Investigating public sector Emergency Medical Service staff perception of the performance management and development system at the eThekwini District

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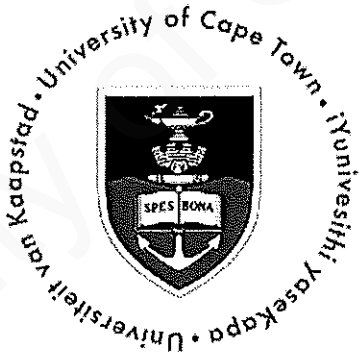

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Declaration

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Abstract

Background

Performance management and development systems are designed to align processes and to manage the performance of employees on a continuous basis. The implementation of these systems in the public sector domain remains a challenge and necessitates the exploration of staff perceptions of the system, its implementation, and fairness. This study seeks to provide meaningful evidence regarding the perception of the Emergency Medical Services staff about the effectiveness and fairness of the Performance Management and Development System application in the eThekwini District in KwaZulu-Natal.

Objectives

The research objectives are to describe the perceptions of Emergency Medical Service employees of the Performance Management and Development System, to describe employees' participation and perception of management commitment to the system and to compare the differences in perceptions by using descriptive variables such as age, gender, professional category, and tenure.

Methods

This study used a descriptive design and used a validated tool. 200 surveys were handed out and 175 questionnaires were collected for analysis. After data cleaning and validation, 164 questionnaires were used in the analysis. Subsequently, inferential statistics in the form of independent t-test and data analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. Data was analysed using demographic information and employee perceptions about fairness, involvement, and participation in performance management.

Results

The results showed that 62.2% of Emergency Medical Service staff in the eThekwini District perceived that a Performance Management and Development System is not effective and fair. The results showed no statistical significance based on gender, age and years employed in the public sector EMS. However, there were statistically significant differences between qualifications, current EMS sector, and current position at work. This demonstrates several shortcomings in the implementation of a Performance Management and Development System in the eThekwini district EMS sector.

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List of acronyms

EMS	:	Emergency Medical Services
KZN	:	KwaZulu-Natal
HRD	:	Human Resource Development
HRMS	:	Human Resource Management Services
PMDS	:	Performance Management and Development Systems
UCT	:	University of Cape Town
NDP:		National Development Plan
NDoH:		National Department of Health

1. Chapter 1

1.1 Background

It has been said that service delivery in the public sector of South Africa is poor (1) (2). There are various contributing factors and many of these can be traced back to how performance is managed and measured, including perceptions regarding fairness and the implementation of performance management systems (3). To improve service delivery and performance, the National Department of Health introduced a formal performance management and development system. The implementation of this Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) in healthcare has not been without its challenges.

PMDS can be described as a continuous communication strategy intended to align processes and management of employee performance. It is used to ensure that employees achieve the desired organisational results by setting individual goals that align with the work unit's performance target (5). This systematic process of performance management can improve the overall performance of an organisation, develop employee competencies and skills, and identify training needs. Performance management should be an ongoing process, constantly monitoring daily inputs and organizational goals. PMDS serve as a dashboard for the organisation's and the individual's overall functioning and enables responsive management as problems emerge. It also integrates formal and informal approaches to managing employees (6).

Designing an effective Performance Management Development Systems are challenging, as there are many barriers to effectively implementing the system (6). This includes training, culture, mindset, and methods of implementation. The effectiveness of a PMDS can be measured in various ways. One way would be to consider how employees perceive the system – whether they think it is fair, how they perceive their involvement, etc.

1.2 EMS in KZN eThekwini District

The eThekwini district is in KwaZulu-Natal and the district includes the city of Durban.
For the purpose of this study, performance management will refer to the South African public PMDS which is discussed in more detail later in Chapter 2 (section 2.12). The implementation of the PMDS in the South African Public Sector is a contested system and there have been numerous studies about the implementation, barriers to implementation and employee perceptions regarding it. However, none of these studies have referred to Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

1.3 Problem statement, aims and objectives

This study seeks to investigate EMS staffs' perception of the PMDS in the eThekwini District to provide empirical evidence regarding the perception of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) staff of the PMDS in one district in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Gathering this information will help us to provide meaningful evidence regarding the perceptions of EMS personnel about how this system is carried out in the eThekwini District and to identify potential shortcomings and challenges that EMS personnel experience with the implementation of PMDS. This will provide valuable information about what employees think about the performance management systems and provide plausible ways of improving performance management. More so, informed recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of PMDS can be made from employees' perceptions. The demographic information is gender, age, and highest qualification.

The specific research objectives are to:

- describe the perceptions of EMS employees about the PMDS,
- describe employees' participation and perception of management's commitment to PMDS and
- compare the differences in perceptions by using descriptive variables such as age, gender, professional category, and tenure.

Research questions;
The survey is divided into three sections, i.e.:
Section 1: Demographic information.
Section 2: Employee perception of the effectiveness of the performance management and development system
Section 3: Employee perception of the fairness of the performance management and development system in the eThekwini District.

The study is guided by the following:

- What are the employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the performance management and development system? This question is influenced by three factors, namely; employees' involvement, performance orientated culture, and management commitment.
- What are the employees' perception of the fairness of the performance management and development system in the eThekwini District? This question is influenced by three factors, namely; employee involvement, employee participation, and employee development.

1.4 Summary and layout of chapters

Data related to the study was put together through an exploration of various literature from various scholars with a research topic and their findings in line with this study. The aims and objectives of this study will be accomplished and are presented in the following chapters.

Chapter 1: provides a background to the study, aims and objectives, the purpose for the study, the limitations of the study, and a summary of the structure and layout of the study.

Chapter 2: is a literature review that discusses the importance of performance management, Performance Management and Development Systems, and it explores current South African literature related to PMDS in the public sector.

Chapter 3: speaks about the research methodology used to conduct the study, including the use of the validated survey used to collect data.

Chapter 4: presents the findings from the study, and it is organized according to the sections of the survey.

Chapter 5: contains the discussion, where the findings of Chapter 4 are interpreted.

Chapter 6: contains the conclusion and recommendations for next steps.

2. Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter conceptualises performance management and development systems and discusses the origins of performance management, the purpose of performance management systems, and the process of performance management. Findings of other studies in the public healthcare sector are discussed. The research objectives are employees' perceptions of Performance Management and Development Systems. The fairness of the performance management and development systems is explicated and literature was gathered to ensure that the findings of this study can be discussed and aligned. Factors that influence the effectiveness of performance management is provided and can guide an organisation into ensuring fair practice when utilising a performance management and development system.

2.2 The concept of performance management

One thing that all performance management authors agree on is the difficulty of defining performance management (7). Stanton and Nankervis note that "Performance management has been a critical attribute of human resource management and business imperative for many years, and it has been seen as a linkage between individuals, sections, divisions and is perceived as the key to effectiveness and global competitiveness"(8).

Aguinis claims that performance management is an ongoing process of detecting, assessing and improving the performance of staff and teams, which ultimately helps the organisation to align their performance with the goals of the business (9).

Performance management also serves as a dashboard, alerting managers to possible problems and allowing them to adjust their practices where necessary, to keep the organisation on track (6). The components of a good performance management system are straightforward, however incorporating them into an organisation's core operating system is more complicated than it appears to be (6).

2.3 Characteristics of a performance management system

The characteristics discussed below are regarded as essential for the effective implementation of a performance management system. While the specifics of each attribute may vary, the underlying principles are universal.

2.3.1 Congruence in terms of strategy and circumstance

One of the key responsibilities of performance management systems, is to support the strategic objectives of an organisation's setting. Individual performance is thus clearly aligned

with the unit's and organisation's strategy in an effective performance management system (12, 4, 13). 'Context congruence' refers to the requirement that the system should be compatible with both the culture of the organisation and the bigger cultural setting of the country or region in which it functions (9).

In a country like South Africa, with its rich diverse cultural setting, achieving cultural congruence might add an additional challenge to the implementation of a PMDS. Employees and managers may be hostile towards a performance management system that does not take into consideration the context and culture of them as individuals, the organisation and the larger societal context of the culture. For example, if an organisation puts results first, before behaviour and implements a system that prioritises behaviour, the system is likely to be ineffectual. As a result, successful performance management systems are those that take an integrated approach to performance management (14,4). In this case, an integrated approach between the performance management system and the organisation's strategic objectives in all areas, albeit planning, human resource management procedures, or the culture of the organization are required (13).

2.3.2 Thoroughness and accuracy

For a performance management system to be effective it should be inclusive of all employees and management staff (12). All key job duties should be assessed; this assessment could consider behaviours and outcomes. It is also important that this should be considered during job design and developing job descriptions for different roles (14).Thirdly, the appraisal should take into account a staff member's performance during the entire review cycle as agreed upon by the performance agreement, not simply the days or weeks leading up to it (9). Finally, feedback must be offered for both good and bad performance (17,18).

