

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

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Introduction

The chapter presents mythological procedures that will be employed to establish impacts of the performance appraisal on the overall performance of employees working in developing countries using a case study of Swaziland. The chapter describes the adopted research method, research design, and target population of the study, sampling design, and instrumentation. The chapter further presents data collection procedure, data analysis, trustworthiness and dependability, limitations and delimitations, ethical considerations, and a summary

Research Method

The research method is the roadmap that is applied by researchers to describe techniques and methods which would guide the research process (Creswell, 2013). Research design is, therefore, a component very crucial in every research study. Thus, the researcher should ensure that the research method chosen will help in the collection of information and evidence that will comprehensively address the research questions. The research method impacts the validity of the results and conclusion of the research.

In the current study, a qualitative method will be used. Qualitative research is founded on understanding, perspective, and attitude of participants towards the topic of interest. It, therefore, involves exploring and understanding the study phenomenon, establishing the underlying issues, feelings, and opinions related to the study topic from respondents' perspective. Furthermore, subjectivity is possible in qualitative approach since the interpretation is founded on frame reference (Creswell, 2013). The method would assist in exploring views of numerous respondents on performance appraisal techniques which could be applied in improving the overall performance of the employees. Besides, the qualitative method is said to facilitate the development of a concise report on personal views and offers a

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significant technique to comprehend the respondent's perspectives as well as their experiences. According to Khan (2017), the qualitative method facilitates the holistic assessment of several constructed study phenomenon, subjective interpretations, and understandings of performance appraisal tactics which could be applied in improving employees' performance as well as motivation. Therefore, it relates to the exploratory nature of this research.

Research Design

There exists a wide range of designs to qualitative researches. These include the generic qualitative design, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory design, and case study. The phenomenological design is applied whenever a researcher is looking forward to establishing some meanings linked with lived experiences of the study respondents (Creswell, 2013). On the other hand, ethnography is the qualitative design applied by researchers in describing social and cultural systems in exploring the study problem. Further, the generic design focuses on understanding and discovering study procedures or views of different shareholders in the study process. The grounded theory design encourages and fosters discovery processes in a study. The design obtains qualitative data and carries out the analysis to explain specific study phenomenon. The case study is the research design which assesses a particular phenomenon in its context (Crowe et al., 2011). This is based on the in-depth assessing of single individual, event, or group in exploring causes of the underlying issues.

In this study, a case study design will be applied. This is based on the fact that the design is exploratory and descriptive analysis in the nature of a person, event, or group (Crowe et al., 2011). The case study design encourages researchers to conduct a discovery process. Furthermore, under case study, themes are expected to emerge from gathered information. Therefore, the case study will enhance smooth delivery and analysis of meaning

from accessed data. Mohajan (2018) asserted that is useful when studying a single case or rather small number of cases. As such, the design will allow the researcher to effectively study about performance appraisal and its impact on performance of workers in the context of Swaziland.

Population and Sampling

The population would encompass individuals working within Swaziland. Generally, the population is considered as an overall group of entities or people from which data is needed (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the population of interest comprised of all employees working for various companies across Swaziland. These include part-time, full-time workers employed by different firms who are in a good position in answering all the study objectives.

Sampling comprises of a selection of several study units from the specific study population. In this study, purposive sampling will be of importance towards an approximation of population features (Creswell, 2013). Purposive sampling is considered as a non-probability sampling, which is chosen based on characteristics of the population and research objectives. This sampling technique would offer some insights into the phenomenon under study (Taherdoost, 2016). Under this sampling technique, the population would be evaluated based on their characteristics. Generally, respondents will be selected based on the importance of data they are likely to offer. Respondents with relevant knowledge and experience regarding the study phenomenon will be chosen. A purposive sample of 15 participants will be selected from manufacturing firms in Swaziland.

Instrumentation

The researcher will apply a self-developed interview protocol for data collection. The interview will entail interview questions related to the study's specific objectives. The first section will include demographic variables. The section will gather information about respondents' gender, age, location, years of service, and job position. The second section will

collect information on different performance appraisal practices and their effect on employee's performance. According to Alshenqeeti (2014), interviews enable researchers to explore details from the respondents. It further encourages respondents to express their perceptions and thoughts independently. Therefore, the interview protocol permits the investigator to elicit some informed responses from respondents.

Data Collection Procedure

Data for the current research study will be collected from primary sources. This entails first-hand data collected from study respondents and enables the researcher to address study problems compellingly and thoroughly. It also enhances the validity of the study process in spite of the primary data collection techniques being cumbersome and more engaging in comparison to the secondary data (Paradis et al., 2016). In this case, the researcher will be seeking to gather primary data from different employees working within Swaziland in terms of their views regarding performance appraisal practices and their impacts on their performance.

