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PERCEPTIONS OF OFFICE-BASED EDUCATORS ON THE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

by

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DECLARATION

STUDENT NUMBER: 91841209

I, Daphne Edith Mohube, hereby certify that this study, entitled "Perceptions of office-based educators on the appraisal system", is the result of my own work. I have acknowledged all the literary work that I have used.

Signature: …………………… Date: …………..........

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my late parents, Daily Dikeledi and London Frederick Mabuse. They believed in me and that made me who I am today.

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I would like to express my immense gratitude to Prof T. S. Tshivhase-Phendla, my supervisor, who never gave up on me. Her guidance and her encouraging and welcoming voice on the other side of the telephone line took me through the course of the project.

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Most of all, I am grateful to God the Almighty, for health, wisdom and perseverance.

ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF OFFICE-BASED EDUCATORS ON APPRAISAL THE SYSTEM

by

Daphne E. Mohube

Measuring and monitoring performance of employees is an integral part of management. The need for an effective appraisal system to manage and monitor the performance of employees is self-evident in this country.

The appraisal system for office-based educators is informed by the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Collective Agreement No. 3 of 2002, which was signed on 11 December 2002. This appraisal system was developed with good intensions of enhancing the performance of office-based educators, and the prime aim being to manage and improve service delivery at all levels in the system.

The objective of the study is to investigate the perceptions of the office-based educators on the implementation of the appraisal system. Do office-based educators perceive it that way? As implementers and direct beneficiaries, are the good intensions of the policy yielded when its implementation is faced with realities and practicalities of the implementation of the policy?

The vehicle I used to achieve the goal of the study was quantitative approach. Self administered questionnaires were completed by respondents. The questionnaire consisted of one open-ended question which gave the respondents sufficient room to voice their opinions without restrictions and the close-ended questions.

The sample was the whole population of the office-based educators in the Dr Ruth S. Mompati district office, department of education, North West province. The total number is only 103 and it was manageable.
The analysis of data is illustrated in the form of tables, graphs and brief discussions.

A written undertaking to guarantee confidentiality to respondents was given and all respondents signed the undertaking to indicate their voluntary participation.

The study is significant in that the findings and recommendations might inform policy custodians on the status and improvement of the quality of the implementation of the appraisal system.

Dominant concepts that emerged from the study:

Lack of commitment
Time consuming
Lack of monitoring and support
Biased payment of incentives

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ABBREVIATIONS

DPSA   Department of Public Service and Administration

MPSA   Minister of Public Service and Administration

IPMDS   Integrated Performance Management and Development System

PMDS   Performance Management and Development Scheme

DAS   Developmental Appraisal System

IQMS   Integrated Quality Management System

PA   Performance Agreement

ELRC   Education Labour Relations Council

NEPA   National Education Policy Act

EEA   Employment of Educators Act

PFMA   Public Finance Management Act

SMS   Senior Management Services

ISC   Institution Support Coordinators

APO   Area Project Office

PSCBC   Public Service Commission Bargaining Council

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1.   INTRODUCTION

Recently there has been an outcry from the general public for greater accountability on the part of government for the quality of services delivered. This has placed tremendous pressure on the various ministers to transform their departments in order to become more effective.

Since 1994, following the establishment of the democratic government and a unified national education system organized on the basis of nine provinces, there has never been a system in place for evaluating the standards set for office-based educators as part of the personnel rendering support to the institutions. Fisher (1997) states that an effective system must focus on the broader issues of improving performance by integrating human resource solutions with organizational needs and priorities.

In short, organizations are deemed effective if they achieve their goals and objectives. If this is to be done, there must be a link between the mission and corporate plan and the human resource policies of the organization. It is therefore important to be able to assess the competence of staff in the organization in order to identify their strengths and the areas that must be developed. These areas for development should then be addressed through skills development initiatives so that the work force becomes more effective.

The need for an effective system to manage and monitor employees' performances is self-evident in this country. On the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) website: www.dpsa.gov.za, it is stated that the former Minister of Public Service and Administration (MPSA) has decided upon an

Integrated Performance Management and Development System (IPMDS). This shows that an updated, standardised and integrated framework for managing the performance of all employees in the departments is crucial. Office-based educators therefore have a critical role to play in achieving the Department of Education's strategic objectives. The effective measuring and monitoring of the employees' performance and competency levels should therefore be accorded very high priority.

Most of the literature the researcher has read concentrated on performance management in the public sector. But, as far as education is concerned, only the institution-based educators' appraisal system is elaborated on. For those who are monitoring and implementing the appraisal system for institution-based educators, that is, office-based educators (the South African term), not much is said about them. In Scotland they are referred to as superintendents, and in the United Kingdom as Local Education Authorities.

Given the claims above, this study will indicate perceptions of office-based educators in the Dr Ruth S. Mompati District office in the North West Department of Education, South Africa, concerning the implementation of their prescribed appraisal system.

The appraisal system for office-based educators is informed by the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Collective Agreement No. 3 of 2002, which was signed on 11 December 2002. It covers all the office-based staff employed in the Department of Education appointed in terms of the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) No. 76 of 1998. This appraisal system operates according to an annual cycle which runs from 1 April to 31 March of the following year and is directly linked with the corporate planning cycle.

In the Department of Education of the North West Province, the implementation process started with advocacy sessions and a training programme for all officials

of the Department of Education. This stage lasted from 2003 to 2004, which means that the actual appraisal process went from 1 April 2005 - 31 March 2006, 01 April 2007 - 31 March 2008 and 01 April 2008 - 31 March 2009. For the Department of Education, 1 March 2009 was therefore the end of the third cycle. The researcher thus found it important to conduct this quantitative research investigation, because it is crucial to know people's perceptions on how they participated and collaborated during the implementation process. There will be inputs informing the improvement of the implementation process. The choice of a survey research design in which respondents will complete self-administered questionnaires is appropriate.

1.2.   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

During the advent of democracy and the notion of quality education for all, a plethora of policies has been developed. The Department of Education is inundated annually with new policies. Policy developers have good intentions and policies are there to enhance the quality of service delivery. However, Molale (2007) maintains that when 'policy hits the ground', and implementers have to execute the imperatives of the good-intended policy, a different picture emerges.

It is upon this eventuality that we look into the implementation process of the appraisal tool for the office-based educators and try to understand their perceptions of the implementation of the appraisal system. As this system has been developed with the good intentions of enhancing the performance of office-based educators, and managing and improving service delivery at all levels in the system, do they perceive it that way? From the viewpoint of implementers and direct beneficiaries, are the good intentions in the policy fulfilled when its implementation involves dealing with realities and practicalities?

If policy implementation is not dealt with efficiently, its good intentions will not be realized. Policy slippage has become a matter of concern for the Department of

Education. It is upon this possibility that the investigation study into the perceptions of office-based educators on the implementation of the appraisal system has been undertaken.

1.3.   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Measuring and monitoring the performance of employees is an integral part of management. It is therefore to the supervisors' advantage to have a tool which will enable them measure and monitor the performance of their supervisees.

In 1998, the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS) was put in place for both institution-based and office-based educators, as Resolution No. 4 of 1998 of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). From the researcher's observation and experience, and because the researcher happened to work closely with the coordination and facilitation of the implementation process of this resolution, not much was accomplished by the Department of Education in this regard.

In 2002, Collective Agreement No. 3 of the ELRC was signed on 11 December as the Performance Management and Development Scheme (PMDS) for office-based educators. This was put in place as a tool for measuring and managing the performance of the departmental employees, i.e. office-based educators. The Department of Education is therefore expected to observe the imperatives of the collective agreement.

The findings and recommendations from this study will inform policy custodians on the status of the implementation of this appraisal system. The office-based educators are the so-called 'white-collar' employees whose numbers are fewer than those of the institution-based educators. For example, in the Dr Ruth S. Mompati district, Department of Education, North West Province, there are 103 office-based educators and 5066 institution-based educators, yet it is the former who are expected to render support and monitoring for the institutions. The

effective monitoring of their performance and competency levels should be accorded very high priority to ensure the requisite improvement in the institutions.

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTION

The research seeks to investigate the perceptions of office-based educators on the appraisal system. These educators have been exposed to the system for four years, so it is crucial for this investigation to be conducted. The main question for this study is:

> What are the perceptions of office-based educators on the appraisal system?

Sub-questions will be posed to the office-based educators to enrich the research:

1.   What are the experiences of the office-based educators during the implementation process of the appraisal system?
2.   How do the office-based educators view the formal policy commitments to the appraisal system and the actual practices of the system?
3.   How could the quality of the implementation process of the appraisal system be improved?

1.5   HYPOTHESES

1. Office-based educators perceive the implementation of the appraisal system to be an extra burden in their workload.
2. There is still a knowledge gap on the part of supervisors and supervisees regarding the smooth implementation process, despite advocacy and the training programmes conducted.

3. According to the ELRC Collective Agreement 3 of 2002, the intentions of the appraisal system were not realized during the implementation process of the appraisal system of office-based educators.

1.6   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to investigate perceptions of office-based educators on the appraisal system.

In order to realize the general objective of the study, the following specific objectives are to:

- conceptualize the office-based educators' appraisal system;
- determine how office-based educators experienced the implementation of the appraisal system;
- determine how office-based educators explain the discrepancies between formal policy commitments to the appraisal system and the actual practices of the system;
- make recommendations that might lead to better ways of approaching the implementation process of the appraisal system for office-based educators.

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1.7   CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Sallis (1993) supports the notion that it is necessary to have a clear understanding of concepts, as they imply different things in different contexts to different people. The following concepts will be used in this study: -

1.7.1 Office-based educators/ Institution-based educators

The definition of an educator, according to National Education Policy Act (NEPA) No. 27 of 1996, means any person who teaches, educates or trains other

persons at an educational institution or assists in rendering education services or education auxiliary or support services provided by or in an education department, but does not include any officer or employee as defined in section 1 of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994).

The office-based educators are educators occupying posts with the ranks of Chief/Deputy/First/Senior/ Education Specialist and working as office staff at Head Office and in Regional/District/Area/Circuit Offices. The Employment of Educators Act (EEA), No. 76 of 1998, regulates their conditions of service but their normal duties, unlike those of institution-based educators, are not discontinued during institutions' closure periods.

1.7.2 Supervisor/Supervisee

According to ELRC Resolution 3 of 2002, a supervisor is an employee who has the authority to recommend to the administrative authority or appointing authority any hiring, transfer, layoffs, promotion, disciplining or rewarding of other employees who are supervisees, or has the responsibility to assign work to and direct others, to supervise or to conduct performance evaluations of others, who are supervisees.

1.7.3 Performance appraisal

Performance appraisal should be regarded as an essential aspect, one phase of the annual performance management cycle. It is the process of reviewing an employee's performance, documenting the review and delivering the review verbally in a face-to-face meeting, (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performance appraisal).

According to the Staff Development, San Diego Community College District Instruction Manual, performance appraisal is to be defined as the periodic

evaluation of a manager's performance of assigned duties and responsibilities. At that particular college, it is always focused on a description of results, so ratings are not to be overly concerned with individual characteristics. The same term is used in England, while the North American equivalent is **performance evaluation**, and was introduced for American teachers in the 1970s.

Evans and Tomlinson (in Gane, 1989) referred to performance evaluation as a step in the performance management process that summarizes the employee's performance during the performance period that has just ended. The process is the same as that for performance appraisal; it is used to find out how the employee is progressing and in what ways further development might be desirable. The process may be used to determine employee salary increases (www.doe.k12.ga.us/schools/nutrition/qmgloss.asp).

1.7.4 Performance Management and Development

Performance management and development means 'getting the people right' (Harrison, 1993). It is the systematic process by which a public institution involves its employees in improving effectiveness in the accomplishment of institutional goals, such as improved service delivery (https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/.../PD20060334.shtml).

Performance management and development are regarded as providing a framework for valuing staff, a working environment that acknowledges their contribution and builds capacity to ensure organizational effectiveness. Further, it is an essential element in the creation of an organizational culture that promotes high-quality performance and the individual acceptance of responsibility and accountability commensurate with the individual's position and role.

1.7.5 Performance Management

According to Harrison (1993), performance management builds on, rather than replaces performance appraisal. Performance management is far more than appraisal. In the broadest sense, it is about translating goals to results. It also focuses not only on individual employees, but also on teams, programmes, processes and the organization as a whole (http://www.opm.gov/hr/employ/products/performance.mgnt/index.asp). It is a strategic and integrated process that delivers sustained success to organizations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of individual contributors and teams.

