Full Length Research Paper

The biographical profiles correlates on the performance management system: A case of the university of technology

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The performance management system (PMS) has been topical in South African higher education institutions even though it is usually resisted by key stakeholders owing to poor consultation, inconsistencies and lack of knowledge and ownership of the entire process. This study aims to sheds light on biographial factors that hinder the processes of PMS from being as effective as it is supposed to be in the context of South African universities. This study adopted a quantitative research design, and a survey method was used whereby a structured questionnaire was administered by the researchers to a selected population size of 150 of which 108 completed questionnaires, generating a response rate of 72%. The target population included academics, academic support and administration staff at senior, middle, junior and non-management levels. The empirical findings have revealed an almost statistical significance (p-value of 0.049) on the consistent use of the PMS on academics. This finding is supported by the fact that academics had the highest mean score value, indicating that the PMS will be implemented consistently within the university concerned. Lack of clarity regarding the purpose of PMS to different biographical levels will send negative perceptions of the system as being managerialist, restricting creativity and academic freedom, which might also make it susceptible to abuse by line managers. Since there is a paucity of published information on the relationship between biographical profiles and the dimensions of PMS, this article will contribute to the body of knowledge and encourage universities to consider the impact of biographical profiles on the success or failure of the system.

Key words: Performance management system, academics, accountability, feedback.

INTRODUCTION

Universities in South Africa have adopted a laissez-faire approach to performance management (PM) and thus operated on a ‘high trust’ basis within an ethos that emphasised independence of thought and scholarship, academic freedom and collegiality (Molefe, 2010: 1). Kettunen (2008: 322) argues that competition and cooperation have led to a situation where trust in the standard of higher education is no longer a sufficient guarantee of quality. However, a number of commentators, especially those within the education sector, regard this managerialistic approach to performance appraisal as unwarranted, counter-productive (Scholtes, 1999), unworkable and unacceptable in knowledge-based organisations (Simon, 2001: 91).

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Other authors describe it as antithetical to a self-governing community of professionals, an infringement of academic freedom, based on a top-down approach to research and teaching. This approach severely restricts creativity and self-development, or a covert means of introducing greater governmental control of the Higher Education and Further Education sectors and increasing the remuneration of those who work in them (Barry et al., 2001; Holly and Olivier, 2000; Henson, 1994; Townley, 1990). Furthermore, research has shown that higher education institutions are facing major challenges regarding the management of the performance of academic staff (Mapesela and Strydom, 2004).

The university under study is one of the previously disadvantaged institutions of the country. Against that backdrop, it has been operating without most of the necessary policies required for operations of a modern university. Because it lacked some policies it did not have job descriptions for all positions and promotions, and increments were done by way of tradition. It was therefore necessary that an exercise to implement a PMS be embarked upon.

A PMS is not in place at the university concerned. As a result, there is little or no accountability of staff with regard to their performance, which makes it difficult to measure the university’s overall performance in relation to its strategic objectives. McLendon et al. (2006: 1) argue that ‘the rhetoric of the new accountability movement in higher education has called for a refocusing on outcomes of campus activities rather than the traditional focus on input or process’.

The PMS is aimed at enhancing the achievement of strategic goals of the institution using an objective tool to measure the output of all staff members. It was also devised to objectively deal with rewards in a manner that cannot easily be challenged. This study investigates the extent to which the demographic variables (age, gender, education, tenure, job type and current job level) of the respondents influence their perceptions of the PM dimensions (current expectations for the PMS, current perceptions on the PMS impact on effectiveness, current perceptions on the consistent use of the PMS and implementation of the PMS).

The objective of this study is to explore the influence of demographic variables on the PMS dimensions based on the sample of 108 research participants of the university concerned. The literature review has two specific aims: to shed light on the feedback of employees’ performance and focus on theoretical analysis aimed at confirming a possible relationship between PMS and effectiveness. The review is followed by a description of the research design, including the research approach, the nature of the respondents who participated in the study, the measuring instruments used and the manner in which data was collected and analysed. The findings of the study are then presented and discussed; recommendations are made to the management of the organisation studied. The paper concludes by mentioning the limitations within the theoretical and empirical research and giving recommendations for future research.

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Employees’ expectations and feedback on PMS

Effective feedback based on agreed and understood objectives and job requirements, specific to agreed objectives, accurate, relevant, balanced, alternative and timely solutions enable the implementation of the PMS to go smoothly. Lawler (2003: 3) reveals considerable research which shows that PM effectiveness increases when there is ongoing feedback; when behaviour-based measurements are used and trained raters are employed. It is recognised that the use of PMS has increased at universities (Broadbent and Laughlin, 2007) and that managers continue to experience resistance. Issues such as the purpose of the PMS, and culture and context are reported as impediments to effective implementation. Li et al. (2006) and Sobol and Klein (2009) assert that work experience, along with age and level of education, are included in the research model as ‘observable’ upper echelon characteristics (Hambrick and Mason, 1984) with the potential to influence strategic choices and consequent performance.

A study conducted by Sukiron and Siengthai (2010: 1) found that participative decision-making and academic rank have a significant effect on lecturer performance. This finding implies that involving lecturers in educational decision-making would improve not only lecturer performance but also organizational performance. Lipman (1997: 11) asserts that lecturers’ participation re-energizes universities; unleashes their initiative and creativity; and gets them to buy into the restructuring agenda. Lecturer participation in school decision-making has been advanced for many reasons, including the belief that it will enhance communication among lecturers and administrators, as well as the quality of educational decision-making and the quality of teachers’ work life ( Smylie, 1996: 181).

Tremblay et al. (2001) confirm that experienced lecturers who are comfortable with the curriculum are a class-level variable that positively affects performance. In their business research, Kennedy and Drennan (1998) assert that higher education and management experience in large organizations is associated with higher performance. Their arguments centre on the fact that experience improves lecturing skills while pupils learn better at the hands of teachers who have taught them continuously over a period of years. Ackah and Heaton (2003) explored whether the acquisition of a human resource professional qualification has the same impact upon career progression for male and female managers. The findings suggest that the careers of men and women do differ, with men receiving more internal promotions while women are more likely to seek career progression.
The impact of PMS on effectiveness

There is little evidence that PMS can accomplish organisational/team/individual objectives, which in turn can make a positive contribution to organisational effectiveness, as it is not clear what practices make a PMS effective at universities. Universities in developing countries are facing challenges in implementing PM systems owing to the fact that key stakeholders are not fully consulted, resulting in resistance towards the system caused by mistrust of the system and fear of the unknown. Phiri (1998) has warned that an effective system of PM is not easy to implement, and that it often impacts negatively on motivational levels of educators, especially in the South African context. The perception in these cases is that PM is first and foremost a management tool aimed at stricter supervision.

Another significant detrimental factor regarding the implementation of the PMS at South African universities is the top-down approach of designing cut-and-paste PMS and other human resource (HR) related policies from well-resourced and previously advantaged universities to predominately disadvantaged universities, which are mostly characterised by maladministration and lack of sophisticated internal systems. According to De Waal and Coevert (2007: 3), the overall lack of management skills and expertise often makes it not viable for developing countries to develop complex structures such as sophisticated PM systems. They therefore concentrate more on introducing and copying tools and systems from the Western world that are not always best suited to local circumstances.

During implementation, PMS project leaders, who are mostly external consultants, encounter resistance from university stakeholders including employees or employee organisations and managers. The negative effect of excessive use of consultants working in silos with existing staff members in designing institutional structures and policies, as well as PMS that includes policies and procedures lacking ownership and consistency, cannot be overestimated. Furthermore, unregulated promotions, nepotism and corruption (Matunhu and Matunhu, 2008: 11) as well as political deployments at universities, are some of the causes of the failure of PMS, as deployees fail to take concrete decisions since they consult their political masters who are mostly academically illiterate. An empirical study conducted at the Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO) found that 80% of the males complained that PM frustrated them because females were usually favoured in ratings by the male supervisors. They went on to say that, gender sensitivity was wrongly applied to PM in their organisations and that corruption, nepotism and sex scandals were prevalent at their workplaces (Matunhu and Matunhu, 2008).

‘Politically incorrect’ deployees are often appointed to serve on university councils. They often fail to understand the council’s mandate of governance, but interfere in operational issues by favouring politically inclined key stakeholders such as union(s) and/or student representative bodies. Section 8(1) of the Higher Education Act 97 (Act 101 of 1997) states that the university council governs the institution and section 8(2)(a-c) emphasises that council makes rules, and establishes council committees and joint committees. One possible cause of the failure to implement the PMS at universities is that unions are given too much power by their political masters who in many instances are also highly represented on council. Therefore, diligence and proper consultation with all key stakeholders is essential when choosing a compensation method to be used at universities, as the failure of PMS is triggered by interference and resistance from trade unions. Beavis (2003: 16) contends that contemporary efforts to introduce performance-based rewards have to consider unions before implementation.

It needs to be stated that unconstructive gossip-mongering at universities forces quality leaders to leave institutions, resulting in a high turn-over and new leadership, which in turn causes culture shock among existing employees, thereby leading to resistance to any developmental project. Zide (2010: 118) warns that any institution that is governed by rumours and gossip-mongering is bound to fail and consequently transformation will come to a standstill. Some academics complain about perceived unequal workload distribution, unequal rewards and unreasonable objectives or goals, the limiting of academic freedom, fear of the unknown, as well as the abuse of the system by line managers. Research findings by Matunhu and Matunhu (2008) reveal that 12 out of a total of 13 responding females argued for gender balance in managing promotions and rewards. They pointed out that there were no female managers to represent their interests as women workers. As Carl and Kapp (n.d.) point out, most academic settings are characterised by a norm of privacy where autonomy (academic freedom) is valued, and performance appraisal is often seen as a threat to this autonomy. For any determination of academic workload to be useful or acceptable, it requires a high level of validity. It must accurately and comprehensively describe both the full range of activities or tasks that an academic staff member might be required to perform, and the complex interrelationship between these tasks as this affects the time required to perform them (Parsons and Slabbert, 2001: 78).

The relationship between the demographic characteristics of university employees and their perceptions on PMS

The influence of the biographical variables on the dimensions of PMS has been empirically analysed as it is
claimed that these variables partly have the potential to affect certain dimensions of PMS. Researchers have also noted the influence of age (Tremblay et al., 2000; Kennedy and Drennan, 1998), gender (Heaton, 2003; Watson, 2003) and education (Karuhang, 2010). A cursory examination of empirical studies relating to the impact of education and experience on performance suggests that there are contradictory findings. In their business research, Kennedy and Drennan (1998) asserted that higher education and management experience in large organizations is associated with higher performance. Tremblay et al. (2001) concurred with Kennedy and Drennan (1998) when they confirmed that class-level variables that positively affect performance are experienced teachers who were comfortable with the curriculum.

H1: There is significant intercorrelation between the demographic variables and the dimensions of the PMS.

The influence of gender on PMS was noted in studies on the productivity of male and female teachers in a secondary school in Delta, Nigeria. Job type and level also have the potential to influence the performance of the academic staff making them involved in decision-making (Marks and Karren, 1997); and academic rank has a positive effect on a lecturer’s performance (Lipman, 1997).

Some of these biographical influences have been noted in studies indirectly relating to PMS. This study aims to assess these direct influences statistically. The findings of Ackah and Heaton (2003) suggested that the careers of men and women do differ, with men receiving more internal promotions while women were more likely to seek career progression in another organization and to be less successful in terms of earnings. In contrast, a gender-based differences study on the financial performance and business growth of small and medium-sized Australian enterprises (Watson, 2003) found that female lecturers tend to perform better than male lecturers.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research approach

The present study uses a quantitative research design, whereby descriptive statistics, namely measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion, were used to describe the distribution of scores on each variable and to determine whether the scores on different variables are related to each other. The survey in this study was made available to potential respondents by means of a questionnaire. Respondents were asked to respond to the straightforward statements in the questionnaire. In this study, a survey research method was adopted which addressed the biographical variables (age, gender, education, tenure, job type and current job level) and four dimensions of PMS (current expectations for the PMS, current perceptions on the impact of PMS on effectiveness, current perceptions on the consistent use of the PMS and implementation of the PMS). According to Brynard and Hanekom (2006), questionnaires provide respondents with an opportunity to carefully consider their responses to the various questions in the questionnaire. Primary and secondary data was utilised to elicit information on the PMS.

In addition, factor analysis was used in this empirical study, with the aim of establishing whether four measures do, in fact, measure the same thing. Hence, principle component analysis was used as the extraction method, and the rotation method was Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.

Research participants

This quantitative study adopted a stratified random sampling and the university employees were identified as the total population. The employees of the university concerned who participated on this survey were divided into three categories, namely, academic, academic support and administration between Peromnes grades 4 to 16. Underhill and Bradfield (1998: 267) confirm that stratification is useful when the population is composite in nature, and can be divided into sub-populations that are distinct in characteristics of interest. In addition, the sample may be described in terms of age, gender, race, tenure, job level and category. A structured questionnaire was administered by the researcher to a population size of 150 as per Sekeran’s (1992: 54) recommended population size. Of the selected scientific sample, 108 completed the questionnaire generating a response rate of 72% which was used for the final analysis of this study.

There were 50% males and females respectively who responded, of whom 64.4% were between the ages of 25 and 44 years. Of these 21.3% (23) were females who were between 25 and 34 years. Nearly half of the respondents (47.2) had postgraduate qualifications. It was observed that by gender, there were no significant differences (male: 24.1%) and (female: 23.1%) in the number of respondents having the same qualifications. Nearly 15% (14.8) of the respondents who had postgraduate degree were between the ages of 25 and 34 years. Of the sample 25.9% (28) were academics, 22.2% (24) academic support and 51.9% were administration support. Most (64.8%) were at non-management level, 15.7% at junior management, 14.8% at middle management and 4.6% at senior management. Of the senior managers, 40% had tenure for at least 20 years.

Two major aspects of precision – reliability and validity – were used in this study to ensure that the researchers used the appropriate instrument to produce consistent results. The sampling approach was considered relevant because this study is empirical and its aim is to explore the biographical variables influence on the dimensions of PMS.

Measuring instruments

A self-developed structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale was developed to assess the key dimensions of the PMS. A five-point likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree to (5) strongly agree, was used. The Likert scale was used as it enables certain arithmetical operations to be performed on the data collected from the respondents and it also measures the magnitude of the differences among the individuals. A nominal scale was used comprising option categories to choose from per biographical variable (age, gender, education, tenure, job level and category).

Research procedure

Upon obtaining a clearance letter from the Ethics Committee of the university concerned to commence with this study, the questionnaire
was piloted to ten employees with the aim of identifying any errors, as well as testing the perceived validity and reliability of the questionnaire. This study used a structured questionnaire which was administered to a population size of 150 within the university. 108 respondents completed the questionnaires, generating a response rate of 72%.

**EMPIRICAL FINDINGS**

**Statistical analysis**

The data collected from the respondents was analysed using Predictive Analytic Software (PASW) Statistics version 18.0 for data capturing, presentation, analysis and interpretation. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis and interpretation. Inferential statistics in the form of Pearson Correlation Matrix was used in this study to indicate the direction, strength and significance of the bivariate relationship between biographical data and the dimensions of the PMS. In addition, the psychometric properties of the questionnaire were statistically assessed using Factor Analysis and Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha (www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/SAS/notes2).

It is noted that the variables that comprised dimensions of the current perceptions about the PMS impact efficiency and effectiveness and current perceptions about the impact of the PMS are loaded perfectly along one component. This means that the statements (variables) that constituted these components perfectly measured the component. That is, the component measured what it was meant to measure. However, the other two components have factors that overlap, indicating a mixing of the factors. This means that the questions in the overlapping components did not specifically measure what it set out to measure or that the components split along themes. One possibility is that respondents did not clearly distinguish between the questions constituting the components.

**RESULTS**

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The results were presented in the form of a table and narratively. Reliability was computed by taking several measurements on the same subjects, the Cronbach’s Alpha values for the biographical data and individual dimensions were high and a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered as “acceptable” (www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/SAS/notes 2). As far as the PMS dimensions are concerned, results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows the overall reliability score of 0.954 which indicates a high degree of acceptable, consistent scoring for the different categories for this research. All of the categories have (high), acceptable reliability values.

**Descriptive statistics**

The respondents were required to respond to the terms of the leading statements of the key dimensions of the study using a 1 to 5 Likert scale.

Table 2 shows that the mean score values indicate that employees have different views on the sub-dimensions of the PMS, which is in descending level based on mean scores, which are as follows:

- Current perceptions on the PMS impact on effectiveness (Mean = 4.0694)
- Current expectations for the PMS (Mean = 3.9204)
- Implementation of the PMS (Mean = 3.7490)
- Current perceptions on the consistent use of the PMS (Mean =3.7025)

The mean score values displayed in Table 2 reflect that on a scale from 1 to 5, the respondents were between 4.0694 and 3.7025. This indicates that a high proportion of employees ranged from agree to undecided on statements relating to each dimension. These averages reflect the current status quo at the university concerned, as there are transformational and cultural changes taking place, as well as fear of the unknown, as the PMS is regarded as a threat.

Under the ambit of the current perceptions of the impact of the PMS on effectiveness, a frequency analysis was undertaken, showing that 7.4% of respondents disagreed and 25.0% were undecided that PMS expectations will be clarified and individual performance feedback will be based on mutual understanding. Whereas, 10.2% disagreed and 24.4% were undecided that there would be an open dialogue between evaluators and those evaluated. On the other hand, 64% of the
administration staff agreed that there would be an open dialogue between evaluators and those evaluated compared to 46% of academic support staff who agreed.

Furthermore, 7.4% of the respondents disagreed, 21.3% were undecided and 4.6% disagreed that line managers will provide guidance. A total of 16.7% of respondents were undecided that employees will be measured according to the functions as stated in their job descriptions. On the other hand, a disproportionately high percentage of 35% of the male respondents were undecided, with 6% disagreeing and 63% agreeing that managers will be prepared to provide guidance when employees run into problems while performing tasks. In contrast, 11% of the female respondents were undecided, 9% disagreed and 79% agreed with the latter sub-dimension. The high percentage of disagreements and uncertainty reflected above requires a concerted intervention in the form of training line managers in performance feedback and evaluation techniques.

The consistent use of the PMS is another aspect that requires improvement as indicated by the study findings. A frequency analysis was undertaken and the research findings reflect that 14.8% of the respondents disagreed and 33.3% were undecided regarding the statement that PMS will be used consistently in this university. At the same time, 13.0% disagreed and 22.2% were undecided in response to the statement that PMS will address unfairness amongst employees. However, 20% of the respondents disagreed, 35% were undecided and 45% agreed that this system will address fairness in this organisation. The research findings further reveal that 16.7% of the respondents disagreed and 25.0% were undecided that PMS will result in equal workload distribution.

The findings show that 9.3% of the respondents disagreed and 25.0% were undecided in response to the statement that the PMS will capacitate employees through training. The respondents do not believe (as supported by the research findings that 15.7% disagreed and 35.2% were undecided) that PMS will not be used to manipulate employees and enforce a particular agenda. The findings show that 13.9% of respondents disagreed and 37.0% were undecided that rewards will be openly and fairly distributed to those who are most deserving on the basis of effort, merit and results. The disproportionately high percentage of disagreement and uncertainty depicted above on the capacitation and rewards of employees is another area that calls for an improvement plan.

The implementation of the PMS requires strategic improvement as displayed by the respondents on the execution of this system. A high percentage of 13% of the respondents disagreed and 34.3% were undecided regarding the statement that PMS will be implemented successfully at this university. The study results indicate that 9.3% of the respondents disagreed and a disproportionately high percentage of 35.2% were undecided that the PMS policy and procedures will be enacted. In addition, 11.1% disagreed and 29.6% were undecided that the PMS process will commence in 2012. However, 9.3% of the respondents disagreed and 22.2% were undecided that the PMS project should commence to senior management by 2012. Hence, 27.8% of the respondents disagreed and 29.6% were undecided that PMS will never encounter any resistance. Amongst those respondents with degree qualifications, 15% disagreed, 20% were undecided and 65% agreed with this statement. The study shows that 13.5% of the respondents disagreed and 21.3% were undecided that the PMS will be supported by the trade union.

### Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics were computed to make decisions with regard to the hypothesis of the study.

**Hypothesis 1:** Employees differing in biographical profiles (age, gender, education, tenure, job type and current job level) differ in the perceptions of the key dimensions of the PMS (Tables 2 to 7).

Table 3 indicates no significant difference in the perception of employees varying in age regarding the other four dimensions of PMS (current expectations for the PMS, current perceptions on the PMS impact on effectiveness, current perceptions on the consistent use of the PMS, implementation of the PMS). Hence,
### Table 3. Age and key dimensions of PMS–ANOVA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of performance management</th>
<th>Age category</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current expectations for the PMS</td>
<td>18–24 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.29</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25–34 years</td>
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<td>3.97</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35–44 years</td>
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<td>3.70</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td>0.603</td>
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<td></td>
<td>45–54 years</td>
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<td>4.19</td>
<td>.58</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55–64 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current perceptions on the PMS impact on effectiveness</td>
<td>18–24 years</td>
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<td>4.18</td>
<td>.54</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25–34 years</td>
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<td>4.07</td>
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<td></td>
<td>35–44 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>55–64 years</td>
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<td>4.09</td>
<td>.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current perceptions on the consistent use of the PMS</td>
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<td>4.04</td>
<td>.64</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25–34 years</td>
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<td>3.69</td>
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<td>35–44 years</td>
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<td>3.47</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>1.059</td>
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<td></td>
<td>45–54 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>55–64 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation of the PMS</td>
<td>18–24 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.71</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25–34 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>35–44 years</td>
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<td>.86</td>
<td>0.458</td>
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<td></td>
<td>45–54 years</td>
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<td>4.01</td>
<td>.62</td>
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<td></td>
<td>55–64 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.62</td>
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</table>

### Table 4. Gender and key dimensions of PMS–ANOVA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PMS dimensions</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
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<tr>
<td>Current expectations for the PMS</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>0.810</td>
<td>0.718</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current expectations for the PMS</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>1.065</td>
<td>0.401</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Current perceptions on the consistent use of the PMS</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>1.175</td>
<td>0.286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation of the PMS</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>1.016</td>
<td>0.458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.73</td>
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</table>

Hypothesis 1 may be rejected in terms of age. Table 4 indicates no significant difference in the perception of employees varying in age regarding the other four dimensions of PMS (current expectations for the PMS, current perceptions on the PMS impact on effectiveness, current perceptions on the consistent use of the PMS, implementation of the PMS). Hence, Hypothesis 1 may be rejected in terms of gender. Table 5 indicates no significant difference in the perception of employees varying in education regarding the other four dimensions of PMS (current expectations for the PMS, current perceptions on the PMS impact on effectiveness, current perceptions on the consistent use of the PMS, implementation of the PMS). Hence, Hypothesis 1 may be rejected in terms of education. Table 6 indicates no significant difference in the
Table 5. Education and key dimensions of PM-ANOVA.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>PMS dimensions</th>
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<th>Std Deviation</th>
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Table 6. Tenure and key dimensions of PMS-ANOVA.

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### Table 7. Job type and key dimensions of PMS-ANOVA.

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*p<0.05

The research findings indicate that there is no significant difference in the perception of employees varying in tenure regarding the other four dimensions of PMS (current expectations for the PMS, current perceptions on the PMS impact on effectiveness, current perceptions on the consistent use of the PMS, implementation of the PMS). Hence, Hypothesis 1 may be rejected in terms of tenure.

Table 7 indicates that there is a significant difference in the perception of employees varying in job type regarding the current perceptions on the consistent use of the PMS at the 5% levels of significance. In order to assess exactly where the differences lie, mean differences were assessed and it was found that under the job type category academic employees had the highest score value of 3.81, reflecting the view that the PMS will be implemented consistently throughout the university. However, academic support employees were in disagreement about the consistent use of the system. But there is no significant difference in the perception of employees varying in job type regarding the three dimensions of PMS: current expectations for the PMS, current expectations for the PMS and implementation of the PMS. Hence, Hypothesis 1 may be rejected in terms of job type.

### DISCUSSION

#### Age

The research findings indicate that there is no significant difference in the perception of employees varying in age regarding the four dimensions of PMS. Tremblay et al. (2001) contend that experience of lecturers positively affects performance as they are comfortable with their curriculum (Kenned and Drennan, 1998).

#### Education

The analysis of the findings show no significant difference in the perception of employees varying in education regarding other dimensions of PMS. This finding is in agreement with three higher education institutions that were intergrated in Nigeria where those with lower qualifications were insecure which resulted in resistance to change as members wanted to maintain the status quo (Karuhang, 2010: 9).

#### Gender

The research findings reflect no significant relationship between gender and the key dimensions of the study. These research findings are supported by the study by Akiri and Ugborugbo (2008), which also showed that there was no significant difference in the productivity of male and female teachers in secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria, although the male teachers were more productive than their female counterparts and female teachers were more influenced by location than the male teachers. In contrast, a study conducted in medium-sized Australian enterprises (Watson, 2003) found that female lecturers tend to perform better than male lecturers.

#### Job type

The research findings of this study indicate that there was
Table 8. Job level and key dimensions of PMS-ANOVA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PMS dimensions</th>
<th>Current job level</th>
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a significant difference in the perception of employees varying in job type regarding the current perceptions on the consistent use of the PMS. The latter findings are confirmed by a study conducted by Marks and Karren (1997) on the participation of academics and (Lipman, 1997) on university education decision-making as well as academic rank which have a positive effect on lecturer performance (Sukiron and Siengthai, 2010).

Job level

The research findings indicate no significant difference in the perception of employees varying in job level regarding the other dimensions. PMS has intensified in universities yet resistance continues to be experienced by managers (Broadbent and Larghlin, 2007). A study conducted by Sukiron and Siengthai (2010:1) confirms that academic rank has a significant effect on lecturer performance.

This study will provide human resources managers with valuable information on the phases of the successful implementation of PMS in higher education institutions. It will also make them aware of the implications of abuse of the system and failure to provide performance feedback to employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A typology of the key recommendations arising from the empirical section of this study includes the following:

- Academics should participate in university education decision-making. This can improve lecturers’ and organisational performance, as well as the quality of their work life.
- The university should devise a retention strategy specifically for experienced academics, as the length of work experience is associated with higher performance.
- The purpose of the PMS should be tacitly and explicitly communicated to managers in order to mitigate resistance.
- Staff promotions within the university should be equitable in terms of gender and should be based on merit rather than practices.
- The university should ensure that all line managers are trained as raters and continuous feedback is provided to subordinates.
- The PMS should be customised to the university concerned in such a way as to promote flexibility, less strict supervision and a less managerialistic approach.
- Gender sensitivity should be applied during all PMS phases.
- Change management interventions should be conducted focusing on academics in order to eradicate their negative perceptions on their academic freedom (autonomy) and the fear of the unknown.
- The PMS committee and evaluation task teams should represent the genders equally in order to avoid bias and serve the interests of both categories equally.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Using only a quantitative research design with a structured questionnaire administered by the researcher was a limitation to this study as it excluded the in-depth
views of the respondents who wanted to give follow ups to the statements on the questionnaires. Furthermore, the poor relationship between the biographical variables with the dimensions of the PMS is another limitation, which prevented the researchers from linking the findings to those of previous studies conducted on this subject. Hence, future research study could look at the biographical influences on PMS practices in other universities of technology in South Africa using both quantitative and qualitative research designs with the aim of yielding triangulated findings. Furthermore, a longitudinal study linking this empirical study with a previously white university might provide a holistic approach in preparing and implementing this crucial system in higher education institutions generally.

