

Article

The Effect of Performance Appraisal on Employee Performance at The University of KwaZulu-Natal

Fulufhelo Mulidzwi, Taahir Vajeth & Pfano Mashau

School of Management, IT and Governance, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban 4000,
South Africa

*Corresponding Author: mashaup@ukzn.ac.za

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Abstract: Performance appraisal (PA) is commonly used to manage as well as to measure employees' performance at various organisations. Large or small organisations are always seeking much better ways to effectively enhance and improve employee performance thus maximising profit. The main aim of the study was to investigate the effect of PA on employee performance at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The hypothesis for this study was that the PA process will have a positive impact on employee performance at the UKZN while the null hypothesis was that the PA process will not have any impact on employee performance at the UKZN. The study employed a quantitative research method. The study also used a descriptive research design to help the researcher describe the characteristics of the population in an accurate and systematic approach. A stratified random sampling technique was employed, employees were divided and categorised into groups representing departments or schools they belong to, and then a simple random sampling in each group was applied. The sample size was determined to be 225 academic and support staff. Findings showed that PA has a positive impact on employee performance at UKZN. The study recommends that managers and supervisors must continue to set clear work goals and work targets for their employees as it is noted that employees are more effective and highly motivated when they know what is required from them and their work target. Appraisers must give frequent feedback to employees and help them improve in areas where they are lacking.

Keywords: Performance; appraisal; appraisers; employees; higher education

Introduction

In South Africa (SA), PA is currently used by various organisations both non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private organisations [PTY (LTD)] as well as State-owned Enterprises (SOEs). Other government-owned organisations using the PA process even though they are currently operating autonomously from the government are institutions of higher learning including universities. UKZN is one of the institutions of higher learning in SA which uses the PA process every year. UKZN is ranked in the top 5 of best universities in SA, and the top 10 of best universities in the African continent (BusinessTech, 2024). In order for an institution such as UKZN to perform well and compete with other top institutions of higher learning locally and globally, it is crucial to ensure that PA processes are conducted effectively and in a way that seeks to improve employee productivity and overall performance.

This study was focusing on determining the effect of performance appraisal (PA) on employees' performance at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). In this study, we will also consider various theories such as Appraisal by results theory, Psychological theory as well as goal setting theory in relation to

the PA and their effect on employee performance. The study will also examine existing literature in relation to Performance Management System (PMS), while considering the pros of cons of PMS and also looking at PA process and employee performance. The study will then present the methodology used when conducting this study as well as the findings obtained after the collection of primary data for this study which will be presented in a form of figures and tables. A thorough discussion of the findings will be provided followed by the conclusion and recommendations.

Various scholars have since established that there is a direct positive relationship between the process of PA and employee overall performance, and according to Almulaiki (2023), if performance management is done properly within a particular organisation, it will help employees to quickly improve their skills, potential and abilities which will help them perform to the best of their capabilities. The primary objective of almost every organisation is to earn large profit returns and produce better and quality service to their clients and other relevant stakeholders through their human capital as well as knowledge assets, this can only be done when these human capital and knowledge assets are highly motivated to perform well within various organisations. Such is also the case in the institutions of higher learning where employee performance is of paramount importance as various institutions are always in constant competition to be ranked amongst the best both nationally and internationally through best performance.

Although there is existing literature on the effect of PA on employee performance within the public and the private sector in SA, there is however a notable gap when it comes to assessing the effect of PA on employee performance within the higher education sector in SA. This study will therefore carefully examine the effect of the PA process on employee performance at the UKZN. The study will also provide awareness at UKZN on how the PA processes can help improve employee performance. According to Human Resource (HR) practitioners at UKZN, the institution has a serious challenge when it comes to retaining and managing its talent, and this study will help the HR Department within the institution to find the best and relevant methods to retain its talent through effective PA processes. The study will also help UKZN as well as other institutions of higher learning to identify problems that employees face when it comes to analysing the institutional goals and objectives as well as policies concerning work performance.