2.3.3 Practicality of the PMDS

A good performance management system is easy to administer for both supervisors and employees. The systems should not be prohibitively complicated or time-consuming (17).

2.3.4 Meaningfulness

The users, including both supervisors and employees should find the process and system useful. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, for example the standards and appraisals must be perceived as essential, relevant, and appropriate (18). It should ensure a performance evaluation of key performance areas that are within the employee's responsibility. Frequently, performance management system requirements are established

without taking into account hindrances to performance that are not controllable by those being measured by it (10). Performance appraisals are only useful if they are conducted on a regular basis. Appraisals that are conducted annually are insufficient, instead quarterly, informal or formal reviews are recommended (12).

2.3.5 Specificity

An effective performance management system is explicit and provides clear directives on what is expected and how those objectives are to be met. It is essential that employees are familiar with the system, expectations and how to obtain information and resources to understand the system and to improve their performance. The system should differentiate between ineffective and effective performance (9). Specificity is educating employees about the system; it ensures consistency of treatment, and offers employees with a formalised method of appeal should they feel unfairly treated or that the measures are inappropriate (19).

2.3.6 Reliable and valid

To ensure reliability, a good performance management system must incorporate consistent, error-free performance measurements. This implies that if an employee is evaluated by different evaluators utilising the same performance parameters, the results should be comparable (17,18). The term "validity" refers to whether or not a measurement is assessing what it should be (10). It must cover all relevant constructs and all performance characteristics to be legitimate; it must not be contaminable with unrelated factors (10). As performance management systems must be standardised, which means that performance should be assessed consistently across individuals and time, this means that managers must follow the same prescript for everyone, however, key performance areas should be based on individual lines of function (9).

2.3.7 Fairness and acceptability

Aguinis points out that the PDMS is acceptable when all employees regard it to be fair. Since judgments of fairness are subjective, one way to determine if a system is seen as fair by its employees is to ask the employees themselves. There are four categories of justice that are identified as having an impact on the system's acceptability and fairness i.e. distributive fairness that is related to how employees feel about the outcome of the evaluation in relation to their performance; the procedural justice here is that employees are concerned about the rating technique and procedure, the interpersonal justice which is related to the quality and the implementation of the system, the informational justice which is about the perception of

fairness relating to standards and goals, feedback and information offered to validate administrative judgments (9).

2.3.8 Correctability and openness

Performance reviews and their consequences are open and visible in a good performance management system. As a result, frequent performance reviews are complemented by continual performance feedback. Factual and honest performance communications are required (15). Managers often avoid criticizing poor performance yet, any sort of feedback is preferable to no feedback at all (16). Since openness necessitates honesty, it can be assumed that the process of managing performance cannot totally eliminate subjectivity because human discretion is a necessary component of the appraisal process. As a result, if employees believe an error has been committed, there should be a system in place to fix it. According to some authors, an appeals process must be developed so that employees can contest unfair choices which is a crucial part of an effective performance management system (4,12).

2.3.9 Ethicality

A good performance management system adheres to ethical guidelines (15). Managers should receive training and be coached on how to reduce bias and self-interest when conducting performance appraisals (16,14).

2.3.10 Inclusiveness

Good performance management systems are, participative allowing for a variety of inputs on a regular basis. Participation is critical to the assessment process because it enables all users to express their issues and verify that their concerns are being handled (13). Employees must also contribute to the system's development by suggesting what outcomes should be measured and how they should be measured (14). Some studies point out that when participants are involved in the design and implementation of a system, it is more likely to result in an effective management system and further adds that employee resistance, performance decline, and legal challenges are also less likely to occur (16,17).

In this section, ten characteristics of PMDS were discussed. These are regarded as essential for the effective development and implementation of PMDS.

2.4 Employee development systems

Employee development aims to develop the workforce by enhancing and improving skills and competencies. It is a joint initiative that the employer/manager and employees engage in, to enhance existing skills and knowledge. It can be defined as creating opportunities for

advancement and making learning accessible within an organisation (20). Training as part of a development process conveys the relevant skills that are transferable back to the work space (21). Skills and knowledge can be acquired in the workplace through continuous development that can be linked to the PMDS and determine the competitiveness of the organisation. Developing the skills and knowledge of employees is necessary and most lead to the success of the organisation. In the Public Health Sector of South Africa, developing knowledge and skills could improve service delivery across various sectors (22).

2.5 Performance management in South Africa

In South Africa, the performance management system used by public employees is referred to as Performance Management and Development Systems (23). Madlabana mentions that in the South African performance management system, there is an overemphasis on using the system as a tool for development (23). The South African government introduced performance management as a system in the public sector to maximise service delivery in all public institutions. One of the aims was that the system allows for the continuous monitoring of performance, and that continuous monitoring and evaluation would ensure effective, efficient performance and subsequent good service delivery (17). The responsibility for PMDS was decentralised so that performance could be managed in the different business units, with the aim to enhance both organisational and employee performance (24).

2.5.1 South African findings on performance management systems in the public healthcare sector

A study about the execution of the performance management and development system at selected public healthcare clinics in Gauteng found that even though there is an authenticated Performance Management and Development System used in the evaluation and monitoring of performance, employees indicated that the Performance Management and Development System is not beneficial, is tremendously complex, it does not have any benefits, and does not encourage performance (18).

In another study, also considering the public service Performance Management and Development System in South Africa, it indicated poor execution of the Performance Management and Development System and its negative impact which is worrisome and may become a hindrance to service delivery (47). Other studies have reported that a poorly implemented performance management system is linked to poor organisation performance, a negative attitude towards employees and wasteful behaviour towards productivity (48, 47). Markos and Sridevi suggest that when designing the performance measurements and control

system, human behaviour should be considered and further than that, a successful implementation of performance management systems relies on accommodating human essentials (49).

The findings of the two previous studies are further strengthened by a study that considered motivation. Performance Management and Development Systems in the South African public sector and its influence on motivation indicated that there was poor leadership and management in the implementation part and a lack of performance monitoring in all departments. They found that the feedback mechanism and the performance evaluation processes were lacking and were the ingredient of obvious attitudes towards the benefit of performance management systems by employees. The authors suggested that the current form of PMDS should be redesigned as a system that fosters career path development and capacity management and that the system should not be viewed as punitive (15).

This is in line with the suggestions made by other authors who agreed that there should be a re-evaluation of the current Performance Management and Development Systems to encourage good performance rather than to impede it (47). Currently, the Performance Management and Development System is viewed as negative, and the employees are not motivated to work towards the outcomes-based performance (50). Swaartbooi argues that healthcare systems may differ but what is constant across different settings is how performance is measured and evaluated (47).

The general argument stemming from the study by Radebe, is that in the local municipality, performance management is not effectively implemented. Furthermore, management and the employees do not set performance targets at the beginning of the performance period. The planning meeting becomes informal with no interest in setting performance targets. Furthermore, good performance is not linked to any remuneration. The employees are remunerated based on experience and seniority (51).

The findings from another study by Madlabana confirms that even though the performance management system is implemented to some extent, there are still loopholes in its implementation and a lack of transparency. This allows the system to be perceived as unfair, with its objective being questioned. This study concludes that the performance management system is inadequately implemented in the public primary healthcare facilities and is required to be reengineered to respond to the South African public health sector demands. Makhubela et al. recommend that the public sector line managers should know their role in the implementation of performance management systems and their findings show that the

employees in the public sector perceive performance management systems to be unfair and ineffective. There are no clear performance standards set, there is no agreement on organisational goals and employees expected performance outcomes, and the appraisal is done in the absence of planned development goals. All these contribute towards a poor perception on performance management systems by employees (10). Even though the employees acknowledge being informed of the existence of the policy on the performance management system, implementation by the line managers has substantial inadequacies (10). In a study by Sachane, Bezuidenhout and Botha, the findings suggested that they believe that the organisation is failing in the aspect of talent management and the findings suggested a general feel that the organisation's performance management is ineffective; there is no recognition of good performance and the feedback system on performance is lacking (52).

2.6 The origins of the performance management

The Performance Management Development System was formed as a mechanism that mitigates against mistakes and improper behaviour in the provision of public services and was part of the then Ministry of Public Service and Administration (25). The execution of the Performance Management Development System is based on the concept that all departments should operate more efficiently. Whilst the SA national government has succeeded in expanding access to essential services since 1994, the quality of these services are frequently being questioned (17).

The South African government faced many barriers when meeting targets and other service delivery key indicators. Some of these barriers include a lack of political will, insufficient leadership, management inadequacies, ineffective institutional architecture, and mismatched decision rights. A strong performance culture seems to be lacking in various government ministries. The substandard health outcomes have revealed a significant gap between vision and reality in terms of achieving the NDP and the ten-point plan targets emphasized as part of the NDoH policy direction (17).

