PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OF VETERINARIANS: A CASE STUDY OF VETERINARY SERVICES IN THE EASTERN CAPE

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother and late father whose desire for education knew no bounds, who without any formal education themselves sacrificed a lot to ensure their sons got a decent education.

Integrative Summary

In recent years, challenging economic conditions have stressed organizations, some to breaking point. Rather than waiting for external improvements, such as market growth or technological advances, many organizations are looking internally for performance and productivity gains (Boxall and Purcell, 2003). Consequently, the concept of performance management is receiving increased attention as a route to improved results and organisational growth (Boxall and Purcell, 2003). Likewise, increasing public pressure on governments to improve service delivery and account for the public purse have also forced many governments worldwide to implement a performance management system in one form or another (Ohemeng, 2009; Cameron and Sewell, 2003; Williams, 2005; Sehested, 2008). The South African Public Service has undergone much transformation since 2000. The transformation has been motivated by the Government's realisation that, as with governments throughout the world, there is a need to modernise and professionalise all spheres of Government.

The guiding principles for this transformation are contained in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995) and the Batho Pele White Paper (1997). This has informed the Public Service Act: Act 32 of 2000 of which stipulates that public service organisations should have a performance management system to promote a culture of performance management amongst all staff. The performance management system must ensure that the public service administers its affairs in an economical, effective, efficient and accountable manner. Whereas performance management systems have been in existence in some parts of the world since the early 1970s (Armstrong and Baron, 2005), in the Eastern Cape Provincial Government (ECPG) the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) can be considered to still be in its infancy stage. It was introduced slightly over a decade ago, with the objective of managing performance in a consultative, supportive and non-discriminatory manner (ECPG, 2001). The PMDS also aims to provide clarity to all employees on their role in the achievement of departmental and provincial goals. This was anticipated to result in enhanced organisational efficiency and effectiveness, accountability for the use of resources and the achievement of results (ECPG, 2001).

A literature review contained in this research indicates that internationally and locally, implementing performance management systems is beset with challenges such as conflicting interests between different groups such as professionals wanting autonomy, organisational culture, poor implementation, lack of capacity and resources, lack of institutional and leadership support, changing workplace environments and many others. However it has also been shown that performance management systems are one way of ensuring that employees are focused, goals are met and organisation move forward toward meeting their mission.

This research, which has been grounded within a post positivist paradigm, describes the impact of the PMDS on veterinarians in their professional conduct. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten veterinarians within the Department, culminating in a total of seven and a half hours of interviewing time.

The findings of this study were that the PMDS was minimally effective in achieving organisational goals and mission because of several reasons such as inconsistency in application, perceived unfairness, a lack of ownership of the system amongst workers and management, a lack of involvement, a dichotomy between policy and actual practice, geographical remoteness of subordinates resulting in dilution of information and influence, lack of resources and finally, the type and validity of indicators used.

A significant finding was that having a non-veterinarian as a supervisor, impacted negatively on professional conduct. This was perceived to affect planning and goal setting, review and feedback discussions, as well as career advancement.

The research ends with recommendations for practice and further research such as exploring management of professionals in multidisciplinary organisations. This research paper is organised and presented in three sections; the first section is in the format of an academic paper, and in addition to a concise review of the literature, will detail the findings, their discussion and conclusion. The second section contains a more expanded literature review of performance management of professionals and the third and last section describes and justifies the design of the study and how it was conducted.

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I hope this research will contribute to the body of knowledge on management of professional workers.

Dr Gabriel Mutero

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SECTION 1: THE ACADEMIC PAPER: Performance Management of Veterinarians: A Case Study of Veterinary Services In the Eastern Cape

1.1 Abstract

Performance management has become a key element in modern public sector governance. As a result, many developing countries have introduced it as a means to measure organizational and individual efficiency in order to ensure that public sector organizations meet the needs of the public. However, the implementation of performance management systems in many of these countries has been affected by a number of institutional and capacity constraints such as culture, institutional fragmentation, public apathy, and leadership support, thus making it difficult for many of them to realize the 'benefits' of such a system. This article examines the impact of a performance management system on the professional conduct of veterinarians with a focus on Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture in South Africa. Utilizing information obtained from interviews of ten veterinarians it was concluded that the performance management system was not achieving its intended outcomes because of several reasons such as inconsistency, perceived unfairness, a lack of ownership amongst workers and management, a lack of involvement, a dichotomy between policy and actual practice, the geographical remoteness of subordinates, which resulted in a dilution of information and influence, lack of capacity and resources and the type and validity of indicators used.

The major finding was that having a non-veterinarian as a supervisor impacted negatively on professional conduct. This was perceived to affect planning and goal setting, review and feedback discussions and career advancement. It was also noted that having a non-veterinarian as a supervisor resulted in a greater chance for role conflict and role ambiguity.

1.2 Introduction

Whereas performance management systems have been in existence in some parts of the world since the early 1970s (Armstrong and Baron, 2005), in the Eastern Cape Provincial Government (ECPG) the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) can be considered to still be in its infancy stage. It was introduced slightly over a decade ago, with the objective of managing performance in a consultative, supportive and non-discriminatory manner (ECPG, 2001). Several elements have been built into the PMDS to allow for transparency, accountability, fairness, equity and alignment of departmental, team and individual plans to the attainment of provincial goals (ECPG, 2001). The PMDS also aims to provide clarity to all employees on their role in the achievement of departmental and provincial goals. This was anticipated to result in enhanced organisational efficiency and effectiveness, accountability for the use of resources and the achievement of results (ECPG, 2001). Also linked to the PMDS is recognition of performance through monetary and non monetary rewards and mechanisms to develop non performing employees (ECPG, 2001). The policy identifies the main objective of the PMDS as to improve service delivery through enhanced management of performance (ECPG, 2001).

Developments within the ECPG are consistent with international trends. In recent years, challenging economic conditions have stressed organizations, some to the breaking point. Rather than waiting for external improvements, such as market growth or technological advances, many organizations are looking internally for performance and productivity gains (Boxall and Purcell, 2003). Consequently, the concept of performance management has received increased attention as a route to improved results and organisational growth (Boxall and Purcell, 2003). Likewise, increasing public pressure on governments to improve service delivery and account for the public purse, have also forced many governments worldwide to implement a performance management system in one form or another (Ohemeng, 2009; Cameron and Sewell, 2003; Williams, 2005; Sehested, 2008). The literature identifies the key requirements of a successful performance management system as being: alignment of the performance management system and the existing systems and strategies of the organisation; leadership commitment; a supportive culture in which it is seen as a way of improving and identifying good performance and not a

burden that is used to chastise poor performers; stakeholder involvement; and continuous monitoring, feedback, dissemination and learning from results (De Waal, 2003; Franco and Bourne, 2003; Wang and Berman, 2001).

A study by Kotter and Heskert (2005) found that companies that instituted performance enhancing cultures, including setting up a robust and relevant performance management system, in all the major financial categories, significantly outperformed those organisations without such a culture. In an effort to introduce private sector managerialism to the public service, performance management has become a key element in modern public sector governance. As a result, many developing countries have introduced it as a means to measure organizational and individual efficiency in order to ensure that public sector organizations meet the needs of the public (Ohemeng, 2009; Williams, 2005). However, the implementation of performance management systems in many of these countries has been constrained by a number of institutional and capacity constraints such as culture, institutional fragmentation, public apathy, and leadership support, thus making it difficult for many of them to realize the benefits of such a system (Ohemeng, 2009). Although performance management in the public sector continues to draw much attention from scholars, there is no consensus on whether it enhances organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and public accountability (Ohemeng, 2009). A common issue arising in performance management systems is conflict between different interest groups all wanting autonomy, including departments and professional bodies (Radin, 2003). Managing the performance of professional staff presents certain unique challenges.

Professionals are identified by a foundation on specialised training and a high degree of autonomy in performance of their duties. It was the hypothesis of this study that professionals due to their autonomy would encounter conflict in their workplaces created by managerial tools such as a performance management system that seeks to control and direct their work. Under a performance management system professionalism as a governing principle is replaced by managerialism as an alternative governing principle (Boland and Fowler, 2000; Sehested, 2002.)

This research will seek to explore how the PMDS affects the ability of the veterinarian to conduct him/herself both professionally and as a manager. The objectives of this study were threefold: Firstly, to evaluate the effectiveness of the

PMDS as a managerial tool for veterinarians to help them manage their subordinates, including both professional and support staff. Secondly, to evaluate the effectiveness of the PMDS from the perspective of the veterinarian as a subordinate. Thirdly, to analyse the functioning and effectiveness of the PMDS - in creating and resolving role conflict that may arise between professional conduct and organisational requirements.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Performance management

Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk and Schenk, (2003) have defined performance management as an on-going process involving the planning, managing, reviewing, rewarding and development of performance. Armstrong and Baron (2005) have defined performance management and clarifies its purpose as follows “a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance. As such, it establishes a shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to leading and developing people which will ensure that it is achieved. A strategy which relates to every activity of the organisation set in the context of its human resource policies, culture, style and communication systems.” Armstrong and Baron (2005) go on to say PM should be effective, strategic and integrated. Performance management is an important area in the organisation as it can result in improvements in performance, accountability, transparency, quality of service and value for money (Fryer, Anthony and Ogden, 2009). Carried out well, PM is a powerful tool to focus activity and effort and enhance organisational performance. It can be used to change work behaviours and motivate employees towards attaining corporate goals and mission (Spangenberg, 1994). Poorly implemented, it can disengage staff, foster unproductive activities, waste effort and misdirect rewards (Armstrong and Baron, 2005). An effective performance management system must also be integrated into other human resource processes and must reduce role ambiguity by clearly stipulating what needs to be done and by whom (Armstrong and Baron, 2005; Spangenberg, 1994).

In practice, performance management has both beneficial and adverse effects. Empirical research shows that performance management is an incentive for

productivity; it contributes to the legitimacy of an organisation; it may stimulate learning processes and generates information that may enhance an organization's intelligence (De Bruijn, 2002). However, there are also a number of adverse effects. Performance management might lead to 'game playing' or strategic behaviour and therefore to production-on-paper rather than professionally relevant production (De Bruijn 2002). It can disincentivise innovations and lead to optimization of input. Performance management may also cause loss of professionalism, may bureaucratize, and can be a toy for managers rather than a lively instrument for professionals (De Bruijn, 2002; Meyer and Gupta, 1994; and Smith, 1993).