The main objective of the study was to determine the effect of performance appraisal (PA) on employee performance at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The hypothesis presented for this study states that the PA process will have a positive impact on employee performance at the UKZN while the null hypothesis was that the PA process will not have any impact on employee performance at the UKZN. PA is one of the many crucial tools which can be used to measure job performance as well as the productivity of employees in various entities (Balu, 2022). Large or small Organisations including institutions of higher learning are always seeking much better ways to effectively enhance and improve the performance of their employees to maximize financial returns. Hayes (2022) defines PA as a frequent review of employees' overall job performance as well as employees' contribution to a particular organisation, and it is mainly done to assess employees' growth, achievements, and skills or lack thereof. Institutions of higher learning are always competing for a higher national and international ranking spot and Balu (2022) has noted the necessity of PA in higher education systems as well as other relevant employee performance assessments to help institutions to effectively plan future strategies and establish performance targets that employees should meet to remain competitive both locally and globally.

One notable PA aspect that is affecting employee performance in the higher education sector is goal setting and according to Camp (2017), goal setting's presence is much weaker in the higher education sector, which then affect teachers' productivity negatively. Straw (2024), however, suggests that having set goals in place in any institution may significantly improve employees' chances of success and productivity. Watts, Rullman and Finn (2023), have noted some serious challenges within the higher education sector such as unfair compensation, concerns by employees over work/life balance in the higher education sector, lack of transformation as well as concerns over sense of urgency over work as some factors that if not properly addressed, may lead to low employee productivity within the higher education sector and subsequently poor performance by institutions of higher learning, hence a paramount and urgent need for appraisers to address all these challenges during the PA process.

Literature Review

1. Appraisal by Results Theory

This theory is also known as Management by Objectives (MBO), and it was introduced as early as 1950s by Peter Drucker who is a noted management theorist who clearly indicated in MBO method that the methods of PA are result-orientated. This method strictly measures employees' performance by determining the degree to which the work objectives which have been predetermined have been met (Salama, 2021). Employers and managers look at the results given through employees' performance given a specific work target and determine whether or not to appraise employees. In most cases, objectives will be established and agreed upon by both manager and subordinates, thereafter employees will be expected to find the skills needed to in order to achieve the given objectives (Aamodt, 2013).

This theory does not focus on the employees' traits and it overcomes challenges that are brought about by assuming that are brought about by assuming that we can reliably measure identify specific traits from employees that are much needed for a job success (Salama, 2021). According to (Aamodt, 2013) this theory focuses on the actual end results in a sense that when employees exceed or at least meet their objectives, they are then acknowledged to have met the accepted job performance level. This then suggests that under this method, employees are judged based on the real outcomes not from their potential to succeed in their work. Employees are highly motivated to perform well when there have specified objectives for their work and if this theory is rightfully applied by appraisers, there is a very high chance that it may improve employees' motivation and performance as well as job satisfaction (Islami, Mulolli, Mustafa, 2018).

2. Psychologic Theory

Work psychology theory has been established as early as the 18th century and is referred to as an understating of people's emotions, behaviour and thoughts in relation to their work/employment (Arnold, & Randall, & Patterson, & Robertson, & Cooper, & Burnes, & Harris, & Axtell, 2016). This theory is used to help improve employers' management and understating their employees and for employees to understand their employers as well as themselves better (Arnold et al., 2016). On many occasions, organizations have complicated systems for the assessment of benefits and costs of their operation besides their management of their employees. Managers always refers to their employees as their greatest assets, human capital or knowledge assets although in most cases employees might not feel that their treatment by the organization and by the employers is that of valued assets. This is supported by Rounds and Su (2014) who state that even though organizations may view their employees as valuable assets, employees do not necessarily feel like valued assists due to treatment they receive from their managers.

According to Rounds and Su (2014), managers should focus more on operational functions like loss and profit account as well as ensuring that they get to understand their employees' background and behaviour. Managers must also lead by example and show the way on how they want the work to be done instead of just assuming that employees understand their tasks. This theory is most essential to both appraisers and employees as it measures the attitude, emotions and the way employees think in relation to their work in order to identify areas where they might be lacking or of concern which needs training, developmental as well as psychological intervention in order to help them to perform better (Landers and Marin, 2021). Sometimes employees might have a bad perception about their employers as well as their fellow employees due to various reasons and it's important that this theory is correctly applied during the PA process so that employee performance may improve (Campbell and Wilmot, 2018).

