




An organisational development framework for enhanced public sector performance



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Orientation: Public sector organisations (PSOs) are continuously scrutinised for their inability to deliver required services to the broader society. Organisational development (OD) appears to be the solution for improved service performance in PSOs.

Research purpose: The main objective of this study was to develop an OD framework that could support long-term performance in a selected PSO.

Motivation for the study: Integrated OD frameworks that can effectively guide the sustainable performance of PSOs are yet forthcoming in Southern Africa.

Research design, approach and method: A qualitative approach was utilised to obtain semi-structured interview data from a purposive sample of management ($N = 15$) from a selected public sector institution. Theme analyses were applied to illicit themes for the data gathered.

Main findings: The findings showed that participants perceive a misalignment between OD interventions and the performance imperatives of the PSO department. The participants highlighted several components that should be part of the OD framework to enhance performance. These included accurate diagnosis and evaluation, leadership and management development, operational factors (i.e. structure, processes and alignment), communication, inclusivity and profiling of employees.

Practical/managerial implications: The study highlights the importance of management competence in driving OD interventions. The framework furthermore provides a guideline for management to implement change interventions to achieve the organisation's strategic objectives.

Contribution/value-add: A framework is presented that is specifically aimed at providing practical guidance for the design of OD interventions in PSOs.

Keywords: change management; leadership competence; OD interventions; performance management; public sector.

Introduction

The South African public service has witnessed an unprecedented process of radical transformation and change in its core mandate and delivery focus since the post-apartheid era (Putzier 2017). Consequently, the performance impact of public sector organisation (PSOs) is expected to increase as the needs because of the diverse and broad base of stakeholders in these organisations (De Waele et al. 2021; Fourie & Poggenpoel 2017). Therefore, PSOs are accountable to several stakeholders, each with criteria for measuring performance (Andersen, Brewer & Leisink 2021). Performance management becomes complex as PSO performance depends on different levels of performance, namely individual-level performance, team-level performance and organisation-level performance (Aguinis 2019; De Waele et al. 2021). Moreover, beyond organisational performance, there is also societal performance, industry performance, and a particular industry's performance in terms of its contribution to the economy on the local and global level (Aguinis 2019; De Waele et al. 2021).

Performance management in the department under study is regulated by the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) policy that has been effective since 02 August 2015 (PMDS Policy 2015). Arnaboldi, Lapsley and Steccolini (2015) refer to performance management in the public sector as 'the ultimate challenge'. According to Masenya, Mokoele and Makalela (2018), many government departments are confronted with adapting effectively to change and implement the employee management and development systems, which in turn hamper service delivery.

In this context, the contribution of organisational development (OD) in promoting the performance of public sector institutions becomes valuable to research. Although the objectives of OD can be stated in simple terms as increased profitability and enhanced sustainability, OD should be understood as a multidimensional and multilevel strategy that covers the breadth and depth of an organisation (see Anderson 2019; Shukla, Heda & Panda 2015). It encompasses many organisational factors and affects stakeholders directly and indirectly (Eriksson et al. 2016). As such, OD is a holistic process applied across an organisation's systemic complexity to create alignment of strategy, structure, people, processes, leadership and rewards (Khan 2015). Moreover, this improves efficiency and productivity in the workplace and ensures organisational profitability and sustainability through enhanced organisational performance (Rothwell 2010).

Based on the aforesaid, OD and organisational performances are interrelated concepts and processes that also mirror the complexity of each other. Furthermore, suppose organisational performance is determined by how performance is perceived, formulated and measured within a specific organisation. In that case, it is important to understand the context in which an OD intervention takes place and the objectives of enhanced performance based on how organisational performance is defined in a particular context.

As a result of the critical importance of high performance in the public sector, it is necessary to understand better how management and subordinates in PSOs perceive OD interventions and the organisation's performance. Furthermore, as subordinates and management often play different roles in OD interventions, it is essential to explore the role of management as perceived by subordinates to ensure informed decisions are made regarding the design and implementation of the OD process. In addition to understanding the role of leadership in OD interventions, it is necessary to determine the critical success factors in designing and implementing successful OD interventions to enhance the performance of PSOs.

This research aims to address the following three research questions: (1) *What are the current perceptions of the management and subordinates regarding OD's role in enhancing a PSO department's performance?* (2) *What are the perceived critical OD components and interventions required to improve institutional performance?* (3) *What components of an integrated OD model support the achievement of sustainable outcomes?*

Next, a literature review is presented on the linkages between OD and performance management. After that, the research design adopted for this study is discussed, and the findings are presented. The article concludes with a discussion and a framework presentation that ties the study's findings together. Finally, recommendations for practice and research are made.

Literature review

Performance and performance management in the context of public sector institutions

Organisational performance depends on various levels of performance, including individual-level performance, team-level performance, organisational-level performance and societal performance (Aguinis 2019; Bussin 2017; De Waele et al. 2021). According to Richard et al. (2009), organisational performance is one of the most crucial concepts in management research. However, performance is a subjective perception of reality (Ion & Criveanu 2016), and there is no singular, unambiguous definition of organisational performance. Aguinis (2019) views performance management as a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing the performance of individuals and teams while aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organisation. Next to that performance management has several goals at the individual, administrative and strategic levels to achieve its business goals (Edeh et al. 2019). Performance management is therefore a system that continuously enhances individual and organisational performance through the alignment and deployment of organisational strategy (Abidi, De Leeuw & Dullaert 2020).

Alignment between organisational development and performance management

Employee perceptions about performance assessments form an important point of departure to gauge whether the system is effective (Sharma, Sharma & Agarwal 2016). According to Bester and Hofisi (2020), the existing performance models in the public sector could play a role in employees not improving their performance. Bouloiz (2020) notes that the main challenge is a lack of clarity on what performance means in the public sector. This leads to issues around the integration of several aspects, economically and socially. Musso and Weare (2020) state that the role of politics in the governance of the public sector causes public managers to have high levels of uncertainty as to whether the rewards and sanctions linked to performance will be forthcoming and leads to the perception of weak incentives to justify going the extra mile in terms of performance efforts.

The systems-based model of performance management (Schleicher et al. 2018) provides some insights into how performance management can be approached in the public sector through effective organisational design. Schleicher et al. (2018) developed a systems-based performance management model based on an extensive review of 35 years of performance management research. The systems-based model provides a holistic and integrated overview of the inputs and outputs of performance management from a systems point of view while considering the workflow, practices and processes thereof. The model also identifies the roles of the different stakeholders in the performance management process (i.e. leadership and employees). According to Bester and Hofisi (2020), the effective design and implementation of a public-sector performance

management system can enhance employee's motivation to perform and in turn, instil public confidence in public-sector delivery. The systems-based performance management model is therefore useful in aligning the organisational strategy and performance outcomes through a mature operations management system and optimisation of human capital that connects multiple organisational objectives (Oncioiu et al. 2022). However, it is worth mentioning that the measuring the public sector performance.

Critical organisational development components and interventions for organisational performance

A review of the literature showed several factors that need to be considered while applying OD interventions for the improvement of organisational performance. These factors are briefly discussed next.

Diagnosis and evaluation

Organisational development interventions aim at organisational effectiveness and performance. An accurate organisational diagnosis should take place to achieve these objectives. Accurate diagnosis entails analysing the organisational context or aspect(s) to identify business problems and deeply understand the heart of such issues (Samantaray 2017). This also includes the identification of the different causes and effects relating to the identified business problem and the interrelationships between these causes and effects. Helland et al. (2021) raise an important point: senior management and the HR practitioner must be aware of the extent to which middle managers believe in the validity of an OD intervention and the evaluation of such interventions. According to Helland et al. (2021:589), the attitude of middle management directly impacts the implementation of OD interventions.

Job descriptions and employee profiling

Job descriptions play an important role in achieving organisational performance objectives if job descriptions consider organisational goals and challenges (Al-Marwai & Subramaniam 2009). Barbouletos (2011) emphasises the importance of ensuring that job descriptions accurately reflect strategic organisational expectations of job roles. However, job descriptions can only be effective in contributing to individual and organisational performance if embedded in a formal and well-designed performance evaluation process that is linked to 'clear expectations ... regarding performance evaluation frequency and accountability' (Chhinzer 2021:19). Job descriptions, combined with employee profiling can ensure that the right employees, with the right skills and competence, are employed in the most suitable role where they will contribute effectively and optimally towards the achievement of organisational objectives (see Akinwale & Oluwafemip 2022; Mendy 2021; Nenonen et al. 2020; Pavlov et al. 2017; Ruiz et al. 2020). According to Akinwale and Oluwafemip (2022), personality profiling is essential to identify a set of personality traits, in addition to knowledge, skills and experience, which would make an employee suitable for a specific role. Applied within the public sector

context, Tyskbo (2023) views talented employees as those having a passion and drive for the job and being adaptable and agile. Moreover, employees should have the right public sector attitude for public sector service delivery.

Interpersonal relationships and teamwork

According to Simoes, Azevedo and Goncalves (2017:996), interpersonal relationships and HR development are key 'dimensions to consider in performance measurement'. This is echoed by Kapur (2020:1), who indicates that good interpersonal relationships are a prerequisite for fulfilling tasks and achieving performance objectives, as employees need to 'develop a mutual understanding and work in cooperation with each other.' Masanja and Chambi (2020:26) state that team building can be used to enhance performance through the creation of strong relationships among employees, which would then increase productivity. According to Tabassi, Abdullah and Bryde (2019:103), a cooperative management style and dealing with conflict in a cooperative way promote 'high team performance and desirable individual behaviour'.

Leadership and management development

The importance of leadership in achieving organisational performance is well documented (see Bans-Akutey & Timub 2021; Van Tuin et al. 2020). According to Van Tuin et al. (2020:3), a balance needs to be created by leaders and management between self-direction and a 'clear and structured context' within which subordinates can conduct their work. A clear and structured context will empower subordinates to self-direct with autonomy and ensure alignment with departmental objectives. A balance between self-direction and a structured context also allows subordinates to conduct their work in an engaged and efficient manner. According to Bans-Akutey and Timub (2021:5), leaders also need to understand their leadership style and how a particular style can motivate some and demotivate others. However, 'it is ... up to the leader to make use of the appropriate style that will motivate his team members taking into consideration characteristics of team members' (p. 5).

Organisational development operational models

Structure, processes and alignment are essential to ensure effective OD implementation. According to Verma et al. (2020), strategy is the key determinant of structure and provides the basis for performance achievement. Crespi et al. (2019:207) also state that 'structures need to be aligned with strategy to ensure strategic dispersion'. In other words, the structure of an organisation needs to be developed in such a way that all functions within the organisation can align with the strategic intent and be enabled to achieve strategic objectives. Change management processes are extensive and include aspects such as planning for change, managing change and reinforcing the change (Asikhia et al. 2021). These processes are supported by various tools such as communication, coaching, training and the identification of

prescriptive change models. Therefore, the change process should be managed through structured methods and pre-planned frameworks to ensure that the organisation can successfully transition from its current to a more desired state (Asikhia et al. 2021).

Biondi and Russo (2022:3) observe that it is important to create a long-term performance plan as a tool to define 'objectives, indicators and targets' and to drive performance. In the context of the department under study, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) (Republic of South Africa [RSA] 2012) requires that an outcome-based performance management approach is followed that is aligned to strategic objectives and a performance management system is in place to:

... ensure that the goals/objectives contained in the department's Strategic Plan (SP) and the Annual Performance Plan (APP), Key Government Focus Areas (KGFAs), which are in the performance agreements (PAs) of HODs, are cascaded into the PAs of the other members of the SMS. (p. 1)

The alignment of performance measurement with the organisation's strategic objectives is an essential element of strategic management control (Smith & Thomas 2020). However, for a performance management system to be effective, employees must believe in the 'correctness' of the performance management system (Sharma et al. 2016:231).

Communication

Hasan (2018:71) regards the communication process and organisational change processes as 'indistinguishably connected processes, and the success of an effective communication depends on the free flow of information about change and the content itself'. Hasan (2018:71) observes that communication needs to be two-way between employees and management. This communication 'facilitates the development of trust and assists the success of future change events'. Kim, Park and Cameron (2017) argue that there is a need for transparency among leaders in an organisation and that their transparency plays an essential role in creating a culture where open and honest communication is valued and employees value the organisation. Relationships are strengthened when open and honest communication exists among employees (Kim et al. 2017). In this regard, Hampton (2019) notes that poor relationships directly impact work performance and that positive relationships, especially between managers and subordinates, play a critical role in job satisfaction and retention.

Training and development

According to Jehanzeb and Bashir (2013), the proactive implementation of employee training and development programmes positively impacts job performance. The human resource management function of PSOs in particular is responsible for maintaining their workforce through various interventions such as up-skilling and training, mentoring and coaching and career progression (Lee 2020). Available research shows that the development of talented individuals in the sub-Saharan African public sector institutions is

essential for both individual and organisational outcomes (Barkhuizen & Masale 2022). A report by the Public Sector Service Commission revealed that many PSO departments are incapacitated because of negligence by senior management to not avail themselves and employees of training intervention (Republic of South Africa 2018).

Organisational culture

Organisational culture is defined as an organisation's shared norms and beliefs (Kim et al. 2017). Various scholars (Govan 2019; Nelson & Gardent 2011; Schraeder, Tears & Jordan 2005) state that employees should be aware of their organisation's culture and uphold the organisational values in their behaviour. According to Govan (2019:29), '[w]hen employees incorporate the fundamental principles into daily processes, operations, and interactions, expected cultural representation occurs'. It is important to observe the importance of understanding an organisation's culture's nature and underlying dynamics (Graamans, Ten Have & Ten Have 2021). It is not disputed that organisational culture has a direct impact on performance. As Govan (2019) argues, organisational culture plays a key role in achieving organisational effectiveness and performance objectives. However, an organisation's culture might be detrimental to performance if the culture is problematic. Because the culture and climate of an organisation have a direct impact on the behaviour of employees and the interpersonal relationships in an organisation, there is a need to first understand the dynamics underlying organisational culture within a particular organisational context before attempting to change the organisational culture (Graamans et al. 2021).

Research design

Research approach

The researchers followed a qualitative research approach. Neuman (2006) defines qualitative research as the social context of understanding the world by documenting real events, recording people's voices and observing participant behaviours. This research falls within the interpretivist paradigm. An interpretivist epistemology claims that knowledge requires understanding and interpreting subjective experiences and exploring these subjective experiences to 'reveal complex, emerging, meaningful patterns rather than singular causes' (Booyesen 2017:35). This research aims to present an integrated framework relating OD and performance management in a PSO.

Sampling

The participants in this study included different management levels in a selected PSO. The particular PSO employed five deputy director generals (DDGs), 15 chief directors, 28 directors, 32 deputy directors and 32 assistant directors over five departments. Within the context of PSOs, director generals, deputy director generals and chief directors (CDs) are regarded as managerial levels, while directors, deputy directors (DDs) and assistant directors (ADs) are regarded as subordinates. The individuals chosen for this study ($N = 15$)

were purposefully chosen because of their experience with OD interventions.

In this study, 10 participants were male and five were female. The age distribution for males was between 32 and 54 years, and for female participants, between 31 and 49 years. Most participants were representative of the African ethnic groups ($N = 14$) with the highest educational qualification ranging between a bachelors and doctoral degree ($N = 14$). All participants were employees in management positions ranging from assistance director to deputy director general. Most of the participants in this study were employees as deputy directors ($N = 6$), followed by directors ($N = 3$). All participants had more than 15 years of work experience.

Entrée and establishing research roles

The director general (DG) of the PSO was approached to obtain permission for this study. The researcher engaged with the participants after permission was obtained to explain the nature and scope of the study. The participants were informed of their rights and that participation was voluntary. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Johannesburg before the commencement of the study. The research adhered to all ethical protocols by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality.

Data collection method

The data in this research were collected by using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate data collection method as the primary researcher wanted to enter the participants' world and ask them questions about their experiences. Semi-structured interviews are conducted based upon a broad framework of open-ended, pre-formulated questions, but the researcher strictly does not have to adhere to these questions (Myers 2013). Thus, the participants' responses shape the order and content of further questions. Furthermore, the researcher made field notes during and after interviews, which informed the continuous development of the interview question framework. This ensured that new emerging themes were sufficiently covered in subsequent and follow-up interviews.

Data analyses

Theme analyses were used in this study applying the six-phase process of Braun and Clarke (2006). The first phase requires the researcher to become familiar with the data. This phase already began with the interviews, in which the researcher deeply engaged with participants through attentive listening and appropriate questioning. Thereafter, the data were transcribed, and the researcher read and re-read the transcripts to become 'familiar with the depth and breadth of the content' (Braun & Clarke 2006:16). 'The second phase entails generating initial codes. Coding data refers to transforming collected information or observations

into a set of meaningful, cohesive categories' (Ye Sun 2018:2). The researcher then searched for themes, constituting the third thematic analysis phase. This entailed the analysis of codes to determine possible links between codes and reflecting on the possible themes that could represent a cluster of codes that appeared to be related. Thereafter, thematic maps were created to view the themes spanning the whole data set as a visual representation of the full data set. Phase 4 of the analysis entailed revising and refining the themes and sub-themes (Braun & Clarke 2006). During this phase, overlapping themes collapsed, and where sub-themes appeared not to have sufficient coherence under the main theme, they were elevated to main themes. During the fifth phase, the researcher defined each theme in one or two sentences to ensure that the label of each theme accurately reflected the essence of the theme, and then reviewed the themes, sub-themes and full set of themes again. The final phase concludes with a report of the findings.

Data recording and storage

The interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the participants. In line with the guidelines of Braun and Clarke (2006), the primary researcher applied a rigorous and thorough process of transcribing the data. The transcripts were returned to the participants to verify their accuracy. The recorded data and transcripts are password protected and will be kept for 5 years.

Ensuring the quality and rigour of the study

Duke and Mallette (2011) indicate that high-quality research requires: a deep understanding of and the ability to shape theory; sharp and insightful observation skills; the ability to decentre to the degree needed to identify and come to understand the perspectives of others; strict adherence to rules for valid and rigorous data collection, data management, and data analysis; the ability to think both generatively and analytically; and the ability to write engagingly and vividly so that the readers can see and grasp the meanings discovered and interpreted. The researchers also applied the principles of credibility (i.e. accurate description of the phenomenon under study), transferability (i.e. application of research in different situations), dependability (i.e. systematic and rigorous research process) and confirmability (i.e. full and logical description of data) as advised by Collis and Hussey (2013).

Findings

The findings of the research are presented in this section. The data analyses resulted in various themes, as evidenced in the given map. The most important themes are presented in the following section and supported by direct quotes from the participants. The participants are coded to ensure their confidentiality.

Theme 1: Perceived alignment between organisational development and organisational performance

The findings relating to employee perceptions about the alignment between OD and performance are reported in the following section. From the participants' responses, it was evident that there is a lack of integration between OD and organisational performance. As indicated by Participant L:

'OD linkage with performance is demonstrated through the alignment of vision, strategy, organisational plans, job descriptions, and employee performance agreements. Without this alignment, resources can be deployed, but performance may not be achieved as per the broader outcomes and expectation of stakeholders, which, in this case, are the South African citizens. Hence, there is a common outcry and low public trust due to poor service delivery.' (PL, Male, Generation X, Director, 4 years in current job)

'There is a strong linkage between the two; however, the performance of the department could be impacted, as there are no good OD interventions implemented, or, rather, the interventions are there, but the process of implementation is problematic, as not enough consultation, according to me, is done.' (PL, Male, Generation X, Director, 4 years in current job)

'There is lack of employee involvement in OD systems. It then affects the strategic alignment of OD to support the department's strategic objectives. It also affects the performance of the organisation because, once OD fails to align itself to organisational strategic objectives, then automatically the position which will be created will not support the core functions of the department. Therefore, individuals' performance and [the] performance management system itself will not be realised, and the systems of performance management will be directly affected.' (PN, Female, Generation X, Assistant Director, 5 years in the current job)

Theme 2: Employee perceptions of the most critical organisational development interventions to enhance organisational performance

This theme relates to participants' opinions on which OD interventions would play a pivotal role in improving the performance of the department. A total of 15 themes emerged from the data. An overview of Theme 2 is provided in Figure 1. The themes that occurred most frequently are discussed.

Sub-theme 1: Accurate diagnosis

Accurate diagnosis refers to analysing the organisational context or aspect(s) to identify business problems and deeply understand what lies at the heart of such a business problem. It also includes the identification of the different causes and effects related to the identified business problem and the interrelation of these causes and effects. As mentioned by Participant D:

'Accurate diagnosis of an organisation and the change event. This can assist the department to analyse the current situation and its effectiveness. Further, diagnosis will assist to enhance the department's functioning if it is development-oriented.' (PD, Female, Generation Y, Deputy Director, 4 years in current job)



FIGURE 1: Sub-themes relating to the most critical organisational development interventions to enhance organisational performance.

Participant D further continues:

'[Accurate diagnosis] will assist in identifying specific problems, and, through this analysis, the departments will be able to design organisational development interventions. Effective interventions, will fulfil, amongst others, the need of an organisation, knowledge of intended outcomes, and the change management capability of the department's employees.' (PD, Female, Generation Y, Deputy Director, 4 years in current job)

Sub-theme: Evaluation

As a theme, evaluation refers to carefully considering all aspects of OD interventions based on set criteria to determine these aspects' success or a lack of success to take further appropriate action. As mentioned by Participant D:

'Evaluation and institutionalisation of organisational development interventions, evaluation should be carried out at the end of any cycle, if the results are to be made more correct, then evaluation should be carried out at every step, so that evaluation can assist to ensure accurate intervention decisions. Critical will be to ensure that the evaluation of OD interventions is done in key areas, such as during the implementation of OD evaluations and the overall impact of OD interventions.' (PD, Female, Generation Y, Deputy Director, 4 years in current job)

Sub-theme: Interpersonal relationships

This theme refers to the connection or association between two or more people and between different groups of people within the department, as well as the level and quality of these engagements. As mentioned by Participant N:

'I think the HR strategies of the department and the holistic culture of how people work, engage, and how people are managed needs to be reviewed.' (PN, Female, Generation X, Assistant Director, 5 years in the current job)

'Teambuilding ... conflict management [*is one of the*] most critical interventions for enhancing performance.' (PG, Male, Generation Y, Deputy Director, 6 years in current job)

Sub-theme: Leadership and management development

This theme refers to the improvement of employees' ability to influence and provide guidance to other employees, as well as how employees plan, structure, and co-ordinate the efforts of subordinates to achieve the department's business objectives:

'Leadership interventions to me are the most critical component of success for enhancing organisational performance.' (PE, Female, Generation X, Deputy Director, 4 years in current job)

'Organisational leadership is of key importance, as I perceive it. It requires active measures to work with different groups and individuals. A leader must understand the strengths and weaknesses of different professionals before making a plan of action to improve the effectiveness of the organisation.' (PM, Male, Generation Y, Deputy Director, 3 years in current job)

Sub-theme: Processes

This theme relates to the series of planned, structured, and formalised actions associated with OD interventions in the department. Some comments of the participants in supporting this theme:

'Performance processes have to be planned ... Provide guidelines of what needs to be done in terms of content of performance contracts, the standards associated with levels, when they will be submitted to DPSA, when will the first reviews be done. Develop standard operating procedures of what steps to follow, skills profiles, skills audits, and the migration process.' (PK, Male, Generation X, Director, 7 years in current job)

'Reengineering of processes and change management are the most critical according to me. The environment is changing at a faster pace, and the department is not keeping up.' (PI, Male, Generation X, Deputy Director General, 5 years in current job).

Sub-theme: Training and development

Training and development refer to the processes through which employees develop their knowledge and skills to enhance performance in a current or future role. According to participant H:

'Training and development is also very important, in that, in the case, for example, where you have technical expertise with no managerial skills. The knowledge that would be acquired enables technical people to be managers and breaks the silos mentality, which will have an effect in the enhancing of performance to a larger extent.' (PH, Male, Generation X, Deputy Director, 5 years in current job)

'Training is critical. You find that people come into organisations with traditional academic qualifications or theory-based or theory-dominated thinking, without the soft skills of people management, risk management, and so on. Re-engineering of skills through training is critical.' (PJ, Male, Generation Y, Deputy Director, 3 years in current job)

Other sub-themes

Other emerging sub-themes that are necessary to include are as follows: communication, change management, inclusivity and profiling of employees. Communication is related to conveying and disseminating information, ideas, and opinions within the department. As mentioned by Participant C:

'I believe relations between supervisor and subordinate is a social science issue that is lacking, which has an impact on job satisfaction. I would actively have chief directorates focus groups to encourage positive relations, diagnose problems, and capacitate individuals on how to manage conflict.' (PC, Female, Generation X, Chief Director, 7 years in current job)

The theme, change management, related to the processes associated with bringing about change in the department. As mentioned by Participant I:

'Reengineering of processes and change management are the most critical according to me. The environment is changing at a faster pace, and the department is not keeping up.' (PI, Male, Generation X, Deputy Director General, 5 years in current job)

The theme of Inclusivity, referred to the extent to which employees are allowed and encouraged to be actively involved throughout OD interventions. Participant G emphasised:

'It [*a well-designed performance management system*] starts [*with*] the inclusion of people in the planning process, deriving deliverables that are translated to performance agreements, and agreement on how progress will be recorded, how each deliverable will be measured, the frequency of delivery, and how the feedback would feed into the development plans for performance improvement.' (PG, Male, Generation Y, Deputy Director, 6 years in current job)

Lastly, the theme of 'Profiling employees', refers to the act of collecting and organising work-related information about individual employees to understand their developmental areas and strengths. As mentioned by Participant M:

'Before making any changes to the company, consider the education of professionals in different areas of the business. Find out about their abilities, skills, and strengths. Identify their weaknesses or the areas where specific professionals face difficulties when working as a team. After identifying the strengths and weaknesses of professionals with different educational backgrounds, focus on the growth of the company by building effective teams. Develop teams with complementary skills and strengths. Encourage professionals to work toward specific goals and give assignments based on their skills, knowledge, and background. Efficiency in a company requires an understanding of different professionals and their role within the business, as well as ways to improve their abilities or make use of unique skills.' (PM, Male, Generation Y, Deputy Director, 3 years in current job)

Discussion

The main objective of this research was to develop a framework linking OD and performance of a selected PSO

department. The findings, in general, showed that the participants believed that OD interventions do not support the performance outcomes of their department. The findings are in line with previous research indicating that clarity should be achieved regarding how OD can enhance the performance of government institutions (see Bester & Hofisi 2020; Bouloiz 2020).

Further analyses resulted in a plethora of themes relating to the components and interventions that should be part and parcel of OD interventions to support performance management in the POS. The findings are summarised in the given framework (see Figure 2).

Three key issues emerged throughout the data set: a lack of leadership and managerial skills, a lack of consultation and inclusion, and a lack of communication from management to operational levels. Underlying these issues are two concerns: (1) A perceived lack of managerial transparency is associated with a lack of trust in OD interventions and unwillingness to engage in and take ownership of OD interventions on an operational level. (2) A significant amount of role confusion exists, which is interrelated and associated with structural issues, misalignment, a lack of integration, workload imbalances, planning and timing issues, and duplication, which tend to wasteful expenditure. Each of these issues contributes to challenges experienced during the implementation of OD interventions, leading to either no effect or a negative impact on organisational performance. In addition, the various challenges experienced by employees contribute to negative staff morale and poor employee well-being.

The role that management ought to play in OD interventions should not be underestimated. As stated, a lack of managerial and leadership skills was cited as a key issue underlying the challenges experienced in the department, leading to poor implementation and a lack of positive impact on organisational performance. It is specifically the tendency of management not to consult and communicate that was raised numerous times by participants. These managerial behaviours contribute to a silo effect in the department, which further restricts alignment and integration.

Based on the findings, it can be stated that the critical success factors for the design of a successful OD intervention that would lead to better performance of a PSO are a leadership and managerial approach that values inclusivity, consultation and communication (see Bans-Akutey & Tiimub 2021). Inclusivity, consultation, and communication should not only be core principles in the manager-subordinate relationship, but also in relationships between management and the OD team, OD and the HR department, as well as between the departmental management (including OD management) and the DPSA, to ensure that all processes and procedures are conducive to aligning departmental strategy, operations and objectives to governmental strategy and objectives, of which the key objective is to fulfil its public service duty to the South African nation.

Three key issues emerged throughout the data set: a lack of leadership and managerial skills, a lack of consultation and inclusion, and a lack of communication from management to operational levels. Underlying these issues are two concerns: (1) A perceived lack of managerial transparency is associated with a lack of trust in OD interventions and unwillingness to engage in and take ownership of OD interventions on an operational level. (2) A significant amount of role confusion is interrelated and associated with structural issues, misalignment, a lack of integration, workload imbalances, planning and timing issues, and duplication, which tend to wasteful expenditure. Each of these issues contributes to challenges experienced during the implementation of OD interventions, leading to either no effect or a negative impact on organisational performance. In addition, the various challenges experienced by employees contribute to negative staff morale and poor employee well-being. The importance of role clarity for OD stakeholders and employee role profiling and the anticipated outcomes thereof is well documented (Akinwale & Oluwafemip 2022; Katzenbach & Smith 2015; Mendy 2021; Nenonen et al. 2020; Pavlov et al. 2017; Ruiz et al. 2020).

The role that management ought to play in OD interventions should not be underestimated (see Bans-Akutey & Timub 2021; Mitchel 1982; Van Tuin et al. 2020). As stated, a lack of managerial and leadership skills was cited as a key issue underlying the challenges experienced in the department, leading to poor implementation and a lack of positive impact on organisational performance. It is specifically the tendency of management not to consult