Traditionally, performance management has been the responsibility of the immediate supervisor (Barnes-Farrell, 2001; Cardy and Dobbins, 1994; Latham and Wexley, 1994). However, changes in the workplace have made it harder for supervisors to be effective managers of others' performance. Specific trends affecting performance management include decentralized workforces, enlarged spans of control, lack of direct experience in the particular job under review, and evolving performer expectations (Fletcher, 2001). Decentralization and remote work sites mean supervisors are often not able to directly observe subordinates, making it difficult for them to credibly manage performance in the traditional sense. Downsizing and flattening of organizations are other recognized trends in business (Barnes-Farrell, 2001; Latham and Wexley,1994). As organizations get flatter, spans of control get larger and managers voice concern that they do not have enough time to monitor the performance of all the subordinates reporting to them.

Another concern is the increasing likelihood of managers never having held one or more of the positions that report to them. Without the expertise, knowledge, and understanding that come with having performed the work, offering feedback may be a challenge and the credibility of feedback is suspect (Coens and Jenkins, 2000). Managers who have successfully performed the work themselves are better suited to recognize performance from others and provide more relevant feedback compared to those who have not.

1.3.2 Performance Management in the Public Sector

Performance management has become a key element in modern public sector governance. As a result, many developing countries have introduced it as a means

to measure organizational and individual efficiency in order to ensure that public sector organizations meet the needs of the public (Ohemeng, 2009; Williams, 2005). However, the implementation of performance management systems in many of these countries has been affected by a number of institutional and capacity constraints such as culture, institutional fragmentation, public apathy, and leadership support, thus making it difficult for many of them to realize the benefits of such a system (Ohemeng, 2009). Performance management in the public sector continues to draw much attention from scholars, yet there is no consensus on whether it enhances organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and public accountability (Ohemeng, 2009).

It has been argued that performance management leads to managerial freedom or autonomy. That is, freedom from unnecessary bureaucratic constraints, and that such autonomy enhances performance (Bouckaert *et al*., 2002; Larbi, 2006; Meier and Hill, 2005; Norman and Gregory, 2003; Verhoest, 2003). Managerial freedom is the freedom to choose how to pursue a goal once it has been set by others; that is, operational autonomy, as distinct from strategic autonomy, which is the freedom to set one's own agenda (Bailyn, 1988; Thynne and Wettenhall, 2004; Verhoest *et al*., 2004). To scholars who believe in managerial freedom, the traditional bureaucratic organization encapsulates public managers, creating a 'bureaucratic web' that leads them to be less innovative and accountable. Hence, such managers follow rules that hinder the effective and efficient use of resources and the delivery of service. Furthermore, they claim that rules-bound organizations lead to bureaucratic inertia among workers. Accountability seems to be the area many believe the introduction of performance management would most profoundly improve (Berman and Wang, 2000; Heinrich, 2002; Osborne *et al*., 1995; Talbot, 2005; Wholey, 1999). Some authors such as de Bruijn (2007) are of the view that measuring performance is a graceful way of calling an organization to account, while Heinrich (2002) says that accountability is the central concern of public sector performance measurement. A third issue that seems to have put PM on the radar screen of administrative reform is efficiency (Talbot, 2005). Since the 1960s, the public bureaucracy has been criticized for inefficient management of the public purse and service delivery (Tullock *et al*., 2002; Wolf, 1993). Both wings of the political divide, as well as academics supported this criticism, which reached its zenith in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when some politicians unequivocally blamed the bureaucracy for all the woes of the state

(Osborne and Plastrick, 1997; Stiglitz, 2003). In fact it was claimed by many during that era, that the public sector organization was the root of all societal evil, and that it should be banished or tamed (Osborne and Plastrick, 1997; Stiglitz, 2003). Thus, in most countries performance management was introduced to ensure that scarce resources are used appropriately. Unfortunately, performance management has not been the success in the public sector that it was predicted to be, with mixed results in various parts of the world (Rademan and Vos, 2001; Fryer, Anthony and Ogden, 2009; Ohemeng, 2009).

1.3.3 Professionalism and Managerialism

Managerialism is the belief that organizations have more similarities than differences, and thus the performance of all organisations can be optimised by the application of generic management skills and theory (Adcroft and Willis, 2005). Along with *controlling* and *coordinating, directing* is one of the oldest and most common words used to describe managerial work. Among other things, directing means issuing directives, delegating tasks, and authorizing decisions (Mintzberg, 1998). However this idea of managerialism can clash with professionalism.

A professional is a member of a vocation that is founded upon specialized educational training and is characterised by a high degree of autonomy (Callahan, 1988, West, 2004). Because of the personal and confidential nature of many professional services and thus the necessity to place a great deal of trust in them, most professionals are held accountable according to strict ethical and moral regulations and their conduct is governed by a code of conduct enforced by their professional bodies (Mintzberg, 1998, Nanda, 2003). Many, if not all, professions place a high value on ethical conduct. Professionals working in organisations that are perceived to have a low regard for ethics should therefore experience occupational-organisational conflict leading to lower organisational commitment. Professional organizations-for example, consulting firms and hospitals- are structured around the work of highly trained individuals who know what they have to do and just do it. Such professionals hardly need in-house procedures or time-study analysts to tell them how to do their jobs (Mintzberg, 1998, West, 2004). That fundamental reality challenges many preconceptions about management and leadership (Mintzberg, 1998). So much of the classic literature on management has

been about the need for controlling, which is about designing systems, creating structures, and making choices. There are plenty of systems in professions, all meant to control the work, but they are systems inherent to the profession not to management. The profession itself, not the manager, supplies much of the structure and coordination (Mintzberg, 1998). In organizations and professions where standard operating routines are applied, the experts work largely alone, free of the need to coordinate with their colleagues. This happens almost automatically. This can be ably illustrated by a surgical procedure during which the various team players are able to coordinate their various efforts, hardly exchanging a word because of the standardization of their skills and by what they were trained to expect from each other (Mintzberg, 1998). This raises questions such as do managers of professional workers have control over them, do they need to supervise them in the traditional way of supervision? Most professional workers require little direct supervision from managers. What they do need is protection and support, and so their managers have to pay a lot of attention to managing the boundary conditions of the organisation (Mintzberg, 1998; West, 2003).

1.3.4 Performance Management of professionals

A common issue arising in performance management systems is conflict between different interest groups all wanting autonomy, including departments and professional bodies (Radin, 2003). Managing the performance of professional staff presents certain unique challenges. Professionals work for more than money. They also want to make a contribution and grow in their fields. Organisational structures (like a performance management system) should help them grow and achieve these goals (Mintzberg, 1998) but do not always do so. Furthermore, a professional such as a veterinarian is a member of a vocation that is founded upon specialized educational training. Because of the personal and confidential nature of many professional services and thus the necessity to place a great deal of trust in them, most professionals are held accountable according to strict ethical and moral regulations and their conduct is governed by a code of conduct enforced by their professional bodies (Mintzberg, 1998, Nanda, 2003). Veterinarians belong to the South African Veterinary Council whose code of conduct stipulates how they should render their service (SAVC, 2005).

During the development of the European welfare states, professionals were integrated into the large bureaucratic public organisations, and professionalism became an important governing principle. It was argued that with the integration in bureaucracies, professions could maybe maintain the technical control (of methods) in their work but they would lose their ideological control (of goals and principles) and the result would be an ideological proletarisation of professions (Derber, 1996). Later studies of professionals in large bureaucratic organisations showed that it certainly was not the end of the professions (Sehested, 2002). The result of this process was a relatively autonomous role for professionals in public organisations and the development of a professionalised bureaucracy (Freidson, 1984, cited in Sehested, 2002). Professionalism and bureaucratisation were intertwined in order to avoid conflicts and to secure stability, continuity and consensus in the production of welfare services.

Podsakoff, Williams and Todor, (1986) define formalisation as the control of job activities by administrative rules and procedures (such as a PMDS). It is traditionally argued that structural formalization arouses conflict between administrative imperatives and professional norms (Organ *et al*., 1981). In their study Podsakoff *et al.* (1986) found that while increased formalization did not directly affect feelings of alienation it did increase role conflict, decrease role ambiguity and enhanced organizational identification. They discuss how formalization can have conflicting effects in the areas of role stress and alienation (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1986). From a professional perspective formalisation, has the potential to reduce autonomy and to render a professional's contribution to larger ends less meaningful (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1986). Autonomy is evident in a job when it provides substantial freedom and independence and discretion to the individual in scheduling work and determining the procedures to be used in carrying out tasks (Ohemeng, 2009). Formalization can contravene professional norms of autonomy and control by expertise and collegial influence (Boland and Fowler, 2000; Sehested, 2002; Podsakoff *et al*., 1986). It can erode norms and create alienation by undermining professional standards (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1986). Mintzberg, (1998), states that professional workers respond to inspiration, not supervision. He goes on to say the profession itself, not the manager, supplies most of the structures and coordination required. Formalised conditions lead ultimately to self-estrangement, in which the professional views the job as preventing the expression of his or her full potential (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1986).

However some authors, like Hall (1968) (as cited in Podsakoff, 1986), said a rigid hierarchy might even facilitate the work of professionals if it leads to improved coordination and communication.

1.3.5 Role Conflict

A role is defined as a pattern of behaviours (Ilgen and Hollenbeck, 1991), and role conflict occurs when there is incompatibility between the expected set of behaviours perceived by the focal person and those perceived by role senders (Nel *et al.*, 2008). An individual's experience of receiving incompatible or conflicting requests (role conflict) and/or the lack of enough information to carry out his/her job (role ambiguity) are causes of role stress (Nel *et al*. 2008). There is potential role conflict when organisational expectations of professionals are not in line with professional code expectations (Ilgen and Hollenbeck, 1991; Nel *et al*. 2008).