Armstrong (2002) emphasizes that performance management is strategic, in the sense that it is concerned with both broader issues facing a business if that business is to function effectively in its environment, and the general direction in which the business intends to go to achieve its longer-term goals. He further sees it as being integrated in two senses: (1) vertical integration, linking or aligning business, team and individual objectives with core competences; and (2) horizontal integration linking different aspects of human resource management, especially organizational development, human resource development, and reward, so as to achieve a coherent approach to the management and development of people.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher will use the survey approach, which is quantitative in nature and which aims at providing a broad overview of a representative sample of a larger sample of office-based educators in the Dr Ruth S. Mompati District Department of Education, North West Province. The questionnaire will consist of one open-ended question which will give the respondents sufficient opportunity to voice their opinions without the restriction of closed-ended questions. This study

is about investigation into perceptions of office-based educators on the appraisal system, and will be used to collect data.

The design was chosen because it is economical in terms of time and the amount of data collection. The analysis of data from closed-ended questions is easy, so the study will be completed within a specified period.

1.8.1 METHODOLOGY

The vehicle or approach for achieving the goal of the study will be quantitative. This will help determine:

- whether the office-based educators understand what is to be measured and managed by the appraisal system;
- their perceptions of the implementation process;
- their experiences whether the intentions of the appraisal system were realized during the implementation process.

Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which data is utilized to obtain information about phenomena or the world (Ross & Mahlck, 1990). Quantitative research also relies on measurement to compare and analyze different variables (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1993). According to Johan and Garber (1996), quantitative research methodology lends itself to the description of opinions and attitudes. From the opinions of the respondents, the researcher will deduce perceptions of office-based educators on the appraisal system.

1.8.2 SAMPLING

The whole population of the office-based educators in the Dr Ruth S. Mompati district office, Department of Education, North West Province, will participate. The total number is only 103, which is manageable. The population is also

accessible and has rich information on the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). These office-based educators are the departmental officials who are expected to render education services or education auxiliary or support services mainly to the institution-based educators. They include, inter alia, curriculum specialists and institution support coordinators (ISCs/circuit managers). The focus was on their perceptions on the appraisal system, their experiences of actual policy implementation and its formal commitments, and their attitudes towards the implementation process of the appraisal system.

1.8.3 DATA COLLECTION

A variety of tools or techniques are used for data collection, one of them being the questionnaire. The most important aspect of this type of data collection is that it is the only means of communication between the respondents and the researcher (Legotlo, 1996; 1994). It is a device that enables respondents to answer questions posed by the researcher. A questionnaire is a document completed by respondents in their own time, usually without the supervision of the researcher (Wierma, 1985).

The questionnaire used by the researcher (see Appendix D) has four sections. Section A contains biographical information; Section B deals with the supervisees' appraisal of the supervisor; Section C consists of Likert-scale items based on employees' perceptions and their experiences with regard to discrepancies found during the implementation process of the appraisal system; Section D is an open question. This will give the respondents sufficient opportunity to voice their opinions without any of the restrictions associated with closed questions**.**

The purpose of mixing both types of questions is to break monotony and to reduce the restrictive response possibilities that characterize structured questions. These two types of questions are also used to gain the confidence

and cooperation of respondents. For example, 'open-ended questions may relieve the anxiety of respondents of giving "false" answers since they can speak freely. But easy structured questions will also reassure respondents who recognize that they are able to answer precise, straightforward questions without fail' (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995).

1.8.4   DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis will be manageable and the researcher will identify information useful for formulating a plan of action. The purpose of data analysis is to make sense of the accumulated information. The researcher will read the data to check whether it is incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent or irrelevant. The researcher will try to collect all the questionnaires.

1.9   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Another parameter for this study that establishes the boundaries, exceptions, reservations and qualifications inherent in every study is delimitations and limitations (Castetter & Heister, 1997). In this instance, the section contains constraints beyond the control of the researcher but known to influence the objects of the enquiry (Murray & Laurence, 2000).

The limitation to this study will be that the researcher was involved in the implementation process of the appraisal system as an implementer, as well as being the coordinator and facilitator of the process. For this reason, other respondents might not be natural and spontaneous in their responses, as they might feel intimidated by the researcher's position. Some may even think the data collected will be used against them, irrespective of the ethical considerations that will be applied.

As far as the distribution of the questionnaires is concerned, some respondents will not return or even complete them properly, and regrettably, according to ethical considerations, the researcher will be at the mercy of the voluntary responses to be given by the respondents. But the utilization of the entire population of office-based educators would ensure total representation and the characteristics of the population would remain intact.

With regard to the timing of the study, the data was collected immediately after the completion of the annual performance appraisal session. The study thus revealed the vivid memories of the recently-concluded cycle. However, more data was based on the period following the inception of the implementation, as the appraisal system was introduced only on 11 December 2002, and the actual implementation process started during the 2005/2006 fiscal year. This means that respondents had already had four cycles of exposure to the implementation process of the appraisal system.

1.10   DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

These were within the researcher's control. In this instance the sample consisted of all the office-based educators of the Dr Ruth S. Mompati District, Department of Education, North West Province. In respect of the timing of the collection of data, it was ideal to send out questionnaires immediately after the completion of the PMDS cycle. During this period the supervisors and supervisees still had a vivid memory of the completion of the process, where all activities of the implementation process of the whole year were summed up and the end results revealed.

1.11   ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The information provided by the respondents will be treated in the strictest confidence. In this study, the research has a moral obligation to uphold the

confidentiality of data. This includes keeping information and the identity of respondents confidential. The researcher will request permission from the head of department of education to conduct this study.

Respondents will receive a written undertaking guaranteeing confidentiality and all of them will sign the undertaking to indicate their voluntary participation. Hence the individual's right to decline to participate in the study at any given time will be respected and upheld (Neuman, 1991). The researcher's application for approval of ethical research involving human respondents will be presented to the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria.

1.12   STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME

CHAPTER 1

This chapter will provide orientation to the study, the research design and the methodology, and clarification of concepts.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter Two will present the available literature pertaining to performance appraisal and the conceptualization of the appraisal system for office-based educators and the relationship among appraisal systems of other employees in the Department of Education.

CHAPTER 3

This chapter will outline the methodology used to collect data. It also focuses on the research design, which will provide clarity on why the particular method and data collection techniques have to be employed. It will examine how the

questionnaire will be used to collect data and will attempt to clarify themes that will ultimately provide answers to hypotheses. The procedure of analyzing and interpreting the data will also be outlined.

CHAPTER 4

This chapter will present a discussion of the data, with graphs and the conclusion. It will be in the form of a report based on the data collected.

CHAPTER 5

This chapter will provide answers to the research questions posited in Chapter One. It will also discuss the conclusion, and will present the recommendations flowing from the findings.

1.13   CONCLUSION

It remains the responsibility of the Dr Ruth S. Mompati District, Department of Education, North West Province to ensure the provision of quality education. The only way to succeed in this or realize this goal is to set standards, on the basis of which the officials of the department should be subjected to the appraisal system to establish whether their performance has reached the expected level or not. In other words, the quality of service delivery is assessed.

The officials in this instance are the office-based educators who render support and monitoring for the 'foot soldiers' in education provisioning, seeing that they are institution-based. The researcher therefore regards it as important to conduct an investigation into perceptions of office-based educators on the appraisal system and find out whether the system in place achieves what it set out to do.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the available literature pertaining to performance appraisal and the conceptualization of the appraisal system for office-based educators. It also illustrates the appraisal system tools utilized for other officials either than the office-based educators, within the Department of Education.

The North West Department of Education in the Dr Ruth S. Mompati District employs personnel under Public Service Act No. 103 of 1994. They are placed in different offices, some at the institutions as support staff and some working in the institutions' hostels. Amongst these staff members, some are categorized under Senior Management Services as directors and chief directors. The other group of staff is employed under the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) No.76 of 1998. They are institution-based educators and office-based educators, as defined in the previous chapter.

Each of the categories of employees of the Department of Education has a specially-designed or developed tool for the appraisal system. A description of the types, which will be outlined in the rest of the chapter, will also highlight the similarities and differences between the respective tools. It should, however, be borne in mind that the study is confined to the appraisal system of the office-based educators.

There are many ways to define performance management. Webb (2003) suggests that performance management is mostly referred to as performance appraisal. This would suggest that the two could be used interchangeably. He further explains that the performance management of individuals refers to formally reviewing and evaluating or assessing a subordinate, usually at the end

of a planning year and that it is common for a skills-development component to be included (Webb:2003).

Another definition is that appraisals are annual or semi-annual interactions between employees and their direct supervisors, during which employees' strengths and weaknesses come under the spotlight and the set goals are assessed (Armstrong & Appelbaum, 2003).

Newstrom and Davis (2002) claim that it is the process of evaluating the performance of employees, sharing information with them, and searching for ways to improve their performance. This idea is shared by Whetten and Cameron (2002), who state that it is used to evaluate a member of an organization to provide feedback to the subordinate about ways to improve job performance.

An interesting view is that performance management is based on the principle of management by agreement rather than management by command, thus providing a more integrated and continuous approach to the management of performance (Armstrong, 2002).

From the above definitions, it is clear that performance management is the process by which an organization ensures that the skills of its human resource are evaluated against the set expectations; it involves the development of staff members in whose performance skills gaps were identified. It is also clear that performance management is aimed at assisting organizations to meet their objectives, ultimately resulting in the realization of the mission and vision.

2.1.1 The importance of evaluating staff performance

Armstrong and Appelbaum (2003) maintain that formal evaluations through regular informal routes provide wonderful opportunities to motivate staff

members. Management is described as the art of getting people to do what has to be done, while keeping them happy and motivated in the process (Mann, 2002). In fact, some scholars go so far as to suggest that management is motivation (Van der Westhuizen, 1991).

The problem, according to Green (2000:4), is that too few people understand the connection between motivation and performance. He goes on to describe motivation as the fuel to performance (Green, 2000). PMDS can serve to motivate staff members by identifying their areas for development so that they can be empowered through skills-development programmes to perform at their expected level. In support, Green (2000) further believes that one can motivate employees by building their confidence through the belief that they can do the job expected of them. What better way to achieve this than through developing the staff members' abilities?

Employees feel motivated when their good performance is both recognized and rewarded. The PMDS recognizes the good performance of staff members and will ultimately reward them for their performance. Built into the PMDS is the process of timely, accurate and ongoing feedback to staff members. Performance feedback is also a key to maintaining high levels of work motivation (Muchinsky & Kriek, 2002)

Armstrong and Appelbaum (2003) further state that appraisals serve to clarify present expectations and track future ones. They under-score the importance of two-way feedback. The appraisal system assists the staff members by providing an opportunity for them to discuss concerns with their supervisors and better understand what is expected of them.

The supervisor is expected to provide clear guidance and fully unpack the performance standards as they relate to the ratings that will be used during the annual appraisal process. In doing so, staff members will also be able to express

their own understanding of their job expectations and any misconceptions can be identified and addressed. This process will highlight the importance of two-way communication instead of using the traditional top-down approach to communication. Employees would be involved in their own career development and would learn valuable elements such as goal setting, effective observation, practical documentation and ongoing communication (Armstrong & Appelbaum, 2003).

World wide, organizations are striving to be more effective by producing quality service delivery to clients. The appraisal system helps to enhance the competence of the office-based educators so that the department can become more productive and efficient. Competence and productivity are essential for organizational success (Fisher, 1997). Muchinsky and Kriek (2002) say that feedback is possibly one of the main reasons for performance appraisals. They argue that only by highlighting the strengths and identifying the areas for development in an individual can targeted training be done.

Performance appraisals help organizations in many ways, such as the following (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995):

- They can enhance the quality of organizational decisions, ranging from promotions to discharges;
- They can enhance the quality of individual decisions ranging from career choices to the development of future strengths ;
- Performance appraisals can affect an employee's views or attachment to his/her organization;
- Performance appraisals provide a rational, legally-defensible basis for personnel decisions, such as promotions, discharges or differences in pay increases.

In the broader sense, one must concur with Meyer, Mabaso and Lancaster (2001), who maintain that education, training and development play a critical role

in the socio-economic development of any nation. All these are addressed in the appraisal system.

Deming, the 'quality guru' (in Grote, 2002), says that quality expectations operate on the basis that if operations are performing properly and according to standard, they should be left alone. Attention should be concentrated only on those aspects that vary from the norm. If this notion was applied to human performance, the great majority of workers in an organization would be ignored by the organization because their performance was not off-track in either a positive or a negative direction.

