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Enhancing Performance Management System for improved employee satisfaction

A case study of a software company in India

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ABSTRACT (MAX. 200 WORDS):
An effective performance management system plays a crucial role in fostering employee engagement and productivity, which are essential for an organization's success. Employee satisfaction is one of the most important factors. However, the critical aspect of employee satisfaction has been largely overlooked in the existing literature. This study aims to bridge the gap by examining the relationship between performance management systems and employee satisfaction by highlighting the inefficiencies and limitations of current performance management practices in addressing employee satisfaction. Key factors identified include the design and implementation of performance management practices, communication and feedback processes, and the influence of recognition and rewards. To enhance employee satisfaction, our research should delve into various aspects of performance management systems. This includes investigating the effectiveness of different performance measurement techniques, the role of leadership and managerial practices, and assessing the impact of organizational culture. Furthermore, research should focus on developing strategies to align employee expectations with performance management goals and provide opportunities for employee participation and involvement. By addressing these research gaps, organizations can develop more

comprehensive and employee-centred performance management systems. We believe the findings of this study provide a foundation for future research directions to enhance employee satisfaction.

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1 Introduction

Employee performance management system (EPMS) is a process that helps organisations measure and evaluate employee performance, and then use that information to improve organisational effectiveness. It includes setting performance goals, providing feedback and coaching, and evaluating employee performance against those goals (Becker, Antuar, and Everett; 2011). EPMS has been found to have a positive impact on employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall organisational performance. A well-designed EPMS can help organisations identify and retain top performers, while also providing opportunities for employee development and growth (Becker et al., 2011).

A good system for employee performance management must include goal setting. Fellows and Liu (2021) discovered that representatives can be persuaded and that defining precise execution goals improves their presentation. According to Ishak, Fong, and Shin (2019), employees and managers should work together while putting forth objectives that are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound). A framework for evaluating a representative's presentation and clear execution assumptions can help representatives comprehend what is typically expected of them.

Standard execution evaluations are another critical piece of a delegate showing the board system. During performance evaluations, managers can compare employee performance to previously established goals and expectations. Palaiologos, Papazekos, and Panayotopoulou (2011) say that it would be ideal for assessments to be fair and predictable and given genuine models like abilities and behaviours connected with the nature of work. Mofokeng and Shepherd Dhliwayo (2022) state that constructive feedback that emphasizes both strengths and areas for improvement should be provided frequently and promptly.

Feedback is an essential part of employee performance management. Research has shown, according to Goleman (2017) that giving employees input can assist them with distinguishing their assets and shortcomings and give direction on the best way to get to the next level. Specific, timely, and actionable feedback should focus on behaviours and outcomes rather than individual traits (Gliddon, 2004). As part of the process, employees should be encouraged to offer feedback on their own performance and seek clarification on expectations.

In addition to goal-setting, performance evaluations, and feedback, an efficient employee performance management system may also include other components such as development planning, coaching and mentoring, recognition and rewards, and performance improvement plans for employees who are not meeting performance expectations (Pulakos, Hanson, Arad, and Moye; 2015). Workers who battle to satisfy execution guidelines can get support from these extra parts, which can assist them with fostering their abilities, perceiving and compensating for elite execution, and helping representatives who are getting along admirably (Pulakos et al., 2015).

As per Weaven, Quach, Thaichon, Frazer, Billot, and Grace (2021), Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) play a significant role in driving economic expansion in both developed and developing economies. Academic writing frequently discusses their contributions to job creation, regional development, the gross national product, technological advancements, and other areas. As the authors explained, new challenges and opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) have emerged as a result of globalisation and expanding

advancement. SMEs would struggle to survive and support their capabilities if developments, efficiency enhancements, and innovation advancements were not implemented. Little size, high work power, advancement backwardness and inside-looking creation should be displaced by development gathering, an outward course in progress, acquiring of implied data and total efficiency (Weaven et al., 2021). Consequently, in order to take advantage of both opportunities and challenges, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) constantly strive to adapt their competitive strategies to the shifting market conditions.

In this study, we are concentrating on Small and Medium Enterprises in the IT field based in India. SMEs are considered the backbone of the Indian economy. They play a significant role in generating employment, promoting innovation, and contributing to economic growth.

Small and medium-sized businesses, or SMEs, account for 42 million jobs, 40 per cent of exports, 45 per cent of industrial output, and one million new jobs annually for the Indian economy (Thomas, Narayanan, and Ramanathan; 2012). Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) currently produce over 8000 high-quality goods for Indian and international markets. They stand to gain greatly from sectoral diversification and expansion as a result. Indian SMEs are making significant progress in a variety of industries, including food processing, precision engineering, and manufacturing (Thomas et al., 2012).

1.1 Problem

Armstrong (2014) asserts that performance management system effectiveness (PMSE) is a metric for determining whether or not the objectives of an organisation and its employees are in sync. Researchers, such as Kennerley and Neely (2003); Kolich (2009); Tan and Smyrnios (2006) state that careful implementation of an effective EPMS ensures this consistency. For a PMS implementation process to succeed, employees must enthusiastically accept and effectively participate in goal setting. Most of the prior research has only taken into account organisational performance within the EPMS context (Busco, Giovannoni, and Scapens, 2008; de Wall and Coevert, 2007; Hooi and Payambarpour, 2016; Thursfield and Grayley (2016). While doing so, completely ignored the workers' discernment. Some recent research has focused on this aspect, and it has been suggested that employees investigate PMSE. Audenaert, Decramer, George, Verschuere, and Van Waeyenberg (2019) suggested investigating EPMS to determine how it influences employee retention, motivation, and work engagement.

The study conducted by Pandey and Sharma (2015), concluded that the professionals in IT companies in India are not entirely satisfied with their job and the way employee performance evaluation is conducted. Our aim is to concentrate on this particular area and try to find the factors challenging the overall satisfaction of employees. The current study focuses on the missing link between EPMS, employee work engagement, and performance.

1.2 Research Question

Our research question aims to explore ways to improve the performance management system in order to increase employee satisfaction. The question acknowledges the importance of employee satisfaction in relation to the performance management process and seeks to identify strategies, practices, or modifications that can be implemented to enhance employee

satisfaction within the performance management system. Goal setting, feedback and communication, rewards and recognition, fairness and transparency, and any other relevant factors that can influence employee satisfaction may be examined as part of the research. Organizations can benefit from the research's insights and suggestions for improving their performance management systems and increasing employee satisfaction. Hence, this case study aims to answer the following research question:

How to enhance the performance management system for improved employee satisfaction?

1.3 Purpose

The clear purpose of the research paper is to enhance the performance management system in a software company in India, with the goal of improving employee satisfaction. The paper aims to explore ways to improve the effectiveness of evaluating and managing employee performance within the organization. It seeks to identify the key challenges and limitations of the current performance management systems and provide recommendations for enhancing these systems. The objectives of the research paper include:

1 Identifying the current state of performance management systems in the selected organization, assessing their strengths and challenges.
2 Examining the various factors that influence employee performance, such as organizational culture, leadership style, employee motivation, and development programs.
3 Evaluating the effectiveness of different performance management tools and techniques, such as goal setting, appraisals, and feedback.
4 Proposing recommendations for enhancing performance management systems based on the research findings and best practices.

In summary, the purpose of the research paper is to investigate and propose improvements to the performance management system in the software company to enhance employee satisfaction.

1.4 Delimitation

In this study we are concentrating on SMEs based in India and focus on a specific time period to evaluate recent trends and developments in performance management systems. The study is limited to the SMEs of the Information technology industry and uses a case study to collect and analyse data. The data is collected on the basis of an individual's perspective and accessing a whole team is not considered. The study may focus on a specific aspect of performance management, such as feedback mechanisms or goal setting, rather than attempting to cover all aspects of the process.

2 Literature Review

A thorough literature review about employee performance management combined with research on the existing systems that manage the employee performance was required to gain a detailed understanding of the subject. This chapter aims to explain several topics that help to have a general view of the implementation of employee performance management systems in organisations. The aspects that are more related to the engagement of employees are presented here even though each of these topics has an extensive explanation and scope according to the literature. After exploring the benefits and challenges of the existing tools and services, a table with a summary of the literature review is presented at the end of the chapter.

2.1 Career Planning – An Imperative for EPMS

According to Ahmed and Kaushik (2011), a judicious Career Planning system that is properly integrated with the potential that employees have demonstrated and the opportunities that the organization can afford to offer is required to support PMS. The authors further state that with the assistance of the reporting officer, career planning (CP) entails assisting the employee in making decisions about their future career paths based on their capabilities. The majority of organizations use the four-stage model, which can be specifically described as setting individual business roles and connecting them to the workgroup and organizational goals through performance planning, performance measurement and review, rewards and performance development (Armstrong & Baron, 2006).

2.1.1 The link between CP and PMS

According to Ahmed and Kaushik (2011), career development and performance appraisal have a direct linkage with PMS as career development considers career mapping, succession planning, management development and integration of career development with organisational development initiatives and associates such appraisal with training needs, promotion, transfer and relocation. Performance appraisal plays the role of the link between the organisation and the employee's personal career goals as it recognises the work done by the employees, mostly by means of rewards and appreciation (Ahmed & Kaushik, 2011). The authors' further state that performance management is not regarded as a single system but rather a number of interlinked processes and activities like communication strategies, competency development, job design and evaluation, payment systems, and motivation practices aligned with performance management for its development. The authors further claim that the usual link found between performance management and career progression or development of skills and capabilities was supervisors' assessment of individual's capabilities and potential for progression by earmarking their status as well-placed as (ready: next year), career-broadening as (ready: lateral move) and increased responsibility as (ready: different job). The link between the career planning process and management according to Walker (1973) is as given in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Link between CP process and management (Walker, 1973)

Individual Career Planning	Human Resource Planning
Occupational and organisational choice	The way we attract, recruit and orient new talent to the organisation
Job assignment/choice	The way we match individual interests and talents with opportunities
Performance and development planning and review	The way we help individuals perform effectively and develop capabilities
Retirement	The way we help individuals prepare for satisfying secure retirement

2.1.2 Roles of Individuals and Organization in CP

Ahmed and Kaushik (2011) state that an Individual is responsible for developing the knowledge and skills necessary for managing their career even though management has some responsibility to provide the organisational climate, support and development programs required for effective career planning. The authors further claim that the employee's ability to work out a satisfying career can depend on the company's policies and practices, right from determining human resources requirements of the organisation to analysing the distribution of employees in different stages, assigning jobs specific to employee's requirement and to the organisations business goals and providing career-based training and development programmes supported by the proper reward system. The career and culture-based motivational resources positively related to the effectiveness in people viewing the strategy, the experience of a well-functioning structure, the relevance of considering performance appraisal, the satisfaction people feel and the length they stay in the organisation (Larsson, Brousseau, Kling & Sweet, 2007). The perceived company provided-support and effectiveness of the feedback management system, as well as the career advancement opportunities within the company in comparison with those outside the company, are the two sets of variables that are found to play a key role in international assignee's decision to stay or quit (Stahl, Chua, Caligiuri, Cerdin & Taniguchi, 2007).

Ahmed and Kaushik (2011) validated the theoretical discussions on the association of individuals and organisational career development interventions which implies that career mobility systems or performance incentive systems in accordance with employees' career orientations need to be designed by the organisation. They conclude that career planning provides opportunities to add value to themselves and the organisation by acquiring higher knowledge and skills and if career planning is focused, sustainable development can be ensured by taking care of employees who have demonstrated performance and potential.

2.2 Performance Management System Effectiveness

According to Dewettinck and van Dijk (2013), the perception of appraisal fairness and performance management (PM) system effectiveness is strongly related to the performance review focus and employee participation and PM system effectiveness is strongly related to the frequency of informal performance reviews than the frequency of formal performance reviews.

The authors found that the role and functionality of PM systems are more effective when the manner in which PM systems are shaped and executed is fundamentally important and the relationship between PM system characteristics and their effectiveness is partially mediated by fairness.

2.2.1 PM system characteristics and Effectiveness

The goal of an organization's PM systems is to enhance the performance of an individual or group with the ultimate purpose of improving organizational effectiveness (DeNisi, 2000). Roberts (2003) identified that policy documents, the use of performance appraisal systems, feedback and communication are among the several processes and activities that fit this definition. The number and duration of formal performance reviews, the frequency of informal performance reviews, the performance review focus and the degree of participation in decision-making are some of the PM system characteristics that refer to how PM is formally designed and the way that PM takes shape in daily practice (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013)

2.2.2 Formal performance reviews

The discussion of subordinate's overall performance and development between supervisor and subordinate as pre-scheduled face-to-face encounters can be referred as formal performance reviews (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013). The delivery of the performance appraisal or performance review is neglected in contrast if the performance is appraised by means of a huge amount of work (Kikoski, 1999). PM system effectiveness is positively related to the frequency and duration of formal performance reviews (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013).

2.2.3 Informal performance reviews

The discussion of explicitly or more implicitly the subordinate's overall performance and development between supervisor and subordinate as unscheduled face-to-face encounters are referred to as informal performance reviews (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013). The opportunity to give the employee specific, behavioural and timely feedback is obtained through regular interactions which contradicts the formal performance reviews (Roberts, 2003). Employees live up to the criteria of the performance appraisal system with informal performance reviews while they just understand the process and the outcome of performance appraisal in the formal performance reviews and thus PM system effectiveness is also positively related to the frequency of informal performance reviews (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013).

2.2.4 Performance review focus

The content of the performance reviews is likely to be determined by the Human Resource Management (HRM) approach within an organisation as the performance reviews are the HRM delivery moments to the employees (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013). The resource-based view on employees tends to consider human resources as a production factor that needs to be guided towards strategic business objectives under the control of pressures and sanctions (Dewettinck, 2008). Goal setting accomplishes the optimisation of the results-to-evaluation connection, but the action-to-results connection has many contingencies and is mostly dependent on employee motivation (Van Knippenberg, 2000). Performance reviews that focus

on employee development more than performance outcomes are associated with higher levels of the PM system effectiveness (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013).

2.2.5 Employee participation

Participation by employees on issues that are relevant to them is viewed as the key factor in employee attitudes and performance (Pritchard, Harrell, Diaz-Granados & Guzman, 2008). Employees' feelings of self-efficacy are increased as a result of employee performance improved by employee participation (Arnold, Arad, Rhoades & Drasgow, 2000). The interactions between employees and managers result in a better understanding of the job, less resistance to change and a greater sense of control when employees feel that their information and input are asked and used (Kleingeld, Van Tuijl & Algera, 2004). The level of PM system effectiveness is positively related to the level of employee participation (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013).