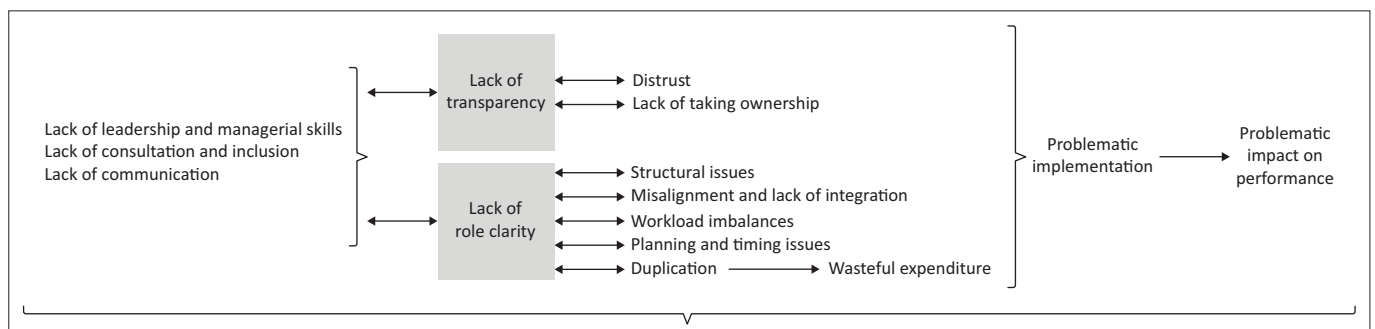


FIGURE 2: Interrelated areas of concern based on the perceptions of employees.

and communicate that was raised numerous times by participants. These managerial behaviours contribute to a silo effect in the department, which further restricts alignment and integration.

Based on the findings, it can be stated that the critical success factors for the design of a successful OD intervention that would lead to better performance of a PSO are a leadership and managerial approach that values inclusivity, consultation and communication (see Govan 2019; Hasan 2018; Kim et al. 2017; Van Tuin et al. 2020:3). Inclusivity, consultation and communication should not only be core principles in the manager–subordinate relationship, but also in relationships between management and the OD team, OD and the HR department, as well as between the departmental management (including OD management) and the DPSA. This will ensure that all processes and procedures are conducive to aligning departmental strategy, operations, and objectives to governmental strategy and objectives, of which the key objective is to fulfil its public service duty to the South African nation (see Biondi & Russo 2022; Crespi et al. 2019; Verma et al. 2020).

Based on the integrated findings, a framework (Figure 3) is presented, indicating:

- the principles for the design of OD interventions;
- the requirements and responsibilities that the OD function needs to fulfil in the PSO environment that would lead to enhanced performance.

The two core principles that should guide the design of OD interventions that will enhance organisational performance are:

- consistent and thorough dialogic consultation and communication across all departmental levels;
- alignment between the objectives of an OD intervention and the departmental and governmental objectives, while adhering to the DPSA's processes, procedures, rules, and regulations.

In addition, OD's specific requirements and responsibilities are in the context of a PSO. The OD team must deeply understand governmental objectives and the associated departmental performance implications. To ensure that OD interventions are designed and implemented in accordance with the DPSA requirements, the OD team would require a thorough understanding of DPSA policies, procedures, rules and regulations, as well as departmental performance implications. The relationship with the DPSA is of critical importance, and when any of the DPSA requirements are detrimental to operations or achieving objectives, there should be open

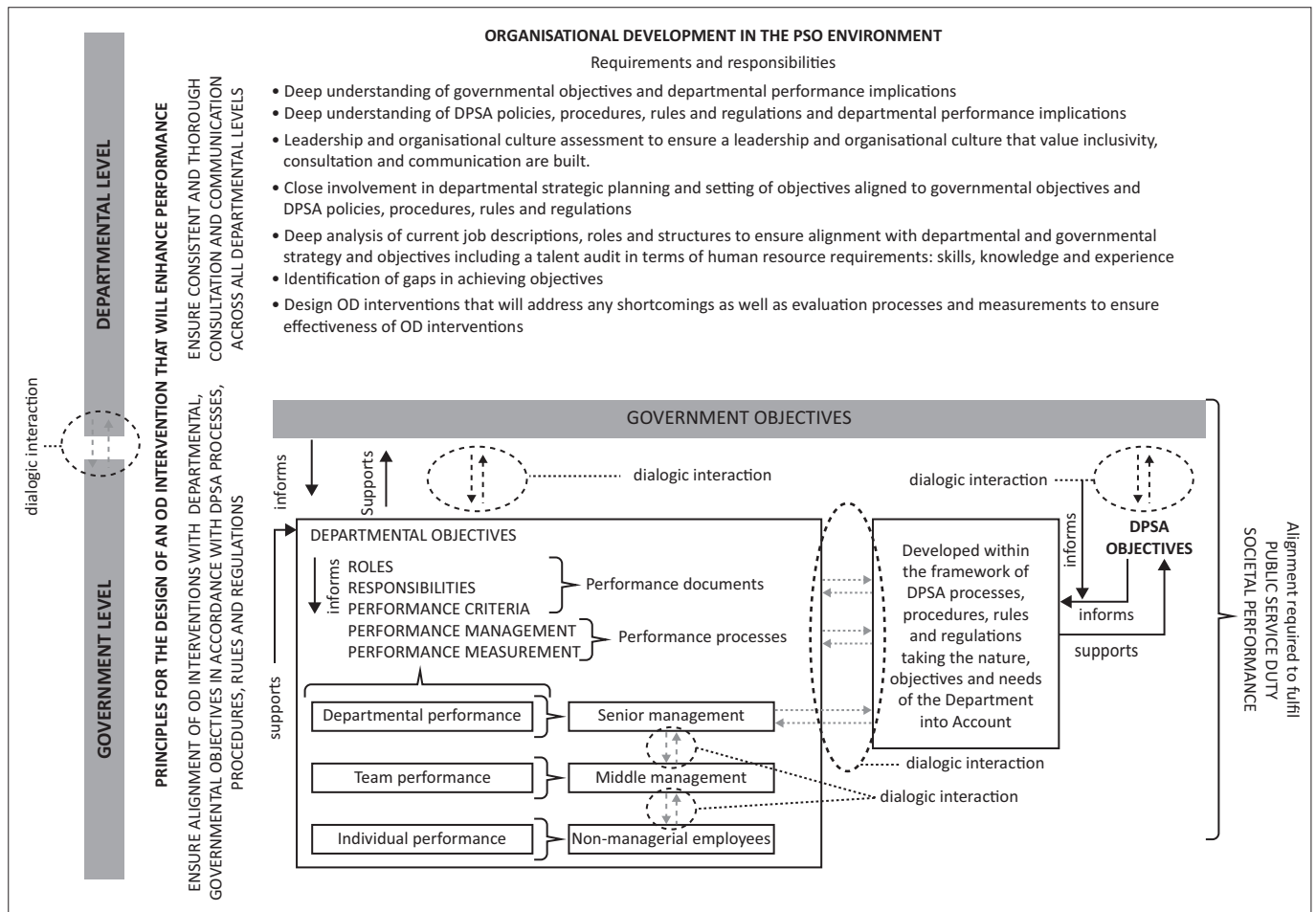


FIGURE 3: Framework indicating principles for the design of organisational development interventions and the requirements and responsibilities of the organisational development function in the public sector organisation environment that would lead to enhanced performance.

communication and consultation with the DPSA. Because leadership and organisational culture play an important role in employee engagement, it is necessary to assess leadership and the departmental culture to ensure a leadership culture that values inclusivity, consultation and open communication (see Bans-Akutey & Timub 2021; Van Tuin et al. 2020). The OD function cannot operate in a silo, separated from the department, if a culture of inclusivity, consultation and open communication is to be fostered. Therefore, there needs to be close co-operation in departmental strategic planning and setting of objectives aligned to governmental objectives and DPSA policies, procedures, rules and regulations. On a practical level, the OD team needs to thoroughly analyse current job descriptions, roles and structures to ensure alignment with departmental and governmental strategy and objectives, including a talent audit regarding human resource requirements: skills, knowledge and experience. In addition, OD should play a proactive role in continuously identifying gaps in achieving objectives and accordingly design OD interventions that will address any shortcomings, and establish evaluation processes and measurements to ensure the effectiveness of OD interventions (Helland et al. 2021).

Value add of the research

This research makes an important contribution on a theoretical and practical level. From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the limited empirical knowledge that currently exists on how OD can contribute to the performance management of PSOs. The framework developed based on the findings of the study can further serve as a theoretical foundation for improved performance management in the public sector.

The findings of this research emphasised the vital role of leadership and management in fostering an environment that promotes OD interventions in support of organisational performance. Therefore, management needs to create a more inclusive culture and involve employees in the change management process to prevent employee resistance to important initiatives to the benefit of the various stakeholders involved (i.e. staff, management and broader society). This requires regular consultation and clear communication with key stakeholders to prevent uncertainty. In consultation with key OD stakeholders, management should develop an integrated OD strategy to support the institution at multiple levels to ensure the smooth operational functions required for service performance transition. The framework presented can be used as a guideline to ensure the effective implementation of OD interventions that will meet the LPIs and strategies promoted by the DPSA.

Limitations and recommendations

This research had some limitations. Firstly, the research was cross-sectional with data collected at one point. Therefore, cause and effect inferences cannot be made over a longer period. Secondly, the research focused on a selected PSO. The findings can, therefore, not be generalised

to other PSO settings. Thirdly, the sample was limited to management perceptions only. Future studies can benefit from including other OD stakeholders, such as HR and employees, to provide a more holistic overview of OD interventions and their impact on performance. The research can also be expanded to PSOs in other countries to allow for cross-cultural comparisons. Moreover, the sample can also be expanded to include a broader demographic representation. Lastly, the framework provides a foundation for developing a survey that can be used to assess the effectiveness of OD interventions across the South African government sector and take corrective actions where necessary.

Conclusion

In this study, a framework is presented that is specifically aimed at providing practical guidance for the design of OD interventions in PSOs, which was developed by applying the integrated findings, indicating the principles for the design of OD interventions, as well as the requirements and responsibilities of the OD function in the PSO environment in enhancing performance. This framework could serve as a starting point to consider using new approaches or adapting existing approaches for the department under study and all government departments. This framework will also allow departments to rethink and re-evaluate existing practices, specifically in their design and implementation processes of OD interventions.

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This is the second scientific article that stems from a cohesive study, the first looked at 'Employee perceptions of organisational design interventions in the public sector' (Melaletsa, Bussin & Barkhuizen 2023), and the second article builds upon these findings, offering an organisational development framework for enhanced public sector performance.

Competing interests

The author(s) declare that they have no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

M.M. executed the study on which this article is based and compiled the original literature review and analyses. M.B. is the promotor of the study and provided editorial inputs to the research article. E.N.B. is the co-promotor of the study, compiled the draft article based on the study and provided editorial inputs.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the Faculty of Management research ethics committee of the University of Johannesburg (No. IPPM 2017-005 [D]).

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, E.B., on reasonable request.

Disclaimer

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