Deming further states that, to ensure quality of products and processes, it may be important to let alone things that are operating properly and concentrate on the exceptions. But in managing human performance that approach is a serious mistake. One of the most frequent complaints people have of their organizations is that they get little attention when they are doing what is expected of them. Only when they excel (which for most people is rare) or make a complete mess (which also is rare) do they get any attention from the boss. Deming then concludes that performance appraisal forces managers and organizations to focus on the fact that the great majority of employees are doing exactly what the organization expects of them and that the company recognizes and reinforces their contributions.

2.1.2 Reasons why performance appraisals fail

Webb (2003) maintains that the most important reason why performance systems fail is low management commitment. Various reasons could account for this. According to Webb (2003), it is mainly owing to the fact that managers view these systems as being of no help. Supervisors are more concerned about filling in so many tedious forms (Armstrong & Appelbaum, 2003). The writers feel that too much emphasis is placed on these and too little actual training takes place.

They further suggest that a further possible reason for low management commitment could be the difficulties of measuring intangibles. The issue of time constraints also deserves a mention here. Supervisors simply do not have the time to engage in long discussions and the completion of paper work necessary for the appraisal system.

Employees and supervisors alike do not enjoy the prospect of engaging in appraisal sessions. Jerome (1997) mentions that people generally feel uncomfortable sitting in judgement on others. Research (Bannister & Balkin, 1990) has also found that supervisees seem to have greater acceptance of appraisal process, and feel more satisfied with it when the process is directly linked to reward. This was true of the appraisal system at its introduction during the Second World War. Such findings are a serious challenge to those who feel that appraisal results and reward outcomes must be strictly isolated.

Furthermore, employee performance appraisal is painful and does not work, because, according to this website, the manager is uncomfortable in the judgment seat.http://humanresources.about.com/b/209/02/15/performance-appraisals-dont-work-8.htm.

He knows he may have to justify his opinions with specific examples when the staff member asks. He lacks skill in providing feedback and often provokes a defensive response from the employee, who may justifiably feel he is under attack. Consequently, managers avoid giving honest feedback, which defeats the purpose of the performance appraisal.

In turn, the staff member whose performance is under review often becomes defensive. Whenever his performance is rated as less than the best, or less than the level on which he personally perceives his contribution to be, the manager is viewed as punitive.

Disagreement about contribution and performance ratings can create a conflict-ridden situation that festers for months. Most managers avoid conflict that is going to undermine workplace harmony. In today's team-oriented work environment, it is also difficult to ask people who work as colleagues, and sometimes even friends, to take on the roles of judge and defendant.

The research, according to the website cited above, found that in many organizations the inconsistency created by not discussing reward issues was aggravated by the practice of having separate wage and salary reviews, in which merit raises and bonuses were decided arbitrarily, and often secretly, by supervisors and managers.

Currently in South Africa, the National Department of Education and Educator Labour Unions are in intensive discussions on the link between the outcomes of the appraisal system and educators' salary increases and the strengthening of Teacher Development Strategy. This resulted in the signing of the ELRC Collective Agreement 4 of 2009, and further discussions are in progress.

Social loafing could be another reason why performance appraisals do not achieve their objectives. Social loafing refers to the reduction of individuals' efforts to perform better because they are working together to achieve common outputs (Harkins, 2001). Harkins explains that because the outcomes are pooled individuals receive neither credit nor blame for their performances. This results in reduced effort.

Individuals who are intrinsically motivated tend to enjoy evaluations because they like the task itself. However, when they are extrinsically motivated, they focus on factors such as rewards, deadlines, surveillance and evaluation. The result is that they often fail to see the value of appraisal systems as the rewards are not appealing.

2.2 POLICY AND LEGISLATION CONTEXT

The following are some of the policies and acts informing the context of Performance Management as an appraisal system in the Public Service:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 Section 195(i**)** serves as a reference point for guiding the conduct of all public officials in every sphere of government. This section provides that "Public administration must be governed by the following principles for public service delivery". It requires that:

  A high standard of professional ethics be promoted and maintained;
  Services be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;
  Resources be utilized efficiently, economically and effectively;
  People's needs be responded to;
  The public be encouraged to participate in policy-making; and
  It be accountable, transparent and development-oriented.

- Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 1999 (as amended Act 29 of 1999) section 38(i) expects the Accounting Officer of a public institution to be responsible for the effective, efficient and economical use of public resources. The goal is to improve delivery of services and, ultimately, the quality of life of the people. The Act gives managers greater flexibility while holding them accountable for the use of resources to deliver services to communities.

- The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele) 1997 is about improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the way in which services should be delivered. It sets out eight principles to improve the delivery of services to all people.

- Public Service Regulations 2001 (as amended) entail an integrated framework designed to promote effective performance. Part III, Chapter 4 for SMS Members, Part VIII, Chapter 7 for Employees on salary level 1 to12,

Part IV of the Public Service Regulations provides an outline for the Management of Performance and PSCBC Resolution 3 of 1999.

- Public Service Act 103 of 1994, Section 12.4 stipulates that "state departments shall manage performance in a consultative, supportive and non-discriminatory manner in order to enhance organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability for use of resources and the achievement of results".

- Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (as amended), Schedule 1, illustrates explicitly the Incapacity Code and Procedures for Poor Work Performance pertaining to educators.

- Collective Agreement 3 of 2002 of the ELRC (PMDS) was signed and put into practice to identify, evaluate and develop office-based educators' performance, which is the focus of the study.

- The final item is the Collective Agreement 8 of 2003 (IQMS), which was signed to promote Institutional-based educators' professional development, to monitor an institution's overall effectiveness and to provide a mechanism to reward good performance.

2.3   TYPES OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

2.3.1   Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) for Senior Management Services (SMS)

The success of performance management therefore lies in the effective implementation by top management. Senior managers should play an active role

in ensuring that national policy frameworks for performance management are implemented in order to yield the required results (Rapea, 2004).

The Minister of Public Service and Administration (MPSA) has directed, in terms of Part III. B3 of Chapter on the Public Service Regulations 2001, the implementation of a new PMDS for members of the SMS. The new PMDS came into effect on 1 April 2002. This category of employees is to enter into a performance agreement, i.e. all members of the SMS (managers and professionals) are to enter into performance agreements (PAs).

The PA consists of the job details, job purpose, job functions, reporting requirements and assessment lines, performance appraisal framework, with detailed work plan and core management criteria, management of performance outcomes, development requirement, timetable of formal performance reviews and annual performance appraisal, dispute resolution, amendment of agreement and signature of parties (supervisor and supervisee).

The detailed Work Plan (Appendix A) outlines key result areas and their measurable performance indicators, which will be signposts for whether expectations were achieved, the time frames (targets) and the comments to account for the state of affairs. There are ratings for this attached. The second feature is the assessment, based on Core Management Criteria, which are inherent job requirements. These competencies refer, inter alia, to the blend of knowledge, skills or aptitude that an employee can apply to meet the requirements of a specific post.

These PAs are to apply for a particular financial year and are to be reviewed annually. Newly-appointed members of SMS must complete their PAs within the first three months of appointment. Within that time, there should have been enough induction and acclimatization to the new environment to enable judgments about what it will take to deliver a good service for that year.

2.3.2 Performance Management and Development System for Public Service Act No. 103 of 1994 (Office-based employees other than SMS members)

This system has been implemented by all departments with effect from 1 April 2001. For each employee, the period in which performance is to be assessed, the performance cycle and the annual date of assessment should be communicated to him/her within a month of her/his employment and the criteria for the performance also should be outlined by the relevant supervisor. The supervisor and the supervisee should agree to meet on a regular basis to discuss the basic objectives of their work and their roles in the success or failure in achieving those objectives.

This is what Castetter and Young (2000) refer to as 'appraisee-appraiser planning conference, the steps or activities designed to acquaint or to reacquaint the appraiser and appraisee with the scope, intent, procedures, and expectations of the appraisal process. During the supervisor's monitoring, there should be continuous feedback, orally or in writing, and an annual assessment should be informed by these sessions.

2.3.3 Performance Management and Development Scheme for Office-based Educators

The former National Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor, in her speech introducing the debate on the Education Budget, vote 15, National Council of Provinces in 18 May 2005, acknowledged that in the Department of Education

> *…we do not as yet have agreed tools of evaluation and accountability. As members know, the National Government sets norms and standards that are defined, implemented and evaluated*

at provincial level. … There are no measures in place that require deep analysis of every facet of education.

Thus, each time we confront policy failure, we are unable to develop effective measures to resolve the problem. Added to this is the challenge of an extensive accountability chain in education. Each component has an important obligation. Educators are the most important part. How do we hold educators accountable and responsive for academic performance? If we are to succeed in building quality into our system, we have to attend to these accountability and evaluation issues. Education is judged by educational performance – this means children who can read, write, count, and hold their own in any academic tasks.

In line with what former minister Naledi Pandor said, there is a tool in place aligned with the performance management and development system. For office-educators there is Collective Agreement 3 of 2002 of the ELRC, PMDS, and the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), as Collective Agreement 8 of 2003 also of the ELRC, for institution-based educators. These tools are both informed by Schedule 1 of the EEA No. 76 of 1998, whereby the Minister is required to determine performance standards for educators, in terms of which their performance is to be evaluated.

2.4 THE PMDS PROCESS FOR OFFICE-BASED EDUCATORS

PMDS operates on an annual cycle which runs from 1 April to 31 March of the following year. This is a fiscal year, which is directly linked with the corporate planning cycle. There are seven processes within the cycle, as outlined in the ELRC Collective Agreement 3 of 2002:

2.4.1 Developing Work Plans

Development of a work plan is informed by the key objectives as they appear in the job description of an employee. The work plan should also indicate activities of each key objective and performance indicators of these activities. Assessment

will be based on these agreed-upon key objectives. Both the supervisee and the supervisor must mutually agree on the work plan.

2.4.2 The Capabilities

Both supervisor and supervisee should agree upon capabilities. The five-point rating scale is used to rate each element of each capability. This then gives rise to the rating of the individual capability. The first five capabilities (job performance, job knowledge and application, interpersonal relations, communication and client service) apply to all the staff members. The last four (equity, operational leadership abilities, visionary leadership abilities and conceptual and analytical skills) apply to all supervisors.

2.4.3 Ongoing Review and Feedback

Ongoing review and feedback sessions are to be held to determine progress registered, or identify impediments to progress at a very early stage of performance. Spangenberg, (1994) maintains that performance management can be regarded as an ongoing process. Both the supervisor and the supervisee monitor ongoing performance against the Work Plan and the Capabilities.

The supervisor provides balance and constructive, ongoing feedback, both positive and negative, which is focused on improving performance. Regular feedback obviates surprises for both supervisor and supervisee at the end of the quarterly review interviews. It is much easier for supervisors to provide ongoing feedback on an issue-by-issue basis than to deal with everything in one session.

2.4.4 Quarterly Reviews

Quarterly reviews formalize the ongoing reviews to prepare for annual reviews. These are an integral part of the PMDS, facilitating improved performance

during the cycle. They also ensure there are no surprises for either the supervisor or the supervisee at the annual performance appraisal interview. Every three months during the PMDS cycle, a supervisor and supervisee jointly review the Work Plan and Capabilities to discuss progress, taking into account any changes in circumstances since the beginning of the cycle.

2.4.5 Annual Performance Appraisal

Annual performance appraisal is informed by the above reviews, and from this practice, pockets of excellence should be identified, as well as areas for development. The scores from the work plan and the capabilities will determine the annual score. It is conducted at the end of the financial year.

Both the supervisor and the supervisee prepare for the appraisal discussion. This is done with at least ten working days notice to the supervisee. Preparation includes self-appraisal against the Work Plan and Capabilities as well as gathering information necessary to aid the discussions. The discussions include:

- assessment of the performance according to the Work Plan and the Capabilities;
- assessment of how the performance affected circumstances for change;
- how the identified developmental needs can be addressed;
- providing a possible future basis for decisions on rewards;
- agreement to the ratings; and
- completion and signing of the documentation.

2.4.6 Personal Development Planning

Development is one of the three broad purposes of a performance appraisal system. This is the human resources management throughput process aimed at preparing employees for career development and progress. After the identification of areas for development during ongoing feedback, quarterly

reviews and the annual review, a Personal Development Plan is completed and finalized. This will be a list for the employee offering development and support programmes, a plan of action based on relative performance standards (Castetter & Young, 2000).

