PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ENHANCES EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE OF A SERVICE DEPARTMENT

by

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submitted in partial requirement for the degree of

MASTERS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

in the

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

(Department of Public Administration and Management)

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FEBRUARY 2026

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PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ENHANCES EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE OF A SERVICE DEPARTMENT

I declare that this Mini dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete in-text source references and a complete List of Sources.

In addition, I declare that I submitted the Mini dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at the University of South Africa (UNISA) for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



26/08/2026

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my supervisor, Prof. Sinval Kahn, please accept my profound gratitude for your professional guidance, academic expertise, and your support throughout this academic research project.

To my children, Akundaho and Nduvho: I would like to express my gratitude for your support. May I be your inspiration to achieve academic fulfilment. Thank you for cheering me on.

To my study mates, Azwi, Pertunia and Gregory: Thank you for being in my corner all the time.

Lastly, to my family and friends, thank you for your unwavering support

In closing:

“I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten, the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm, my great army that I sent among you.” (Joel 2:25 NIV)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful children Akundaho and Nduvho Museisi and my loving Mother Sarah Ramulifho. Thank you for your love and support.

To everyone reading this Mini dissertation

“You can always edit a bad page. You can’t edit a blank page." — **Jodi Picoult**

ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of performance management in public service institutions of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) is negatively affected by a range of challenges, including non-compliance with administrative requirements for implementing performance management and a lack of employee motivation. Performance management is widely regarded as a key tool for enhancing organizational effectiveness and productivity. Performance bonuses are widely used as incentives to motivate employees and enhance performance. However, in the public sector, the absence of such bonuses remains understudied, creating a significant gap in understanding its effects on employee motivation, performance, and institutional effectiveness. The aim of this study has been to determine whether performance management enhances employees' performance in the South African public sector. This study applied a qualitative research approach to address and achieve the research objectives. Information was gathered through desktop research by reviewing secondary data sources available in the public service domain**.** Secondary data included journals, published books, e-books, dissertations, government policies, legislations, and departmental reports.

This study found that motivation enhances employees' performance, and that rewards such as performance bonuses, pay progression, and promotions increase employees' performance and productivity. This study also found that the discontinuation of performance bonuses and a high vacancy rate negatively impact on employees' health and psychological well-being, which directly affects their motivation, performance and productivity.

This study recommends that for employees to be motivated, enhance their performance and productivity, DSD should consider a merit-based performance bonus system that recognises and rewards exceptional employee performance. To manage a high vacancy rate in the Department it is suggested that succession planning, job-enrichment and job-enlargement at middle management level and above, be implemented. This could serve as a buffer to deal with unexpected resignations.

Keywords: employee performance, employee motivation, institutional effectiveness

MAWANWA

U shuma zwavhuḓi ha ndangulo ya kushumele kha zwiimiswa zwa tshumelo ya tshitshavha zwa Riphabuḽiki ya Afrika Tshipembe (RSA) zwo kwamea nga nḓila i si yavhuḓi nga khaedu dzo fhambanaho, hu tshi katelwa na u sa tevhedza ṱhoḓea dza ndaulo dza u thoma ndangulo ya kushumele na u shaya ṱhuṱhuwedzo ya vhashumi. Ndangulo ya mushumo i dzhiiwa nga vhathu vhanzhi sa tshishumiswa tsha ndeme tsha u khwinisa kushumele kwa ndangulo na u bveledza. Ndivho ya ngudo iyi yo vha i ya u vhona arali ndaulo ya kushumele i tshi khwinisa kushumele kwa vhashumi kha Muhasho wa Mveledziso ya Matshilisano (une nga murahu ha zwenezwi wa ḓo vhidzwa sa DSD). Ngudo yo shumisa nḓila ya ṱhoḓisiso ya khwaḽithethivi u itela u tandulula na u swikelela zwipikwa zwa ṱhoḓisiso. Mafhungo o kuvhanganywa nga kha ṱhoḓisiso ya desike nga u sedzulusa zwiko zwa data zwa vhuvhili zwine zwa vha hone kha domeini ya tshumelo ya tshitshavha.

Ngudo iyi yo wana uri ṱhuṱhuwedzo i khwinisa kushumele kwa vhashumi, na uri pfufho dzi ngaho bonasi dza kushumele, mvelaphanḓa ya miholo, na u huliswa zwi engedza kushumele na mveledziso ya vhashumi. Ngudo iyi yo wana uri ṱhuṱhuwedzo i khwinisa kushumele kwa vhashumi, na uri pfufho dzi ngaho bonasi dza kushumele, mvelaphanḓa ya miholo, na u huliswa zwi engedza kushumele na mveledziso ya vhashumi. Ngudo yo dovha ya wana uri u fheliswa ha bonasi dza kushumele na tshivhalo tshihulwane tsha zwikhala zwi kwama nga nḓila i si yavhuḓi mutakalo wa vhashumi na vhuḓifari ha muhumbulo, zwine zwa kwama thwii ṱhuṱhuwedzo yavho, kushumele na mveledziso.

Ngudo i themendela uri vhashumi vha ṱuṱuwedzee, vha khwinise kushumele kwavho na u bveledza, DSD i tea u lavhelesa sisṱeme ya bonasi ya kushumele yo tewaho kha vhukoni ine ya dzhiela nṱha na u ṋea malamba kha kushumele kwa vhashumi kwo khetheaho. U langa tshivhalo tsha nṱha tsha zwikhala zwa mushumo kha Muhasho hu khou dzinginywa uri pulane ya u tevhekana, u pfumisa mishumo na u engedza mishumo kha ḽeveḽe ya vhulanguli ha vhukati na nṱha, zwi thomiwe. Hezwi zwi nga shuma sa tshithivheli tsha u sedzana na u ḓirula mushumo hu songo lavhelelwaho.

Maipfi a ndeme: kushumele kwa vhashumi, ṱhuṱhuwedzo ya vhashumi, mvelelo dza tshiimisw

NKATSAKANYO

Vukahlekahle bya mafambiselo ya matirhelo eka mavandla ya vukorhokeri bya mfumo wa Riphabiliki ya Afirika Dzonga a ya khumbeki kahle hi mitlhotlho, ku nga landzeleri swilaveko swa mafambiselo yo humelerisa malawulelo ya matirhelo na nkayivelo wa nkhutazo eka vatirhi. Malawulelo ya matirhelo ya tekiwa tanihi xitirhisiwa xa nkoka ku tlakusa vukumiwa bya kahlekahle bya mihlangano. Xikongomelo xa dyondzo leyi a ku ri ku kumisisa loko ku va malawulelo ya matirhelo ya tlakusa matirhelo ya vatirhi ka Ndzawulo ya Nhluvukiso wa Mahanelo (swi vuriwaka (NNM). Dyondzo yi tirhisile endlelo ra ndzavisiso wa nkoka ku hlamusela no kuma swikongomelo swa ndzavisiso. Mahungu ya hlengeletiwile ku tirhisa ndzavisiso wa desikithopo hi ku pfuxelerisa swihlovo swa switiviwo swa vumbirhi swi nga kona ka ndhawu ya vukorhokeri bya mfumo.

Dyondzo yi kumile leswaku nkhutazo wu tlakusa matirhelo ya vanhu, na leswaku mimbuyelo yo fana na tibonasi ta matirhelo, hakelo ya phurogirexini, na ntlakuso wo engetela vatirhi vukumiwa bya matirhelo. Dyondzo yi kuma leswaku ku herisiwa ka tibonasi ta matirhelo na mpimo wa le henhla wa mitirho swi na xiave xo biha eka rihanyo ra vatirhi na le ka vutivi bya miehleketo ya vanhu, leswi khumbhaka nkhutazo, eka matirhelo na vukumiwa.

Dyondzo yi bumabumela leswaku vatirhi va khutaziwa, no tlakusa vukumiwa na matirhelo ya vona, NNM yi fanele ku tekela nhlokweni sisiteme ya bonsai ya matirhelo ximeriti-nkongomiso leyi tekelaka nhlokwei na ku nyikela vatirhi lava tirhaka kahle. Ku lawula mpimo wa le henhla wa mitirho eka Ndzawulo swa bumabumeriwa leswaku nkunguhato wo tekelela, ku fuwisa ntirho no wu kurisa eka levele ya malawulelo ya le xikarhi kumbe ehenhla, swi humelerisiwa. Leswi swi ta pfuneta tanihi xisirheleri xa ku tshika lu tirha swi nga languteriwangi.

Marito ya nkoka: matirhelo ya vatirhi, nkhutazo wa vukahle bya mavandla ya vatirhi

Table of Contents

DECLARATION ---------- ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ---------- iii
DEDICATION ---------- iv
ABSTRACT ---------- v
CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION ---------- 1
1.1 INTRODUCTION ---------- 1
1. 2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY ---------- 2
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT ---------- 4
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS ---------- 6
1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES ---------- 6
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY ---------- 7
1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW ---------- 8
1.7.1 Performance management motivates employee ---------- 8
1.7.2 Performance management enhances employees' performance ---------- 8
1.7.3 Performance increase institutional effectiveness ---------- 8
1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY ---------- 9
1.9 ETHICAL CLEARANCE ---------- 10
1.10 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS ---------- 10
1.11 CHAPTER OUTLINE ---------- 10
1.12 SUMMARY ---------- 11

CHAPTER 2: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ---------- 13
2.1 INTRODUCTION ---------- 13
2.2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ---------- 13
2.2.1 New Public Management (NPM) ---------- 13
2.2.2 Batho Pele Principles ---------- 15
2.2.3 Institutional Theory ---------- 20
2.3 THEORIES OF MOTIVATION ---------- 22
2.3.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs ---------- 22
2.3.2 Vroom's Expectancy Theory ---------- 24
2.3.3 Hertzberg's Two-Factor Theory ---------- 25
2.3.4 McClelland Theory ---------- 26
2.4 EMPLOYEES MOTIVATION ---------- 28
2.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING MOTIVATION ---------- 31
2.5.1 Promotion ---------- 31
2.5.2 Performance Bonus ---------- 32
2.5.3 Training and development ---------- 34
2.5.4 Employee relations ---------- 36
2.5.5 Leadership style ---------- 37
2.6 EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE ---------- 40

2.6.1 Performance management process ---- 40
2.6.2 Performance planning ---- 41
2.6.3 Performance monitoring and measurements ---- 42
2.6.4 Performance assessment or appraisal ---- 43
2.6.5 Managing the outcomes of assessment ---- 44
2.7 INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ---- 46
2.8 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ---- 49
2.8.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 ---- 49
2.8.2 Public Service Regulation, 2016 ---- 50
2.8.3 Public Service Act ---- 53
2.8.4 Labour Relations Amendment Act, 1995 ---- 53
2.8.5 White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service of 1997 ---- 54
2.8.6 Treasury Regulation, 2001 ---- 56
2.9 SUMMARY ---- 57

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ---- 58
3.1 INTRODUCTION ---- 58
3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN ---- 58
3.2.1 Research Approach ---- 59
3.2.2 Research Design ---- 60
3.2.3 Research Method ---- 60
3.3 SAMPLING ---- 62
3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHOD ---- 63
3.5 METHODOLOGICAL VALUE OF THE CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH ---- 63
3.5.1 Reliability ---- 64
3.5.2 Validity ---- 65
3.5.3 Trustworthy ---- 66
3.6 ENSURING DATA QUALITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ---- 66
3.7 SUMMARY ---- 67

CHAPTER 4: INFORMATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS 68

4.1 INTRODUCTION ---- 68
4.2 INFORMATION GATHERING ---- 68
4.2.1 Search Engines ---- 68
4.3 THEMES AND SUB-THEMES ---- 74
4.3.1 Theme 1: Employee motivation ---- 74
4.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Rewards ---- 75
4.3.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Recognition ---- 82
4.4 THEME 2: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE ---- 86

4.4.1 Sub theme: 1 Effectiveness ---------- 87
4.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Productivity ---------- 90
4.5 THEME 3: INSTITUTION EFFECTIVENESS ---------- 96
4.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Customer satisfaction ---------- 96
4.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Better service delivery ---------- 100
4.6SUMMARY ---------- 108

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS ---------- 110

5.1 INTRODUCTION ---------- 110
5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES ---------- 110
5.3 SYNTHESIS OF CHAPTERS ---------- 110
5.3.1 Chapter One ---------- 111
5.3.2 Chapter Two ---------- 111
5.3.3 Chapter three ---------- 111
5.3.4 Chapter four ---------- 111
5.3.5 Chapter five ---------- 112
5.4 FINDINGS ---------- 112
5.4.1 Objective One: To explore whether performance management motivates employees ---------- 112
5.4.2 Objective 2: To examine whether performance management enhances employees' performance ---------- 113
5.4.3 Objective 3: To investigate whether performance management increases the institution’s effectiveness ---------- 114
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS ---------- 115
5.5.1Objective One: To explore whether performance management motivates employees ---------- 115
5.5.2 Objective 2: To examine whether performance management enhances employees' performance ---------- 116
5.5.3 Objective 3: To investigate whether performance management increases the institution’s effectiveness ---------- 116
5.6 CONCLUSION ---------- 116
5.7 LIMITATIONS ---------- 117
5.8 FURTHER RESEARCH ---------- 118

LIST OF SOURCES ---------- 119

ANNEXTURES:---------- 137

ANNEXTURE 1: UNISA'S ETHICAL CLEARANCE ---------- 137
ANNEXTURE 2: EDITORS LANGUAGE AND EDITING CERTIFICATE ---------- 138
ANNEXTURE 3: TURNITIN REPORT---------- 139

LIST OF TABLES ----------

Table 2.1: Batho Pele Principles Standards and Statement---------- 16
Table 4.1: Search engines---------- 70
Table 4.2: Themes and sub-themes ---------- 73
Table 4.3: Promotion by salary levels/bands---------- 75
Table 4.4: Progression by salary level/bands---------- 77
Table 4.5: Performance rewards ---------- 79
Table 4.6: Training per occupational level---------- 81
Table 4.7: Achievement of targets programme---------- 86
Table 4.8: DSD productivity level ---------- 90
Table 4.9: Summary of citizens experience and perceptions---------- 95
Table 4.10: Services by DSD ---------- 101

CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of performance management in public institutions of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) is negatively affected by a range of challenges, including non-compliance with administrative requirements for implementing performance management and a lack of employee motivation. Performance management is widely regarded as a key tool for enhancing organizational and institutional effectiveness and productivity. Therefore, it is important for institutions to implement performance management effectively to improve employee performance. In terms of section 195(1)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA), 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Constitution), public institutions are required to provide public services in an effective, efficient, and economical manner. These constitutional imperative places a clear responsibility on public institutions to ensure that their administrative processes and performance management practices are aligned with principles of good governance. Effective performance management is therefore not merely an internal administrative tool, but a constitutional requirement aimed at enhancing accountability, improving public service delivery, and promoting the overall effectiveness of the public sector. As such, the public institutions should prioritise the proper implementation of performance management systems to fulfil their constitutional mandate and meet the expectations of the citizens they serve.

The Department of Social Development (DSD, 2021:12) plays a critical role in providing social protection services in RSA. “The social development sector delivers its services in an environment marked by high levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality” (DSD:2021:12). For the DSD to effectively deliver these services, good performance management implementation, and employees motivation strategy are thus critical. Mohangi and Nyika (2023:77) states that a well-trained and motivated workfare is the foundation of performance management which in turn enhances organizational effectiveness. Effective performance management promotes a work-

place climate that encourages employees to advance and achieve high work performance (Bussin &Thabethe, 2018:3).

This study sought to explore whether performance management motivates and enhances employees' performance, which in turn increases the public institution's effectiveness, productivity and improves public service delivery.

This chapter first provides a relevant background and motivation of the research. Secondly, the problem statement is explained the purpose of this research followed by the research objectives and research questions which indicate the focus and limitation of the research. This chapter provides a preliminary literature review and describes appropriate research design and methodology for the research. Moreover, reflections on ethical guidelines and an outline of the layout of chapters and the research limitations are also presented. A conclusion concludes this chapter.

1. 2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Performance management was introduced in the South African public service during July 1999 following the signing of the Public Service Co-ordination Bargaining Council Resolution 13 of 1998 on Agreement on senior management and became effective from April 2001. Section 195 of the Constitution emphases the formulation of public policies and processes that would make government more effective, efficient and economical. These principles require, among other things, the cultivation of good human resource management (HRM) and career-development practices to maximize human potential. The Constitution further establishes the foundation for performance management through its requirement for an accountable government. For DSD to be able to meet its constitutional obligations, it is important for it to develop a system of managing and measuring performance.

The Public Service Act of 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994) mandates that "performance in public service and -sector institutions be managed in a consultative, supportive, and non-discriminatory way to improve institutional effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability" (RSA, 1994).This is underscored by the White Paper on Human Resource Management (1997) which stresses that the success of the public

service in delivering on its mandate depends largely on the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees (public servants) perform their duties. It highlights that effective performance management is essential for ensuring that institutional mandates are successfully implemented and that employees' competencies and capabilities are optimally utilized to support institutional effectiveness. In this regard, performance management serves not only as a mechanism for enhancing individual performance but also as a strategic tool for improving overall organizational functioning within the public service and -sector. Together, these frameworks guide public institutions in developing and implementing systems for managing employee performance to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and service-delivery capability.
According to Coccio (2019:4), incentives have a powerful effect on performance, motivation, commitment, and satisfaction of employees in organizations. Aljumah (2023:7) agreed, stating that a well-designed incentive system can increase motivation.

In today's rapidly changing environment, the public continuously raises expectations and demands better public services from government. This increases the need for ongoing monitoring and assessment of institutional performance. Research shows that effective performance management increases employee performance, which has a positive impact on organizational performance and service delivery (Van Waeyenberg, Peccei & Decramer, 2022:627). Barth and De Beer (2017:5) stated that when performance management functions well, it generates significant benefits for both the organization and its employees. Van der Westhuizen (2021:209) contended that performance management is a continuous, systematic and integrated process of identifying, appraising, managing, and developing employee's performance. He further stressed that performance management is a strategic process that helps to create a work-place climate that is conducive for motivating employees to develop and achieve high standards of performance. Aguinis (2019:1) earlier on pointed out that performance management is a systematic process that improves institutional performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning their performance with strategic goals of the institution. Performance management is a means of attaining better outcomes from an organization, teams and an individual

through an understanding and effective management of performance in line with the agreed objectives (Kubheka, 2018:181). According to Caesar (2018:40), the relationship between performance management and a rewards system plays an important role in effective performance of employees. Recognition systems allow employees to enhance their performance and achieve satisfaction. Performance bonuses are widely used as incentives to motivate employees and enhance performance. However, in the public sector, the absence of such bonuses remains understudied, creating a significant gap in understanding its effects on employee motivation, performance, and institutional effectiveness. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult to design effective human resource policies that foster high employee performance and improve service delivery.

In terms of the Public Service Regulations, 2016, “all departments are required to have a Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) policy in place “(Public Service regulation ,2016). DSD is mandated to provide comprehensive social protection services through public policy development and the enforcement of standards aimed at reducing poverty, inequality, and vulnerability (DSD, 2025:24).

According to the Public Service Regulations 2016, DSD is required to have a Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) policy in place. At the DSD, the PMDS policy is implemented to regulate performance planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting. The effectiveness of the implementation of the performance management system has a direct impact on public service delivery and employee productivity. Against this background, this study investigated whether performance management motivates and enhances employees’ performance, which in turn increases the public institution’s effectiveness and improves public service delivery.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The DSD has been inundated with complaints regarding poor delivery service (Parliamentary of Republic of South Africa reports, 2023 and 2024; Public Protector report,2021:9 and 2020). These complaints included recurring delays in processing social grants payments, the inconsistent application of eligibility criteria, irregular

procurement processes, and the non-payment of Non-Profit Organization (NPO) partners as well as backlog in foster care cases. Collectively, these issues undermined public confidence in the DSD and negatively affected the efficiency and effectiveness of public social services. These were because employees did not receive annual performance bonuses that used to motivate them to enhance their work performance and productivity.

Public Service Commission (PSC) (2014:24) noted that the public service continues to experience numerous challenges, including: a poor understanding of the performance management system, subjective application of the system by managers, and a lack of skills and time to effectively implement performance management. These challenges suggested that insufficient performance management training for managers and supervisors contributed significantly to the poor understanding and ineffective implementation of the system at the time.

It resulted in managers following their own ideas and ways of conducting performance appraisal of their subordinates, which at times might have been subjective. This led to subordinates' question and compare their performance appraisal with their fellow colleagues, which resulted in employees reducing their performance, which in turn influenced the institution's quests of effectiveness and high productivity negatively.

The Minister of Department of Public Service and Administration approved the decrease of budget percentages for performance bonuses from 2019 (DPSA, 2019:7). "For the performance cycle 2019/2020, 0.75% was allocated for performance bonus, for the performance cycle 2020/2021, 0.5% was allocated, and for the performance cycle 2021/2022 0% was allocated" (DPSA, 2019:7). The lack of a performance bonus did not only demotivate employees, but also negatively impacted on their performance, which in turn affected the institution's effectiveness and delivery of public services. Nduati & Wanyoike (2022:364) stated that performance management plays a significant role in the effectiveness of the organization. This is underscored by Adams and Ama (2024:2) who claimed that rewards have a substantial impact on an institution's ability to motivate its employees and to produce a higher quality of work-performance.

Performance bonuses are widely used as incentives to motivate employees and enhance performance. However, in the public sector, the absence of such bonuses remains understudied, creating a significant gap in understanding its effects on employee motivation, performance, and institutional effectiveness. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult to design effective human resource policies that foster high employee performance and improve service delivery. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how the absence of performance management and in particular performance bonuses influence employees' performance and the operational effectiveness of public institutions. As previously mentioned, performance management plays a key role in the effectiveness of an institution in addressing the challenges in implementation of a performance management system. Therefore, this research sought to explore the question: Does performance management motivate employees, enhance their performance, and increase the institution's effectiveness?

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question was: Does performance management motivate and enhance employees' performance to increase the DSD's effectiveness?
The following secondary questions were put:

- Does performance management motivate employees?
- Does performance management enhance employees' performance?
- Does performance management increase the institution's effectiveness?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main research objective was to determine whether performance management motivates and enhances employees' work-performance to increase DSD's effectiveness.
The following secondary research objectives were pursued:

- To explore whether performance management motivates employees.
- To examine whether performance management enhances employees' performance.
- To determine whether performance management increases the institution’s effectiveness.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Thusi, Jili, Adetiba, Mlambo and Mkhize (2023:44) carried out research in performance management systems by exploring challenges in implementing work-performance management in the public sector. Their study revealed that the implementation of performance management systems in the public service sector was embedded with challenges that included a lack of knowledge regarding employees’ performance when supervisors are not constantly with them or when their contact is not consistent, and a lack of training in evaluating employee performance. They found that Supervisors must be taught and trained in the performance assessment process to ensure fairness and prevent mistakes of judgment.

Another study by Mohangi and Nyika (2024:39) revealed that low level of accountability and poor communication of performance management practices hinder the implementation of performance management, which negatively affects the ability of the institution. This research endeavoured to investigate whether performance management enhances institutional effectiveness, because the public sector does not offer performance bonuses, a well-implemented performance management system is a critical tool for improving employee performance, productivity and the institution’s effectiveness.

Although many research studies have been done in performance management, few focused specifically on the effectiveness of performance management and performance bonuses in public institutions with particular reference to the DSD.

1.7 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is based on a review of secondary data to address the research questions. The secondary data consists of government publications and internal documents, legislation, peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, books including e-books, media articles, internet articles, and other sources related to the subject matter. The referencing method used is the Harvard referencing method.

This study is underpinned by a deductive approach through identifying concepts from literature review to answer the research questions (Snyder, 2019:334). An overview of the key concepts that guide the study are very briefly discussed below. The detail literature review is discussed in chapter 2:

1.7.1 Performance management motivates employee

Tudor and Peter (2021:721) define motivation as the process that initiates purposeful behaviours, guides, and keeps employees focused, engaged and with a positive attitude. Employee motivation is an important factor which influences organizational performance, job satisfaction, and employee retention (Bustasar, Sumarsih, Nugroho, 2019:81). Pancasila, Haryono and Sulistyo (2020:390) attest that motivation process is driven by the need to be satisfied, which means that when employees' needs are satisfied, they will make efforts towards achieving the goals of the organization. Robescu and Iancu (2016:49) suggest that organization needs motivation strategy to motivate employees' motivation is a significant contributor to exceptional performance (Armstrong, 2023:173).

1.7.2 Performance management enhances employees' performance

Performance management is an important tool for managers because it helps to integrate individual efforts and goals with those of the business (Leatherbarrow & Fletcher, 2019:247). Lopez-Fernandez (2019:52) stated that, by assessing individual performance, the organizational performance is determined. If all parties involved

perform their task and functions effectively, the overall organizational performance objective will be met.

1.7.3 Performance increase institutional effectiveness

Organization gets success with the help of its employees. Employee performance lays a significant role in the improvement of productivity of the institution, the organizational goal is therefore achieved through employee's performance (Alase & Akinbo, 2021:18). The authors further state that high-performance of employees which results to producing high inputs will result in high productivity of the institution. Pay and performance are directly related to achieving organizational goals. According to the Public Service Regulation 2001, employees strive to achieve the objective of his or her organization in the interest of the public. If employees perform at their level best, service delivery should be rendered effectively.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Bloomfield, Crawford and Fisher (2019:27) defined research methodology as the plan that is used to answer research questions. Research design ensures that the answers provided are as valid as possible and are discovered as efficiently as possible (Mello, 2021:14). The selected methodology for this research was a non-empirical study. Unlike an empirical study that is concerned with collecting data, a non-empirical study is concerned with analysing concepts (Dan, 2017:2). Taking into consideration that this research objective was to determine whether performance management enhances employee's performance in DSD, this provided the foundation for the conceptual study.

The research approach for this study was qualitative research. The application of the chosen method was informed by the availability of information on the internet. This is a low-cost method, and data can be easily accessed (Ugwu, Chinyere, Eze & Val, 2020:27). According to Bloomfield, Crawford and Fisher (2019:27), a research design can be described as the overall strategy that is used to conduct a research study. The essence of research design is to achieve the research objective clearly, objectively,

precisely, and economically and minimize errors (Asenahabi, 2019:87). The selected research design for this study was a systematic literature review.

1.9 ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Ethics should be considered when conducting scientific study in the social sciences. Brynard, Hanekom, and Brynard (2014:28) highlighted a few crucial requirements for researchers about ethical considerations, including honesty and confidentiality. In upholding ethical values and standards for this research, an ethical clearance was obtained through the College of Economic Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of South Africa (see Annexure 1). Brynard, Hanekom, and Brynard (2014:97), indicated that research ethics committees safeguard the rights of researchers, society, and research participants. Furthermore, "approval from an institutional ethics review board is integral to comply with sound research practices" (Navalta, Stone & Lyons, 2019:03). However, it is worth noting that this research was a conceptual study, and therefore, the researcher is also bound to adhere to all scientific research ethical considerations.

1.10 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The study was non-imperical. Research limitations included those that had an effect on information gathering, empirical data collection, access to participants in the data-collection process, and the potential for the researcher to unintentionally use the data analysis to make incorrect conclusions. These unfortunate state of affairs already warned good researchers that when they have to carry out scientifically based research, they should be cautious of any issues that might raise question on the reliability of the results and conclusions.
(Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:28).

1.11 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The chapters of the Mini dissertation are as follows:

Chapter 1: Chapter 1 provides a general outline of the research study. It covers the background and rationale of the study and problem statement, which guide the research questions and objectives. It explains the significance of the study, which aims to clearly explain the importance of the study. It further discusses the selected research methodology and provides a brief explanation of the ethical considerations.

Chapter 2: This chapter addresses the research questions through a review of secondary sources of data relating to performance management and employee motivation. It also provides an overview of the theoretical framework that underpins this study.

Chapter 3: This chapter outlines the research methodology and design. The reason for selecting the conceptual study is to provide critical insight into conceptual study of performance management in the DSD.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents the process of analysing collected, and its interpretation of the results.

Chapter 5: This chapter provides the findings, recommendations, and conclusions of the study. A summary of the key aspects discussed throughout the study is outlined in this chapter. The recommendations are made based on the findings as well as for any future research that may be considered. The limitations encountered during the research are also explained, and conclusions presented.

1.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the background and motivation for the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, preliminary literature review, research design and research methodology. It further

provides the required ethical considerations for the study as well as brief explanation of limitations.

The next chapter explores performance management and motivation and provides an overview of the theoretical framework that underpinned this study.

CHAPTER 2: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the background and motivation of the study, the significance of the study, problem statement, research objectives and research questions, preliminary literature review, research design and methodology, ethical clearance, and the division of the study. To have a broad understanding, this chapter presents a theoretical review of the literature regarding performance management, primarily focusing on enhancing employees' performance in the Department of Social Development. This chapter presents a theoretical review of the literature regarding performance management, focusing on the enhancement of employee performance.

2.2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Sandberg and Alvesson (2022:488) defined theory as a belief or a system of ideas that intend to explain something. Theory is important because it provides clear meanings of how things should be, how they should be done and why they are done. Therefore, it is important to identify theories that support the use of performance management as the variable of the study so that users of the phenomenon can be clear on what it means, how and why it should be done.

2.2.1 New Public Management (NPM)

New Public Management (NPM) emerged internationally in the late 1970s and 1980s as a dominant paradigm for public sector reform, largely in response to fiscal crises, perceived bureaucratic inefficiencies, and growing demands for greater accountability in government (Zahra, Haliah, & Kusumawati, 2024:897). NPM is a theoretical framework situated within the broader context of managerialism, emphasizing efficiency and market-oriented practices in public administration. It represents a shift from traditional bureaucratic models to a more dynamic approach that incorporates business-like methods (Pazdzior, Lenczuk, Jarmul & Sokolowska-Wozniak, 2023:690). This transition is driven by the need for improved performance, accountability, and responsiveness in public services, reflecting a significant change in the role of the state and public organizations (Stroińska, 2020:17).

New Public Management shifted the public sector focus from inputs (e.g., budgets and compliance with procedures) to outputs (e.g., measurable results and outcomes) by introducing explicit performance standards, decentralized management, and accountability tied to tangible achievements rather than process adherence (Mahmoud & Othman, 2024:151). This reform emphasized output control, allowing managers flexibility in methods while holding them responsible for meeting specific targets, such as reduced crime rates or improved service delivery metrics, instead of just increased spending. Christensen and Perlaegreid (2022:42) pointed out that there is still a lack of systematic empirical knowledge about the actual effects of NPM on public service delivery.

The inequality in public service sector development globally highlights persistent disparities in access to essential public services (Ingrams, Piotrowsla & Berliner, 2020:259). A study conducted by Mahmoud and Othman (2024:167) found that, in Jordan, NPM reforms enhanced efficiency goals but faced cultural challenges like favouritism, which undermined equitable access to public services. In Indonesia, Erniaty and Harun (2020:346) found that the decentralization associated with NPM in healthcare caused unequal access, disproportionately benefiting higher-income groups over poorer populations.

The theoretical postulations of New Public Management (NPM) have been progressively embedded in South Africa's public service-sector to transform governmental structures, strengthen financial management, and enhance work-performance across the national, provincial, and municipal government spheres (Molobela & Uwizeyimana, 2023: 332). Both NPM and Post-NPM paradigms enable government to pursue efficiency in the allocation and utilization of state resources while simultaneously allowing the deconstruction and reconfiguration of national and provincial government-sphere departments (Molobela & Uwizeyimana, 2023:332). The shift from traditional public administration to NPM promoted decentralization, performance orientation, and customer-centric governance, leading to reforms aimed at improving public service delivery and operational efficiency (Christensen & Perlaegreid, 2022:43).

Nevertheless, there is ongoing debate about the tangible effects of NPM. Alkaabi, Hazzam, Wilkins, and Dan (2024:1128) observed that NPM practices do not automatically result in improved service quality; rather, this relationship is mediated by service innovation. They suggested that the modernization of government through NPM requires adopting innovative institutional and public service-delivery methods tailored to the public sector. Similarly, Zahra et al., (2024:901) emphasized that improving public-sector performance depends on applying selected private-sector management techniques adapted to public-sector contexts.

These aforementioned reforms sought to modernize a historically bureaucratic and fragmented administrative system inherited from apartheid in RSA that was marked by inequality, inefficiency, and weak institutional capacity. However, challenges persist in implementing NPM reforms in a country experiencing skill shortages, uneven organizational capabilities, and tensions between the efficiency-driven logic of NPM and the nation's developmental and redistributive objectives (Molobela & Uwizeyimana, 2023:325). Despite these limitations, the Researcher is convinced that NPM continues to influence contemporary public-sector reform agendas, shaping public policies that strengthen professionalism, improve public service delivery, and enhance institutional performance. As Zweni, Yan, and Mabugu (2024:220) observed, NPM has even transformed the auditing paradigm in the public sector from compliance-based audits to performance auditing by emphasizing the interrelationship among economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in evaluating organizational outcomes.

2.2.2 Batho Pele Principles

South Africa's Batho Pele "People First" principles constitute a foundational public-service reform initiative designed to enhance service delivery by placing citizens at the centre of government operations. The principles emphasise consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, transparency, and mechanisms for redress, collectively forming a framework for strengthening institutional effectiveness and ensuring that public services are delivered in a responsive, equitable, and accountable manner. According to Mojapelo, Modiba, and Saurobe (2023:359), Batho Pele Principles document contributes significantly to improving both the quality and accessibility of government services by promoting efficiency and service excellence.

Through this approach, public servants are held accountable to citizens and are expected to perform their duties in accordance with agreed-upon service standards (Department of Public Service and Administration [Hereafter referred to as DPSA], 2003).

Representing the core of the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, the Batho Pele Principles was formally adopted in 1997 as a guiding philosophy to reshape the culture of public administration in alignment with the RSA's constitutional values (Masiya, Davids, Lubinga, Roberts, Sausi, Sanchez, & Mangai, 2025:3). These constitutional ideals, particularly those outlined in section 195 of the Constitution, prioritise the effective, efficient, and economic use of public resources, requiring high levels of productivity within the public service (i.e., national and provincial government-sphere institutions) as well as the public sector (i.e., local government-sphere municipalities). From the outset, "the Batho Pele Principles approach embedded a strong performance imperative: public servants as well as public sector officials were expected to pursue excellence in fulfilling their mandates and to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to improving public service delivery in RSA" (DPSA, 1997:8).

Furthermore, the operational integration of Batho Pele Principles into the daily functioning of government was never intended as a peripheral or optional exercise. The White Paper explicitly states that Batho Pele Principles should be embedded within all management activities, ensuring that every administrative and managerial process supports improved public service delivery and enhanced customer satisfaction (DPSA, 1997:9). This directive firmly aligns Batho Pele Principles with the broader agenda of promoting public-service- as well as public-sector organizational productivity. In the RSA context, Batho Pele Principles continues to be recognised as a key driver of organizational effectiveness due to its focus on public service standards, accountability, and continuous improvement. As Masiya, et al., (2025:3) observed, Batho Pele Principles remains one of the few nationally endorsed frameworks that explicitly links public service quality to citizen and resident experience and trust in government.

Since its inception, the transformative philosophy underpinning Batho Pele Principles has been intimately connected to the creation of high-performing, citizen-centred

public service- and public sector institutions. This connection underscores the need to evaluate the extent to which Batho Pele Principles, particularly its public service standards, are internalised and consistently implemented across public service and -sector institutions. Systematic adherence to these principles not only signals a commitment to ethical and accountable governance but also reflects an institution's capacity to achieve and sustain high productivity.

The literature suggests a strong conceptual and practical link between the implementation of Batho Pele Principles and the effectiveness of public service sector institutions in RSA (Nkambule & Ngubane, 2023:210). Compliance with the standards of the Batho Pele Principles serves as a reliable indicator of a government institution's commitment to performance, accountability, and public service excellence (Mojapelo, Modiba, & Saurombe, 2023:361). Public institutions that effectively internalise and operationalise Batho Pele Principles tend to demonstrate improved organizational productivity, better public service outcomes, and stronger stakeholder confidence. Consequently, assessing the degree to which Batho Pele Principles is embedded within an institution such as the DSD offers a valuable lens for evaluating institutional effectiveness (Mojapelo, Modiba & Saurombe, 2023:361). Understanding the implementation of Batho Pele Principles therefore contributes not only to appraising public service-delivery quality but also to elucidating broader institutional performance dynamics. Table 2.1 displays the different types of Batho Pele principles, standards and statement of leadership in which it is derived from:

Table 2.1: Batho Pele Principles, standards and statements

PRINCIPLE	STANDARD	STATEMENT
Consultation	Citizens and residents must be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they	Consultation with communities when developing programmes.

	receive.	
Service Standards	Public institutions must set clear service standards and communicate them to the public.	Sets norms and standards which outlines timelines for public services.
Access	All citizens and residents should have equal access to public services, regardless of location or socio-economic status.	The public to access public social Services.
Courtesy	Citizens and residents should be treated with courtesy, empathy, and respect.	Maintaining ethical conduct when engaging clients.
Information	Citizens and residents should be given full and accurate information about public services and procedures.	The public to be provided with information regarding the public services.
Openness and transparency	Government must be open about how public services are rendered and how decisions are made.	Publishing annual performance plans, budgets, and public service delivery reports.

Redress	If the promised standard of public service it is not delivered, service beneficiaries should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy.	Complaint mechanisms at local Public service offices to address Challenges experienced by the public.
Value for money	Public services should be provided economically and efficiently to give public service recipients the best value for their money.	DSD prioritising efficient use of funding.

Source: Adapted from Batho Pele Handbook (1997)

Delivering high-quality public services to citizens and residents of RSA must remain a central priority, particularly given the department's (DSD) mandate to improve people's lives. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997) and the Batho Pele Handbook (1997) emphasize that public service employees (public servants) on the national and provincial government spheres should pursue excellence in fulfilling their service delivery responsibilities. Batho Pele Theory reframes public administration as a citizen-driven, ethically grounded, and performance-conscious system. It recognizes that true service delivery reform cannot be achieved through structural efficiency alone but must be anchored in values of humanity, equity, and accountability. When integrated with NPM's managerial tools and Institutional Theory's legitimacy framework, Batho Pele Principles provides a holistic model for effective, inclusive, and trusted governance in RSA.

2.2.3 Institutional Theory

This theory encourages stakeholders of organizations to develop operations about their organizations and monitor if organizations are making attempts to deliver these expectations (Virani & Van der Wal, 2023:55).

Management is more aware of social views and opinions and more willing to incorporate societal norms, rule, regulations, and requirements in its daily operations of an organization (Rana, Ahmed, Narayan & Zheng, 2025:464).

Institutional theory provides a valuable lens for understanding why performance management systems (PMS) in public service institutions are often adopted not only for technical efficiency but to satisfy external legitimacy demands (Sminia, 2024:5). Khassawneh and Elrehail (2023:3) highlighted that institutions are shaped by regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements. For better service delivery, institutions must align internal structures and processes with external expectations and policy norms to remain effective and legitimate (Virani & Van der Wal, 2023:61).

Shongwe and Meyer (2023:140) discussed the challenges of service delivery in South African municipalities and emphasized the role of institutional capacity, political stability, and planning frameworks in obtaining better outcomes. The two authors advocated for improved monitoring systems and the community involvement in all planning and decision-making process, which will contribute positively to effective service delivery (Shongwe & Meyer, 2023:137). Mabizela and Matsiliza (2020:6) were of the opinion that challenges such as inadequate technical skills, knowledge, leadership and management skills hinder service. Mngomezulu (2020:42-43) further attested that political interference affects service delivery precisely because when an incompetent person is employed, they may fail to execute their duties satisfactorily and the deployment of unqualified officials will impact public service delivery.

Better service delivery is a fundamental indicator of institutional effectiveness, particularly in the public service as well as the public sector. The literature affirms that improving service delivery requires a multifaceted approach that combines strategic planning, participatory governance, performance monitoring, and institutional reform (Alase & Akinbo, 2021:18). In the South African context, frameworks like Batho Pele Principles and IDPs provide the foundation for aligning institutional mandates with community expectations (Mojapelo et al., 2021:359).

Scholars emphasize that institutional effectiveness and legitimacy rely on how well institutions such as DSD align internal structures and processes with external formal, informal, and political environments. From the rational action perspective, institutions must comply with formal laws and regulations, balancing efficiency with regulatory constraints (Sminia, 2024:25). The social-constructionist strand highlights adaptation to societal norms and cultural expectations to sustain legitimacy and stakeholder trust (Marschlich, 2022:27). Meanwhile, the mediated-conflict view underscores the need to navigate complex political environments and competing interests to maintain policy coherence and strategic flexibility (Adwaith, 2022:76). Collectively, these perspectives affirm that institutional resilience arises from integrating legal compliance, cultural legitimacy, and political adaptability within a coherent organizational strategy.

Regarding the aforementioned review of the term “Institutional theory”, the Researcher, for the use in this Study, defines it as internal as well as external organisational arrangements (e.g., communication and facilitation of healthy inter-governmental relations (IGR) in order to comply with external or social norms, rules, and requirements to receive legitimacy and support. For example, an institution should comply with environmental regulations. Other than conformity, the theory bridges the gap between societal expectations and organization’s actions (Khassawneh & Elrehai, 2022:2).

It can be deduced that the integration of New Performance Management, Batho Pele Principles, and Institutional Theory underscores that sustainable public service effectiveness depends on balancing work performance outcomes, citizen values, and

institutional legitimacy. New Performance Management provides the structural and procedural tools such as results-based evaluation, accountability mechanisms, and performance metrics that drive efficiency and measurable outputs within public institutions. However, performance alone is insufficient without alignment to the Batho Pele Principles, which embed the ethical and human-cantered dimensions of governance, emphasizing consultation, service standards, courtesy, transparency, and redress. Together, they shift public administration from a purely bureaucratic model to a citizen-responsive and value-driven system.

Institutional Theory complements these frameworks by explaining how institutions maintain legitimacy and coherence while adapting to external public policy norms, societal expectations, and political pressures. From a rational-institutional view, Batho Pele Principles' codified principles reinforce formal legitimacy through compliance with public service regulations; from a social-constructionist perspective, they nurture informal legitimacy through public trust and cultural alignment; and from a mediated-conflict lens, they guide institutions in navigating competing political and public policy interests.

2.3 THEORIES OF MOTIVATION

Numerous motivation theories, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Hertzberg's two-factor theory, McClelland's three needs theory, and Vroom's expectation theory, demonstrate the critical role of needs (Varma & Budhwar, 2020). Pancasila et al., (2020:390), and Sanjaya and Indrawati (2023:12) were of the opinion that one of the most important aspects of motivation is meeting people's needs.

2.3.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow in 1943 suggested that human needs can be classified into five categories and that these categories can be arranged in a hierarchy of importance. These include physiological, security, belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation needs. Physiological needs, such as food, sleep, and health, constitute the strongest motivational drivers

because they are fundamental for survival (Rojas, Mendez & Watkins-Fassier 2023:2). Employees who struggle to meet basic needs such as adequate nutrition, wages, or safe working conditions cannot meaningfully contribute to productivity, creativity, or organizational performance (Maslow, 1943:370). Jonas (2026:107) states that human beings inherently seek more than what they already possess, reinforcing Maslow's conceptualisation of needs as a dynamic and evolving hierarchy. Jonas (2016:113) further noted that individuals can satisfy specific needs through multiple pathways, highlighting the adaptable nature of human motivation. Similarly, McLeod (2025:22) recognised that a person may be driven by both lower-level deficiency needs and higher growth requirements.

The theory also provides useful insights for organizational reward systems. Maslow's hierarchy suggests that junior or lower-income employees are motivated primarily by financial rewards that enable them to satisfy physiological and safety needs. McLeod (2025:13) similarly stated that monetary incentives are particularly motivating for employees whose foundational needs remain unmet. Conversely, employees who have already satisfied lower-level needs may derive greater motivation from opportunities for recognition, meaningful work, autonomy, or career development.

Furthermore, Maslow's emphasis on self-actualisation aligns closely with contemporary organizational practices, particularly those related to staff development. Training and development programmes enhance employees' competencies, confidence, and career progression, thereby fulfilling both esteem and self-actualisation needs. Herzberg (1959) reinforced this perspective, asserting that growth opportunities are powerful intrinsic motivators that stimulate satisfaction and organizational commitment. Maslow's model therefore provides an important rationale for investment in training, career development initiatives, and leadership programmes that promote employee growth and fulfilment.

Despite its influence, Maslow's theory faces several criticisms for its rigid, hierarchical structure. Ghaleb (2024:1035) observed that the theory should acknowledge that human needs are dynamic and fluid, rather than static and rigid. Needs, like many other things in nature, are an interactive, dynamic and integrated system (Ghaleb,

2024:1035). It does not assume lower-level satisfaction as a prerequisite for the emergence of higher-order needs. The theory should also allow for some variation and overlap in the hierarchy, rather than enforcing a strict sequence (Mcleod, 2025:25). In addition, Papaleontiou-Louca, Esmailnia and Thoma (2021:334) stated that highly self-actualizing people are focused on their own development and achievements, they are focused on "the self." Individuals who pursue self-actualization participate in activities that align with their core values and interests (Ghaleb, 2024:1039). Recent research indicates that human motivation is dynamic and overlapping, with individuals often pursuing higher-order needs even when lower-level needs remain unmet (Phiri, Siwale, & Mwewa, 2023:1046). The increasing diversity of the workforce and rapidly changing work environments require more flexible motivational frameworks, highlighting that while Maslow provides foundational insights, it is insufficient to fully explain contemporary organizational motivation (Saepudin & Rahmayanti,2025:341).