Role expectations are defined as how others believe an individual should act in a given role (Nel *et al.,* 2008). Role perception refers to how we believe we should act out our roles (Nel *et al.,* 2008). It is the expectation of this research that veterinarians may experience a discrepancy between role expectations (from the organisation) and their own perceptions as professionals of how they should fulfil their roles. This discrepancy could cause a lot of frustration and tension in the work environment. For example, most professionals know what to do, how to do it and when to do it when it comes to performing their duties. Organisational demands through a PMDS may place certain demands on the professional that are incompatible with professional norms and this may create conflict.

Veterinarians in the public sector are called on to engage in multiple roles simultaneously: veterinarian (professional), manager, subordinate, and colleague. As a professional veterinarian they are expected to discharge their professional (animal health) duties. As a manager the vet has to plan and set goals for subordinates, monitor and evaluate their performance and report on such activities. As a subordinate, the veterinarian allows his or her work to be monitored by the supervisor (mostly through PMDS and other structures), and discusses issues related to professional growth. As a colleague, the vet participates in responsible, ethical peer relationships with the manager, with other staff members, and with the profession as a whole. Each of these roles carries specific expectations for the veterinarian’s behaviour. The expectations may originate with the manager, within

the work environment, within the organisation, or within the profession. Because the expectations associated with these roles are numerous and diverse, veterinarians are likely to encounter difficulties fulfilling these roles and attending to them simultaneously.

There is very little local research on managing professional workers and the roles of structures and systems like PMDS in their professional conduct. This research will seek to explore how the PMDS affects the ability of the veterinarian to conduct him/herself both professionally and as a manager.

1.4. Research Method

1.4.1. Research Methodology

This research is an evaluation research study. According to Babbie (2008) evaluation research includes research that is undertaken for the purpose of determining the impact of a social intervention, which in this study is the PMDS. The research adopted a post positivist approach (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, a deductive approach (Babbie, 2008:49) was followed, exploring the applicability of deductions from accepted premises (theory) on performance management and organisational behaviour, to the case of veterinarians.

1.4.2. Sampling

There are 41 veterinarians in total in the Veterinary Services Programme of the Eastern Cape. Ten veterinarians were selected to make up the sample based on several criteria such as at least four years working for the public service and using the PMDS, and holding a managerial or supervisory position. Convenience sampling was used because of ease of access to participants and to manage the costs of conducting interviews.

1.4.3. Data collection

Primary data was collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions {according to Babbie (2008), Weiss (1998) and Saunders (2000)}. There were a total of 20 questions prepared (Appendix 1) but some questions were not asked in some interviews. The total duration of each interview was on average about forty five minutes. Participants were phoned and emailed beforehand to ensure their availability and to schedule appointments. A total of ten veterinarians

were interviewed, during a period of two months in October 2011 and November 2011. The total interview time was seven and half hours and resulted in a written summary of about twenty five pages. Almost more than half of the interviewees did not give permission to have their interviewees recorded, and notes had to be made of these instead.

1.4.4. Data analysis

According to Babbie and Mouton (2003: 490), there is no one "neat and tidy approach…" to qualitative data analysis. Weiss (1998) says the aim of analysis is to convert a mass of raw data into a coherent account and goes on to suggest a logical process for qualitative data analysis which was used in this study. Data was analysed by describing the nature of PMDS, comparing how close it is to the original plan, ruling out rival explanations, interpreting through deducting from theory, and fashioning recommendations (Weiss, 1998). Data was also analysed through discovering and describing patterns and through explanation building (Babbie, 2008). The patterns may point to a theoretical understanding of the PMDS in the context of managing professionals.

1.5 Results/Findings

The objectives of this study were threefold: That is, firstly to evaluate the effectiveness of the PMDS as a managerial tool for veterinarians to manage their subordinates, including both professional and support staff. Secondly, to evaluate the effectiveness of the PMDS from the perspective of the veterinarian as a subordinate. Thirdly, to analyse the functioning and effectiveness of the PMDS in creating and resolving role conflict between professional conduct and organisational requirements.

The findings are presented in three sections in the same order as the objectives highlighted above.

1.5.1 PMDS as a managerial tool

This section will report on the findings to evaluate the effectiveness of PMDS as a managerial tool for veterinarians. Most respondents alluded to the fact that PMDS is

supposed to be a tool to help them manage, increase productivity, efficiency and accountability. They said properly implemented it should result in focusing all resources towards a common goal. However there was a general feeling that the current PMDS is not effective in achieving its intended outcomes or organisational goals and mission for several reasons, including a poor understanding of how to implement the system, a lack of leadership, non-uniformity in applying the system across various sections of the department, short termism, the type of indicators used, a lack of ownership of the process, lack of involvement of employees and so forth. These findings were further classified into themes and will be presented under these themes.

1.5.1.1 Rigidity

Unfortunately many respondents felt the system was not effective as a managerial tool for several reasons. While the system helped to plan work and set targets for the year, this also promoted rigidity to the extent that some workers were not flexible to deviate from the pre-agreed key performance areas, to for example, accommodate new challenges that arise during the year. One respondent had this say:

"*At the present moment, PMDS is not achieving its intended outcomes. Many employees are failing to adhere to the agreements and a large number have a negative attitude towards the system altogether making it difficult to effectively manage performance. Though problems of underperformance can be identified the supervisor is in most cases unable to take corrective action without being seen as 'punitive' by the concerned subordinate. Most employees are failing to get adequate training as per their PDP requirements because in most cases the organisation is said to be having insufficient resources to train staff.'*

1.5.1.2 Consistency

It was noted that some of the factors limiting its usefulness as a management tool are its subjectivity and unfairness. There is general feeling that the system is not applied fairly in the directorate and even across the department. Some respondents mentioned that this has an effect of undermining some managers especially if they are seen to be strict with awards. One veterinarian had this to say:

'We have cases of some managers being generous with high scores whereas others will only award a merit if a subordinate walks on water literally. This makes it difficult for some supervisors to then apply the system objectively and consistently and thereby lose control over their subordinates. Eventually we end up with a system where managers just average out the scores either for compliance's sake or to fit in with the crowd"

Respondents were of the opinion that Human Resource Management Department (HR) was supposed to be the watchdog of this process to ensure that the system is applied uniformly and consistently across the department. While individual managers might not have an overall picture of how the system is progressing in the department HR being the custodian of the system are supposed to have a bird's eye view of the process and should try and iron out any inconsistences.

1.5.1.3 Distance

Another thing that made PMDS difficult to use as an effective managerial tool, is the distance between supervisors and subordinates. In as much as they can plan together for the following year, it is quite difficult to supervise the subordinates in a practical sense with supervisors having to rely on reports coming from the subordinates. This challenge was more pertinent with professional workers than with non-professional workers. Most vets have animal health technicians who report to them and work in distant offices. In such cases supervision is through weekly work-plans which the subordinates submit to the supervisor in advance for approval. In such cases the vets said they don't have direct supervision and control on whether and how the work has been done other than to rely on monthly reports from the subordinates. One veterinarian had this to say about the difficulty of supervising professional workers:

"*Yes there are challenges, the organisation is expanding and [the] distance between me and some of my subordinates is getting long, meaning I do not have direct supervision and maybe even control over them. In fact the distance has always been long with some of my technicians working in distant districts. In such cases I think motivation should be from the employee herself."*

1.5.1.4 Span of control

Another aspect that was mentioned during interviews is the increasing span of control in the workplace. Vets are findings themselves having to manage a diverse range of skilled personnel. One vet who is head of a veterinary laboratory highlighted this challenge as he had various vet technologists who report to him but he does not have control of how they work. They set their own KPAs, own targets and all he does is to facilitate the provision of resources that they need to accomplish their goals. In other words, they know what they have to do and what is expected of them and simply do it.

1.5.1.5 Lack of involvement

The respondents also highlighted lack of involvement in the initial planning process of the departmental strategy and setting of annual targets. They felt the process was just forced onto them and they were given targets without knowing their origin, or how they were arrived at. As supervisors they felt this made managing of staff difficult as sometimes they could not explain this clearly to their supervisors. They felt if the staff were involved in setting targets that affected them, they would embrace and take ownership of the process, which would make managing easier.

1.5.1.6 Dichotomy between policy and practice

There was a general feeling that PMDS contained various instruments that if properly implemented would result in improved organisational performance. Unfortunately most respondents felt what was in the policy and what actually happened on the ground are two different things. Respondents highlighted some aspects of PMDS which would enhance its usefulness as a managerial tool, such as recognition of good performance through monetary rewards. However, some respondents felt rewards were a double edged sword. In as much as it motivated workers to perform better it also ended up clouding the judgement of the review process. Employees have to rate themselves first before a review discussion with the supervisor and respondents were quite frank to say who would want to rate themselves lower if they knew there is a monetary reward or promotion that is linked to that score and they would defend that rating vigorously during the review process. Under such circumstances employees begin to learn and apply writing and debating

skills, simply so they can get better scores. Respondents alluded to incidents where those who had scored higher, were not necessarily those who had performed better, but had merely presented themselves better before their supervisor or review committee.

Built into the PMDS is a developmental aspect which respondents valued as a useful managerial tool that had allowed them to develop poor performers. However they mentioned that this rarely happened because of lack of resources to send the staff on identified courses.

During the review process of the PMDS there is provision for an employee to rate themselves first and then later have a discussion with the supervisor and agree on a rating. Respondents mentioned that unfortunately most of these discussions were not constructive and most supervisors ended up just agreeing with the ratings that the employee had given themselves.

1.5.1.7 Feedback

Another area that respondents felt was challenging was giving feedback. Some were forthright saying they are incapable and uncomfortable to give feedback for various reasons such as not being well trained to do so and also the subordinates not receiving negative feedback well, mainly because they know there is a monetary reward attached to the outcome of the review process. One respondent had this to say regarding giving feedback;

"*I always face challenges when giving feedback, not all my subordinates take feedback positively. Some are of the opinion that I am undermining their professional competency. Sometimes the only difference I have with some of my subordinates is experience and one may feel that I cannot contribute anything to them having the same qualifications as them. Some feedback sessions actually degenerate into emotionally charged affairs right from the start".*

However most respondents valued the provision in the PMDS policy to give feedback as stipulated in the PMDS policy. There has to be a way however for all sides to embrace feedback sessions and make the most of them.

