

CHAPTER FOUR

GENESIS AND EVOLUTION OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

Developed countries thrive because they have elaborate and effective performance management systems complemented by monitoring and evaluation capability. In South Africa post 1994, several legislative instruments were approved and set in motion to improve all South Africans' overall quality of life. Developments included performance management and monitoring and evaluation systems, which are the subject of enquiry in this chapter. Research shows that the literature in performance management and monitoring and evaluation have built an artificial wall between the two areas of study. Almost all the literature consulted in the research leading to the writeup of this chapter discusses the one area of study exclusively as though it is wholly independent of the other (Ile, Eresia-Eke & Ile, 2019). The main question at the heart of this chapter is whether this separation is real, justifiable and in the interests of the two areas of study. To answer this seemingly rhetoric question, this chapter starts by defining the main concepts, which will point to areas of divergence and convergence. The chapter also traces the evolution and the nexus between performance management, monitoring and evaluation, its locus and focus, and delves into the discussion on the macro and micro levels of performance in the public sector.

CONCEPTS OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

According to Mello (2014), "performance management is a process integrated within other institutional systems and strategies for optimum achievement of institutional goals and continuous development of individual employees". Aguinis (2013) defines performance management as a continuous process that identifies, measures, and develops the performance of teams and individuals while also aligning performance with the organisation's strategic goals. Performance management helps management

achieve strategic objectives. Armstrong (2006) defines performance management as a process of improving organisational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams. Armstrong (2006) further believes that a performance agreement, measurement, feedback, positive reinforcement, and dialogue characterise performance management.

Most importantly, performance management is concerned with aligning individual and organisational performance (Aguinis, 2013). Armstrong (2006) and Pulakos, Mueller-Hanson and Arad (2019) support this view on aligning individual and organisational objectives. Viedge (2011) further tries to operationalise performance management as being implemented through a process that involves planning and goal setting, monitoring, giving feedback, analysing and assessing performance, reviews, attending to underperformance and coaching.

Monitoring is viewed by Wilsey, Field, Punay, and Walz (nd) as the continuous collection and analysis of data for the use in decision-making and improvement in achieving predetermined targets. Data collected from monitoring is used in evaluations to establish cost-benefit, return on investment, human resources, finance and other relevant contextual issues. Monitoring is seen by Essa (2014) as a continuous function using systematic interventions that provide evidence of the extent to which progress is made in the use of resources and objectives are achieved. Qualitative and quantitative indicators are used. Essa (2014) explains evaluation as a systematic and objective assessment of ongoing and completed programmes and projects and, in some instances, policies. Evaluations focus on the design, implementation and results. The emphasis is on outcomes, impact rather than of outputs. Monitoring is a continuous process that tracks a programme's activities and compliance with regulations and laws. Information collected is subsequently used in evaluations (James & Miller, 2005, in Wagner, Day, James, Kozma, Miller & Unwin, 2005). These authors further define evaluation as assessment of performance against set goals. Evaluations, they assert, should not be at the end of a project cycle.

Hunter (2009) brings a different perspective to monitoring and evaluation. He sees monitoring and evaluation as a management function and further explains monitoring as a systematic collection and analysis of information while the programme or project progresses. Evaluation occurs mid-term or at the end of a project to measure impact against initial plans. Kariuki (2021) is one of the few authors who attempts to conceptualise monitoring and evaluation within the context of performance management thereby suggesting inadvertently the convergence of performance management and monitoring and evaluation. He defines monitoring as the continuous and periodic tracking of activities about an intervention, gathering information systematically about specific indicators to check progress towards achieving an objective. Kariuki (2021) further defines evaluation as establishing and assessing an intervention's significance by applying scientific methods to decide on the efficacy of a design, implementation, efficiency in implementation, resource utilisation and sustainability of results. Kariuki (2021) describes monitoring and evaluation as a science that depends on data to judge merit.

MACRO AND MICRO LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

To provide a clear picture of the connection between performance management, monitoring and evaluation, dissecting performance at both macro and micro levels in the South African public sector is important. These two levels are considered separately in the sections that follow.

Macro level of performance in the public sector

For the state to function at an optimal level in all sectors of the society including the administration of the state, several institutions at a national level must be able to fulfil their constitutional mandate. Mello (2014) looks at performance from a broader perspective in which political parties formulate manifestos to respond to global and national societal challenges. The assertion by Mello suggests that while a state is a self-contained entity, it is influenced by international actors and other states in its quest to

perform at an optimal level. Policy-making at the highest level in any state and in South Africa vests with Parliament. Parliaments may differ in size and number of houses from one state to another. In South Africa, Parliament comprises two houses, the National Assembly, and the National Council of Provinces. The National Assembly has between 350 and 400 members while the National Council of Provinces has 90 members representing the nine provinces and organised local government. The composition of Parliament has a bearing on the performance of South Africa as unitary state. The composition ensures that all provinces and municipalities' voices are represented in decisions taken at the national sphere of government. Parliament has the authority in terms of section 43 and 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 to make laws.

Similarly, provinces and municipalities can make laws confined to their jurisdiction. They may not conflict with the Constitution or national legislation. Should a conflict of laws arise, the Constitution and national legislation takes precedence and nullifies such legislation. Once in power, the ruling political party translates its manifesto into policies that are then cascaded down and are reflected in strategic goals and annual plans. The National Assembly, with its power to elect and pass a motion of no confidence in the President, has an important mandate to ensure that the President exercises his/her powers with circumspection and performs functions for the upliftment of the South African populace, hence the duty to demand accountability.

In addition to the role of the legislature in the overall performance of the state, the executive as the President and his/her cabinet has a critical role in the macro performance of the state. The executive authority of the Republic of South Africa is vested in the President and his cabinet in section 85 of the Constitution. This authority, which the President exercises with cabinet members that he has the prerogative to hire and fire, has far-reaching implications for performance management at a macro level of the state. The President in the South African government and its parliamentary system is accountable to both Parliament and the party that elected him or her into office. These supervisory and monitoring roles mean that Parliament has the authority to supervise the performance of the President and pass a motion of no confidence.

Similarly, the governing party can exercise its power in Parliament by passing a motion of no confidence or recalling the President. In both scenarios, the President must vacate his office. It is consequently the responsibility of the President to closely monitor the performance of cabinet ministers to ensure that they perform at their best lest they are removed from office. By implication, by monitoring the performance of ministers, the President is also monitoring the performance of state departments, especially in the current dispensation where the presidency has a say in appointing directors-general or the accounting officers of each department. Dual accountability to the party and Parliament often confine the performance of the President. The South African Presidency is under the current electoral system, like a bird whose feathers have been clipped and yet is expected to fly. The solution, the author submits, is simple; the country must move to a presidential system.

Within cabinet, different ministers are responsible for different portfolios linked to national government departments. Vision, mission and values are, according to Armstrong (2006), some of the key aspects to organisational performance. This is also true of national government departments, which would be directionless without a vision and mission. In addition to the vision and mission, public institutions require internal and external appraisals. This is where monitoring and evaluation comes into the picture at a macro level of a departmental performance. The concept performance is included and used strategically to emphasise the omnipresence of performance in public institutions.

Micro level of performance in the public sector

Mello (2014) believes employees are the smallest yet most crucial units in the public sector's broader performance management scheme. Individual employees are members of teams, constituent parts of units that make up the institution. The overall performance of any institution commences at an individ-