at the fact that you have been here for a longer period because you aware of the policies and what not so you know just to keep everything running smoothly as well, I think in that sense its ok, but you know when somebody comes from outside and they are a professional and they have been in the profession for a number of years they also come with a number of year which should be taken into consideration, so in that sense I am of the opinion that they are not being fair. So I think they should look at maybe another way of perhaps doing it, considering that people who also come from outside do have ideas and are also professionals as well”* (Teacher 4).

*“There have been sensitive issues raised, for myself last year, she raised my dress code and that I was too casual, and that I needed to bring it up a notch, which I was accepting of, but I do know that the other teachers who were told the same thing have not improved on that, so I assume that they got the same feedback that I did and the rumour was going and I know that other people we spoken to about the same issue you know. You know a teacher wears takkies, jeans and t-shirt every day and I wear that once a week and my smarter clothes are all but older, we got the same comment about that kind of thing. So for me it seemed a bit like unfair, but I also understand that the dress code needs to be a particular way. And I suppose being in the foundation phase, we kind of get a bit used to being a bit more casual, because we are going to maybe be doing carpet work or whatever so you know I get that” (Teacher 6).*

These comments show that fairness in the performance appraisal system is perceived in different ways. While there are experiences of objectivity and fairness of the process some participants were of the opinion that the appraisers were subjective and biased when using the appraisal tools. The fairness of the appraisal was based on the standardized process that promoted equal treatment for all teachers. The appraisal system seemed to measure the abilities and the skills of the teachers based on their strengths. What this implies is that the system identifies that everyone is different in their own right and they all have different strengths and weaknesses which is taken into account during the appraisal process. The participants who talked about performance appraisal as unfair gave the example of evaluating the physical appearance of the teachers rather than the educational competence of the teacher. This shows that despite the tool that is structured for evaluation there are other factors that influence the appraisers’ assessment of the performance of the teacher.

**TABLE 4.4: Analysing and Discussing the Themes for Research Question three (3)**

Research Question	Themes
3. What do school principals, HODs and teachers regard as unfair performance appraisal practices?	<p data-bbox="799 472 1366 613"><u>What the participants considered as unfair in the performance appraisal process.</u></p> <p data-bbox="799 663 1318 696"><u>Reason for conducting the appraisal</u></p> <ul data-bbox="850 745 1158 891" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perks</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Destroying morale</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="799 943 1286 976"><u>Weighting on the appraisal scores</u></p> <ul data-bbox="850 1025 1366 1227" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not properly weighted</li> <li>• Not a true reflection of performance</li> <li>• Not easily quantifiable</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="799 1279 967 1312"><u>Favouritism</u></p>

*4.3.3. Theme 3: What the participants considered as unfair in the performance appraisal process.*

This section outlines the general views regarding what the participants consider as unfair in the performance appraisal process. The researcher asked the participants to identify and discuss what they felt was unfair about the appraisal system currently operated at their respective schools. The responses of the participants were analysed and it became apparent that the concept of unfairness in the performance appraisal needed to be explored. These three sub-themes are described in the following paragraphs.

#### 4.3.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Reason for conducting a performance appraisal

The participants frowned upon conducting a performance appraisal mainly for giving bonuses to staff members, Principal 3 believes it is counterproductive and it should be used as a tool for monitoring. The other participants were of the opinion that when a performance appraisal is used as a whip that the supervisor can crack up anytime would be unfair. The participants described their views as follows:

*“As a principal of a school, an unfair performance appraisal would be a performance appraisal where you give perks to teachers as a result of their work. I know that sounds weird but it really is counterproductive. In the corporate world that is exactly what a performance appraisal is. A performance appraisal can lead to a perk. It will cause such diversion in a school if one teacher feels that she is superior to the other teachers”* (Principal 3).

*“When an appraisal system is used to oppress the staff member that is unfair, you know, when you want to show who is boss. I always felt that it is not a sword that hangs above your head, and you get to be executed for doing certain things right or wrong, I feel personally that an appraisal is a tool where you can have the opportunity of visiting a classroom or you can create the opportunity of actually walking in unannounced into a classroom via appointment or without appointment, whichever one it is because we do set up a time slot where the teacher can actually invite you to a specific lesson at a specific time slot”* (Principal 1).

*“A performance appraisal that is done to destroy the morale of a staff by breaking them down is unfair because I feel that with an unfair appraisal you are going to do more damage to the individual because if you set a standard and you expect that person to reach that standard and nothing is ever good enough for you, you are actually going to cause the person to become disgruntled, they are not going to be happy with what they do, they are not going to care eventually whether they do it right or wrong*

*because you are discrediting them in an unjust way, because you feel nothing is ever good enough anyway” (HOD1).*

An unfair performance appraisal system is the one that is put in place to always remind the subordinate that their every move is being watched. This is said to be counterproductive because a performance appraisal should be a tool to develop the subordinate and not tear them down. The power and authority associated with the use of assessment tools is perceived by some of the participants as an oppressing and demotivating process. Drawing from the comments of the participants, running an appraisal system in schools is considered unfair if there is a lack of collaboration in the relationship between appraisers and the teachers. In addition, when a supervisor is bent on reminding all the subordinates that he/she is the boss, and uses that appraisal system to oppress and destroy the morale of the staff members, that is also considered unfair. A performance appraisal is a tool to build up, not to destroy. It seems that an organisation with an unfair and ineffective performance appraisal might have a high staff turn over rate as the employees may more often than not become dissatisfied with the job and seek better working conditions.

#### 4.3.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Weighting of the appraisal scores

The educators expressed concerns about the weighting and the ratings of the appraisal system; they felt that the weighting flaws made the appraisal system unfair. The participants described these concerns as follows:

*“As an educator, I think that some issues or facets are weighted equally and I think in some cases that’s wrong. For example, and I keep on using this example because to me it’s the best example, somebody is weak in classroom management, but may have excellent subject knowledge, may score highly for other issues but score badly on classroom discipline and you see that their score is not that much lower than somebody who manages their classes well. So in other words the classes of the other person who manages their classes well, teaching and learning takes place properly, but if you can’t manage your classroom, it doesn’t matter how great your subject knowledge is or how*

*many posters you have got, if you cannot manage your classes then teaching and learning doesn't take place properly and that to me is unfair" (Principal 2).*

*"You know if I look at it, it makes it very difficult because some of them to me doesn't match the criteria that they give you there and you feel that the person is actually on a four but the way that the criteria has been designed you can't give the person a four there. So I feel the performance on one hand and the criteria on the other hand doesn't marry for me. It's not always a true reflection, I would rather be given a list of comment and then on a scale of one to this, where would you have rated according to these comments" (HOD 3).*

*"No, because some teachers are not just as neat as other teachers and some teachers, the way they teach might not always be the way the principal or the CEO would like them to teach, but that's their teaching style and it works for the kids so no its not usually a true reflection and it's sometimes not fair that's what I believe" (Teacher 1).*

In addition, one of the participants was of the opinion that since you cannot really quantify teaching, the rating system and the tool itself is not a true measure of the work of the teacher. The participant's response was as follows:

*"You know? With all the measures in place, you cannot really know how good the teaching is really, we try to get as accurately as we can, but to get really to the point. It's not like you can say you sold more stuff than that person, or you made more client than that person, it's subjective, so unless I'm a fly on the wall permanently in their classroom, how do I really know which teacher is really nailing it? So you have got to be very careful, it's a dangerous tool" (Principal 3).*

There were other views about the weighting system. Another participant regarded the weighting system as a fair measure. She had this to say:

*"Well its ok to be honest, because it covers everything from the discipline in the class to the decoration in the class, I know that sounds strange but it is important for the children, do we have what the*

*department of education has asked for, that is at least a south African flag or the different emblems etcetera from south Africa. So it's broken down into very easy and precise categories that we need to be dealing with so the basic stuff like the classroom and then going to if the lesson plan is well thought out. The lesson plan should already be on this from the teacher, was she confident during the lesson? Very basic stuff so it's easy for us to appraise and be objective" (Teacher 5).*

*"Very easy, it's very easy to understand, it's easy to do, the forms that we have when we are assessing our peers is pretty much yes no and a comment. So do they have South African flag or emblems up in the classroom yes or no? Yes. Are the pictures up for the topics that we are covering? Yes, and then you can comment on lovely display of the children's artwork or whatever. So the forms that we do complete are very simple and easy and then that is transcribed on to another document which the principal will go thru with us, what your peer assessment says showing either good or maybe you could improve here, our principal assessment I am very happy with the way your files and books are looking good, but is expect you to maybe improve here and then we discuss things and then sign at the bottom" (Teacher 6).*

From the responses of some participants, it is apparent that some aspects of the appraisal system are not properly weighted, and may not be a true reflection of the work done by the teachers. As a matter of fact, it turns out that some teachers who are actually not teaching properly in the classroom end up getting the same ratings as those who are teaching properly. Some of the participants in this study questioned the fairness of the scoring system as a tool since the way in which it was used did not differentiate accurately the different competencies that the teachers had and displayed. There also seems to be a gap between the performance and criteria. Some teachers actually out perform some of the criteria stipulated in the appraisal tool, but they end up not getting the ratings because there are no provisions to enable the supervisor to justify why the staff member merits that score. The finding on the use of weighting in the performance appraisal suggests a need to re-structure the scoring tool

incorporating the necessary adjustments to make weighting more reliable and accurate.

The participants who are relatively happy with the weighting system found the tool user-friendly. The transparency and the structure of the tool makes both the appraiser and the appraisee understand what is required (simple answers) if those criteria are met. The difference in the use of the weighting tool and the perception of the extent to which the tool is a fair measure suggest that the appraisers need further training on how to use the tool in a more effective and objective way.

#### 4.3.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Favouritism

The participants identified favouritism as one of the things that makes an appraisal process unfair. Their responses were as follows:

*“If you start pulling one teacher ahead of another teacher because of a performance appraisal, that’s where unfairness in performance appraisal comes in, or in the case indeed if you have favouritism with your staff, that’s obviously a no brainer, that’s just stupid”* (Principal 3).

*“Ok, I guess that would be a difficult one to answer because I don’t really see our school as particularly being unfair, but perhaps if you have got a teacher who (this doesn’t happen at our school) is out smoking for half their period and they get the same feedback on appraisal time that you were in your classroom the whole period, that is what I would find as very unfair, favouritism I also find to be very unfair”* (Teacher 6).

Not much was said on the issue of favouritism. It was one participant who mentioned preferential treatment referring to incidences in other schools. What this implies is that the participant is aware of unfair treatment during the appraisal and either such incidences are not experienced in the school or the participant opted not to give examples from their school. The other participant was of the opinion that the system should apply the principle of objectivity and



not allow favouritism of any kind. Favouritism could lead to tensions within staff members and also bring about internal conflict, disunity and demotivation among staff members. Such a response shows sensitivity with regard to consistency in doing the appraisal.

**TABLE 4.5: Analysing and Discussing the Themes for Research Question four (4)**

<p>4. Why are some performance appraisal processes considered unfair and other processes considered fair?</p>	<p><u>What makes a performance appraisal fair/unfair?</u></p> <p><u>Performance appraisal practices that are considered fair</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representativeness</li> <li>• Ethicality</li> <li>• Consistency</li> </ul> <p><u>Performance appraisal practices that are considered unfair</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No input from staff member</li> <li>• No feedback</li> <li>• Lack of communication</li> </ul>
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*4.3.4. Theme 4: What makes a performance appraisal fair/unfair?*

In conducting the interviews, the researcher wanted to explore the different views regarding what makes a performance appraisal fair/unfair. The aim was to narrow down the different practices the educators felt made an appraisal process fair and unfair. In this regard, the participants were asked to identify and describe several practices that were unfair/fair about the appraisal system. These two sub-themes are described in the following paragraphs.

#### 4.3.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Performance appraisal practices that are considered fair

The participants identified consistency, representativeness in the appraisal process, and applying ethical principles during the process of appraisal as fair practices. The participants' responses were as follows:

*"You see a fair system would be one that has the same process apply to everyone, where you have your peer, you have your senior on the panel, you can appeal ratings that you think is not a true reflection you know? All these combined I think would make an appraisal system fair"* (Principal 2).

*"I would say a practice that is fair is one that allows everyone to participate and it's not just management coming in and doing the appraisal. I think at the end of the day a fair practice acknowledges and allows for room to grow"* (Principal 3).

*"Well I feel one that the feedback is honest and true, an appraisal system where both the supervisor and the staff member both see it, agree on it, sign it and acknowledge it"* (HOD 2).

*"I suppose a process that looks at the whole broad spectrum in teaching and not just look at one aspect like with the school we did the control, so they make sure that the children's books are up to date and that their work is correct and that you as the teacher you are doing your own part, you know? Giving them work to do, the way they come to sit in on your teaching. So what I am saying is when they look at the holistic aspect and not just one area, take the book control for example, it is nice that they come and sit in and listen to how you teach and how you interact with the children, so I think it when it's a broad spectrum"* (Teacher 2).

The issue of representativeness and consistency were mentioned by the participants when responding to the question on the qualities of a fair performance appraisal system. The findings of this study show that a fair performance appraisal system is a system where the feedback is not shrouded in mystery, everyone involved in the appraisal is given the opportunity to

discuss the feedback and give their opinion about it. A fair appraisal system is described as a holistic assessment of the teaching and learning process. The findings in this sub-theme emphasize the importance of self-concept and self-image of the teacher which should be built on by acknowledging the strengths and positive aspects of the teachers' work during the appraisal process. As much as one of the purposes of the performance appraisal is to develop a teacher after identifying their weakness, appreciation for the positive work done is a source of motivation and a balance between the strength and weakness of the teacher. The participants in this study consider such a balance during appraisal as fair practice.

#### *4.3.4.2. Sub-theme 2: Performance appraisal practices that are considered unfair*

The participants identified the absence of feedback and not being represented or involved in the process as practices that would make an appraisal system unfair. The participants described unfair practices as follows:

*"...speaking of an unfair practice, I think it would be unfair if there was no input from the staff members you know? If it was just the appraiser calling you in and handing you an appraisal rating which used to be the case. When I started teaching we had a thing where you had your appraisal without your knowledge, so I think it would be unfair if you weren't allowed an input into the process"* (Principal 2).

*"An unfair practice I think is one that is not open, when it is all shrouded in mystery, withholding information hinders people from developing because you don't know what you are doing wrong or right you know. In terms of promotion someone might just come and take away that portfolio from you maybe because of who they are or what they have done and you don't know what you haven't done. So if they give everyone an equal opportunity and they have it down in writing to say fine this is the criteria we are looking at then you as an individual are given the opportunity to grow"* (Teacher 4).