1.5.1.8 Type of indicators

Most respondents mentioned that PMDS could be a useful management tool for non professional workers as their work is routine and repetitive but is not quite effective in managing professional workers, as some of their needs are not adequately addressed in the policy. They mentioned especially the type of indicators used. They said the system focused too much on the quantification of targets at the expense of a focus on the quality of work. They felt the way they achieved those targets was more important than how many targets have been achieved. They mentioned that maybe this was because quantity was easier to measure and report than quality. One respondent mentioned that for example one of the duties of an animal health technician was to educate farmers and the community about animal and public health diseases. It is easier to measure how many awareness sessions had been conducted, but not so easy to measure the impact and outcomes of such sessions. One respondent had this to say regarding the challenge of managing professional workers*;*

'Managing professionals under PMDS is a challenge because of its quantification of indicators as I have mentioned earlier in the interview. To me it does not matter much how many tests a technologist has carried out, of paramount importance is how the tests where done, are the results valid, and what was the turnaround time or test interval. There is no point in someone bragging that they have achieved their target of say 100 Brucella abortus tests per quarter when half of those are wrong diagnoses, which can have huge implications in decision making for the farmer, department and the country. Or let's say another example again a chicken farmer brings in samples for analyses, it serves no purpose to the farmer if results are relayed to him after 10 days which most likely after that period the whole flock has been decimated by the disease. To prevent losses there must be a way to do tests quickly, get results to the farmer early, so that decisions are made in time before losses happen. An obvious question that arises there is can PMDS address such issues or is it the professional guidelines that should guide or collaboration between both?'

One aspect of PMDS that respondents mentioned could be useful as a managerial tool is timely reviews, in this case quarterly feedback. This they said would give them

an opportunity to see if they are on track to meet targets and rectify in time rather than wait until the end of the year.

1.5.1.9 Organisational learning and growth

Questions were also raised during the interviews regarding what the organisation does with the data they get through PMDS, questions such as, is the organisation learning anything, and is there any review and monitoring of the system to see if it is actually achieving its intended objectives. Many felt this was not happening and as a result the process and hence the organisation was not improving.

1.5.1.10 Managing teams

Most respondents highlighted that PMDS is not structured to manage the performance of teams. They said the system focused on individuals, but there were occasions when they had projects that needed team collaboration and the nature of PMDS made it difficult to manage and coordinate the performance of each individual to ensure the success of the team. One veterinarian who manages a laboratory gave an example of when they were preparing the laboratory for accreditation. The process required inputs from various technologists working as a team and it was a challenge to manage their individual efforts, but with a team goal to achieve.

1.5.2. PMDS through the eyes of the veterinarian as a subordinate

This section will present the findings of evaluating the effectiveness of PMDS from the perspective of the veterinarian as a subordinate. The findings were classified into themes and quotes were given to support the theme. Very few respondents found the PMDS assisting in their professionalism for several reasons such as having a non- veterinarian supervisor which made things like setting goals and giving feedback difficult, and the nature of performance indicators being used that is quantitative while ignoring the qualitative aspects. These were put into themes and will be discussed under such themes in the following sections.

1.5.2.1 Professional development

Through literature and interview sessions it was gathered that professionals always aspire to grow and develop in their various fields and structures and systems like the PMDS should help them achieve this. Whilst they did acknowledge that there is provision to develop poor performers in the PMDS, this rarely happened, mostly because of a lack of funding. Furthermore, development that was provided, was mostly focused on poor performers, disregarding the fact that even star performers need to be developed further so that they keep performing at high levels, or even excel further. One respondent had this to say regarding the lack of development;

"Personally I don't feel its achieving anything, because it's being used for the wrong reasons for example just as a measurement and evaluation tool rather than for improvement. As an organisation I don't see us growing and I suppose this is a tool that is supposed to help us grow".

During interviews veterinarians mentioned continuous professional development (CPD) which they said was enforced by the SAVC to ensure veterinarians keep abreast with new developments in their field. They felt they should be a link between the organisation's skills development efforts and CPD as it was in everyone's interest that new skills are acquired on an on-going basis. However they bemoaned the lack of resources as hampering any such links. They also felt as professionally they should add to the body of knowledge but resources were not available to enhance that. They mentioned that every day they encounter clinical cases and are usually the first to report on any new diseases so they should be involved in research and development and they felt the PMS should assist towards that end.

1.5.2.2 Non veterinarian supervisor

One of the reasons that was mentioned by some respondents as leading to PMDS having a minimal positive effect on their professional conduct, was having a non-vet as a supervisor. This often led to supervisors not understanding the KPAs and failing to give adequate and valuable feedback. Some felt these non-vet supervisors did not fully understand the scope of their work.

However some veterinarians did not see this as a problem as some managers, even being non-veterinarians were quite supportive and understanding and would make

sure they create a favourable environment for them to perform their professional duties.

1.5.2.3 Professionalism

Due the nature of their training, vets feel they have certain duties and responsibilities to the community and the community trusts they will use their professional knowledge for the betterment of mankind. This made it difficult to measure certain aspects of their profession using the current PMDS. One vet put it well with this statement;

'PMDS does not fully facilitate in accomplishing professional goals, as some roles not included in the KPAs cannot be met through PMDS, such as ethics and professional conduct. As a vet I have a duty for example to prescribe for responsible use of antibiotics to prevent overuse which leads to other problems such as antibiotic resistance, but then how do you put this in your performance plan and how would you measure that I am being responsible'

The respondents said they behaved professionally not because of PMDS but because they value their profession and what it can offer to the community.

1.5.2.4 Feedback

Most respondents valued the feedback aspect of the PMDS and the ability to sit down with their supervisor to discuss their performance. This they said gave them an opportunity to hear how they were performing and also to tell their supervisor about their challenges. However they mentioned that this was one of the weakest links of the system for several reasons, such as having a non-vet as a supervisor, or some supervisors being ill equipped to give constructive feedback. Some vets even went on to say they view their supervisors as their mentors and their feedback would be invaluable to their professional development. This response from one veterinarian illustrates this lack of feedback clearly:

"There is p*oor or no feedback from supervisor, I believe in some way my supervisor is my mentor and should be giving me adequate, objective and timely feedback on my performance. Now this becomes a problem if my supervisor is a non-vet or doesn't know how to give constructive feedback.*

Also linked to the issue of feedback is the use of one rater to give feedback. Some vets felt there is a need to include feedback from other sources other than my supervisors. They felt use of one rater brings in questions of reliability and fairness of the whole process.

"*The major challenge I have with PMDS is the use of a single rater which of course brings in question marks in areas like reliability and fairness of the process. I am rated according to a singular perspective or opinion of the rater which leaves [out] other important sources of information such as inputs from colleagues, customers, other divisions/departments etc."*

1.5.2.5 Lack of ownership

One thing that was also apparent during this study was the lack of ownership of the system. Veterinarians felt this was a system that was just forced upon them with no consultation at all. They also said they just received figures through an annual performance plan with no consultation as to whether these figures can be achieved.

"No the system does not help me in accomplishing my professional goals because it's top down driven or top down orientation. Some guys at the top decide that these are our targets for the year and I must run with it. There is never a consultation with us the professionals in the field on what should be done. We also have cases of budgetary constraints that affect whether you perform your duties or not."

However, some veterinarians felt that to some extent their professional needs were met through the PMDS because the head of the directorate was a veterinarian who ensured that their professional requirements were included in the drafting of KPAs.
For those veterinarians who reported to non-veterinarians there is some autonomy and flexibility in drafting their own KPAs hence they felt that their professional needs were met.

1.5.2.6. Comparison with other professionals

The respondents mentioned that having a non-veterinarian supervisor as mentioned above often resulted in their performance being compared to that of other professionals within the department as they all reported to that same manager. This they felt was not fair and would prefer 'apples to be compared to apples'. One vet had this to say with regards to the above issue

"*Another thing that I find not fair with PMDS is my performance is sometimes compared to other different professionals whereas our scope of work is different. For example a land planning officer's KPA maybe to produce one land use plan per year and mine is to control various diseases through various vaccinations and other control mechanisms. Clearly it's not fair to compare these two professionals in terms of attainment of goals."*

1.5.2.7. Resource constraints

The respondents highlighted that another aspect that hamstrung the attainment of the objectives of the PMDS is lack of resources to implement it fully. Without enough resources they said most of the times they couldn't achieve their key performance indicators. This they said negatively affected their professionalism. One veterinarian had this to say regarding how lack of resources affected his professionalism;

"We set key performance areas and key performance indicators but there is not enough finance to achieve them. For example a farmer brings to me a cow that is sick. For me to attend to give the right attention to the animal I need the correct diagnosis which would need performing various tests. Unfortunately because of (a) lack of resources I cannot perform those tests as I do not have all the equipment or there is no money to forward samples to specialised laboratories. If that animal dies the blame comes to me as a professional and I myself would also feel bad for failing to give professional help. In order to give full professional advice I need adequate finances."

1.5.3. Role conflict within PMDS

This section will report on the findings to analyse the functioning and effectiveness of the PMDS - in creating and resolving role conflict between professional conduct and

organisational requirements. Veterinarians are also recipients of the PMDS system and as such value the system in terms of what it aims to achieve. As professionals they have their own professional aspirations while at the same time they also need to meet organisational requirements through the PMDS. Unfortunately, they feel the system does not add any value to their professional requirements. They mentioned that being professionals, quality mattered more than quantity, and that the PMDS fell short in measuring some areas of their profession.

1.5.3.1 Role clarity

There were mixed feelings with regards to PMDS and role clarity. Whereas some vets said the system clearly stipulated what they were supposed to do, a sizable number said it was vague, leaving them to rely on their professional guidelines and various Acts of Parliament to help them. One vet said one of his KPAs simply said "facilitate lab functions" which to him was not clear. He would have preferred it if it was more explicit.