2.4.7 Upward Feedback

The upward feedback provides an important opportunity for supervisors to access valuable feedback from their staff indicating how they could manage them better. This practice is used throughout the United States and Canada, where effective district-wide supervision and evaluation requires that district-wide compliance, effective formative and summative work and consistent implementation of the standards and process by the evaluators are guaranteed, which is why teachers are required to state how well supervision and evaluation work in their school departments. The Teachers' Assessment of his/her Evaluator's Performance as a Supervisor Instrument, which addresses skills specific to supervision and evaluation has to be completed (Ribas, 2005). This also lends valuable integrity and credibility to the process by recognizing that feedback is a two-way process.

Lastly, there will be moderation to ascertain, as far as possible, that supervisors perform consistently across the Department. The process concurs with Du Toit *et al.* (2002) when they say that "employee performance management includes: planning work and setting expectations, continually monitoring performance, developing capacity to perform [and] periodically rating performance in a summary manner".

This process can unfold only after the supervisor and the supervisee have met and exchanged information about it. This is the stage referred to earlier as 'Appraisee-Appraiser Planning Conference'. This conference enables the supervisor and the supervisee to inform and be informed about the appraisal

process, clarifies to the supervisee what are the expectations of the organization, elucidates any differences between present and desired levels of job performance, establishes future performance expectations and allows the supervisor and supervisee to influence each other in planning the assessment process (Castetter & Young, 2000).

Du Toit, Knipe, Van der Waldt and Doyle (2002) noted that, even if the steps outlined above are followed, all the aspects of performance management arouse controversy, especially appraisal and performance-related pay; it is the same for the appraisal system for office-based educators. The writers point out that critics have identified weaknesses in their methodology and basic philosophy. Employees are often dissatisfied with the methods used in performance management systems, and managers are frequently reluctant to engage in the process because of its confrontational nature. In too many organizations it enforces the compliance of an unhappy workforce.

2.5   CONCLUSION

The chapter presented the available literature pertaining to performance appraisal, the conceptualization of the appraisal system for office-based educators, and the connections among appraisal systems of other employees in the Department of Education. In essence, the objectives realized by implementation of the four tools are similar, irrespective of the differences among their structures or formats. These tools are utilized to manage the performance of employees.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology the researcher will use to collect data. It also focuses on the research design, which provides clarity as to why the particular method and data collection techniques are to be employed. It examines how the questionnaire will be employed to collect data in an attempt to clarify themes that would ultimately provide answers to hypotheses. Clarity is provided on:

♦   the research design;

♦   the nature of quantitative research, its advantages and disadvantages;

♦   selection of participants;

♦   the questionnaire, its advantages and disadvantages;

♦   the validity and reliability of the study; and

♦   data analysis.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Babbie & Mouton (2001), research design addresses the planning of scientific inquiry. That is, designing a strategy for finding out something. Bless and Higson-Smith (1993) say research design relates directly to the testing of hypotheses. It is a specification of the most adequate operations to be performed in order to test a specific hypothesis under given conditions. Terreblanche and Durrhein (2002) also allude to the notion that research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. Research designs are plans that guide "the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a

manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure".

But McMillan and Schumacher (2001) define research design as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the questions. The design shows which individuals will be studied, when, where and under which circumstances they will be studied.

In this study the researcher will use the survey approach which is quantitative in nature and which aims at providing a broad overview of a representative sample of a large sample of office-based educators. Closed-ended questions questionnaires will be used to collect data, as this study is about perceptions of office-based educators on the appraisal system.

The design has been chosen because it is economical in terms of time and the amount of data collection. Analysis of data from close-ended questions is easy, so the study will be completed within a specified period. Survey research will give the researcher a picture of what people think. The survey researcher often uses a sample or a smaller group of selected people and generalizes results to a larger group from which the smaller was chosen (Neuman, 1997).

3.3   METHODOLOGY

the researcher will use the quantitative vehicle or approach to achieve the goal of the study. This will assist in determining whether the office-based educators do understand what is to be measured and managed by the appraisal system, what their perceptions on the appraisal system are and what their experiences of the realization of the intentions of the appraisal system during the implementation process were.

Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process in which data is utilized to obtain information about phenomenon or the world (Ross & Mahlck,

1990). Quantitative research also relies on measurement to compare and analyze different variables (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1993). It also lends itself to the description of opinions and attitudes. From the opinions of the respondents the researcher will deduce perceptions of the office-based educators on the appraisal system.

Generally, the quantitative method is designed to provide summaries of data that support generalizations about the phenomenon under study. In order to accomplish this, quantitative research usually involves few variables and many cases, and employs prescribed procedures to ensure validity and reliability. Using standards means that the research can be replicated, analyzed and compared with similar studies.

Kruger (2003) confirms that 'quantitative methods allow us to summarize vast sources of information and facilitate comparisons across categories and over time'. He goes on to say, however, that research is often carried out in an unnatural, artificial environment so that a level of control can be applied to the exercise. This level of control might not normally be in place in the real world, yielding laboratory results as opposed to real world results. In addition, preset answers will not necessarily reflect how people really feel about a subject and some cases might be just the closest match.

Quantitative method allows for a broader study, involving a greater number of subjects, and enhancing the generalization of the results. Unfortunately, in comparison to qualitative methods, quantitative methods collect a much narrower and sometimes superficial dataset. Results are limited, as they provide numerical descriptions rather than detailed narrative and generally provide less elaborate accounts of human perception. Additionally, these statistics can be humanly insignificant, therefore yielding insignificant results. Kruger (2003) discusses how it can be 'difficult to get the real meaning of an issue by looking at numbers'.

Quantitative methods are ideal for finding out who, what, when and where (Day, 1995). However, they are inappropriate for the collection of behavioural data. Questions have to be direct and easily quantified, and made available to a sample of no less than two hundred participants to permit reliable statistical analysis (Urban Wallace & Associates, 1995).

This study will apply a quantitative method because of its appropriateness for responding to the hypotheses. At the end of the study, the findings will reveal perceptions of office-based educators on the appraisal system.

3.4 POPULATION

A population is the theoretically specified aggregation of the study of elements (Babbie, 1992). McMillan and Schumacher (2001) define population as a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research. This group is also referred to as the target population or universe. The target population is often different from the list of elements from which the sample is actually selected, which is termed the survey population or sampling frame.

In this study, the study population will be the office-based educators of the Dr Ruth S. Mompati District, Department of Education in the North West. The total number of office-based educators is 103, excluding vacant posts. These office-based educators are the departmental officials who are expected to render 'education services or education auxiliary or support services' mainly to the institution-based educators. They include, inter alia, curriculum specialists and institutions support coordinators (ISCs/circuit managers). All office-based educators will participate in the study because this is a sizeable and manageable number and the characteristics of the population will remain intact.

3.5   DATA COLLECTION METHOD

3.5.1   Questionnaire

A variety of tools or techniques can be used for collecting data. The researcher will use a survey questionnaire for this purpose (see Appendix D). The most important aspect of this type of data collection method is that it is the only means of communication between the respondents and the researcher (Legotlo, 1996). It is a device that enables respondents to answer questions posed by the researcher. A questionnaire is a document completed by respondents in their own time, usually without supervision by the researcher (Wierma, 1985).

3.5.1.1 Questionnaire construction

The preparation of the questionnaire takes theoretical guidelines, such as the following, into account (Chadwick, Bahr & Albrecht, 1984):

- Avoid long, complex sentences, so that questions are explicit;
- Avoid leading questions;
- The wording of questions must be very clear, focusing on directness and simplicity.

Huysamen (1994) makes the point that questions should be multi-choice, in which respondents have to select from two or more alternative responses the one which best applies to them.

The survey questionnaire will consist of a mixture of closed- and open-ended questions. The questions will also be standardized, because the study population is rich with information on the implementation process of the appraisal system of office-based educators.

The questionnaire will be structured in four sections:

Section A: the purpose of these questions will be to gather biographical data and the background information of the respondents. The information is essential to understanding the background information of the respondents.

Section B: questions concerning the supervisees' appraisal of the supervisor.

Section C consists of Likert-scale items based on employees' perceptions and their experiences of discrepancies encountered during the implementation process of the appraisal system.

Section D is an open question. This will give the respondents sufficient opportunity to voice their opinions without any of the restrictions of closed questions**.**

The purpose of mixing both types of questions was to break monotony and to reduce the restrictive response nature of the structured questions. These two types of questions are also used to gain the confidence and cooperation of respondents. For example, 'open-ended questions may relieve the respondents' anxiety about giving "false" answers, since they can speak freely. But easy, structured questions also reassure respondents, who recognize that they are able to answer precise, straightforward questions without fail' (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995).

The survey questionnaire will be self-administered, so the respondents will complete the questionnaires themselves. The questionnaires will be hand-delivered to the respondents, as they are within reach of the researcher. They have already been given to the supervisors of the respective sessions for distribution to their subordinates. The collection point will be a box marked "RESEARCH", which will ensure the respondents' anonymity. As the box leaves the respective office, the questionnaires will be counted to check the number returned. That will inform the researcher whether everyone has responded. The

researcher will bear in mind the ethical principle that the respondents must complete the questionnaires voluntarily.

3.5.1.2 Advantages of a questionnaire

According to Chardwick *et al.* (1984), the following are some of the advantages:

- A questionnaire is one of the instruments a researcher can use to collect data quickly. It is relatively inexpensive, provided that the respondents are able to interpret the content of the questionnaire correctly.
- The administration of questionnaires is relatively easy, as it depends on the number of respondents involved at a certain time and gaining their response to certain well-constructed questions.
- It is an economical instrument. This includes "economy of time", too, as the researcher can reach a high proportion of respondents.
- Questionnaires provide reliable results from data obtained, normally without any bias, because the researcher usually does not know the respondents.

3.5.1.3 Disadvantages of questionnaire

The following disadvantages of questionnaires can, inter alia, be identified (Chardwick *et al.*, 1984):

- The respondents often fail to return the completed questionnaires or do not complete them at all. This is because people become suspicious of the reasons for the research.
- Lengthy questionnaires discourage respondents, because of the time and effort involved in completing them.

- The inaccurate completion of questionnaires creates problems. Some respondents may misinterpret the questions so they do not supply accurate answers.

- Respondents who are reluctant to divulge information may ignore certain questions or falsify their answers.

- A further limitation on conducting questionnaires is the problem of getting respondents to think and respond honestly, rather than supplying responses they think will please the researcher.

- Questionnaires are rigid and provide no flexibility from the researcher's point of view; comments made by the respondents cannot be further explored or probed. Open-ended questionnaires address this disadvantage to some extent.

3.6   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

It is important to note that data analysis is a specialized area of research procedure and one would need to use an expert to conduct this. Accurate data entry for quantitative research study is essential for accurate findings and conclusions to be made. When using a computer programme for entering data, the researcher has to ensure that the data file is compatible with the statistical data programme to be used.

The researcher in this case will have to ensure that the data analysis procedure to be used is appropriate in relation to the objectives, aim or hypotheses. The analysis and interpretation of data can be correctly undertaken only when understood in terms of the entire research process. In this study, descriptive statistics will be used mainly in the form of tables, graphs and figures for interpreting the results.

3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY

When conducting a study, one must report the extent to which instruments employed in the study are reliable and valid. Researchers often ignore reliability and validity issues regarding instrumentation. For example, instruments from other countries are sometimes used in the South African context, irrespective of whether they can be appropriately employed in this context or not (Struwig & Stead, 2001).

Failure to address issues of reliability and validity could render a project's finding worthless. Reliability can be defined as the extent to which test scores are accurate, consistent or stable. A test score's validity is dependent on its reliability, because if the reliability is inadequate, the validity will also be poor. It is therefore important to determine a score's reliability before one examines its validity. For example, a scale measuring weight may consistently give the same weight reading for an object but the particular scale could be an invalid or inaccurate measure of weight (Struwig & Stead, 2001).

According to Struwig and Stead (2001) reliability studies should be conducted ideally on a sample of 200 or more individuals. If the sample is small, one should still provide reliability co-efficients for the test used. But in this study the researcher will use the entire population of 103. The validity and reliability of the data to be collected is guaranteed because the population's characteristics will not be tampered with.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the methodology to be used for collecting data. It also focused on the research design, which clarified why the particular method and data collection techniques were employed. It examined how the questionnaire was employed to collect data in an attempt to clarify themes that would ultimately

provide answers to hypotheses. The procedure of analyzing and interpreting data was also outlined.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the results of the empirical investigation conducted to determine perceptions of office-based educators at the Dr Ruth S. Mompati District office, Department of Education in the North West on the appraisal system. The quantitative and open-ended items collected through a questionnaire are summarized, analyzed and discussed.

4.2   REVIEW OF RESPONDENTS

The 103 questionnaires to be completed by all office-based educators were prepared and distributed. About 72 (69.9%) of the distributed questionnaires were returned and used to analyze data.