*“You know that only thing I think would be an unfair practice is when they don't give you feedback, yeah it frustrates me, you know if I don't get a feedback, remember even the kids want feedback I also want feedback after my appraisal process, so if I don't get that I would consider it unfair” (Teacher 3).*

*“... the one where the person does not get to see the final report, when there's no feedback. You know I've sent the report this is what happened but you can't change it. You know that would be unfair” (HOD 2).*

In the same vein, what many of the participants considered unfair is when an appraisal system does not encourage development, both in terms of remuneration, promotions and also development through learning. Drawing from the comments, what would be considered unfair in a performance appraisal would be when appraisers are not given equal opportunities. What would also be considered unfair would be when that appraisee has no say in the appraisal process. In other words, when the appraisal is regarded as a management issue without consulting the teachers on how the process should be carried out. Unfair practice is also perceived as limited or no opportunity given to the teacher to engage with the feedback provided after the appraisal. Dialogues and interpersonal relationships seem to be regarded as important aspects of a fair appraisal process.

**TABLE 4.6: Analysing and Discussing the Themes for Research Question four (5)**

Research Question	Themes
5. What are the implications of a fair/unfair performance appraisal process?	<p data-bbox="804 465 1359 501"><u>Implications of fair performance appraisal practices:</u></p> <ul data-bbox="852 577 1337 672" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="852 577 1206 613">• Improves enthusiasm</li> <li data-bbox="852 636 1337 672">• Provides opportunities to learn</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="804 748 1359 784"><u>Implications of unfair performance appraisal practices:</u></p> <ul data-bbox="852 860 1238 954" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="852 860 1238 896">• Increases staff turnover</li> <li data-bbox="852 918 1037 954">• Kills drive</li> </ul>

*4.3.5 Theme 5: Implications of fair performance appraisal practices*

One of the aims of the researcher in conducting this study is to fully understand the implications of both fair performance appraisal and unfair performance practices to an organisation. The researcher asked the participants to describe the effects a fair/unfair performance appraisal has on both their professional life as well as the organisation itself. These two sub-themes are described in the following paragraphs.

4.3.5.1. Sub-theme 1: Consequences of fair performance appraisal practices

The participants stated that a fair performance appraisal process increases the staff motivation and enthusiasm in doing their work. When teachers are motivated they will strive to improve their teaching and learner performance will also improve. They said the following:

*“When an appraisal system is fair, a teacher is positive and they have got the desire and enthusiasm, it filters through to the children, the*

*children functions well, everybody functions well. So you have to have a very healthy staff to have a healthy body. I don't know that's just my own view, that's how I feel about it, I just feel you need to be fair, it is very important to be fair and not unfair when you are doing an appraisal because people work hard and not everybody is the same. That's really the way I feel because I feel if you are fair in your appraisal your staff know they can trust you, your staff know you will not go out of your way to find faults in them, they will be comfortable and they will be loyal towards you, whereas if you don't do that you end up with a hornet's nest. I don't know that's just my opinion, I am sorry" (HOD 1).*

*"If the performance appraisal is done in the right way you can learn a lot about who you are, you learn a lot about your strengths and your weaknesses and where you can improve and if the performance appraisal is done in such a way that you can benefit from it you know? Which I personally feel is what a performance appraisal should be all about" (Teacher 6).*

*"Everyone needs someone to say to you that I acknowledge that you are a good student, you are a good teacher, you are a good janitor, because if you feel valued, you are going to perform better" (Principal 3).*

A fair performance appraisal has far reaching positive effects on the organisation. A performance appraisal that is fair improves teacher morale and the overall teaching and learning process. If the teacher is motivated and has the drive and passion to work, this will always trickle down to the students. What fair performance appraisal practices mean in both the long term/short term is the general improvement of the learning environment. Another effect that is likely to be experienced from the responses of the participants is increased loyalty of the staff members and positive self-image. This finding implies that if staff members feel that they have a better chance of growing their career at your organisation, there is very little chance they will be seeking employment elsewhere. If the staff turnover is low, there is consistency at the school thereby increasing the quality of teaching and learning.

#### 4.3.5.2. Sub-theme 2: Consequences of unfair performance appraisal practices

The participants reiterated that an unfair performance appraisal would have an adverse effect on an organisation. They concluded that it might disillusion the staff members. Their responses were as follows:

*“An unfair appraisal has an adverse effect on the overall stability of your staff and school. It is like you can’t always say you are not good enough, you are never going to reach the standard, you know every time something is wrong, like I said eventually the standard of your school drops, the standard of everything drops because you always finding faults” (HOD1).*

*“It kills your drive; you know sometimes they appoint people without going through the proper channels you know? The management are the ones that decide on your behalf, sometimes the HOD would say no I would like to work with a particular person. These things make you disillusioned in the long run you know?” (Teacher 4).*

Unfair performance appraisals may lead to an increase in staff turnover, as the staff members would generally feel disillusioned and would seek other employment where they felt their chances of career development would be greatly enhanced. Unfair performance appraisals would result in teachers having a negative self-image and feeling demotivated. The ability of the educator to be involved in identifying areas in which they need support and the drive to develop themselves will be reduced. When a staff member does not feel as if they are part of the process, they may become demotivated and this will ultimately impact the way they teach in the classroom. In the short term the teaching and learning process suffers, in the long term the standard of the school drops.

#### **4.4. Summary of the chapter**

Based on the responses of the participants, some findings emerged. A major concern was that greater emphasis was placed on how teaching is done and

the tools utilised in the teaching process as against the overall process. This is a flaw in the appraisal system that could potentially lead to dissatisfaction with the process in the long run. With that said, findings also revealed that the way a performance appraisal is conducted plays a vital role in how fairness is perceived.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine educators' perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices in Gauteng Independent Schools. The rationale for the study was that if the performance appraisal system of an organization is not fair, it may result in an employee being dissatisfied with the appraisal system and this may lead to extremes such as employee attrition. The main research question is: How do school principals, HODs and teachers in private schools in Gauteng province perceive the fairness of performance appraisal practices in their schools? The researcher was interested in examining the perceptions of procedural fairness and satisfaction about the fairness of the performance appraisal practices.

The first chapter of the study presented a general background to the study, highlights the statement of the problem, defined the study objectives and stated the research questions for the study. The second chapter was the review of literature. In this chapter, journals, textbooks, newspapers, articles and magazines were extensively reviewed. The third chapter highlighted the methodology adopted for the study. In this chapter the data collection sources, data used, population, sample and sampling technique are stated. The data analysis method used was also discussed. The fourth chapter was devoted to the data analysis and interpretation of the data collected for the study. This chapter presents a summary of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations.

#### 5.2 Summary of research findings

##### *5.2.1 Participants' general experiences of performance appraisal*

The aim of the question on how school principals, HODs and teachers describe their experiences of performance appraisals in their school was to explore the experiences of the participants with regards to how the performance appraisal was conducted, what was evaluated during the process and the value of the

performance appraisal in their professional work. The participants involved in this study seem to perceive performance appraisal as a learning opportunity that also provides the support required for their overall professional development. There appears to be a perception that there is balance in the appraisal process between acknowledging the efforts of the teachers and the skills that still need to be developed. The participants also seem to perceive the performance appraisal as an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practices and identify areas that need improvement.

This finding supports Grobler (2011) who noted that the appraisal of teachers is a function that involves human decision-making by judging the effectiveness of a particular work performance making use of reports that compare the actual work performance with set performance benchmarks. The responses of the participants to the question on their general experiences also stated that the interpersonal relationships between teachers and their supervisors influences their views regarding the fairness of the appraisal process. In essence, dialogue on the outcome of the appraisal and the nature in which the appraisal was done contributes to confidence in the appraisal process.

This finding supports Folger, (2011) who stated that communication between the supervisor and subordinate creates an avenue where the opinions and inputs of the employee are respected and also conveys respect for employees' input and opinions and enhances a hands-on approach by the employees. This finding is also similar to the assertion of Rasheed and others (2011) that when teachers trust their principal and are satisfied with him or her, they perceive a performance appraisal as an effective administrative tool. Information gathered during the appraisal process should be used as a panacea by organisations in agreement with their teachers to develop strategies for improvement.

In conclusion, the overall finding of this theme can be supported by Jawahar (2007), who states that the success of a performance appraisal system depends on the employees' perceptions of fairness and their reactions to various aspects of the system.

### *5.2.2 Participants' views regarding the fairness of the performance appraisal process.*

In this study, the fairness of the performance appraisal system was perceived in different ways. While there are experiences of objectivity and fairness of the process some participants were of the opinion that the appraisers were subjective and biased when using the appraisal tools even with standardized tools in place to promote the fairness of the appraisal system. Although the appraisal system seemed to measure the abilities and the skills of the teachers based on their strengths, what this implies is that the system identifies that everyone is different in their own right and they all have different strengths and weaknesses which is taken into account during the appraisal process. This is in line with Gilliland and Langdon (2013) when they define fairness as the extent to which outcomes and procedures are perceived as objective, consistent or apposite.

The participants' responses regarding their views on fairness in the performance appraisal process also stated that despite the structure in place to ensure that the performance appraisal follows due process and to ensure fairness, other factors influence the appraiser's assessment of the performance of the teacher. Kuvaas (2007) also found that there were multiple factors that influenced the different views of the researchers and the practitioners regarding fairness in the performance appraisal. The truth remains that with all the measures put in place by both researchers and practitioners, there is still the issue of practicality. With a well-structured performance appraisal tool, a number of things could still go wrong. Human errors and bias still prove to be difficult to control to ensure that the process of the performance appraisal is fair. As Dunham (2011) clearly states, the halo effect is the most common error in the performance appraisal.

### *5.2.3 What the participants considered as unfair in the performance appraisal process.*

The findings of this study show that the participants felt that an unfair appraisal system is one that is put in place to intimidate staff members - in other words, an appraisal system that always reminds the participants that they have a *sword hanging over their head* Responses from the participants show that this

would not only be counterproductive but also oppress and demotivate staff members. In addition, the findings also show that an unfair performance appraisal system does not allow for collaboration and a relationship between the appraisers and the appraisees.

These findings are supported by researchers like Eniye (2007) and Desalegn (2010), who identified erratic communication of appraisal feedback to employees, lack of clarity on the purpose of the performance appraisal, inconsistency in the timing of the performance appraisal, lack of opportunity to improve their work and the inability to make suggestions about the appraisal system as unfair practices in the performance appraisal. The findings as reflected by the responses also show that when an appraisal is conducted for the sake of giving bonuses and improving remunerations, it is considered unfair. As such, many of the participants believe that the performance appraisal should be used solely for monitoring and developmental purposes.

Likewise, Aguinis (2007) asserts that in the performance appraisal the main aim is to uncover employees' strengths and weaknesses, revealing opportunities for improvement and skills development. The findings are also similar to Bell (2011), who identified the fact that in some cases, teachers are not upgraded to the next salary level, even after they have fulfilled the training and workshop requirements. This has brought about a situation where teachers insist on getting pay bonuses rather than the conventional salary progression.

In other words, employee appraisal is at a risk of losing its credibility of developing careers if performance is continually linked to pay.

In comparing the findings and the literature, it is evident that the absence of effective communication, representativeness and consistency would ultimately make an appraisal system unfair. With that been said, organisers of performance appraisals should look to be more objective and focus mainly on the factors that aid positive learning rather than dwell on frivolities.

#### *5.2.4 What makes a performance appraisal fair/unfair?*

The responses from the participants in this study show that they see fair performance appraisal practices as holistic in nature, and should carry along

everyone involved in the process, allowing both appraisers and appraisees' to discuss feedback. On the other hand, an unfair appraisal system does not encourage development and is always shrouded in mystery. These findings are supported by Tyler and Bies (2015), who refer to fairness in performance appraisal as a personal assessment of managerial conduct in relation to ethics and morality.

The findings also show that some of the appraisal systems in place are not user friendly. Some participants pointed out that the appraisal tools in place at their schools do not allow appraisers to award ratings above a certain threshold. In essence, staff members do not get more than a certain rating even if they deserve it. This was a problem most of the appraisers frowned upon. This is supported in literature by Ahmad and Bujang (2013). They identified several problems regarding performance appraisals in schools - problems such as leadership styles affecting the performance appraisal, political mask in performance appraisal, user-friendliness of the appraisal forms, irregular performance appraisal to develop appraisers and total quality management of the system.

#### *5.2.5 Implications of fair/unfair performance appraisal practices*

Tyler and Bies (2015), assert that fairness in performance appraisal has the ability to generate prevailing benefits for both the employees and organisations. These benefits include fostering better commitment and trust, valuable job performances, healthier citizenship behaviour, better customer satisfaction, and reduced disagreements. The responses on this question support the literature above. According to the findings, a fair appraisal system has far reaching positive effects on an organisation. One major effect that a fair performance appraisal has is that it improves teacher morale which in turn enhances the overall teaching and learning process. In the same vein, an unfair performance appraisal practice demotivates staff and leads to teachers having a negative self-image.

These findings are similar to Ikramullah (2011), who states that the perceptions of fairness regarding several elements of appraisal systems have serious ramifications for both the employees and the organisations. If the staff

members of an organisation are afforded the opportunity to change their ratings or have been given the right to raise several queries about assessments which they perceive as unfair, this will result in fair perceptions of the performance appraisal system. Similarly, fairness of a performance appraisal system is remarkably related to the satisfaction of employees with several aspects of a performance appraisal system such as the setting of targets and feedback.

Morrow (2011) and Abdul-Shukor and others (2008) also reported that the fairness of a performance appraisal is remarkably related to the commitment of employees, their enthusiasm and satisfaction with the organization. Meyer and Allen (1997) found that if the performance appraisal processes are fair, employees are dedicated to their work, unlike when the employees perceive the performance appraisal process to be unfair. What this means is that employees are more likely to embrace and contribute expressively to a performance appraisal system if they see it as an opportunity for promotion, a way of developing personal opportunities, a chance to be noticed, an avenue to demonstrate their skills and abilities and as an opportunity to network with other employees in the organization.

In conclusion, these findings mean that employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment and tendency to hunt for other jobs is related to performance appraisal, and hence it is vital for organizations to understand fairness in performance appraisal procedures. Dissatisfaction, feelings of unfairness in the performance appraisal process, and perceived inequity in evaluations may doom any performance appraisal system to failure.

### **5.3 Delimitations of the study**

This study was delimited to the following:

- Public schools in Gauteng province: The researcher did not involve public schools in this study because they already have a blanket appraisal system in the form of IQMS.
- Quantitative research: The researcher decided not to use the quantitative approach because the aim was to explore and describe the opinions and perceptions of the participants involved in the study. The

researcher opted to do a qualitative study using interviews to collect in-depth descriptive data.

- Population: The researcher did not involve educators from public schools. The justification for this is that the study is only about independent schools and as such the aim of the study was to obtain data only from educators of independent schools.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

The following unavoidable limitations were identified while conducting the study:

##### *5.4.1 Generalizing findings*

The research was conducted on only a small section of the population. A total number of thirteen (13) participants were eventually involved in the study as against the original fifteen (15) that the researcher anticipated. In qualitative studies, results cannot be generalised, the research should have also involved more participants at more schools and on several levels.

##### *5.4.2 Self-reported Data*

This study being qualitative in nature, the researcher gathered information himself. This is limited by the fact that it cannot be independently verified. In other words, the researcher had to take what the participants said at face value. With that said, the study may contain some sources of bias, such as selective memory (participants not remembering events that may have occurred at some point). Exaggeration may also be present if participants embellished events and made them more significant than they really are. The researcher tried as much as possible to verify the responses received from the participants. This was done by asking some questions twice in some cases to make sure that the responses were the same.

##### *5.4.3 Triangulation*

The researcher identified a reflective journal as a source for secondary data collection. Unfortunately, on the field, all the participants were not willing to write a reflective journal as they felt they had already given me enough of their time. The researcher tried to get at least one participant to help write a

reflective journal but was not successful. This is a limitation to the study as the researcher could not triangulate data collected using different methods in this study.

## **5.5 Conclusions**

This study examined educators' perceptions of fair performance appraisal practices in independent schools in Gauteng Province, South Africa. This study focused on educators in independent schools in Gauteng Province, examining how school principals, HODs and teachers describe their experiences of performance appraisals in their schools, the views of the school principals, HODs and teachers regarding fairness in the performance appraisal process, what school principals, HODs and teachers regard as unfair performance appraisal practices, why some performance appraisal practices are considered unfair and why other practices are considered fair and to find out what the consequences of fair/unfair performance appraisal practices are.

The study revealed among other things that the performance appraisals at independent schools focus mainly on the tools utilised in the teaching process and how teaching is done, flagrantly ignoring how knowledge is transferred from the teacher to the students. With that being said, participants involved in this study perceive the performance appraisal as a learning opportunity that also provides the support required for their overall professional development.

The findings of this study show that the performance appraisal at the independent schools is quite fair as it gives the staff members the opportunities to discuss feedback and the ratings they receive. The study also found that in some schools there seems to be some element of politicking. Some participants pointed out the fact that teachers who transferred from other schools are not given the same opportunities as those who have been in the organisation longer. This, in the long run, may affect the credibility of the appraisal process and also disillusion staff members. Some of the participants considered the performance appraisal unfair when it does not encourage development, both in terms of remunerations, promotions and also development through learning. However, the participants acknowledged that



the performance appraisal system at their schools motivates them and as such there is a high level of enthusiasm in performing their duties.

Based on the findings of the study, the element of fairness in a performance appraisal system is essential for an organisation. If the appraisal system of an organisation is fair, the staff members are highly motivated. This is because they see the appraisal system as an opportunity to grow and develop on the job. Employee attrition and low morale among staff members in an organisation occur when an appraisal system is unfair and ineffective. Therefore, to guard against high employee turnover of in organisations, a performance appraisal system needs to be effective and priority needs to be given to the procedural fairness of the system.

The study also found that the performance appraisal at the independent schools is not reviewed and updated regularly. A school principal stated that their appraisal system has been in place for seventeen (17) years and has never been updated or reviewed. It is no surprise that this was the only school where the principal felt the appraisal system had outlived its usefulness and called for an overhaul of the process. The other schools involved in this study have also not reviewed their appraisal system in over eight (8) years. What this indicates is that schools develop an appraisal system mostly as a requirement for UMALUSI, and when that is in place they do not review and update the process. The lack of reviewing and improving the appraisal process could be detrimental in the long run and may lead to many problems for the organisation and ultimately for the profession. Some of the problems that are likely to be experienced are low retention of qualified staff members, inability to recruit qualified staff into the organisation and ultimately a brain drain in the profession, as qualified teachers choose to seek employment in other countries in search of better opportunities.

## **5.6 Recommendations**

### *5.6.1. Participants' general experiences of the performance appraisal.*

The study found that the appraisal system does not necessarily evaluate the holistic dynamics of teaching and learning. This is evident when the responses

only show that the appraisal evaluates only the tools used in teaching and how teaching is done.

- Constant review and updating of the performance appraisal system would easily identify and address the flaws in the process.
- As a matter of policy, the agency responsible for quality control (UMALUSI) should require all independent schools to review and update their performance appraisal practices annually.

*5.6.2. Participants' views regarding the fairness of the performance appraisal process.*

The study found that there are contrasting views regarding the fairness of the performance appraisal. It is apparent that even with tools that provide some sort of structure, there are some factors that affect the appraisal of a teacher.

- Teachers should be appraised at least twice a year. The justification for this is that the more a teacher is appraised, the more chances there are of improving their perception and performance
- Organisations should ensure that their appraisal system takes into account the context in which the teacher operates. This will eradicate any form of unfairness the teachers may feel about an appraisal system.

*5.6.3. What the participants considered as unfair in the performance appraisal process.*

The study found that the appraisal system was poorly weighted and as such all the work done by the teachers was not totally captured. In essence there seems to be a gap between performance and criteria.

- Organisations should draw up new appraisal tools redistributing the weighting of the appraisal system ensuring that performance and criteria are properly reconciled.

- Organisations and appraisers should practice constant performance appraisal of staff members in order to capture as much as possible of the different aspects of a teacher's strengths and weaknesses.

#### *5.6.4. What makes a performance appraisal fair/unfair?*

The study found that consistency and representativeness were the major factors that made an appraisal fair while limited and no feedback were the major reasons an appraisal system would be considered unfair.

- Organisations and appraisers should encourage dialogue and interpersonal relationships between appraisers and appraisees. This may improve the perception of fairness of the appraisal process.
- Appraisers should try to improve the self-image of the appraisee by acknowledging the positive aspects and strengths of the teacher's work.

#### *5.6.5 Implications of fair/unfair performance appraisal practices.*

The findings of the study show that a fair performance appraisal system increases the loyalty of the staff members thus reducing the staff turnover, while on the other hand an unfair performance appraisal destroys the morale of staff members and in the long run leads to employee attrition from both the organisation and also the profession.

- Organisations should ensure that there is an interpersonal relationship that is based on trust and that all stakeholders are committed to achieving organizational goals. This could result in a fair and objective appraisal practice.
- Performance appraisals should be conducted in a way that involves following the proper channels of communication from the beginning to the end of the appraisal. This will ensure that the appraisees feel they are part of the appraisal process and as such will reduce the feeling of being disillusioned.
- In addition, decision making should be consultative, in other words the appraisees need to be consulted to ensure they understand the

objective and reason behind the entire process. This will ultimately strengthen the basis of commitment at the organisation.

### **5.7 Future Research**

The research reveals the educators' perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices in selected independent schools in Gauteng. There is a need to investigate the factors that affect appraisal practices of teachers in schools; to further explore the other concerns/grievances which may affect the commitment of teachers leading to the underperformance of learners. It would also be imperative to carry out research on the importance of fair performance appraisals in attaining the school objectives. Performance appraisals are the cornerstone of profession development which should lead to an increase in productivity and the achievement of set objectives and goals.

Methodologically, future research should include a larger sample, possibly a quantitative study to be able to generalize findings on the fairness of the performance appraisal in all types of schools. A longitudinal study could be conducted in a district implementing teacher appraisal practice systems. A pre-test prior to implementation and a follow up study after implementation to determine educators' perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices would add to the knowledge base of factors that lead to teacher perception of the appraisal system.

### **5.8 Conclusion**

This study set out to explore educators perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices in Gauteng independent schools. The purpose was to explore the different perceptions of educators regarding the concept of fairness of performance appraisal in their respective schools and also explore the implications of fair/unfair performance appraisal practices. The study found that the performance appraisal was fair, but other concerns were discovered during the course of the study. The study found that there seem to be a major emphasis on how teaching is done and the tools utilised in the teaching process as against the overall process. The study also revealed that the way a

performance appraisal is conducted plays a vital role in how fairness is perceived.