1.5.3.2 Role conflict

Few respondents said they had noted few cases of role conflict and they attributed this to having a vet as head of the Directorate. They said the head being a member of the SAVC would ensure that professional requirements are included in the PMDS. At the same time some vets who had non-vets as supervisors, noted they had encountered cases of role conflict as this respondent said;

"Conflicts may arise especially in cases where my supervisor (rater) is a non-veterinarian. A case that I may give is let's say there is a disease outbreak during one or more of the quarters under assessment and the disease is not included in my KPAs. My immediate professional instinct is to divert resources towards this new challenge. Unfortunately the challenge comes at the end of the year when I have to explain why I failed to meet my targets, something that a veterinarian would understand but a non-veterinarian would take time to understand".

Where cases of conflict arose the veterinarians said they would prefer to follow their professional guidelines. The veterinarians mentioned that they have certain professional standards to maintain and would not be prepared to compromise these standards. In the PMDS there is provision for resolution of conflicts through dispute

resolution channels. Respondents feel if at all there are conflicts these should be addressed between professional managers of the organisation and the Human Resources team that is involved in drafting the PMDS policy.

One of the challenges that were raised by respondents is a lack of clarity on whether they should concentrate on primary animal health care or animal disease regulation. Many believed that their primary role was animal disease regulation, while at the same time the needs of emerging and often poor farmers needed to be met through primary animal health care. Emerging farmers cannot afford the cost of animal treatment at private veterinarians and the government has tried to fill this gap through state veterinarians. Unfortunately, the state veterinarians do not have adequate resources to fulfil this role. SAVC regulations stipulate certain minimum requirements that must be met if one is to render animal treatments, but veterinarians are often expected to perform under an inadequate environment because the state does not have enough resources to equip the clinics to stipulated standards. Under such circumstances some veterinarians said they would not render any animal treatment unless they have adequate resources meeting SAVC regulations while some said they would try their best to help these animals and these farmers. In the former case this would work against the particular veterinarian concerned as they would be deemed to have failed to meet their performance target.

1.6 Discussion and conclusion

1.6.1 Discussion

The objectives of this study were threefold; that is, firstly to evaluate the effectiveness of the PMDS as a managerial tool for veterinarians to manage their subordinates including both professional and support staff. Secondly, to evaluate the effectiveness of the PMDS from the perspective of the veterinarian as a subordinate. Thirdly, to analyse the functioning and effectiveness of the PMDS - in creating and resolving role conflict between professional conduct and organisational requirements. The literature review contained in this research has shown that performance management is one of the instrumental management tools introduced by governments to improve service delivery, increase accountability and efficiency.

The study showed that most of the respondents showed an understanding of performance management and what it aims to achieve. This indicates that the respondents appreciate the fact that performance management is not merely about 'policing people', but that a performance management system is about developing the employees as well as ensuring that targets are set to improve service delivery. However most respondents in this study showed a negative perception of PMDS stemming mainly from the way it is implemented and felt it was not achieving its intended objectives. Although some respondents said they did not find anything of value in the current PMDS some said they found some valuable aspects such as the feedback loop, regular (quarterly) assessments, the rewarding of high performers, and the ability to plan their personal and their subordinates' work in advance. However, they were quick to point out that they valued the theoretical (i.e. the policy document) aspects of the PMDS and not necessarily what was happening in practice. For example, they mentioned the reward aspect of PMDS which was abused and ended up clouding the judgement of the participants of the whole process. One thing that was clear from this study was a lack of understanding in the implementation of the system, highlighting a need for regular training of all participants by the Human Resources Department.

There was also a general feeling that the current PMDS is not effective in achieving its intended outcomes or organisational goals and mission for several reasons ranging from poor understanding on how to implement the system, a lack of leadership, and inconsistency in applying the system across various sections of the Department. The literature also showed many developing countries facing challenges in implementation and therefore not getting anticipated gains (Cameron and Sewell, 2002; Ohemeng, 2009; William, 2006). Instead of it being motivational, the respondents felt the PMDS was demotivating. It was also noted that employees and supervisors tend to think of PMDS in compliance terms, something forced or required by the organisation, with some veterinarians alluding that the only reason they participated was because it's a requirement on their employment contract. They said given a choice they would not do it as they felt it wasted their time yet they had nothing to show for it in terms of career advancement, better results or merit awards. Although quantitative indicators to measure the effectiveness of the performance management programmes are hard to come by, a general consensus among public servants, managers of State Owned Enterprises, and a number of scholars indicate

that the performance management programme has not led to any significant improvement in attitudinal change, accountability, managerial freedom, organizational capacity, organizational efficiency, or service delivery (Ohemeng, 2009).

Very few respondents found the PMDS assisting in their professionalism for several reasons such as having a non-veterinarian supervisor - which made things like setting goals and giving feedback difficult. They were also critical of the use of quantitative indicators, whilst ignoring the qualitative aspects of the job. This may stem from qualitative aspects of a job being difficult to measure. For example, it is easier to measure how many community outreach programmes have been conducted than to measure the impact and outcomes of such outreaches. There was also mention of failure to consider feedback from multiple sources, for example from customers. Veterinarians deal with clients more than with their supervisors and feel they may give some valuable feedback on their performance. Some respondents cited poor feedback between them and their supervisors, which can be attributed to having a non-veterinarian supervisor, or a supervisor who simply does not know how to deliver effective feedback, does not have the time to do so, or does not think it is necessary. Coens and Jenkins (2000) identify a growing trend in organisations where supervisors have never held one or more of the positions that report to them. Without the expertise, knowledge, and understanding that come with having performed the work, the credibility of feedback is suspect (Coens and Jenkins, 2000). Managers who have successfully performed the work themselves are better suited to recognize performance from others and provide relevant feedback than those who have not. A challenge that was mentioned by most of the supervisors was having to supervise remote workers.

A new challenge that is emerging with flattening and downsizing of organisations is the increasing span of control. Managers now are sometimes responsible for surprisingly large and diverse work groups, keeping track of employee performance through results and measurement data. Managers sometimes work in a different location; their subordinates may work in multiple locations, miles apart as was also alluded to in this study. With self-managed teams and autonomous individuals, the reporting relationship is not clear. There is a need to rethink the way pay and

performance is managed in that environment. The possibility of individuals managing their own performance under such circumstances should be investigated.

In government, it the possibility of being managed by a non-veterinarian or someone from outside one's profession is quite high, or even inevitable. For example, in the Department under study, there are district coordinating managers who will have various different professionals reporting to them such as veterinarians, agricultural engineers, agricultural economists, crop scientists, and so forth. Sometimes these different professionals have to work as a team to complete a project and in such cases self-managed performance management should be investigated and promoted. Veterinarians cannot operate in a silo and will always need input from other professionals and all will report to one manager. The proliferation of teams, task forces and temporary assignments highlights one of the strongest criticisms of merit pay: it overemphasizes individual performance (Vaughan, 2003). There are jobs where being an independent, stand-out performer is highly advantageous, but there is growing agreement that cooperation and teamwork are essential to most work situations (Vaughan, 2003). There is not an established alternative model for a merit policy that reinforces the values of a team environment.

The issue of giving and receiving feedback was quite prominent in this study. It was found to be a weak point in the PMDS and for several reasons such as having a non-veterinarian as a supervisor, or a lack of capacity to give constructive feedback. From this study it was also seen that some managers assume their star employees do not need feedback. This assumption may be because they are clearly doing a good job and they don't need to improve. Even top performers need input to stay engaged, focused, and motivated and they need frequent feedback both positive and negative. They have a need to be told how much their good work is appreciated, to identify and share development areas, even if there are only a few. Feedback sessions are also opportunities for managers to solicit input from their subordinates on how they are doing as a manager. Respondents had reported that feedback was largely one sided, mostly from the supervisor to subordinate.

Cases of role ambiguity and role conflict were also mentioned, and in the former, most respondents said they would have to seek guidance on what to do from their professional code of conduct. It is interesting to note that in cases where there is

conflict between PMDS requirements and professional requirements respondents would go along with the professional requirement. This supports the literature (Anton, 2009), which indicated that most professionals are loyal or committed to their professions. The chances of receiving incompatible requests (i.e. role conflict) were quite high in those veterinarians who reported to non-veterinarians, which can be a source of dissatisfaction on the job. However, most respondents said they have not experienced many cases of role conflict and they attributed this to having a veterinarian as Head of the Directorate. This agrees with literature which says professionals need support and protection and the role of the head of the organisation is to lobby for resources and create a facilitatory environment for professionals to 'perform their work' (Mintzberg, 1998, 146).

Most respondents said theoretically PMDS can be useful as a management tool, as it helped in planning and control (i.e. monitoring work). Unfortunately, in practice, there seems to be lack of institutional, leadership and political support to assist in that end. This resonated with the findings of other studies (Cameron and Sewell, 2002; Ohemeng, 2009; Williams, 2006). The general perception of the respondents was that the public sector has limited resources to perform their duties, and that because of this deficiency, it was difficult to implement an effective performance management system. Further, employees do not always have the available resources or means to adequately execute all their functions (KPAs) as determined by the PMDS.

1.6.2 Conclusion

The objectives of this study were threefold, that is, firstly to evaluate the effectiveness of the PMDS as a managerial tool for veterinarians to manage their subordinates including both professional and support staff. Secondly, to evaluate the effectiveness of the PMDS from the perspective of the veterinarian as a subordinate. Thirdly, to analyse the functioning and effectiveness of the PMDS as a mechanism for creating and resolving role conflict between professional conduct and organisational requirements of the veterinarian. The study found that although PMDS was structured to assist as a management tool through focusing organisational resources the respondents indicated that it was not effective as a managerial tool. This can be attributed to various reasons ranging from a poor understanding of how

to implement the system, to a lack of leadership, inconsistency in applying the system across various sections of the Department, a lack of ownership of the system by the employees and managers, a lack of capacity and resources, and the type and validity of indicators that were used. This resulted in the system failing to achieve its intended outcomes. The study also found that the system did not assist the respondents in their professional conduct for various reasons such as the nature of the system itself being quantitative whereas it was felt by the professionals that in their line of work the quality of work is more important. On the role of PMDS in creating and resolving conflict there were mixed findings with some respondents saying the system created conflicts between their professionals and organisational requirements. In cases of conflict or role ambiguity, the professionals indicated that they would lean towards their professional obligations. However some respondents mentioned that they have not encountered any conflicts and they attributed this to having a veterinarian as a senior manager who would ensure that their professional requirements are taken into consideration. Another source of conflict noted resulted from the veterinarians having a non-veterinarian as a supervisor which would make things like setting goals and targets and giving feedback and reviews difficult.