4.3   BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The biographical information reflected in Fig 4.1 – 4.6 was drawn to illustrate the picture and profile of the respondents. Such information is important for understanding the background of the respondents. A brief summary of the information will be presented.

4.3.1   Position

The respondents were requested to indicate the position they hold. Of the total respondents, about 61% are supervisees while 28% are supervisors. The supervisees exceed the supervisors for obvious reasons.

FIGURE 4.1

POSITION OF RESPONDENTS

■ Supervisor   ■ Supervisee   ■ No response

11%

28%

61%
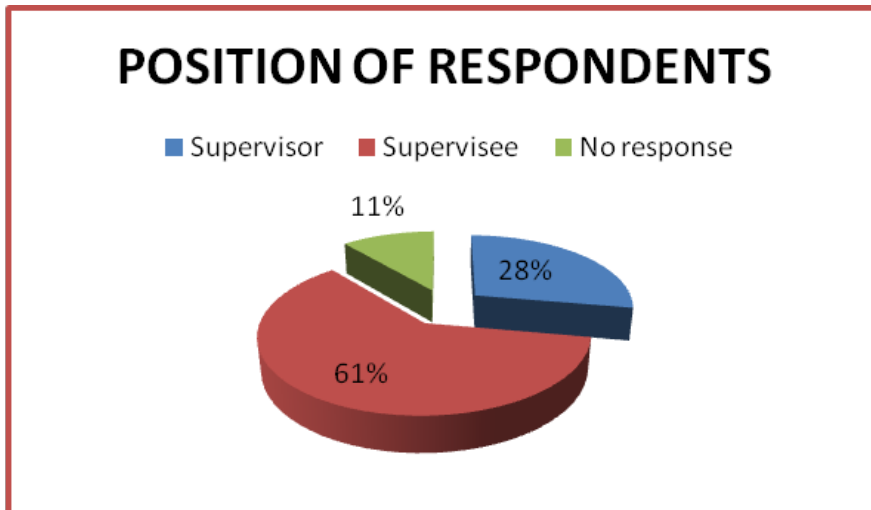
In almost all organizations one supervisor takes care of a number of supervisees, and the office-based educators are no exception. They are tasked with the responsibility of appraising their subordinates and seeing to their developmental needs.

4.3.2   Experience

Respondents were required to indicate their experience as office-based educators. According to fig. 4.2, more than half of the respondents (66.8%) have been office-based educators for 10 to more than 30 years.

FIGURE 4.2

EXPERIENCE IN YEARS

27.78

22.22

16.67   16.67   16.67

| 0 to 5 | 5 to 10 | 10 to 20 | 20 to 30 | 30 and over |
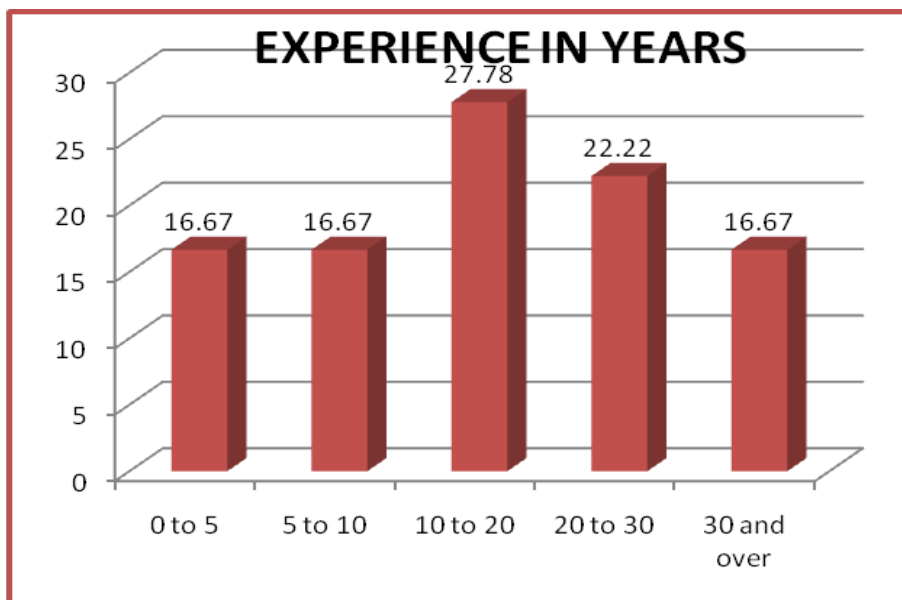
This information suggests that most of the respondents have a great deal of experience, wide knowledge and expertise in their areas of work. Supervisors know what they expect from their subordinates, will use their experience to guide supervisees in the process of appraisal and will afford them the opportunity to perform well.

4.3.3   Gender

According to fig. 4.3, the majority of the respondents (72%) are male, while only 28% were female. This implies that more male office-based educators than female participated.

FIGURE 4.3
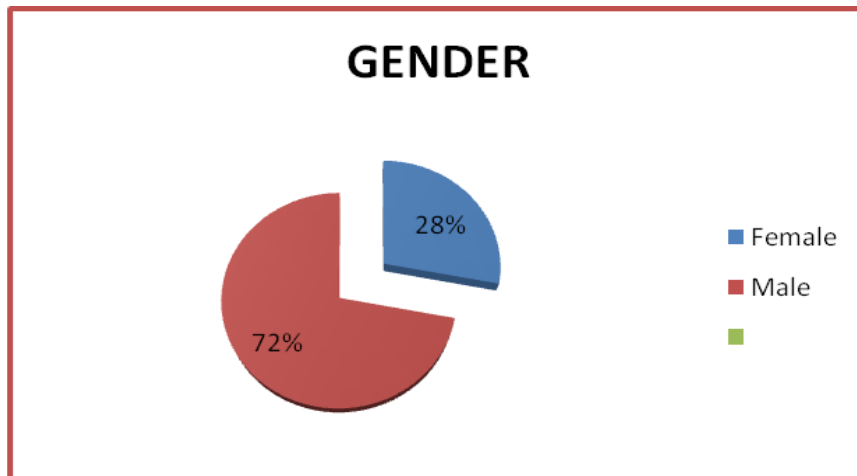
The total number of the office-based educators is 103; 62 are female, 41 are male. This means the researcher expected more completed questionnaires to be returned by females than by males.

4.3.4   Section in District

Half of the respondents (50%) who took part in the study were office-based educators based at the District office; the other 50% were from the AO/circuit offices. This equal number of office-based educators reflected in fig.4.4 at district and circuit offices is a fair distribution that accounts for their differing opinions on the implementation of the appraisal system.

FIGURE 4.4
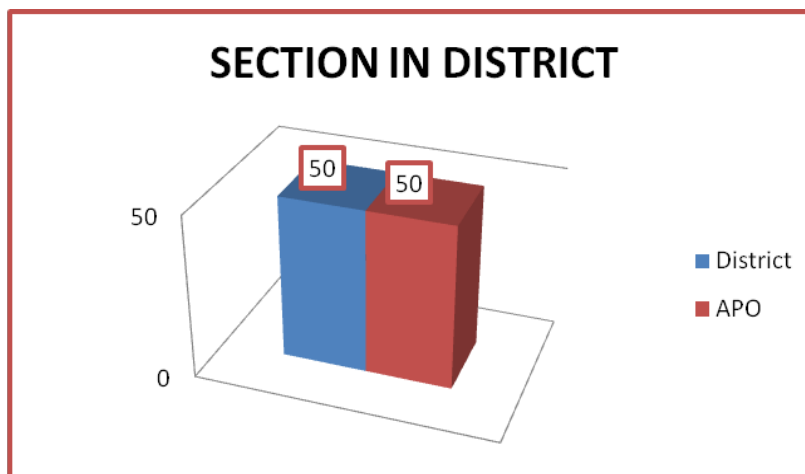
4.3.5   Incentives for good performance

Respondents were asked whether or not they had received incentives as a result of good performance. Figure 4.5 shows that the overwhelming majority of respondents (89%) indicated that they had never received incentives for good performance.

FIGURE 4.5

INCENTIVES GIVEN FOR GOOD PERFORMANCE

■ yes ■ no

11%

89%
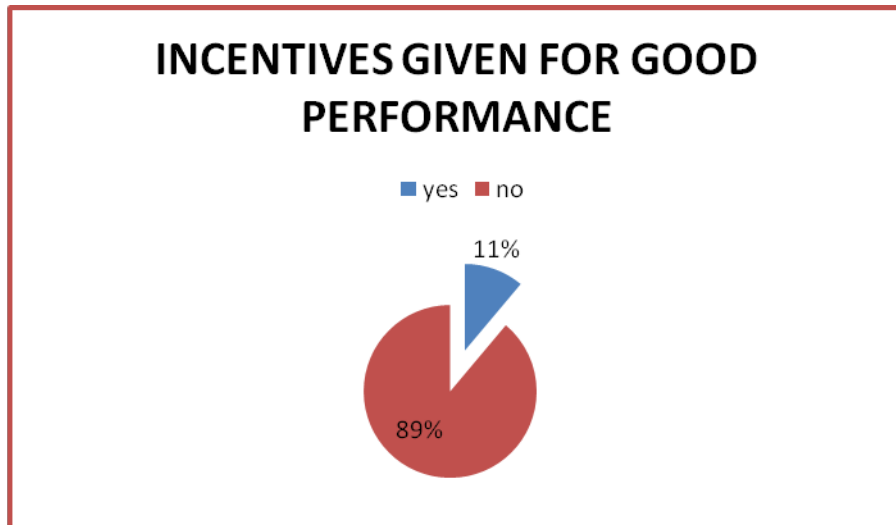
The implication of this finding is that the majority of the respondents have not benefited in monetary terms from the implementation of the appraisal system.

4.4 Undergone developmental training programme

This item investigated whether respondents had undergone any developmental training programme following the implementation of the appraisal system. Most of the respondents (61%), as reflected in fig. 4.6, indicated that they had never been taken through any such developmental training programme. Only 39% had attended developmental training.

FIGURE 4.6

UNDERGONE DEVELOPMENTAL TRAINING

■ yes ■ no

39%

61%
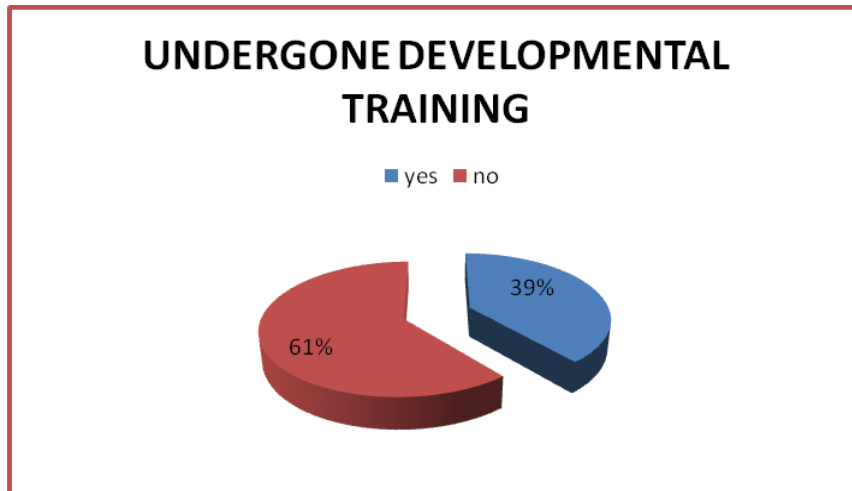
4.5   EMPLOYEES' EVALUATION OF THE SUPERVISOR'S APPRAISAL TECHNIQUES

This section of the questionnaire seeks to investigate the supervisees' feelings when interacting with their supervisors during the actual appraisal process. The section is comprised of 7 questions. The responses are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

STATEMENTS	YES		NO	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*
1. Did the supervisor put me at ease?	64	88.89	8	11.11
2. Did the supervisor ask me how I felt about my own performance?	36	50	36	50
3. Did the supervisor praise my good performance?	48	66.67	24	33.33
4. Did the supervisor give me a chance to ask questions?	60	83.33	12	16.67
5. Did the supervisor allow me to make suggestions?	52	72.28	20	27.78
6. Did the supervisor help me to establish future goals?	44	61.11	28	38.89
7. Did we clarify any disagreements?	48	66.67	24	33.33

The following is the analysis of the responses concerning respondents' evaluation of their supervisors' appraisal techniques as illustrated in Table 4.1:

ITEM 1 Did the supervisor put me at ease?