The existing Performance Management Development System requires departments to administer performance more efficiently so that a strong performance culture may be fostered (17). To improve organisational success, all departments are encouraged to manage performance in a collaborative, supportive, and non-biased manner (24). The Performance Management Development System was designed to enable transparency and accountability for the use of resources if it is implemented correctly which will lead to better performance and will result in an organisation's goals and objectives being met (17).

Performance management practices must be linked to a comprehensive plan for the growth of employees and aligned with the strategic goals of the business unit (17). The major focus of performance management should be developmental, allowing for appropriate reactions to repeatedly poor performance as well as recognition for exceptional performance. Performance management methods should be designed to reduce the administrative burden on supervisors while ensuring transparency and administrative justice (26).

2.7 The purpose of performance management systems

The purpose of a performance management system is threefold, with strategic, developmental, and administrative functions. Strategically, a performance management system should link the daily activities of the employee to the organisation's strategic goals, and performance should be aligned with the organisation's objectives. To achieve strategic alignment entails joint planning and well-articulated job descriptions with clear key result areas. Work ethic and behaviours are included in job descriptions and joint planning. From a developmental aspect, the employee should possess the required skills for the job and the management style should be appropriate to the employees' needs. Administratively speaking, the processes should be simple and understood by all parties, allowing employees and managers to participate in performance management and it should be seen as a system that is part of their daily work (27).

2.8 The processes of performance management

The South African Public Service and Administration Performance Management and Development System of the Republic of South Africa, 2007, provides guidelines to all departments on the implementation of Performance Management and Development Systems (17). The performance management and development cycle adopted by the South African public sector is a continuous process that begins in the first cycle of the public service financial year [1st April] (17). In the beginning of a performance cycle, employees and their managers sign a contract, or performance agreement, then in September, the employee and the manager conduct a half yearly review. During the review, the manager rates the employee according to the agreed performance targets. If poor performance is identified, training needs should be determined to develop and empower the employee to improve their performance. At the end of March, the following year, the cycle repeats. If poor performance is continually identified, more frequent appraisals may be required at the discretion of the manager (17).

The employees' performance is measured against the agreed performance. If the employee rating is satisfying the employee is financially rewarded according to stipulations in the

Performance Management Development System policy (17). The guidelines propose that the Performance Management and Development System should be conducted over a 12-month period where employees' performance must be planned, agreed upon, put into effect, and assessed. The phases in the Performance Management and Development System are discussed in the next section.

2.8.1 Planning phase

Specific goals serve as a benchmark for performance planning, appraisals, incentives, and improvements are set. It helps the manager to have a better understanding of the business goals, which will impact how they conduct an evaluation at the beginning of performance reviews/appraisals. Employees must be aware of and agree to the objectives, as well as the activities allocated to them by their section managers and those objectives must contribute to the overall strategy of the organisation. If there were no goals, time and effort would be wasted on activities that contributed very little to the organisation's success (7).

From the start of each performance cycle, managers and employees need to agree on goals and employees must be aware of and agree to the goals. It is significant that the meeting should bring value and consider what achievements are expected and how those expectations should be met (28).

2.8.2 Performance effecting and assessment phase

Employees feel more engaged with the PMDS if they have a clear job description with clear expectations and measurements that enable them to self-assess and practice autonomy in the process. When employees are given autonomy and the ability to self-assess, the system becomes more successful. Collaboratively setting the plan, with the autonomy to self-evaluate, permits the employees to be actively involved in the process and could reduce defensiveness during evaluation. It could also improve how employees view the process (9).

2.8.3 Performance review phase

During the review, the manager and employee considers the agreement against actual performance. The manager can hold the employee accountable for their performance and measure the planned, expected outcome against the actual performance at the end of the cycle. During the review phase, the manager affords the employees the opportunity to rate themselves before the manager gives their rating based on their performance. A manager's performance review is an opportunity to address poor performance and identify the next step to improve performance (29). The manager's responsibility during the review is to rate the

employee, provide feedback on performance, and to discuss potential barriers experienced during the cycle (29).

2.8.4 Managing performance

A manager's responsibility is to detect performance gaps and to work closely with employees to resolve any issues. This includes the manager observing quality performance and providing feedback, as well as setting direction, monitoring and assessing performance, and taking appropriate action. This should occur in a way that is aligned with the culture of the business unit or organisation (30).

2.8.5 Rewarding Phase

Attracting and retaining high-quality employees, and keeping them motivated, are a major concern within the South African healthcare (and other) setting. There is an expectation that employees will perform more with less, and have a drive towards greater rewards. If organisations want to continue to improve their performance, they must devise a method that will bridge the gap. Organisations are becoming aware that they must strike a fair balance between the employees' impact on the organisation and the organisation's impact on the employees. Employee incentive systems relate to programmes used by various organisations to recognize and inspire employees. Rewards might be monetary or non-monetary in nature (31).

2.9 Employee's perception and participation in the performance appraisal system

A PMDS is designed as a collaborative process between manager and employee. The employee should not be disempowered during the process or be a passive recipient. Active involvement in performance appraisals may impact employees' perceptions regarding the process (19).

If employees are actively involved and see the PMDS as a method to advance their career and their interests, it strongly contributes to the success of the PMDS. Whereas, if it is used as a punitive system or employees are not involved, they will experience it differently. Employees will welcome and participate meaningfully in a performance management system if they see it as a way to advance their careers or further their personal growth; they might also see the system as an opportunity to be visible and exhibit their abilities, as well as network with others in the organisation. The PMDS must be clearly explained and agreed upon by the employees and the effectiveness of the system is dependent on employee eagerness, mind-

set and behaviour development, communication and harmonization of organisational and individual goals, and the creation of healthy relationships between employees and management. Due to the difficulty in creating a precise performance checklist, some managers rely on subjective views which are usually unacceptable in many organisations, whist other managers combine subjective and objective performance appraisal assessments (19).
If employees perceive the performance appraisal process to be unfair, it may lead to lower productivity and negative perceptions about PMDS/performance appraisals. The sentiments shared by both employees and management regarding the existence of a formal appraisal system, the manager's knowledge of employee performance, the capacity to detect and improve performance inadequacies, and how often the evaluations are performed, all play a role in the perception of fairness in performance appraisals (32).

2.10 Managers' roles in performance management

Successful and effectual performance management systems necessitate a substantial outlay of time and resource investment (7). Motivation and growth of staff performance in their individual positions is required for the system to function well. Flaws in the system can demotivate employees, especially because in the Public Health sector in South Africa, remuneration is based on employee performance ratings, however, this is not general practice everywhere but specific only in two state sectors. One of the elements contributing to the ineffectiveness of the system created to monitor staff performance is the human component. Managers must guarantee that potential is found, cultivated, and managed, and that poor performance is dealt with properly when grading employees. These are required to guarantee that a performance management system is put in place in the workplace with the expressed intention of fulfilling the goals and objectives of the organisation. Employee involvement and motivation can have a significant impact on the organisation's success by inspiring employees to be held liable and to be a part of finding solutions (33).

Boxall, Purcell, and Wright state that managers consider performance monitoring systems as attempts to pressurise staff to generate greater results, while employees see them as a system designed to drive them to work more. Due to all of these factors, performance-oriented culture is a factor that influences the deployment of Performance Measurement and Management Systems in government settings (34). Sanger notes that an efficient system necessitates a leader who is committed, is willing to follow and implement stipulated guidelines, and has leadership skills (35).

Poister adds that the participation of senior officials and managers is a crucial aspect of good performance management systems. Management commitment has an influence on employees' commitment to reaching goals and increasing performance (36). If performance management is poorly administered, it can result in low self-esteem, cause damage to relationships between employees, decrease motivation to perform, bring about burnout and job dissatisfaction in employees, unjustified demands on managers and employee resources, varying and unfair standards and ratings, and an increased risk of litigation (9).

2.11 Fairness of performance management and development systems

Performance appraisals should maintain a high level of integrity and transparency, as well as an acceptable amount of fairness (8). A performance appraisal system has the ability to boost employee job satisfaction and organisational attainments commitment, however only if there is participation and fairness perceptions from its employees (37). Employees' perceptions of fairness might influence their behaviour that contributes to the organisation's goals (38). Also, employees may become unproductive and negative towards the system as a result of perceived injustice and ineffectiveness of the performance management system. Due to the fact that managers fail to realize the complexity of performance management, many organisations omit the importance of employee participation in performance appraisals which ultimately leads to mixed consequences (39).

Managers must empower their employees to make decisions for themselves, as well as comprehend and accept their own needs, feelings, and attitudes (40). Only when employees are given the opportunity to discuss the results with managers, they become more satisfied and motivated with the performance appraisal system.

The feelings expressed by both management and employees about the existence of a formal appraisal system, the supervisor's knowledge of the performance of employees, the existence of action plans to improve performance weaknesses, and the frequency of evaluations all influence the perception of fairness in performance appraisals (41). Narcisse and Harcourt (2008) point out that distributive, procedural, and interactional justice influence employees' perceptions of system fairness, and staff are particularly concerned about these three types of justice as discussed (42).

2.12 Background of performance management systems in the emergency medical service

The EMS is a unit within the Department of Health and the implementation of the performance management system came into effect simultaneously with other units within the Department of Health. The EMS, often known as an ambulance service, is a critical component of health-care systems (26).

Human resource management and development that is successful has the potential to promote and preserve an organisation's performance; equally motivated EMS employees can deliver a high-quality emergency medical service. The Performance Management and Development System contract is used to evaluate EMS employees. A manager is supposed to sign an agreement in the form of a contract with an employee at the commencement of a new cycle and then conduct quarterly ongoing assessments as prescribed by the Department of Health policies. The role of Performance Management and Development Systems for EMS employees is no different from other employees in the Department of Health, as the EMS objectives are linked to the overall departmental goals. The findings from a related study suggest that EMS employees are aware of the performance management and development system's concept, however, there is a lack of skill and knowledge in implementing the system, both by managers and employees (61).

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter discussed literature pertaining to performance management systems. Employees fear and dislike any type of performance management in general, while the process for managers is known to be extremely stressful. Performance is a behaviour that is linked to an organisation's outcomes. The characteristics of a good PMDS was discussed, the PMDS as accepted by the South African Government Service was explored and other studies considering PMDS were discussed. The next chapter presents the research methodology used for this study.

3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter covered the relevant literature, its implication, influence, and significance to the current research. This chapter covers the methods that were used to address the primary research objectives in this study, which is to investigate the EMS staff perceptions of the PMDS in the eThekwini District. This chapter describes the research design, study area, data collection, methodology, population and sampling, and data analysis methods that were employed to address the research objectives.

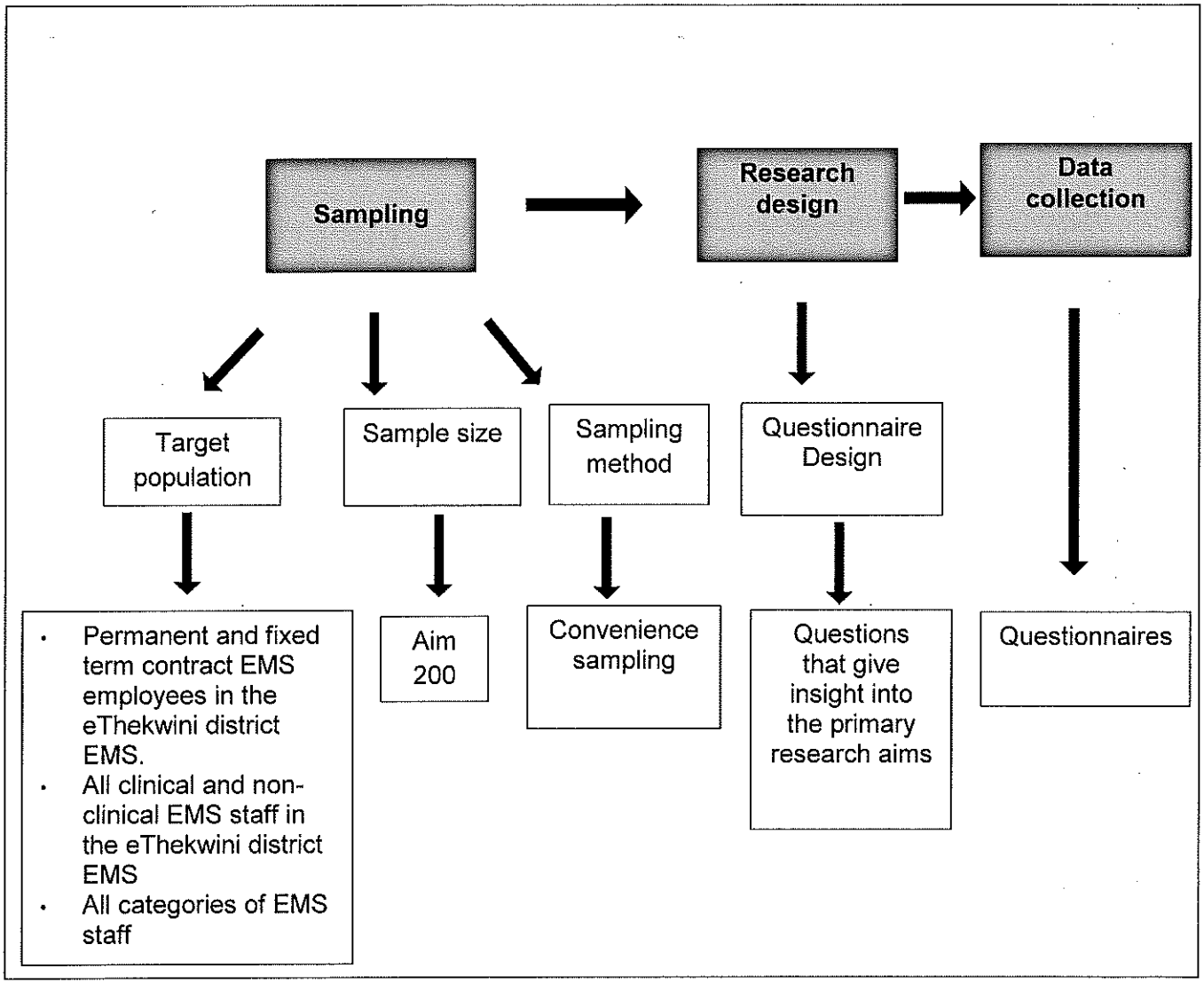
3.2 Research philosophy

This research was founded on a positivist research philosophy. The researcher used their experience, and observations backed by a literature review to develop a set of objectives that the research set out to address. It has been suggested that the positivist paradigm is more appropriate for dealing with quantitative data where the researcher sets out to address outlined aims and objectives. This research is based on a quantitative approach; a positivist research philosophy was therefore deemed the most appropriate research approach (44).

3.3 Research Design

This study followed a cross-sectional descriptive design to describe the current status of identified variables for example, demographic information. A previously validated survey was used to gather the required data. This enabled the researcher to appropriately address the research objectives.

Figure 3.1: Research design for the study – investigating the public sector's Emergency Medical Service staff perception of the performance management and development system in the eThekwini District



3.4 Area of study

This study focused on the KZN Department of Health: EMS (eThekwini District) and included permanent and fixed term contract employees. Within the eThekwini District there are six EMS bases namely: Tongaat, Phoenix, KwaMashu, Mlazi, Wentworth, and Marian Hill. The EMS personnel render emergency services to all citizens around the eThekwini municipality and some are employed in the control centre and EMS offices as shift leaders. Employees at all six bases were invited to participate.

3.5 Methodology

To effectively address the main aims and objectives of the research project, this study employs a quantitative approach. Data was collected using a validated survey and was analysed using descriptive statistics.

3.6 Quantitative Research

This study employed a quantitative research approach to address the primary aims of the research. In this study, variables that assisted the researcher to evaluate employees' perceptions on the effectiveness and fairness of the PMDS were used. Employees' perceptions were measured by the following factors: employees' involvement, performance orientated culture, management commitment, employee involvement, employee participation, and employee development (45).

3.7 Population

The target population was the KZN Department of Health: EMS (eThekwini District) permanent and fixed term contract employees who were conveniently accessible to the researcher. The accessible number of participants was 200, this is the number of staff in the employ of KZN Department of Health: EMS (eThekwini District). We aimed to reach them all.

3.8 Sampling

Probability sampling was used, and everyone in the accessible population had an equal chance of being part of the study. These benefits include the use of the readily available sampling since the researcher focused on available participants or respondents.

The targeted number of participants was 200 and 175 surveys were collected. After data cleaning and validation, 164 questionnaires were used in the analysis (46).

3.9 Data collection method and procedure

The researcher used a survey research approach because of the following reasons: this approach is cost effective and more reliable since the same set of questions are posed to each participant. Surveys can also be administered remotely, increasing convenience and eliminating geographic limitations (47). The survey research method was suitable for the current study because through the quantitatively collected data, the researcher was able to explore and investigate employees' perceptions on the effectiveness and fairness of the PMDS. Not all participants had work email addresses or internet access, thus the surveys were handed out as hard copies. The researcher followed all COVID-related guidelines (hand

sanitiser, the wearing of masks, and social distancing) to ensure his own safety and that of the participants. This included keeping completed surveys in a box for three days before handling them and limiting the handling of hard copies. Hard copies were handed out during the staff changeover to maximise participation.