1.6.3. Recommendations

From this study it can be recommended that further research into the following is imperative; how to enhance the effectiveness of PMDS in managing the performance of professionals within a multi-disciplinary organisation. It was discovered from this study that veterinarians are managed by a coordinating manager along with other professionals.

How can the PMDS be re-structured to include or enhance the management of performance of a team? It was discovered from this study that PMDS is focused on individual performance yet there are occasions when workers must work as a team and team dynamics would need to be considered.

Another challenge that was identified in this study was managing the performance of remote workers. In light of this it is recommended that further research be carried into how the PMDS can be structured to effectively manage the performance of remote workers. Furthermore the possibility of putting such workers in charge of their

own performance should also be investigated taking into consideration motivation theories.

For the organisation the following recommendations are made: There should be ongoing training of managers and subordinates with regards to operationalisation of PMDS. This training should cover several areas which have been identified in this study to be deficient such as conducting constructive review/feedback sessions; and planning and goal setting (which should include aligning individual goals to overall individual goals). The validity and usefulness of performance indicators should also be investigated. In particular, qualitative indicators should be put in place. Should these improvements be made, it is hoped that the PMDS would function more effectively.

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SECTION 2: Literature Review

2.1 Performance management

In recent years, challenging economic conditions have stressed organizations, some to the breaking point. Rather than waiting for external improvements, such as market growth or technological advances, many organizations are looking internally for performance and productivity gains (Boxall and Purcell, 2003). Consequently, the concept of performance management is receiving increased attention as a route to improved results and organisational growth (Boxall and Purcell, 2003). Likewise, increasing public pressure on governments to improve service delivery and account for the public purse have also forced many governments worldwide to implement a performance management (PM) system in one form or another (Ohemeng, 2009, Cameron and Sewell, 2003; Williams 2005; Sehested, 2008). Swanepoel (2003) has defined performance management as an on-going process involving the planning, managing, reviewing, rewarding and development of performance. Armstrong and Baron (2005) have defined performance management as; 'a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organisational performance. As such, it establishes a shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to leading and developing people which will ensure that it is achieved. A strategy which relates to relates to every activity of the organisation set in the context of its human resource policies, culture, style and communication systems. The nature of the strategy depends on the organisational context and can vary from organisation to organisation." Armstrong and Baron (2005) go on to say PM should be effective, strategic and integrated. Performance management is an important area in the organisation as it can result in improvements in performance, accountability, transparency, quality of service and value for money (Fryer, Anthony and Ogden, 2009). Carried out well, PM is a powerful tool to focus activity and effort and enhance organisational performance. It can be used to change work behaviours and motivate employees towards attaining corporate goals and mission (Spangenberg, 1994). Poorly implemented it can disengage staff, foster unproductive activities, waste effort and misdirect rewards (Armstrong and Baron, 2005). An effective performance management system must also be integrated into other human resource processes and must reduce role ambiguity by clearly stipulating what needs to be done and by

whom (Armstrong and Baron, 2005; Spangernberg, 1994). Armstrong and Baron suggest an effective performance management system has to fulfil the following criteria; communication of a vision to all employees, setting departmental and individual performance targets that are related to wider objectives, conducting formal reviews of progress towards these targets, using the review process to identify training, development and reward outcomes, evaluating the whole process to improve effectiveness, expressing performance targets in terms of measurable outputs, accountabilities and training/learning targets, using formal appraisal procedures as ways of communicating performance requirements that are set on a regular basis, and linking performance requirements to pay, especially for senior managers. The literature identifies the key features of a successful performance management system as being; alignment of the performance management system and the existing systems and strategies of the organisation; leadership commitment; a culture in which it is seen as a way of improving and identifying good performance and not a burden that is used to chastise poor performers; stakeholder involvement; and continuous monitoring, feedback, dissemination and learning from results (Wang and Berman, 2001; De Waal, 2003; Franco and Bourne, 2003;)

Performance measurement has both beneficial and adverse effects. Empirical research shows that performance measurement is an incentive for productivity; it contributes to the legitimacy of an organisation; it may stimulate learning processes and generates information that may enhance an organization's intelligence (de Bruijn, 2002). However, there are also a number of adverse effects. Performance measurement might lead to 'game playing' or strategic behaviour and therefore to production-on-paper rather than professionally relevant production (De Bruijn 2002). It can disincentivise innovations and lead to optimization of input. Performance measurement may also cause loss of professionalism, may bureaucratize, and can be a toy for managers rather than a lively instrument for professionals (De Bruijn, 2002; Meyer and Gupta, 1994; and Smith, 1993).

At the same time, regrettably, lingering concerns over the effectiveness of performance management (Coens and Jenkins, 2000) and dissatisfaction (Bernardin *et al*., 1998) have not been resolved. Given the central role played by the performer, it is also surprising that performance management continues to be a predominantly top-down effort. One does not have to delve deeply into this field to get the impression that performers are at the mercy of their organizations' performance

management systems (Buchner, 2007). In the worst cases, performance management is something done to people. These employees and their supervisors tend to think of performance management in compliance terms – something forced or required (Coens and Jenkins, 2000). Progressive philosophies of performance management tend to think of it as something done for, or in partnership with, performers and imply possibilities for alternate strategies (Buchner, 2007). Unfortunately, most organizations lag behind, and most employees do not look to performance management as a helpful or valued element of their jobs (Coens and Jenkins, 2000). Traditionally, performance management has been the responsibility of the immediate supervisor (Barnes-Farrell, 2001; Cardy and Dobbins, 1994; Latham and Wexley, 1994). However, changes in the workplace have made it harder for supervisors to be effective managers of others' performance. Specific trends affecting performance management include decentralized workforces, enlarged spans of control, lack of direct experience in the particular job under review, and evolving performer expectations (Fletcher, 2001). Decentralization and remote work sites mean supervisors are often not able to directly observe subordinates, making it difficult for them to credibly manage performance in the traditional sense. Downsizing and flattening of organizations are other recognized trends in business (Barnes-Farrell, 2001; Latham and Wexley, 1994). As organizations get flatter, spans of control get larger and managers voice concern that they do not have enough time to monitor the performance of all the subordinates reporting to them.

Another concern is the increasing likelihood of managers never having held one or more of the positions that report to them. Without the expertise, knowledge, and understanding that come with having performed the work, offering feedback is a challenge and the credibility of feedback is suspect (Coens and Jenkins, 2000). Managers who have successfully performed the work themselves are better suited to recognize performance from others and provide relevant feedback than those who have not. Modern employees also have different expectations when it comes to performance management and feedback. Over the past several decades, increasing numbers of employees have been exposed to participation and empowerment in the workplace. Many now expect to be involved to a significant degree in determining the performance management processes that affect them (Mohrman *et al*., 1989). In such cases where supervisors do not have direct control/supervision of their subordinates performance management should take advantage of various motivation

theories and put the employee in charge of their own performance (Mohrman *et al*., 1989). In practice, however, feedback generally is insufficient (Coens and Jenkins, 2000; Fletcher, 2001). Employees wait for performance feedback from supervisors who are either too busy or too far removed to provide it, except for the traditional year-end formal appraisal – too little, too late. If managers (and performers) understood how tight feedback loops support goals in ways that encourage the close self-monitoring advocated by control theory, more attention and priority would likely be attached to these feedback streams and needed feedback would be accessible to subordinates without management intervention (Coens and Jenkins, 2000; Fletcher, 2001).

2.2 Performance Management in the public sector

Performance management has become a key element in modern public sector governance. As a result, many developing countries have introduced it as a means to measure organizational and individual efficiency in order to ensure that public sector organizations meet the needs of the public (Ohemeng, 2009; Williams, 2005). However, the implementation of performance management systems in many of these countries has been affected by a number of institutional and capacity constraints such as culture, institutional fragmentation, public apathy, and leadership support, thus making it difficult for many of them to realize the benefits of such a system (Ohemeng, 2009). Performance management in the public sector continues to draw much attention from scholars, yet there is no consensus on whether it enhances organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and public accountability (Ohemeng, 2009). It has been argued that performance management leads to managerial freedom or autonomy; that is, freedom from unnecessary bureaucratic constraints, and that such autonomy enhances performance (Bouckaert *et al*., 2002; Larbi, 2006; Meier and Hill, 2005; Norman and Gregory, 2003; Verhoest, 2003). Managerial freedom is the freedom to choose how to pursue a goal once it has been set by others; that is, operational autonomy, as distinct from strategic autonomy, which is the freedom to set one's own agenda (Bailyn, 1988; Thynne and Wettenhall, 2004; Verhoest *et al*., 2004). To scholars who believe in managerial freedom, the traditional bureaucratic organization encapsulates public managers, creating a 'bureaucratic web' that leads them to be less innovative and accountable. Hence,

such managers follow rules that hinder the effective and efficient use of resources and the delivery of service. Furthermore, they claim that rules-bound organizations lead to bureaucratic inertia among workers. Accountability seems to be the area many believe the introduction of performance management would most profoundly improve (Berman and Wang, 2000; Heinrich, 2002; Osborne et al., 1995; Talbot, 2005; Wholey, 1999). Some authors such as De Bruijn (2006) are of the view that measuring performance is a graceful way of calling an organization to account, while Heinrich (2007) says that accountability is the central concern of public sector performance measurement. A third issue that seems to have put PM on the radar screen of administrative reform is efficiency (Talbot, 2005). Since the 1960s, the public bureaucracy has been criticized for inefficient management of the public purse and service delivery (Tullock *et al*., 2002; Wolf, 1993). Both wings of the political divide and academics supported this criticism, which reached its zenith in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when some politicians unequivocally blamed the bureaucracy for all the woes of the state (Osborne and Plastrick, 1997; Stiglitz, 2003). In fact it was claimed by many during that era that the public sector organization was the root of all societal evil, and that it should be banished or tamed (Osborne and Plastrick, 1997; Stiglitz, 2003). Thus in most countries performance management was introduced to ensure that scarce resources are used appropriately. Thus PM is seen as a mechanism to provide a strategy for delivering a higher quality service and for increasing efficiency in public organizations (Kelman, 2006). Indeed, efficiency issues are at the core of administrative reforms in developing countries (World Bank, 1995, 1996). Unfortunately, performance management has not been the success in the public sector that it was predicted to be, with mixed results in various parts of the world (Rademan and Vos, 2001; Fryer *et al*, 2009; Ohemeng, 2009). In a study of perceptions on various aspects of performance appraisals in the public service of South Africa, Rademan and Vos (2001) found statistically significant differences in perceptions between supervisors and subordinates with regards to fairness, ethics, accuracy, rating error, and administrative-aspects. In some cases the organisation and the employees did not share the same feelings regarding the objectives of PM with some employees seeing the introduction of PM as a policemen coming into town (Williams, 2006). In an evaluative study of the implementation of a performance management system in the Cape Town Municipality (South Africa), Cameron and Sewell (2003) found that