3. Goal Setting Theory

This theory was brought forward in the 1970s by Latham and Locke (1979). The primary explanation of this theory stated that specified goals can operate as a performance inducer. This in simple terms means that employees can be highly motivated to perform better if they are given specific goals or targets instead of expecting employees to just work with no direction or specific target/goal. This theory is highly supported by Muriuki (2016) who agrees that when goals within a particular organisation are specific, motivation, as well

as the performance of employees within the organisation, is highly increased thus resulting in more production as well as high financial returns. According to Muriuki (2016), this mostly happens when critical but feasible goals are set for employees while proper feedback is provided on their performance. In agreement with this theory, Muriuki (2016) further stresses the importance of setting goals by employees within a particular organisation with the motive for employees to own these goals while also stressing the importance of regular and proper feedback by employers, managers, and HR Practitioner as feedback becomes a source of motivation for employees to achieve set and achieve even bigger goals

4. Performance Management System (PMS)

Sulistiani (2018) defines performance management as a process of developing, managing, identifying, and measuring the performance of human resources in a particular organisation or entity. According to Jain and Gautam (2014), PMS is a system that connects organisational goals with employee activities. Performance Management System is a cycle comprising of many steps, starting with the clarification of expectations and the first step should ensure that the workers understand clearly the organisational objectives and goals (Modipane, Botha, & Blom, 2019). The second step ensures "performance facilitation, performance monitoring, providing feedback, coaching, and support", and the last step for PMS is to acknowledge performance (Viedge, 2017). Many organisations including institutions of higher learning in SA have expanded their dimensions in managing and assessing their employees' performance and are now using PMS. UKZN as well has long adopted PMS as their main tool for PA. MTI (2021) has identified some of the pros and cons which are associated with PMS.

The pros include providing workers with valuable feedback and according to MTI (2021), this feedback is important as it reveals where employees are doing well as well as where they are lacking. Feedback also helps managers/supervisors to come up with appropriate tips, training, and development programs to help improve their employees' performance. Another advantage of PMS is that managers/supervisors can easily access the PA history record which is not always negative, and this can be used to encourage and celebrate employees' successes within an organisation, and this may often result in motivated and happier employees. Another advantage noted by MTI (2021) is that it opens a door for manager/employee engagement. If used properly, PMS can be a powerful foundation and a strategic tool for employees to achieve their goals and ambitions and for the organisation to accomplish its important financial goals (Hervie, Illes and Dunay, 2021)

MTI (2021) also noted some disadvantages associated with PMS. One of the disadvantages that have been noted is that PMS can be time-consuming for managers (especially from big entities) who will have to spend plenty of time writing employees' performance reviews. Another disadvantage is that PMS outcomes tend to discourage employees. If the review outcomes from PMS are not a pleasant experience or may not be the true reflection of the employee's performance, this may demotivate and discourage that employee. PMS as a human-made system is not immune to errors, and these errors may also cause more damage than good to employees' motivation and thus affecting their performance in the process. A study by Lunenburg (2012) discovered that some of these errors include leniency or strictness, halo effect, and central tendency.

5. PA Process and Employee Performance

In a study conducted by Kagotho (2017) to determine the effect of PA on employee performance in the healthcare sector in Kenya, an overwhelming majority of participants agreed that the PA process has a significant influence in the overall performance of the employees and that the PA process is critically important for the identification of relevant employee training programs that may help improve employees' skills and potential. In the same study, majority of the participants also indicated that the PA process positively affect employee performance to a greater extent.

Another study conducted by Helal (2022) to investigate the impact of performance appraisals on employee productivity in the Lebanese retail sector targeted 100 respondents in the Lebanese companies. The study collected data quantitatively and concluded that there was a direct relationship between appraisal methods such as MBO, 360-degree appraisal, performance appraisal, and the overall organisational performance.

A study conducted by Hamidi (2023) to assess the impact of PA on employee's job satisfaction and organisational behaviour noted that the experience of a positive PA raises employees' sense of self-worth and accomplishment thus fostering trust in the legitimacy of the process. The study further emphasized the need to give feedback to employees, defining goals and encouraging employee involvement.