This item investigated the respondents' experiences during the interaction with their supervisors. All office-based educators are supervisees to supervisors. Each one is subject to this interaction, irrespective of the position held or the level of their post. A significant number of respondents, that is, 89%, felt that the supervisors put them at ease. This is in line with the ELRC Collective Agreement number 2 of 2003, which indicates that the process is 'a participative process involving discussion of expectations and performance between the supervisor and the supervisee', where the atmosphere is

expected not to be threatening but should rather allow the discussions to flow easily. 'Setting the tone' gets the office-based educators, especially shy supervisees, but who are nonetheless valued employees, to open up.

ITEM 2: Did the supervisor ask me how I feel about my own performance?

Respondents were requested to indicate whether the supervisor had asked how they felt about their own performance. There were almost equal percentages, 50% each for 'Yes' and 'No'. If 50% had been asked how they felt about the process, this is an indication that the supervisors do indeed understand that the process is a two-way feedback arrangement, because one of the aims of the appraisal system is to improve communication between the supervisor and the supervisee. That is why supervisors are expected to give the supervisees about ten days' notice for the appraisal session, so that the supervisees can mentally and emotionally prepare themselves for the session.

ITEM 3: Did the supervisor praise my good performance?

As reflected on table 4.1, respondents were asked whether their supervisors had praised them for their good performance. Most of the respondents agreed that during the appraisal process, supervisors also commended them on the indentified pockets of excellence, because 67% of the supervisors, according to the respondents, did praise the supervisees for their good performance. This concurs with one of the objectives of the appraisal interview, which is to give recognition where it is due. While the emphasis during appraisal interviews may tend to be on highlighting weak performance, the importance of recognizing an employee's strengths and areas of good performance must also be kept in mind.

Recognition of this type can be a powerful motivating force in furthering the employee's development. This is also an indication of adherence to one of the underlying principles of the appraisal system which says that the focus of the appraisal system is 'to be positive and constructive' during the implementation process (ELRC Collective Agreement 2 of 2003). If employees are to improve the quality of service they are delivering, a word of praise acts as encouragement for better performance.

ITEM 4: Did the supervisor give me a chance to ask questions?

The item should establish whether the supervisors give supervisees a chance to ask questions. The majority (83%) of the respondents responded positively that they had been able to ask questions. The implication is that the supervisees recognize the aims of the appraisal system. One of them is to 'improve communication' between the supervisor and the supervisee.

The process of appraisal is also regarded as 'participative' and involves 'discussions' of expectations and performance between supervisors and supervisees. The idea of asking questions also helps the supervisors to gain a better understanding of the employees and their work, because the supervisees are given the opportunity of talking freely, making suggestions, and giving reasons why they perform as they do.

ITEM 5: Did the supervisor allow me to make suggestions?

The item seeks to verify whether supervisors allow supervisees to make suggestions. About 73% of the respondents agreed that they had been allowed to make suggestions. This implies that supervisees have a say in the enhancement of their performance. That is why agreements are to be reached and signed by both parties during the process of the development of the Work Plan and the Capabilities.

The ELRC Collective Agreement number 2 of 2003 stipulates, inter alia, that during the quarterly reviews and any feedback session the supervisor and the supervisee should 'agree' on the adjustments necessary to improve performance. They should also 'discuss' the performance to date against Capabilities and 'make arrangements' for 'the agreed' training. There is thus an assertion that 'open discussions with the supervisee improve performance and further their future in the organization… [it] can build a better relationship between supervisor and supervisee, and building this sort of a relationship is an important key to the whole development process'.

ITEM 6: Did the supervisor help me to establish future goals?

In item 6, respondents were to state whether they agreed or disagreed that their supervisors had helped them to establish future goals. Table 4.1 shows that the supervisor helps to establish future goals for the supervisees because 61% of the respondents agreed with the statement. This is an indication that the implementation of the appraisal system is about improvement of quality of future service delivery. This concurs with the previous item, because if future goals are discussed with suggestions being considered, the enhancement of quality service delivery can be realized. And through targets set in the Work Plans of the supervisees and the development plans that result from the appraisal system, there will be planning and an influence on the future performance of the supervisees.

ITEM 7: Did we clarify any disagreements?

This item seeks to establish whether, during the interaction beween the supervisor and the supervisee, any disagreements that may have arisen were clarified. Out of the total number of collected instruments, 67% of the

respondents agreed that any disagreements during the implementation of the appraisal system had been clarified.

The implication in this item is that both the supervisor and supervisee realize the underlying principles of the appraisal system as articulated by the ELRC Collective Agreement number 2 of 2003. This states that 'the entire process must be transparent' and it must 'aim to minimize subjectivity through openness and discussion'. This is also maintained that 'an interesting view is that performance management is based on the principle of management by agreement rather than management by command, thus providing a more integrated and continuous approach to the management of performance (Armstrong, 1995).

4.6   DISCREPANCIES FOUND DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF THE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The respondents were asked questions which sought to investigate whether they understood the implementation process of the appraisal system and whether, in their view, the formal policy commitments to the appraisal system are actually practised.

According to Molale (2007), when policy is introduced, and the implementers have to execute the imperatives at the heart of a good intended policy, a different picture is created.

It is upon this submission that we look into the implementation process of the appraisal tool for the office-based educators with a view to understanding their perceptions on the appraisal system. As this appraisal system was developed with the intention of enhancing the performance of office-based educators, the primary aim being to manage and improve service delivery at all levels in the system, do they perceive it that way? As implementers and direct beneficiaries,

are the good intentions of the policy fulfilled implementation has to face up to the realities and practicalities of the process?

Table 4.2 illustrates respondents' perceptions and their experiences with regard to the discrepancies found during the implementation of the appraisal system. The section is comprised of 18 statements in response to which the respondents were to indicate the extent of their agreement on a four-point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree). Each item will be briefly discussed.

TABLE 4.2

STATEMENT	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
1. Appraisal system enhances the performance of office-based educators.	4	5.56	28	38.89	32	44.44	8	11.11
2. The appraisal system improves individual awareness and understanding of their work objectives and performance standard expected of them.	12	16.67	48	66.67	8	11.11	4	5.56
3. Through the appraisal system, service delivery is improved at all levels of the Department.	4	5.56	28	38.89	28	38.89	12	16.67
4. Implementation of the appraisal system is regularly monitored and supported within our unit/directorate during the cycle.	8	11.11	20	27.78	32	44.44	12	16.67
5. External monitoring and support of the implementation is conducted on a regular basis during the cycle.	4	5.56	12	16.67	48	66.67	8	11.11
6. Supervisors follow the processes and procedures of implementation to the letter.	4	5.56	16	22.22	44	61.11	12	16.67
7. In practice, the appraisal system was implemented for annual appraisal only.	4	5.56	44	61.11	20	27.78	4	5.56
8. There is a clear distinction between the descriptors of each rating objective (grey area)	12	16.67	28	38.89	28	38.89	4	5.56
9. The first-level supervisor conducts moderation to ensure that the work plans meet the required standard of the job as prescribed in the job description.	8	11.11	40	55.55	24	33.33	-	-

10. The second level supervisor did moderate work plans to ensure that the required value of the plans is reflected.	8	11.11	28	38.89	36	50	-	-
11. Quarterly reviews should include Work Plans and Capabilities.	4	5.56	52	72.22	12	16.67	4	5.56
12. Developmental needs of office-based educators are determined by the outcomes of quarterly reviews only.	20	27.78	44	61.11	8	11.11	-	-
13. The Central Moderation Committee should concentrate on high scores only and not on the spread of scores in the unit.	8	11.11	4	5.56	40	55.55	20	27.78
14. For career pathing supervisors make the Employee Equity Plan available to employees.	8	11.11	24	33.33	28	38.89	12	16.67
15. Lack of national uniformity in the implementation of appraisal system is the cause of lack of commitment within the system.	32	44.44	36	50	4	5.56	-	-
16. Senior managers are interested in the through-puts (activities) of the appraisal system.	12	16.67	36	50	24	33.33	-	-
17. Senior managers take payment of appraisal system incentives seriously.	4	5.56	28	38.89	28	38.89	12	16.67
18. Supervisors use the appraisal system as a punitive measure.	16	22.22	20	27.78	24	33.33	12	16.67

ITEM 1: Appraisal system enhances the performance of office-based educators.

One of the benefits of the appraisal system is that the performance of the employees is enhanced. According to Table 4.2 just above half (56%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the appraisal system enhanced their performance. About 54% of the respondents agreed with the statement. Although there seems to be a very slight statistical difference between the respondents who disagreed and those who agreed that the appraisal system enhanced their performance, the implication is that appraisal system does not enhance the performance of employees.

ITEM 2: The appraisal system improves individual awareness and understanding of their work objectives and the performance standard expected of them.

As reflected in Table 4.2, an overwhelming majority of respondents (83%) strongly agreed that the appraisal system improves their awareness and understanding of the work objectives and performance standard expected of them. Only 17% disagreed with the statement. It is evident that office-based educators in Dr Ruth S. Mompati are aware of the importance of participating in performance appraisal process.

ITEM 3: Through the appraisal system, service delivery is improved at all levels of the Department

More than half of the respondents (56%) strongly disagreed that through the appraisal system service delivery is improved at all levels of the Department. This implies that they see the appraisal process as not improving service delivery at all levels of the Department. This finding is contrary to the main purpose of appraisal, which aims at the improvement of service delivery in general, and yet they know the performance standard expected from them, as reflected in item 2.

ITEM 4: Implementation of the appraisal system is regularly monitored and supported within our unit/directorate during the cycle.

Item 4 seeks to establish whether the appraisal system is regularly monitored and supported within the unit/directorate of the respondents' during the cycle. In this instance 61% of respondents do not agree that the implementation of the appraisal system is regularly monitored and supported within their unit/directorate during the cycle. This is an indication of why they also feel that the appraisal system does not achieve its objective of improving service delivery in the system by getting the right people to do the right things the right way.

ITEM 5: External monitoring and support of the implementation is conducted on a regular basis during the cycle.

With regard to conducting the external monitoring and providing the support of the implementation on a regular basis during the cycle mentioned in item 5, about 67% and 11% of respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively. This gives the researcher 78% of the respondents not agreeing with the statement that regular external monitoring is conducted.

ITEM 6: Supervisors follow the processes and procedures of implementation to the letter

In item 6 the researcher wanted to check whether the supervisors follow the processes and procedures of implementation to the letter. According to the respondents, supervisors do not follow the process and procedures of implementation to the letter because 78% of respondents did not agree with the statement. Possibly the supervisors do not comply with the policy because there is no monitoring and provisioning of support for them during the process as indicated by the respondents in item 5.

ITEM 7: In practice, the appraisal system was implemented for annual appraisal only.

The statement in item 7 seeks to establish whether in practice the appraisal system was implemented for annual appraisal only. The majority (66%) of the respondents agree with the statement. These responses reinforce the fact that there is no proper internal and external monitoring and support of the appraisal system and that neither the supervisors nor the supervisees conform to the

appraisal system to the letter. That is why the process concentrates only on the annual appraisal phase.

ITEM 8: There is a clear distinction between the descriptors of each rating objective (grey area)

The respondents agreed that there was a clear distinction between the descriptors of each rating objectives (grey area) because 57% of them agreed with the statement in item 8. This indicates that the appraisal system policy is clearly developed and the respondents understand the contents.

ITEM 9: The first level supervisor conducts moderation to ensure that the Work Plans meet the required standard of the job as prescribed in the Job Description.

Item 9 checks whether the first-level supervisor conducts moderation to ensure that the Work Plans meet the required standard of the job as prescribed in the Job Description, and 67% of the respondents agreed with the statement. This contradicts the responses of statements in items 4, 5 and 6, where the respondents disagreed that implementation of the appraisal system was regularly monitored and supported within our unit/directorate during the cycle, and supervisors followed the processes and procedures of implementation to the letter respectively. Or the first-level supervisor is concerned only with the correctly developed Work Plans that meet the required standard of the job as prescribed in the Job Description. How the performance is appraised according to the Work Plan is not the concern of the first -level supervisor.

ITEM 10: The second level supervisor did moderate Work Plans to ensure that the required value of Work Plans is reflected.

In item 10 the researcher wanted to establish whether the second- level supervisor moderated Work Plans to ensure that the required value of Work Plans is reflected. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents did not agree, which means 50% did agree. This is a reflection of the contradiction observed in the above statement on the monitoring and support of the implementation of the process.

ITEM 11: Quarterly reviews should include Work Plans and Capabilities.