although performance management concepts, approaches and tools used by the municipality were politically and theoretically appropriate at an organisational level, they were not effectively operationalised to achieve real management ownership, accountability, motivation and commitment. Despite all the enthusiasm and drive of political leadership in the City Council, they identified several challenges affecting the effective implementation of the performance management system, which eventually lead to diminished management support for the implementation of performance management. In his investigation of the impact of organisational culture on the implementation of a performance management system at a local government in South Africa, Williams (2006) found several challenges to the implementation of the programme, such as a culture of fear and mistrust. His research also found that there was a dichotomy between the political and administrative leadership, resulting in non-implementation of council resolutions, the lack of an organizational strategy, poor institutional arrangements and inadequate resource allocation to the programme (Williams, 2006).

Public sector organisations are differentiated in comparison with their commercial counterparts in the private sector. There is no profit maximising focus, little potential for income generation and, generally speaking, no bottom line against which performance can ultimately be measured. The vast majority of public sector organisations still generate most of their income from the State, and have to account to several stakeholders (Adcroft and Willis, 2005). As a result it was once, and not that recently, considered impossible to measure performance in the public sector.

2.3 Professionalism and Managerialism

Managerialism is the belief that organizations have more similarities than differences, and thus the performance of all organisations can be optimised by the application of generic management skills and theory (Adcroft and Willis, 2005). Along with *controlling* and *coordinating, directing* is one of the oldest and most common words used to describe managerial work. Among other things, directing means issuing directives, delegating tasks, and authorizing decisions (Mintzberg, 1998). However this idea of managerialism can clash with professionalism.

A professional is a member of a vocation that is founded upon specialized educational training (Callahan, 1988; West, 2004). Because of the personal and

confidential nature of many professional services and thus the necessity to place a great deal of trust in them, most professionals are held accountable according to strict ethical and moral regulations and their conduct is governed by a code of conduct enforced by their professional bodies (Mintzberg, 1998; Nanda, 2003). Many, if not all, professions place a high value on ethical conduct. Professionals working in organisations that are perceived to have a low regard for ethics should therefore experience occupational-organisational conflict leading to lower organisational commitment. Professional organizations-for example, consulting firms and hospitals- are structured around the work of highly trained individuals who know what they have to do and just do it. Such professionals hardly need in-house procedures or time-study analysts to tell them how to do their jobs (Mintzberg, 1998; West, 2004). That fundamental reality challenges many preconceptions about management and leadership (Mintzberg, 1998). So much of the classic literature on management has been about the need for controlling, which is about designing systems, creating structures, and making choices. There are plenty of systems in professions, all meant to control the work, but they are systems inherent to the profession not to management. The profession itself, not the manager, supplies much of the structure and coordination (Mintzberg, 1998). In organizations and professions where standard operating routines are applied, the experts work largely alone, free of the need to coordinate with their colleagues. This happens almost automatically. This can be ably illustrated by a surgical procedure during which the various team players are able to coordinate their various efforts without saying a word, because of the standardization of their skills and by what they were trained to expect from each other (Mintzberg, 1998). This brings questions such as do managers of professional workers have control over them, do they need to supervise them in the traditional way of supervision? Most professional workers require little direct supervision from managers. What they do need is protection and support, and so their managers have to pay a lot of attention to managing the boundary conditions of the organisation (Mintzberg, 1998; West, 2003).

2.4 Performance Management of professionals

A common issue arising in performance management systems is conflict between different interest groups all wanting autonomy, including departments and

professional bodies (Radin, 2003). Managing the performance of professional staff presents certain unique challenges. Professionals work for more than money. They also want to make a contribution and grow in their fields. Organisational structures (like a performance management system) should help them grow and achieve these goals (Mintzberg, 1998) but do not always do so. Furthermore, a professional such as a veterinarian is a member of a vocation that is founded upon specialized educational training. Because of the personal and confidential nature of many professional services and thus the necessity to place a great deal of trust in them, most professionals are held accountable according to strict ethical and moral regulations and their conduct is governed by a code of conduct enforced by their professional bodies (Mintzberg, 1998; Nanda, 2003). Veterinarians belong to the South African Veterinary Council whose code of conduct stipulates how they should render their service (SAVC, 2005).

During the development of the European welfare states, professionals were integrated into the large bureaucratic public organisations, and professionalism became an important governing principle. It was argued that with the integration in bureaucracies, professions could maybe maintain the technical control (of methods) in their work but they would lose their ideological control (of goals and principles) and the result would be an ideological proletarisation of professions (Derber, 1996). Later studies of professionals in large bureaucratic organisations showed that it certainly was not the end of the professions (Sehested, 2002). The result of this process was a relatively autonomous role for professionals in public organisations and the development of a professionalised bureaucracy (Freidson, 1984, cited in Sehested, 2002). The autonomous role indicates that due to their expert knowledge, professionals possess a high degree of autonomy in their work and often a monopoly of their working area (Sehested 2002). The argument for the autonomy and monopoly was that they knew best how to perform their expert work. Professionals also became their own leaders in public organisations. Furthermore they did not accept the detailed bureaucratic control of their work and they worked mostly without external control. Instead they developed their own internal control and collegial supervision (Sehested, 2002). The autonomous role was based on a fair amount of trust and confidence in professionals as experts to perform their work in the best interest of society and the citizens. The public organisations dominated by professionals developed to be professional bureaucracies. They were characterised

by specialised and functional administrative units (e.g., for social and technical services) and institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals, kindergartens) with a clear division of work, competence and decision making between professionals. Professionals in both leading and producing positions populated each of their administrative areas – leadership and profession were connected – and their specific technical and professional values based on scientific knowledge became the governing principle of the areas (Sehested 2002). Professionalism and bureaucratisation were intertwined in order to avoid conflicts and to secure stability, continuity and consensus in the production of welfare services.

In the late twentieth century, most Western European countries ushered in New Public Management reforms with the aim of changing the functioning and culture of the public sector (Boland and Fowler, 2000; Sehested, 2002.). One of the pillars of New Public Management is performance management (Boland and Fowler, 2000; Sehested, 2002.). The trend of New Public Management reforms challenged the role of professionals in public organisations (Boland and Fowler, 2000; Sehested, 2002.). Under the New Public Management professionalism as a governing principle is replaced by managerialism as an alternative governing principle (Boland and Fowler, 2000; Sehested, 2002). The autonomous professionals were seen as motivated by self-interest and they only fight for more resources in their area to increase their status and prestige (Sehested, 2002). Trust in professionals and professional bureaucracies were replaced by mistrust and privatisation and various audit mechanisms were introduced as necessary. The governing principle of professional norms and values were replaced by subordination, hierarchy and control as governing principles (Boland and Fowler, 2000; Sehested, 2002). New Public Management reforms were often based on the criticism of the large professionalised bureaucracies that were out of control for managers and politicians and the intention was to roll back the domination and power of professionals in public organisations (Boland and Fowler, 2000; Sehested, 2002). Methods were to minimize the welfare state and professional institutions through privatisation and to introduce new forms of control and management including performance management in professional work combined with the strengthening of administrative and political leadership.

Podsakoff, Williams and Todor (1986) define formalisation as the control of job activities by administrative rules and procedures (such as a PMDS). It is traditionally

argued that structural formalization arouses conflict between administrative imperatives and professional norms (Organ *et al*., 1981). In their study Podsakoff *et al.* (1986) found that while increased formalization did not directly affect feelings of alienation it did increase role conflict, decrease role ambiguity and enhanced organizational identification. They discuss how formalization can have conflicting effects in the areas of role stress and alienation (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1986). From a professional perspective formalisation, has the potential to reduce autonomy and to render a professional's contribution to larger ends less meaningful (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1986). Autonomy is evident in a job when it provides substantial freedom and independence and discretion to the individual in scheduling work and determining the procedures to be used in carrying out tasks (Ohemeng, 2009). Formalization can contravene professional norms of autonomy and control by expertise and collegial influence (Boland and Fowler, 2000; Sehested, 2002; Podsakoff *et al*., 1986). It can erode norms and create alienation by undermining professional standards (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1986). Mintzberg, (1998), states that professional workers respond to inspiration, not supervision and hardly need in-house procedures or time study analysis to tell them how to do their work. He goes on to say the profession itself, not the manager, supplies most of the structures and coordination required. Formalised conditions lead ultimately to self-estrangement, in which the professional views the job as preventing the expression of his or her full potential (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1986). However some authors, like Hall (1968) (as cited in Podsakoff, 1986), said a rigid hierarchy might even facilitate the work of professionals if it leads to improved coordination and communication.

2.5. Role Conflict

A role is defined as a pattern of behaviours (Ilgen and Hollenbeck, 1991), and role conflict occurs when there is incompatibility between the expected set of behaviours perceived by the focal person and those perceived by role senders (Nel *et al.*, 2008). An individual's experience of receiving incompatible or conflicting requests (role conflict) and/or the lack of enough information to carry out his/her job (role ambiguity) are causes of role stress (Nel *et al*., 2008). There is potential role conflict when organisational expectations of professionals are not in line with professional code expectations (Ilgen and Hollenbeck, 1991; Nel *et al*., 2008)).