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## ANNEXURES

### ANNEXURE A: PERMISSION LETTERS



06 February 2017

The Principal

School .....

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL**

I Mr. Olushola Olatunji a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am currently enrolled for my Master's degree in the Department of Education Management, Faculty of Education, and University of Pretoria. I am requesting you to grant me permission to involve your educators in my research study entitled: ***Educators' perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices in Gauteng Independent Schools***

The aim of the study is to explore employees perceptions of the fairness of performance appraisal practices. If you agree to allow me to conduct research in your school, I will interview one (1) principal, two (2) teachers and two (2) HODs. I have attached a copy of the interview schedule for your information. Interviews will be conducted at a venue and time that will suit the educators, but it may not interfere with teaching time. It will be audio taped after obtaining consent from the participants and transcribed by me for the of the purpose of

this study. It is only me and my supervisor that will have access to the information obtained from the participants.

Participation in this study is voluntary and the participants can withdraw at any time. The identity of the school and all the participants will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will know which schools were used in the research and this information will be treated as confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for your school and teachers during data collection and analysis. The information that will be collected will only be used for academic purposes. All data collected with public funding may be made available in an open repository for public and scientific use.

Collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's and will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes. After completion of the study, the material will be stored at the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies according to the policy requirements of the University of Pretoria. In my research report and in any other academic communication, pseudonyms will be used for the school and educators and no other identifying information will be given.

A copy of the findings of the study and recommendations made from the study will be given to the participating schools. The full dissertation will be available at the University of Pretoria library. I thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter. I am looking forward to a positively considered response.

If you agree to allow me to conduct this research in your school, please fill in the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below, or via E-mail.

Yours faithfully

.....

Mr Olatunji Olushola  
Student Researcher

Contact number: 0620121516  
Email: [olusholaadebayo0@gmail.com](mailto:olusholaadebayo0@gmail.com)

.....

Dr. T.A. Ogina  
Supervisor

Contact number: 0721289958  
Email [taogina@up.ac.za](mailto:taogina@up.ac.za)



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

06 February 2017

Principal/HoD/Educator

Mr. / Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir/Madam,

**PERMISSION AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPANT IN THE STUDY ON THE PERSPECTIVES FAIR OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES IN GAUTENG INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

I am currently enrolled for a Master's degree in Education Management and Policy Studies at the University of Pretoria. Part of the requirements for the awarding of this degree is the successful completion of a significant research project in the field of Education Management.

The title of my proposed research study is ***“Educators’ perspectives of fair performance appraisal practices in Gauteng Independent Schools”***

and the focus is to understand the perceptions of educators as employees in a school setting and what they view as fairness in the performance appraisal process. It is therefore my great honour and privilege to be able to invite you and your school to become part of my research project.

Kindly afford me this opportunity to explain the scope and responsibility of your participation, should you choose to do so. It is my intention to gather the information I require for this research project in the following manner:

- a. by interviewing you as the principal of the school;
- b. by interviewing six (2) Heads of Department; and
- c. by interviewing six (2) unitary subject educators.

I have included herewith for your information a copy of the preliminary interview schedule to be used during the interview process.

The aim of this research project is not to pass judgment on- or to evaluate the performance appraisal practices at your school, but rather to add significantly to the current picture of how performance appraisal takes place in private schools in Gauteng.

Kindly note that the choice for you and your school to participate in this research project is entirely voluntary and that once you have indicated your willingness to participate, permission for your participation will also be secured from the principal

Please also be assured that the information obtained during the research study will be treated confidentially, with not even the principal having access to the raw data obtained during the interview process. At no time will either you as an individual or any other of the individuals who participate in the study or the school be mentioned by name or indeed be allowed to be identified by any manner or means whatsoever during the research process or in the final research report. To ensure that you are comfortable with the information you provide during the interview, you will be given an opportunity to comment on your interview transcripts to approve contents and accuracy.

At the end of the research study you will be provided with a copy of the research report containing both the findings and the recommendations for performance appraisal practices in Gauteng schools. I will also be happy, at your request, to plan and present a workshop at your school on the findings and recommendations contained in the research report.

If you agree to participate in this research, please fill in the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below, or via E-mail.

Yours faithfully

.....

Mr Olushola Olatunji

Student Researcher

University of Pretoria

Olusholaadebayo0@gmail.com

062 012 1516

.....

Dr. T.A Ogina

Supervisor

University of Pretoria

[Teresa.ogina@up.ac.za](mailto:Teresa.ogina@up.ac.za)

072 128 9958

## ANNEXURE B

### Consent form (HoDs and Teachers)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Principal, HOD/educator at \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ situated at \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ agree / do not agree to participate in the study entitled:  
..... Being conducted by Mr Olatunji Olushola.

I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately 45 minutes at a venue and time that suits me and the interview will not interfere with my responsibilities and school activities or teaching time. I give consent for the researcher to audio taped the interview.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

\_ *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from

the research at any time.

\_ *Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed

about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in

the research.

\_ *Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed

at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.

\_ *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be

protected at all times.

\_ *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of

deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## ANNEXURE C

### Consent form (Principal)

I, \_\_\_\_\_(your name), the Principal of \_\_\_\_\_agree / do not agree to allow Mr Olatunji Olushola to conduct research in this school. The topic of the research being:.....

I understand that ..... will be interviewed about this topic for approximately 45 minutes at a venue and time that will suit the participant, but will not interfere with school activities and teaching time. The interview will be audio taped with consent from the participant.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

\_ *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from

the research at any time.

\_ *Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed

about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in

the research.

\_ *Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed

at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.

\_ *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be

protected at all times.

\_ *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of

deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ANNEXURE D**

### **Interview Schedule for Teachers**

1. Tell me something about yourself (how old are you? How long have you been teaching in this school? What are your main responsibilities etc.)?
2. Tell me about your experiences of performance appraisal in your school?
3. What can you say about your last performance appraisal?
4. What can you say about fairness in the performance appraisal process?
5. What can you say about unfairness in the performance appraisal process?
6. What do you regard as fair performance appraisal practices?
7. What do you regard as unfair performance appraisal practices?
8. Please comment on what you would regard as satisfactory performance appraisal?
9. What do you have to say about unsatisfactory performance appraisal?
10. What is your role during the performance appraisal process?
11. What are your views on rating during performance appraisal process?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about fair/unfair performance appraisal practices?

### **Closing**

Thank you very much for consenting to take part in this research and taking time to participate in this interview. Will it be in order if I may make another appointment for follow up questions after transcription this interview if I need clarity on some points.

## **ANNEXURE E**

### **Interview Schedule for HOD's**

1. Tell me something about yourself (how old are you? How long have you been Head of Department in this school? What are your main responsibilities etc.)?
2. Tell me about your experiences of performance appraisal as an HOD in your department?
3. What can you say about your last performance appraisal?
4. What can you say about fairness in the performance appraisal process?
5. What can you say about unfairness in the performance appraisal process?
6. As a HOD, what do you regard as fair performance appraisal practices?
7. As a HOD, what would you regard as unfair performance appraisal practices?
8. Please comment on what you would regard as satisfactory performance appraisal?
9. What do you have to say about unsatisfactory performance appraisal in your department?
10. As a HOD what is your role during the performance appraisal process?
11. What are your views on rating during performance appraisal process?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about fair/unfair performance appraisal practices?

### **Closing**

Thank you very much for consenting to take part in this research and taking time to participate in this interview. Will it be in order if I make another

appointment for follow up questions after transcription this interview if I need clarity on some points.