Permission will be sort from departmental heads from various organisations where participants will be sampled from. Once different departmental heads in sampled firms approve the acceptance form, the researcher will proceed with contacting participants and asking them for a face-to-face interview. Afterward, informed consent will be sent to the participating employees via e-mail. The informed consent will include introductory information such as the researcher's name, school affiliation, the title of the study, and the purpose of the study. In addition to providing the participants with the informed consent, the researcher will coordinate with departmental heads of different firms to send an e-mail notice to the potential participants to inform them that responding to the interview questions is voluntary. The participants will also be notified in the entry page that the interview will only take 45 to 60 minutes to complete. The interview will be conducted using a digital recorder

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and notes on a paper. The participants will be informed that the interviews are being recorded. The digital records and notes will be well-maintained and then typewritten in the word document to facilitate the data analysis process. The word document will be stored in a password-protected folder in a personal computer to safeguard information gathered from the respondents.

Data Analysis Technique

The purpose of data analysis is to organise the collected data into manageable sections, draw summaries, and apply statistical techniques (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). After collecting data needed for this current study, data will be subjected to analysis. The researcher will adopt a rigorous approach to analysing collected data. Since this study is qualitative and interviews will be applied for collecting data, the researcher will ensure that data analysis procedures facilitate the free flow of the themes from the collected data by selecting thematic analysis as the most appropriate data analysis technique. The thematic analysis is considered as the process which entails penetrating across the data set like focus group discussion and interviews to establish recurrent or frequent patterns of the thematic meaning (Alhojailan, 2012). The methods permit researchers to interpret the raw qualitative data and lengthy explanation of the information since the individual codes could be applied in cross-referencing several themes. This technique is considered as the form of classifying tactics for qualitative data. It also offers a useful and flexible study tool which in turns provides a rich, complex and detailed account of the data and allows for explanation of numerous facets of study problem (Guest & McQueen, 2012).

The data analysis will entail selecting, transforming, and simplifying information into a uniform pattern. This will be accomplished in three levels. First, the researcher will tabulate data for ease of data analysis. Second, the researcher will establish keywords as well as extract patterns evident in respondents' responses. Third, the researcher will break down

extracts into different themes. The themes and the sub-themes will be displayed with respects to their link with study specific objectives to assists in drawing the study conclusions and recommendations.

Trustworthiness and Dependability

The goal of every research study is to have a trustworthy and dependable measurement. Instrument trustworthiness and dependability are essential in making sure that the research study is successful (Creswell, 2013). The main element of the interview will be to ensure that participants understand the study questions the way the researcher intended for them to understand. Additionally, the interview questions will be aligned with the research questions to enhance trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of the study will be established by having the supervisor independently examining the study themes. Exploring developed themes would enhance internal logic, credibility, and trustworthiness of this research. Additionally, participants will be encouraged to be honest throughout the data collection process.

To ensure dependability, the researcher will ask the instructor to conduct an inquiry audit and examine the processes of data collection, data analysis, and results of the current study. The audit inquiry will be used to confirm the accuracy of the results and make sure that the gathered data support the findings. Besides, the research steps will be described from the start of the study to reporting of findings. The records indicating the research path shall be maintained throughout the study.

Limitations and Delimitations

The potential utmost limitation in this study is getting responses from the respondents. Most of the information which will be sought is very sensitive. This encompasses information on performance appraisal practiced in different firms. Nonetheless, it is assumed that participants will only provide truthful information regarding the study phenomenon.

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Additionally, employment of an interview could also result in biasness as some respondents might not comprehend some of the issues being asked by researcher incomplete details. The researcher will employ simplified questions which are straightforward to be easily understood by every respondent being interviewed. This would be through the employment of simple language while configuring the interview questions.

Ethical Considerations

Observing ethical standards is crucial while conducting any study. The researcher ought to clearly understand all the basics of carrying out any ethical research (Creswell, 2013). Participation in this study will be voluntarily and without intimidation. The participants will also be informed that they can withdrawal from the research and that there will be no consequences.

Further, the researcher sought approval from relevant departmental heads of different firms. The researcher will also fully disclose research objectives to all respondents and explain to them how outcomes would be utilised. Besides, participation in this study will not involve any form of monetary benefits. This will be put across while acquiring informed consent from the participants to prevent them from expecting financial benefits from taking part in the study. Further, confidentiality and anonymity will be highly maintained in this study. The real name of the respondents will not be indicated when presenting the obtained information. Pseudonyms will be used in place of respondents' names.

Summary

In chapter three, research methodology is discussed using a qualitative approach. Sampling techniques, data collections, and research design, among other elements, are discussed. The purpose of the current qualitative study is to determine the impact of the performance appraisal on the performance of employees working in Swaziland. The qualitative research method will be used in the current research study. This technique

comprises collecting data, describing, tabulating, organizing, and depicting the findings of the data presented in open-ended questions. The method is appropriate since it helps in answering questions such as what, who, where, when, and how linked with specific study question or issue. Chapter 4 will present a detailed analysis of data collected in the form of themes to show a better understanding of the data analysis.

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