Methodology

1. Research Design

The study applied a descriptive quantitative research method, so that it may include a large sample size as well as avoid biases that are associated with qualitative methods so that it may effectively help the researcher to successfully describe the characteristics of the population in an accurate and systematic approach. According to Kivunja (2017), a research paradigm represents a set of common beliefs, assumptions, and principles that are shared among scientists on how problems should be addressed and understood. The study applied a post-positivist research paradigm as it is consistent with the quantitative research method.

2. Participants

According to Kivunja (2017), population is defined as the total group of individuals from whom information concerning a particular study may be required. The study was targeting the academic employees from the College of Law and Management Studies (CLMS) as well as the support staff from the Student Services Division at UKZN. The total population of interest for the study is 514 comprising 205 academic staffs from (CLMS) and 309 support staff from the Student Services Division at UKZN. The College of Law and Management Studies at UKZN comprises of 4 schools, namely, the School of Accounting, Economics and Finance (SAEF), Graduate School of Business & Leadership (GSB&L), School of Management, Information Technology and Governance (SMITG) and the School of Law. The Division of Student Services at UKZN comprises of 5 departments which include Department of student residence affairs (DSRA), Department of student funding (DSF), Student Governance and Leadership Development (SGLD), Student Health and Sports department (SHSD) as well as the Department of Disability Support and HIV/AIDS Program (DDS/HIV&AIDS).

3. Instrument

The study made use of a stratified random sampling technique. According to Hayes (2023), stratified random sampling is a sampling method that involves population division into smaller subgroups called strata. In this study, employees were divided and categorized into groups representing departments or schools they belong to, then a simple random sampling in each group was applied. For the study workers were stratified into 9 different groups representing the 5 departments that they are coming from as well as 4 schools they are coming from.

According to Taherdoost (2017), the sample size is the number of individual participants who form part and are included in a particular study. For this study, a sample size of 225 participants was derived from the 514-total population of interest applying a formula which was introduced by Yamane (1967). This formula has been used by various scholars throughout the years until this very day and it has been supported by the likes of Anokye (2020) who viewed it as one of the best formulas to accurately determine a sample size for any survey. The formula is presented as follows:
$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Whereby n = sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision or sampling error. Hussey and Hussey (1997) argue that there can never be any survey that may provide 100% surety and have error limits of lower than 5% as well as a confidence level of higher than 95% which should be accepted. When applying the formula to the study, a sample size of 225 was determined.

$$n = \frac{514}{1+514(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 225$$

4. Data Collection and analysis

According to Brown (2017), a survey is a method of collecting information from a sample of individuals and in research it is used to resolve problems that have been observed, for answering questions that have been raised as well as to determine whether certain objectives have been addressed. In this study, individuals within the sample from various Schools in the College of Law and Management Studies as well as employees from various departments within the Division of Student Services at UKZN were randomly given standardized questionnaires to help investigate and question a broad sample. The participants within the sample were expected to respond by giving appropriate answers, whereby a 5-point Likert scale was used which in all questionnaires, ranging from (1-strongly disagree), (2-disagree), (3-neutral), (4-agree), (5-strongly agree) to depict the appropriate measurement level for further statistical analyses. A neutral response was determined to mean (neither agree nor disagree) based on the questions asked in the questionnaire.

For the collection of primary data, a method of survey data collection was employed in this study. According to Ponto (2015), “Survey research can use quantitative research strategies (e.g., using questionnaires with numerically rated items), qualitative research strategies (e.g., using open-ended questions), or both strategies (i.e., mixed methods). As it is often used to describe and explore human behaviour”. In this study, individuals within the sample from various Schools in the CLMS as well as employees from various departments within the DSS at UKZN were randomly given standardized questionnaires which to help investigate and question a broad sample. For those who preferred filling up the questionnaire online, a survey link was created in Google forms and shared with them to fill it up online. There were no restrictions based on gender, race, age as well as job title, or level of management. The participants within the sample were expected to respond by giving appropriate answers, whereby a 5-point Likert scale was used which in all questionnaires, ranging from (1-strongly disagree), (2-disagree), (3-neutral), (4-agree), (5-strongly agree) to depict the appropriate measurement level for further statistical analyses. A neutral response was determined to mean (neither agree nor disagree) based on the questions asked in the questionnaire.