Conclusion

The study showed that resistance and uncertainties to the PMS could be minimised if the expectations and purpose of the system can be clarified and continual feedback provided. This study concluded that employees at the university concerned disagree with the consistent use of the system throughout the university, while academically generally agree that the system would be consistently applied. This conclusion indicates a need for a thorough educational consultation with all stakeholders with the aim of making them understand the need, purpose and the advantages of the system.

REFERENCES


QUESTIONNAIRE

We would greatly appreciate your assistance in completing the questionnaire as part of a survey on the employee perception on PMS within your department. The results of this study will be of benefit to your department as it will result to the smooth implementation of the PMS which is responding to the needs of MUT employees.

The questionnaire is ANONYMOUS and all responses will remain STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL and will be used for academic purposes only.

Thank you in advance and we really appreciate your time and effort in filling out this questionnaire.

Should you require additional information concerning this research project or further clarity, you may call the following:

________________________________
Dr. Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu
Organisational Development Coordinator: Human Resource and Development
Mangosuthu University of Technology
031-9077329
E-mail address: ngcamub@mut.ac.za

Section A: Biographical Data

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current job level</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Management</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Management</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Management</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Managerial</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.
1- Strongly disagree
2- Disagree
3- Undecided
4- Agree
5- Strongly agree

### Section B: Current expectations for the performance management system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PMS is needed in my organization</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that performance plans will be aligned to the university goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have an in depth knowledge and background of the performance management system</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within MUT PMS will identify appropriate opportunities for training and development</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my department PMS will improve communication with the line manager</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMS will further and support organizational culture change at MUT</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my organization PMS will improve interpersonal relations</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that PMS will also provide non-monetary rewards</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be more satisfied and motivated to perform my duties if rewarded</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that individual, team and project performance will be awarded categorically in my organization</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section C: Current perceptions on the performance management system impact on efficiency and effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my organization performance management system is necessary as it will improve efficiency and effectiveness</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that the PMS will build a high-performance culture whilst enhancing academic excellence</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through PMS, my organization will develop necessary job competencies and provide trainings</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that the PMS will link effective performance, reward and recognition</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that in my organization PMS expectations will be clarified and better feedback to individuals about their performance and will be based on mutual understanding.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that they would be an open dialogue between evaluators and those evaluated</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My line manager will always prepared to provide guidance when I run into problems at my tasks</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that I will be measured to the functions stated to the job description/job profile</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section D: Current perceptions on the impact of the performance management system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do believe that it is possible to develop a PMS that fairly and accurately measures contributions to business results</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do believe that the PMS will be applied consistently throughout the MUT</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that PMS addresses the unfairness issue between employees</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that PMS will clarify the reporting lines and job grades</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that PMS will result to equal workload distribution</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my organization the PMS will provide employees with resources such as relevant trainings</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my organization PMS will not be used to manipulate employees and to enforce a particular agenda</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards will be openly and fairly distributed to those who are most deserving on the basis of effort, merit and results</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.
1- Strongly disagree
2- Disagree
3- Undecided
4- Agree
5- Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section E: Implementation of the performance management system</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my organization a PM policy and procedure will be implemented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want PMS processes to commence in 2011 and implemented in 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my organization PMS pilot project should commence to the senior management by 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that people in my organization will be interested in getting a part of their incentive (extra) based on their performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that performance management will be implemented successfully in my organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t foresee any resistance to the PMS in my organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I foresee PMS supported by the union (NEHAWU)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that PMS will build closer working relationships with our superiors based on mutual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my organization my performance will be measured by my immediate senior</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that a representative PMS steering committee will be formed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Thank you!!!*