## **ANNEXURE F**

### **Interview Schedule for Principals**

1. Tell me something about yourself (how old are you? How long have you been Principal at this school? What are your main responsibilities etc.)?
2. Tell me about your experiences of performance appraisal a principal?
3. What can you say about the last performance appraisal conducted at this school?
4. What can you say about the fairness of performance appraisal process at your school?
5. What can you say about unfairness in the performance appraisal process?
6. As a Principal, what do you regard as fair performance appraisal practices?
7. As a principal, what would you regard as unfair performance appraisal practices?
8. Please comment on what you would regard as satisfactory performance appraisal?
9. What do you have to say about unsatisfactory performance appraisal in your school?
10. As a Principal what is your role during the performance appraisal process?
11. What are your views on rating during performance appraisal process?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about fair/unfair performance appraisal practices?

### **Closing**

Thank you very much for consenting to take part in this research and taking time to participate in this interview. Will it be in order if I make another

appointment for follow up questions after transcription this interview if I need clarity on some of the issues.

## ANNEXURE G

### Sample of interview transcript

Date: 05:05:2017.

- Researcher: Good morning thank you for taking time out to conduct this interview with me, I would like to state that this interview is confidential and whatever information you give me will not be traced back to you or your school. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to leave at anytime if you do not feel comfortable. The transcribed copy will be given to you for confirmation, before I proceed to use the information you have given me.
- Participant: Ok
- Researcher: So I would like to start of with you telling me something about yourself, your age, gender, how long you have been at the school? And your main responsibilities?
- Participant: I am 65 years old, I have loved teaching, I teach grade one's, I am trained to teach nursery school and grade one, two and three, I have studied further, I have a diploma in education to help children with problems, not remedial teaching but therapeutic teaching, its called minimal brain dysfunction, I have been teaching at this school for twenty years, this is the twentieth year, before that I was at another school teaching grade one as well, I taught in grade one class, I have taught grade two's and three's, nursery schools is not my scene they are too small, I like the grade ones more. Before that I was the head of department junior primary at Aston Manor primary one of the sister schools in Kempton Park. That is basically it.
- Researcher: Can you tell me your experiences about performance appraisal in your school?
- Participant: In the beginning, I walked in at the beginning of performance appraisals and its very nice because if the performance appraisal is done in the right way you can learn a lot about who you are, you learn a lot about your strengths and your weaknesses and where you can improve and if the performance appraisal is done in such a way that you can benefit from it you know? Which I personally feel that what



a performance appraisal should be all about. You know how can I improve? Yes, I've seen some performance appraisal that are wonderful, but this here is are you doing your job? Yes, Yes, Yes, ok thank you very much and that's it. So I refer a performance appraisal where I can learn, I don't mind, if I am doing something wrong tell me about otherwise I am just going to blissfully carry on. If there are strengths, I have tell me about it because I can use my strengths to overcome my weaknesses so that's basically it.

- Researcher: So what can you say about your last performance appraisal at the school?
- Participant: Our performance appraisal here, I found it was perhaps a very elementary appraisal you know? Its almost like I felt do you really know me? Do you really know what I am doing? Everything was right, you know it was basically just yes yes yes, now if you've read Bach? He wrote the book personnel and in there he's got performance appraisal and things like that. Where he says you start of with a person and you see if he's doing things right, if the answer is yes, no further action. If the answer is no, further action. So that's what I like, I like a more in depth appraisal system where they can tell me, more of what I am doing right and what I am doing wrong. This one is very nice but its very elementary you know? It was like work done? Yes, this done? Yes, Punctual? Yes. So its yes, yes, yes. Its rudimentary, id like a little bit more meat you know? Partly because I am human and you'll want to hear when I am doing something good, I want to hear you have noted it. Wow you know its like when you work with children they want to hear when they do good, then they can accept when they didn't do well in a better way, but it was a fine appraisal but its like very basic.
- Researcher: Thank you for that information.
- Participant: Pleasure
- Researcher: So what can you tell me about fairness in performance appraisal
- Participant: Again when you do a performance appraisal, I think that you actually have to go out of your way to get to know that person because

some people are very good, I call them the “I” specialists because I am good at this and I am this so they tend to talk a lot, so you cant base your performance appraisal on what people have told you about themselves that they are good. When you do a performance appraisal you have to go in and you have to observe the person, whether they then know that you are observing them or not. Some people are very quiet, but they don’t talk about what they are or what they are doing in their classroom and this and this and that you they don’t talk about it. So I cant just go in and say because this person flashy I just write an appraisal, I have to know, I have to look at what she’s like? what does her classroom look like? Does she take care? Does she take an interest in the children? How is she with the children on break. When you do this nobody can put up a front, when you go down to the nitty gritty you’d see that. So yeah sometimes I think performance appraisal might not be fair. I cant say if my performance appraisal is fair and I also cannot say it is unfair that sort of thing.

- Researcher: So is it safe to say that a fair performance appraisal is the one where the appraiser gets to know the appraisee?
- Participant: Yes, Exactly! Get to know the person that you are appraising.
- Researcher: What can you say about unfairness in performance appraisal processes? What would you regard as unfair?
- Participant: You know what? Its like when you work with children, if a child makes mistakes or does something wrong and I say to the child you made the wrong choice, the child will know, yes I did. Now if I do something wrong in my class or anything like that and they come in fairness and say to me you are doing this wrong, id appreciate that, because I want to learn and become better, it’s a human trait that you want to better yourself, you know? I don’t know if I am expressing myself very clearly, but uhm fairness in performance I find can sometimes be mean, and I am not talking from here I am talking broadly, it could be very unfair because I have heard from other people where they were judged on the clothing that they wear is that fair? I

don't think so, yes if they are not dressed neatly, yes of their clothes looks scrappy or they are inappropriately dressed then I could talk to them to sort it out, but I wouldn't put that in a performance appraisal report, I would prefer that to be a verbal yeah, you know? So then I don't that would be fair judging someone out of the context of their performance, and also you have to look and see peoples circumstances at times, sometimes they it could be they are the only source of income in that household and there is no money for extra clothing, so you would really put that in a performance appraisal?

- Researcher: So in other words and unfair performance appraisal would be a system that doesn't look at your performance on the job?
- Participant: No I would say I would say look at my performance on the job and tell me that you know me well enough.
- Researcher: What would you regard as a fair?
- Participant: I want the truth, be honest with me, if there is something I am doing wrong tell me, if you feel I have done something grossly wrong, send me on a course, let me go and learn more, give a book and say to me maybe you will find this book useful, help me, I need help, but in the same vain, if I am doing something very wow, then tell me. Use me and say can you perhaps help that person? I would be glad to.
- Researcher: Could you please comment on what you would regards as a satisfactory performance appraisal? What ticks the box for you?
- Participant: Obviously when I hear all good things {laughs}, You know basically if I can learn something from that appraisal process, that I get the feeling yes if I have done hard work in my class and that its recognised and not just other things. For example, we all know that for your job you have to be punctual, we all know you have to teach in your class. So I know those are the things I have to do, and if all of that is done but the person who is doing the appraisal sees that you have gone the extra mile then tell me about it in my appraisal, because a lot of people use those appraisals when they go and look for another job, so do I want to use it as something that I file and forget about. So in essence a satisfactory appraisal is one I would like to be honest but I

must get the feeling that yes you do know me, yes you have noticed that sort of thing.