2.2.6 Appraisal fairness

The ability of the employees to understand the connection between results and evaluation or the appraisal process and between evaluations and outcomes or the rewarding process was found to be particularly dependent on fairness (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013). Narcisse and Harcourt (2008) identified that the primary determinants of perceptions of fairness are the congruence between actual performance and appraisal rating or the results-to-evaluations connection and the extent to which appraisal rating resulted in compatible outcomes such as pay or promotion or the evaluation-to-outcome connection (Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008). The number and duration of formal performance reviews, the frequency of informal performance reviews, the performance review focus and the perceived level of involvement in PM and PM system effectiveness are all mediated partially by perceived fairness (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013).

Dewettinck and van Dijk (2013) used three theories which are expectancy theory, goal-setting theory and control theory to understand the relationship between performance management practices and performance management system effectiveness. The basis of the Expectancy theory is the idea that individuals expect to maximise their satisfaction by the consequences of allocating their limited amount of time and energy to actions (DeNisi & Pritchard, 2006; Buchner, 2007). How performance goals affect task performance and how well the task is executed considers the content of performance goals as a determining factor and explains the goal-setting theory while people continuously monitor their actions and the results and compare them with standards or goals that have been set for the same defines the control theory (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013). They conclude that the line manager's role is critical for effective performance management and the relationship between performance management practices and performance management system effectiveness identifies fairness as the partial mediator.

2.3 Performance Appraisal Implications in the Software Industry

According to Sanyal and Biswas (2014), the software industry differs from other industries by fast-changing technology, quality-conscious and multinational clients, stiff international competition and shortage as well as fast obsolesce of skill and the success of IT companies

depends on its talented and skilled workforce, hence measurement and management of performance of the individual, team and the organisation as a whole are very essential.

2.3.1 Multiple uses of performance appraisal

Performance appraisal is to measure and control individual performance and integrate it into the organisational objective to achieve expected results (Boxall & Purcell, 2022). The purpose of evaluation includes increment decisions, incentives, bonuses, long-term promotion decisions, identification of poor performers, determination of termination, and lay-off (Snell & Bohlander, 2017). Employees' perception of appraisal accuracy is related to system and process facets through the interaction of social and contextual performances (Findley, Giles & Mossholder, 2000). Employee welfare, autonomy, participation, communication, emphasis on training, integration, supervisory support involvement, formalisation, innovation and flexibility, reflexivity, clarity of organisational goals, efficiency, effort, performance feedback to managerial practices productivity and innovation are identified as the organisational climate dimension variables (Patterson, West, Shackleton, Dawson, Lawthom, Maitlis, Robinson & Wallace, 2005).

2.3.2 People management in the software industry

High rate of attrition is the common area to be addressed in the people dimensions of the software firms in India (Budhwar, Varma, Singh & Dhar, 2006). Innovative HRM practices are being used by IT companies to combat the issue of attrition (Binoy &Diaz-Granadosupert, 2011). Paul and Anantharaman (2003) established a relationship between organisational outcome and HRM practices in a software firm through competencies, teamwork, organisational commitment, and customer orientation facilitating employee retention, productivity, increasing product quality, speed of delivery and reducing operational cost.

Sanyal and Biswas (2014) establish the renowned two-factor theory that better employee performance is influenced by hygiene factors and motivators. Authors indicate that the motivator factors among the highly educated, skilled young dynamic workforce of India are task derivative, growth latitude, recognition agreement, innovation reinforcement and empowering accepting culture which are more important than pecuniary agreements and propose accurate and bias-free rating of performance by supervisors are introduced by a performance culture of openness, confrontation, trust, empowerment, proacting, authenticity, collaboration, experimenting and continuous interaction.

2.4 Managerial Values Approach in Improving EPM

According to Neher and Maley (2020), the Employee Performance Management (EPM) process is riddled with persistent problems, particularly concerning the manager's enthusiasm to properly implement EPM and its consequent effectiveness even though there are many kinds of literature available on EPM. Managers often show contempt for EPM as it is a highly controversial and confusing process (Elicker, Levy & Hall, 2006). There is growing evidence that the manager or the supervisor of the employee may be at least partly attributed to the problem of ineffective EPM (Neher & Maley, 2020). EPM systems poorly implemented can do more harm than good (Watkins & Leigh, 2009).

2.4.1 Overview of Employee Performance Management

EPM was initially intended for managers, professionals and technical employees, but now it is frequently utilised in many parts of the world to evaluate staff at all levels (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). The EPM process changed lately enhancing the performance appraisal, specifically on the supervisor-employee interview part (Festing, Knappert, Dowling & Engle, 2010). Frequent feedback, career development and rewarding employees are typically encouraged by EPM, evidently moving away from technical and social controls (Maley, 2017).

The EPM process has never quite lived up to its original expectations and goals although it has always been argued that the technical control focusing on measuring performance has noble intentions in terms of increasing employee effectiveness and company performance (Cascio, 2006). EPM usage and satisfaction tend to have a negative impact on the entire HRM process with some managers viewing it as a pointless annual ritual (Dusterhoff, Cunningham & MacGregor, 2014). There has been a movement to abolish EPM advocated by scholars and practitioners recently and multinational corporations (MNCs) such as Adobe, Dell, Delloite, Google, Microsoft and PwC are claiming that PM is ineffective and have discarded it recently (Cappelli & Tavis, 2016).

2.4.2 The purpose of EPM

In the ten countries Milliman, Nason, Zhu & De Cieri (2002) sampled, including the United States, Australia and Asian nations, they discovered that the purpose of EPM was not clear. When Whitford and Coetsee (2006) looked into EPM procedures in South Africa, they also discovered that the EPM goal was frequently ambiguous. Maley and Moeller (2014) discovered that supervisors in the Australian subsidiaries of MNCs often did not effectively convey the goal of EPM, which was the primary cause of dissatisfaction and ultimately ineffectiveness of the EPM process.

Bowen and Ostroff (2004) suggest that the strength of the HRM system is important to understand the purpose of EPM and its process should be clearly articulated by the supervisor. Katou (2017) using employee attitudes and behaviour, identified the evidence of a connection between organisational atmosphere and performance. The purpose of EPM is embedded in the criteria governing the EPM process and it is not just a stand-alone process (Neher & Maley, 2020).

2.4.3 The criteria of EPM

Murphy (2008) argues that the need for reliable and valid PM criteria is widely acknowledged. The consistency of performance and freedom from random error can be referred to as Reliability (Kramar & De Cieri, 2008). The fact that employees are measured on areas that are really important to the objectives of the company is called validity (Neher & Maley, 2020). It also means that all the relevant aspects of the job shall be assessed by the performance measure (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Severity is very much dependent on the supervisor conducting the EPM process by the nature of reliability and validity (Murphy, 2008; DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Strategic congruence, specificity and acceptability and engagement are other three criteria important for an effective EPM process.

2.4.4 Strategic congruence

Becker, Huselid, Huselid and Ulrich (2001) state that a well-developed HR strategy in many firms does not necessarily flow down smoothly to supervisors and their subordinates and the outcome is a reduced congruence and poor understanding of the order of importance of employee's responsibilities. Kaplan and Norton (2001) linked a company's long-term goals to employees' short-term actions for developing a strategic congruence.

2.4.5 Specificity

The performance process where the employee is getting directed with the expected behaviour is referred to as Specificity and it is essential since the performance of an employee can be improved by guiding what to be done and what not (Neher & Maley, 2020). The authors also state that the strategic and development aspects of EPM also have some relevance with specificity as it will be very challenging for the employee to overcome their weakness if the goal-setting process incorporated in an EPM system fails to pinpoint an employee's weakness.

2.4.6 Acceptability and engagement

EPM acceptability have been identified as important recently as the number of EPM studies focussing on the perspective of employees rather than the organisation has increased (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). EPM acceptability is indicated as whether the managers and employees find the process acceptable or not (Neher & Maley, 2020). Kramar and De Cieri (2008) state that motivation and commitment are also involved in EPM acceptability. According to Kuvaas (2007), the employee is more likely to find EPM acceptable if motivation and commitment exist in the process. Fairness, motivation and commitment result in employee engagement (Verweire & Van den Berghe, 2004).
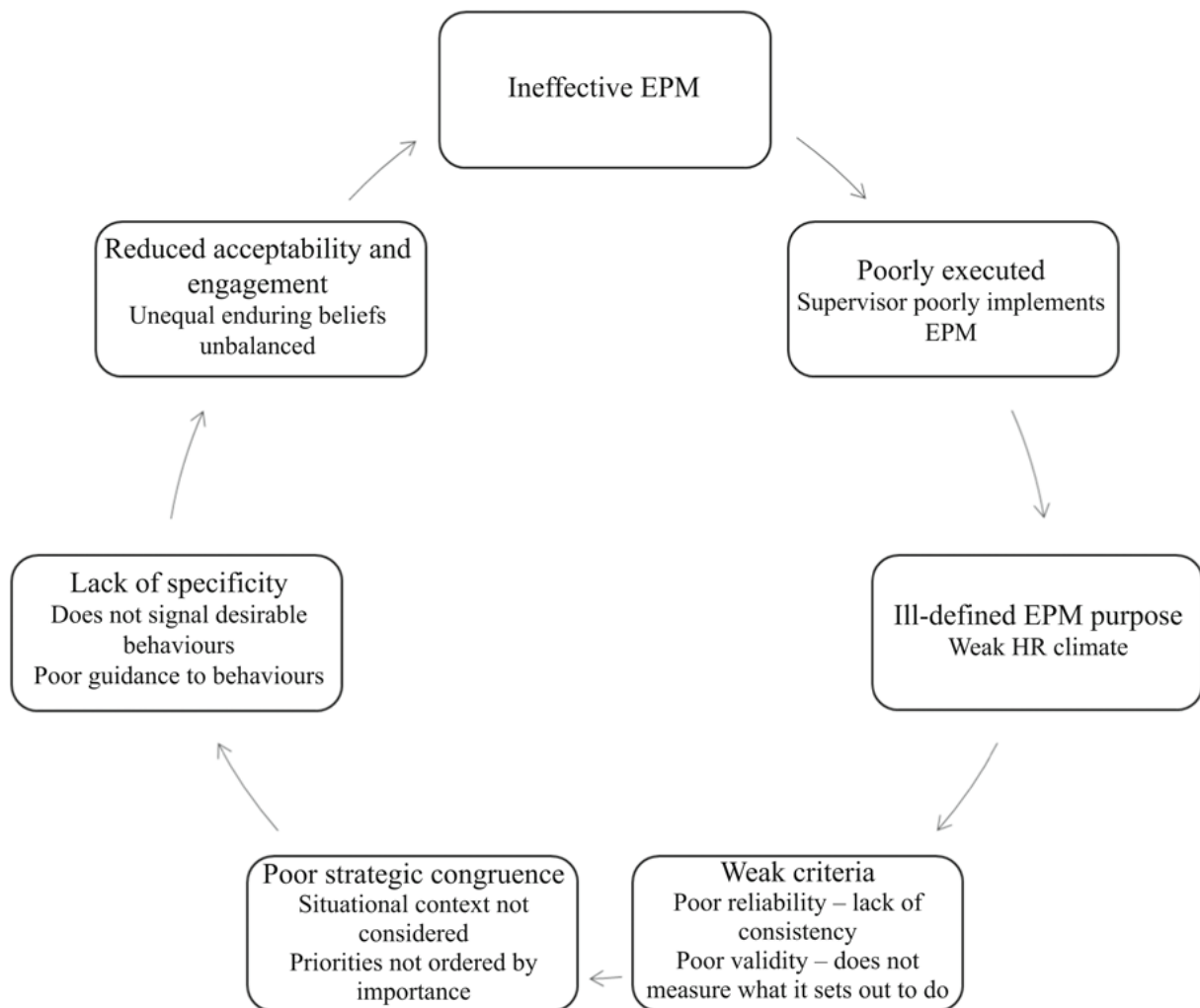
Figure 2.1: Antecedents of an ineffective EPM (Neher and Maley, 2020)

2.5 Interactive Performance Measurement System

According to Yuliansyah, Khan and Triwacananingrum (2022), optimal employee performance management benefits can be delivered if the organisation's peculiar operational setup adapts to a performance management system (PMS) as an interactive system and through its mediating effect on improving organisational learning and knowledge sharing, such strategic adaption could affect employees' team performance. Demski, Fellingham, Lin and Schroeder (2008) state that the success of an organisation is also by the cooperation and collaboration of the individual employees as a team and not just affected by the individual employees. Operational efficiencies are maximised when work procedures are tailored around team-based work (Kozlowski & Chao, 2018). PMS should be adapted to contexts where most work is undertaken as teams in order for it to be of optimal benefit to the organisation (Yuliansyah, Khan & Triwacananingrum, 2022).

2.5.1 Organisational learning

The consistent interaction and exchange of information across all lines and functions of organisational structure by organisational members is guaranteed by the interactive use of PMS,

which eventually leads to improved organisational learning and a conducive environment for sharing skills (Naranjo-Gill & Hartmann, 2007). Organisational learning can be improved in contemporary business organisations with the interactive use of PMS (Henri, 2006). The interactive use of PMS and organisational learning has a positive relationship (Yuliansyah, Khan & Triwacananingrum, 2022).

2.5.2   Knowledge sharing

The frequency of interaction between supervisor and subordinate will be more if the PMS is designed to encourage mutual interaction among employees, which will lead to a higher level of coordination and assessing information between two levels of hierarchy (Henri, 2006). The flow of knowledge between the supervisor and the subordinate as well as among the lower-level employees will be increased automatically with this process (Yuliansyah, Saputra & Alvia, 2016). The interactive use of PMS and knowledge sharing is positively related (Yuliansyah, Khan & Triwacananingrum, 2022).

2.5.3   Team performance

Team members will feel engaged and motivated to use the system effectively in their routine work when supervisors personally and regularly involve themselves in the team-based work environment and encourage team members to actively demonstrate interaction and collaboration with one another (Chong & Mahama, 2014). The management can use the interactive PMS effectively as a tool to overcome any information delivery barriers present among organisational members, as well as acting as a psychological support for teams on a larger scale and the organisation's members as a whole (Adler & Chen, 2011). The interdependence will eventually improve the business decision quality, strengthen the organisation's attention on critical success elements and encourage efficient and effective use of the limited organisational resources that are currently available which validates a positive relationship exists between interactive use of PMS and team performance (Chong & Mahama, 2014).

Yuliansyah, Khan and Triwacananingrum (2022) used Schatzki's (2002) "site of the social" theory which asserts optimal potential will be accomplished by any social practice if developed on or adapted to a befitting "site" of creation or development. The authors substantiated the phenomenon that team performance through organisational learning and knowledge sharing can be improved by the interactive use of PMS.