Role expectations are defined as how others believe an individual should act in a given role (Nel *et al.,* 2008). Role perception refers to how we believe we should act out our roles (Nel *et al.,* 2008). It is the expectation of this research that veterinarians may experience a discrepancy between role expectations (from the organisation) and their own perceptions as professionals of how they should fulfil their roles. This discrepancy could cause a lot of frustration and tension in the work environment. For example, most professionals know what to do, how to do it and when to do it when it comes to performing their duties. Organisational demands through a PMDS may place certain demands on the professional that are incompatible with professional norms and this may create conflict.

Veterinarians in the public sector are called on to engage in multiple roles simultaneously: veterinarian (professional), manager, subordinate, and colleague. As a professional veterinarian they are expected to discharge their professional (animal health) duties. As a manager the vet has to plan and set goals for subordinates, monitor and evaluate their performance and report on such activities. As a subordinate, the veterinarian allows his or her work to be monitored by the supervisor (mostly through PMDS and other structures), and discusses issues related to professional growth. As a colleague, the vet participates in responsible, ethical peer relationships with the manager, with other staff members, and with the profession as a whole. Each of these roles carries specific expectations for the veterinarian's behaviour. The expectations may originate with the manager, within the work environment, within the organisation, or within the profession. Because the expectations associated with these roles are numerous and diverse, veterinarians are likely to encounter difficulties fulfilling these roles and attending to them simultaneously.

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SECTION 3: DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

When undertaking research, there are three questions that should be addressed at the outset of research (Remenyi, 1996; Saunders, 2000). These three questions underpinning any research are: What to research?, Why research?, How to research? This section seeks to explain 'how' the research was conducted. The research adopted a post positivist approach (Lincoln and Guba, 1994). This philosophical stance sees the researcher as an objective analyst and an interpreter of tangible social reality (critical realism), giving the former independence from the research, the ability to critically evaluate the evidence and generalise (Remenyi, 1996). Furthermore, a deductive approach (Babbie, 2008:49) was followed, exploring the applicability of deductions from accepted premises (theory) on performance management and organisational behaviour, to the case of veterinarians.

3.2 Research Method

This research is an evaluation research study. According to Babbie (2008) evaluation research includes research that is undertaken for the purpose of determining the impact of a social intervention, which in this study is the PMDS.

3.3 Sampling

In terms of collecting data within the qualitative paradigm, Babbie and Mouton (2003), state two important procedures that need to occur. There needs to be a sampling process followed by the collection of data. When the researcher decides prior to embarking upon the research as to what important criteria should be studied, the sampling is referred to as "purposeful" sampling. Merriam (1998) states that in purposeful sampling; the intention is to use a sample, which is either typical, atypical or an exceptional example of the phenomena being studied. When gathering data, Spradley (1979) states that when selecting respondents for the collection of data, several criteria should be applied, namely, the respondent should be thoroughly versed with the institution, and also requires that the respondent be well versed with the subject matter being researched. The second requirement is that the

respondents should be currently involved in the matter being studied and lastly, the respondents must be able to make time available for the interview.
There are 41 veterinarians in total in the Veterinary Services Programme of the Eastern Cape. Ten (Appendix 2) veterinarians were selected to make up the sample based on several criteria such as at least four years working for the public service and using the PMDS, had to have a managerial or supervisory position. Convenience sampling was used because of ease of access to participants and to manage the costs of conducting interviews.

In terms of this study, the interviewees had all worked for the department for at least four years and had been arguably exposed to the PMDS. Further, only interviewees who were willing to make time available for the interviews were interviewed. All the respondents participated freely during the interview process in accordance with the suggestions made by Rubin and Rubin (1995) who state that qualitative interviewing should be characterized by being “flexible, iterative and continuous”.

3.4 Data collection

Primary data was collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions according to (Babbie, 2008; Saunders, 2000; Weiss, 1998). Further, the interviewing schedule and questions were adapted during each interview in accordance with Rubin and Rubin’s (1995) suggestion that the interviewing process should be conducted in such a manner that the interviewer does not overly pre-plan the questions. Although guideline questions were prepared, provision was made for redesign as the research progressed. The questions were broadly divided into three sections: The first section was general and introductory in nature and also served to build rapport with respondents. The second section was seeking to understand the impact of PMDS on professionalism. The third section sought to evaluate the usefulness of PMDS as a management tool. There were a total of 20 questions prepared (see Appendix 1), although some questions were not asked in some interviews, because they had been answered earlier in the interview. This also shortened the duration of the interview, reducing the chances of fatigue. Participants were phoned and emailed beforehand to ensure their availability and to schedule appointments. A total of ten veterinarians were interviewed, during a period of two months in October 2011 and November 2011. The total duration of each interview

was on average about forty five minutes. The total interview time was seven and a half hours, and resulted in a written summary of about twenty five pages. About half of the interviewees refused to have their interviews on tape and notes had to be made of these during the interview and afterwards. The interviews were conducted during the day and transcribing was done by the end of the following day.

The researcher was at all times guided by the quest to elicit rich or thick responses (Babbie, 2008) and was always aware of the iterative manner in which questions should be developed when working within a post positivist paradigm. After the interview the respondents were asked if they could be available later to clarify some unclear questions that may arise during the transcription process.

3.5 Data analysis

According to Babbie and Mouton (2003: 490), there is no one “neat and tidy approach…” to qualitative data analysis. Weiss (1998) says the aim of analysis is to convert a mass of raw data into a coherent account and goes on to suggest a logical process for qualitative data analysis which was used in this study. Data was analysed by describing the nature of PMDS, comparing how close it is to the original plan, ruling out rival explanations, interpreting through deducting from theory, and fashioning recommendations (Weiss, 1998). Data was also analysed through discovering and describing patterns and through explanation building (Babbie, 2008). The patterns may point to a theoretical understanding of the PMDS in the context of managing professionals.

3.6 Ethical considerations

According to Remenyi (1998), there are three major ethical considerations when undertaking research. These are how the “information is collected”, how the “information is processed” and lastly, “how the findings are used”. Remenyi (1998) states that when applying the first ethical consideration, namely how the information is collected, it is necessary for the researcher to be open and honest with the informants, to keep respondents anonymous or the information they offer confidential if so requested, and that information should not be obtained under coercion. This study has upheld this first ethical consideration, as at all times during and prior to the

interviews, the relationship was open and honest. The researcher declared upfront the motivation for undertaking the research and how the results would be used.

Remenyi (1998: 114) also states that confidentiality should be upheld to avoid potentially “unsatisfactory practices which endanger staff”. This ethical consideration was upheld by keeping the identity of all the respondents anonymous. Further, only respondents, who were willing to be interviewed, were interviewed, and the wishes of those who did not want to be recorded were respected.

Remenyi (1998) states that when processing information, it is vital that the researcher avoid any manipulation arising from his or her personal bias. Further, the research findings must be honestly presented and not manoeuvred or adjusted merely to appease the researcher’s biases. Remenyi (1998) also states that sometimes researchers are often not aware of his or her biases, but where he or she is aware that they are biased; the integrity of the research is maintained if they declare their bias. It must be stated that this researcher is a veterinarian employed the same department under study. In light of this statement, this researcher declares that the only conscious bias known is the desire to understand the impacts of systems such as PMDS on professionalism and general management of professionals. Interest in this research area arose from several fronts. As mentioned before, the researcher works for the department that the research was conducted in and had heard informal complaints from colleagues that the PMDS did not adequately address their professional concerns, nor did it motivate them. Additionally, reading newspaper articles and listening to radio and television news gave the impression that there was no performance culture in the public service and that there was a lack of accountability, transparency and poor service delivery. Service delivery protests were also highlighting the performance deficiencies in the public sector. While the research findings confirmed the concerns that the researcher had assumed that professionals held regarding the PMDS, these have been presented in a balanced way, also highlighting the merits of the current system and its application.

Finally, Remenyi (1998) states that the research should be placed within the public domain for others to use. This research will be available with permission through Rhodes University Library for anyone to use.

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Appendix 1: List of interview questions

Research title: Performance Management of Veterinarians: a case study of Veterinary Services in the Eastern Cape.

Section A: General/Opening questions

1. Briefly explain what you understand by performance management.
2. What aspects of PMDS do you value most?
3. In your own opinion do you think the PMDS is achieving its intended outcomes?
4. How effective do you think the current PMDS is in achieving the organisational goals/mission?

Section B: Expectations (professional, organisational/PMDS, conflict)

1. As a vet how does your profession define good performance? (in the context of Eastern Cape Veterinary services).
2. As a vet what are critical performance areas that your profession identifies?
3. In your opinion how does the PMDS facilitate the performance of your professional duties? Please explain further.
4. Does PMDS clearly stipulate your roles?
5. Do organisational structures like PMDS give you autonomy and flexibility when performing your duties?
6. Does the PMDS facilitate you in accomplishing your professional goals? Please explain further.
7. Are there any conflicts that arise from expectations arising from the PMDS versus expectations from SAVC (professional) code of conduct? How are these conflicts resolved?
8. When misalignment arises between professional expectations and organisational expectations (through PMDS) how are these addressed?
9. When misalignment arises between professional expectations and organisational expectations (through PMDS) how do you think these should be addressed?

Section C: Managing within PMDS

1. As a manager how do you manage the performance of your subordinates?
   a) Professional staff
   b) Support admin staff.

2. As a manager how do you make use of the PMDS to manage the performance of your staff?
3. Does the PMDS help you when managing professional and non-professional workers? (evaluating the effectiveness of PMDS as a managerial tool)
4. In your management/supervision of professionals do you experience any challenges? How do you overcome these?
5. Does the PMDS hinder you when managing professional and non-professional workers? (evaluating the effectiveness of PMDS as a managerial tool)
6. How do you think an ideal PMDS should be structured to manage professional workers?
7. What recommendations do you have to further improve the PMDS as a management tool?

Appendix 2

Profiles of respondents.

Respondent number	Rank	Average years of experience in public service	Average no of subordinates
1 to 3	Managers (Veterinarians)	20	14
5 to 5	State veterinarian: lab service	5	12
6 to 10	State veterinarian: Animal health	6	6