The statement in Item 11 aimed to establish whether or not the respondents do know that the quarterly reviews should include Work Plans and Capabilities. Here 78% agree that quarterly reviews included work plans and capabilities. This is an indication that the respondents understand the contents of the policy of the appraisal system well.

ITEM 12: Developmental needs of office-based educators are determined by the outcomes of quarterly reviews only.

In Item 12 the researcher wanted to check whether the respondents do know that, according to the policy appraisal system, the developmental needs of office-based educators are determined by the outcomes of quarterly reviews only. In this regard, 89% of the respondents agreed with the statement. But the policy states that both the quarterly reviews and the annual appraisal should determine the developmental needs of the office-based educators, not just the quarterly reviews, even if they are integral to the appraisal system. The quarterly reviews also ensure that there are no 'surprises' for either party (supervisor and supervisee) at the annual appraisal interview.

ITEM 13: The Central Moderation Committee should concentrate on high scores only and not on the spread of scores in the unit.

In Item 13, about 83% of the respondents did not agree that the Central Moderation Committee should concentrate on high scores only and not on the spread of scores in the unit. According to the ELRC Collective Agreement number 2 of 2003 on the appraisal system of office-based educators, this Central Moderation Committee is the third level of moderation, and they are to look for apparent abnormalities and call upon the relevant Head of the section or supervisor to justify the ratings. As a guide, the expectation is that the bulk of the staff (90-95%) will fall within an overall rating of 2 - 4, and that only very small numbers would be ranked in the other categories. That suggests that staff should be rated according to performance.

Clearly any supervisor who appeared to skew his or her ratings towards 'outstanding' or 'unacceptable' would have to justify their decisions before the Central Moderation Committee. During such an appearance by the supervisor or head of the section, a clear portfolio of evidence is needed to support the very high or very low scores and this process is not favoured by the respondents, as the 83% of them, which is the majority, indicated in their responses.

ITEM 14: Do career-pathing supervisors make the Employee Equity Plan available to employees?

In Item 14 the researcher seeks to establish whether the Employee Equity Plan is made available to employees for career pathing. Almost half of the respondents (56%) indicated that supervisors do not make the Employee Equity Plan for career pathing available to them. This implies that some of employees do not know the Employee Equity Plan of their units, and think that the appraisal system is the only instrument that can identify, evaluate and develop staff performance. Consequently, the enhancement of career pathing is not catered for.

ITEM 15: Lack of national uniformity in the implementation of the appraisal system is the cause of lack of commitment in the system.

In Item 15, the researcher wished to establish whether the lack of uniformity in the appraisal system is the cause of lack of commitment in the system. A significant number of the respondents, 94%, agreed with the statement. This means that the majority of the employees see lack of commitment in the system with regard to the implementation of the appraisal system as far as the office-based educators are concerned.

ITEM 16: Senior managers are interested in the through-puts (activities) of the appraisal system.

In Item 16, the researcher wanted to check whether the senior managers were interested in the through-puts (activities) of the appraisal system. Sixty seven percent (67%) of the respondents agreed with the statement. But, in Item 15, the majority of the respondents indicated their sense of a lack of commitment in the system, which is a contradiction of the response to this item. One has to ask whether, if senior managers are interested in the through-puts, they can, at the same time, lack commitment. Or does the lack of commitment apply to other levels of management, not to senior managers? But senior managers have to ensure the commitment of every employee in the system, because the success of the office-based appraisal system is effective implementation from the top.

ITEM 17: Senior managers take payment of appraisal system incentives seriously.

Item 17 checks whether the senior managers take payment of the appraisal system incentives serious. The respondents who do not agree with the statement are represented by 56% of the responses. This implies that senior managers, according to the respondents, ignore the appraisal system prescripts articulated in the ELRC Collective Agreement number 2 of 2003 which, " identifies, evaluates, and develops staff performance so that staff benefit through clarification of expectations, *recognition of their efforts*, feedback on their

performance, improved training and development, and enhanced career planning". And one of the aims of the appraisal system is to "provide a possible future basis for decisions on rewards".

ITEM 18: Supervisors use the appraisal system as a punitive measure.

In the statement contained in Item 18, the researcher wanted to establish whether the supervisors were using the appraisal system as a punitive measure. Half of the respondents, that is 50%, do not agree with the statement, which means that half of them do. The appraisal system is not utilized to punish the office-based educators, but to enhance their performance and to enable the Department of Education to realize their set objectives. According to the ELRC Collective Agreement number 2 of 2003, the appraisal system 'represents a departure from the previous 'assessment' schemes which were judgmental and inequitable.

4.7 RESPONDENTS' OPINIONS

Section D of the questionnaire required respondents to state their opinions on the implementation of the appraisal system for office-based educators. The question was expressed in this way because 'open-ended questions may relieve the anxiety of respondents about giving "false" answers, since they can speak freely. But openly-structured questions 'will also reassure respondents, who recognize that they are able to answer precise, straightforward questions without fail' (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995)

Firstly, they were to indicate whether the appraisal system for office-based educators according to them was an exercise worth doing or not. Secondly, they were expected to support their agreement or disagreement according to the statement given.

Figure 4.7 shows that the majority of respondents (61%) do not agree that the appraisal of office-based educators is a worthwhile exercise, while 39% of the respondents agreed that it was.

FIGURE 4.7
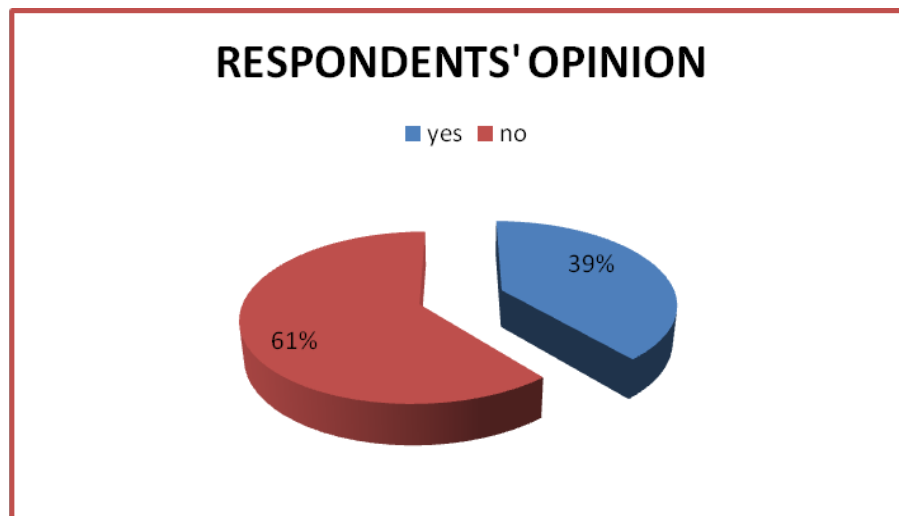
The implication is that most of the office-based educators do not see appraisal as an important process. This finding will be justified by the reasons put forward in their elaborations. The following are some of the comments repeatedly given as to why it is not a worthwhile exercise:

- Supervisors under-rate or decrease the scores of supervisees (66.67%)

According to the appraisal process of the office-based educators, supervisees first evaluate and score themselves and later they are evaluated by their supervisors. Some of the respondents' explanations as to why the process is not worth doing included:

'What supervisors usually do is to decrease the marks of the educator.'

'What is irritating most is that supervisors are told not to go beyond a certain mark. For example 3 unless a strongly convincing factors are available.'

These comments indicate that most supervisees are not happy with the scores allocated to them. Maybe they are not easily or satisfactorily convinced by their supervisors' reasons for a particular score being given against their own rating. This might be the reason why other respondents feel that '*there is no feedback on the final outcome*' (44.44%). The appraisal system is intended to give feedback to office-based educators. If the feedback is given on time, employees have the opportunity of improving in areas identified as 'grey areas'. Hence one respondent said:

feedbacks on final outcome of the process for individuals are urgently requested'.

- The process is not monitored and there is no induction for the newly appointed (50%).

Almost half the respondents stated that another reason for seeing the appraisal system as not worthwhile is that

'the implementation is not monitored, supervisors concentrate more on the output or outcome.'

'There is no induction programme for beginners in offices. The policy is good but not taken seriously'.

The last statement gives hope that the appraisal system could be taken seriously by both supervisors and supervisees for the success of its implementation. If it had been taken seriously by all involved, then the following statement might have not been made:

'*PMDS process is time consuming and the process is not transparent (27.78%).'*

- The developmental needs not attended to (72.22%)

After all the employees have undergone performance appraisal, they agree, together with their supervisors, on areas that should be developed. These are submitted to the HRD for inclusion in the skills-training programmes. The problem of the developmental needs that are not attended to is one reason for repeatedly-cited statements by majority of respondents. One said:

'The training needs or personal development is not considered and we become discouraged.'

- There is no proper planning for smooth implementation (55.55%).

Although the performance agreement outlines explicitly the time and steps to be followed during implementation, most respondents indicate that the appraisal system is usually done haphazardly and without proper planning. One supervisee mentioned that:

'Overlapping, uncoordinated activities of often questionable significance take up much of working time, leaving little room to attend to demands of potentially valuable systems such as appraisal. If valuable, there would be more order in the programmes put up, evaluations of systems put in place and communication (circulars, etc.).

4.8   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the analysis and interpretation of some of the empirical data were undertaken. From the research conducted, it can be concluded that the majority of office-based educators, especially those who are supervisees, see the implementation of the appraisal system as a waste of time, because the intended objectives are not realized at the end of the cycle.

The intended purpose is understood and augurs well for the improvement of service delivery, but the implementation process is flawed because of the lack of monitoring and support of the implementation process, as well as the lack of commitment in the system, as indicated in the responses to various items, as indicated by 5 and 15 respectively. This resulted in both supervisors and supervisees not following the processes and procedures of implementation to the letter. In Chapter Five, a summary of the research will be given. Important findings will be discussed and recommendations will be made.

CHAPTER 5

5. DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This research set out to investigate perceptions of office-based educators on the appraisal system. The office-based educators of the Dr Ruth S. Mompati District, Department of Education in the North West province were asked to complete the questionnaire. This chapter provides answers to the research questions posed in Chapter One:

1. What are the experiences of the office-based educators during the implementation process of the appraisal system?
2. How do the office-based educators view the formal policy commitments to the appraisal system and the actual practices with regard to the appraisal system?
3. Which ways can be employed to better the quality of the implementation process of the appraisal system?

The researcher will discuss the conclusions based on the data collected during the course of the study, and will put forward the recommendations that flow from the findings.

5.2 RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS

5.2.1 What were the experiences of the office-based educators during the implementation process of the appraisal system?

The supervisors make preparations for the appraisal review interviews according to the appraisal review prescripts stipulated in the ELRC Collective Agreement

number 3 of 2002. The prescripts are elaborate in respect of thorough preparations: notice is to be sent out 'ten working days' before the actual appraisal review interview. It is also stated that the process is 'a participative process involving discussion of expectations and performance between the supervisor and the supervisee', where the atmosphere is expected not to be threatening but should rather allow the discussions to flow easily. This is confirmed in Chapter 4, Table 4.1 (p.48), which shows that 88.89% of respondents indicated that the supervisors made them feel at ease and 83.33% said they were even given a chance to ask questions for interaction during the appraisal review process.

The 'setting of the tone' gets the office-based educators, especially shy supervisees, but who are nonetheless valued employees, to open up. Grote (2002) also emphasizes that 'the opening few minutes set the tone' at the start of the interview, where the aim is to 'relax' the supervisee. These preparations, completed before the actual appraisal session, are welcomed by the respondents.

In conclusion, despite all the preparations carried out in accordance with the ELRC Collective Agreement number 3 of 2002 prescripts for the annual review session and Grote's (2002) recommendations on the 'setting of the tone', the majority, 61%, of the office-based educators who are supervisees, as shown in Chapter 4, Figure 4.7 (p.62), do not regard the appraisal system as an exercise worth doing. They feel it is a waste of time and the following reasons were advanced:

- Supervisors under-rate supervisees and decrease their scores.
- The process is not monitored and there is no induction for newly-appointed office-based educators.
- The developmental needs are not attended to.
- There is no proper planning for smooth implementation.

But Deming (in Grote, 2002), an adherent of the quality movement, noted that individuals are rarely the responsible parties when quality problems arise. He maintains that more frequently poor quality is a function of system breakdowns and bad processes, not individual failures. He then urged organizations (in this case the Department of Education, North West, in the Dr Ruth S. Mompati district), including the office-based educators, to concentrate on system rather than human problems.