2.6   Improving Employee Performance

According to Fitrio, Remofa, Hardi and Ismail (2023), worker productivity can be raised by service quality agility as a technique and employee performance can be improved by competence and organisational commitment mediated by service quality agility. The authors further state that employee and organisational performance can be improved by employees working with suitable competence, high commitment and high motivation in providing services which is the strength of human motivation theory.

2.6.1 Competence

Organisation assigns tasks to an individual and the level of skills, knowledge and behaviour acquired by that individual in carrying out those tasks can be described as competence (Wibowo, 2016). Spencer and Spencer (2008) claim that management development, recruitment, training, performance management, career planning, salary, rewards and team building are all influenced or impacted by competence. The authors further added that planning and implementing, serving, leadership, management, cognitive thinking and mature thinking are some of the competency measurement indicators. Employee performance can have an impact positively with competence (Fitrio et al. 2023).

2.6.2 Organizational commitment

Robbins and Judge (2017) define organisational commitment as the emotional attachment with special identification and involvement by employees. Trust, willingness and loyalty influence organisational commitment (McShane & Glinow, 2018). Affective, continuance and normative commitment are several aspects to measure dimensions of organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employee performance can have a positive effect on organisational commitment (Fitrio et al. 2023).

2.6.3 Service quality agility

Certain sets of demands are met by the impact of the sum of all qualities and traits is called a service's quality (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Service quality agility can be viewed as the capacity of service providers to quickly deploy strategies and adapt to the unstable and constantly changing client environment (Fitrio et al. 2023). Fitzsimmons (2017) states that reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance and empathy are the five dimensions of service quality measurement. Both competency and organisational commitment have positive effects on service quality agility and employee performance can have a positive effect on service quality agility (Fitrio et al. 2023).

2.6.4 Employee performance

According to Mathis and Jackson (2008), performance can be defined as what an employee is doing or not doing. Whether official or informal, public or private, the outcome of the job a person or a group of people have completed in an organisation is their performance and several elements impact it significantly (Fitrio et al. 2023). Quantity of work, quality of work, compatibility with others, presence at work, length of service and flexibility are the six elements of performance (Mathis & Jackson, 2008).

Fitrio, Remofa, Hardi and Ismail (2023) contribute to human motivation theory where employees can motivate themselves to get the highest achievement in improving individual performance by being competent, committed and having agility in providing quality services leading to improved organisational performance. The authors concluded that employee performance can be improved by providing agile service quality accompanied by achievement motivation where employees work with appropriate competence and high commitment.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

The literature review presented different themes that are part of employee performance management systems implementation in several organisations. We consider the ones which are most relevant to the participation of employees as all these themes have different aspects. The thematic overview is meant to lead our research and also to get a base for shaping our interview guide. Table 2.2 shows an overview of the main themes, subthemes, and references in a consolidated way which helps to have a general perspective of the literature review.

Table 2.2: Literature overview

Theme	Sub-theme	References
Career Planning – An imperative for EPMS	The link between CP and EPMS Roles of individuals and organisation in CP	Ahmed & Kaushik (2011); Armstrong & Baron (2006); Larsson et al. (2007); Stahl et al. (2007); Walker (1973)
Performance management system effectiveness	PM system characteristics and effectiveness Formal performance reviews Informal performance reviews Performance review focus Employee participation Appraisal fairness	Arnold (2000); Buchner (2007); DeNisi (2000); DeNisi & Pritchard (2006); Dewettinck (2008); Dewettinck & van Dijk (2013); Kikoski (1999); Kleingeld, Van Tuijl & Algera (2004); Narcisse & Harcourt (2008); Pritchard et al. (2008); Roberts (2003); Van Knippenberg (2000)
Performance appraisal implication in software industry	Multiple uses of performance appraisal People management in software industry	Binoy & Sebastian Rupert (2011); Boxall & Purcell (2022); Budhwar et al. (2006); Findley, Giles & Mossholder (2000); Patterson et al. (2005); Paul & Anantharaman (2003); Sanyal & Biswas (2014); Snell & Bohlander (2017)
Managerial values approach in improving EPM	Overview of Employee Performance Management The purpose of EPM The criteria of EPM Strategic congruence Specificity Acceptability and engagement	Becker (2001); Bowen & Ostroff (2004); Cappelli & Tavis (2016); Cascio (2006); DeNisi & Murphy (2017); Dusterhoff, Cunningham & MacGregor (2014); Elicker, Levy & Hall (2006); Festing et al. (2010); Kaplan & Norton (2001); Katou (2017); Kramar & De Cieri (2008); Kuvaas (2007); Maley (2017); Maley & Moeller (2014); Milliman et al. (2002); Murphy (2008); Neher & Maley (2020); Verweire & Van den Berghe (2004); Watkins & Leigh (2009); Whitford & Coetsee (2006)
Interactive performance measurement system	Organisational learning Knowledge sharing Team performance	Adler & Chen (2011); Chong & Mahama (2014); Demski et al. (2008); Henri (2006); Kozlowski & Chao (2018); Naranjo-Gill & Hartmann (2007); Schatzki (2002); Yuliansyah, Khan & Triwacananingrum (2022); Yuliansyah, Saputra & Alvia (2016)
improving employee performance	Competence Organisational commitment Service quality agility	Fitrio et al. (2023); Fitzsimmons (2017); Kotler & Keller (2016); Mathis & Jackson (2008); McShane & Glinow (2018); Meyer & Allen (1991); Robbins & Judge (2017); Spencer & Spencer (2008); Wibowo (2016)

	Employee performance	

According to Table 2.2, there is a lack of attention paid to employee satisfaction as a result of system inefficiencies in the existing literature on performance management systems. This void should be filled by investigating aspects of performance management systems that have a direct impact on employee satisfaction. This incorporates researching the plan and execution of execution the board works, looking at the job of correspondence and criticism processes, and evaluating the effect of acknowledgement and prizes. In addition, performance management systems should investigate how leadership, managerial practices, organizational culture, and climate affect employee satisfaction. Organizations can create more positive and productive work environments that encourage employee engagement and organizational success by addressing these gaps.

3 Research Method

We intend to provide a comprehensive overview of the proposed research's design in this chapter. The research's philosophy, method, data collection and analysis techniques, ethical considerations, and scientific quality are discussed in this chapter. Our goal is to give readers a complete understanding of the research process by discussing these aspects.

The guiding principles or beliefs of the study are referred to as the research philosophy. In this part, we are trying to make sense of the philosophical viewpoint that illuminates the examination. For instance, a positivist, interpretive, or critical philosophy might serve as the research's philosophical foundation. The assumptions and beliefs behind each of these philosophies regarding the nature of reality, the function of the researcher, and the approach to the creation of knowledge are distinct.

The research's methodological approach to data collection and analysis is referred to as the research approach. We have talked about the research strategy and how it fits in with the research philosophy.

The methods that the researcher used to collect and analyze data are referred to as data collection and analysis methods. We described the data collection techniques in this section. In addition, we described the methods for data analysis, such as statistical analysis, thematic analysis, or content analysis.

A crucial component of any research project is ethical considerations. We discussed the ethical considerations which we took into account when designing the study in this section. This may entail obtaining participants' informed consent, safeguarding their confidentiality and privacy, and ensuring that the research does not harm participants.

The rigour and validity of the study are referred to as the research's scientific quality. We demonstrated in this section how we guaranteed the research's scientific quality. The use of appropriate statistical methods, the use of a representative sample, and the discussion of the data collection and analysis methods' reliability and validity are all examples of this.

In general, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the proposed research's design. We intend to comprehensively comprehend the research procedure by discussing the study's philosophy, approach, data collection and analysis methods, ethical considerations, and scientific quality.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Our aim with this research is to conduct a study about the Employee Performance Management System used in SMEs based in India and how to enhance it for the overall satisfaction of the employees. To find out answers to these questions, we need to know the current trends in the field of Information technology and conduct interviews with selected individuals to get their perspectives on those approaches. Given the nature of the research topic, we decided upon interpretivism as the suitable research philosophy. Approaches that emphasise people's meaningful character and participation in both social and cultural life are referred to as interpretivism (Elster, 2007; Walsham, 2006). Interpretivism concentrates on the subjective nature

of the research with an inductive approach, unlike positivism which is more into the rigid and objective nature of data interpretation with a deductive approach. So interpretivism is the most appropriate philosophy in this case as it enables a strong understanding of the data which is collected through interviews (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Moreover, Lee (1991) states that in positivism knowledge is considered as a product of natural phenomena.

The purpose of this study is to find out what is lacking and finding what are the factors affecting the overall satisfaction of IT industry workers in India. In particular, the review is keen on investigating the missing connection between EPMS, representative work commitment, and execution. The study is focusing on the idea of EPMS, which describes a supportive environment that helps projects in an organization get done right. The goal of the study is to find out what makes EPMS work and how it can affect employee engagement and performance at work. The exploration will expect to distinguish the elements that are influencing the fulfilment levels of workers in the IT business in India. Surveys, interviews, and other data collection methods will likely be used to collect information from a sample of IT company employees in India. The collected data will be analyzed to determine the factors affecting employee performance and satisfaction. The study can assist businesses in enhancing their EPMS and employee engagement programs by determining the factors that influence employee satisfaction and performance. This, in turn, may result in higher levels of performance, motivation, and satisfaction among employees, which may be to the organization's advantage.

In rundown, the flow concentrate on expects to address the exploration hole recognized by Pandey and Sharma (2015) and examining the missing connection between EPMS, representative work commitment, and execution in the IT business in India. The study will be important in determining the factors that influence employee performance and satisfaction, as well as in assisting businesses in enhancing their EPMS and employee engagement programs.

Goldkuhl (2012) states that qualitative research is closely connected to interpretive research since we are interpreting the answers, we received from the candidates who are attending our interviews. The entire process of collecting, analysing, presenting, and comparing the data we received is based on interpretivism (Patton, 2014). In this case, we need to collect, process, and compare the perceptions from the employee's point of view who is reporting to higher management and has a team to manage. Both views are important for our research because we get individual perceptions and collective perceptions like the whole team. Comparing both of them is challenging even though it possesses immense value to our findings. According to Bhattacherjee (2012), interpretive designs, which include case research, phenomenology, and ethnography, seek subjective interpretations of social phenomena from the perspectives of the subjects.

3.2 Research Approach

As per Patton (2014), qualitative research methods are used to understand human experiences in a holistic and inductive manner. The author's recommendation is based on the dynamic, complex, and interdependent nature of the research question that requires connecting and opposing the information derived from the interviews. Qualitative research enables researchers to explore the experience of people and identify underlying issues. As Kaplan and Maxwell (2005) mention, the qualitative research approach is compatible with the interpretivism philosophy that emphasizes the importance of understanding how people experience and make sense of the world. Addressing research questions through a naturalistic, human-based

approach is critical in qualitative research. Researchers prioritize values, emotions, ethics, and experiences collected through various observations, interviews, surveys, and other documents over numerical data. The goal of the qualitative research approach is to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study by collecting rich and detailed data through various qualitative techniques (Patton, 2014). Qualitative research allows researchers to develop insights into the experiences of individuals, groups, and communities. By collecting data through interviews, observations, and other qualitative techniques, researchers can develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being studied. The holistic and inductive approach of qualitative research enables researchers to uncover unexpected findings and generate new hypotheses. Additionally, qualitative research enables researchers to identify and explore underlying issues, such as power dynamics and social structures, that may not be apparent through quantitative methods (Patton, 2014). Overall, qualitative research provides a valuable approach to understanding human experiences and can offer unique insights into the complexities of social and cultural phenomena.

EPMS is evolving on a day-to-day basis by implementing new techniques for the evaluation process. Recker (2013) is recommending a qualitative research method for subjects which has not been explored completely. As a part of the research, we collected data from employees working in the SMEs in the IT sector based in India. Whatever findings we received through their interpretations helped us to get a clear picture of our research topic today, areas of improvement and future directions also.

Interviews are a primary method for data collection in qualitative research, and it is essential to be careful about the interview process to ensure the quality and validity of the data collected. As noted by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), qualitative research methods require time and resources for preparing, processing, and analyzing the information obtained through interviews. Preparing for the interview process involves developing a set of questions that are relevant to the research questions and are appropriate for the participants being interviewed. The interview should be structured in a way that allows for open-ended responses, and the interviewer should be prepared to follow up on participants' responses to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. Processing and analyzing the information received through interviews is also a critical component of qualitative research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The data collected through interviews should be transcribed and coded to identify key themes and patterns. Researchers should analyze the data carefully to identify important insights and to ensure that the findings are grounded in the data collected. To successfully achieve research goals through qualitative research, it is essential to have a proper structure and method for the interview process. Researchers should allocate enough time and resources to conduct an adequate number of interviews and should ensure that the interview process is conducted in a respectful and ethical manner. Overall, the interview process in qualitative research requires careful planning, execution, and analysis to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected. Proper preparation, structured interviews, and thorough analysis are essential to achieve the research goals through the qualitative research method (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

3.3 Data Collection Methods

We have already discussed the qualitative research method approach for this research topic in the preceding section. In this research, data collection is a very important part of the process. For qualitative research, interviews are widely acknowledged as one of the best methods of data collection (Klein and Myers, 2001). In an interview, the researcher and the participant have one-on-one conversations in which the researcher asks questions and the participant responds. Interviews can be carried out in person, over the phone, or online, and they can be structured (following a set of questions that have been predetermined) or unstructured (allowing for more freedom and spontaneity). In-depth qualitative data on participants' experiences and perceptions of the Employee Performance Management System can be gathered through interviews.

Beck and Manuel (2008) have provided a detailed description of the interview process as a research data collection method. The interview process begins with identifying potential participants who meet the inclusion criteria for the study. Once participants have been identified, the next step is to schedule interviews in advance and decide upon the mode of interview, whether it be in-person, via telephone, or online meeting. To avoid any problems during the interview, it is essential to check interview tools, such as recording devices or software, before the meeting. As per the authors, this ensures that the data collected during the interview is of high quality and can be effectively used for analysis. Planning the interview is a critical step in the process. The interview should be well-paced and cover all aspects of the research topic. Researchers should develop a set of open-ended questions that are relevant to the research questions and are appropriate for the participants being interviewed. It is also essential to provide adequate time for each participant to answer the questions thoughtfully and in detail. During the interview, the interviewer should follow the interview guide and encourage participants to share their experiences and perspectives. The interviewer should also listen actively to participants and probe for more information when necessary. The interview should be conducted in a respectful and ethical manner, and participants should be given the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any misunderstandings. After the interview, the data collected should be transcribed and analyzed. The analysis should involve identifying key themes and patterns in the data and comparing and contrasting participants' responses. The analysis should be conducted in a way that is transparent and grounded in the data collected during the interviews. Overall, the authors emphasise that the interview process in qualitative research requires careful planning, execution, and analysis to ensure the quality and validity of the data collected. Proper preparation, structured interviews, and thorough analysis are essential to achieve the research goals through the interview method (Beck and Manuel, 2008).

As recommended by Recker (2013), we need to organise data collection through interviews. We, who are conducting the interviews should not expect predetermined answers from the participants and the questions should be unbiased and well-structured. Comments and judgements need to be avoided and the responses should be recorded properly. Mutual trust is also an important factor to be considered for conducting a neutral interview. The key objective of the interview should be developing a thorough understanding of our research topic and for that purpose, the interviewer and the participant should be comfortable with each other. This enabled us to get information more openly and easily (Recker, 2013). So, we planned to organise our interview in sections with a clear introduction, valid questions and a proper conclusion.

3.3.1 Interview participants

It is important to choose the right participants for the study (Recker, 2013). Hence, we have chosen senior employees who have been working in the organisation for around 10 years at least so that they are well experienced working with the performance management system in the organisation. The participants are also chosen in the way that they not only have a manager to report, but they have a team of employees reporting to them so that they know the perspectives of both sides. We were also careful in choosing the participants in such a way that all of them are working in different teams or projects and they do not know each other. To get the perspective of non-technical employees, we have included two participants where one is purely a manger focusing on product implementation and the other is involved in testing or verifying and validating the product rather than programming. The summary of the interview participants details is shown in the table 3.3.1 below.

Table 3.3.1: Summary of Interview participants details

Respondent	Designation	Interview Date	Duration	Appendix
R1	Senior Technical Architect	22 Apr 23	44 minutes	Appendix 2
R2	Senior Test Analyst	29 Apr 23	27 minutes	Appendix 3
R3	Program Manager	04 May 23	31 minutes	Appendix 4
R4	Senior Technical Architect	06 May 23	47 minutes	Appendix 5
R5	Senior Technical Architect	06 May 23	40 minutes	Appendix 6

3.4 Conducting Interviews

To ensure a productive and successful Zoom interview for research purposes, it is essential to adhere to certain guidelines (Lobe, Morgan, and Hoffman, 2020). The most important steps we took are summarized in the following:

1. Scheduling: Shared the details of the Zoom meeting beforehand with the participants, including the meeting link, ID, and password if applicable, and agreed on a time for the interview that is mutually convenient. Clearly communicated how to join the Zoom meeting.
2. Environment and Equipment: Made sure we had a reliable device with a working microphone and camera and a reliable internet connection. Tracked down a sufficiently bright area for the meeting to limit interruptions and guarantee clear correspondence.
3. Ethics and Consent: Made sure the participants are aware of the purpose of the study, their rights, and the confidentiality of their responses before conducting the interview. Complied with moral rules and guaranteed members that their security and information will be safeguarded.
4. Icebreakers and opening statements: Introduced ourselves and our role in the research at the beginning of the interview. Permitted respondents to present themselves too. Used icebreaker questions or casual discussion to assist with laying out compatibility and establishing an agreeable climate.
5. Interview Construction: Outlined the interview format and the topics we'll cover in detail. Gave an outline of the inquiries or conversation focuses to assist members with

understanding what's in store. Consistency was ensured by employing a script or guide for the interview.

6. Listening intently: Be mindful and effectively paid attention to respondents' reactions. By asking additional questions or seeking clarification, we encouraged them to expand on their responses. Kept an impartial and non-critical mentality to encourage transparent correspondence.

7. Assistance with Technology: Prepared to offer participants technical support in the event that they encounter audio or video issues with Zoom. If necessary, we were ready with alternative communication channels or troubleshooting advice.

8. Making records and taking notes: We recorded the interview for future reference with the participants' consent. Furthermore, took definite notes during the meeting to catch significant focuses, key experiences, and member quotes.

9. Wrapping up: Towards the finish of the meeting, sum up the central matters examined and inquired as to whether members have any last considerations or extra data they might want to share. Thanked them for their time.

10. Security and Confidentiality of Data: Securely stored the recorded files and notes following the interview in accordance with data protection and confidentiality guidelines.

3.5 Data Analysis Methods

Analysis of the collected data is a critical part of this research paper. This process is required to make sense of the huge amount of data collected through interviews. For a better understanding of the research topic, Recker (2013) suggests we analyse the data from interviews and information from the literature. Before analysing, we need to process the data we gathered. This typically entails reading the data from a file or database, cleaning it to handle missing values, rectifying errors, and transforming it into an analysis-friendly format (Dasu and Johnson, 2003).

This research paper is depending up on coding techniques to analyse the data we obtained. Coding is the most commonly used popular technique which is very useful for reducing qualitative data to meaningful information as per Recker (2013). Numerous qualitative data analyses are founded on the identification of major themes and patterns. This, in turn, is frequently dependent on procedures for coding data. Segmenting and coding data are two aspects of qualitative research that are frequently taken for granted. All researchers need to be able to manage, organise, and retrieve the most important parts of our data. According to our ideas, the most common method is to label or tag the data. We basically break down the majority of our data sets into units that can be analysed by forming categories with and from our data. This procedure is typically carried out, despite the fact that the term "coding" can suggest a rather mechanical process. We prefer to think of coding as generating concepts with and from our data. Coding is not considered a part of the analysis process, despite the fact that it may be (Coffey and Atkinson; 1996).

3.5.1 Transcribing

As soon as we completed the interviews, we started the process of transcription. As per Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), transcription is the process of converting the audio data we have into

a written format for further analysis. All our interviews were conducted in the local Malayalam language and translated into English during the transcription. We manually did this process for all the interviews conducted since converting Malayalam speech to English was not supported by most of the tools available in the market. Since the respondents wished to be anonymous, we have removed names while transcribing.

According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), the transcriptions did not include every word. Instead, the transcriptions were written more formally to make them easier to read, and some parts of the emotional context were added to make the research more credible (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Respondents laughed in the emotional contexts we included to illustrate situations where a statement might not be taken at face value. Each interview was split between the two of us because we wanted to finish the transcripts as soon as possible after the interview. In order to maintain the same structure throughout the transcriptions, the transcription procedure was decided jointly prior to the first interview, which is regarded as an essential step by Kvale & Brinkmann (2009).

3.5.2 Coding

Once we are done with the transcription process, we started the analysis of the data we have with us. Coding was done to provide a structure to the data we collected through interviews and the result made it easy for us to get the summary of content (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), coding can be data-driven or concept-driven. The former uses codes that have been developed in advance by looking at existing literature or material, while the latter begins without codes and builds them through reading the material. Concept-driven coding was carried out as a result of the early development of our research model's factors, which were primarily based on existing literature.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) express that while classifying long bits of text into a couple of straightforward classifications, a basic "+" or "- " can be utilized to demonstrate the event or non-occurrence. As a result, respondents who indicated that a factor had influenced their adoption decision received a "+" and respondents who indicated that a factor did not influence their adoption decision received a "-." In order to provide an overview of which factor was discussed, the factors needed to be categorised in conjunction with the positive or negative markers. The factors we utilized during the coding phase are abbreviated in Table 3.5.1.

Table 3.5.2: Factor abbreviations

Factor	Code
Performance Management System	PM
Bell Curve	BC
Employee Satisfaction	ES
Transparency	TY
Multiple Platforms	MP
Visibility	VY
Favouritism	FM

Unachievable Targets	UT
Work Related	WR
Well Defined	WD
Proper System	PS
Genuine Feedback	GF
Frequent Updates	FU
Following Process	FP
Motivation	MN

The performance management system used by this software company is known as Feedforward, literally meaning the exact opposite of the term feedback. The supervisor can add n number of objectives in the system with an expected start date and end date. This is assigned as a target to achieve, to one of the employees who is reporting to this supervisor. This employee can update the status of this objective with the percentage of completion, self-evaluation and notes or remarks if any. This is rated by the supervisor based on how the employee has performed this objective in any of the four categories. Excellent, good job, could have been better or the target was not met.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

As per Recker (2013), ethical considerations are important as they might cause unintended consequences and there is a chance of negative impacts on learners. The role of ethics while doing research is really important as there are cases where fraudulent researchers, performed plagiarism, manipulated data to accomplish their intended results etc and got punished when found that they have operated it wrongly (Recker, 2013). If human interaction is necessary for conducting the research, the participation shall be voluntary, the data acquired shall be kept confidential and the data shall be accessible at least 5 years after the publication (Recker, 2013).

Interviews as part of a qualitative method require high ethical consideration as the person who is being interviewed is sharing their personal knowledge and experience (Patton, 2014). The researcher should get the consent of the interviewee before starting the interview process and shall maintain anonymity if the interviewee demands it (Patton, 2014). The private information received from the interviewee shall also be kept confidential by not revealing the employer if the interviewee needs to (Patton, 2014). The researcher shall also inform the interviewee that the interview is published and the public can access it once the research is published (Patton, 2014). The interviewee has permission to withdraw from the interview at any time they want as part of the right they have (Wiles, 2012). There should not be any mention of names or company names or even the name of the interviewee as part of maintaining confidentiality and pseudo names shall be used instead of actual names (Wiles, 2012). It is better to share the data analysis from the interview transcripts with the interviewee before publishing to confirm that the understanding of the interviewer is correct (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, and Walter, 2016). An interview can bring different aspects which the interviewer is unaware of and that can lead to emotional instability it is important for the interviewer to focus on

collecting the data without reacting to those emotions (Patton, 2014). If the interviewee shares a piece of very sensitive information, it is better to get a confirmation or approval again for sharing that information even if the consent is already given (Ryan, Coughlan, and Cronin, 2009; Patton, 2014).

Plagiarism is a very serious issue while writing the research and the researcher should give recognition to the author while taking an idea or findings from a published work one should not give authorship to a person for any reason who is not participating in the research all (Recker, 2013). The researcher shall not manipulate the data collected to meet the research aim because it defies the whole purpose of the research (Recker, 2013).

3.7 Scientific Quality

As there are many factors that can influence the quality of the research, we will brief what all shall be considered to make sure that the quality of our research is good, in this section.

When choosing a research area, it is important that it contributes to the research area itself (Buchholz, 1995). To get a good research question, the researcher needs to find it interesting, unique, worthy and possible (Recker, 2013). The content of the paper shall be relevant and useful even though the research paper might be unique (Buchholz, 1995). Information shall be collected from reliable sources to make sure that the literature review is of high quality (Efron and Ravid, 2018). It is important to be clear and transparent about how the data was collected for research purposes (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The findings obtained must be reliable when the data is integrated with the research problem, research approach, analysis and data collection (Bhattacherjee, 2012). If the data collected through the interviews is accurate and beneficial, it will be useful to repeat the study and further develop it (Patton, 2014).

There are two types of reliability, external and internal reliability which are consistent with the research conducted while reinforcing the value of qualitative research (Bryman, 2006). External reliability focused on replicating the exact study which can be difficult in terms of a qualitative approach as the same interview situations cannot be repeated in a similar context. Internal reliability observers focus on the interpretation of the same data, that could confirm the same findings they observed through the study (Bryman, 2006).

The validity of the data obtained from the study shall also be considered along with the findings of the study (Bryman, 2006). According to Bhattacherjee (2012), verification is one of the key aspects when it comes to research quality. Internal validity involves whether or not the observed learning was influenced by additional factors and how well it was conducted while, external validity involves whether the results of a study can be generalised to other contexts (Bryman, 2006).

The researchers should do the analysis and get the results with real facts for the research to have high quality (Buchholz, 1995). There is a possibility to get biased while writing the paper and the researcher should consciously avoid such a situation in order to make the reader not influenced by any such biases (Sica, 2006).

4 Findings

This chapter provides the findings of the interviews conducted for this case study and categorises the findings into themes which are developed into the theoretical framework.

4.1 Planning

4.1.1 Top-down approach

When we enquired about the 360-degree feedback happening in the organization, Respondent 1's answer was:

"...feedback is happening downwards, which means from top to bottom only, not with peers and managers" (R1: 26).

Respondent 3 also shared similar response which is given below:

"...The objective is to follow a top-down model. It means the chairman of the company has an objective. That is provided as the objective to the CEO of the company who is reporting to him. CEO divides the objective and gives it to different heads of each line of the business unit (LOB)..." (R3: 4)

But Respondent 5 has a different viewpoint and pointed out the drawback of this approach:

"...this was actually an objective of my line manager and he has assigned that to me..." (R5: 16)

4.2 PMS Effectiveness

4.2.1 Favouritism

When asked about the drawbacks of the current system, Respondent 1's reply was:

"...the system is not capable of assessing the band based on quantifying the tasks and performance. And the chance for manipulating it with favouritism is still there in the system" (R1: 46).

Respondent 2 gave an example to assert this point and talked deeply about this:

"Talking about the bell curve, there is an ongoing issue happening in our office. One of my team members who is reporting to me is leaving our project and joining another in our company itself. That employee was the best-performing candidate who had the best score among our team. Since he is leaving our project, I have pressure from the manager to reduce his score and give the highest score to some other employee who is staying in our project itself..." (R2:16).

"There is clearly partiality from the side of managers. They always want to favour their people in the team even if they are underperforming. The reason behind the person leaving the project is this favouritism…" (R2:18).

"…once I submit the report my manager is asking me to change it as per the information from the HR department. But I am sure that it is his decision but we want to put it on HR. I can give higher bands to all of my team members if they are performing well. There is no compulsion on me to give different bands technically. There are targets and goals upon which we decide the bands of each team member. Saying this, most of the goals are unachievable and can be manipulated easily. My manager can easily interfere with my report and make corrections for their favourite team member. In my opinion, the targets are not properly defined. Managers can always change the definition according to their wish if they need to give someone a lower or higher band…" (R2:26).

Respondent 4 provided a solution for this drawback:

"Involving HR also in this system is one way to avoid internal politics. Normally HR expects us all to do the performance well and properly. But these are individual choices on how to do it. It's a behavioural aspect" (R4: 62).

Respondent 5 was also agreeing with his fellow respondents:

"…In our organization, we can get promotions only through contacts. If you know a decision-making person, you can climb up and the reviews don't matter." (R5: 30).

"…This system is connected to all the details of an employee so that it is easy to find any information and it is transparent also. Managers and their superiors are able to view the progress of an employee and the grading is done by the system itself even though managers can comment on it. If the task is completed it's a "Yes" automatically else a "No". So management won't be able to twist the objectives according to their wish. Favouritism can also be removed from the equation…" (R5: 32).

4.2.2   Targets without clarity

While discussing the objectives, Respondent 1's response was:

"…this system contains generic goals to achieve" (R1:50).

Respondent 2 also shares the same opinion:

"…once I submit the report my manager is asking me to change it as per the information from the HR department. But I am sure that it is his decision but we want to put it on HR. I can give higher bands to all of my team members if they are performing well. There is no compulsion on me to give different bands technically. There are targets and goals upon which we decide the bands of each team member. Saying this, most of the goals are unachievable and can be manipulated easily. My manager can easily interfere with my report and make corrections for their favourite team member. In my opinion, the targets are not properly defined. Managers can always change the definition according to their wish if they need to give someone a lower or higher band…" (R2:26).

"...The generic targets are making the team nervous and they don't know how to achieve those. If you make the tasks we do as the target it will be more clear and encouraging for the team members. Even I feel difficulty in explaining the targets to the team if they are coming up with doubts. We can't blame them. I always felt the targets given to the employees are not realistic. When I ask managers, they say that is the point of the target (Smiles). It can be manipulated easily" (R2:30).

Even though Respondent 3 admits that goals are not well defined, he also points out the reason behind it:

"...This system should be like a work-assigning tool. Otherwise, this won't be effective..." (R3: 4)

"...Objectives can't be clearly defined. That is an issue..." (R3: 10)

Respondent 4 shares the same opinion as respondents 2 and 1:

"...It is not supposed to put a generic target. For example, no bugs are expected in this cycle. This kind of target is not supposed to be set..." (R4: 12)

Respondent 5 also agrees with the rest of them:

"...I am a technical person and if the objective is to complete AWS certification, I can manage. Here I need to win business even though I am not a business development person. So what I am saying is, the objectives have nothing to do with our job description" (R5: 14)

"...The same objectives were given to me in different quarters. It was to add one more team member to our project. But this required approval from the client and the client was not okay wh that even after requesting to add one more member. Since they are our clients and we are providing service to them, I can't pressurise them to add one more member. I was not able to meet this expectation from our management both times. I have already updated this to our manager but the feedback I got was "could have been done better" the first time and "target not met" the second time. I think this was not fair..." (R5: 24)

4.2.3 Manual interference

While discussing interference in the system, Respondent 1 replies:

"...if these numbers are fixed in the system and LOBs manual decisions don't matter, can avoid lots of confusion" (R1:78).

Respondent 2 has given an example for external interference:

"Talking about the bell curve, there is an ongoing issue happening in our office. One of my team members who is reporting to me is leaving our project and joining another in our company itself. That employee was the best-performing candidate who had the best score among our team. Since he is leaving our project, I have pressure from the manager to reduce his score and give the highest score to some other employee who is staying in our project itself..." (R2:16).

"...once I submit the report my manager is asking me to change it as per the information from the HR department. But I am sure that it is his decision but we want to put it on HR. I can give higher bands to all of my team members if they are performing well. There is no compulsion on me to give different bands technically. There are targets and goals upon which we decide the bands of each team member. Saying this, most of the goals are unachievable and can be manipulated easily. My manager can easily interfere with my report and make corrections for their favourite team member. In my opinion, the targets are not properly defined. Managers can always change the definition according to their wish if they need to give someone a lower or higher band..." (R2:26).

But Respondent 3 thinks the other way:

"...my manager can take a call about who actually is responsible for the time and act upon it..." (R3: 12)

4.2.4 Manipulation

Respondent 2 has talked about the manipulation from the management:

"...once I submit the report my manager is asking me to change it as per the information from the HR department. But I am sure that it is his decision but we want to put it on HR. I can give higher bands to all of my team members if they are performing well. There is no compulsion on me to give different bands technically. There are targets and goals upon which we decide the bands of each team member. Saying this, most of the goals are unachievable and can be manipulated easily. My manager can easily interfere with my report and make corrections for their favourite team member. In my opinion, the targets are not properly defined. Managers can always change the definition according to their wish if they need to give someone a lower or higher band..." (R2:26).

"...The generic targets are making the team nervous and they don't know how to achieve those. If you make the tasks we do as the target it will be more clear and more encouraging for the team members. Even I feel difficulty in explaining the targets to the team if they are coming up with doubts. We can't blame them. I always felt the targets given to the employees are not realistic. When I ask managers, they say that is the point of the target (Smiles). It can be manipulated easily" (R2:30).

Respondent 4 also mentioned about manipulations:

"...that is why managers put all the targets once at the end of the cycle. And mostly the end date of the majority of the targets will be the end date of the cycle" (R4: 66)

Respondent 5 explained the manipulation from management he experienced:

"...My manager has asked me to inform someone in my team who was not happy with the project that next year we will try to provide you with an increment or an onsite opportunity. I think this is a bad approach. If management is not happy they have to inform the employee and it is that employee's decision to leave or stay in the organization. Management cannot give fake promises and deny increments" (R5: 50)

4.3 Appraisal Implications

4.3.1 Performance banding

Respondents 1 and 5 gave their view about performance banding:

"We will not be satisfied if we didn't get the banding according to the work we did, we will only be satisfied if we get the band that we deserve" (R1: 32).

"...It affected my performance band. We have bands starting from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lower band. For this review, I was awarded band 2...I was not happy since the objectives given to me were not related to my work and I felt like they deliberately reduced my performance band. I was not happy with their decision" (R5: 26, 28).

4.3.2 Salary increment

Respondent 1 provides details behind increments:

"...I think the companies cannot execute their budget and salary hike without such a bell curve" (R1:62).

"...Most of the employees want a salary hike more than the others. Should get as per the industry standard..." (R1:64).

Respondent 5 also shares his views:

"...We can't give everyone a band 5 rating since it is directly proportional to the increment in salary in the next year. That needs a huge fund which is not possible in our organization..." (R5: 34)

"...there are restrictions from managers because the fund available for the increment of salary is limited. But there are no percentage barriers also. With that limited fund, we will decide how much can be given to each employee according to their performance. Employees will leave if they are not satisfied with the appraisal received which will affect the ongoing project..." (R5: 36)

4.3.3 Promotion

Respondents 1 and 5 share their views on promotion in the organization:

"...it also cannot be justified if the salary is not reflected along with the promotion. Salary, band, promotion all these are not mapped, that is the issue..." (R1:76).

"...In our organization, we can get promotions only through contacts. If you know a decision-making person, you can climb up and the reviews don't matter." (R5: 30)

4.3.4 Attrition

Different views from respondents 1, 4, and 5 regarding the attrition rate of their projects:

"...I think the companies cannot execute their budget and salary hike without such a bell curve" (R1:62).

"...Most of the employees want a salary hike more than the others. Should get as per the industry standard..." (R1:64).

"...I have given a band to my team members which they are convinced of. That is why not so many attritions in my team..." (R4: 18)

"...there are restrictions from managers because the fund available for the increment of salary is limited. But there are no percentage barriers also. With that limited fund, we will decide how much can be given to each employee according to their performance. Employees will leave if they are not satisfied with the appraisal received which will affect the ongoing project..." (R5: 36)

"...if somebody wins the Star of the Week award, he will receive a special cap which the winner needs to wear inside the office. This is a type of recognition a whoever sees this person will understand he/she is the star of the week. They are implementing so many appreciation programs like this for their employees. If we start implementing such programs, I feel like the attrition rate of our organization can be reduced" (R5: 46)

4.4 Managerial Approach for Improvement

4.4.1 Bell curve

Respondent 1 believes bell curve is outdated:

"...it is a limitation, especially for a small team. Suppose there are only 2 or 3 people in a team. There is a chance that all of them are performing well. But still, the management has to forcefully give different bands for them to meet the bell curve, which is a limitation" (R1: 36).

"...if there are 10 members in the team and all these 10 members performed this way, we cannot give the outstanding band to all the 10 because of the bell curve" (R1: 58, 60).

Respondent 2 also shares the same opinion:

"Talking about the bell curve, there is an ongoing issue happening in our office. One of my team members who is reporting to me is leaving our project and joining another in our company itself. That employee was the best-performing candidate who had the best score among our team. Since he is leaving our project, I have pressure from the manager to reduce his score and give the highest score to some other employee who is staying in our project itself..." (R2:16).

"...once I submit the report my manager is asking me to change it as per the information from the HR department. But I am sure that it is his decision but we want to put it on HR. I can give higher bands to all of my team members if they are performing well. There is no compulsion on me to give different bands technically. There are targets and goals upon which we decide the bands of each team member. Saying this, most of the goals are unachievable and can be manipulated easily. My manager can easily interfere with my report and make corrections for

their favourite team member. In my opinion, the targets are not properly defined. Managers can always change the definition according to their wish if they need to give someone a lower or higher band…" (R2:26).

"The problem with the bell curve is two employees within a band are considered equal. For example, one who is on the lower side and one on the higher side of the same band are considered as equals…" (R2:40).

Respondent 3 finds it unjustifiable:

"...doing a comparison and identifying who is performing best, better, good etc is a task for the manager. And the percentage for each band depends on the company. They can decide based on their revenue and growth. There will be differences in implementing that in a product company and a services company. Outstanding performers in product companies will be mostly below 10%. It is a good thing, but hard to justify. 8 out of 10 people can be justified but for the remaining 2, it is unjustifiable" (R3: 14)

Respondent 4 shares the difficulties while following bell curve approach:

"I usually recommend the exact band they deserve to HR. sometimes HR comes back saying it is not possible…" (R4: 26)

Respondent 5 also believes the bell curve system is outdated:

"...We can't give everyone a band 5 rating since it is directly proportional to the increment in salary in the next year. That needs a huge fund which is not possible in our organization…" (R5: 34)

"...there are restrictions from managers because the fund available for the increment of salary is limited. But there are no percentage barriers also. With that limited fund, we will decide how much can be given to each employee according to their performance. Employees will leave if they are not satisfied with the appraisal received which will affect the ongoing project…" (R5: 36)

"… they provide similar salary increments for equally performing employees. As far as I know, our client is financially in a better position and they don't have any const doesn't to do so. Since the system is deciding the increment, employees are happy with the outcome also" (R5: 38)

"...the bell curve system followed by our organization is outdated. We need to implement new methodologies in the review system. Most of the employees here are not satisfied with our bell curve system" (R5: 42)

4.4.2 Decision making

Respondents 1 and 2 share their views on decision making by the managers:

"...Managers schedule a one-to-one discussion after making the decisions. There is no point in defending at that time. But if the system shows that the manager has updated the task with feedback any time before making the decisions, there is always a chance to discuss and convince the reason…" (R1:80).

"...Since he is leaving our project, I have pressure from the manager to reduce his score and give the highest score to some other employee who is staying in our project itself..." (R2:16).

4.4.3 Implementation

Respondents 4 and 5 believes it is the implementation that is lacking:

"...the process is right, but the way people implement might be wrong. The problem is most managers, what they do is, they surprise their employees with a rating and banding. That is the issue..." (R4: 36)

"...It is with the way we are using our system. We and our client are using similar systems but here, the objectives are twisted and there is no transparency. Only the line manager is getting involved in our process. For the client, it is open for all the higher management and the HR department is actively involved in the process. Here only the manager will update the score, nobody knows what is happening behind and higher management doesn't know the employees also" (R5: 48)

4.5 PMS Interaction

4.5.1 Frequent updates

All the respondents we approached explained the requirement of frequent updates:

"...employees can add comments or update it once in a day or week or maybe even once in a month is also good. Evaluating these frequently will be better than doing all of this at the end of the year. But people rarely use it that way effectively, mostly due to laziness and that becomes an advantage for managers. This system should be utilised with maximum automation like these key results of objectives to be automatically updated with very limited inputs from employees..." (R1:48).

"...most of the people update the system at the last moment. Even though they get the objectives six months before, they fill in with their inputs at the time of evaluation by recollecting what they have done in the last six months. That is why I doubt the effectiveness of the execution..." (R3: 4)

"...I update them on their status constantly. So, there is no surprise in the appraisal meeting. I ensure they know whether they are on the right track or not. If there is anything to be corrected, I inform them as quickly as possible. So that they also don't get deviated. So usually they will be on the right track. Usually, what others do is they give the targets for 6 months and at the end of the 6 months they will give a band according to their performance and the manager explains the reason for that band which may sound surprising to the members..." (R4: 24)

"...if not daily, at least once a week would be the minimum..." (R4: 44)

"...This system is connected to all the details of an employee so that it is easy to find any information and it is transparent also. Managers and their superiors are able to view the

progress of an employee and the grading is done by the system itself even though managers can comment on it. If the task is completed it's a "Yes" automatically else a "No". So management won't be able to twist the objectives according to their wish. Favouritism can also be removed from the equation…" (R5: 32)

4.5.2   Visibility and transparency

This point also was agreed by all the respondents. But regarding negative feedback respondent 4 believes it should be between employee and the line manager:

"...if an employee in a job level gets a particular performance band, then this is the range of salary hike they are going to get. Such kind of transparency will be better. Now people are clueless about what they get, even after getting a band, got a hike which is less than another who got a band less than mine. Things like these are also demotivating. If it is clear that this is the salary range one is going to get for a specific band and it is visible to all, everyone will work towards getting that salary change to get reflected…" (R1:74).

"...the employee will be clear about the banding criteria and we will have all the evidence to show them for the past six months. They should be able to prove to the manager that they have done something remarkable and, in this case, it is easy to track. This will make the process more transparent than what we are doing right now" (R2:32).

"...it will be easy to prove if it is transparent" (R3: 24)

"...Whatever negative feedback I gave, that employee will take it in the right sense. But if it's shared with another person, it may not go well…" (R4: 48)

"...It is with the way we are using our system. We and our client are using similar systems but here, the objectives are twisted and there is no transparency. Only the line manager is getting involved in our process. For the client, it is open for all the higher management and the HR department is actively involved in the process. Here only the manager will update the score, nobody knows what is happening behind and higher management doesn't know the employees also" (R5: 48)

4.5.3   Escalation

Respondent 2 agreed on this point:

"...we have all the records for that period, we can explain to the employee if he challenges the low banding. These records can be given to the HR department if we feel the arguments from the employee are correct…" (R2:34).

Respondent 4 has a different take on escalation point:

"Involving HR also in this system is one way to avoid internal politics. Normally HR expects us all to do the performance well and properly. But these are individual choices on how to do it. It's a behavioural aspect" (R4: 62)

Respondent 5 also shares similar opinion:

"...It is with the way we are using our system. We and our client are using similar systems but here, the objectives are twisted and there is no transparency. Only the line manager is getting involved in our process. For the client, it is open for all the higher management and the HR department is actively involved in the process. Here only the manager will update the score, nobody knows what is happening behind and higher management doesn't know the employees also" (R5: 48)

4.6 Roles to Improve Performance

4.6.1 Additional activities

Respondent 1 believes going extra mile should be recongized:

"...There are other tasks which are part of extra activities. To become outstanding performers, we need to do tasks beyond what we are assigned" (R1:56).

Similar opinion by respondent 2:

"...If the employee has done something extra than his/her work, they can mention that in the key results. There should be an option for that like an extra target or achievement. Being said that employees cant decide their targets. I am mentioning the additional ones after meeting the targets set by the management..." (R2:36).

4.6.2 Regular communication

Respondent 3 explained the importance of frequent feedback:

"...If the employee is convinced with the provided feedback, then most will be convinced with the band as well and hence will be satisfied. So communication is the key" (R3: 28)

Respondent 4 also explained deeply the importance:

"...targets will be set after discussing them with us. But it depends. No need to discuss this with a newly joined fresher. There will be a defined target for them. That will be given as it is. But with experienced people, what is expected will be discussed from the project perspective. So the discussion is there with seniors. So it is different for different job levels..." (R4: 8)

"...I have given a band to my team members which they are convinced of. That is why not so many attritions in my team..." (R4: 18)

"...I update them on their status constantly. So there is no surprise in the appraisal meeting. I ensure they know whether they are on the right track or not. If there is anything to be corrected, I inform them as quickly as possible. So that they also don't get deviated. So usually they will be on the right track. Usually what others do is they give the targets for 6 months and at the end of the 6 months they will give a band according to their performance and the manager explains the reason for that band which may sound surprising to the members..." (R4: 24)

"...targets should be mutually agreeable. Provide regular feedback. If they are not on the right track, the manager should give feedback that they are not on the right track and make sure that they have the time and infrastructure available to execute that target…" (R4: 38)

5 Discussion

This chapter presents the thesis discussion which makes contributions to both research and practice. In theory, we have identified some factors, elements, challenges and issues that are important to be noticed by the scholars. Whereas in practice, we have identified specific practical points that should be acknowledged by practitioners in the field. The strongest contributor to our research is the association between dissatisfaction with the internal employee performance management system and the way it is executed. Furthermore, a strong positive association can be drawn between the employee's goals or objectives and their contribution. Also, a strong and negative association is present between performance evaluation implementation and the existing processes in different business units. The outcome of the thesis is reflected by the structure of this chapter, which states the implications of our findings.

5.1 Planning

Ahmed and Kaushik (2011) state that career planning provides opportunities to add value to themselves and the organisation by acquiring higher knowledge and skills and if career planning is focused, sustainable development can be ensured by taking care of employees who have demonstrated performance and potential.

5.1.1 Top-down approach

Respondent 1 states that feedback is only happening in one direction, from top to bottom and it is not considered for managers and not even peers or colleagues who work in the same team at the same level (R1: 26). Respondent 3 is a program manager, who is handling one of the senior positions in the company. Respondent 3 also confirms that the feedforward system is following a top-down model where the objectives or goals of an employee are distributed to the employees in the next level (R3: 4). Respondent 3 gives an example where if the target of the company's CEO is to increase the revenue by 500 million, and there are five business units present in the company, CEO may probably give the objective of each business unit heads to make the revenue of the business units 100 million more than last year, assuming each business units are having similar revenue-generating projects (R3: 4). This distribution of the objectives goes further down, from business unit heads to sales managers, program managers, delivery managers, project managers and up to junior most level employees like software engineers at the bottom of the pyramid. There, the objective might be to complete a coding task within a particular duration so that they can work on other tasks in the remaining time which was planned earlier for the same task and that way they can finish more tasks in the shortest time possible to achieve the company's objectives or goals.

Respondent 5 who is a senior technical architect had a strange experience on one occasion. Respondent 5 was once working at a client site along with the customer and Respondent 5's line manager gave an objective to bring another project from the same customer so that the income from that customer is more (R5:14). Respondent 5 even though not a business or salesperson, was forced to work on this objective, later recognising that this was one of the objectives given to the line manager and being a technical person talking business to the customer does not make any sense at all (R5: 16).

As these examples point out, this one-directional goal setting does not always make the employee satisfied even if it is accomplished. It may work well to achieve the company's objectives, but what about the employee's career goals? A target should ideally be agreed upon mutually.

Respondents point out that one-directional goal setting does not always make the employee satisfied even if it is accomplished. Respondents suggest a mechanism which is two-directional will be better to agree upon responsible tasks mutually and also employees get the option to plan their career according to their wishes.

5.2 PMS Effectiveness

Dewettinck and van Dijk (2013) state that the line manager's role is critical for effective performance management and the relationship between performance management practices and performance management system effectiveness identifies fairness as the partial mediator.

5.2.1 Favouritism

Respondent 1 claims that there is always a chance for the supervisor to provide feedback to an objective in the system based on a bias (R1: 46). Respondent 2 explained a scenario where Respondent 2 was forced to change the feedback to a lower band for an employee by the line manager since the employee is leaving the project and to give that good rating to someone who is continuing in the project (R2:16). Even though an employee who has performed well and was about to get good feedback for the work done, not getting the deserved rating just because that employee's service is no longer available while an employee who has not performed well on the assigned tasks is going to get a good rating which is not at all deserved. And the reason being the best performer of the team is leaving that team, which is not fair at all. Respondent 2 also said about the instances where the superior has made decisions showing a clear case of partiality (R2:18). Line manager of respondent 2 always has the authority to pressurise respondent 2 to change the feedback and this is a cause for concern (R2: 26). Line manager cannot make changes in the system but can instruct the reporting employees to do so and they are obliged to do the same otherwise, they will also get entry in their bad books.

Respondent 4 agrees with the fact that there is a possibility of involvement in internal politics while making decisions as long as the choice completely depends on the behaviour of some individuals (R4: 62). Respondent 5 informs that an employee can get promoted to the next senior level if that employee is the favourite of the reporting manager and there is nothing the system can restrict (R5: 30). Hence some employees are more interested in building connections at the senior level than performing on their assigned tasks. This way undeserved employees can also go to higher levels while deserved employees stay in the same position for many years as long as the reporting manager is not happy with that employee, personally. Emotions should not be involved in making such decisions.

5.2.2 Targets without clarity

Respondent 1 expresses that most of the goals defined in the system are generic in nature (R1: 50). Respondent 2 claims that most of the targets provided in the system are not properly

defined and that the managers might be doing it intentionally so that they can change the definition according to their wish if they want to give a lower or higher band for that target as they required (R2: 26). Respondent 2 also gave an example of an unclear target which is, complete an innovative activity in the next quarter. And whatever innovative steps an employee takes to achieve this target, whether the said activity contains enough innovation or not is a complete decision the manager can make. Respondent 2 has seen some team members going nervous about thinking about how to achieve certain targets because it is provided in such a way that is so generic and sometimes unrealistic in nature (R2: 30). When respondent 2 checked the same with the line manager, was informed that it is done intentionally so that it can be manipulated according to their wish later (R2:30)

Respondent 3 says that a target should ideally be a plan that is executable (R3: 4). Respondent 3 gave examples like to attend specific training to learn about new technology, complete the certification on that technology within the next quarter etc. These are examples of clear and achievable targets while doing a new valuable activity for the organisation lacks clarity as what activities are valuable for the organisation is debatable. Respondent 3 confirms that it will be difficult to execute if there are no small achievable goals as objectives.

Respondent 4 supports the importance of targets being clear and specific and gives a bad example of targets as no bugs expected from the coding activity during the next cycle (R4: 12). The assigned employee could be so confused as he/she does not know what are the coding activities planned for the next cycle, how many lines of new codes are required to execute those activities, how much time allocated for those activities etc. Respondent 5, being a senior technical architect gave a target to bring another project from the same customer once. Other than that, there was one more incident where the target was given to add one more team member at the customer site so that the profit of the project will be more (R5: 24). Respondent 5 received low bands like "could have been better" and "target not met" for next two quarters for failing to meet this target even though this is out of scope from a technical role. This is a clear case of giving an invalid or unachievable target. Targets like these not only make the employee unsatisfied but also demotivates them.

5.2.3 Manual interference

Respondent 1 talked about the problem of senior managers interfering in the already made decisions (R1: 78). Even after an employee's performance is evaluated and performance banding and salary increment are all decided, the manager of the supervisor still has the control over it and can change it (R1: 76). This is another reason for employees to get dissatisfied as their deserved ratings are getting changed due to re-evaluation based on the business unit's performance. Respondent 2 faced a situation where the line manager instructed respondent 2 to lower the performance band of an employee just because the employee is leaving the project and that employee's service is no longer required (R2:16). This is a clear case of interfering with others' decisions on evaluating an employee's performance, which is an improper process. Even if the line manager is reluctant to change the rating as per the senior manager's wish, sometimes they are forced to do it with the involvement of the HR department as told by senior managers making the excuse of process deviations (R2: 26).

Respondent 3 clarifies that when there is a disagreement between the employee and the appraiser on a certain evaluation, that is the time the line manager of the appraiser should get involved in the decision, just to confirm who is more correct on their argument (R3: 12). Respondent describes a situation where the manager instructs to provide fake promises so that

the employee stays with the team and the project even though the employee is not satisfied with performance assessment (R5: 50). This is a wrong thing to do as the employee has the right to leave the project, or even company if it feels like the employee did not get what is deserving. But instead, the line manager is telling the employee's appraiser to approach the employee with offers that make the employee continue their work in the team, which indicates that the senior management team requires this employee's service but is not ready to provide benefits for the same and interferes with emotional attractions.

5.2.4 Manipulation

Respondent 2 describes a circumstance in which he is in charge of selecting the bands based on the performance of their team members. However, after submitting the report, the manager requests modifications based on information from HR, presumably to delegate decision-making authority to HR. He also states that they are able to give team members higher bands based on how well they do without having to follow any technical rules. In any case, the respondent noticed that the objectives and targets used to decide the groups are frequently unattainable and handily controlled. Additionally, he expresses concern regarding the manager's ability to easily alter the report and correct it for their preferred team members. Employees think the targets aren't clear, so managers can change the definitions to make lower or higher bands according to their preferences (R2: 26).

Respondent 2 communicates setting business-related targets in light of the genuine undertakings performed for the client, as opposed to utilizing nonexclusive targets. He thinks that the team members are anxious and unsure of how to achieve the generic goals. He recommends that making the particular assignments the objectives would give clearness and inspiration to the group. He likewise specifies encountering trouble in clarifying the objectives for the group and recognizes that it is justifiable for them to feel somewhat wary. Respondent 2 actually feels that the objectives given to workers are not reasonable and suggest that directors could deliberately set manipulatable targets (R2: 30).

Respondent 4 suggests that managers might purposefully set all of the goals at the end of a performance cycle, with most of the goals aligned with the cycle's end date. The implication is that managers can potentially manipulate the outcomes to their advantage by using this strategy, which gives them greater control over the targets (R4: 66).

Respondent 5 discusses the advantages of a client's system, which gives each employee 25 work-related tasks or goals for a year. Transparency and easy access to employee data are the goals of this system. Employee progress can be monitored by managers and superiors, and the system itself assigns grades based on task completion. This robotized approach decreases the potential for control or bias by the board. The client's system is regarded as an improvement over the writer's organization's current system (R5: 32). Respondent 5 has also observed management making false promises to prevent someone from leaving the company. The respondent's manager specifically asked him to inform a team member, who was unhappy with their project, that there would be a potential salary increase or an opportunity for an onsite assignment next year. The respondent believes that this approach is problematic. He argues that if management is not satisfied with an employee, they should openly communicate that to the employee, allowing them to make their own decision to stay or leave the organization. He also believes that management should not make false promises and then deny the promised increment or opportunity (R5: 50).

Respondents reflected that favouritism, targets without clarity, manual interference and manipulating the evaluation are the key factors that make a performance management system ineffective. Respondents suggest a modification required in the performance management system in such a way that a third party like someone from the human resource department not biased to any party should also involve in the process to avoid these factors.

5.3 Appraisal Implications

Sanyal and Biswas (2014) propose accurate and bias-free ratings of performance by appraisers are introduced by a performance culture of openness, confrontation, trust and authenticity.

5.3.1 Performance banding

Employees are classified into five bands after evaluating their performance for each cycle. The table 5.1 below shows the five different bands and their description.

Table 5.1: Performance bands

Band	Description
5	Outstanding / Far exceeds expectation
4	Excellent / Exceeds expectation
3	Good / Meets expectation
2	Satisfactory / Often meets expectation
1	Poor / Needs improvement

Band 5 is the best band an employee can get while Band 1 is the worst. Respondent 1 reflects that employees will be dissatisfied if they did not get the band according to the work they have done and they will be satisfied only when they get the band that they deserve (R1: 32). The probability of getting a high band for a low performing employee is very less while the probability of getting a lower band even for a high performing employee is very high.

Respondent 5 remembers the instance where band 2 was received (R5: 26). There was an objective which was out of scope for a technically skilled employee and the same target was given for 2 quarters in which both the time got the rating or feedback as "could have been better" and "target not met" respectively (R5: 24). When there are feedbacks like these in the cycle, one will get a band lower than deserved. Respondent 5 feels that these kinds of invalid and unachievable targets are deliberately given so that they can give a band lower than the deserved one (R5: 28). Respondent 5 was really disappointed with the band received in that cycle.

The performance band received by an employee for a cycle is an important factor as it is directly related to the salary increment due for that year. So, whether deliberate or not, performance bands lower than the deserved ones have a huge impact and it is going to affect the salary of the employee for the whole year. Other than that, if an employee is receiving a low-performance band, the chance of getting promoted to the next level senior to the current level,

can also be delayed. Factors like these make the employee unsatisfied when they figure out that they have not received the performance band that they deserved.

5.3.2 Salary increment

According to Respondent 1, many businesses continue to evaluate employee performance and determine salary increases using a bell curve method. He accepts that organizations depend on this way to deal with their financial plan successfully and dispense compensation increments appropriately (R1:62). Respondent 1 expresses that utilizing a bell curve approach alone is probably not going to keep employees from leaving an organization. He believes that the majority of employees place a high value on salary increases and anticipate receiving compensation that is in line with industry norms. The case of a worker getting fixed 5% increments north of 10 years, would result in the salary being significantly lower compared to someone who changed jobs multiple times during that period. He argues that these situations cannot be compared, emphasizing the importance of fair and competitive compensation practices (R1:64).

Respondent 5 has described a scenario in which all seven employees have performed exceptionally well and explained how they assigned them a performance band. Due to the financial implications for salary increases in the following year, he asserts that granting everyone a Band 5 rating is impractical. The respondent suggests talking about the situation with their delivery manager and thinking about other things, like how willing team members are to break any ties. As a consequence of this, they intend to assign one employee to Band 5, two employees to Band 4, and the remaining employees to Band 3 (R5: 34). Respondent 5 adds that managers place restrictions on performance banding because there aren't enough funds for salary increases. However, no particular percentage barriers are imposed. The choice of the amount to apportion to every worker depends on their exhibition inside the limitations of the accessible assets. That's what respondent recognizes in the event that representatives are not happy with their evaluations, it could affect continuous activities and lead to steady loss. They recognize the need to find a balance that ensures team members' satisfaction in this challenging situation (R5: 36).

5.3.3 Promotion

Respondent 1 clarifies that the process for promotion to the senior designation is not determined by the Employee Performance Management System. Instead, it is the manager's decision based on specific manual criteria. However, the issue arises when the promotion is not accompanied by an appropriate salary increase. The respondent highlights that there is a lack of alignment between salary, performance band, and promotion, creating confusion. Additionally, each Line of Business has control over these numbers, leading to further complications. He also mentions that there are limits on salary hike percentages set by LOBs, which can result in satisfying some critical resources while leaving others unsatisfied (R1: 76).

Respondent 5 considers Career Navigator in a client's organization to be the best performance management system he has encountered when discussing promotion. To be promoted to senior software engineer under this system, a software engineer must complete a certain number of courses within a year. Everything is centralized and simple to comprehend because the system reflects the individual's work-related details and value-added services provided for projects. The framework fills in as a wellspring of inspiration for representatives. On the other

hand, the respondent expresses dissatisfaction with their company because promotions appear to be based more on personal connections than on performance reviews (R5: 30).

5.3.4 Attrition

Respondent 1 recognizes that one of the primary purposes behind attrition is when people feel that they are not getting what they merit with regard to pay. However, it also demonstrates that, in light of rising inflation, some individuals may choose to switch jobs where they can bargain for a higher salary rather than relying solely on a salary increase at their current employer (R1: 68).

Respondent 4 claims that he has never had the impression that they received the appropriate performance banding. They believe that the ratings of outstanding or Band 5 that they have received are appropriate. He also mentions that the members of their team have been working hard to give them the bands they deserve and have not voiced this concern. They examine and agree with colleagues prior to doling out a band. As a result, the respondent's team has low attrition rates, with only a few people leaving to pursue other academic pursuits or because of geographical constraints (R4:18).

Respondent 5 explains that there are limitations from the board with regards to execution banding because of limited compensation increase reserves. However, no particular percentage barriers exist. Based on each employee's performance and within the constraints of the funds that are available, the amount that will be given to them is decided. He acknowledges that if employees are dissatisfied with their appraisals, it could impact ongoing projects and potentially lead to attrition. In this challenging circumstance, therefore, striking a balance that ensures team members' satisfaction becomes critical (R5:36). Respondent 5 says that one of their clients uses "Employee of the Week" and "Employee of the Month" employee recognition programs on a weekly basis. The recipients of these titles are acknowledged in some way. For instance, as a token of their appreciation, the winner of the "Star of the Week" award is given a special cap to wear to work. This is just one of many employee appreciation programs that the client has put into place. The respondent is of the opinion that their company's attrition rate could possibly be reduced if it implements programs that are comparable (R5:46).

Respondents reacted that performance banding, salary increment and promotion are all linked with the evaluation of one's performance this should be done with precision in the performance management system without the possibility of a human error.

5.4 Managerial Approach for Improvement

Neher and Maley (2020) states an effective performance management process contributes to a positive experience that motivates and guides personal development.

5.4.1 Bell curve

A certain percentage of employees are classified into five bands after evaluating their performance for each cycle. The Figure 5.1 below shows the bell curve rule applied in the company where we have conducted the case study.
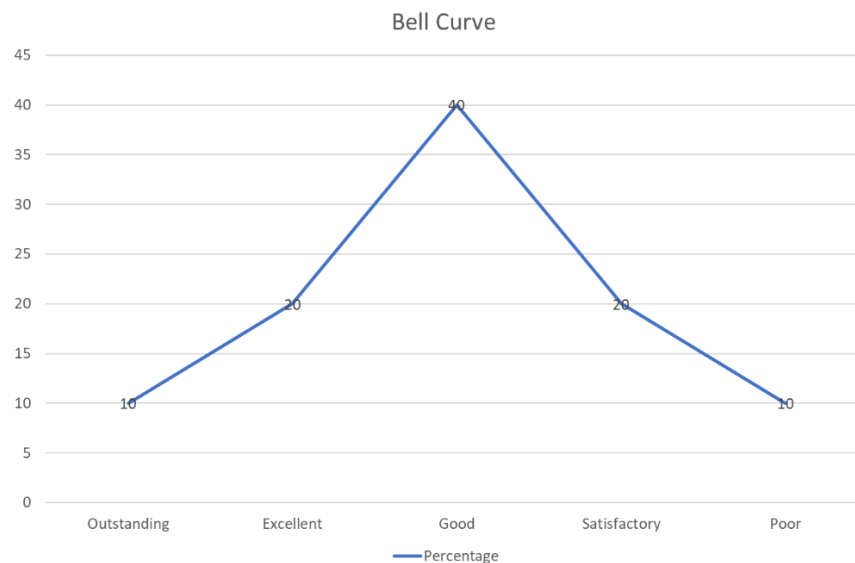
Figure 5.1: Bell curve

Respondent 1 points out a limitation when it comes to small teams, which may only have two or three members. To meet the bell curve requirement, management must assign distinct performance bands to each team member even if performing well. The pressure to adhere to the bell curve distribution causes this limitation, which may not accurately reflect the small team's performance (R1:36). Respondent 1 discusses the complexity of implementing systems that automatically capture task details from other systems. It is suggested that such systems may not be comprehensive, as they may not capture tasks that are part of extra activities. He emphasizes that to become an outstanding performer, one must go beyond assigned tasks. They provide an example of outstanding performance, such as completing a task in 3 days instead of the expected 5 days. However, the challenge arises when all team members perform at this exceptional level. If there are ten people on the team, it can be difficult to assign an outstanding band to everyone (R1:58). Respondent 1 points out that even if a team has all ten members performing well, a few of them will still be placed in the "needs improvement" performance band. Implementing the bell curve distribution necessitates differentiation in performance bands even when overall performance is high, resulting in this issue (R1:60).

Respondent 2 discusses an ongoing issue in the office related to the bell curve. The best candidate on the team, with the highest score, is leaving the current project to join a different one within the same company. As the team member's supervisor, the manager is pressuring the respondent to lower the score of the departing employee and award the highest score to another employee who will continue working on the current project. The respondent, on the other hand, is aware of the departing employee's hard work and the quality of their work, so they are unwilling to comply. The respondent's credibility would be harmed, and they would also have to answer questions if the manager instructed them to lower their score. Furthermore, the manager is now requesting a report on the employee's previous track records, despite having already submitted it, suggesting an intentional search for reasons to lower the employee's score (R2:16). Respondent 2 is responsible for deciding the performance bands for the eight individuals who report to him. However, despite the respondent's belief that it is their manager's decision, their manager makes changes to the report based on information from the HR department. Technically, the respondent is free to assign higher bands to their team members if they are performing well. However, the goals and targets used to determine the bands are often unachievable and easily manipulated. The manager can alter the report and make

adjustments to favour their preferred team member. The respondent believes that the targets are not properly defined, allowing managers to assign lower or higher bands by changing their definitions as needed. Managers can argue for or against recognizing a team member's innovative action in the context of innovation (R2:26). The bell curve has a problem because it treats employees in the same band equally, regardless of their actual performance level. This may be acceptable for the employee at the bottom of the band, but it makes the employee at the top unhappy. When some team members are rewarded with salary increases, promotions, and special mentions while others are not, it causes problems. The respondent is of the opinion that the system as a whole is satisfactory; however, proper application is required to guarantee fairness and avoid creating disparities among team members (R2:40).

Respondent 3 believes regardless of how well the team as a whole is doing, the majority of businesses use a bell curve for performance banding, which forces employees to be divided into categories like outstanding, excellent, good, meet expectations, and needs improvement. The reason behind this standard is to separate representatives in light of their presentation levels. It is impossible for every employee in a business to be regarded as the best performer. The rate dissemination for each is not set in stone by the organization, considering elements like income and development. Executing this standard can differ among item and administration organizations, with exceptional entertainers ordinarily comprising a little rate, frequently beneath 10%. Even though this strategy is reasonable, it becomes difficult to justify when only a few employees fall outside of predetermined categories (R3:14).

Whereas Respondent 4 often recommend the exact performance band that my team members deserve to HR. Sometimes, HR pushes back and claims it is not possible. In those cases, he used to fight hard to retain the original banding because he believes they are truly deserving. He has been successful in some instances. However, there are also situations where he faces immense pressure from higher-ups, and it becomes impossible to maintain the desired banding. In such cases, he is forced to reassess and compare team members to determine who is relatively better and assign bands accordingly (R4:26).

Respondent 5 admits that due to a lack of funds for salary increases, performance banding is subject to restrictions from management. However, no particular percentage barriers exist. Supervisors have the obligation of deciding how much every worker can get in light of their presence inside the accessible spending plan. Essential to find an equilibrium that fulfils the colleagues, as disappointment with examinations can prompt representative wearing down and possibly influence continuous undertakings (R5:34). Limited funds for salary increments pose restrictions from managers in determining the amount to allocate for each employee's performance. Although there are no particular percentage barriers, the decisions are guided by the available budget. Dissatisfaction with appraisals can result in attrition and have an impact on ongoing projects, so it is essential to strike a balance that all team members are happy with. To ensure the team's satisfaction and the success of the project as a whole, managing this situation calls for careful navigation (R5:36). The client using the Career Navigator system does not face appraisal-related issues like constraints on salary increments for equally performing employees. They are monetarily stable and can give fair compensation increases. The automated decision-making process of the system guarantees employee contentment with the outcomes (R5:38). Respondent 5 believes that the bell curve system used in their organization is considered outdated, and there is a need to implement new methodologies in the review system. Many employees express dissatisfaction with the current bell curve system (R5:42).

5.4.2 Decision making

Respondent 1 believes that implementing a systematic and frequent feedback system would be beneficial for employees. Currently, managers schedule one-to-one discussions after making decisions, leaving little room for defence or discussion. However, if a system is in place where managers provide feedback on tasks prior to decision-making, employees have a chance to discuss and present their arguments. Instead of being updated every six months, this system should be updated on a regular basis (R1:80).

Respondent 2 is facing a dilemma with one of his team members who is leaving their project to join another within the company. With an outstanding score, this individual has consistently been their team's best performer. On the other hand, his manager is putting pressure on him to give the highest score to another team member who is still working on their project and lower the score of the leaving employee. The respondent finds this situation challenging because he is fully aware of the departing employee's hard work and exceptional quality of work. If he succumbs to his manager's request and reduces the score, it will not only undermine his credibility but also make him accountable for such a decision. Furthermore, his manager presently demands getting a report on the withdrawing representative's past histories, which he has previously submitted, yet his supervisor stays disappointed and has all the earmarks of being purposely looking because of motivations to reduce their score (R2:16).

5.4.3 Implementation

As per Respondent 4, the problem is not with the performance banding process itself but with managers' implementation of it. The issue emerges when managers shock their employees with their appraisals and bandings, causing disappointment and dissatisfaction. It is important to note that problems with their managers account for approximately 65% of employees leaving the company. Concerns regarding salaries may motivate the remaining majority. For workers who have subsided into their jobs, their chief's activities during the examination cycle become the essential justification for their takeoff. There may be additional minor issues, but they typically become more serious during the appraisal period. As a result, individuals' use of the system rather than the system itself is the primary issue (R4:36).

Respondent 5 believes that instead of the system itself, it appears that the issue lies in how the system is utilized within the organization. The organization's objectives and transparency appear to be distorted, despite the fact that the client and respondent's organization use similar systems. Because only the line manager in their company is involved in the process, there is little visibility into what goes on behind the scenes. The client, on the other hand, involves upper management and the HR department actively in the process. Higher management's lack of transparency and limited involvement in your company results in a disconnect because they are unaware of the employees' performance (R5:48).

Respondents explain that the Bell curve phenomenon does not work for smaller teams and usually large teams are divided into smaller teams hence forceful segregation as per bell curve criteria is ineffective these days. Respondents also said that some managers are not implementing the way it should be and there are times when decisions are already made even before a discussion. Respondents recommend the change in the performance management system in which decisions cannot be finalised without the approval of the concerned employee and that a discussion has been carried out for the same.

5.5 PMS Interaction

Yuliansyah, Khan and Triwacananingrum (2022) claim that interactive use of performance management systems can improve individual as well as team performance.

5.5.1 Frequent updates

Respondent 1 thinks that the HR team's Objectives and Key Results (OKR) system has a number of benefits. It stays open over time, considering ceaseless updates and input. Workers can add remarks and update their targets consistently, which is desirable over assessing execution just toward the year's end. Be that as it may, compelling use of the framework is frequently frustrated by worker lethargy. In any case, the framework can be upgraded with expanded automation. Key results like task completion time or code productivity, for instance, can be automatically updated based on employee input. An automated evaluation can be carried out by making use of the data already in the system, like the number of bugs and code quality, which makes it less likely that there will be arguments or subjective interpretations (R1:48).

Respondent 3 describes the feedforward system that is used in their company's performance management process. A top-down approach is used to set goals twice a year. The board sets a goal, which is then passed down to the Managers, who further splits it between the heads of various departments. This cascading procedure continues until the final downstream employee receives some of the objectives. When these key areas are successfully met, each objective is considered accomplished. Key results are defined in relation to each objective. The objectives of their company are pertinent to the sector in which they operate and in line with the company's overall objectives. Employees who perform well are rewarded in accordance with the company's focus on how they can contribute to its success. Some employees may remain at the same level for an extended period of time despite their tenure, and there are instances in which high performers receive double promotions. However, despite the well-thought-out process, execution frequently fails. During the evaluation, many employees tend to update the system last minute, recalling their accomplishments over the previous six months. This raise worries about the adequacy of the execution. To address this, the respondent accepts an exhibition cycle ought to have a characterized plan, relegated through the feedforward framework. Workers ought to execute the arrangement, which incorporates vocation advancement achievements and assessments. For instance, a programmer's arrangement could incorporate coding for a specific number of runs, trailed by going to an instructional meeting, and afterwards applying the obtained information in their work. A clear career development plan and evaluation cycle are established in this manner. In addition, the system ought to be used as a tool for work assignments rather than merely as a place to record accomplishments. Ordinary in-between time audits are requested however seldom powerful assuming that the goals are just checked once during the examination cycle. For the plan to work, managers and employees must be aware of it and actively participate in it. In general, the respondent emphasized the significance of taking a more proactive and systematic approach to performance management in order to guarantee its efficacy and alignment with employee career growth (R3:4).

