

Performance Management Development System Challenges in the Public Hospitals in Mpumalanga Province

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ABSTRACT

Performance Management Development System (PMDS) is presumably a standout amongst the most challenged framework actualized in public service. It is vital for organization to develop a timeously grievance resolution matrix in order to enhance labor peace in the public service. This article highlights PMDS challenges in public hospitals in Mpumalanga Province. Again, the noteworthy foundation to performance management development framework in South African public sector. The problem statement, aims and objectives of the study, frame of reference, data collection method and data analyze thereof. The collected primary data was analyzed, interpreted and finally, the conclusions were drawn. The qualitative research configuration was embraced for this article. The purposive sampling was utilized and thirty-two respondents took an interest in the project. The participants were sampled from poll of government employees which includes hospital executives, employees and trade union shop stewards in Mpumalanga Province. It emerged from the findings that PMDS challenges were still as problem which remain unresolved. Recommendations advocate for sustainable permanent solution to the PMDS.

Keywords: Public hospitals; Shop stewards; Grievances

INTRODUCTION

Every year after the PMDS annual final assessment period, public hospitals experience protests from general staffs and trade unions because of non-payment of the incentive bonuses. The Department of Public Service and Administration introduced the PMDS by way of a instrument to tracking and evaluating the performances of all government employees. In spite of South Africa's Bill of Rights, human rights are often violated by employees. Strikes by the health care workers are a worldwide phenomenon. The patients' rights often violated as the protesters put tools down, closing the hospital gates, which leave the patients with no option but to seek health services elsewhere. According Brevis et al. allude that the performance management systems that organization implement influence the behavior of members in groups and teams [1]. Performance evaluation and reward systems focus on either individual performance and reward or collective performance and award. The chosen system reinforces specific behavior and could encourage or discourage group performance. A crucial prerequisite for the effective functioning of work teams is that

organizations should evaluate and reward team members collectively.

According Brevis et al. individuals are cornerstone and the machinery behind the success and the performance of an organization [1]. The competitiveness and sustainability of organizations can be linked to its talent, creativity and performance. Performance management in institutions should be continually assessed as unique changes in the environment need organizations to adjust with the goal that they stay sustainable. The impact of worker conduct is a vast supporter of the achievement of an institution; henceforth arrangement of the key objectives and destinations of the organization to its shareholders and employees. Inability to react instantly and act timeously to the shifting necessities of performance management may result the failure of the institution. The human capital is the most valuable asset in any institution, which is in charge of an accomplishing its targets, objectives and goals by means of their performance management. The capacity to quantify the execution of this crucial asset is noteworthy for the enhancement of the institution performance. According Brevis et al.

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motivation bears a direct influence on employee performance, and managers can play a major part in the motivation of their employees [1]. A common misconception is that managers can motivate their employees to perform better. Nobody can motivate another person, motivation comes from within. Motivation is an inner desire to satisfy an unsatisfied need.

According to du Plessis, performance management can be explained as a continuous process and as an exchange relationship to align organizational, individual and team expectation, expressed as objectives [2]. It ensures that corporate core values are reached. It could therefore be said that the aim of performance management is to establish a culture of high performance at the individual, group and organizational level, within a framework that is set by the organization's objectives. A comprehension of the justification behind the PMDS together with good implementation would help with enhancing both institution performance and individual. Since dawn of democracy, South African Government embraced performance management as a key instrument to improve service delivery. The literature review on this subject shows number gaps which contribute to lodging of grievances and eventually persistent labour unrest particularly in the public hospitals in Mpumalanga Province. This article seeks to identify on PMDS challenges which remain persistent in public hospitals in Mpumalanga Province. The background to performance appraisal will be discussed. The latter will be followed by the problem statement, aims and objectives of the study, frame of reference, data collection method and data analyze thereof. The collected primary data will be analyzed, interpreted and finally, the conclusions will be drawn.

PMDS challenges is a countrywide phenomenon which persistent in many departments and provinces. It worth noting that PMDS is a extensively used worldwide. The better understanding of PMDS and proper implementations is key in addressing both organizational performance and individual performance. Therefore, it is imperative for this article to highlights historical version of PMDS background in South Africa public sector.

Background to performance management development system in South African public sector

Similarly to South Africa context, Department of Public Service and Administration was introduced PMDS in favor of service delivery. The main objective of the performance management is intended at planning, managing and enhancing performance of workers. The institution by governments of measures to appraise and manage performance is an indicator of their aim to improve the delivery of goods and services to satisfy the needs of their customers (citizens). These measures are commonly instituted to counteract the systemic challenges inherent in government performance that inhibit delivery of goods and services in terms of prescribed performance standards [3].

Concept of performance management development and appraisal system

According to Warnich et al. argue that the performance appraisal is the process of evaluating how well employee perform their jobs when compared to a set of standards, and then communicating that information to employees [4]. Again according to above authors, Warnich et al. further state that performance management is process which significantly affects organizational success by having managers and employees work together to set expectations, review results and reward performance [4]. However, according to Singh refers performance management as "As a process performance management aims to integrate goal setting, performance review and development, and subsequent compensation and rewards into a single system with the objective of aligning employee performance with organizational goals and objectives" [5].

As Mondy put it, that Performance management is a goal-oriented process directed towards ensuring that organizational processes are in place to maximize productivity of employees, teams, and ultimately, the organization [6].

In support of above statements, van der Westhuizen insights into meaning of Performance Appraisal (PA) and Performance Management (PM) sometimes used interchangeably is a critical theoretical aspect that underlies how they are practiced [3]. Performance appraisal, sometimes called performance evaluation, performance measurement or performance review is the most common phase of the Performance Management process and one with which most employees are familiar [7-9]. It is both an interesting and contentious topic. Performance appraisal is defined as a part, phase, activities or aspect of performance management through which the performance of an employee is appraised and a 'performance score or rating' that indicates the level of performance is decided upon [10,11]. It refers to the activities by which the PM process is integrated and through which employees' work performance and competence is developed [12]. From definitions mentioned above, its confirmed that performance management is a methodical process with a point of accomplishing an performance enhancement culture that accomplishes the institution's objectives.

According to Mpumalanga Provincial Government the aim and objectives of a performance management system [13].

- The specific objective of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government's PMDS is to promote interaction in respect of performance between a jobholder and the supervisor concerned.
- Ensure that the jobholder and the supervisor know and understand what is expected of them, as per the approved operational plan.
- Identify and respond to developmental needs for individuals and where applicable, teams.
- Assess and improve individual, team, and departmental performance.
- Use performance as the basis of recognizing and rewarding accomplishments, and as a basis for effective response to address poor performance.

Regulatory provisions governing performance management in the public service

According to van Der Westhuizen points out all the functions and activities that are carried out in public institutions are regulated [3]. Even though the regulations are not prescriptive, they impact knowledge about existing regulatory gaps, the roles and responsibilities of persons in authority and the goals should be achieved. Regulations enforce a chain of accountability through which public officials are held answerable.

Constitution of the republic of South Africa 1996

According to van der Westhuizen states that the Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic of South Africa [3]. The Constitution gives effect to all other types of laws and those that are inconsistent with it are considered invalid [14]. Its status is unique [15]. The Constitution's relevance to instituting Pas is embedded in Section 195(1), which provides for promotion of the efficient, economic and effective use of resources, a development-oriented and accountable public administration and cultivation of good Human Resource Management (HRM) and career-development practices to maximize the potential of employees.

The public service act 103 of 1994

The Public Service Act was passed to uphold the requirements of the Constitution. It regulates the organization and administration of the public service, in particular the conditions of employment in which issues that relates to performance management are a critical [3].

White paper on human resource management in the public service of 1997

The White Paper is consistent with the requirements of the Public Service Act (PSA) in that the policies that are set out in it are applicable to public institutions identified in the Public Service Act [3].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding of the performance management development system

According to Brevis et al. state the management theories often downplay the role of money as a motivation [1]. Instead, they place more emphasis on the importance of factors such as challenging jobs, recognition for achievement and opportunities for personal growth and creativity in the workplace. Researchers of human behavior agree that these factors do satisfy the higher-order needs of people in the workplace. However, there is also evidence that money influences people's work performance.

South Africa's performance appraisal dilemma and grievances

Performance appraisals may be objective or subjective, intentionally or unintentionally and they may be conducted by appraisers who do not possess the skills to conduct them effectively [16]. In an appraisal relationship, consequently, the good intention behind the institution of performance appraisals may come to naught or the entire PM system may be wrecked. Managers need to be very conscious of problems that are associated with the rating of performance by means of a performance appraisal [3].

Contributing factors to high levels of grievances

Poorly formulated performance agreements: According to Public Service Commission cited that ineffective performance management of senior management has ripple effect on the manner in which performance is managed at lower levels thought the department [17].

Rating errors

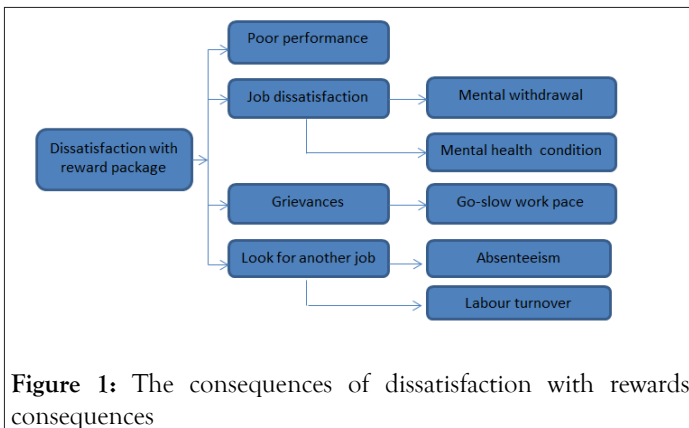
Although performance ratings or scores are the most common method of appraisal work performance, they are often found to be erratic and only appropriate for work that can be quantified [16,18,19]. The most common rating errors that are associated with Pas are:

- Personal bias: Constructed as preferential treatment or nepotism error, personal bias is the common rating error and derives from bias or prejudice either in favour of or against an employee [3,20].

Development of performance standards

Van der Westhuizen argues that another problem that characterizes performance appraisal is managers' inability to facilitate the development of appropriate performance standards [3]. Performance standards are an important feature of a successful performance appraisal because they are the instruments with which actual performance is measured. Inappropriately developed performance standards increase the likelihood of rating errors and vice versa. Because of frequent new deployments, new appointments, promotions and transfers, employee populations and management arrangements in public institutions change endlessly.

The challenges encountered by the hospitals during moderating and after awarding incentive bonuses to the qualifying candidates affect the service delivery. The persistent unprotected strikes "toy-toyi" or "perfect storm" in hospitals is cause of concern because it has become a norm that disqualified candidates put the hospital in intensive care unit. The aim of this paper is to investigate PMDS challenges in the public hospitals in Mpumalanga Province Figure 1.



Rewarding good performance

It is important to recognize and reward employees who perform exceptionally well, and whose skills are particularly valued, in order to encourage them to maintain the high standard they have achieved, and to encourage others to strive for improved performance. The most obvious way of achieving this is by awarding incremental increases in pay. The development of new remuneration systems within the Public Service [21].

Managing grievances

According to DPSA states that grievance systems should be focused on promoting the amicable settlement of problems, rather than on legalistic, confrontational procedures [21]. In developing grievance procedures the following principles should be observed:

Fairness and objectivity: The facts of the case should be objectively determined, and the resolution of the problem should take account of all the circumstances in a fair and impartial manner.

Transparent: The aggrieved employee and his or her relevant manager should be fully informed of the procedures, and kept informed as the case progresses.

Independence: There should be an independent avenue through which the grievance can be lodged, outside the aggrieved employee’s direct line management.

Timeousness: A grievance should be dealt with swiftly, in order to avoid disrupting the good management of the department and spreading discontent more widely in the organization.

Orientation: The aggrieved employee should be given full opportunity to participate in the presentation of his or her own case, and to be assisted in doing so by a representative of his or her own choice.

Understanding the strike action

According to Hyman argues that strike is defined as “a temporary stoppage of work by a group of employees in order to express a grievance or enforce a demand” [22]. Whereas, Garbers and Potgieter outline strike action as “a concerted and temporary withholding of employees’ services from the employer for the purposes of extracting greater concessions in the

employment relationship than the employer is willing to grant at the bargaining table” [23].

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted qualitative research design for this article. The ethical consideration was taken into considerations. The research participant’s voluntary gave consent and permission for study and they confirmed understanding the context of research. The research guaranteed the privacy and anonymity. The researcher employed the semi-structured interview questions and furthermore, the respondents were humbly requested to relate their experiences on PMDS in far a rewarding or recognizing of qualifying employees is concern. The primary research questions were as follows:

- What is PMDS?
- What performance management development challenges you experienced in the hospital as the manager or employee?

The interviewer led the participants with semi-structured interviews. The respondents indicated the most convenient time for conducting the interviewed. The researcher was flexible and managed to accommodate the respondents who requested to be interviewed after hours.

The purposive sampling was employed by researcher and thirty-one respondents took part on the research project. Sixteen participants were executive managers of various public hospitals in Mpumalanga Province. Seven participants from recognized trade union shop stewards. The eight participants emerged during the research. Authors are arguably regarding this sampling as snowball sampling technique. The research used the life narrative interview method for data collection on the PMDS challenges in the public hospitals in Mpumalanga Province. The interviews were conducted in the public hospitals in Mpumalanga Province. The narrative interview exploits the social-science subjects’ skill to verbally express themselves. However, not giving them choice-answers in interrogative research situations, but allowing them to speak freely and in unguided manner. Narrative data have become indispensable in understanding past experiences and events; the subjects’ detailed and vivid descriptions cannot be accessed as efficiently with other research methods and techniques. The technique of narrative interview appeared and has developed in the framework of the qualitative approach of socio-humanities. The qualitative research has brought along a new modality to approach the subjects, with less intricate guides, without predefined-answer surveys, with the subjects’ greater freedom to express themselves, with significant restraint of the control by the researcher on the subjects [24].

For data analysis, the researcher employed the content analysis technique. The justification for selecting the data collection method, was it easily help in identifying similarities and differences in the theme. Again, for data to be analysis effective and efficient, researcher adopted breakdown structure technique which assists data to be divided into small manageable fragments. From the findings, it emerged that PMDS is still a huge challenge in the public hospitals across the Mpumalanga Province. It should note, this cannot be generalizing the PMDS

challenges in all the public hospitals. Body language appeared as of the items which show persistent PMDS challenges in the public hospitals. Some respondents stated their PMDS understanding in reference to the PMDS policy.

In one case, Official A explained that hospital operational activities are badly affected by striking employees. Managers are chased away from their hospitals. Some employees do not comply with PMDS policy but at end of cycle, they demand performance bonuses. He gave an account of how employees repeatedly came to his office singing revolutionary song with placard written "Mr.....MUST GO!". This has left him with unhealed invisible bleeding scars. He feels vulnerable and isolated. In another account, Official B said PMDS must be scrapped because it always makes unions and management to fight over performance bonuses. She further said some employees are now calling PMDS "14th cheque". It brings seriously tension between management and employees. Some hospitals become hostile during PMDS season and managers are left on their own to manage the situation on the ground. Other opportunist employees get a chance to settle their personal scores. It point out that there is continuous PMDS challenges in the public hospitals. This made a writer to ask himself a number of questions.

Is PMDS about money or is about employee performance management?

Do employees and organized labor understand the purpose of PMDS?

Official C said "Last financial year, workforces at various hospitals, involving cleaners, porters, doctors, nurses, clerks, porters and general assistants, participated in a wildcat strike blocking hospital main entrance, throwing rubbish bins as well as disrupting operations leaving patients unattended". They demanded to be paid performance bonuses because they work hard every day," he said. As a result one senior manager had to undergo psychological counseling. PMDS complaints come thick and fast. This indicates the seriousness and impact of the challenges of PMDS on the various managers. Some employees were paid performance bonuses even if they did not comply with PMDS policy. He further said "Why other employees should comply with policy if non-compliance employees are paid performance bonuses. This spark the bone of contention and indeed it hold water". According to Dhai et al. claim that healthcare professional slowdowns pose a problematic demand, in particularly taking in account professional ethos and code of conduct in the public sector [25].

On another explanation, Official D shared her frustration about PMDS in particularly during the moderation process. Where unions want all employees to be paid performance bonus, even there is no exceptional extra miles. The PMDS moderating system is a real a nightmare. It is worst when there is no support from the principals. Another responded, in hospital employees took a matter as far Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). This echo the emotion that public officials and organized labors are not sharing same understanding with respect to PMDS policy. Shop steward A, gave his version that PMDS has been the problem since its

inception. These challenges are not only affecting the public hospitals but it's a general problem across the province. Yes, it's worst with Department of Health because its affect the service delivery in particular patients as employees leave the work station to participate in unprotected strike. The department should come with better understandable PMDS [26].

According to Shop steward B, said "PASS ONE PASS ALL". No employees should be disqualified during the PMDS moderation. Upon questioning him, he said "it's not their problem that the hospital does not have the balanced budget for performance bonus. The hospital must request funds from the Provincial Office (Department of Health)". This conduct displays that there is still a lack of understanding of PMDS policy. Furthermore shop steward C said "one of his member has been working in medical ward for about five years and had not nominated for performance bonus. This is totally unfair." He further reentered that they are responsible union they won't leave patients unattended but want send a strong message to hospital executives. It is evident from the research conducted that PMDS is still in the public hospitals. In section, I provide recommendations which can assist and curb near future challenges with respect to Performance Management Development System in public hospitals. Department of Public Service and Administration through Public Sector Coordinating Bargaining Council should evaluate the effectiveness of performance management system as they are lot challenges. However, unions would have conceded on a moratorium on incentive bonuses because of government existing economic constraints [27].

The hospitals management should regard employees in the Department of Health as an "ESSENTIAL SERVICE". Hospital Chief Executive Officers, Facility Managers and District Managers should apply the principle of "NO WORK NO PAY" in all instances where employees are not on duty on the day(s) of the strike action, the number of hours of absence should also be calculated and deducted as unpaid leave. The Strike Management Committees should establish Strike Management Contingency Plan. Finally, Department Public Service and Administration should be scrapped the PMDS.

CONCLUSION

With reference to data analysis, PMDS has serious challenges in the public hospitals in mpumalanga province. International Labor Organization (ILO) regards health industry as essential service and the 'right to strike may be subject to major restrictions'. However, Department Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and unions in the sector have not collective agreed on the minimum service agreement at Public Sector Coordination Bargaining Council (PSCBC). But, the laws must be executed and upheld.

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