Data that was collected was first entered into Microsoft Excel and then coded within SPSS as per each variable of the study and the study made use of descriptive statistics. Kaur, Stoltzfus, J & Yellapu, (2018) states that descriptive statistics are mostly utilized for summarizing data in an orderly and summarized manner by relating a relationship among variables within a population or sample. Calculating descriptive statistics symbolizes an important initial step when conducting a study and should at all-time be done before making an inferential statistical comparison (Kaur et al., 2018).

Findings

1. Demographics Information

Gender

According to the findings illustrated in Figure 1 above, it was noted that 54% of the targeted respondents were males while females made up 46% of the respondents for this study.

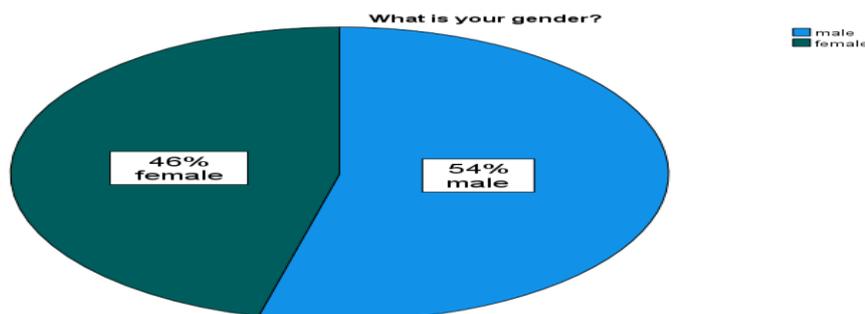


Figure 1. Sex/Gender

Age Group

According to the findings illustrated in Figure 2 below, 20% of the respondents fell under the age bracket of 21-30 years, 31% of the respondents fell under the age bracket of 31-40 years, 30% of the respondents fell under the age bracket of 40-50 years, 13% of the respondents fell under the age bracket of 51-60 years while only 7% of the respondents fell under the age bracket of 60+ years.

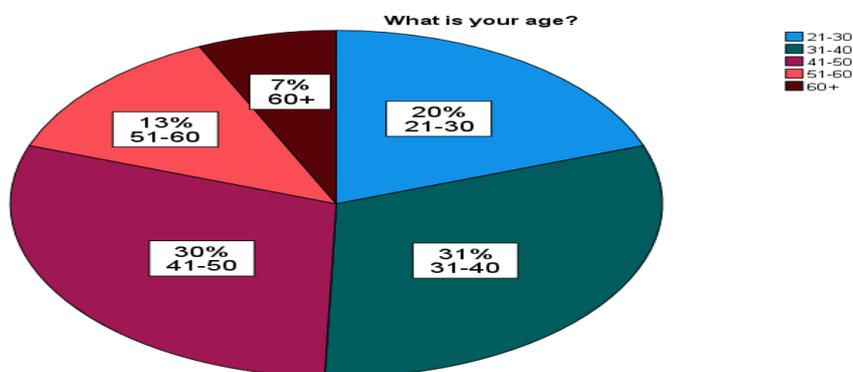


Figure 2. Age group

Educational Level

As per the findings shown in Figure 3 below, only 1% of the respondents had no specific educational level/qualification. 10% of the respondents had Matric/Grade 12, while 7% of the respondents obtained a national certificate as their highest qualification. 9% of the respondents possess a National Diploma, and 12% of the respondents possess a university degree. 18% of the respondents obtained Honours or either a Postgraduate Diploma qualification, 16% of the respondents have a Masters degree while 27% of the respondents have a doctor in philosophy (PhD).