After completing hard copy surveys, the answers were placed in an envelope. No completed questionnaires were left on site. The researcher kept the completed questionnaires with him.

Data collected in this study was password protected and will be stored on the researcher's computer for five years, after which it will be deleted. Hard copy questionnaires were shredded after being captured onto soft copy.

3.10 Research Instrument

This study used a previously validated research tool used in the South African public sector by Makhubela, et al. The survey was minimally adapted to address the specific research objectives of this study.

The survey was divided into three sections that covered the main objectives of the study. The questionnaire included the following sections:

Section A: Focused on demographic information such as age, gender, and years of experience.

Section B: Obtained data about the employees' perception on the effectiveness of the PMDS which is influenced by the three factors, namely, employees' involvement, performance orientated culture, and management commitment.

Section C: Employee perception on the fairness of the PMDS which is influenced by three factors, namely, employee involvement, employee participation, and employee development.

Questions in Section B and Section C were measured on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

3.11 Data analysis methods

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, and subsequently inferential statistics in the form of independent t-test and data analysis of the variance (ANOVA) was used.

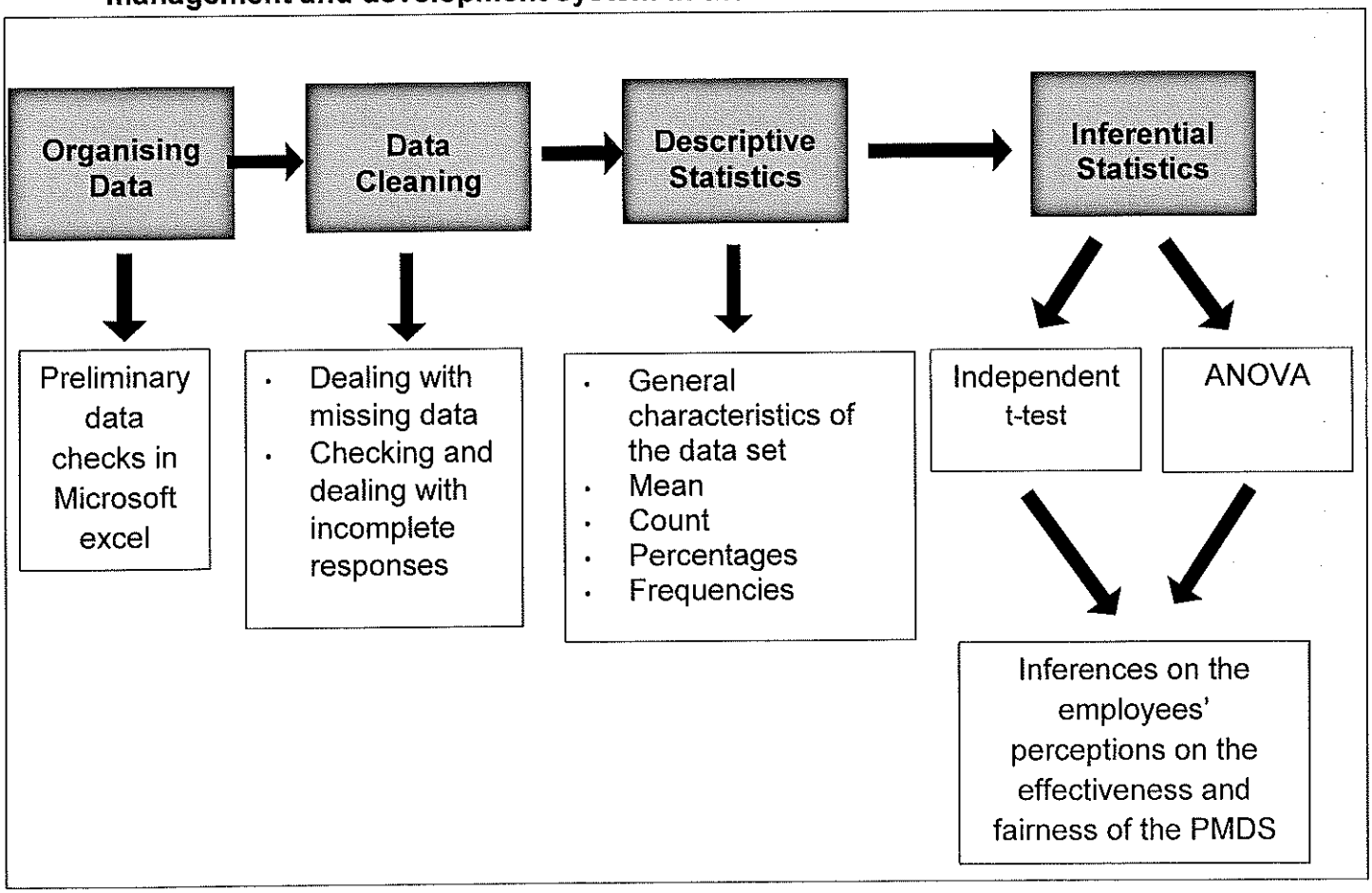
The questionnaire was divided into three sections and was analysed according to the objectives

Section A: Demographic information. This section focuses on information such as age, gender, and years of experience. This information was used to answer objectives 2 and 3.

Section B: This section deals with employees' perception on the effectiveness of the PMDS which is influenced by the three factors, namely, employees' involvement, performance orientated culture, and management commitment. Data from this section was analysed and used to answer objective 1.

Section C: Employee perception on the fairness of the PMDS which is influenced by three factors, namely, employee involvement, employee participation, and employee development. Data from this section was analysed and used to answer objectives 1 and 2.

3.12 Figure 3.2: Data Analysis procedure for the study - Investigating public sector Emergency Medical Service staff perception of the performance management and development system in the eThekwini District



Data collection took place from 25 May – 25 June 2021.

The targeted number of participants was 200. Out of the 175 participants, after preliminary checks on the questionnaires, 11 questionnaires were found to be incomplete and were excluded from the analysis. In the end, 164 questionnaires were used in the analysis. This translates to a response rate of 93.71%.

Data was captured in Microsoft Excel for preliminary cleaning and validation, and thereafter exported to the IBM Software: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), package 25. The data was first analysed using simple descriptive statistics to show frequencies, averages, and measures of variability. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was used for this study as the data collected contained categorical variables. An independent t-test was also carried out to test the differences in means of binary variables.

Independent t-test

An independent t-test is an inferential statistic that is used to determine if significant differences exist between the means of two groups (50). This technique compares the means of two independent groups to find out if there is statistical evidence that the associated population means are significantly different (51).

The researcher used the independent t-test for comparing the differences in perceptions of the effectiveness and fairness of the PMDS, based on gender which was coded as a categorical variable. An independent t-test was used because of its capacity to deal with categorical variables as well as continuous variables.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The ANOVA test was used for this study for comparing the differences in perceptions of the effectiveness and fairness of the PMDS based on demographic variables (age, gender, qualifications, current EMS sector, and current position at work).

Analysis of Variance can be defined as a data analysis technique used in statistics to divide observed aggregate variability within a data set into two parts and to compare them. It is used to determine if there are any statistically significant differences between the means of three or more independent groups (62,63). This data analysis method was selected because some of the variables in this study consisted of three or more independent groups.

3.13 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are used to measure the quality of the research; they stipulate the degree to which a method or technique measures what it is set out to measure (54). The findings may not be generalised to the entire KZN province or South Africa as a whole, but it can provide a good indicator of the status of the PMDS and some of the findings may thus be generalised to make inferences on the larger EMS population.

As the researcher used a previously validated tool, the findings can be compared to previous studies to increase its validity. This study ensured reliability by confirming that the findings from this study could be consistently achieved by applying the same methods under the same scenario. The researcher ensured transferability by providing complete and comprehensive accounts of the research process that are clear enough so that other researchers can make informed judgements about the findings' transferability to other contexts. Trustworthiness was addressed by revealing all the approaches of analysis with enough details to enable the readers to determine if the process was sound.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval number HREC REF: 315/2021 (APPENDIX A) was received from the Ethics committee of the University of Cape Town (UCT). Approval to undertake research in the KZN Health Sector was sought from the KZN Health Research Committee, and facility approval was obtained from the Director of EMS in the eThekwini district (APPENDIX B). Participants were required to provide informed consent and were allowed to withdraw from the study at any point in time. All data was treated with confidentiality.

4. Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Study Results

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 covered the methods that were used to address the research objectives in this study. The chapter described the research design, study area, data collection, methodology, population and sampling, and data analysis methods that were employed to address the research objectives. Chapter 4 presented the data analysis techniques used. Data was collected using a survey. The targeted number of participants was 200 and 175 were collected. After data cleaning and validation, 164 survey were used in the analysis. Data was analysed through descriptive statistics to get an overview of the sample. Subsequently, inferential statistics in the form of an independent t-test and data analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used.

4.2 Reliability

To test for reliability and internal consistence, Cronbach's Alpha was therefore utilised. The results produced a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.9 suggest that the items in the instrument (questionnaire) have high internal consistency (55)

Section A: Descriptive statistics

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Under 25	4	2.4
	25-34	10	6.1
	35-44	35	21.3
	45-54	81	49.4
	55 and above	34	20.7
	Total	164	100
Gender	Male	124	75.6
	Female	40	24.4
	Total	164	100
Highest Qualifications	Basic Ambulance Assistant (BAA)	50	30.5
	Ambulance Emergency Assistant (AEA)	82	50
	Emergency Care Technician (ECT)	3	1.8
	Critical Care Assistance (CCA)	6	3.7
	Emergency Care Practitioner (ECP)	23	14
	Total	164	100
Number of years employed in the EMS	0 - 4 years	6	3.7
	5 - 9 years	13	7.9
	10 - 19 years	70	42.7
	20 - 29 years	36	22
	30 years or more	39	23.8
	Total	164	100
Sector within EMS	Operations	75	45.7
	Planned Patient Transport	2	1.2

	Communication Centre	58	35.4
	Officer	12	7.3
	Other	17	10.4
	Total	164	100
Current position	Operational crew/control centre	118	72
	Other	24	14.6
	Shift Leader	10	6.1
	Station Manager	2	1.2
	Sub-District Manager	10	6.1
	Total	164	100

Age (Table 4.1)

Most of the participants (49.4%) were in the age group 45 to 54 years. This was followed by the age group 35-44 years with 21.3%, then age group 50 and above years with 20.7%. The age group 25 to 34 years represented 6.1% and the age group with the least participants was the under 25 years' age group with 2.4%.

Gender (Table 4.1)

Among all the participants in this research, 40 identified as female, which represented 24.4% of the survey and 124 identified as male, representing 75.6% of the survey.

Highest Qualifications (Table 4.1)

Half of all the participants (50%) indicated that their highest qualification was Ambulance Emergency Assistant (AEA), followed by 30.5% with Basic Ambulance Assistant (BAA) as their highest qualification, 4% with Emergency Care Practitioner (ECP) as their highest qualification, 3.7% with Critical Care Assistance (CCA) as their highest qualification and 1.8% with Emergency Care Technician (ECT) as their highest qualification.

Number of years employed in the public sector EMS (Table 4.1)

Most of the participants (42.7%) indicated that they had been employed in the public sector EMS for 10-19 months, while 23.8% indicated that they had been employed in the public sector EMS for 30 years or more. Those who had been employed in the public sector EMS for 20-29 years represented 22% of the sample, and those employed in the public sector EMS for 5-9 years represented 7.9% of the sample. The least represented group was those who have been employed in the public sector EMS for 0-4 years, with 3.7%.

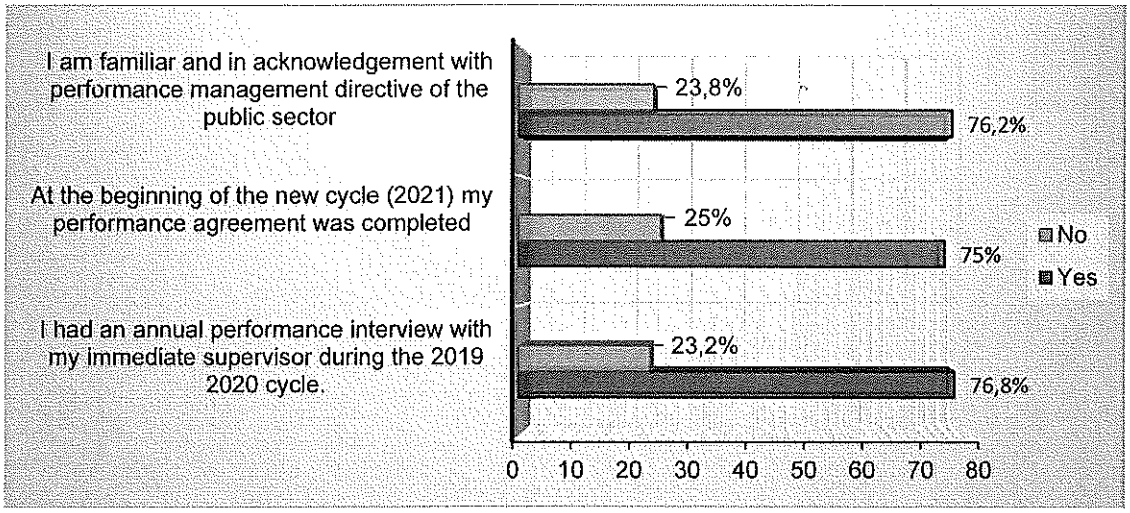
Sector within EMS currently working in (Table 4.1)

45.7% of the participants were working in Operations within the EMS sector, followed 35.4% in the Communication Centre, and 10.4% in other sectors not listed in this survey. 7.3% were Officers and 1.2% worked in the Planned Patient Transport sector.

Current position at work (Table 4.1)

Participants who indicated that their current position was in the Operational crew/control centre were 72% of the total participants. 6.1% indicated that they were Shift Leaders, 6.1% also indicated that their current position was Sub-District Managers. 1.2% were Station Managers and the remaining 14.6% were in other positions not listed in this survey.

Figure 4.1 Performance management



The findings in Figure 4.1 suggest that most of the employees (76.2%) agreed that they were familiar with and in acknowledgement of the performance management directive of the public sector. However, 24.8% indicated that they were unfamiliar with and not in acknowledgement of the performance management directive of the public sector (6).

Concerning the performance agreement, 75% of the employees indicated that their performance agreement was completed at the beginning of the new cycle (2021). Only 25% indicated that their performance agreement was not completed at the beginning of the new cycle (2021). These findings suggest that a quarter of all the employees who participated in this study have not clearly articulated the performance expectations discussed with them.

When asked if they had an annual performance interview with their immediate supervisor during the 2019-2020 cycle, most of the employees (76.8%) acknowledged that annual performance interviews had taken place and 23.2% indicated that no annual performance interviews had taken place with their immediate supervisor during the 2019-2020 cycle.

4.3 Section B: Employee Perceptions of the effectiveness and Fairness of the PMDS

This section of the findings refers to section B of the survey.

Employee Perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS (Figure 4.2)

This section focuses on employees' perception on the effectiveness of the PMDS which is influenced by the three factors, namely, employees' involvement, performance orientated culture, and management commitment.

Employee involvement

Many the employees (40.9%) were of the opinion that there are not involved enough in the development of PMDS, 31.7% agreed that they were involved in the development of PMDS, while 27.4% neither agreed nor disagreed. It is important to point out that a total of 68.3% of the participants indicated that they could not agree that they were involved in the development of the PMDS.

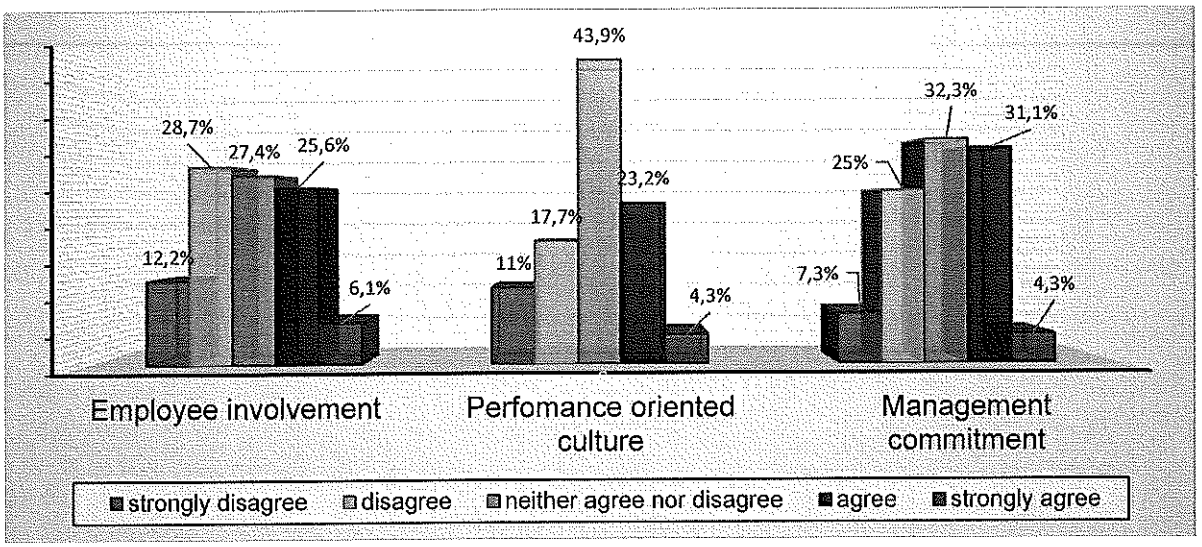
Performance orientated culture

Concerning performance orientated culture, the findings in Figure 4.1 showed that 27.5% acknowledged the presence of a performance orientated culture. 28.7% were of the perception that there is no performance orientated culture, while 43.9% neither agreed nor disagreed. Thus, 72% felt it was neutral or disagreed that it did not inspire confidence in the way the PMDS is being developed and implemented in the eThekwini District.

Management commitment

As shown in Figure 4.1, 35.4% felt that there was management commitment to PMDS, 32.3% were of the view that there was no commitment from management, while 32.3% neither agreed nor disagreed. Thus, 64.6% of the employees failed to agree that there is management commitment to the PMDS which shows that most employees perceive that there was not enough support from management (7).

Figure 4.2 Employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS



Employee Perception on the Fairness of the PMDS

This section focuses on employees' perception on the fairness of the PMDS which is influenced by three factors, namely, employee involvement, employee participation, and employee development.

Employee involvement

As seen in Figure 4.2, 37.8% of the employees indicated that they are involved in the development of the PMDS with 30.5% disagreeing that they are involved in the development of the PMDS, and 31.7% neither agreed nor disagreed.

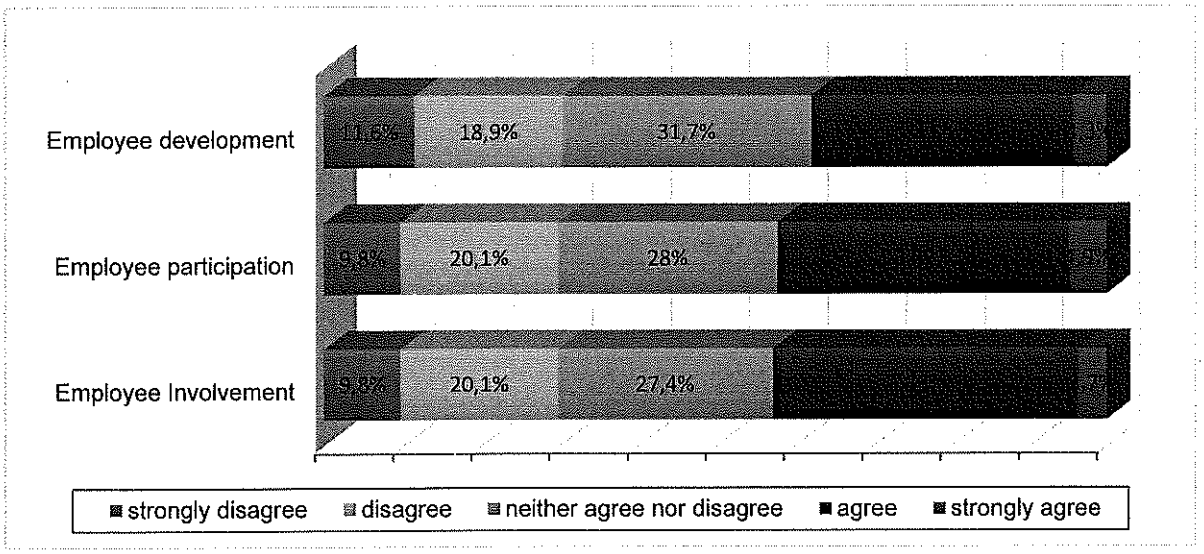
Employee participation

The findings in Figure 4.2 showed that 42.1% acknowledged that there is employee participation, 29.9% believed there is not enough employee participation. 28% neither agreed nor disagreed. These results show that even though many the employees (42.1%) acknowledged that there is employee participation, more than half (57.9%) could not agree that there was employee participation in the development and implementation of the PMDS.

Employee development

The findings on fairness (Figure 4.3) relating to employee development showed that 42.7% of participants either agreed and strongly agreed that there is employee development in the eThekwini District in KZN whilst 29.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 27.4% neither agreed nor disagreed. This finding suggests that 57.3% of the participants felt that more could be done to improve employee development in the eThekwini District.

Figure 4.3 Employees' perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS



4.4 Section C: Comparing the differences in perceptions of the effectiveness and fairness of the PMDS based on demographic variables (age, gender, qualifications, current EMS sector, and current position at work).

Comparing the differences in perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS.

Table 4.2 Independent t-test: Perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on Gender

	F	Sig.	T	df	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	0.386	0.536	0.833	162	0.13445	0.16132
Equal variances not assumed	0	0	0.856	69.05	0.13445	0.15713

The p-value (0.536) is greater than 0.05, and there is no statistically significant difference between male and female employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS. It should be mentioned that there were fewer female participants than male and it is likely that this represents the current demographic in the sector.

Table 4.3 (ANOVA): Perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on Age

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.216	4	1.304	1.688	0.155
Within Groups	122.834	159	0.773		
Total	128.05	163			

The p-value in table 4.9 (0.155) is larger than 0.05 as determined by the one-way ANOVA test results. This infers that there is no statistically significant difference between employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on age and that age does not significantly determine perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS.

Table 4.4 (ANOVA): Perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on Qualifications

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.549	4	1.887	2.49	0.045
Within Groups	120.5	159	0.758		
Total	128.05	163			

There were statistically significant differences between employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on qualifications.

Table 4.5 (ANOVA): Perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on number of years employed in the public sector EMS

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.416	4	0.854	1.089	0.364
Within Groups	124.634	159	0.784		
Total	128.05	163			

Looking at the perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on the number of years employed in the public sector EMS, results showed that there are no statistically significant differences between employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on the number of years employed in the public sector EMS. This was informed by a p-value (0.364) being greater than 0.05.

Table 4.6 (ANOVA): Perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on current EMS sector

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.961	4	1.74	2.285	0.006
Within Groups	121.089	159	0.762		
Total	128.05	163			

There were statistically significant differences between employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on the current EMS sector. These results imply that the

current EMS sector significantly influenced employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS.

Table 4.7 (ANOVA): Perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on current position at work

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.428	4	2.357	3.159	0.016
Within Groups	118.621	159	0.746		
Total	128.05	163			

The analysis of the Variance test on the perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on current positions at work, revealed that there are statistically significant differences between employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS based on their current position at work (p-value (0.016) < 0.05). These results imply that current employees position at work does influence perceptions of the effectiveness of the PMDS.

Comparing the differences in perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS

Table 4.8 Independent t-test: Perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on gender

	F	Sig.	t	df	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	0.784	0.377	1.083	162	0.17375	0.16043
Equal variances not assumed			1.135	71.682	0.17375	0.15303

Table 4.14 shows that the p-value (0.377) is greater than 0.05, which suggests that there is no difference between male and female employees' perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on gender. This means that perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS do not differ based on gender among employees in the eThekwini District in KZN.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Table 4.9 Perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on age

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.664	4	0.416	0.528	0.716
Within Groups	125.349	159	0.788		

Total	127.013	163			

There were no statistically significant differences between employees' perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on age.

Table 4.10 Perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on qualifications

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.49	4	2.623	3.579	0.008
Within Groups	116.523	159	0.733		
Total	127.013	163			

The analysis of variance test / variance test on the perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on qualifications revealed that there are statistically significant differences between employees' perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on their qualifications (p-value (0.008) < 0.05).

Table 4.11 Perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on number of years employed in the public sector EMS

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.204	4	0.801	1.029	0.394
Within Groups	123.809	159	0.779		
Total	127.013	163			

The results showed that there are no statistically significant differences between employees' perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on number of years employed in the public sector EMS.

Table 4.12 Perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on qualifications

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.783	4	3.196	4.448	0.002
Within Groups	114.23	159	0.718		
Total	127.013	163			

There were statistically significant differences between employees' perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on the current EMS sector.

Table 4.13 Perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on current position at work

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.137	4	2.284	3.081	0.018
Within Groups	117.875	159	0.741		
Total	127.013	163			

There were statistically significant differences between employees' perceptions on the fairness of the PMDS based on their current position at work (p-value (0.018) < 0.05).

5. Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This study set out to investigate the perceptions of EMS staff of the PMDS in the eThekwini District. The validated survey considered perceptions of the PMDS, participation in the PMDS, and demographics. The PMDS system used in the eThekwini District was implemented by the South African government to improve service delivery in public institutions, and it should be viewed as a tool to render quality emergency care and improve service delivery. As discussed in the literature review, there are various characteristics that ensure the successful implementation and management of performance (section 2.3.). Fairness and inclusivity are two important characteristics.