- Researcher: What would you then regard as an unsatisfactory performance appraisal? What would you regard as unsatisfactory?
- Participant: When I feel that it's not the truth, and also when I have not been given the opportunity to justify why? To me an unsatisfactory appraisal is when there are things that are a NO and there's no justification as to why it is a no, or maybe they did the appraisal on a 5-point scale, one being good and five being bad, and they gave me one, one, one and then a three, and I say why a three for that and they say yeah but I can't just put all ones. That I think is unfair and unsatisfactory. If you give me a three then I want to know why because that is my job as a teacher in the class, I want to go and be better than that three, so that next time I can get a two or a one even. Because I want to be the best.
- Researcher: Can you please state your role during the performance appraisal process?
- Participant: Nothing really, I don't do performance appraisal. Oh no sorry I do I do I do, I go to visit, oh sorry, scrap that {laughs}, we do peer assessment so then I would go to a colleague's class and sit and then give her an appraisal form for then lesson, and then next term it might be another person, so yeah.
- Researcher: So your role is the peer assessing?
- Participant: Peer assessment, yes.
- Researcher: Finally, is there any other comments you would like to add about the fairness and unfairness of performance appraisal practices? Necessary tweaks you feel that might be added?
- Participant: No, not really, like I said to you before, sometimes I find that maybe you need to stay away from a personality judgment and rather look at the work that they are doing in the class, stay away from making a comment about their clothing and rather you know address it. Although sometimes I feel that when there's a transgression or you have done something wrong, and then they pull you up, and then when they do a performance appraisal they then write it again in black and

white, how many more times do you need to be punished for an offence? If you a staff comes late one day, and needs reprimanding, I feel you should address it right there and then. You can address the person there and say sorry this is the time I expect you be here; you will not be late. But don't address it then and when the time comes for performance appraisal you also put it there again, you don't punish over and over and over for that first offence you know that sort of thing, that I think would be unfair.

- Researcher: That concludes our interview session. Thank you very much for consenting to take part in this interview. Will it be in order if I make another appointment for follow up questions after transcription of this interview if I need clarity on some points?
- Participant: Sure no problem, no problem at all
- Researcher: I would also transcribe this interview and bring it back for you to confirm the information, before I go ahead in using the information. I also want to remind you that any information you have given is confidential and would be used solely for the purpose of the research.
- Participant: I hope not {laughs}
- Researcher: No it wont
- Participant: I don't think they would like it if I said it was very elementary {laughs}
- Researcher: Thank you very much once again
- Participant: It's a pleasure
- Interview Ends:

## ANNEXURE H

**TABLE 4.2.1: Data analysis table**

QUESTIONS AND JOB. QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	SEGMENTS	COMMENTS/CODES	THEMES/SUB.
<p>How do school principals, HODs and teachers describe their experiences of performance appraisals their school?</p>	<p><b><u>Teacher 1:</u></b>            Yeah well, we do it a little bit different because I never actually knew that is a performance appraisal that's what you call it? So, I don't think it's like in government schools, but the appraisal that we get a lot here is, well we get class visits and we get a feedback and the nice thing about that is</p>	<p>Yeah well, we do it a little bit different because I never actually knew that is a performance appraisal that's what you call it?</p> <p>Well we get class visits and we get a feedback and the nice thing about</p>	<p><b><u>Teachers</u></b>            Done regularly/ Consistent.            Positive Process            Adds values to teaching and learning process.            Conducted in a friendly manner.            It is nice            .....  <b><u>HODs</u></b>            Conducted in an encouraging way            It is positive.            They feel it shouldn't be made to victimise the teacher            It should not be use to</p>	<p><b><u>Themes</u></b>            Experiences of performance appraisal            Positive Sub-Themes            Teachers think it is consistent            They see it as a positive process            They feel it adds value to the teaching and learning process            Teachers think it is conducted in a friendly manner            They also feel it is nice            Negative</p>

<p>there is constructive criticism so where you can improve and also obviously your positive part of it, that is what you are good at, and that's that and obviously our files and things get checked, the text books and all of that is then recorded, and giving us our criticism and the good parts too and a lot of it is oral and that I think is what makes the school amazing, things like thank you for doing that, thank you for being there, we appreciate you that's what builds a</p>	<p>that is there is constructive criticism so where you can improve and also obviously your positive part of it, that is what you are good at, and that's that and obviously our files and things get checked, the text books and all of that is then recorded, and giving us our criticism and the good parts too and a lot of it is oral and that I think is what makes the school amazing (Teacher 1)</p>	<p>destroy morale It is subjective Other methods should be used to appraise Conducted quite fairly. ..... <u>Principals</u> It is very important to the teaching and learning process Principal b is of the opinion that it has stagnated Principal b also thinks it is becoming useless and boring</p>	<p><u>HODs</u> <u>Positive Sub-themes</u> <u>The HODs feel it is conducted in an encouraging way</u> <u>The submit it shouldn't be used to vicitmise the staff</u> <u>They also feel it should not destroy the morale of the staff</u> <u>The feel it is conducted quite fairly</u> <u>Negative Sub-themes</u> <u>It is subjective</u> <u>Other methods should be used to appraise the staff members</u> <u>Principals</u> <u>Postive Sub-themes</u> <u>They agree it is very important for checking the activities of the teachers at the school</u> <u>Negative Sub-themes</u> <u>Principal b believes the process has stagnated and that it should be reviewed</u> <u>Principal b also believes it is becoming a routine and as</u></p>
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<p>person that's why the staff turnover is extremely low in this school.</p> <p><b><u>Teacher 2:</u></b></p> <p>Ok so we have various ways, so the first is that the principal and the CEO they come for the class visits so they sit in on a lesson that you present, and then they will give you a written out feedback on how you did, and the other one is your presentation of the file of all the relevant information like your term planners and all your information is in the file, you compile it and then you send</p>	<p>First is that the principal and the CEO they come for the class visits so they sit in on a lesson that you present, and then they will give you a written out feedback on how you did, and the other one is your presentation of the file of all the relevant information like your term planners</p>		<p><u>such useless and boring</u></p>
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<p>it to them at the end of each term and they make sure everything is in there and also your book control, there you give three books to your HOD so one of the weak child {academically} then a middle child and then your academically strong children, and then they will go through it and makes sure you mark regularly that you comment, that you don't just sign, that you support the children if they need any kind of support.</p> <p><b><u>Teacher 3:</u></b></p>	<p>and all your information is in the file, you compile it and then you send it to them at the end of each term and they make sure everything is in there</p>		
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<p>Oh, they normally our supervisors, HODs they check every now and then according to the ATP, then they look at the progress of our work and all that you know, we have a tool where the HOD checks for certain pointers, they do this every now and then when they have time, they will check in on us. In the graph you can say we dropping in a way, but it's because of the kids, they are not the same, yeah when I started working here, the performance</p>	<p>We have a tool where the HOD checks for certain pointers, they do this every now and then when they have time, they will check in on us.</p>		
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<p>of grade 12 was 99% and this year we got 91%, so it's dropping in a way.</p> <p><b><u>Teacher 4:</u></b></p> <p>Well, I think it is very limited, I mean in terms of performance for you to reach a particular standard, take me for example for me to have been a subject head I had to do maybe two years in the particular department before I could continue, and even becoming a convener I had to be the coach too, what I feel is just take into consideration</p>	<p>I think it is very limited, I mean in terms of performance for you to reach a particular standard</p> <p>I think it's fair because</p>		
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<p>the fact that you have been partaking in that particular activity and therefore you get recognition for it and you are also given an opportunity to grow and develop within that portfolio you have been given and I think it's fair because they do consider the fact that you have been teaching that subject for a couple of years before you are considered for a particular position.</p>	<p>they do consider the fact that you have been teaching that subject for a couple of years before you are considered for a particular position.</p> <p>Our performance appraisal from what I can see is quite fair...</p>		
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