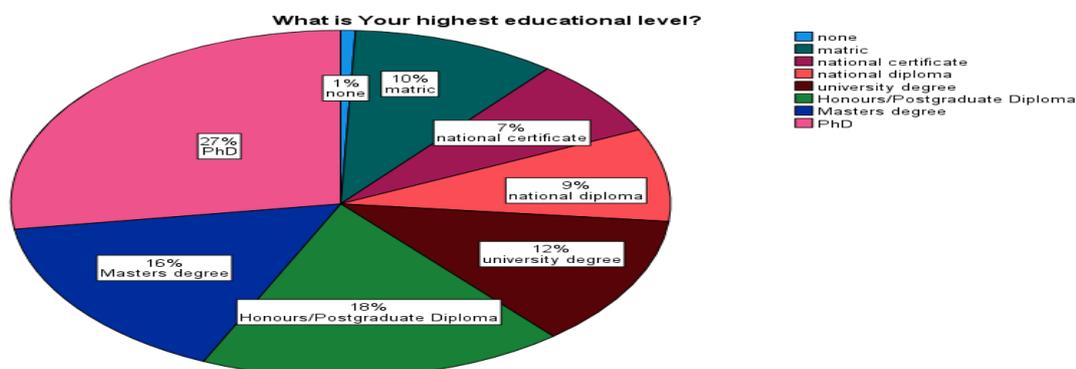


Figure 3. Educational level

Job Position Level of The Respondents

10% of the respondents were General workers, 9% of the respondents were Junior staff, 31% of the respondents were Staff, 7% of the respondents were senior staff, 3% of the respondents were in middle management, 1% of the respondents were in Senior Management. 2% of the respondents were Junior lecturers, 18% of the respondents were Lecturers, 12% of the respondents were Senior lectures, 4% of the respondents were Associate Professors, 1% of the respondents belonged to the category of Professors while another 1% of the respondents belonged to the category of Senior Professors.

School/Department of Work

15% of the respondents belonged to the SAEF, while 4% of the respondents were from the GSB&L. Another 15% of the respondents belonged to SMITG while only 7% of the respondents were from the School of Law.

18% of the respondents were from the DSRA, 9% of the respondents were from the SGLD, 11% of the respondents were from SHSD, 14% were from the DDS and HIV/AIDS and 7% of the respondents were from the DSF.

2. The Effect of The PA Process on Employee Performance

The effect of PA process is assumed to have a big positive impact on employee performance. The respondents were asked a set of questions on a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. On this questionnaire, a neutral response represented (**neither agree nor disagree**) response.

Table 1. The effect of the PA process on employee performance

	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	%	%	%	%	%
The process of (Performance Appraisal) encourages confidence.	12%	19%	15%	43%	11%
I am happy and motivated with the way Performance Appraisal process is conducted to evaluate my performance.	12%	26%	19%	36%	6%
There are set goals for my work.	6%	4%	18%	58%	14%
Performance of employees is easier to measure.	9%	31%	26%	29%	5%
I certainly understand the objectives of Performance Appraisal Process.	7%	12%	17%	57%	7%
Performance Appraisal process urges participation and cooperation.	7%	15%	22%	54%	2%
Performance Appraisal has assisted me to perform well and meet my work target.	14%	19%	19%	42%	5%

Most of the respondents agree that there are set goals for their work. This is followed by the fact that employees understand the objectives of the PA Process. Lastly, most respondents agree that the process of PA encourages confidence. 36% agreed that they are happy and motivated with the way the PA process is conducted to evaluate their performance, while 6% also strongly agreed that they are happy and motivated with the way the PA process is conducted to evaluate their performance. 42% of respondents agree that PA has assisted them to perform well and meet their work target, while 5% of respondents strongly agree with this notion. 15 % of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that the process of PA encourages confidence while 19% of the respondents chose to disagree and a further 12% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this notion.

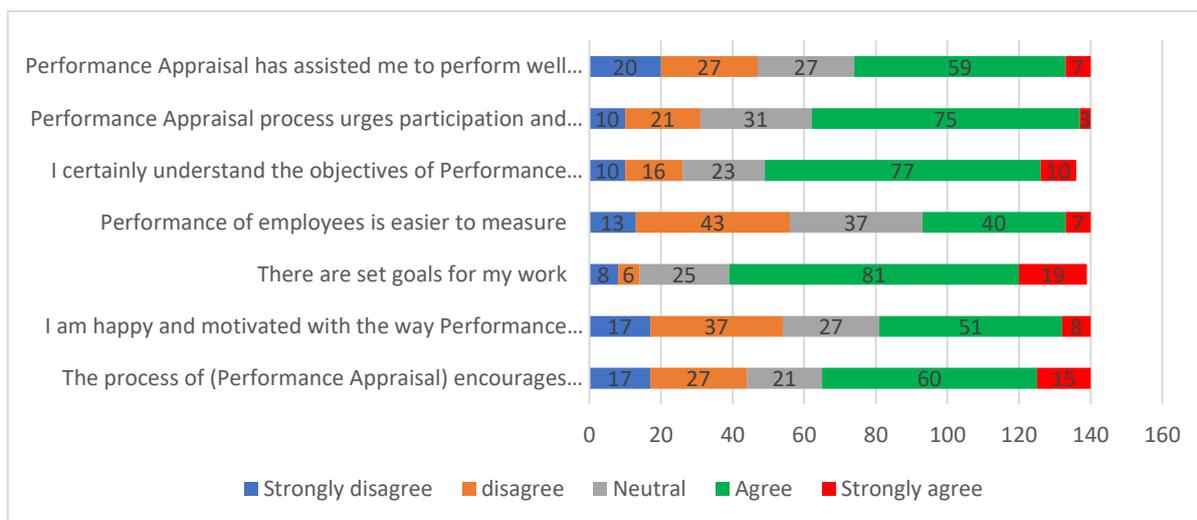


Figure 4. The exact number of respondents who responded on each category (The effect of the PA process on employee performance.)

Figure 4 shows the exact number of respondents who responded to various questions investigating PA's effect on employee performance. 59 respondents agreed that PA had assisted them in performing well and meeting their work targets, while 7 respondents strongly agreed. However, 20 respondents strongly disagreed with this notion, 27 respondents disagreed, and a further 27 opted to be neutral. A total of 78 respondents agree that the PA process urges participation and cooperation, while a total of 21 respondents disagree, and 31 respondents neither agree nor disagree. A total of 87 respondents agree that they certainly understand the objectives of the PA process, while a total of 26 respondents disagree, and a further figure of 23 respondents neither agree nor disagree. The majority of respondents, making a total of 56, disagree that the performance of the employees is easier to measure. 100 respondents agree that there are set goals for their work, while 14 respondents disagree, and 25 neither agreed nor disagreed. A total of 59 respondents agree that they are happy and motivated with the way PA process is conducted to evaluate their performance, while 54 respondents disagree and 37 respondents only agree to some extent. A total of 75 respondents agree that the PA process encourages confidence, while 44 respondents disagree with this notion, and a further 21 only agree to some extent.

Reliability

Reliability is defined as "whether or not an instrument can be interpreted consistently across different situations" (Field, 2013, p. 12). Reliability is the determination of the research instrument's consistency in providing the same results. Data was collected from the Online Likert scale Survey.

Table 2. Reliability

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
1. Scale 1	07	.887
2. Scale 2	13	.807
Total	20	$\alpha \geq .700$

Cronbach's alpha produced internal consistencies that exceeded the minimum value of .70 for the two scales required for acceptable reliability, (Cronbach & Shapiro, 1982), $\alpha = .887$ and $\alpha = .807$.

Table 3. Response rate

Category	Targeted Respondents	Responses	The response rate in percentage (%)
SAEF	31	20	65
GSB&L	7	6	86
SMITG	30	21	70
LAW	22	10	45
DSRA	55	24	44
SGLD	13	12	92
SHSD	26	15	58
DDS&HIV/AIDS	23	19	83
DSF	18	9	50
Total	225	136	60

Table 3 shows the total number of responses from the targeted respondents in each School/Department as well as the response rate percentage.

Discussion

The findings show that majority of respondents agree that there are set goals for their work. Many employees are more motivated to perform to the best of their capabilities when they have specified goals that they need to achieve and this is inconsistent with the statement made by Bozkurt, Bektas, Ahmed Kola & Yurtkoru,

(2017) saying that organisations set both organisational and individual goals to enhance employee performance. These set goals are mainly meant to reinforce employee performance, which may increase employee commitment within the organisation and trigger employee job satisfaction. The presence of specific goals within a particular organisation may bring satisfaction to employees when these goals have been achieved, while unclear and unspecified goals may bring dissatisfaction, thus resulting in stakeholder emotional distress (Lunenburg, 2012).

The findings from the study also showed that most respondents certainly understood the objectives of the PA process. Some of the objectives of the PA process include the determination of salary increases, determination of promotions, identifying relevant training and development programs for employees (which are essential to help employees improve their work performance), as well as to provide employees with feedback (Awodiji, 2023). It is important for employees to understand the objectives of the PA process fully and in this case, most employees agree that they understand these PA objectives). Islami et al. (2018) also affirm that clearly set goals and work objectives motivate employees to perform better in their day-to-day tasks.