5.2 PMDS as a collaborative process

A PMDS is more effective when it follows a collaborative process where the employee and manager are committed to setting and adhering to objectives that are aligned with the organisation or business unit's overarching objectives. It was found that 40.9% of employees stated that they were not involved in the process, with 27.4% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (Figure 4.2). This is despite the fact that 76.2% of employees indicated that they are familiar with the process, and 24.8% stated that they are not familiar with the PMDS. This implies that approximately a quarter of the eThekwini EMS staff are not setting objectives that are aligned with their organisation's imperatives. This has implications on training and development needs and the functioning of the organisation.

5.3 Manager involvement

It does seem that the manager commitment may play a role in how the PMDS is implemented and only 35% of participants stated that there is management commitment. Other studies have suggested that management involvement plays a vital role in the implementation, feedback mechanisms, and subsequent employee buy-in. 35.4% felt that there is management commitment to the PMDS, 32.3% were of the view that there is no commitment from management, while 32.3% neither agreed nor disagreed. The fact that 64.6% of the employees failed to agree that there is management commitment to the PMDS shows that a large number of employees perceive that there is not enough support from management. A perceived lack of management commitment to the PMDS may result in demotivated employees who do not believe in the outcomes of the PMDS. It can lead to mistrust between management and employees where some employees may feel that the PMDS is used to penalize them by their supervisors. This may also emanate from a lack of meaningful involvement of employees in the development and implementation of the PMDS.

5.4 Number of neutral responses as a concern

The number of responses that were neutral (neither agreed nor disagreed) are also significant as it may point towards the employees not knowing enough about the PMDS to have an opinion or it is just likely that the responders were truly neutral on the question asked. A clear understanding of the PMDS by the employees and managers is critical for an organisation to administer performance management effectively and to align employees' performance with the organisation's ultimate goals.

5.5 Fairness

Another objective about the perceptions regarding fairness was to investigate the EMS staff perception of the effectiveness and fairness of the PMDS in the eThekwini District. Results showed that 62.2% of EMS staff in the eThekwini District perceived that the PMDS is not effective and fair (Figure 4.2). These findings are in line with (7) (57) who also found that public sector employees perceive the PMDS to be ineffective. There are various potential reasons for this which could include the lack of management commitment (figure 4.2), the lack of collaborative participation and the lack of aligning development or training needs with organisation's vision. This fits with other studies that have perceived the PMDS not to be beneficial, being too complex, and not having benefits (13) (16) (57) (58).

As discussed in the literature review (section 2.11) there are four categories of justice and how employees feel about the outcomes of the evaluation in relation to their performance is called distributive justice. Procedural justice relates to the rating technique and procedure. Employee involvement in the PMDS may have an impact on how they perceive the fairness of the process. In this case, it appears that employees may feel that distributive and procedural justice is inaccurate.

5.6 Influence of demographic factors on perceptions about PMDS

Another aim was to compare the differences in perceptions based on demographic variables (age, gender, qualifications, current EMS sector, and current position at work, and number of years employed in the public sector EMS). There were no statistically significant differences in employees' perceptions of the effectiveness and fairness of the PMDS based on age, gender, and number of years employed in the public sector EMS.

However, there were statistically significant differences between qualifications, current EMS sector, and current position at work. The analysis revealed that Emergency Care Technicians (ECT) were more likely to feel that PMDS are ineffective compared to employees with other qualifications. Station managers were more likely to feel that the PMDS are ineffective compared to employees in other position in the EMS sector. ECT were likely to feel that PMDS is not fair compared to employees with other qualifications. Station managers were more likely

to feel that the PMDS is unfair compared to employees in other positions in the EMS sector and the communication centre was likely to feel that the PMDS is unfair compared to employees in other EMS sectors. The findings regarding current positions at work are in line with another similar study that showed there was a statistical significant between employees occupying general positions compared to those in managerial and professional positions (7).

This finding is meaningful as it suggests that different qualifications, positions and sectors may perceive that they are treated differently by the management team. This finding could not be confirmed by other studies.

These findings are not surprising since 64.6% of the employees failed to agree that there is management commitment to the PMDS (Figure 4.2). The findings are supported by others who argued that poor leadership and management in the implementation of the PMDS leads to employee demotivation in the South African public sector. Management commitment is directly associated with the effectiveness of PMDS (36).

This study also found that perceptions on the fairness and effectiveness of the PMDS differ based on the specific sector. It is not uncommon for employees to view their department as the most important in the organisation. Such internal organisational dynamics may lead to competition between departments and lead to perceptions that some departments are more important than others. If not kept in check, such developments may cultivate mistrust and perceptions that the PMDS is not fair and therefore ineffective.

5.7 PMDS Cycles

The findings showed that 25% of the participants indicated that their performance agreement was not completed at the beginning of the new cycle (Figure 4.1). This implies that a quarter of the participants have not had an outline of work expectations and/or an agreement regarding expectations. It helps the managers to understand how to monitor and evaluate employee's performance and give a score during performance appraisals (7).

These findings suggest that 25% of employees in the EThekwini EMS will be evaluated on performance that was not collaboratively set at the beginning of the performance cycle. This is in line with the study by Madlabana which confirmed that even though the performance management system is implemented to some extent, there are still some loopholes. It is further supported by other studies that performance management is not effectively implemented (23)(58). Furthermore, the management and employees do not set performance targets at the beginning of the performance period. This further implies that 25% of employee performance in the EThekwini EMS may not be aligned to their organisation's objectives, which may lead

to organisational objectives not being met. Performance management plays an important role in the development of employees. 25% of the employees in the EThekwini EMS have not indicated their development needs, therefore, this will further hamper the achievement of the organisational objectives (9).

The South African directives state that the major focus of performance management should be developmental, allowing for appropriate reactions to repeatedly poor performance as well as recognition of exceptional performance (17).

Service delivery is influenced by organisational culture. When there is a culture of mistrust in the PMDS, it will not be effective. The organisation must reflect on the PMDS in order to achieve a balance of effective performance and sustainability. Therefore, PMDS is both a strategy and an integrated system for obtaining good outcomes through working as a group or individual in an organization.

5.8 Implications

This study has revealed deficiencies in the development and implementation of the PMDS. These include but are not limited to the lack of familiarity with the performance management directives of the public sector, incomplete agreements, incomplete annual performance reviews (Figure 4.1), lack of employee involvement in the development of PMDS, and a lack of management commitment to PMDS (Figure 4.2 & 4.3).

Most of the employees' sentiments indicated that the PMDS is ineffective and fair (Figure 4.2 & 4.3). The findings imply that there is a need for improvement in terms of employee involvement, employee participation, and employee development to ensure the effectiveness and fairness of a PMDS (Figure 4.2 & 4.3). Findings also relayed that employees feel that there is not enough management commitment to PMDS. If a PMDS is to be effective, managers should show commitment to the PMDS.

These results show that even though (42.1%) acknowledged that there is employee participation, more than half (57.9%) could not agree that there is employee participation in the development and implementation of PMDS.

This study has successfully uncovered and described the deficiencies in the administration of PMDS in the eThekwini EMS sector; this is suggestive of poor policy implementation with regards to the PMDS by this sector. This may result in poor service delivery as performance management is central for responding adequately to service delivery.

6. CHAPTER 6: Conclusions, recommendations and limitations

6.1 Conclusions

Managers who are tasked with handling performance management, need to fully understand their roles and responsibilities in the development and implementation of a PMDS. Several shortcomings in the PMDS in eThekwini have been demonstrated; these shortcomings impact how the PMDS is perceived by employees and it may impact their productivity and perceptions regarding the fairness of the PMDS. It appears that there is room for improvement in how a PMDS is implemented, starting with manager commitment and employee participation (Figure 4.2). There is a statistically significant difference relating to qualification, sector, and position.

However, it starts with management, and the findings highlighted a lack of management commitment to the PMDS and an absence of a performance orientated organisational culture. A performance orientated organisational culture is a requirement for creating a favourable environment for the effective development and implementation of a PMDS. Management needs to inspire and cultivate a performance orientated culture in an organisation to ensure effective performance management.

6.2 Recommendations

These findings suggest that more needs to be done to improve the involvement of employees in the development of PMDS. Encouraging management commitment to PMDS and cultivating a performance orientated culture in performance management can go a long way to enhance the participation and involvement of employees in the development of PMDS.

Findings also suggest that more needs to be done to improve employee development in the eThekwini district. Clearly articulating and discussing performance expectations with employees and making sure that annual performance interviews are carried out on time, can improve employee development.

6.3 Limitations

Limitation: The study was done in one urban district, and the same study could be repeated in other districts to see if there will be similar findings in their EMS organisations. Findings may differ in other districts or rural settings.

Recommendation for future research:

Future research could include a mixed method study to develop a better understanding of the effective management of a PMDS from key stakeholders. Another possible study could be to explore the barriers to the implementation of PMDS studies.

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8. List of appendices

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