The comparative study conducted by Iherisekien and Joel (2023:85) revealed a clear relationship between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, highlighting the diversity of individual needs and the critical role of managers in motivating employees to achieve higher performance within government institutions such as DSD. This study demonstrated that motivation is multifaceted and should be approached as a composite of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational theories. Isolating either form of motivation may hinder an employee's ability to satisfy specific needs. Notably, institutional success depends not only on a manager's ability to organise and coordinate material resources, but also on the capacity to recognise the varying needs of employees and to develop appropriate strategies to address them.

2.3.2 Vroom's Expectancy Theory

According to Vroom (1964), motivation is determined by three elements: expectancy (effort leads to performance), instrumentality (performance leads to rewards), and valence (value of the reward). The theory posits that employees are motivated when they believe their efforts will result in performance and that performance will be rewarded with something of value (Fang, 2023:7). The theory assumes that behaviour is based on selecting consciously from a range of possible substitutes.

Rehman, Sehar and Afzal (2018:431) observed that expectancy theory assumes that individuals choose their behaviour consciously from available alternatives, selecting the option perceived to have the greatest likelihood of yielding desirable outcomes. In their view, institutions should provide both financial and non-financial incentives because these increase the valence of rewards and play a critical role in influencing motivation and goal achievement. This underscores the importance of designing reward systems that address the diverse needs and preferences of employees. Expectancy theory is therefore particularly relevant in structured work environments that require clear goals, performance evaluation and reward alignment (Ogundare & Omotosho, 2022:8).

Watters (2021:6) was of the view that Vroom's theory however does have some weaknesses. The first, and perhaps most significant weakness, is that the application of the theory is quite complex, making it difficult for managers to effectively use it on a day-to-day basis. A study by Fang (2023:11) showed that some scholars have found that expectancy theory is not an effective way to motivate employees in organizations. Employees may not be motivated by expectations, values, or instrumentality. Expectancy theory is limited when employees need more than money and rewards. The study suggested that expectancy theory needs to be modified or expanded to include other factors that explain employee behaviour. Furthermore, the expectancy theory is very strict in that employees are motivated to improve their performance only when all three factors are met simultaneously.

2.3.3 Hertzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg suggested that there are factors in a job that cause satisfaction, which are intrinsic factors (motivators), and other factors he refers to as dissatisfiers (hygiene factors) (Alam, 2021:36). Herzberg postulated that motivation is made up of hygiene factors which are concomitant with negative feelings about the job, and the motivators, which are factors connected with positive ambiances, and which contribute to propelling enhanced employee performance (Ihensekien & Joel, 2023:85).

This theory places significant emphasis on motivators, which are factors intrinsic to the job itself and responsible for generating positive job attitudes, deep satisfaction, and long-term internal motivation (Ihensekien & Joel, 2023:85). Unlike hygiene factors, which prevent dissatisfaction but do not create motivation, motivators arise from the nature and content of the work, influencing employees' psychological fulfilment, engagement, and sense of meaningful contribution (Acquah, Agyabeng-Mensah, & Afum 2021:26). Herzberg (1959) identified five primary motivators that enhance job satisfaction: achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement or growth opportunities. These elements correspond closely to the higher-order needs identified in Maslow's hierarchy, particularly esteem and self-actualisation, reflecting the human desire for competence, development, and purpose.

Hygiene factors constitute the second major category in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and describe those extrinsic conditions that surround the job rather than being part of the work itself. These factors relate to the organizational environment, administrative structures, and interpersonal dynamics. Herzberg (1959) explained his Theory by saying that hygiene factors do not generate motivation or satisfaction when present or improved; instead, their primary role is to prevent dissatisfaction. When hygiene factors are absent, inadequate, or perceived as unfair, they create frustration, reduced morale, and disengagement. However, their presence merely stabilises the work environment and does not result in lasting motivation or higher job performance.

2.3.4 McClelland Theory

McClleland's theory suggests that employees are motivated by three factors: the need for power, achievement, and affiliation. The need for power (nPow) refers to the desire to influence and control others. Individuals high in socialised power use their influence constructively to achieve organizational goals and are well suited to leadership and managerial roles that require decision-making and direction (Arogundade & Akpa,2023:234). The need for achievement (nAch) reflects an individual's desire for excellence, goal attainment, and mastery of challenging tasks. Individuals high in nAch prefer moderately challenging work, value clear feedback, and are motivated by

opportunities to demonstrate competence, often excelling in problem-solving and innovative roles (Arogundade & Akpa, 2023:234). The need for affiliation (nAff) emphasises the desire for strong interpersonal relationships, social acceptance, and cooperation. Individuals high in nAff thrive in team-oriented and relational roles but may avoid leadership positions that require conflict or assertive decision-making unless balanced by other motivational needs.

McClelland found that high achievers exhibit characteristics such as goal orientation, persistence, and a preference for environments where performance is measured objectively. According to Imran, Ghazwan and Firmansyah (2025:12), individuals with strong achievement needs engage in competitive behaviours and hold themselves to exceptionally high standards of perfection. These employees are motivated by challenging work, clear feedback, and opportunities for autonomy. They tend to excel in roles requiring problem-solving, innovation, and strategic thinking. Unlike Maslow and Herzberg, McClelland contended that motivational needs are not innate biological drives but are acquired through social influences (de Andrade Baptista, Formigoni, da Silva, Stettiner, & de Novais, 2021:55), (Rodjanatham & Badir,2025:4). Abiola, David, Okutu, Hammed and Ozioma (20213:37) further pointed out that motivation varies among individuals depending on their dominant need and that these needs are not hierarchical. The uniqueness regarding the needs of everyone, showing that the individuality of people makes each person to have a different perception of reality (de Andrade Baptista et al., 2021:55).

From the above discussion, an analysis of Maslow's, Herzberg's, McClelland's, and Vroom's motivation theories, Employee motivation reveals that employee motivation is a multifaceted and dynamic process driven by individual needs, job-related elements, learning experiences, and cognitive expectations. While Herzberg emphasized the difference between elements that actively motivate and those that prevent dissatisfaction, and Maslow emphasized the progression of human needs, McClelland showed that motivation varies among people based on dominant learned needs for achievement, power, or affiliation. By demonstrating how employees' views of effort, performance, and reward outcomes affect motivation which lead to improved performance. These theories concur that an effective workplace motivation strategy

that meets workers' needs inspires workers, which increases effectiveness and enhances institution’s outcomes.

2.4 EMPLOYEES MOTIVATION

This section will discuss employee motivation by focusing on intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence motivation, namely, training and development, performance bonus, promotion, and pay progression.

Motivation refers to the capability to transform the behaviours and performance of employees at the workplace (Tumi, Hasan & Khalid, 2021:123). In the workplace, motivation refers to the internal drive or external influence that inspires employees to take action, perform tasks effectively, and pursue organizational goals with commitment and enthusiasm. According to Bandhu, Mohan, Nittal, Jadhav, Bhadauria and Saxena, (2024:2), motivation can be defined as the processes that account for an individual’s intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining a goal. While Uwimpuhwe (2018:114) defined motivation as the willingness to exert and maintain effort towards organizational goals, influenced by the expectation that this effort will satisfy certain individual needs such as physiological needs, esteem needs and self-actualization need. Similarly, Ali and Anwar (2021:22) described motivation as the extent to which an individual’s behaviour is self-determined and driven by internal satisfaction or external rewards. Similarly, Pancasila, Haryono and Sulistyo (2020:390), highlighted that the motivation-process is driven by the need to be satisfied, which means that when employees’ needs are satisfied, they will make efforts towards achieving the goals of the organization or institutions.

In essence, workplace motivation determines why employees choose to work diligently, how committed they remain to their tasks, and how persistently they pursue their success, as well as the success of the organization. It is a key factor in improving productivity, innovation, job satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness (Bustasar, Sumarsih, & Nugroho, 2019:81). Employees are encouraged to perform effectively in accordance with the organizational needs when they are motivated (Robescu & Lancu, 2016:49).

Employee motivation is an important factor that influences organizational performance, job satisfaction, and employee retention (Bustasar, Sumarsih, & Nugroho, 2019:81). High motivation is a significant contributor to exceptional performance (Armstrong, 2023:173). Ihsani and Wijaya (2020:500) affirmed that the effectiveness of an individual in an organization depends on their ability to perform the assigned task, a healthy work environment, and the reason that drives the individual to exceed expectations, therefore organizations must create and maintain a work environment in which employees are motivated (Alase & Akimbo, 2021:20). Motivation is very important to enhance employee organizational commitment, resulting in higher productivity levels (Rehman, Sehar & Afzal, 2019:431).

Generally, motivation can be categorized into two main types, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation arises from external rewards or pressures that encourage employees to perform their tasks in the organization, and these include incentives such as monetary bonuses, promotions, recognition, and other tangible or social incentives (Ali & Anwar, 2021:22). These incentives or rewards play a key role in reinforcing desirable behaviour and boosting performance, particularly when employees perceive that their contributions are valued by the organization. According to Imran, Ghazwan and Firmansyah (2025:1) recognition programs, performance bonuses, and opportunities for career advancement can enhance morale of employees and foster a sense of achievement.

On the other hand, intrinsic motivation is derived from internal satisfaction of an employee, and it includes incentives such as personal growth, enjoyment of the work itself, and the sense of accomplishment gained from completing a task (Ali & Anwar, 2021:22). It reflects an employee's internal desire to perform well because the work is inherently rewarding or aligns with their personal goals and values. According to Ryan and Deci's (2020:2) Self-Determination Theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation is sustained when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their work. According to Aljumah (2023:2) employees who are intrinsically motivated tend to show higher creativity, persistence, and commitment at their workplaces.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) Incentives Policy Framework (2003:17) stated that public institutions must implement performance incentives to ensure that employees who perform at satisfactory levels should be rewarded. Performance appraisal systems are used as a motivation tool, linking performance to rewards contributes to increased motivation and satisfaction. Performance bonuses, pay progression, and promotions are the main extrinsic motivators that public institutions use to motivate employees. Sanjaya and Indrawati (2023:19) claimed that intrinsic motivation, such as autonomy and skills development, must be used to motivate employees.

According to Aljumah (2023:6), intrinsic motivation emphasizes three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. He further stated that employees who are intrinsically motivated, demonstrate better quality performance. The two-factor theory of motivation (Herzberg, 1966, cited Peramatzis and Galanakis (2022:974) pointed out that intrinsic motivation includes recognition, responsibility, autonomy, ability utilization, and influences human behaviour across various contexts by fostering engagement, persistence, and overall well-being. According to Maslow's Hierarchy, people are motivated differently depending on their needs. Extrinsic motivation can be driven by salary and fringe benefits, gifts, promotions, or advancement opportunities. It entails activities with separable consequences, such as tangible rewards an individual’s willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organizational goals, conditioned by the individual’s ability to satisfy some need (Aljumah, 2023:7). The two-factor theory of motivation (Herzberg, 1966, cited in Peramatzis and Galanakis (2022:973) distinguishes between intrinsic motivation (for example, recognition, responsibility, autonomy, and ability utilisation); and extrinsic motivation (for example, remuneration, working conditions, promotion, prestige), which may be linked to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. There is a positive relationship between motivation and performance (Bustasar, Sumarsih, & Nugroho, 2019:83). An institution needs motivated employees to perform effectively and efficiently (Robescu & Lancu, 2016:49). It can therefore be concluded that motivation

is not only a personal attribute but also a product of organizational culture and leadership practices.

2.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING MOTIVATION

Theories related to the core motivations of employees indicate that motivation is a dynamic force emanating from both internal and external sources, which influence behaviour in the workplace (Ndudi, Kifordu & Egede 2023:98).

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, there are five different categories into which human needs can be divided, and these categories can then be organized in a hierarchy of priority. These include the requirements for physical needs, security, possessions, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943:370). He contended that a person's primary motivations are to meet their physiological demands. When physiological needs are satisfied, they cease to act as primary motivational factors, and the individual moves “up” the hierarchy and seeks to satisfy security needs. This process continues until finally self-actualisation needs are satisfied (McLead 2025:13).

2.5.1 Promotion

Promotions function as both financial and psychological motivators (Maslow, 1943:370). They symbolize career advancement, recognition, and social status within the organization. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1993) identified advancement and recognition as key motivators that contribute to job satisfaction and commitment. Rinny, Purba and Handiman (2020:41) showed that promotions have a positive and significant influence on employees’ motivation, which in turn increase the institution’s effectiveness and performance. Kim (2025:377) highlighted the importance of providing various alternative career paths that bureaucrats can follow. Lack of motivation and promotion result in demotivated employees (Maslow, 1943:370), which lowers morale and produces poor performance. Promotion as a form of organizational reward serves as a crucial motivational mechanism that enhances job satisfaction, productivity, and employee retention. Setyawati, Woelandari, and Rianto (2022:1968) were of the opinion that promotion functions as a powerful motivator because it

integrates increased responsibility, recognition, and rewards with employees' efforts, thereby strengthening motivation, loyalty, and work productivity. To maximize its effectiveness, promotion must be implemented through a structured and transparent system that aligns individual performance with organizational objectives.

Furthermore, promotion opportunities encourage employees to continuously improve their performance and foster employment stability within the organization (Setyawati, et al., 2022:1958). In this context, career development, motivation, and promotion can be viewed as interrelated latent variables that exert a significant influence on employee performance. They are also of the opinion that employee performance, in turn, represents the quality and quantity of outputs achieved by employees in fulfilling their assigned duties and responsibilities in accordance with organizational standards.

2.5.2 Performance Bonus

Performance rewards serve as a powerful motivator by reinforcing desired behaviours and signalling the value placed on performance excellence within an organization (Tziner & Persoff, 2024:4). This mechanism incentivises employees to exceed expectations and contribute meaningfully to organizational goals (Tziner & Persoff, 2024). Rewarding performance fosters a culture of achievement, encouraging employees to strive for higher standards and to deliver their best efforts. According to Nduati and Wanyoike (2022:375), financial incentives are among the most effective mechanisms for enhancing performance levels, particularly when employees clearly understand how their efforts translate into rewards. Performance bonuses create a sense of fairness and accountability, motivating employees to exceed performance expectations. When employees perceive a direct link between their efforts and the rewards they receive, they are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of motivation and commitment (Bykova, Lobza, Gavrysh, Soroka, Soroka & Karpenko, 2022:1487).

In the South African Public Service, the Incentives Policy Framework introduced by the Minister of Public Service and Administration in 2003 mandates public institutions to implement performance incentive systems to motivate employees through

recognition and rewards. Performance bonuses, pay progression, and promotions have traditionally served as the primary extrinsic motivators. In addition, Chapter 4 of the DPSA Senior Management Service (SMS) Handbook (2003:24) requires public institutions to implement non-financial (intrinsic) reward systems that focus on internal drivers such as job satisfaction, training, development, and work–life balance (Onavwie, Okereka & Erude, 2023:20). Pay progression and bonuses are directly linked to performance evaluations, with employees who meet or exceed performance standards qualifying for salary progression within their respective salary bands and post levels (DPSA Incentive Framework, 2019:5).

However, the Minister of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) approved a gradual reduction in the budget allocated for performance bonuses. For the 2019/2020 performance cycle, 0.75% was allocated; this was reduced to 0.5% in the 2020/2021 cycle and further reduced to 0% in the 2021/2022 cycle, effectively eliminating performance bonus funding (DPSA, 2019:7). Although Regulation 73 of the Public Service Regulations (2016) requires each Executive Authority to establish a performance incentive scheme, employees are no longer eligible for performance bonuses in terms of DPSA Incentive Policy 2019.

The absence of performance bonuses has significant implications for employee motivation in the public sector. Adams and Ama (2024:2) were of the opinion that incentives play a critical role in inspiring employees and improving the quality of work, and that the removal of performance bonuses negatively affects motivation. This view was also followed by Pancasila et al., (2020:289), who contended that employees tend to perform at levels commensurate with their income. Furthermore, Manger (2025:4) emphasised that money is considered a strong motivator as it fulfils multiple employee needs. In terms of DPSA Incentive Policy (2019:7), It is evident that public service employees are no longer eligible for performance bonuses, which could negatively impact employee morale and motivation.

2.5.3 Training and development

Intrinsic motivation arises from internal satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment that employees experience from performing meaningful work. When employees are recognized, they feel valued which dispel their perceived work-related limitations to set higher targets and to devise innovative ways to achieve targets (Aljuma, 2023:6). Effective training programmes are seen to be a way to change employees' attitude and behaviour, resulting in greater motivation (AlAbri & Alam, 2022:6219). Govender and Bussin, (2020:6) suggested that training must be prioritised not only for enhancing employees' knowledge and skills but also for improving their motivation and overall performance. When organizations invest in employees' learning, they foster a sense of growth and competence (Mustafa & Lieshu,2024:2). Employees who perceive that their organization values their professional development are more likely to remain committed and motivated (Mone & London, 2018:4).

Ali and Anwar (2021:21) found that development-oriented performance management practices such as personalized learning, mentorship, and career progression plans enhance intrinsic motivation by satisfying employees' needs for self-improvement and recognition. Thus, continuous learning and professional development not only improve performance, but also cultivate a deeper sense of purpose and engagement within the workforce. Training and development programmes play a fundamental role in enabling public service as well as public sector institutions to remain competitive in an increasingly dynamic and knowledge-driven environment. In order to be effective, such programmes must be carefully designed to align with institutional strategies, operational goals, and future workforce requirements, while also addressing employees' individual learning needs. A study conducted by Tumi et al., (2021:124) found that employees who participated in structured training programmes reported significantly higher levels of general self-efficacy than those who had not undergone training. Their study further revealed that enhanced self-efficacy was positively associated with increased motivation and job satisfaction, indicating that training and development initiatives contribute not only to skills acquisition but also to psychological empowerment and positive work attitudes (Tumi et al., 2021:124–125).

Similarly, Karim, Choudhury and Latif (2019:32-33) earlier on investigated the role of a supportive training environment in enhancing employee motivation. Their findings indicated that organizations offering continuous learning opportunities, management support, and adequate training resources, experienced higher levels of employee motivation and engagement. The study also revealed that employees who perceived training as an organizational investment in their professional development demonstrated stronger commitment and willingness to perform beyond minimum job requirements.

Govender and Bussin (2020:6) were of the opinion that investing in capacity building for future organizational needs enhances employee morale, as employees perceive training as an indication of organizational support and long-term investment in their careers. Increased morale often translates into higher levels of enthusiasm, loyalty, and discretionary effort, which are critical for achieving sustained performance improvements. Employees who believe that their organization is committed to their professional growth are more likely to align their personal goals with organisational objectives.

Similarly, Ozkeser (2019:809) highlighted that training and development activities contribute to improved employee morale by enhancing competence and reducing job-related uncertainty. When employees possess the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their duties effectively, they experience reduced stress and greater job control, which positively influences their attitudes and behaviour. Improved morale subsequently leads to increased productivity, better quality of work, and enhanced organizational performance. In this regard, training and development function not only as mechanisms for skill enhancement but also as tools for strengthening employee well-being and organizational resilience. Training and development have a significant and positive influence on employee outcomes and organizational performance. A well-structured and supportive training initiatives enhance employees' general self-efficacy, motivation, and job satisfaction. Increased self-efficacy and motivation contribute to

improved morale, which, in turn, leads to higher levels of employee engagement and performance.

2.5.4 Employee relations

Employee – manager relationships play a critical role in influencing employee performance and productivity. Dlamini, Suknuna and Bhana (2022:29) emphasized that positive relationships between employees and managers are essential drivers of effective performance outcomes. Similarly, a conducive working environment, characterized by cooperation, mutual support, and positive relationships among employees, encourages diligence and timely task completion (Arman, Wardi, & Evanita, 2018:1044). Consequently, maintaining healthy and constructive working relationships between managers and staff is fundamental to organizational effectiveness (Dlamini et al., 2022:29).

In the public service of RSA, employee relations are formally regulated by the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, which seeks to protect the rights of all workplace participants while promoting fair labour practices, economic development, industrial peace, democracy, and social development (RSA,1995). Fair treatment in the workplace enhances employees' willingness to perform their duties effectively. When managers demonstrate respect, recognition, and appreciation for employees, it strengthens trust and fosters positive employee relations. Effective relationships and open communication are closely associated with perceptions of fairness and procedural justice, which in turn contribute to higher levels of employee performance (Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson & Arad, 2019:261).

Maryani and Gazali, 2024:159 stated that positive labour relations significantly reduce the occurrence of stress, absenteeism, and counterproductive work behaviours. Saragih, Siahaan, and Gultom (2024:15) discovered that effective conflict management has a positive and significant effect on employee work productivity. Conversely, unresolved labour disputes can result in strikes, reduced morale, and substantial financial and operational costs for organizations (Uchendu, Akintayo, & Dagunduro, 2024:998). Therefore, the ability of management to prevent, manage, and

resolve workplace conflicts constructively is essential for sustaining harmonious labour relations and ensuring long-term institutional stability and performance.

Arimie and Oronsaye (2020:9) further stated that when employees are consistently disregarded or undervalued, they are likely to develop feelings of inadequacy and inferiority, which negatively influence their attitudes toward management and colleagues. Such emotional strain often manifests in strained labour relations, heightened interpersonal conflict, and an increased likelihood of workplace disputes. In this regard, emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in fostering harmonious labour relations, as it enables both employees and managers to recognize, understand, and regulate emotions during workplace interactions (Arimie & Oronsaye, 2020:9). Employees and leaders with higher levels of emotional intelligence are better equipped to manage interpersonal challenges, communicate effectively, resolve conflicts constructively, and adapt to organizational demands. As a result, in workplaces where the employees are more emotionally intelligent fewer disputes, stronger labour relations, and enhanced employee performance and productivity (Maryani & Gazali, 2024:171).

2.5.5 Leadership style

Leadership is widely regarded as a critical organizational process that shapes employee attitudes, behaviours, and performance outcomes. Tewari, Gujarathi, and Maduletty (2019:115) defined leadership as an influence process through which leaders and followers work together to achieve organizational objectives, particularly in contexts of change. Similarly, Andriani, Kesumawati, and Kristiawan (2018:20) described a leader as an individual capable of influencing and directing followers toward the attainment of a shared vision or organizational goals. In this regard, Costa, Padua and Moreira (2023:5) emphasized that leadership style is of paramount importance in motivating employees and guiding them toward the successful achievement of organizational objectives.

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Pancasila and Haryono (2020:390)

affirmed that effective leadership enhances employee performance by fostering motivation, commitment, and engagement. Leaders influence employee-effort through the manner in which they communicate expectations, provide feedback, and support subordinates. Consequently, the leadership style adopted by managers significantly affects the level of effort employees are willing to exert in pursuit of organizational goals. Tewari et al. (2019:115) stated that employee satisfaction and performance are strongly dependent on leadership styles, noting that the adoption of an appropriate leadership approach facilitates the successful implementation of long-term organizational plans.

Leadership support is particularly critical within performance management systems. According to Costa et al. (2023:4), leadership and managerial support are fundamental determinants of employee performance, while Govender and Bussin (2020:6) contended that the success and effectiveness of performance management largely depend on the quality of leadership. In the public service context, the Senior Management Service (SMS) Handbook identifies leadership as a core competency requirement of all managers, emphasizing the ability to provide a clear vision, set strategic direction, and inspire employees to deliver on the organizational mandate (DPSA, 2003:15).

Among various leadership styles, transformational leadership has been widely recognized in enhancing employee motivation, commitment, and performance. Dupe, Sarong, Astuti, and Foeh (2023:31) reported that transformational leadership positively influences organizational commitment, which in turn increases employee motivation and improves performance. Similarly, Arman, Wardi, and Evanita (2019:1043, 1047) found that transformational leadership has a significant effect on work motivation, thereby positively impacting organizational performance. Andriani, Kesumawati, and Kristiawan (2018:20) described transformational leadership as a style that inspires subordinates through motivation and encourages them to develop into future leaders, a view supported by Jensen & Bro (2018:537).

Furthermore, transformational leaders enhance employee self-confidence and stimulate intrinsic motivation by making work more meaningful and engaging (Zhao, Liu, Xi, Zhu & Liu, 2022:4). Mahmood, Uddin and Fan (2017:757) similarly demonstrated that transformational leadership practices make jobs more interesting, motivating employees to perform beyond expected standards. As a result, transformational leadership is widely regarded as an effective approach for increasing employee motivation and sustaining high-performance levels. Adopting an appropriate leadership style is therefore a key determinant of excellence in employee performance, as it shapes how managers interact with and influence their subordinates (Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020:2079).

In summary of this section, transformational leadership, organizational commitment, employee motivation, and equitable compensation collectively play a crucial role in enhancing employee performance and facilitating the achievement of organizational goals (Dupe, Sarong, Astuti, & Foeh, 2023:39). These factors reinforce one another, highlighting the strategic importance of leadership in driving sustained institutional success in and by DSD. It can be deduced from the above discussion that employee performance is influenced by the combined effects of promotion, leadership, performance bonuses, and labour relations. Fair and transparent promotion practices and performance-based bonuses motivate employees by recognizing effort and rewarding achievement. Effective leadership, particularly transformational and supportive leadership, enhances motivation, commitment, and the fair implementation of reward systems. Positive labour relations, supported by emotionally intelligent leadership and open communication, reduce workplace conflict and create a stable and cooperative environment. Together, these factors reinforce one another to improve employee motivation, productivity, and overall institutional performance.

2.6 EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE

This section will discuss performance management processes, which include performance planning, monitoring and measuring performance, performance assessment or appraisal, and managing the outcomes of assessment.

2.6.1 Performance management process

In general, performance management is a continuous, systematic, and strategic process through which public institutions in RSA ensure that employees' activities and outputs are aligned with the institution's goals and objectives. It involves planning, monitoring, reviewing, and rewarding performance to enhance both individual and organizational effectiveness.

Performance management is a continuous, systematic, and integrated process aimed at improving individual, team, and organizational performance (Van der Westhuizen, 2021:209; Armstrong, 2023:161). It involves setting clear performance expectations, providing ongoing feedback, coaching, and aligning employee efforts with organizational goals (Nduati & Wanyoike, 2022:370). From a normative perspective, effective performance management not only clarifies tasks and recognizes good performance but also motivates employees, enhances productivity, and supports career development. Public service- (e.g., DSD) and public sector institutions (e.g., municipalities), in particular, can benefit from both formal and informal recognition programs to encourage high performance (Mansaray, 2019:191).

Performance management serves multiple purposes, including enhancing employee motivation, guiding promotion and reward decisions, informing development planning, and strengthening organizational accountability and productivity (Alase & Akinbo, 2021:18; Nduati & Wanyoike, 2022:375). Modern approaches emphasize agility and adaptability, using real-time feedback, continuous dialogue between supervisors and employees, and digital tools to monitor and improve performance (Pulakos et al., 2019:261; Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020:2078). This evolution reflects a shift from

traditional annual appraisals to a dynamic, employee-centric system that fosters continuous improvement and ensures alignment between individual contributions and institutional objectives.

2.6.2. Performance planning

Effective employee performance is significantly influenced by performance management planning, which clarifies goals and expectations (Lutaaya & Mokaya, 2018:570). This process not only delineates what employees need to achieve but also how to accomplish these objectives.

In South Africa, performance planning is guided by the National Development Plan, which aims to promote institutional effectiveness. Performance planning entails setting performance standards and objectives for individuals, motivating them to focus their efforts on accomplishing organizational goals (Mokoele, Masenya, & Makalela, 2018:109). Effective performance management requires planning and involves establishing individual objectives and developing the performance agreements (Bristol-Alagbariya, Ayanponle & Ogedengbe, 2022:39). At the beginning of every financial year (Public Service Regulation, 2016), public service as well as public sector managers establish and examine the connections between a worker's job descriptions along with the institution's targets, objectives, (including strategic planning) in order to define the aspects that will lead to success (Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020:2079). This they achieve by discussing with employees about the desired results, which include responsibilities and results that are expected of them during their subsequent evaluation period. Vuong and Nguyen (2022:5) stated that one of management's most crucial responsibilities is to carefully determine and choose the pertinent performance standards that will help the institution reach its targets and objectives. These targets are established at the beginning of the financial year through performance agreement (Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson & Arad, 2019:256). Key performance indicators ought to be used to determine the effectiveness of employees' performance (Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020:2079).

2.6.3 Performance monitoring and measurements

Managing organisational performance is a strategic process that entails measuring, monitoring, and evaluating both individual and organisational outcomes using clearly defined metrics or performance indicators (Armstrong, 2022:173). Effective performance management enables institutions to align employee-outputs with strategic objectives, identify areas requiring improvement, and ensure that resources are optimally utilised to achieve desired results. At the individual level, continuous monitoring of performance is critical for identifying performance barriers, assessing progress, and addressing development needs in a timely manner (DPSA, 2007:15). Without systematic monitoring, obstacles that hinder employees from achieving objectives or meeting targets may remain unaddressed, potentially undermining organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

The performance management process is typically structured around regular reviews, which include quarterly evaluations, mid-year assessments, and comprehensive annual appraisals (Bristol-Alagbariya, Ayanponle & Ogedengbe, 2022:41). Quarterly reviews allow managers to provide timely feedback on ongoing tasks, recognise achievements, and identify early signs of performance challenges. Mid-year assessments serve as checkpoints to evaluate overall progress, adjust objectives where necessary, and develop targeted interventions to address performance gaps. Annual evaluations, in turn, provide a summative review of employee performance, facilitating decisions regarding promotions, rewards, training requirements, and career development planning. Collectively, these performance reviews create a feedback loop that promotes continuous improvement and ensures that employees remain accountable for their outputs.

Monitoring performance is not limited to identifying shortcomings; it also provides opportunities to enhance employee capabilities through targeted development initiatives. By linking performance management with training and development programmes, institutions can proactively address skills gaps, reinforce strengths, and prepare employees for future roles (Armstrong, 2022:173). Furthermore, consistent

performance monitoring fosters a culture of accountability and transparency, as employees are aware that their contributions are regularly assessed and aligned with institutional priorities. This process also supports evidence-based decision-making, enabling managers to implement corrective measures, recognise high performers, and strategically allocate resources to improve overall institutional effectiveness.

In addition, empirical research indicates that structured performance management systems positively influence employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction. When employees receive regular feedback and constructive guidance, they are more likely to feel valued and supported in achieving their objectives (Bristol-Alagbariya, Ayanponle & Ogedengbe, 2022: 43). Similarly, DPSA (2007:15) highlighted that performance monitoring ensures that development interventions are responsive to individual needs, which enhances both personal growth and organisational performance. Consequently, institutions that implement systematic performance management processes are better positioned to achieve strategic goals, improve employee productivity, and maintain high levels of workforce morale.

Research conducted by Lutaaya and Mokaya (2018:568) revealed that linking monitoring and measurement to employee performance ensures accountability, enhances efficiency, and supports continuous improvement. The authors emphasized that performance planning, when combined with systematic monitoring, provides a structured mechanism to track employee progress, align individual goals with institutional objectives, and optimize overall performance outcomes. Furthermore, feedback derived from performance measurement promotes employee engagement, fosters professional development, and strengthens institutional culture by reinforcing standards and expectations.

2.6.4 Performance assessment or appraisal

Without a formal mechanism for measuring performance, it becomes difficult to determine whether progress is being made toward achieving set targets (Dauda, 2018:212). In RSA's public service as well as the public sector, performance assessment and appraisal form critical components of the broader performance

management system. These processes are regulated by the Public Service Regulations, 2016, which seek to enhance accountability, improve service delivery, and promote employee development. The primary objective of performance appraisal is to enable management to make informed decisions regarding promotions, rewards, and, where necessary, disciplinary actions, including termination (Anyim, 2021:6). Performance appraisal involves evaluating employees' work against predetermined goals and targets to ensure that individual and managerial contributions align with the institutional objectives (Vuong & Nguyen,2022:5). Supervisors are required to monitor employee performance continuously and provide regular feedback aimed at improving performance and achieving organizational goals (Anyim, 2021:5).

In the public sector, effective performance appraisal can foster intrinsic motivation, which refers to the satisfaction and fulfilment employees derive from performing their duties. When employees receive accurate, consistent, and adequate feedback regarding their work behaviour, it can instil feelings of competence, achievement, and control. Such intrinsic motivation supports employees' developmental needs and enhances overall performance (Ebegbetale, Enwezo & Showemimi, 2023:49). Performance appraisal is a structured process through which managers and employees engage in discussions about performance, clarify expectations, and identify areas for improvement. This process facilitates the recognition of strengths, the addressing of weaknesses, and the development of actionable plans to achieve expected outcomes (Dauda, 2018:212). Furthermore, performance appraisal is closely linked to employee motivation through mechanisms such as performance-based rewards, career progression, and development opportunities, all of which contribute to improved organizational effectiveness (Lavanya, Lakshmi & Sree, 2024:1602).

2.6.5 Managing the outcomes of assessment

According to the Public Service Regulations (2016), an executive authority is required to inform employees of the outcomes of their performance assessments. Communicating performance outcomes is a fundamental aspect of performance

management, as it promotes transparency, accountability, and fairness, ensuring that employees are recognised and rewarded in line with their assessed performance. Transparent communication of assessment outcomes fosters trust between employees and management and reinforces a culture of organizational fairness, where employees understand how their efforts contribute to the institutional goals.

The Public Service Regulations further emphasise the management of poor performance through appropriate corrective and developmental interventions, aimed at improving employee performance ensure continuous improvement and organisational effectiveness. Effective management of performance assessment outcomes therefore involves a dual approach: rewarding employees who perform well, while simultaneously identifying and supporting those who do not meet performance standards. Timely, specific, and meaningful feedback is central to this process, enabling employees to correct performance deficiencies, improve competencies, and align their efforts with both individual and institutional objectives (Govender & Bussin, 2020:14). Feedback serves not only as a mechanism for accountability but also as a developmental tool, facilitating continuous improvement and employee growth.

Moreover, the outcomes of performance assessments are closely linked to training and development initiatives. Communicated assessment results provide managers with the information necessary to identify skills gaps, target developmental interventions, and design tailored training programmes. Employees who consistently underperform in certain areas can be prioritised for coaching, mentoring, or structured skills development, while high-performing employees can be considered for advanced training, leadership development, or career advancement opportunities (Armstrong, 2022:173). This integration of performance management and capacity building ensures that workforce capabilities are continuously enhanced and aligned with strategic institutional objectives.

Oversight of performance management within RSA's public service is the responsibility of the Public Service Commission (PSC). The PSC monitors the efficiency and effectiveness of the performance management system to ensure that performance assessment outcomes are applied consistently, fairly, and in accordance

with legislative and policy frameworks (Public Service Commission, 2024:25). Through this oversight role, the PSC helps maintain integrity in performance evaluations, safeguards against bias or inconsistency, and ensures that performance outcomes are linked to both employee development and organisational objectives.

The effective management and communication of performance outcomes positively influence employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction. Employees who receive constructive feedback and support feel valued and supported, which enhances commitment and reduces turnover (Govender & Bussin, 2020:14). By integrating performance feedback with targeted development interventions, institutions create a continuous improvement loop in which employees are guided, developed, and motivated to improve. This approach not only addresses immediate performance deficiencies but also contributes to long-term workforce resilience, competence, and organizational effectiveness within and by the institution (e.g., DSD). Managing the outcomes of performance assessments is an important component of effective performance management. Through transparent communication, corrective and developmental interventions, meaningful feedback, and alignment with training and development, institutions can enhance accountability, employee development, and overall organizational performance. It can be deduced that effective management of performance assessment outcomes is essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and fairness within the public service as well as the public sector. The communication of assessment results enables employees to understand their performance levels and ensures that rewards are allocated objectively in accordance with established performance standards. Furthermore, the appropriate management of poor performance through corrective and developmental interventions allows the institution to address performance deficiencies while supporting employee growth and capability development.

2.7 INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Performance management is essential for aligning individual performance with the institution’s goals, fostering employee development, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement. It represents a strategic approach that integrates key

processes such as goal setting, performance measurement, and feedback mechanisms to enhance overall organizational effectiveness in and by the institution (Alase & Akinbo, 2021:18). The success or failure of an institution in achieving its intended objectives largely depends on the ability of employees to effectively perform their duties and responsibilities (Kuswati, 2019:283). In line with the Public Service Regulations, 2016, the Executive Authority is required to establish a performance management system that links individual performance to institutional goals. To achieve an institutional goal effectively, it is important to, by means of internal organizing, develop a system that supports the measurement of progress towards institutional and government goals throughout the performance cycle. In terms of Regulation 73 of the Public Service Regulations (PSR), 2016, the annual assessments should reflect the performance of the employee for the entire period of the cycle.

Performance management enhances institutional effectiveness by aligning individual- and team goals with broader institutional objectives, thereby contributing to organizational success (Bratton & Gold, 2017:191). Consequently, an institution's capacity to achieve its goals and objectives is largely dependent on the performance of its employees (Madingwane, Mazenda, Nhede & Munyeka, 2023:240). Pulakos et al., (2019:260) emphasised that performance management practices should be designed in alignment with the institution's strategy and goals. Similarly, Van der Westhuizen (2021:214) and Al-Jedaia & Mehrez (2020:2085) were of the opinion that high-performing employees are fundamental to the attainment of an institution's objectives. Bratton and Gold (2017:191) identified a key feature of an effective performance management system as its ability to link all levels of the institution through clearly defined goals, critical success factors, and performance measures. Institutional goals are derived from business strategy and cascaded into sectoral, departmental, managerial, and individual employee goals. This cascading process ensures alignment across the institution and enhances accountability. In support of this view, Leatherbarrow and Fletcher (2019:271) contended that performance management enabled institutions to achieve a competitive advantage through the successful implementation of strategy and achievement of objectives.

In the public sector, institutional effectiveness is often assessed through the lens of service delivery, as public institutions are mandated to meet the needs of citizens in an efficient, equitable, and sustainable manner. Service delivery refers to an institution's ability to provide timely, accessible, and high-quality public services that meet the expectations of the country's citizens and residents. It is closely associated with governance, accountability, performance management, and citizen engagement. Public service delivery encompasses the actions undertaken by public institutions to satisfy citizens' needs and expectations through the implementation of government policies.

Barbier and Tengeh (2022:422) observed that public service delivery represents a tangible link between government and citizens (including residents), and that the strength of this relationship depends largely on the quality of public-services provided. As such, the quality of public service delivery serves as an important indicator of citizen trust in government. Quality public service delivery is widely regarded as a key indicator of a capable and responsive public sector institution (Javidi et al., 2020:10). Effective service delivery is often measured through the achievement of planned targets, reflecting the successful implementation of a performance management system. This view is reinforced by Barbier and Tengeh (2022:422), who stated that improved service delivery requires a multifaceted approach incorporating strategic planning, participatory governance, performance monitoring, and institutional reform. Furthermore, the Public Service Charter obliges public institutions to commit to the continuous improvement of service delivery to the public, thereby reinforcing the central role of performance management in achieving institutional effectiveness (Barbier & Tengeh, 2022:423). Based on the reviewed literature, it can be deduced that institutional effectiveness is closely linked to employee performance. Effective performance management systems, supported by appropriate motivational strategies, play a critical role in enhancing employees' commitment, productivity, and overall performance. Motivation influences how employees apply their skills and effort toward institutional goals, thereby affecting organizational outcomes. Consequently, institutions that align performance management practices with motivational factors and legislative requirements are more likely to achieve higher levels of effectiveness, sustainability, and goal attainment

2.8 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

It is imperative for the performance management policy framework of a public service- and sector institution to be guided by the legislative framework. To understand the concept of performance management especially in the public service, it is important to trace its origins. The following key aspects about performance management will be discussed: the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Public Service Regulation, Public Service Act, Labour Relations Act, White Paper on Human Resource Management, Senior Management Handbook, and Treasury Regulations.

2.8.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 is the supreme law of South Africa and guides the formulation of laws, regulations and policies (Mlambo, Mashupye & Maserumule, 2024:211). It paves the way for performance management with the requirements for an accountable government, the promotion of the efficient, economic and effective use of resources, displaying transparency by making available information, being responsive to the needs of the society, and by facilitating a culture of public service and accountability amongst staff employed in the respective public institutions (e.g., DSD) (PSC:2021). Munzhedzi (2021:3) was of the opinion that these constitutional principles require government departments to adopt performance management systems that promote effective service delivery, sound human-resource practices, and responsible use of public resources. Similarly, Masuku and Jili (2019:4) pointed out that a public institution must be governed with values and principles. This brings to the fore the importance of the professionalisation of the public service. The Constitution thus provides both the normative mandate for motivated, high- performing employees and the enforcement mechanism for performance failure, however, the evidence indicates that implementation gaps between constitutional intent and managerial practice persistently weaken employee motivation and service delivery outcomes. Effective performance management is therefore not merely an internal administrative tool, but a constitutional requirement aimed at enhancing accountability, improving public service delivery, and promoting the overall effectiveness of the public service. As such, DSD should prioritise the proper implementation of performance

management systems to fulfil the constitutional mandate and meet the expectations of the citizens they serve.

The Constitution also shapes the legislative framework that governs performance in the public service, influencing key instruments such as the Public Service Act, Public Service Regulations, and Batho Pele White Paper, which operationalise constitutional values into planning, monitoring, and evaluation processes (Ndevu 2023:180). Despite this strong constitutional foundation, scholars highlight a persistent gap between constitutional expectations and the actual practice of performance management, noting that implementation is often weakened by managerial capacity constraints, a compliance driven culture, and inconsistent accountability (Thusi, Jili, Adetiba, Mlambi, & Mkhize 2023:44). Moreover, research conducted by Mohangi and Nyika (2024:39), showed that challenges such as subjective performance assessments, weak consequence management, and inadequate leadership undermine the translation of constitutional principles into improved service delivery outcomes. Overall, the literature suggests that while the Constitution firmly anchors performance management in South Africa, practical shortcomings within the public service continue to hinder its realisation.

2.8.2 Public Service Regulation, 2016

The Public Service Regulations (PSR), 2016, provides that the Executive Authority must, in consultation with the department, establish a performance management system that links individual performance to the institution's strategic goals. Furthermore, it emphasizes that public institutions must act in public interest and therefore require employees to perform optimally to ensure improved service delivery, with performance agreement and performance assessments serving as tools to measure the extent to which employees contribute to institutional objectives. Therefore, it is essential that annual assessment takes place at the DSD. This will ensure not only measuring key performance indicators in accordance with Public Service Regulation, but also the achievement of those strategic goals.

Mokoele, Mokoele and Makalela (2018:4) postulated that public servants are encouraged to perform to the best of their ability through public policies that provide incentives such as notch increments and performance bonuses. The PSR, 2001 also requires that poor performance be managed through targeted improvement plans. More broadly, the amended regulations emphasise that performance management must be conducted in a consultative, supportive, and non-discriminatory manner to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability in the use of public resources. While primarily developmental, the system must also address persistent underperformance and recognise excellence, ensure minimal administrative burden on supervisors, and promote transparency and administrative justice. The performance management system is therefore intended to encourage joint participation between supervisors and employees, emphasizing coaching, continuous feedback, progress reviews, and annual appraisals to support the achievement of departmental strategic goals and broader government priorities. Ultimately, the success of the performance management system is measured by the extent to which it enables effective employee performance and contributes to improved service delivery outcomes.

Scholarly literature highlights that although performance management systems in the South African public service are designed to enhance accountability, improve service delivery, and align individual performance with institutional goals, their implementation remains inconsistent and often ineffective (Armstrong, 2022:189). Studies show that performance management frequently becomes a compliance-driven process rather than a developmental tool, with limited impact on improving institutional outcomes (Munzhedzi, 2021:7). Research further reveals that employees often perceive the system as unfair, inconsistently applied, and inadequately linked to rewards or development opportunities, which undermines its motivational effect (Hasyim & Bakri, 2023:70). Scholars also emphasise the absence of strong monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms, arguing that without proper review processes, performance management cannot generate meaningful improvements in employee behaviour (Nduati & Wanyoike, 2022:369). Furthermore, inadequate managerial capacity contributes to poor-quality assessments, weak coaching, and limited follow-through

on performance improvement plans (Mahmoud & Othman,2023:2). Overall, the literature suggests that while the performance management framework is well-aligned with the constitutional principles of efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness, its practical implementation challenges significantly reduce its intended developmental and performance-enhancing effects (PSC, 2021).

2.8.3 Public Service Act

The Public Service Act, 1994, clearly indicates that performance appraisal should be provided for in the public service. The performance in the public service institutions (e.g. DSD) as stipulated by Proclamation 103 of 1994 shall be managed in a consultative, supportive, and non-discriminatory manner in order to enhance institutional effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability. The Public Service Act (PSA), 1994 provides the legal framework for how the South African Public Service is organised and managed. It regulates the appointment, performance, conduct, and discipline of public servants, and assigns oversight responsibilities to ministers, MECs, and heads of departments to ensure an efficient and accountable public service.
“Performance management in the public service is guided by the PSA and the Public Service Regulations” (PSR), 2016. All employees sign performance agreements, work according to annual performance cycles, and undergo mid-year and final reviews. The system aims to improve service delivery, clarify expectations, recognise good performance, and address poor performance through development plans or incapacity procedures. Performance results influence pay progression, bonuses, and overall employee development.

Scholars consistently state that the Public Service Act (PSA) of 1994 provides the foundational framework for regulating human resource management, organizational structures, and administrative accountability within the South African Public Service (PSC, 2021). According to public administration researchers, the Act plays an important role in promoting professionalism, standardising employment practices, and aligning administrative processes with constitutional values of fairness, transparency, and efficiency. However, several authors had noted that despite these strengths, the PSA retains elements of traditional bureaucratic centralisation, which sometimes

constrains managerial flexibility and contributes to uneven implementation across government departments (Masuku & Jili, 2020). The performance management system, introduced through the PSA and strengthened by the Public Service Regulations, is widely recognised in the literature as essential for improving service delivery (Ndevu, 2023:182), most studies highlight persistent implementation challenges: supervisors often lack the necessary skills to manage performance effectively, evaluations are frequently inconsistent or inflated, and performance agreements do not always align well with strategic objectives such as departmental Annual Performance Plans (Munzhedzi, 2021:4). Researchers further were of the opinion that performance management has become highly compliance-driven, limiting its developmental value, while poor performance is rarely addressed through structured improvement plans (PSC, 2022). Overall, the literature suggests that while the PSA and PMDS frameworks are conceptually sound, their impact is weakened by capacity constraints, realistic goal setting, fairness, and a lack of accountability (Ibeziako,2025:20)

2.8.4 Labour Relations Amendment Act, 1995

The Labour Relations Act (LRA) 6 of 1995 rules out discrimination in the workplace and puts in place measures for the protection and promotion of economic development, labour peace, and democratisation of the workplace (Labour Relations Act 6 of 1995). The LRA protects the rights of the employee and the employer and outlines mechanisms for dispute resolution. Employees perform better when they are working in a conducive environment. Studies have shown that there is a relationship between positive employee relations and employee engagement in enhancing organizational performance. Institutional performance is positively related to the effective relations that exist between the managers and the employees (Arimie & Oronsaye, 2020:9). The importance of manager behaviour and employee-manager interpersonal relationships on employee attitudes and performance has been widely recognized and is supported by decades of research. For example, studies have shown that effective relationships and open communication are associated with perceptions of fairness and procedural justice (Pulakos et al., 2019:261). Poor communication during the performance management process has a significant

negative impact on the system's success; the lack of information-flow between the supervisor and supervisee prevents the Performance Management System from achieving its goal and objectives, which include increasing employee productivity and improving organizational performance (Thusi et al., 2023:46). According to Ibeziako (2025:2), a lack of clarity frequently leads to misunderstanding and disagreement over who performs what and when, causing delays in job completion and affecting employee performance and predictability. The Labour Relations Act offers a corrective procedure, requiring an investigation to determine reasons for poor performance to be considered prior to dismissal. When training is provided, employees are equipped with the necessary competencies to improve their performance, which contributes to greater performance effectiveness and ultimately enhances the institution's service delivery.

Furthermore, The LRA states that an individual has the privilege to be recognized and covered during disciplinary action of any kind whatsoever by a representative of the union or a fellow employee. This ensures that dismissal of employee due to poor performance should be the last resort and (Republic of South Africa, 1995).

2.8.5 White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service of 1997

According to the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997) of RSA, the success of the public service in achieving its mandate depends largely on the efficiency and effectiveness of employees in executing their duties. Performance management is therefore a critical component of an effective human resource management and development strategy. Mokoele et al., (2018:5) identified key principles underpinning performance management, including results orientation, training and development, rewarding good performance, managing poor performance, openness, fairness, and objectivity.

The White Paper on Human Resource Management, 1997 (Republic of South Africa, 1997:27) states that an employee's performance should be evaluated using a work plan that outlines their duties and the goals they must accomplish within a given time

frame. All public employees are assessed quarterly or annually, depending on their status of employment. Sachane, Bezuidenhout and Botha (2018:3) stated that the 12-month cycle is also linked to the financial year for the purpose of planning, pay progression and other performance-related incentives such as performance awards or cash bonuses. The probation cycle, however, is linked to the appointment date of a jobholder (DPSA, 2007:11). Additionally, according to section 73 of the Public Service Regulation, 2016, “public employees who perform above expectations are given recognition awards, while those who perform below expectations are given the required training” (PSR, 2016). The White Paper further provides that employees who are dissatisfied with their final performance assessment should be afforded an opportunity to appeal, thereby reinforcing principles of fairness and objectivity. Such fairness may be ensured through intervention by immediate supervisors or managers (Arimie & Oronsaye, 2020:9). Training and development, as central elements of the performance management system, enable institutions to identify employee strengths and weaknesses and to implement appropriate developmental interventions (Aljuma, 2023:6). When employees are provided with adequate training and development opportunities, they tend to feel valued and motivated, which enhances their commitment and performance within the institution. This, in turn, contributes to greater efficiency and effectiveness in achieving institutional goals, in line with section 195(1)(h) of the Constitution, which emphasizes good human resource management and career development to maximize human potential (Republic of South Africa,1996).

The White Paper also serves as a guideline for developing human resource management practices that support an effective and efficient public service aimed at economic and social transformation. Consequently, the transformation of the public service necessitates the transformation of human resource practices. Effective performance management of human resources is therefore essential to achieving sustainable and meaningful public service transformation (Nduati & Wanyoike, 2022:364).

2.8.6 Treasury Regulation, 2001

The National Treasury Regulations (2001) play a central role in embedding performance management within the South African public sector. Scholars generally agree that these regulations enhanced accountability, strengthened reporting requirements, and aligned budgeting with performance. However, persistent implementation challenges capacity constraints, a compliance-driven culture, and centralisation tensions limit the effectiveness of these regulations. The literature points to the need for improved institutional capacity and a shift towards using performance information for decision-making rather than mere compliance**.** The Treasury Regulations of 2001 regulates public institutions to budget for projected performance-related salary increments and rewards that may be allocated to deserving public employees (servants) at the end of the financial year. It prescribes the control measures to ensure compliance. This relates to the first objective that explores whether performance management motivation motivates employees through incentives. This Regulation takes into consideration the performance motivation by means of incentives. It seeks to set out how employees must be compensated for their performance. Madingwane et al. (2023:240) state that an institution with a stimulus remunerative system that includes a variety of employee benefits will have a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining labour market employees. Similarly, Armstrong (2023:173) shares a similar view that employees are motivated and increase their performance when they experience positive incentives and rewards. Nabila, Anwar, Fitriani, Ismayanti and Fauziah (2024:1) went further to state that a highly motivated employee leads to improved work-performance, which significantly influences performance outcomes. This convinces an institution to budget for incentives and rewards for motivating its employees as rewards have a substantial impact on organizational ability to motivate employees and get higher work quality (Adams & Ama 2024:2).

Performance management in the South African public service is grounded in the Constitution, which requires public administration to be accountable, efficient, transparent, and fair as outlined in Section 195 of it. These constitutional values form

the legal foundation of performance management. They are further reinforced by public policy and labour legislation, which promote a developmental and results-based performance management system that links individual performance to institutional goals and public service delivery. In addition, performance management practices must comply with fair labour standards, requiring clear performance expectations, support for employee improvement, and procedural fairness before any disciplinary action for poor performance. Overall, performance management in South Africa is a legally regulated system aimed at promoting fairness, accountability, efficiency, and improved public service delivery.

2.9 CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 examined the key aspects of performance, including the theoretical framework of performance management, theories of motivation, factors influencing motivation, the legislative framework of performance management, employee motivation, and institutional effectiveness. The chapter also explained the key factors of performance management. It highlighted a strong link between performance and motivation, indicating that employee motivation has a significant influence on performance levels. The reviewed literature emphasizes the importance of effectively managing employee performance while simultaneously motivating employees to enhance institutional effectiveness. The next chapter presents the research methodology applied in this Study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reviewed the literature related to this study, the key concepts of the study were defined, an overview of the legislative framework that underpins the study was outlined, key factors regarding performance management, focusing on the enhancement of employee performance and institution effectiveness were discussed.

The research methodology adopted in this study was aimed at gaining an understanding whether performance management enhances employees' performance in the South African public sector through answering the research questions outlined in Chapter 1.

This chapter outlines the research methodology, including the entire research activity for a qualitative research approach, research design, research method, sampling method, data collection method, recording method for the collected data, data analysis method, ensuring quality of the data collected, and ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

A research methodology is a comprehensive framework that guides the entire research process, ensuring that the study is systematically conducted to address the research questions effectively. It encompasses paradigms, approaches, methods, design, data collection, and analysis, emphasizing ethical considerations and the alignment of components with research objectives (Costa et al., 2023). Research methodology involves the systematic procedures by which the researcher starts from the initial identification of the problem to collection of data, until final conclusion and data presentation (Wotela, 2017:226). This includes the methods and procedures used to conduct the study (Madondo, 2021:38).

The data was collected through desktop research by analyzing secondary sources of information that addressed the research questions. Such secondary data included journals, published books, e-books, dissertations, government policies, legislations,

and departmental reports. A research design guides researchers in collecting and analysing data to address specific research questions. It encompasses various methodologies, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, each tailored to the nature of the research problem (Asenahabi, 2019:5). Research design defines the phenomenon of a study and how it will be studied, as well as how the data will be collected, analysed, and reported (Eller, Gerber & Robinson, 2017:92).

This section focuses on the research approach, research design, research method, sampling method, data collection method, recording method for the collected data, data analysis, ensuring data quality, and ethical considerations.

3.2.1 Research Approach

Research approaches may be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods, depending on the nature and objectives of the study (Mulisa,2022:115). Creswell (2014:4) described a qualitative research design as a method for finding and comprehending the significance that individuals and groups give to a social or human issue. Qualitative research is characterised by its interactive and flexible design, enabling researchers to gain rich insights into complex social phenomena by exploring individuals' lived experiences and subjective meanings (Ugwu, Chinyere, Eze, Val 2023:20).This approach makes use of various empirical materials, such as case studies, interviews, and document analyses, and is particularly useful when investigating phenomena where limited accessible information exists or where the research is exploratory in nature. As noted by Taherdoost (2022:54), qualitative research facilitates the discovery of new insights, ideas, and perspectives and can contribute to theory generation. In this study a qualitative and interpretive research approach was adopted to explore the factors influencing the effectiveness of the performance management in the South African public sector. In this study, there was no direct interaction with human being participants in the information gathering phase. Instead, information was collected through desktop research, involving the systematic review and analysis of secondary data sources relevant to the research questions.

In qualitative studies, collected data are analysed to generate new interpretations of constructs within specific contexts. By applying interpretive paradigms, researchers can provide new perspectives on a phenomenon and uncover emerging patterns or trends (Mulisa, 2022:118).

3.2.2 Research Design

The research design can be viewed as a map that is broadened to guide a study on how the researcher will gather, measure, and analyze the data to provide a suitable response to the problem or research question. However, there are various methods for collecting, measuring, and analyzing data to provide a suitable response to a research question. Research design serves as the blueprint for a study, detailing the methods, procedures, and strategies used to collect and analyze data to answer research questions (Gamage, 2025:92). It determines how the research is structured, implemented, and analysed (Creswell, 2014:279) while ensuring that the findings are valid, reliable, and meaningful.

According to Bloomfield, Crawford and Fisher (2019:27), a research design can be described as the overall strategy that is used to conduct a research study. Gamage (2025:91) stated that a research design must be in line with the goals of the study and the type of data that is needed. The careful selection of an appropriate research design enhances the quality, rigour, and credibility of the research and ensures that the study effectively addresses its objectives. By providing a clear and systematic plan, the research design plays a pivotal role in guiding the research process and producing meaningful and trustworthy findings. The essence of research design is to achieve the research objective clearly, objectively, precisely, and economically and minimize errors (Asenahabi, 2019:87).

3.2.3 Research Method

Research methods refer to the systematic procedures, techniques, and processes employed by a researcher to collect, analyse, and interpret data to address a research

problem. These methods encompass all the tools and strategies used during the research process and are generally planned. They may include theoretical procedures, experimental studies, numerical techniques, statistical approaches, and qualitative methods, depending on the nature and objectives of the study. Research methods are essential in guiding the collection of data and facilitating the identification of solutions to research problems (Mulisa, 2021:125).

Scientific research methods are grounded in empirical inquiry and rely on evidence derived from observations, measurements, and documented facts rather than reasoning alone. Such methods accept only explanations that can be verified through systematic investigation, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of research findings. In essence, research methods are aimed at generating valid and trustworthy solutions to research problems. Research methodology, on the other hand, refers to the overarching framework that justifies the choice and application of specific research methods, ensuring that appropriate procedures are employed to achieve the research objectives.

In this study, a qualitative research method was adopted, with a primary focus on document and literature review as the main data collection technique. The study sought to understand the impact of performance management on employee performance through the analysis of existing literature, policy documents, and organizational reports rather than through direct engagement with human-being participants. Consequently, qualitative methods such as interviews, surveys, or focus groups were not employed, as no primary data were collected from individuals (Ugwu, Chinyere, Eze, Val, 2020:27).

The decision to utilise document analysis as the primary research method was informed by several factors. Firstly, extensive information relevant to performance management and employee performance was readily available through academic publications, policy documents, and organizational reports accessible via online platforms. Secondly, this method was cost-effective and allowed for efficient access to a wide range of credible secondary data sources (Ugwu, Chinyere, Eze, Val, 2020:27). Document analysis also enabled the researcher to examine trends, patterns,

and gaps in existing knowledge, thereby contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

However, Lim (2025:203) cautioned that while document-based qualitative research can be objective, researchers must remain vigilant against potential bias, particularly the tendency to make selective interpretations that align with preconceived assumptions. To mitigate this risk, the study applied a systematic and critical approach to data analysis, ensuring that conclusions were drawn based on balanced interpretation and fair judgement of the reviewed evidence.

3.3 SAMPLING

Sampling is a fundamental component of the research process, as it determines which individuals or units of analysis are included in a study (Berndt, 2020:224). According to Makwana, Engineer, Dabhi and Chudasama (2023:762), sampling refers to the systematic process of selecting potential participants for a scientific investigation, based on the assumption that the selected participants can provide meaningful and relevant insights into the research problem under investigation.

Sampling is the process by which a researcher carefully selects through probabilistic and non-probabilistic methods several individual items from a larger population of interest for closer study (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020:180). Sampling methods are categorized into probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling uses random sampling, which gives equal opportunity of being selected (Berndt, 2020:224).

Given the qualitative and exploratory nature of the study, a theoretical sampling technique was employed to select secondary data sources (Adu & Miles, 2023:257). Literature in the public domain were deliberately chosen based on their relevance, credibility, and potential to provide rich information on the implementation and effectiveness of the performance management system in DSD. The study focused mainly on a literature review and did not involve any human being participants. The literature was sampled based on the relevance of the secondary data in relation to the research topic, focusing on performance management, employee performance, and employee motivation.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data collection methods are largely influenced by the chosen research approach and design. In qualitative research, data may be collected through various techniques, including surveys, case studies, visual observations, experiments, open-ended response questions, and the review and analysis of documents (Sardana, Shekoohi, Cornett & Kaye, 2023:66). Qualitative data collection methods are typically open-ended and flexible, allowing researchers to explore meanings, experiences, and patterns in depth, whereas quantitative data collection instruments are generally structured and closed-ended (Madondo, 2021:93).

Secondary data refer to information that has already been collected by other researchers or institutions for purposes other than the current study but can be effectively reused for further research (Taherdoost, 2022:12). The use of secondary data was appropriate for this study, as it enabled the researcher to access a wide

The selected secondary sources were systematically reviewed, summarised, and analysed to identify patterns, themes, and gaps relevant to the research objectives. This approach enhanced the depth and breadth of the analysis while ensuring cost-effectiveness and accessibility of data. By relying on credible and authoritative sources, the study ensured the reliability and validity of the data used to address the research questions (Madondo, 2021:93).

3.5 METHODOLOGICAL VALUE OF THE CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH

This section of the chapter deals with the measurement and the assessment of quality for conceptual research. All research requires validity and reliability to obtain trustworthiness. According to Taherdoost (2022:12), validity refers to the extent to which the research findings accurately and adequately reflect the real meaning of the concept under consideration. Research reliability refers to the ability to obtain the same results if the research were to be repeated or undertaken by any researcher

(Ahmed & Ishtiaq, 2021:2402).

3.5.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency, stability, and transparency of the research process and the extent to which the findings can be replicated under similar conditions (Adu & Miles 2023:301). According to Coleman (2022:243), reliability of measurement is concerned with the consistency and transparency of the procedures used in a research study. Similarly, Andersson, Boateng and Abos (2024:2) emphasised that high reliability is essential for minimising errors and ensuring that research findings are replicable and trustworthy.

In this study, reliability was largely determined by the way secondary source information was collected and analysed. The researcher applied a systematic and consistent approach to the selection, review, and analysis of secondary data to ensure uniformity throughout the research process. Consistency was maintained by adhering to predefined research objectives, which guided the selection of relevant documents and the interpretation of findings. This approach reduced the likelihood of selective reporting and researcher bias.

Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the DSD and DPSA reports were supported by academic material that was relevant to the studies' predominant findings. The research objectives were predetermined and guided the research. By cross-validating organizational reports with scholarly evidence and aligning them with prevailing trends identified in the literature, the study enhanced the dependability and trustworthiness of its findings. By maintaining methodological consistency, aligning data analysis with predetermined research objectives, and corroborating findings across multiple sources, the study ensured a high level of reliability in the research process and outcomes.

3.5.2 Validity

In qualitative research, validity refers to the extent to which findings accurately and meaningfully represent the real-world phenomena being studied. Rather than focusing on statistical measurement, qualitative validity emphasises credibility, authenticity, and the depth of data interpretation. According to Andersson, Boateng and Abos (2024:2), validity concerns the degree to which research findings truthfully reflect the phenomenon under investigation and whether the research measures what it is intended to measure. Ensuring validity is therefore essential, as it enhances the credibility and significance of a study's findings.

Aslan (2025:386) asserted that validity relies on the appropriate collection and interpretation of data so that research findings accurately reflect the reality being studied. In qualitative secondary research, this involves the systematic analysis and interpretation of documents using approaches such as thematic analysis and comparative review. Analysing multiple sources and identifying recurring themes and patterns helps to minimise bias and strengthens the credibility of a study's interpretations. In this study, validity was addressed through the careful selection and evaluation of existing sources, including academic journal articles, institutional reports, policy documents and other published materials

Furthermore, the ability to demonstrate validity is a key determinant of the scientific value of research. Coleman (2022:244) emphasised that researchers must clearly justify the selection and application of appropriate research tools and procedures to ensure trustworthy findings. In this study, validity was enhanced through transparent criteria for selecting secondary data sources, consistency between the research objectives and the analysed data, and clear documentation of the analytical process. These measures ensured that the findings were well grounded in the data and also accurately represented the phenomenon under investigation.

3.5.3 Trustworthy

Trustworthiness is used to assess the quality and rigour of a study and the extent to which the research findings are credible, dependable, confirmable, and transferable (Stahl & King, 2020:29). It is the overall impression of quality associated with a research endeavour (Rose & Johnson, 2020:434). A researcher must ensure that he / she employs suitable, sufficient, and systematic methodologies and that they accurately present the results (Rose & Johnson, 2020:441). Trustworthiness in qualitative research is assessed through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Adler, 2022:599). In this study, confirmability was enhanced by grounding interpretations in credible documentary evidence and minimising researcher bias using multiple data sources. Transferability was supported by providing rich and detailed descriptions of the research context and organizational setting, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar public sector contexts.

The trustworthiness of this study was ensured through the systematic application of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability criteria. By adhering to these principles, the study maintained methodological rigour and produced findings that are credible, reliable, and meaningful within the context of performance management in the public service.

3.6 ENSURING DATA QUALITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Literature suggests that it is essential to evaluate the quality of qualitative research findings to determine their credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness. Research must be trustworthy by means of evaluating credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Adler, 2022:599). In this study a qualitative research method was applied to determine the reliability and credibility of the data collected by comparing multiple sources and obtaining perspectives of different authors to answer the research questions.

Complying with ethical standards is required in a research study. Obtaining ethics approval is a prerequisite in conducting research, as it ensures that a study complies with established ethical standards (Sadeghi & Smith, 2024:129). This study was conducted with honesty, integrity, and consideration for all ethical issues. The researcher followed guidelines as prescribed by UNISA and adhered to ethical considerations by following a well-planned strategy to conduct the research study. Guided by the Unisa Research Ethics Review Committee (URERC), ethical clearance was granted by the Department of Public Administration and Management at Unisa. Unisa ethics clearance certificate is attached as annexure A. Plagiarism was avoided by ensuring that all the information sources cited were valid, authentic, and trustworthy. The mini dissertation was submitted through Turnitin to check for any plagiarism. The Harvard method of in-text source-referencing was used to cite sources.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the qualitative research methodology used in this study to determine whether performance management enhances employees' performance in the South African public sector, consisting of the research approach, research design, research method applied, and method of ensuring the quality of the data collected and ethical considerations. The next chapter presents the information analysis and interpretation of results.

CHAPTER 4: INFORMATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the research methodology, which highlighted a qualitative research approach, research design, sampling method and data collection. This chapter outlines the data analysis and search engines used to source information. Furthermore, this chapter presents the data analysis and interpretation of results.

4.2 INFORMATION GATHERING

The data collection method was through desktop research, gathering information from secondary sources available in the public domain of DSD and relevant to address the research questions. The sources were mainly published books, e-books, peer reviewed journals, departmental reports, legislation and media articles. To obtain information relevant for the research, information related to the public service employee's motivation, recognition of work carried out and rewards and incentives paid, the public service rendering institution's overall effectiveness, and the effectiveness of the work performance management system implemented in the Department were targeted and gathered.

4.2.1 Search Engines

Details of the information search engines used for gathering are detailed in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Search engines

No.	Database type		Search words	Sources obtained
1.	Electronic engines (journals and e-books)	Unisa online Library	Promotions	Rinny, Purba & Handiman (2020), Kim (2025)
			Motivation	Herzberg (1959) Mcleod (2023) Herzberg (1959
			Performance	Pancasila et al., (2020) Nabila, Anwar, Fitriani, Ismayanti and Fauziah (2024) Okereka,Erude,(2023)
			Organization Effectiveness	Nduati & Wanyoike (2020)
			Productivity	Wighman, Fernaman & Rutherford (2022) Gumede, Mangai, Fotoyi, Mokgohloa, Biyase, Mpofu and Mello (2024)

No.	Database type		Search words	Sources obtained
				Aarstad & Kvitastein (2023)
			Service delivery	Javidi, Salajeghe, Pourkiani & Sayadi (2020) Dlamini, Worku & Muchie (2022) Ringson, (2023) Rusere, Hunter, Colinson & Twine (2025, Nyasulu & Maposa (2024)
			Training and development	Soegiarto, Sihite & Usmany (2024) Niati, Siregar & Prayoga (2021) Bhumika, et al.,2024) Govender & Bussin, (2020), Noorazem et al., (2021)

No.	Database type		Search words	Sources obtained
				Alijuma, (2023). Ryklief & Tangeh, (2022)
			Hierarchy	Sitopa, Sitinjake & Marpaung (2021)
			Pay Progression	Onavwie, Okereka & Erude (2023)
			Incentives	Armstrong (2023) Maslow (1943) Rinny, Purba & Handiman (2020) Pancasila et al., (2020)
			Rewards	McLeod (2025) Adams & Ama (2024) Armstrong (2023)

No.	Database type		Search words	Sources obtained
			Performance	Alse & Akinbo (2021) Kuswati (2019)
			Self-actualisation	Herzberg (1959)
3.	Government publications	Reports	Performance Rewards	Department of Social Development (2019 - 2022)
			Promotion and Pay progression	Department of Social Development (2019, 2020, 2021); Public Service Commission (2020); Onavwie, Okereka, Erude, (2023)
			Training and Development Utilisation of leave	Department of Social Development (2019, 2020, 2021)
			Achievement of Targets	Department of Social Development (2019, 2020, 2021)

No.	Database type		Search words	Sources obtained
			Customer Satisfaction	South African Human Rights Commission (2019, 2020, 2021) Parliamentary Portfolio Committee (2020, 2021) Public Protector (2019, 2020, 2021)
			Service delivery	Batho Pele
			Utilisation of leave	Department of Social Development (2020, 2021)
		Legislation	Performance	Public Service Regulation,2016
			Incentives	Public Service Regulation,2016, DPSA Incentive Framework,2019
			Productivity	DPSA Productivity Framework,2017
			Training and Development	Public Service Regulation,2016

Source: Compiled by researcher.

4.3 THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

This section discusses the themes and sub-themes that were derived through an analysis of secondary sources. The themes and sub-themes are presented in Table 4.2. The first theme is *employee motivation*, which mainly focuses on rewards for work carried out and recognition awarded by the employer to the public service employee. The second theme is *employee performance*, which deals with the nature and extent of employees' performance and productivity. The third theme is the *effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the institution* in general. This research variably focused on customer satisfaction and better public service delivery.

Table 4.2: Themes and sub-themes

Themes	**Sub-themes**
Theme 1: Employee motivation	Reward and Recognition
Theme 2: Employee performance	Effectiveness and Productivity
Theme 3: Institution effectiveness	Customer satisfaction and Better service delivery

Source: Compiled by researcher

4.3.1 Theme 1: Employee motivation

Employee motivation is an important factor influencing the performance and effectiveness of public sector institutions in the RSA. In public institutions, where service delivery is often under intense scrutiny, motivated employees are essential for ensuring that public services are delivered efficiently on time, and of a high standard. One of the key drivers of employee motivation in these settings is the presence of robust recognition of work delivered by employees and rewards systems facilitated by the employers.

This section explores whether rewards and recognition motivate employees to increase their work-performance.

4.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Rewards

Through public policies, the RSA government emphasizes the need for rewarding work performance in public service- and public sector institutions. The Incentives Policy Framework introduced by the Minister of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) in 2003, mandates public institutions to implement performance incentives to ensure that employees are motivated through recognition and rewards systems. Performance bonuses, pay progression and promotions are the main extrinsic motivators that public institutions use to motivate employees. Chapter 4 of the DPSA's SMS Handbook (2003:24) mandates public institutions to utilize non-financial rewards systems (intrinsic) to boost the motivation levels of employees. This focuses on internal drives such as facilitation of job satisfaction, quality training, positive development, and obtaining a satisfactory work-life balance (Onavwie, Okereka, & Erude, 2023:20). Pay progression and bonuses are linked to performance evaluations. Employees who meet and exceed work-performance standards are eligible for pay progression to the next salary notch within their respective salary bands and post levels (DPSA, 2019).

In terms of Regulation 73 of the 2016 Public Service Regulations (PSR), each Executive Authority (EA) should implement the performance incentive scheme to reward employees in his or her institution.

Table 4.3 below depicts the nature and extent of *promotions* affected during the periods 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 in DSD.

Table 4.3: Promotion by salary levels/band for 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 and 2021/2022

SALARY BAND	Employees as at April 2019/2020	Promotion to another salary level 2019/2020	% of total within salary band	Employees at April 2020/2021	Promotion to another salary level 2020/2021	% of total within salary band 2020/2021	Employees at April 2021/2022	Promotion to another salary level 2021/2022	% of total within salary band 2021/2022
Lower skilled (Levels 1-2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skilled (Levels 3-5)	75	0	0.00	69	0	0	88	0	0
Highly skilled production (Level 6-8)	272	**1**	0.40	261	0	0	254	**3**	1.20
Highly skilled supervision (Level 9-12)	258	**0**	0.00	243	**4**	1.60	247	13	5.30
Senior Management (Level 13-16)	94	0	0.00	88	**2**	2.30	82	6	7.30
Other, Permanent	45	0	0.00	6	0	0	1	1	100
Contract (Level 1-2, Permanent	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Contract (Levels 3-5), Permanent	23	9	39.10	30	0	0	18	0	0
Contract (Levels 6-8), Permanent	26	**2**	7.70	24	**1**	4.20	24	1	4.20
Contract (Levels 9-12), Permanent	23	**1**	4.30	25	0	0	24	0	0

SALARY BAND	Employees as at April 2019/2020	Promotion to another salary level 2019/2020	% of total within salary band	Employees at April 2020/2021	Promotion to another salary level 2020/2021	% of total within salary band 2020/2021	Employees at April 2021/2022	Promotion to another salary level 2021/2022	% of total within salary band 2021/2022
Contract (Levels 13-16), Permanent	9	**1**	11.10	15	0	0	16	0	0
Total	**825**	**14**	**1.70**	**762**	**7**	**0.90**	**755**	**24**	**3.1**

Source: Department of Social Development (2019/20:141), (2020/21:204), (2021/22:151).

From the above table 4.3, it is obvious that in 2019/2020, more contract employees were promoted than permanent employees. Highly skilled supervision (level 9-12) has predominantly more employees who were promoted in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. This is not only translated into cost-saving for the DSD but also increased its (DSD) institutional effectiveness. Employees are motivated and increase their work-performance when they experience positive incentives and rewards (Armstrong, 2023:173).

Table 4.3 also reveals that highly skilled production (level 6-8) had the highest workforce for the period from 2019-2022, but fewer employees were promoted as compared to other salary bands for the stated period. Lack of motivation and promotion within this salary band resulted to demotivated employees, which lowered morale and produced poorer performance.

The table furthermore shows that the financial increase in promotion was more felt at senior levels because of their high salary-bands, notches, and scales.

There was an average decrease to 0% for all contract salary bands from 2020 to 2022. This implied that the financial cost of contract employees remained constant for the stated period.

It is obvious that there were no promotions during 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 because the DSD had to deal with 43% promotion-related grievances (PSC, 2020-2021). This

did not only negatively impact morale and motivation of employees intrinsically, but also extrinsically, which limited the number of career advancement opportunities across various salary levels, and subsequently affected DSD-employees' morale and performance, prompting them to seek alternative avenues for career growth.

It is evident from the discussion above that contract workers received more promotions than permanent employees. This implies that fewer employees were motivated through promotions.

Table 4.4 below illustrates **pay progression** in DSD for the periods 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022:

Table 4.4: Progression by salary levels/band for 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 financial year

SALARY BAND	Employees as at 1 April 2019/2020	Progression to another notch within a salary notch 2019/2020	Notch progression as % of employees by salary band 2019/2020	Employees as at 1 April 2020/2021	Progression to another notch within a salary notch 2020/2021	Notch progression as % of employees by salary band 2020/2021	Employees 1 April 2021/2022	Progression to another notch within a salary notch 2021/2022	Notch progression as % of employees by salary band 2021/2022
Lower skilled (Levels 1-2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skilled (Levels 3-5)	75	75	100.00	69	36	52.20	88	94	109.30
Highly skilled production (Level 6-8)	272	174	64.00	261	162	62.10	254	247	98
Highly skilled supervision (Level 9-12)	258	148	57.40	243	154	63.40	247	248	102.10
Senior Management (Level 13-16)	94	75	79.80	88	62	70.50	82	78	95.10
Other, Permanent	45	0	0.00	6	0	0	1	0	0
Contract	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	100

SALARY BAND	Employees as at 1 April 2019/2020	Progression to another notch within a salary notch 2019/2020	Notch progression as % of employees by salary band 2019/2020	Employees as at 1 April 2020/2021	Progression to another notch within a salary notch 2020/2021	Notch progression as % of employees by salary band 2020/2021	Employees 1 April 2021/2022	Progression to another notch within a salary notch 2021/2022	Notch progression as % of employees by salary band 2021/2022
(Level 1-2)									
Contract (Levels 3-5), Permanent	23	23	100.00	30	12	40	18	14	77.88
Contract (Levels 6-8), Permanent	26	7	26.90	24	11	45.80	24	24	100
Contract (Levels 9-12), Permanent	23	12	52.20	25	8	32	24	24	100
Contract (Levels 13-16), Permanent	9	2	22.20	15	4	26.70	16	12	75
Total	**825**	**516**	**63.00**	**762**	**449**	**59.00**	**755**	**742**	**98.28**

Source: Department of Social development (2019/20:141), (20/21:204), (2021/2022:151).

Table 4.4 reveals that in 2019/2020, all employees in skilled (level 3-5), permanent, and contract positions, progressed to the next salary level. This shows that all employees on the lower salary level met the performance standards expected for the job in the financial year 2019/2020, which means that lower-level employees were more motivated. Financial incentives are a primary motivator, especially for lower-income employees, which significantly impacts job performance (Gerhart, Kim & He, 2025:6). The period with the majority of employees who progressed to the next higher level in 2021/2022 is 98.28%, which suggests that more employees were motivated as compared to 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. Nabila, Anwar, Fitriani, Ismayanti and Fauziah (2024:1) claimed that highly motivated employees lead to improved

performance, which significantly influences performance outcomes. In 2021/2022, employees on salary levels 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) had a steady increase in pay progression as compared to SMS (Level 13-16). This means that lower-level employees benefited more than senior managers. The ability of lower-level employees to improve their financial position is dependent on salary increases, which boost staff morale. This would not only benefit lower-level employees, but also the institution, who would not only save money because of the fact that lower-level employee salary increases are less costly than salary increases for senior managers while still also experiencing increased productivity. This was underscored by McLeod (2025:13), stating that Maslow's hierarchy of needs may be used to motivate junior staff who are earning very low salaries. Increasing their salaries would motivate and enable them to meet their physiological needs. The SMS Handbook (SMS Handbook Chapter 4) suggests that, in the absence of financial rewards, non-monetary rewards for senior managers, such as increased autonomy, should be considered (DPSA SMS Handbook 2006:32).

Table 4.4 shows an average decrease of pay progression of 51.2% from 2019/2020 to 2020/2021 for employees on salary band skilled Level 3-5, thereafter an average increase to 0.57% from 2020/2021 to 2021/2022. Eligibility for pay progression involves several factors which include meeting performance standards, years of service in the position, employees on the maximum notch and employees on personal notch are not eligible for the pay progression (DPSA, 2019:6), which contributed to the reduction in pay progression opportunities.

From the aforementioned discussion the salary progression trends reveal a clear link between financial incentives and employee motivation, particularly at lower salary bands. Employees in Levels 3–5 consistently meet performance standards and benefit significantly from monetary rewards, which fulfil basic needs and drive higher morale and productivity. Limited pay progression at SMS, suggested the need for tailored non-financial and financial reward systems. The progression percentages appear to vary from year to year, which may be influenced by eligibility restrictions including maximum notch limitations and duration in position. The implication is that some employees cannot advance to a higher pay level due to these constraints.

Table 4.5 below illustrates **performance rewards** for 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 in DSD.

Table 4.5: Performance Rewards by salary levels/band for 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 financial year

SALARY BAND	Employees 1 April 2019/2020	Number of Beneficiaries	% of employees by salary band 2019/2020	Employees 1 April 2020/2021	Number of Beneficiaries	% of employees by salary band 2020/2021	Employees 1 April 2021/2022	Number of Beneficiaries	% of employees by salary band 2021/2022
Lower skilled (Levels 1-2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	100
Skilled (Levels 3-5)	134	32	23.9	106	8	7.50	112	14	12.50
Highly skilled production (Level 6-8)	483	94	19.5	274	63	23	275	38	13.80
Highly skilled supervision (Level 9-12)	273	80	19.3	266	45	16	275	21	7.60
Senior Management (Level 13-16)	99	18	18.15	95	5	0.00	87	8	9.20
Total	**989**	**206**	**23.1**	**741**	**121**	**17.90**	**750**	**82**	**10.93**

Source: (Department of Social Development, (2019/20:146-148), (2020/21:213), (2021/2022:156-157).

Table 4.5 shows an average decrease of 5.2% between the period 2019/20 and 2020/21 in performance rewards and an average decrease of 6.97% between the period 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. Not only did the lack of a performance bonus impact on employee motivation, but also the government's noncompliance with its incentive policy. This is underscored by Adams and Ama (2024:2) who revealed that rewards have a substantial impact on an organizational ability to motivate employees and get higher quality work.

Table 4.5 reveals that skilled (level 3-5) has consistently received more rewards, while SMS (level 13–16) received less performance bonus in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. Lack of motivation of SMS may lead to decreased motivation and engagement as senior managers might feel undervalued and unappreciated.

Since the 2021 performance management cycle, employees in DSD were no longer eligible for performance bonuses, which has had a negative impact on employees' performance. Furthermore, because of the government's inability to comply with its incentive policy (DPSA, 2019:7), which has not only deprived public servants of performance bonuses but also sent a clear message that it is content with substandard performance levels. Employees perform at a level that is equal to their income (Pancasila et al., 2020:289), Monetary incentives have a direct influence on employee motivation (Noorazem, Sabri & Nazir, 2021:43). It is obvious that substandard performance would negatively impact service delivery, which would affect the standard of living and quality of life of citizens. This is evident from service delivery complaints that were reported at the South African Human Rights Commission that reveal high rates of malnutrition-related illness and inadequate healthcare facilities (South African Human Rights Commission, 2022:3). There were also complaints reported at the Public Protector regarding delayed payments of social grants (Public Protector, 2020) It is obvious that the significant reduction and unbalanced bonus distribution between the period 2020 and 2022 undoubtedly decreased employee motivation, particularly among middle to SMS level staff. Because performance rewards are crucial components that impact employee motivation, a lack of performance bonuses would negatively impact employees' performance.

4.3.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Recognition

When employees are recognized for their service, they feel valued which dispels their perceived work-related limitations to set higher targets and to devise innovative ways to achieve targets (Aljuma, 2023:6). Training and development empower employees, which enhance their intrinsic motivation through autonomy (Soegiarto, Sihite & Usmany 2024:1577).

Table 4.6 displays *training and development* of employees at the DSD per occupational category, namely legislators, senior officials and managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals, clerks, service and sales workers, skilled agriculture and fishery workers, craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers as well as elementary occupations.

Table 4.6: Training per occupational category

Occupational Category	Number of employees as at April 2019	Number of employees trained in 2019	Number of employees as at April 2020	Number of employees trained in April 2020	Number of employees as at April 2021	Number of employees trained in April 2021
Legislators, senior officials and managers	105	42	115	37	101	54
Professionals	171	95	171	99	171	96
Technicians and associate Professionals	112	90	112	190	103	98
Clerks	482	43	481	18	380	80
Service and sales workers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skilled agriculture and fishery workers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Craft and related trades workers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elementary occupants	0	0	0	51	0	0
Total	**870**	**260**	**879**	**395**	**755**	**328**

Source: Department of Social Development (2019/20:154), (2020/21:208), (2021/2022:166).

Table 4.6 shows that more employees were *trained* in 2020 financial year. This indicates that more employees received training and development which significantly enhanced their job satisfaction and increased motivation and performance (Soegiarto, & Usmany 2024:1582). In 2021 the number of trained employees decreased by 1.49% which means that the DSD had not only trained less employees as compared to 2020 but had also invested less in the empowerment of its workforce. The demands of the 21st century compel institutions to prioritize ongoing employee training and development to remain competitive and effective (Bhumika, Samal, Sharma & Sharma, 2024:59). Therefore, training must be prioritised not only for enhancing employees' knowledge and skills but also for improving their motivation and overall performance (Govender & Bussin, 2020:6).

DPSA has mandated the implementation of various compulsory training programmes across all salary levels to ensure that government departments systematically prioritize the development of their workforce in key competency areas (DPSA, 2023:6). However, there is a notable disparity in the focus of these training programmes. For lower-level employees, particularly clerks, the training is predominantly limited to induction and orientation programmes. These do not address the development of advanced skills and capabilities that are essential for career progression and improved job performance as the induction and orientation programmes focus on only orientating employees on how the public service in RSA functions.

Table 4.6 shows that employees who are most trained are technicians and associate professionals and professionals, while other categories are less trained, clerks have been found underrepresented. Implying that fewer employees were motivated in this occupational category which can decrease their performance and job satisfaction (Soegiarto et al., 2024:1581). Training and development do not only improve clerks' skills and knowledge, but also significantly contribute to job satisfaction, which leads to commitment and higher retention (Noorazem et al., 2021:41). PSETA indicated skills gaps on clerical workers; customer orientation, business writing, records management, and digital skills (Public Service Education and Training Authority,

2022:41), which should be incorporated into individual personal development plans. Providing training to these employees will not only enhance their skills and motivate them but also complying with training and development prescripts.

There is a notable increase in clerical training from 3.7% in 2020 to 21.1% in 2021 which suggests a corrective approach to previous neglect. This change may point to renewed recognition of the clerical workforce's role in service delivery, potentially enhancing motivation through professional development. This is underscored by Aljumah, (2023:6) who claimed that there was a significant relationship between employee recognition and intrinsic motivation. Table 4.6 illustrates an average increase of 21.29% between the period 2020 and 2021 for Legislators, senior officials and managers category. This does not only motivate employees in this occupational category but also complies more with the training policy (DPSA, 2023:4).

The analysis of employee training at the DSD from 2019/2020 to 2021/2022 revealed that training initiatives were strategically concentrated on professionals and technicians. These occupational groups consistently received high levels of training, suggesting that the department viewed these roles as critical to service delivery and leadership. For example, technicians and associate professionals reached a training rate of 95.14% in 2021/2022, while professionals achieved 56% across all three years. The disparities in training opportunities and inconsistent training of clerks as shown in table 4.6 highlights potential human resource development inequity. This is underscored by Adams' Equity Theory (1963), which claims that perceived unfairness in workplace rewards, including access to training, can lead to demotivation and reduced engagement. Adams' Equity Theory also suggests inclusive strategy that ensures recognition across all occupational levels to motivate employees. When employees are provided with adequate training and development opportunities, they tend to feel valued and motivated, which enhances their commitment and performance within the institution. This, in turn, contributes to greater efficiency and effectiveness in achieving institutional goals, in line with section 195(1)(h) of the Constitution, which emphasizes good human resource management and career development to maximize human potential (Republic of South Africa,1996). This is underscored by Herzberg (1959) who claimed that development opportunities are powerful motivators that influence job satisfaction and commitment. Furthermore, Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of

needs indicates that training can fulfil employees' esteem and self-actualization needs, thus enhancing intrinsic motivation.

From the above discussion, training trends reveal that professional, technicians, and related professionals benefited more on training as compared to legislators, senior officials, managers, and clerks, which can translate to lack of motivation on these occupational levels. The inability to provide training to employees also shows noncompliance of the Work Skills Plan and the training planning which is a requirement for an institution to plan and train its employees annually. DPSA stated that employees' training needs must be addressed through a performance development plan (Public Service Regulation,2016 section 72). Table 4.6 reveals that employees at DSD have inadequate training which could negatively impact the effectiveness of the institution.

4.4 THEME 2: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Section 195 of the Constitution states that the success of the Public Service in achieving its goals, depends primarily on the efficiency and effectiveness of employees in carrying out their duties (RSA,1996). In general, the performance effectiveness assessment in a government department evaluates how successfully the department achieves its strategic objectives, delivers public services, and meets operational goals. The overarching goal is to determine whether the department operates efficiently and produces meaningful outcomes for citizens, stakeholders, and government priorities (Kuswati, 2019:283).

Employee performance plays a significant role in the improvement of productivity of the institution. This is underscored by Alase and Akinbo (2021:18) who claimed that the institutional goals are achieved through employee's work-performance. The Public Service Regulation, 2001 states that institutions must strive to achieve their objectives in the interest of the public, thus it requires employees to perform at their level best for better service delivery. Performance assessments will therefore measure the extent to which employees are effectively performing their duties, which in turn contribute to the achievement of the institution's strategic goals (PSR, 2016: section 71).

4.4.1 Sub theme: 1 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of an institution (for example, the Department of Social Development (DSD)) is evaluated by measuring the extent to which its predetermined objectives are achieved. Strategic planning and the clear formulation of achievable SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) are essential to ensure effective, efficient and economical public service delivery within the developing context of the Republic of South Africa (RSA).

Table 4.7 below illustrates performance outcomes for the DSD for the period 2019-2022.

Table 4.7: ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGETS PER PROGRAMME

	2019/2020				2020/21				2021/22			
Programme	**Number targets**	**Number of Targets Achieved**	**No. of targets not achieved**	**% of targets achieved**	**Number of targets**	**Number of Targets Achieved**	**No. of targets not achieved**	**% of targets achieved**	**Number targets**	**Number of Targets Achieved**	**No. of targets not achieved**	**% of targets achieved**
Programme 1: Administration	4	1	3	25%	8	6	2	75%	13	10	3	77%
Programme 2: social Service	1	1	0	100%	1	0	1	0%	1	1	0	100%
Programme 3: Social security policy administration	4	2	2	50%	7	6	1	86%	10	7	3	70%
Programme 4: Welfare services policy development & implementation	20	8	12	40%	26	20	6	77%	23	19	4	83%
Programme 5: Social programme & integrated service delivery	16	10	6	62%	17	16	1	94%	20	17	3	85%
TOTAL	**45**	**22**	**23**	**49%**	**59**	**48**	**11**	**81%**	**67**	**54**	**13**	**81%**

Source: (Department of Social Development (2019/2020:36,41,67-71), (2020/2021:37-92), 2021/2022: 64-81).

Table 4.7 indicates that during the 2019/2020 financial year, the DSD achieved only 49% of its performance targets, while 51% were not achieved. This reflects performance ineffectiveness of the institution which is attributed to employee performance. This is affirmed by Nduati and Wanyoike (2020:364) who claimed that employee performance is found to be a key factor that affects organizational effectiveness. The lack of sufficient capacity because of moratorium of filling vacancies and absenteeism during Covid-19 has also contributed to lower target rates (DSD, 2020:64). Table 4.7 further shows that Programme 1: *Administration,* responsible to provide leadership, management and support services had an average increase of 52% of archived targets from 2019 to 2022, which translates into improved performance. Programme 2: social assistance, which provides social grants to eligible beneficiaries had decreased to 0% in 2020/2021 which translates into decreased performance in this financial year as compared to the previous year, and thereafter an average increase of 100% achieved targets in 2021/2022. Programme 3: Social Security Policy and Administration, responsible for social security policy development, administrative justice, the administration of social grants, and the reduction of incorrect benefit payments, had an average increase of 36% of achieved targets in 2020/2021 and thereafter an average decrease of 16% of achieved targets in 2021/2022. Programme 4: Welfare Services Policy Development and Implementation Support, which provides for social security policy development, administrative justice, the administration of social grants, and the reduction of incorrect benefit payments had an average increase of 43% of achieved targets in 2021/2022. Programme 5: Social Policy and Integrated Service Delivery, which provides social security policy development, administrative justice, the administration of social grants, and the reduction of incorrect benefit payments had an average increase of 32% achieved targets in 2020/2021 and thereafter an average decrease of 9% in 2021/2022, Table 4.7 also indicates that in the 2019/2020 financial year, Programme 2 and Programme 5 achieved above 50% of their performance targets, whereas Programme 1, Programme 3, and Programme 4 achieved 50% and below of their targets. Programme 2, which is responsible for the administration of social grants, achieved 100% of its targets. This reflects the successful transfer of funds to SASSA, highlighting strong performance in this area. Programme 5 achieved 62% of its targets despite facing persistent challenges such as high levels of poverty, unemployment,

inequality, and rising social ills including gender-based violence and subsistence-related issues. Notably, this programme exceeded its targets related to poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihoods, and food security. For example, while the original target was to provide food to 415,000 vulnerable individuals through the DSD feeding programme, the actual number reached was 876,860, indicating significantly effective performance. These trends contributed to effective social service delivery which shows improved employees' performance and institutional effectiveness. Leading logically from the above discussion, performance targets at DSD increased from 49% in 2019/2020 to 81% in both 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, which suggests that the institution (DSD) strived to improve its performance, despite Covid-19 pandemic challenges. This shows improved employees' performance and commitment for the two financial years. Vacancies on leadership positions seem to be a setback in the achievement of performance targets, which includes a Director-General post that has been vacant since 2019. In the DSD 2020 annual report, the Auditor General suggested that the leadership position must be filled within the prescribed time frame to enable the functionality of the institution (DSD, 2020:110).

4.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Productivity

Productivity measures both efficiency and effectiveness of the institution. A generic public service productivity measurement instrument was instituted by DPSA to measure the productivity of public institutions (DPSA, 2017:3).

The measurement of the institutional productivity is based on a multiplicity of factors impacting on the quality and quantity dimensions of basic social services provided by the department, and these multi-factors were clustered into three weighed core indicators, namely *Labour, Operations, and Performance.*

Table 4.8 below lists the multi-factors impacting on the service quality and quantity dimensions of institutional services in relation to the three weighted indicators. Each indicator was allocated its own weight based on its perceived contribution to overall institutional productivity. A higher weight allocation to an indicator means it is expected to contribute more towards improvements in organizational productivity.

Table 4.8 below gives an analysis of the institutional productivity levels achieved over a 3-year period (2019-2022). The Assessment Tool evaluated performance across three weighted dimensions: Labour 20% (200 points) focus on workforce stability and capacity for example, vacancies, absenteeism, turnover, and training; Operations 40% (400) points which assesses internal system efficiency, role alignment, ICT functionality, workplace design, and citizen stakeholder engagement; and performance 40% (400 points) which measures goal achievement, total rewards, work related stress, number of employees disciplined, and budget effectiveness. Using a 1,000-point weighted scorecard and a four-tier rating system, the matrix offers a balanced and interpretable view of productivity. Because there was no data for operations which was weighing 40% (400 points) and the sub-factor (number of employees under counselling) under indicator performance the total weight was 550 points which means that 400 points of operations and 50 points of a subfactor (number of employees under counselling) were excluded (Public Service Productivity Framework, 2017:19). The availability of quality data is critical for reliable productivity measurement. In this study the lack of data on operations made it difficult to assess areas on this indicator, which suggested the use of the framework review.

Table 4.8: DSD Productivity level

Indicator	Weighting	Total potential score for each indicator	Level achieved	Score achieved for each productivity level(α)	Level achieved	Score achieved for each productivity level(α)	Level achieved	Score achieved for each productivity level(α)
Financial Year (FY)			**2019/20**		**2020/21**		**2021/22**	
LABOUR 20%								
Ratio of salary cost to total budget	5%	50	1	**50**	1	**50**	**1**	**50**
Days absent (Absenteeism)	5%	50	1	**50**	1	**50**	**1**	**50**
Training of Staff (Skills Programmes)	5%	50	1	**50**	2	**25**	**1**	**50**
Vacancy rate	5%	50	4	**12.5**	4	**12.5**	**4**	**12.5**
Total score achieved for Labour				162,5/200=0.81		137,5/200=0.69		**137,5/200= 0.69**
OPERATIONS 40%								
Implementation of the public service operation framework	5%	50	No data	**No data**	No data	**No data**	**No data**	**No data**
Workplace design	5%	50	No data	**No data**	No data	**No data**	**No data**	**No data**
Citizen stakeholder feedback	5%	50	No data	No data	No data	No data	**No data**	**No data**
ICT downtime	5%	50	No data	No data	No data	No data	**No data**	**No data**
PERFROMANCE 40%								
Total rewards to employees	10%	100	4	**25**	4	**25**	**4**	**25**
Number of employees under counselling /work related stress	5%	50	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data

Number of employees disciplined	5%	50	1	**50**	1	**50**	**4**	**12.5**
Budgetary performance	10%	100	4	**25**	4	**25**	**1**	**100**
Annual performance targets achieved	10%	100	4	**25**	4	**25**	**4**	**25**
Total score achieved for Performance				**125 /350=0.36**		**125, /350= 0.36**		**162,5/350= 0.46**
Total Level score achieved for all indicators				**287.5**		**262.5**		**300**
Level of Productivity				**287.5/550=52%**		**262.5/550= 48%**		**300/550=55%**

Source: Department of Social development, (2019/2020), (2020/2021), (2021/2022)

Table 4.8 above shows that the *productivity* level for the institution was 'moderate' for three (3) years (2019-2022). In this context, 'moderate' means that the productivity of the institution is average in effort and quality.

The productivity ranged from 48% to 55% across the three-year period, indicating moderate performance well below optimal efficiency thresholds. In the financial year period 2020-2021 (1 year), the productivity decreased to 48% and thereafter improved to 55% in 2021/2022.

Table 4.8 shows a drastic decline in *labour productivity* from 0.89% in 2019/2020 to 0.69% in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022. This usually indicates that the skills and competencies of employees are inadequate or not utilised to its full potential. Declining labour productivity is also characteristic of team friction or low morale in an organization. Table 4.8 depicts that from 2019 to 2022 vacancy rates were higher than 10%. The increased vacancy rate reflects that the DSD exceeded the vacancy rate of 10% of funded posts (DPSA, 2015:1) and did not adhere to the provisions of Section 65 of the Public Service Regulations, 2016, which requires public institutions to fill vacant positions within 12 months of being vacated (RSA, 2016:69). This means that the duties of the vacant post must be assigned to an acting official as an extra

workload which has negative impact on employees' performance and ultimately on institution's productivity (Wighman, Fernandez & Rutherford, 2022:667). The position of the Director-General has been vacant since 2020 (DSD, 2020:134) which has had a negative impact on the leadership of the institution. This is underscored by Wighman, Fernandez, and Rutherford (2022:667) who claimed that high vacancy rates at senior levels create leadership gaps that undermine continuity, disrupt established processes, and introduce a sense of uncertainty within the institution. The Auditor-General's report shows that vacancies in key positions create instability which leads to inefficiencies in service delivery (DSD, 2020:110). The Public Service Commission (2022:7) shows that vacancy rate at the SMS in the public service remained consistently high since 2020, averaging approximately 20%, suggesting compliance of the vacancy rate at 10% or less for institutional functionality. While it may be argued that vacancies contribute to a temporary reduction in the public wage-bill, reflected in the relatively stable ratio of salary cost to total budget during this period as shown in table 4.8, such fiscal savings come at the expense of operational effectiveness (Gumede, Mangai, Fotoyi, Mokgohloa, Biyase, Mpofu & Mello, 2024:15). Thus, while the short-term financial implications may appear beneficial, the long-term costs in terms of reduced service quality and weakened institutional leadership are significantly more detrimental.

In 2020/21 training level decreased and thereafter increased in 2021/2022. This shows the disparity in the DSD's training and development. Public Service Commission (2021:27) revealed that departments reported challenges in conducting trainings during 2020/2021. Because of Covid-19 pandemic, people were unable to attend training due to various reasons, such as laptops and network connectivity. This means that for 2020/2021 the institution was unable to conduct training due to Covid-19. Gumede et al., (2024:15) claimed that inadequate employees-training can influence organization's functionality, which affects institution's productivity and effectiveness (Ryklief & Tengeh, 2022:65). A trained and developed workforce is essential to achieving organizational goal (Public Service Commission, 2021). Table 4.8 above also shows that training levels increased in 2021/2022. This shows that determined efforts by the DSD in skills development may have improved productivity.

Table 4.8 above also reveals that absenteeism remained stable with full scores for three years. Aarstad and Kvitastein (2023:8) claimed that absenteeism leads to disruptions in workflow, resulting in decreased efficiency which affects overall productivity. The stability in absenteeism scores may reflect a degree of operational resilience within the public service workforce, possibly due to effective attendance monitoring systems or employee commitment to service delivery despite institutional challenges, implying increased productivity.

Table 4.8 above also illustrates that performance bonus indicators and annual performance targets achieved remained low for three years. Budgetary performance improved from level 4 to level 1 between the periods 2019/2020 and 2021/2022, which demonstrates better financial planning and execution (Prasad, Bajpai & Tripathi, 2023:271). An institution's available budget is what turns inputs (staff costs, infrastructure, materials, and equipment) into outputs and outcomes. Performance budgets are not only related to financial control but also provide a key instrument for maximizing efficiency and effectiveness in providing public services to the public (Wokas & Gerungai, 2019:32). Effective budgetary control ensures that institutions can align their financial resources with their strategic goals, thereby enhancing overall performance (Wokas & Gerunagi, 2019:32). Strong budget execution can directly affect service outputs and resource efficiency. Budget efficiency (i.e., spending the total available budget in line with its earlier planning and according to the constitutional principles of transparency and accountability) is thus critical for achieving a high level of institutional productivity and building citizen-trust in the performance of government. There was a sharp increase in employees disciplined from the period 2021/2022, which suggests more conflicts. All four indicators under operations (40% weight) lacked data across all three years. This included workplace design, ICT downtime, stakeholder feedback, and implementation of the public service operations framework. Therefore, adjustments were made from the nominal value of 1000 to 550 to accommodate the non-availability of reliable data.

From the above discussion it can be seen that DSD obtained a moderate productivity level over three financial years which suggested several implications regarding operational efficiency and employee engagement. This situation might have indicated systemic issues within the institution that require attention to enhance overall

performance. There was a drastic decline in labour productivity from 0.89% in 2019/2020 to 0.69% in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, which might have indicated that the skills and competencies of employees are inadequate or not utilised to its full potential.

The availability of quality data is critical for reliable productivity measurement. In this case, lack of data on operations, which included workplace design, ICT downtime, stakeholder feedback, and implementation of the public service operations framework, made it difficult to assess areas on this indicator. This suggests that Public Service Productivity Framework review was necessary. The level of total rewards to employees was poor in all three financial years, which translated into lack of financial motivations for employees, that indirectly impacted employees' performance, and in the last instance also led to a negative influence on the institution's effectiveness and productivity.

Vacancy rates were higher than 10% for the period 2019 to 2022 which reflects non-compliance of the DPSA Regulation to fill vacant positions within 12 months from being vacated (RSA, 2016:69).

4.5 THEME 3: INSTITUTION EFFECTIVENESS

This section investigates DSD's effectiveness in service delivery and customer satisfaction.

4.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Customer satisfaction

When institutions provide their services in an effective, efficient and economical manner, it significantly enhances customer satisfaction. The quality and effectiveness of customer satisfaction is assessed by effective services to customers and clients.

Table 4.9 below shows the experience of citizens regarding the services provided by DSD. Only certain services are mentioned to provide a status of customer satisfaction. These services are social-grant relief, foster care, social work, NPO, care institution, and social grant system:

Table 4.9: Summary of Citizen experience and perceptions

Services	Citizen experience	Satisfaction
Social Grant Relief	Repeated grant delays and inconsistent eligibility criteria, especially during the COVID-19 period, undermined confidence in DSD's ability to deliver timely financial relief.	No
Social Grant System	DSD's limited capacity to deliver emergency relief during the pandemic exposed significant gaps in contingency planning and citizen communication	No
Foster care and social worker	foster care backlogs and social worker shortages reflect deep-rooted structural limitations rather than isolated service failures.	No
NPO	Irregular procurement processes and the non-payment of NPO partners point to weaknesses in internal governance, affecting both service delivery and institutional credibility.	No
Care institution	Poor conditions in care institutions, particularly for children and the elderly, suggest insufficient oversight and a failure to uphold client dignity and basic rights.	No

Source: SAHRC (2019,2020,2021); Parliament Portfolio committee (2019,2020,2021)

The DSD through its Strategic Plan for 2019/2020, committed to the provision of social assistance to eligible beneficiaries, in line with the Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004 and its accompanying regulations. This mandate is operationalised by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), which is tasked with ensuring the timely and efficient disbursement of social grants (SASSA, 2022/2021:8).

The Public Protector and SAHRC reports (2023 September) show numerous complaints regarding delayed payments of social grants, especially the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant during the Covid-19 pandemic. The delays in payment of social grants significantly affect service delivery. This undermines the credibility of the social protection system and highlights structural inefficiencies within the grant administration process (Luthuli, Haskins, Mapumulo, & Harwood, 2022:10). This was underscored by Seekings (2020:19), who claimed that complaints on social grants reflect inconsistencies in eligibility criteria, exclusions of vulnerable applicants, and a lack of effective appeals mechanisms. These issues show significant erosion of trust

in DSD's ability to deliver timely financial support. During the 2019/2020 reporting period, the Minister for DSD acknowledged that the social security system is overdue to be changed to a system that will make a significant contribution towards creating a more comprehensive social security system that is affordable, inclusive, sustainable and appropriate for all South Africans, as envisioned in the National Development Plan (Department of Social Development, 2020:8). Improving the social security system that will deliver public service more efficiently and effectively can lead to greater citizen satisfaction and increase trust in government (Gumede, Greyling, & Mazorodze 2024:26).

Parliamentary records and SAHRC hearings, in the years between 2019 and 2022, highlighted widespread dissatisfaction with the foster care system. Backlogs in processing court orders and a shortage of social workers resulted in delays and legal uncertainty for foster families. These operational inefficiencies were consistently flagged as systemic, not incidental, reflecting deep-seated structural service gaps within DSD. During the Portfolio Committee meeting in the year 2019/2020, the Committee raised concerns on the foster care backlog where it was found that the backlog is due to lack of financial resources (DSD, 2020:110). The Minister also emphasised that the DSD should plan to engage other Ministers such as the Minister of Finance, to understand the challenges of the country in terms of budgets (DSD, 2020:110). This was underscored by Mokgalapa and Rapholo, (2021:385) who claimed that shortage of resources, lack of personnel, nature of the operational system of the children's courts, lack of cooperation from clients, and the state of the screening process prevented social workers from finalising the management of foster care cases, causing foster care backlogs.

Office of the Public Protector and South African Human Rights Commission (2019; 2022) revealed cases of maladministration in procurement processes and non-payment of Non-profit organization service providers (Public Protector: 2019:107-109). These complaints reflected dissatisfaction with contractual fairness, transparency, and support for civil society actors. They suggested that DSD's internal governance challenges directly affect quality service delivery. In the Portfolio

Committee meeting held in 2019, the Minister of DSD acknowledged the challenges and indicated that all matters related to NP were to be resolved (DSD, 2020:109).

The South African Human Rights Commission Report (2022:3) revealed complaints received from different stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, healthcare professionals, and community leaders, revealed alarming rates of malnutrition-related illnesses and even fatalities. The report highlighted the daily struggles they face in providing adequate nutrition to their children (SAHRC, 2022:3). It also pointed out the lack of adequate healthcare facilities and the challenges in accessing existing ones, especially in rural areas. The report showed that a substantial percentage of children in the Eastern Cape Province are suffering from various forms of malnutrition.

Parliamentary oversight in South Africa has highlighted concerns regarding the treatment and protection of vulnerable populations in care facilities. For example, public hearings on the Older Persons Amendment Bill (Republic of South Africa, 2022) drew attention to maltreatment and care issues experienced by older persons, while parliamentary committee engagement with the Department of Social Development (DSD) acknowledged the need for stronger caregiver support and accountability mechanisms (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2023; 2024). The recurrence of such conditions reflects weak oversight and low responsiveness by the institution to clients' dignity and rights. Section 28(1) of the Constitution sets out the rights of children regarding appropriate care, basic nutrition, shelter, health care and social services, and detention; however, it seems that not much heed is given to these regulations.

From the above discussion, customer satisfaction was generally low for the 2019-2022 period. Citizens were not satisfied with the services, as they had expressed their complaints. The dissatisfaction was influenced by several critical factors, including lack of training of personnel, because training and development enhances employees job satisfaction which in turns increases motivation and performance (Soegiarto, Sihite & Usmany, 2024:1582). However, insufficient training at DSD not only have a negative impact on employees' performance, but also on the institution's effectiveness and service delivery to citizens. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted

approach to enhance service quality and responsiveness. When employees are recognized, they perform better, lack of performance bonus may contribute to the ineffectiveness of the institution because employees are demotivated.

4.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Better service delivery

Quality service delivery to citizens is widely regarded as a key indicator of a capable and responsive public sector institution (Thusi, Matyana & Jili 2023:138). Effective service delivery is often measured by the achievement of planned targets, which signifies successful implementation of a performance management system. This is underscored by Barbier and Tengeh (2022:422) who claimed that better service delivery requires a multifaceted approach that integrates strategic planning, participatory governance, performance monitoring, and institutional reform. The Public Service Charter obliged public institutions to commit to delivering improved services to the public (Barbier & Tengeh, 2022:423). This commitment underscores the need for clearly defined Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIPs) that guide institutional efforts towards more efficient and responsive service provision. The DSD aims to enhance the delivery of social services by consistently striving to meet its annual performance targets (Barbier & Tengeh, 2022:433).

Table 4.10 shows the analysis of the *services which were delivered* during the period 2019-2022. Only certain services are mentioned to provide a status of service delivery. In 2019/2020, services delivered: poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihood and food security, the institution's target of 415 000 people for the feeding scheme eventually reached 876 860 individuals. The Social Crime Prevention and Victim Empowerment endeavoured to monitor implementation of Anti-Gangsterism Strategy in six (6) provinces. Training of these provinces on anti-gangster and crime has reduced the impact on crime in South Africa. The target for youth development was 2 800 and only 1 849 (66%) young people participated in social development youth camps. The NPO targeted the processing of 33 065 applications within two months of receipt, but only 32 299 applications were processed. The Know Your NPO Status Campaign was aimed at encouraging non-profit organizations to submit annual reports and update organizational details. During the 2019/20 financial year, the campaign was held in 44 municipalities across 15 districts and reached 4 935 organizations (DSD, 2020:14).

HIV and AIDS: the Institution's target to conduct nine (9) capacity building workshops for Psychosocial Support Services (PSS). Twelve (12) PSS capacity building workshops were conducted in all provinces, 589 SSPs were trained to contribute to the 90-90-90 strategy, that 90% of all people with HIV would have their infection diagnosed, 90% of those with diagnosed infection would be prescribed antiretroviral treatment (ART), and 90% of those treated would be virally suppressed. In terms of Children services, DSD targeted to build capacity in nine (9) provinces on the implementation of Guidelines for Community Based prevention and early intervention services to vulnerable children. 556 301 vulnerable children were provided with early intervention and protection services, and 6 773 Children and Youth Care were trained.

In 2020/2021, *services delivered*: Poverty Alleviation: Sustainable Livelihood and Food Security: the institution's target of 3 300 000 people for the feeding-scheme eventually reached 10 006 423 individuals. Community Development: the institution targeted to create 17 400 EPWP work opportunities and eventually created, 39 437 EPWP work opportunities. Youth Development: DSD targeted to develop 10 000 youths in 52 districts through Siyakwazi Youths Network. 10 000 youths in 52 districts were developed. The NPO targeted processing 22 685 applications but only 13621 (55%) applications were processed. HIV and AIDS: the Institution targeted to conduct 150 SSPs on psychosocial support guidelines and capacitate 100 SSPs on Social and Behaviour Change (SBC). 204 SSPs were capacitated on psychosocial support guidelines and 226 SSPs were capacitated on Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) programmes. Children services: the Institution targeted to build capacity to 500 social workers. Eventually, 430 social workers were trained.

In 2021/2022 *services delivered*: Poverty Alleviation: Sustainable Livelihood and Food Security, the institution targeted to finalise the framework for a programme to link social protection beneficiaries to sustainable livelihoods. The Framework for a programme to link Social Protection Beneficiaries to Sustainable Livelihoods was finalised. Social Crime Prevention and Victim Empowerment: The Department of Social Development's (DSD) target was to implement the Anti-Gang Strategy in nine (9) high-risk districts, and this target was achieved as the strategy was implemented

in all nine (9) identified district. This included the Anti-Gangsterism Strategy Educational Sessions with parents and children conducted in nine (9) high risk districts, namely, Gert Sibande and Ehlanzeni Districts in Mpumalanga, Buffalo City in Eastern Cape, Mopani and Vhembe Districts in Limpopo, Amajuba District in KwaZulu-Natal, Lejweleputswa District in Free State, Dr Ruth Mompati District in North West and Johannesburg Metro in Gauteng, providing awareness on causes of gangsterism and bullying and granting a platform for parents to share how they are affected by gangsterism activities as individuals. Family and community; utilizing testimonies of rehabilitated and reformed former gangsters (adult and a child) to motivate and encourage the parents and children to take steps to prevent gangsterism (DSD 2021/2022:59). The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 envisages that people in South Africa will feel safe and enjoy a community life free of crime. The SAPS Annual Crime Report (2019-2022) reported the decrease of crime in 2019/2020 by 2,7% and decreased by 16,4% in 2020/2021 and thereafter increased by 7.1% in 2021/2022. Youth Development; DSD's targeted to capacitate (9) nine provinces on the implementation of Youth Development Policy. Capacity building on DSD Youth Policy 2021- 2030 was conducted in all provinces. In terms of NPO, the DSD targeted to process 98% applications within two months of receipt, 27 552 applications were received and only 27 127 NPO applications were processed of which 27 089 (98%) were processed within two months. Information sessions with NPO's in various provinces to raise awareness on the compliance of the Non-Profit Organization Act,1997, were conducted (DSD, 2021/2022:75). HIV and AIDS: the institution's target to conduct 3000 SSPs on psychosocial support guidelines and capacitate 400 SSPs on Social and Behaviour Change (SBC), only 321 SSPs were capacitated on psychosocial support guidelines and 730 SSPs were capacitated on Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) programmes. The launch of YOLO and ChommY programmes at Amajuba District in KwaZulu-Natal Province and Lejweleputswa District in Free State Province as part of the District Development Model which was targeting children and young people including those with disabilities to create awareness on HIV and Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBV) to promote positive behaviour change among these target groups (DSD, 2021/2022:56).

The Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) contributed to the national Cheka Impilo Wellness Campaign, which encourages citizens to know their HIV status which contributes to the UNAIDS 90-90-90 strategy. A total of 20 (NPOs) in all provinces were funded to roll out social and behaviour change programmes to reach young people through dialogues and workshops. Similarly, a total of 834 facilitators were trained to implement YOLO, Men Championing Change, and the Traditional Leaders Programmes (DSD, 2020:53). DSD also partnered with the SANAC Men's Sector to implement the Men and Boys Championing Change programme which seeks to galvanise men and boys in all provinces to champion the change in the prevention of new HIV infections and gender-based violence which perpetuates the spread of HIV (DSD, 2020:53). In terms of Children services, DSD targeted to increase children accessing quality Early Childhood Development services by 5%. 1 435 601 children had access to quality Early Childhood Development services. Additionally, 518 483 children from poor households were subsidized through equitable share budget. National Treasury allocated an amount of R1 326 640 to DSD over an MTEF period as a Conditional Grant to improve access to ECD services to children from poor households. The allocation was meant to subsidise children for 264 days at a rate of R15 per child per day. In this regard, a total of 108 091 children were subsidised during the period under review (DSD, 2020:29).

Table 4.10 Service by DSD

2019/2020			2020/2021			2021/2022		
Nature of Service	**Target**	**Actual achievement**	**Nature of Service**	**Target**	**Achievement**	**Nature of Service**	**Target**	**Achieved**
Poverty Alleviation, Sustainable Livelihood and Food Security	415 000 accessing food through DSD feeding scheme	876 860 individual accessed food through DSD feeding scheme	Poverty Alleviation, Sustainable Livelihood and Food Security	3 300 000 accessing food through DSD feeding scheme	10 006 423 individuals accessed nutritious foods through DSD Food Programmes	Poverty Alleviation, Sustainable Livelihood and Food Security	Finalise the framework for a Programme to link Social Protection Beneficiaries to sustainable livelihoods	The Framework for a Programme to Link Social Protection Beneficiaries to Sustainable Livelihoods is finalised
Social Crime Prevention & Victim Empowerment	Monitor implementation of Anti-Gangsterism Strategy in six (6) provinces	6 provinces trained on anti-gangster and crime has reduced	Community Development	17 400 EPWP work opportunities to be created through DSD Programmes	A total of 39 437 EPWP Work Opportunities were created through DSD Programmes	Social Crime Prevention & Victim Empowerment	Nine (9) high-risk Districts implementing Anti-Gang strategy	Anti-Gangsterism strategy has been implemented through capacitating nine (9) high-risk districts
Youth Development	2 800 young people participate in Social Development Youth Camps	1 849 people participated in Social Development Youth Camps	Youth Development	10 000+ youths in Siyakwazi Youth Network in the 52 districts	10 000+ youths in Siyakwazi Youth Networked in the 52 districts	Youth Development	Capacity building of nine Provinces on the implementation of Youth Development Policy	Capacity building on the DSD Youth Policy 2021-2030 was conducted in all provinces

2019/2020			2020/2021			2021/2022		
Nature of Service	**Target**	**Actual achievement**	**Nature of Service**	**Target**	**Achievement**	**Nature of Service**	**Target**	**Achieved**
NPO	Processing 33 065 of applications within two months of receipt	32 299 applications were processed	NPO	Processing 22 685 applications for NPO registration	13 621 were processed (55%)	NPO	Process 98% of applications within two months of receipt	27 552 applications received and 27 127 NPO applications were processed of (27 089) 98% were processed within 2 months
HIV and AIDS	Conduct 9 Psychosocial Support Services (PSS) capacity building workshops in all provinces	Twelve (12) PSS capacity building workshops were conducted in all provinces. Where 589 SSPs were trained to contribute to 90-90-90 strategy	HIV and AIDS	Capacitate 150 SSPs on psychosocial support guidelines Capacitate 100 SSPs on Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) programmes	204 SSPs were capacitated on psychosocial support guidelines. 226 SSPs capacitated on Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) programmes	HIV and AIDS	300 SSPs on psychosocial support And (400) SSPs on Social and Behaviour Change	(321) Social Services Practitioner Guidelines for HIV Testings 730) Social Services Practitioners (SSPs) on the Compendium of Social and Behaviour Change

2019/2020			2020/2021			2021/2022		
Nature of Service	**Target**	**Actual achievement**	**Nature of Service**	**Target**	**Achievement**	**Nature of Service**	**Target**	**Achieved**
Children services	Build capacity in 9 provinces on the implementation of Guidelines for Community Based prevention and early intervention services to vulnerable children	The program managed to provide prevention early Intervention and Protective Services to 556 301 vulnerable children and trained 6 773 Child and Youth Care	Children services	Capacitate500 Social Workers	430 Social Workers were capacitated	Children's Services	5% increased of children accessing quality Early Childhood Development services	A total of 1 435 601 children had access to quality ECD

Source: Department of Social Development (2019/2020:67-71), (2020/2021:77-89), 2021/2022:64-81)

Table 4.10 above indicates that on Poverty Alleviation, Sustainable Livelihood and Food Security, for all three financial years' the DSD exceeded targets. In 2019/20, 876 860 individuals instead of the targeted 415 000 had access to food, and in 2020/21, 10 006 423 individuals instead of 3 300 000 targeted individuals had access to food, and in 2021/22 the institution finalised the framework for a programme to link Social Protection Beneficiaries to sustainable livelihoods. Additionally, 1,414,307 individuals had access to food. The successful distribution of food to a huge number of South African households has decreased poverty, inequality, vulnerability, and social ills, which translate to improved service delivery. This is underscored by Dlamini, Worku and Muchie (2022:154), who claimed that better service delivery is fundamental in increasing the institution's effectiveness. Rusere, Hunter, Colinson and Twine (2025:223) agreed, stating that despite the economic disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, food security improved in many rural South African households. This was largely due to strengthened local food systems and value chains, suggesting that

food interventions were not only about immediate relief but also about promoting more resilient and sustainable community-based food solutions.

Table 4.10 indicates that in 2019/2020, 1,849 youths participated in development campus, resulting in the achievement of only 66% of the target. However, DSD demonstrated progress in the periods 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, achieving targets in capacity building and youth networks. This means that the institution was able to provide 100% youth service for two consecutive years. This translates to better service delivery as underscored by Ringson, (2023:31) who claimed that strong youth capacity building is crucial for improving young people's economic participation. NPO processing rates were 97.68% in 2019–2020 and dropped to 55% in 2020–2021. Only nearly half of the applications were processed in this period. NPOs played a critical role in fulfilling state obligations, including providing care for vulnerable populations. Not achieving targets translated to poor service delivery to these vulnerable populations. However, in 2021/2022, there was an improvement, with 98% of applications processed (DSD, 2021/2022:79).

Table 4.10 reveals that the institution (DSD) exceeded the targets in both financial cycle years for SBC and PSS training, which translate to institution effectiveness, The effectiveness of psychosocial support is well-documented as essential for community-based HIV responses; therefore, providing these services to support the 90-90-90 strategy is crucial. According to Department of Statistics South Africa, (2022, there has been an improvement in the 90-90-90 strategy, which translates to better service delivery. Nyasulu and Maposa (2024:46) claimed that the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality was at 91-68-92 towards the set targets, meaning that 91% of HIV-positive individuals knew their status, of whom 68% were initiated on antiretroviral therapy and 92% were viral suppressed and the overall HIV positivity rate has significantly declined from 10% in the year 2017-2018 to 4% in the year 2021/2022 (Nyasulu and Maposa, 2024:47), which shows positive progress towards access to HIV services. The HSCR's 2023 report revealed a decrease of people living with HIV in South Africa from 14% in 2017 to 12,7% in 2022, which shows significant progress towards the 95-95-95 targets to be achieved by the end of 2025. As part of the

2019/2020 period regarding Children Services, the institution (DSD)targeted to increase capacity in all nine provinces to implement the Guidelines for Community-Based Prevention and Early Intervention Services to Vulnerable Children. The DSD reached 556,301 vulnerable children with prevention, early intervention, and protective services, and it trained 6,773 Child and Youth Care providers. However, the Department only achieved 430 of the 500 goals for social worker capacity building in the subsequent fiscal year, which means that service delivery was not entirely met. The institution reported that more than 1.4 million children received high-quality early childhood development services in 2021–2022 (DSD, 2019-2022).

From the above discussion, Poverty Alleviation, Sustainable Livelihood, and Food Security exceeded the performance targets, which means the institution (DSD) did better than expected in helping people to improve their living conditions, secure income sources, and access food. This reflects effective planning and execution and shows that the support provided by the Department actually reached more people or had a stronger impact than planned. The institution has shown improvement over the two financial years on SBC and PSS training on HIV, which has provided psychosocial support and improved the 90-90-90 strategy. This reduced the number of people living with HIV in South Africa from 14% in 2017 to 12,7% in 2022, which shows significant progress towards the 95-95-95 targets to be achieved by the end of 2025 (HSCR, 2023). The children's service delivered showed improvement. Ninety percent of services were achieved, which translates to better service delivery for the three financial years. Though the institution could not meet all its goals, it showed improvement in most of the services, which reflects better management, stronger programme delivery, and the ability to adapt when necessary.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter analysed the data collected, search engines used to collect data, and the prevalent themes identified. The first theme explored whether rewards and recognition motivate employees of DSD to increase their performance. The second theme explored the effectiveness and the productivity level of the institution. The third theme highlighted the DSD’s effectiveness in service delivery and customer satisfaction.

The next chapter outlines the summary of the key findings, recommendations, and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter analysed the data collected and presented the interpretation of the results. This chapter synthesizes the key findings of the study, drawing from the data analysis presented in Chapter Four. It highlights the three themes of employee motivation, employee performance, and institutional effectiveness. This chapter concludes the study and presents the key findings, recommendations, and conclusions of the study. The limitations and areas for further research are also presented.

5.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was to explore whether performance management enhances employees' performance, which in turn increase the effectiveness and productivity of the institution.

The main research objective was to investigate whether performance management motivates and enhances employees' performance to increase DSD's effectiveness.

The secondary research objectives were as follows:

- To explore whether performance management motivates employees.
- To examine whether performance management enhances employees' performance.
- To investigate whether performance management increases the institution's effectiveness.

5.3 SYNTHESIS OF CHAPTERS

Various literature sources were consulted to examine whether performance management enhances employees' performance, while investigating employees' motivation, performance management, and the institution's effectiveness.

5.3.1 Chapter One

This chapter introduced the topic of this study. It referred to the nature of performance management. It dealt with the general introduction and background of the study. It further highlighted the study area, the problem statement, research questions, and objectives, as well as the significance of the study. The chapter further presented the preliminary literature review, research methodology, ethical clearance, and layout of chapters of the research.

5.3.2 Chapter Two

This chapter endeavoured to answer the research questions through a review of secondary sources of data in relation to performance motivation, employees' performance, and institutional effectiveness. The chapter covered the theoretical literature and the legislative framework that guides performance management in the public service of RSA, and factors influencing motivation.

5.3.3 Chapter three

The chapter presented the qualitative research methodology. It further detailed the qualitative research approach to address the research questions and generalise the findings. A reflection on past academic information allowed the researcher to gain insight and knowledge of the research subject. Literature review was chosen as the research method. The selection behind specific literature was outlined, as well as the information gathering and analysis process. Information quality and ethical considerations were also detailed.

5.3.4 Chapter four

This chapter laid out the process of analysing the collected information and interpreted the findings through an objective approach. The search engines used to collect relevant information were detailed, and themes were identified to address the study objectives. The first theme, for example, focused on employees' motivation. The

second theme focused on employees' performance. The third theme explored the institution's effectiveness.

5.3.5 Chapter five

The final chapter outlines a summary of the key findings of the study. The recommendations on the findings, conclusions, limitations of the study, and further research are also presented.

5.4 FINDINGS

This section presents the main findings in relation to the research objectives presented in section 1.4 of this study.

5.4.1 Objective One: To explore whether performance management motivates employees

In line with the first research objective of this study, the literature in chapter two revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between performance management and employees' motivation; however, there are apparent disparities in promotion rates, effectiveness of monetary rewards, stagnation at senior-level compensation, and unequal access to training opportunities (Adams & Ama, 2024:2; Pancasila, et al., 2024:289; Alijumah,2023:6). The study showed that rewards such as performance bonuses, pay progression, and promotions are important motivators in the public sector (Yusoff, Isahak, Sharbani, Zulkifli & Salimin, 2022:384). Employees are motivated and increase their performance when they experience positive incentives and rewards (Armstrong, 2023:173). However, there has been a declining allocation for performance bonuses from 2019 (0.75%) to 2021 (0%) in DSD, (DPSA, 2019:7), which affected employees' motivation negatively, which in turn negatively influenced their work-performance, the institution's effectiveness and productivity (Bykova, Lobza, Gavrysh, Soroka & Karpenko, 2022:1487). Non-allocation of budget aimed at rewarding employees for outstanding performance demotivates employees (Maslow, 1943:370); lowers morale and negatively affects their work-performance.

Furthermore, numerous motivation theories claim that intrinsic rewards play an important role in motivating employees which translates to improved performance, Similarly, Aljumah (2023:16) discovered that employee recognition has a positive and significant effect on intrinsic motivation, which could also foster transactional leadership capabilities. The literature shows that there is training disparity between employees at lower levels of the hierarchy and those at middle, senior and technical levels. Employees at lower levels enjoy fewer training opportunities than those at middle, senior and technical levels. The latter enjoy better benefits and promotion opportunities because they are prone to more motivational prospects (Noorazem et al., 2021:43).

5.4.2 Objective 2: To examine whether performance management enhances employees' performance

The study revealed that the DSD's Performance management progressively improved over the three-year period from 49% in 2019/2020 to 81% in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 respectively. During the Covid-19 pandemic the DSD was able to provide additional services to support the public social needs (DSD, 2020:13). Therefore, these additional services assisted in the achievement of institutional goals which resulted in better planning, and stronger accountability mechanisms (Kuswati, 2019:283). The literature reveals that the DSD's productivity remained moderate (48% to 55%) over the three years 2019 to 2022, with contributing factors that include vacancy rate, performance rewards and training. It was discovered that the reduction in performance bonuses from (0.75%) in 2019 to 0% in 2022 (DPSA, 2019;7) may have contributed to lower productivity, because lack of financial incentives may negatively influence employees' motivation and performance, which in turn affects institutional effectiveness and productivity.

The study showed that the vacancy rates were higher than 10% for the period 2019 to 2022 (DSD, 2019, 2020, 2021), which included a senior executive position (DSD, 2020:134). The high vacancy rate attributed to officials incurring extra workloads, which negatively impacted their health, psychological well-being, and work performance due to the increased level of work pressure (Meintjies, 2019:3). This is

also a violation through non-compliance of the DPSA regulation in filling vacant positions within 12 months from being vacated (Republic of South Africa, 2016:69). Such behaviour has a negative impact on vacant leadership positions in the institution, which ultimately impacts the institution's effectiveness and service delivery (Wighman, Fernandez & Rutherford, 2022:667). The literature shows a decline in workforce from 89% in 2019/2020 to 69% in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, which indicates that the skills and competencies of employees were not utilised to its full potential which was due to the high vacancy rate.

The increase in expenditure over the period of three years reflected improved administrative efficiency, employee effectiveness, and strategic alignment. Budget execution rose from 74.51% in 2019/2020 to over 99% in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 respectively. This convergence of high expenditure and high goal achievement reflects growing organizational maturity, operational effectiveness, and employee productivity (Gama, Wiagustini & Soares, 2023:447).

5.4.3 Objective 3: To investigate whether performance management increases the institution's effectiveness

The literature showed that customer satisfaction within the DSD was generally low during the 2019-2022 period. Citizens were not satisfied with services, as they have expressed their complaints regarding social grant delays, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, foster care backlogs, poor conditions in care facilities, and NPO funding delays, highlighting widespread dissatisfaction (South African Human Rights Commission, 2022:3).The achievement of strategic goals of poverty alleviation, food security programmes, psychosocial support (HIV-related), and youth development exceeded the projected targets. These increases suggest that service delivery had improved quantitatively, however inconsistent in quality, particularly in citizen-facing services where client satisfaction remained low (DSD, 2019-2022). The DSD had shown an improvement over the two financial years on SBC and PSS training on HIV, which provided psychosocial support and improved the 90-90-90 strategies (DSD, 2020-2022).

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In respect of the above-mentioned findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

5.5.1 Objective One: To explore whether performance management motivates employees

To address the negative impact that the cessation of performance bonuses has on employees' performance. It is recommended that DSD considers a merit-based performance bonus system for employees who performed significantly above expectations in terms of assessment rating calculator at a score between 120-125 in, receives an amount of R5000 per year; and those with a score between 127-133 receives an amount of R 10 000 per year.

To ensure that employees at lower occupational levels are afforded equal access to training and development opportunities, it is recommended that the training cycles be shorter but more frequent to allow employees to apply the knowledge gained in practise. Furthermore, they should be exposed to occupational relevant training programmes that support career-pathing and internal capacity building, thereby promoting employee motivation and sustained performance improvement.

Continuous training for the whole workforce to improve and deliver quality services. Training should not be limited to senior managers but should include all salary levels to enhance employee performance. Training should be indicated in the PDP of employees and according to each employee's needs.

5.5.2 Objective 2: To examine whether performance management enhances employees' performance

To ensure that vacancies at MMS and SMS are timeously filled it is recommended that the DSD should consider implementing succession planning, job-enrichment and job-enlargement, which can strengthen employees' skills, broaden the internal talent pool, and help maintain service continuity. These would allow the institution time to follow HR practices in filling vacant positions.

5.5.3 Objective 3: To investigate whether performance management increases the institution's effectiveness

To ensure that customers' satisfaction increases, particularly regarding social grants, NPO and foster care, it is suggested that all social grant payment systems be fully integrated in digital payment systems. This includes upgrading ICT infrastructure, improving coordination between SASSA, banks, and payment service providers, as well as introducing real-time monitoring to quickly identify and resolve payment failures. Furthermore, grant application and verification processes should be simplified through standardised documentation, digital platforms, and biometric verification to reduce administrative delays and errors. These would ensure timely and accurate payment of social grants.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Performance management is a continual activity that integrates all important human resource elements. The proper execution of a performance management system, supported by appropriate motivational strategies, has the potential to enhance employees' performance, which enhances institutional effectiveness and productivity. The literature is clear that motivation enhances employees' performance, and that rewards such as performance bonuses, pay progression, and promotions increase employees' performance and productivity. The study revealed that the discontinuation of performance bonuses and high vacancy rate negatively impact on employees'

health and psychological well-being, which indirectly affects their motivation, performance and productivity.

In a more particular sense, DSD recorded that Performance target achievement rose from 49% to 81%, reflecting better internal efficiency and resource utilization, which included poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihoods, food security, social crime prevention, and victim empowerment, as well as HIV and AIDS, over the stated period. However, the high vacancy rates and unequal access to training opportunities continue to hamper employee performance and restrict the institution's effectiveness and service delivery.

These findings suggest that public institutions should adopt a holistic approach to performance management that extends beyond performance measurement and target achievement. Such an approach should integrate employee motivation, staff development, workforce planning, employee wellness, and reward and recognition mechanisms within performance management frameworks. Addressing factors such as high vacancy rates, limited training opportunities, and the absence of performance incentives is critical to sustaining employee morale and productivity. By creating an environment that supports both employee well-being and professional growth, public institutions can enhance employee performance, strengthen organizational effectiveness, improve service delivery outcomes, and ultimately contribute to the achievement of broader public sector development objectives.

5.7 LIMITATIONS

The study mainly relied on literature as there was no human participation due to the nature of the study being non-empirical. Therefore, it was difficult to obtain data on customer satisfaction from secondary data. The lack of sufficient data restricts the ability to benchmark findings and identify trends. This limits the generalisation of findings and increases the risk of subjective interpretation, which highlight the need for future primary research to validate the results.

5.8 FURTHER RESEARCH

While this study focused on examining the effectiveness of performance management in enhancing employee performance in the public institutions through a non-empirical approach, several areas warrant further investigation. Further research should explore the impact of the absence of rewards and recognition on employee performance and organizational outcomes in the public sector. In particular, the discontinuation of performance bonuses requires further attention, given its potential influence on employee motivation, productivity, and workplace morale.

Performance bonuses are widely recognised as an important incentive for motivating employees and enhancing performance. However, within the public institutions, limited research has examined the consequences of their absence, creating a significant gap in understanding how the withdrawal or non-implementation of performance-based rewards affects employee motivation, performance, and institutional effectiveness. Further research should investigate the extent to which the absence of performance bonuses influences employee performance and the operational effectiveness of public institutions, with a view to informing performance management and reward practices in the public sector.

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College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management

Date: 28/10/2024

Dear: Ms Fulufhuwani Irene Museisi

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PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ENHANCES EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Qualification: Master in Public Administration

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management for the above mentioned research study Ethics approval is granted for {three years}.

The **{Low} risk application** was **reviewed** by College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management, and it is in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College of Economic and Management Sciences_ERC Public Administration and Management.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.



CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

19 February 2026

To Whom It May Concern

This Certificate serves to inform that the draft Mini dissertation "*Performance management enhances employees' performance: A case of the Department of Social Development"* was submitted by Ms FI MUSEISI to PAT for professional linguistic editing, proofreading, and academic English language refinement.
Using the Track-changes feature of Microsoft Word's Review-function, PAT identified and highlighted typing-, language use-, and linguistic shortcomings, and provided suggestions for improvements and changes for the student's consideration.

Yours faithfully,

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PAPER NAME
Mini Dissertation Museisi.docx

AUTHOR
FULUFHUWANI IRENE MUSEISI

WORD COUNT
31718 Words

CHARACTER COUNT
199891 Characters

PAGE COUNT
124 Pages

FILE SIZE
172.7KB

SUBMISSION DATE
Mar 3, 2026 3:00 PM GMT+2

REPORT DATE
Mar 3, 2026 3:03 PM GMT+2

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