The majority of respondents in this study also agree that the PA process urges participation and cooperation, and this is another crucial factor for any organisation, ensuring that employees within that particular organisation are motivated enough fully cooperate and participate in any given work-related task. In most cases, it is only when employees are highly satisfied and motivated in their entities whereby, they fully cooperate and participate in any given task, and it is therefore very important for the process of PA to always be conducted in a manner that would encourage and urge employees' cooperation and participation.

The findings also show that many respondents acknowledged that they were happy and motivated with the way the PA processes are conducted to evaluate their performance at UKZN. Organisations must conduct the PA process correctly and effectively so that employees may have more confidence and a positive reception towards it. Van Dijk and Schold (2015) have noted that although PA is a crucial tool for managing both managers and employees, both these parties are rarely satisfied with PA in general. Some workers may not be satisfied with the PA process because poorly conducted PA tends to produce unreliable results, which may not be the true reflection of employees' overall Performance (Chaponda, 2014). It is, therefore, important for organisations to conduct the PA process accurately and properly when evaluating employee performance, as this will result in employees being happy and motivated with the way the PA process is conducted within various organisations.

Many respondents agree that PA has assisted them to perform well and meet their work targets. Employees may only perform well towards a specific work target if there are organisational and work goals that the organisation has set for employees. This is supported by Locke and Latham (2019), who imply that specific goals that are complemented by critical performance targets are most likely to improve employees' performance. Goal setting theory, as first introduced in the 1970s by Latham and Locke (1979), has stressed the very importance of organisational and individual goal setting in various organisations as it motivates employees to perform well and also meet their work targets. The primary explanation of this theory states that specified goals can operate as a performance inducer. This in simple terms means that employees can be highly motivated to perform better if they are given specific goals or targets instead of expecting employees to just work with no direction or specific target/goal.

Various studies that have been conducted in the past, as well as various recent literature, support that the Process of PA does have a positive impact on employee performance and employee motivation within both the public and the private sector (Idowu, 2017). This study was able to fill the gap that existed in literature by examining the effect of PA on employee performance in a South African institution of higher learning.

Conclusion

The study concludes that there is a positive effect of PA on employee performance at UKZN. The PA process at UKZN does help improve employees' overall performance. This is supported by the findings obtained from the participants as most participants agree that the PA process in UKZN inspires confidence. Then then means that the PA process is being conducted in a way that is improve the work confidence of most employees.

Majority of the employees are also happy with the way the PA process is conducted to evaluate their performance, meaning that majority of them view the process as fair with little to no biases. Work Goal setting at UKZN is frequently practiced and this also help employees to perform better in their day to day duties. The PA process in UKZN generally help employees to perform well and meet their work target and this is supported by majority of employees who agreed that the PA process has assisted them to perform well and meet their work target. Overall the PA process was found to be an important tool that does help employees to perform well in their daily duties.

The study recommends that line managers and supervisors must continue to set clear work goals and work targets for their employees as it has been noted that employees are more effective and highly motivated when they know what is required from them and their work target. Appraisers must give frequent feedback to employees and help them improve in areas where they are lacking. The process of PA must be conducted consistently without any biases and favoritism as this harm employee motivation as well as their performance. Hard working employees must be well compensated. This act of compensation will also keep them motivated and committed to their work.

Since there was a fair number of respondents who indicated that PMS does not manage them well, it is therefore crucial for line managers and HR personnel at UKZN to train employees both academics and support staff on what PMS entails and how to effectively use the PMS. Line managers and supervisors at UKZN should establish the appropriate training and development programs that must be carried out often to assist employees who are underperforming to do well and those who are performing well to excel even further. The correct training and development programs may improve employees' performance, motivation, and job satisfaction.

Since this study was limited to academics from the CLMS as well as support staff from the Student Services Division, the primary investigator recommends that a full-scale study should be conducted which will include all colleges and all departments to investigate the effect of PA on employee motivation across UKZN. This will help the institution to fully understand which appropriate actions should be taken to ensure that employees at UKZN are highly motivated.

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