5.2.2 How do the office-based educators view the formal policy commitments to the appraisal system and the actual practices with regard to the appraisal system?

The office-based educators understand that one of the objectives of the appraisal system is to make them aware of their work objectives and the performance standards expected of them. Once they have this understanding, service delivery could be improved at all levels of the Department of Education. They understand the policy commitments, as indicated in Chapter 4, Table 4.2, (p.53) where it is shown that 83% of the respondents agree that appraisal system improves their individual awareness and understanding of their work objectives and the performance standard expected of them.

However, because of the lack of commitment in the Department when it comes to the implementation of the appraisal system, supervisors, according to Chapter 4, Table 4.2, (p.53), do not follow the processes and procedures of implementation to the letter. Most of the respondents, 78%, confirmed non-compliance to the appraisal system procedures because supervisors only concentrate on annual appraisal, and neglect the quarterly reviews and ongoing feedback sessions.

The literature review confirms that 'performance management can be regarded as an ongoing process…" (Spangenberg, 1994). Both the supervisor and the

supervisee monitor ongoing performance against the Work Plan and the Capabilities. The supervisor provides balance and constructive ongoing feedback, both positive and negative, which is focused on improving performance (ELRC Collective Agreement 3 of 2002). Regular feedback obviates surprises for both supervisor and supervisee at the end of the quarterly and annual review interviews. These surprises are displayed in Chapter 4, to which 66.7% of respondents replied that the supervisors under-rated or decreased the scores of the supervisees. This would not have occurred if, according to Spangenberg (1994), there had been ongoing feedback on an issue-by-issue basis rather than containing it all in one session.

Payment of incentives is not regarded as important, to which 89% of the respondents attest, indicating that they had never received incentives. But research (Banister & Balkin, 1990) has reported that supervisees seem to find greater acceptance of appraisal process, and feel more satisfied with it, when the process is directly linked to rewards. But if 89% of the respondents did not receive incentives, and 79% of respondents, as shown in Figure 4.6, (p.47), went through developmental programmes, the correlation holds water, because if fewer receive incentives, it means more will obviously be subject to capacity building and support programmes. This is in the spirit of the appraisal system prescripts. But the supervisees do not regard it in the same way; they think supervisors decrease or under-score them so that they can qualify for the incentives.

If incentives or rewards were the main reasons for implementing the appraisal system, then the ELRC Collective Agreement 2 of 2003 would be flouted, because its aim is not just to 'provide a possible future basis for decisions on rewards', but

- '*to improve performance against corporate goals by establishing a performance culture;*

- *Improve individuals' awareness and understanding of their work objectives and the performance standards expected of them;*

- *Ensure that individuals know how their performance against these standards is perceived;*

- *Improve communication between supervisors and their staff;*

- *Evaluate performance fairly and objectively;*

- *Provide opportunities to identify individuals' development needs and to devise, with their supervisors, plans to address those needs and*

- *Facilitate the effective management of unsatisfactory performance'.*

In South Africa, the National Department of Education and the Educator Labour Unions are currently involved in intensive discussions on linking the appraisal system with salary increases and strengthening Teacher Development Strategy. This resulted in the signing of the ELRC Collective Agreement 4 of 2009.

Given that there is a lack of regular monitoring and support both externally and internally, as confirmed by 78% of the respondents and shown in Chapter 4 Table 4.2, (p.53), the policy commitments have not been realized. Webb (2003:9) maintains that the most important reason why performance systems fail is low management commitment. Various reasons could account for this low level of commitment. According to Webb (2003) it is mainly due to the fact that managers view this system as being of no help and supervisors are concerned about having to fill in so many tedious forms (Armstrong & Appelbaum, 2003). Molale (2007) also confirms that when policy is instituted, and implementers have to execute the imperatives of the good intended policy, a different picture is created.

5.2.3 Which ways can be employed to better the quality of the implementation process of the appraisal system?

The low commitment to the implementation process of the appraisal system could be the issue of time constraints. Supervisors simply do not have the time to

engage in long discussions and complete the paper work necessary for the PMDS. Supervisors are concerned about having to fill in so many tedious forms (Armstrong & Appelbaum, 2003). They feel that too much emphasis is placed on these and too little actual training takes place. The reduction of quarterly reviews to semester reviews could assist in giving more time to ongoing feedback sessions rather than having quarterly paper-work.

Some of the opinions raised by respondents in Chapter 4 when trying to explain why the process is not worth doing included these:

'*What supervisors usually do is to decrease the marks of the educators*'

'*What is irritating most is that supervisors are told not to go beyond a certain mark. For example 3 unless a strongly convincing factors are available*'.

Significant here is the lack of ongoing feedback, because had it been practised, according to the ELRC Collective Agreement 3 of 2002, there would have been no 'surprises' during the quarterly and annual review sessions. It is therefore important to discuss the quality of performance with the supervisees on a continuous basis.

The process is not monitored and there is no induction for the newly-appointed (50%) staff. Almost half the respondents stated the following as a further reason for seeing the appraisal system as not worth doing:

'*the implementation is not monitored, supervisors concentrate more on the output or outcome*'.

This indicates that the appraisal system should be taken seriously by both the supervisor and supervisees if it is to be successful because those who carry it out can identify gaps in the process.

In conclusion, the ELRC Collective Agreement 3 of 2002 also emphasizes that both the supervisor and the supervisee monitor the ongoing performance against the Work Plan and the Capabilities. The supervisor provides balance and constructive ongoing feedback, both positive and negative, which is focused on improving performance. Thus it is a two-way process and extensive monitoring and support should be provided.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the study, there are a number of recommendations relating to the implementation of the appraisal system for office-based educators. If the stipulations in the policy are to be carried out, the following have to be taken into consideration:

- Time frames articulated by the policy must be adhered to or review of the ELRC Collective Agreement 3 of 2002 is necessary for reducing the quarterly paper work to semester reviews, as in the IPMDS and the PMDS for SMS members.

- A feedback stage should be implemented and supervisor and supervisee should engage in discussions on how the quality of the performance could be reinforced or improved. Agreement on the rating should also be reached amicably: i.e. ongoing review and feedback sessions are to be held to determine progress registered or to identify impediments to progress at a very early stage of performance.

- Supervisees should attend further workshops that emphasize the main objective of the appraisal system, i.e. ELRC Collective Agreement 3 of 2002 was signed and put into practice to identify, evaluate and develop office-based educators' performance.

- There should be a review of the policy on moderation of results by the Central Moderating Committee and on who constitutes the moderating team

If the above could be met, the Department of Education could implement the appraisal system without hindrance. The findings will be used to improve the quality of the implementation process of the appraisal system for office-based educators.

5.4   CONCLUSION

The above recommendations will require careful consideration by both the provincial and district Departments of Education to enhance the quality of the appraisal system for office-based educators so that the articulated objectives of the appraisal system as in the ELRC Collective Agreement number 3 of 2003 will be realized.

The Department of Education as an organization will be helped in many ways by using the appraisal system. The following (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995) are cases in point:

- It could enhance the quality of organizational decisions ranging from promotions to discharges;
- It could enhance the quality of individual decisions ranging from career choices to the development of future strengths;
- It could affect an employee's attachment to his/her organization;
- It provides a rational, legally-defensible basis for personnel decisions, such as promotions, discharges or differences in pay increases.

In the broader sense, one must concur with Meyer, Mabaso and Lancaster (2001), who maintain that educational training and development play a critical role in the socio-economic development of any nation. The through-puts by the Department of Education, i.e. producing literate citizens, should correlate with the demand for monetary rewards for high ratings and the intensive training programmes required by the appraisal system processes.

Deming (in Grote, 2002) says that quality operates on the basis that if operations are performing properly and according to standards, they should be left alone. Attention should be concentrated only on those aspects that vary from the norm. If this notion was applied to human performance, the great majority of workers in an organization would be ignored by the organization because their performance was not out of alignment either positively or negatively. One of the most frequent complaints people have of their organizations is that they get little attention when they do what is expected. Only when they excel (which for most people is rare) or completely fail (which also is rare) do they get any attention from the boss.

He then concludes that performance appraisal forces managers and organizations to focus on the fact that the great majority of employees are doing exactly what the organization expects of them and that the company recognizes and reinforces their contributions.

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APPENDIX: D QUESTIONNAIRE

OFFICE-BASED EDUCATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire forms part of the requirements for Masters in Education (Educational Leadership) and is addressed to office-based educators, who are requested to contribute to a study that seeks to investigate the perceptions by office-based educators of the implementation process of the appraisal system.

The appraisal system for office-based educators has the following underpinning key principles:

♦ Its focus is to improve future performance, not simply to judge past performance;

♦ Its focus is to be positive and constructive even where performance needs to improve;

♦ It encourages regular, honest and timely feedback, both positive and negative;

♦ It is a participative process involving discussion of expectations and performance between supervisor and staff member;

♦ It places a strong emphasis on development;

♦ The entire process must be transparent; and

♦ It aims to minimize subjectivity through openness and discussion.

Currently in North West Department of Education, with focus on the Dr Ruth S. Mompati District, we have just made fourth year (2008/2009 cycle) submissions of the annual appraisal documentation for consideration by Human Resource practitioners. It is critical to reflect and make constructive contributions regarding your perceptions of the implementation process of the appraisal system. The timing for this exercise is apt, with every step taken still vivid in our minds.

With this submission the researcher requests your good selves to respond honestly to this questionnaire.

All information in this questionnaire will be treated confidentially.

It is estimated that it will require approximately 20 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

Kindly put the completed questionnaires in the box labeled "RESEARCH" in the Executive Manager's /Office Manager's office.

Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is greatly appreciated.

A.   BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

INDICATE YOUR RESPONSE WITH A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX.

   i. What position do you hold?

Supervisor	Supervisee

   ii. Years of experience in your present post:

0 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 20	20 to 30	30 and over

   iii. Gender?

Female	Male

   iv. Which section of the District do you belong to?

District office	Area Project Office

   v. Have you received incentives as a result of good performance?

Yes	No

vi. Have you undergone any developmental training programme as a result of the outcome of the implementation of the appraisal system?

Yes	No

B. EMPLOYEE'S APPRAISAL OF THE SUPERVISOR'S APPRAISAL TECHNIQUE:

EMPLOYEE'S EVALUATION OF THE SUPERVISOR'S APPRAISAL TECHNIQUE'S

Answer each question with a cross(X) in the appropriate box.

ITEMS	STATEMENTS	YES	NO
1.	Did the supervisor put me at ease?		
2.	Did the supervisor ask me how I felt about my own performance?		
3.	Did the supervisor praise my good performance?		
4.	Did the supervisor give me a chance to ask questions?		
5.	Did the supervisor allow me to make suggestions?		
6.	Did the supervisor help me to establish future goals?		
7.	Did we clarify any disagreements?		

C. **EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH REGARD TO DISCREPANCIES FOUND DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF THE APPRAISAL SYSTEM**

Indicate with a cross in the appropriate box to show your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

ITEM	STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The appraisal system enhances the performance of office-based educators.				
2	The appraisal system improves individual awareness and				

ITEM	STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	understanding of the work objectives and performance standard expected of them.				
3	Through appraisal system, service delivery is improved at all level of the department.				
4	Implementation of the appraisal system is regularly monitored and supported within our unit/directorate during the cycle.				
ITEM	STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	External monitoring and support of the implementation is conducted on a regular basis during the cycle.				
6	Supervisors follow the processes and procedures of implementation to the letter.				
7	In practice, the appraisal system is implemented for annual appraisal only.				
8	There is a clear distinction between the descriptors of each rating objective (grey area).				
9	The first-level supervisor conducts moderation to ensure that the Work Plans meet the required standard of the job as prescribed in the job description.				
10	The second-level supervisor moderated Work Plans to ensure that the required value of Work Plans was reflected.				
11	Quarterly reviews should include Work Plans and Capabilities.				
12	Developmental needs of office-based educators are determined by the outcomes of quarterly reviews only.				
13	The Central Moderation Committee should concentrate on high scores only and not on the spread of scores in the unit.				
14	For career-pathing, supervisors make the Employee Equity Plan available to employees.				
15	Lack of national uniformity in the implementation of the appraisal system is the cause of lack of commitment in the system.				
16	Senior managers are interested in the through-puts (activities) of the appraisal system.				

17	Senior managers take payment of appraisal system incentives seriously.				
18	Supervisors use the appraisal system as a punitive measure.				

D. What is your opinion with regard to the implementation of the appraisal system for office-based educators? Is it a worthwhile exercise? Indicate with a cross (X) in the appropriate box.

YES	NO

Elaborate on your response:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE.