

Performance Management Practices in the South African Police Service in the Western Cape, South Africa

N. Mafanya and N. S. Matsiliza

*Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Business,
Cape Peninsula University of Technology, P.O Box 562, Zonneblom, Western Cape,
South Africa*

E-mail: MatsilizaN@cput.ac.za, Shirleymats2@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT Effective performance can be executed only when organisations are able to execute each key component of the performance management process well. They not only set goals and plan work routinely, they measure progress toward those goals and give feedback to employees, develop the skills needed to reach them and recognise the behaviour and results through rewarding. This paper assessed the application of the performance management system at the South African Police Service (SAPS) with the intention of finding better approach for the management of employee performance at the Nyanga Police station. This study revealed some internal and external factors that are potential threats to the SAPS initiatives in providing effective performance management. A mixed method was employed for collecting and analysing data. Findings and recommendations from this study contribute towards the management and effective employee performance management system in the public service.

INTRODUCTION

Performance management is an important aspect in an organisation as its purpose has to be understood in the context of a broader systems operating with diverse components. The effectiveness of PMS depends on the methods chosen by the individual organisation and the metrics used to measure the success of the PMS. Performance management intends to improve accountability, performance, communication, efficiency and productivity among civil servants (Boipono et al. 2014). The dawn of performance management systems in the past three decades has been driven by the global impact on the emerging new public management (NPM) phenomenon that drives the efficiency and result-driven focus. Similarly, the global financial crisis has accentuated the longstanding need for effective performance management of public services (Arnaboldi et al. 2015). In the effort to respond to public sector global and national challenges, performance management is expected to reflect the key goals and objectives that department plan to achieve. The overarching aim for improving police performance is to implement national priorities as articulated through the annual performance plan (2014/2015). This study provide literature review and empirical lessons on how different core aspects on managing

performance can be interpreted and evaluated in an organisation like SAPS.

Performance management systems at the SAPS can provide elected officials with objective information they can share with constituents when they discuss the rationale for decisions they have made. Good data analysis and reporting on the daily activities in the SAPS can shed light to public officials in various departments by assisting them to reach agreement on priorities and that can also improve the image of SAPS as an organisation. The purpose of this article is to assess whether the EPMS applied at Nyanga police station is effective or not. This case therefore intends to analyse the management of EPMS at Nyanga police station; by assessing the policy and legislation supporting performance, the EPMS models and instruments and present the findings from the sample extracted from the Nyanga, conclusion and recommendations.

Theoretical Framework

The New Public Management and Organisational Analysis

This study is theoretically informed by the New Public Management (NPM). The intention of infusing the principles of NPM in some

government departments was to re-invent the way government works and to improve the overall performance of government departments and agencies. In principle, the NPM is interlinked with public sector reforms as part of all circumstances (Arnaboldi et al. 2015). Government's intention is to merge the private and public management ideas and practices to enable better results in the delivery of goods and services. Similarly, the adoption of NPM favours the use of economy theory and models and the obsession with performance management (Hughes 2012).

The doctrine of NPM has been associated with efficiency, public accountability and organisational best practices (Osborn and Gaerber 1992). This organisation doctrine further implied a working relationship between the private and the public sector, whereby there is a doctrine of public trust and ethos efficiency in resource management. Andrews (2014) asserts that effective performance information systems is needed to influence managers to formulate, implement and monitor organizational goals (Andrews 2014). The performance of the SAPS is to some extent aligned with the doctrine of accountability and NPM. Police service by nature needs to restore peace, enforce law, restore order, fight corruption and make SAPS members to be accountable of their actions.

Then SAPS members are subject to the security in their performance according to the argument based on Lobo (2008) contention that institutions set the context and framework within which organisations operate. According to Lobo (2008) employee's performance is influenced by opportunities and resources available at their disposal. It is also clear that the quality and extent of organisational services depends on the organisational policies and priorities. Newham (2006) noted that there are less opportunities for police departments to be effective due to the limited resources and motivation in their work environment. Lobo (2008) asserts that knowledge of the institutional landscape can benefit managers and landscape in order to devise effective ways of dealing with change.

Performance in the South African Police Service

It has emerged from the literature that police performance can be analysed through the lens-

es of public bodies and research agencies, with or without the presence of support on their organisational needs for them to achieve the desired indicators and outcomes (Newham 2006). The implementation of performance management system also involves a massive investment of resources and time on training government personnel, both subordinates and managers at different levels. All over the world performance is a controversial issue that has to do with rewarding well performing staff; punishing those who do not comply and perform; and correcting the whole organisational performance and productivity.

The central focus on police performance emanate from the suggested indicators observed through the police delivery environment and organisational environment. Some of this targets aim at establishing adequate human resources, investing at human capital, an effective discipline and integrity management, investing in human capital development management, improving the wellness of the organisation, focusing on organisational development capacity, improving infrastructure and service delivery (Annual Performance Plan 2014/2015). The negative indicators are constantly nullified due to the burden of the proof, for example, the police treatment of offenders and suspects and brutal attacks to members of the society need evidence as proof.

The main contextual challenge in the SAPS performance is the focus on outputs rather than outcomes, as a matter of fact employees tend to concentrate on the number of reported cases rather than on the outcomes achieved. Bruce (2011) argue that the nature of police work is more associated with their norms of activities which challenges them to adapt to innovative performance measures. Notable, the White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service South Africa (1995) places an emphasis on human resource development and management designed to promote involvement through innovation to build and capacitate departments to be able to perform better.

Furthermore, the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997) makes provision that all employees should be assessed with their agreed and reasonable targets. Its aim is to create a sense of accountability in the public sector. Similarly, police department set performance agreements based on their annual performance plan that is issued a

year before the performance year. The Police Annual Performance Plan (2014-2015) is aligned with the National Development (NDP) 2030, especially on reducing crime rates, improving the criminal justice environment to be more effective and efficient in dealing with crime and investigations, improving service delivery and social cohesion among communities. The PFMA lays a foundation for PM by providing how accounting officers should account and be 'responsible for the effective, efficient, economical and transparent use of the resources in the government departments, trading entity or constitutional institution.

Therefore, public departments are evaluated on how they manage and deliver services in an 'effective and, efficient and economical' manner. More specific provisions are contained elsewhere in legislation and regulations. Public Service Act of 1994 provides for the organization and administration of the public service – on conditions of employment. The 'Batho Pele' principles that are entrenched in the Public Service Act (1994) talks more on the public service standards and all public departments including SAPS are expected to comply with them. In addition to that, the White Paper on Human Resources Management was promulgated in 1997 to provide for the assessment of all employees at agreed reasonable targets. The White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service (1995) – provides for a new system of accountability that ensured that officials are accountable to their decisions and actions.

Legislative measures and policies guides departments to comply and manage employee performance, though more responsibility is placed on the employees and managers to focus on meeting organisational norms and adapt to change that has brought by these guidelines. Similarly, performance management systems also involves a massive investment of resources and time by government public agencies, especially when departments' emphasis is on the understanding of the principles of accountability embodied in the Constitution (Bruce 2011).

The use of annual reports and assessment plans serves contribute towards employee management of performance. These documents are used as mechanisms for reporting performance and accountability since 2001. The use of performance charts as a tools for measuring performance has improved performance since it can

also record crime statistics. The execution of the PMS can be accompanied by sensitivity of unintended consequences that are observed as results of the appraisal process. Shane (2008) argue that SAPS is not making a cut in ensuring that there is quality assured in their programmes on crime prevention. Similarly, Bruce (2008) assertion of police performance is critical of the SAPS National Inspectorate, who has failed to execute its mandate due to poor leadership and unwarranted reorganisations (Bruce 2008). The Western Cape Province SAPS regards performance management as an important aspect for developing accountable and responsible workforce that can ensure improved service delivery (SAPS Annual Report 2014).

Mentorship programmes are set to provide support and address poor performance. The SAPS is the only organisation that has a legitimate and legal mandate to carry and use lethal weapons in the line of duty. However, the same police officials can mostly deprive people of their freedom and use these weapons to intimidate the offenders during crime raids and repossess goods such as drug and alcohol. Sometimes their behaviour and conduct can change due to their possession of stolen goods such as drugs and alcohol, tempering with evidence in the crime (Newham 2006).

The Objectives of the Study

The total of 285 employees at the station form part of the population. Mainly the primary objective was to examine the application of the PMS at the SAPS, using the case of Nyanga police station. The secondary objectives were to determine the level of understanding the PMS within the Nyanga SAPS police, to assess the challenges experienced by SAPS while executing the PMS and recommend a workable approach in practice by learning lessons from the case of Nyanga police service.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Brynard et al. (2014) assert that a research methodology necessitates a reflection on the planning, execution and structuring of research in order to comply with the truth, objectivity and validity. A mixed methods research was chosen to embolden the use of numerous world-views, or paradigms (that is beliefs and values),

that are associated with the case being studied (Devos and Strydom 2011). However, this study collected data from primary sources using interviews, observations and questionnaires. The secondary sources for data collection included policy documents, literature review from accredited journal articles and books.

These sources necessitated a reflection on the planning, structuring and execution of the research in order to comply with the demands of truth, objectivity and validity. Extreme literature was covered from knowledge areas relating to performance management theories and application, police reports, auditor's general reports on SAPS performance and compliance, articles from accredited journals on performance management in the public service with international and local themes. The Nyanga police station was selected as a study. A purposive sample was selected among the members of the SAPS representing all the ranks.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Biographical Representation of Participants

The Nyanga police station is the unit of analysis where the population was drawn to be a composition of 285 SAPS members. The population included all different ranks among employees in that department. Also, there 25 participants that were 25 participants interviewed. About 57.5 percent were males and males were only 57 percent. This profile indicates that there were more males than females at the Nyanga police station. According to data collected, the age profile was composed of 30 percent of participants in the ages of 20-35, and the 48 percent of participants were in the ages of 36-45 years and the total of 22 percent represented participants in the ages of 46-65 years old. The following section will discuss the findings and the interpretation of data.

Participant's Understanding of Employee Performance Management

The representative of 80 percent from the participants indicated clearly that they were aware of the employee performance management process. The question was raised in order to determine the extent to which EPMS is understood at the work-place by the members of SAPS.

The majority of related EPMS with compliance of employees towards organisational rules, hence they are rewarded at the end of the performance cycle. The other participants noted that the department of South African Police Service employees in Nyanga ensured that they respond to their outcomes as stated by the performance annual report, set goals and turnaround times. Rajin (2012) notes the imperative for employee's involvement in the planning for performance management reviews in order to claim to know the process and the organisation goals.

Coaching and Personnel Improvement

Coaching enables employees to realize that they add value in an organisation. Managers must show some encouragement and recognition of their subordinates to increase their motivation and productivity. It was indicated by participants that frontline managers and staff don't make sure that there is user-friendly information system through which signals are transmitted to solicit help and assistance needed by the communities. The 88 percent of participants in the study strongly disagreed that they were supported and coached by their managers. This study notes that there is no relationship between coaching and improvement at this organization. According to Brocato (2003), self-awareness of the problem is important for leaders and team-leaders to recognise their barriers to effective performance. Collaborations and team-works can enhance a process of healing for those who can find coping strategies and learn for others.

Annual Performance Reviews

Participants indicated reluctance and mixed feelings in the conduct and management of annual reviews. According to results, employee evaluation dropped, and the researcher found that 67 percent of employees were not satisfied about their level of evaluation to the lowest 2-1 performance rating. Members evaluated every end of the departmental financial year. The 80 percent of management always do year plan on improving performance but their plans were not successfully achieved because of the skill shortages in the department though they ensure that coaching mechanisms are in place to assist employees in performing to their utmost best as currently only 20 percent agree to have obtain

coaching sessions with their supervisors. A group of respondents mentioned that:

"We want our department to plan around the most priority areas in order to improve performance".

Members goes further in outlining that:

"We do not get the necessary coaching they deserve from their superiors which make it difficult for them to achieve the required expected performance outcomes. Employees individual goals are not always met due to members monthly consecutive absences". [10 December 2014]

The study also revealed that 90 percent of employees do not achieve their expected results due to dissatisfaction about how they are being appreciated by their superiors.

Mechanisms for Reporting and Lines of Authority

Respondents indicated that subordinates get instructions from the Commanders to spot regular crime areas. The police work is dangerous, members of the police have to attend to crime scenes and come into contact with people who allegedly committed the crime. Sometimes shooting between criminals and the police with the intention of not being apprehended on the part of criminals does take place. The responsibility of a captain is to give instructors to command the non-commissioners to do their work. It was echoed that there is joint effort in identifying and addressing crime spots in the areas closer to the police station. It came out that captain have an oversight role on the crime early diagnostic phase and the deployment of staff to the crime areas.

Challenges Relating to the Implementation of PM

It has been indicated by participants that there was no proper planning for the reviews within the department. However, the majority of the respondents believed that there was no proper planning that caters for the implementation of performance enhancement process, and that affects results of the process. However, the study findings revealed that managers had conflicting ideas regarding measuring performance in Nyan-ga. Participants claimed that PMS was intended to monitor the implementation of the performance enhancement process in order to align depart-

mental objectives into plans and later consolidate those into achievable goals.

Similarly, findings revealed that, supervisors do not use supportive approach to correct mistakes and problems during the performance review process, which is not working as expected by the entire employee. Respondents are of the view that their supervisors need to be sent for the training in order to obtain knowledge about the relevant approaches needed in the performance review process. It surfaced that employees were comparing themselves with one another, competing about getting acknowledgement and 99 percent indicated that they are not recognised for their hard-work based on their cases and response to crime reports.

However, participants were not happy about the fact that certain members are always recognised and appreciated as key working people in the department. The other challenges included the lack of proper management skill on resources such as human resources, budget and assets like fleet/ transport. It is suggested that resources should be sufficient for the SAPS members to conduct their duties effectively (Leggett 2011)

Performance Management and Service Delivery

The sum of 60 percent of participants indicated that they would be appreciating an existing PMS policy that is driving the whole process, but it's non-existing. They doubted if every member was treated fairly by their institution on the grounds of decision making, promotion, compensation and disciplinary action. When asked about the performance management system, a group of 60 percent of respondents highlighted that:

"Performance management system best assist in putting performance standards clearly and concisely in order to be ready for the measuring process" [12 December 2014].

Besides compliance to Batho Pele Principles, 63 percent of the respondents indicated that they have access to departmental service standards. The sum of 37 percent indicated that sometimes they have to pay respect to their seniors and make their orders as priorities that come first than service standards. Data revealed that 79 percent of police members strongly agreed with delivering quality service to the community by being visible to communities and fighting crime

to protect residents of Nyanga impoverished community.

Approaches for Dealing with Poor Performance of SAPS Members

It has surfaced from the study findings that 65 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that there is no available approach that currently exists for members to overcome performance challenges. The respondents stated that they underperform due to the unclear instructions that they get from their superiors which mislead them to follow wrong orders however, 35 percent of members mentioned that they lack potential capabilities for an environment such as Nyanga as managers do not provide them with training developmental needs that might assist to improve performance process.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to assess whether the SAPS manages employee performance effectively. The study provided an account of policies and procedures and processes that provides and guides public service performance management and that of the provincial office of SAPS. The study found that even though there are positive perceptions on the performance management system at the Nyanga police station, attention has to be paid to strengthening the lines of reporting and authority and annual performance and the instrument used for performance management. In addition, the internally and externally imposed restructurings and re-organisational staffing restrict the successful implementation of an effective performance management system. There are positive responses on performance of police and service delivery and the method of dealing with poor performance. It was found that the supervisors and managers are still grappling with key issues regarding the process of performance management, especially accuracy when assessing/ appraising subordinates hence their system is not effective at all. Training, coaching and relevant workshops were critical to improve employee performance. Notable, SAPS focus more on outcomes instead of outputs due to the nature of their work. Due to the nature of their work, employees with success in solving more cases are rewarded better.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the SAPS in Nyanga must improve discipline, exposure to the system through coaching and training; they can improve interpersonal relations among subordinates and their supervisors through team building and trust. It is recommended that this study must shed light to the police workforce at Nyanga police station for them to improve the conditions of working towards an effective EMPMS. The staff together with their senior managers must engage in constant talks about current development in their department and embrace EPMS by considering how they can achieve their goals with less negative outcomes. The police force must be subjected to continuous improvement and training. For them to feel that they are valued by the department, they need to be appreciated by the organisation and by the community. Lastly, the human resource department must implement strategies for improving performance of poor performing employees.

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