Respondent 4 claims that during the appraisal meeting, I never give his team negative feedback out of the blue. He provides steady updates on their presentation and guarantees they know about their advancement consistently. Assuming there are any regions that need improvement, he addresses them promptly to keep them doing great. By keeping up with regular communication and offering constructive feedback, his colleagues for the most part perform

well and are not astonished by their evaluation results. Because he has communicated with them on a consistent basis about areas where they can improve, even individuals who receive the lowest band are convinced. His team has been more open and understanding as a result of this strategy (R4:24). Respondent 4 believes that the feedforward system should be actively utilized on a daily or at least weekly basis by managers and employees alike. The main issue is that the system is typically checked and updated only once every six months. Nonetheless, to guarantee successful execution, it is significant to screen and tracks progress consistently, including everyday exercises.

While talking about other systems, respondent 5 states that the system used by one of their clients assigns 25 tasks or goals to employees in a year, focusing on work-related activities and increasing productivity. Because employee information is connected to this system, easy access to information is made possible and transparency is encouraged. Administrators and more significant level bosses can screen a representative's advancement, and the actual framework decides the evaluation, despite the fact that directors can give remarks. The automatic recording of task completion as "Yes" or "No" reduces favouritism and eliminates the potential for management to manipulate objectives in their favour. These benefits highlight the client's system's superiority to our current one (R5:32).

5.5.2 Visibility and transparency

Respondent 1 states that employees who receive positive evaluations may find it motivating to display their performance band, tasks completed, and feedback to their co-workers; however, employees who receive negative evaluations and feedback may find it detrimental. However, it can be beneficial to provide transparency regarding the salary range and the percentage of salary increases based on performance band and company revenue. The ongoing absence of clearness in regards to pay and evaluation results can be demotivating, however, in the event that the framework can show the compensation range for each occupation level and the comparing level of pay increment for various execution groups, it would assist with staying away from variations and give lucidity. Additionally, transparency regarding salary and raise percentages, as well as publishing information about top performers, their accomplishments, and positive feedback, can contribute to employee satisfaction and comfort (R1:74).

Respondent 2 strongly believes that transparency would be enhanced by putting in place a system that provides clear banding criteria and evidence of employee performance over the past six months. Employees would be able to easily track their progress and demonstrate their remarkable accomplishments with such a system in place. This expanded straightforwardness would further develop the general evaluation process (R2:32).

Respondent 3 believes that banding would be based on individual performance rather than team dynamics. If a performance evaluation system were implemented in which outstanding performance is recognized for completing tasks before the allotted time and achieving cost savings, and performance that needs improvement is identified for incomplete tasks within the allotted timeframe. This approach permits workers to get groups as per their own presentation, no matter what group they are in. In addition, the system's visibility of each team member's tasks and feedback can clarify banding decisions and inspire individuals to strive for improved performance in the future. While the practicality of such a system may need to be considered, its transparency would make it easier to provide evidence and explanations for banding outcomes (R3:24).

As per Respondent 4 it is not recommended to share targets and feedback with peers at the same level in a transparent way. Because it may involve providing in-depth feedback on shortcomings and challenges encountered while carrying out tasks, it may result in negative outcomes. The employee is more likely to interpret the feedback positively when it is communicated one-on-one. However, if the employee receives feedback from others, it may have a negative impact on them. It is vital to try not to fault people before others and endeavour to keep a valuable and positive methodology in giving criticism (R4:48).

Respondent 5 believes that the organization's main flaw is the system's lack of transparency and stakeholders' limited involvement. In contrast to the client's system where higher management and the HR department are actively involved, in the system used by the respondent's organization only the line manager is responsible for updating scores, and there is no visibility into the process for others. This lack of transparency creates a disconnect between higher management and employees, leading to a less effective and less inclusive performance management process (R5:48).

5.5.3 Escalation

Respondent 2 claims that if employees are dissatisfied with their banding, they can challenge the decision and present their arguments. The records and proof for that presentation period can be introduced to the representative and, if fundamental, imparted to the HR office to additionally survey what is going on. During the review process, in addition to performance, other considerations include the employee's attitude, teamwork, and support provided outside of regular office hours (R2:34).

Respondent 4 believes that participating in the performance management system with the HR department can be helpful in reducing internal politics. It is possible for HR to concentrate on ensuring that performance evaluations are carried out impartially and fairly. HR can help reduce favouritism and bias by establishing clear guidelines and expectations and actively monitoring the process. Furthermore, advancing a culture of straightforwardness, open correspondence, and responsibility can deter political ways of behaving and advance a more impartial workplace (R4:62).

Respondent 5 thinks that issue is with the implementation and utilization of the performance management system rather than the system itself. In contrast with the client's system, there are contrasts in how goals are characterized and the degree of transparency. In contrast to the client, their organization only involves the line manager in the process, resulting in a lack of visibility and comprehension on the part of others. In order to address this issue, it might be beneficial to think about involving HR and upper management in the performance management process. This would promote transparency and help the organization as a whole gain a better understanding of how well its employees are performing (R5: 48).

Respondents are concerned that updates are not done frequently in the system, mostly completed during the last few days of the cycle and there is no option to check the validity of the targets. Respondents suggested a provision to escalate it to the senior manager where the line manager reports or involvement of the human resource department in case of an invalid or unachievable target is in the picture.

5.6 Roles to Improve Performance

Fitrio, Remofa, Hardi and Ismail (2023) states that employee performance can be improved by providing agile service quality accompanied by achievement motivation where employees work with appropriate competence and high commitment.

5.6.1 Additional activities

Respondent 1 feels like automating the task tracking process by integrating with other systems may be challenging and may not capture all the necessary tasks, especially those related to additional activities. It is frequently necessary to go above and beyond the tasks that have been assigned and take on additional responsibilities in order to excel and perform at a high level (R1:56).

Respondent 2 believes that it is essential to establish work-related goals that cannot be easily changed to suit the preferences of managers. These objectives ought to be obviously characterized in the system. If employees go above and beyond their assigned tasks, they can mention their additional achievements in the key results. In any case, it is critical to take note that employees shouldn't have the sole power to set their own objectives. In addition to the goals established by management, additional accomplishments should be taken into consideration, with an emphasis on the employee's quality of work (R2:36).

5.6.2 Regular communication

Respondent 3 emphasises the importance of effective communication and providing timely feedback which is crucial in the performance management process. If an employee realizes that a task was meant to be completed in 5 days but they were able to finish it in 3 days, it could have resulted in a better band for them. Employees are more satisfied with the evaluation process when feedback and clear communication assist them in understanding their performance and coordinating their efforts accordingly (R3:28).

As per Respondent 4, the method involved with putting forth objectives fluctuates relying upon the gig level and experience of the employee. There may be predetermined goals that are directly assigned to new employees. However, for experienced individuals, targets are discussed and established with seniors in light of the project's requirements. Goal-setting with superiors is common, but employees may be able to add additional objectives on their own occasion. Individual circumstances and job levels may influence the specific approach (R4:8). Respondent 4 believes that he has been successful in addressing the concerns of your team members regarding performance bands. He makes sure that everyone on his team knows what's going on and talk about the banding decisions with them, taking into account their points of view and coming to an agreement. His team's satisfaction has been high as a result of this strategy, and attrition rates have been low as a result. The majority of departures were caused by personal choices like higher education or location constraints (R4:18). Respondent 4 never springs surprises on his team members when it comes to their performance evaluation. Unlike others who set targets for six months and then suddenly announce at the end of the period that their performance didn't meet expectations, he adopts an alternate strategy. He keeps them informed of their progress at all times, ensuring that they are aware of whether or not they need to make any adjustments. He believes in keeping them well-informed to avoid any unexpected revelations during the appraisal meeting. He gives them feedback and direction on

a regular basis, rather than waiting until the end, to keep them on track without being harsh. This way, even if he has to give a member of the team a lower band, they will understand and accept it because he has always talked to them about things they can do better. A team member who received the lowest band (band 1) has even been persuaded of the fairness and validity of the evaluation process by this strategy (R4:24).

Respondent 4 suggests a few steps to ensure proper implementation of frequent feedback and interaction without surprises. To begin, the procedure ought to include a provision for setting goals with realistic deadlines based on their achievability, such as a day, week, month, or year. This makes it easier to match realistic deadlines with expectations. Furthermore, giving input ought to be an individual decision, yet it ought to be done consistently. The nature of the work and the employee's performance toward the goal may influence the frequency of feedback. However, it is essential for managers to provide employees with the necessary time and resources to achieve their goals and to provide feedback when an employee is not performing as expected. It's crucial that the assigned work and the given targets are complementary to each other. For instance, if an employee is tasked with automation but is also given a target that requires nine hours of work, it won't be mutually beneficial or feasible. In conclusion, the most important things are to set goals that everyone can agree on, give regular feedback, and make sure the work that is given matches the goals (R4:38).

Respondents would like to add features in the performance management system which value additional activities performed and mandates regular communication.

5.7 Summary of Discussion

In summary, there are different ways to make the performance management system more effective by improving planning, approach and roles. Our theme is closely related to a combination of goal-setting and control theories since the determining factor is the content of performance goals, their execution, continuously monitoring actions and their results and comparing it with goals that have been set. A two-directional or 360-degree approach instead of a top-down model is recommended for career planning. Removing the bell curve rule, and implementing processes to eradicate decisions made without consent improves the managerial approach. The provision to mandate frequently updating the system and adding visibility and transparency with the provision to escalate makes the performance management system more interactive. All these factors will have a huge impact on the appraisal directly reflecting in the performance banding, salary increment and promotion which will lead to improved employee satisfaction. The figure 5.7.1 below shows the conceptual framework of performance management system for improved employee satisfaction.
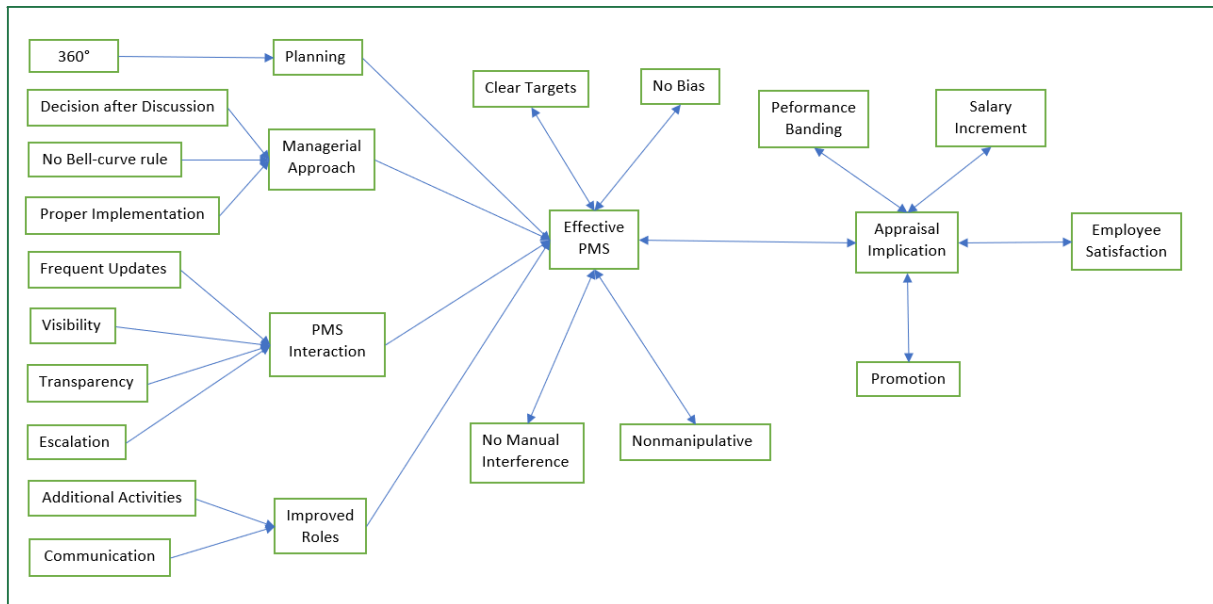
Figure 5.7.2: Conceptual framework of PMS

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, organizations must improve their employee performance management system if they want to increase overall performance and employee satisfaction. The purpose of this case study was to investigate the options for enhancing the performance management system and maximizing employee satisfaction.

Numerous important aspects have been identified as potential areas for improvement through extensive research and analysis. First, effective goal setting is essential, ensuring that targets are realistic, aligned with organizational objectives, and mutually agreed upon. Regular feedback and communication play a pivotal role, providing employees with timely and constructive input on their performance and facilitating ongoing dialogue to address concerns or areas for improvement.

Transparency and fairness within the performance management system are also critical. The evaluation criteria, performance expectations, and the effect of performance on rewards and promotions should all be clear to employees. Furthermore, perceiving and compensating for outstanding performance can act as a strong inspiration, supporting positive ways of behaving and encouraging a culture of appreciation.

Besides, a supportive and collaborative managerial approach is essential for enhancing the performance management system. Managers ought to give direction, resources, and open doors for development and advancement, establishing a climate that energizes consistent learning and improvement. Employee engagement and a sense of purpose can also be enhanced by aligning individual goals with organizational objectives.

In conclusion, strategies that emphasize effective goal setting, regular feedback and communication, transparency, fairness, recognition, and supportive managerial practices can improve employee performance management systems. Organizations can create a positive and productive work environment that maximizes individual and collective performance by prioritizing employee satisfaction through these enhancements. It is suggested that additional research and empirical studies be conducted to confirm the efficacy of these strategies and investigate additional strategies for continuously improving employee performance management systems.

6.1 Future Research

Enhancing employee performance management systems can be the subject of additional research that can investigate a variety of avenues to enhance our comprehension and identify additional improvement strategies. The following are some potential areas for future study:

Technology's impact: Examining the job of innovation in enhancing performance management systems, such as the use of digital platforms, data analytics, and AI-driven tools for goal tracking, feedback collection, and performance evaluation. Grasping the advantages, difficulties, and best practices related to integrating technology into performance management can provide valuable insights.

Cross-cultural perspectives: Examining how performance management systems can be successfully adjusted and customized to various social settings. This study can look into how

cultural norms, values, and expectations affect performance management practices and find culturally sensitive ways for enhancing employee satisfaction.

Comparative analysis: comparing the efficacy of various performance management strategies, such as individual-based evaluations versus team-based evaluations or traditional annual reviews versus continuous feedback models. Insights into the advantages and disadvantages of various performance management strategies can be gained by comparing the outcomes and levels of employee satisfaction associated with various approaches.

Organizations can learn more about how to continuously improve their performance management systems to increase employee satisfaction and overall performance by addressing these research areas.

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

1. Thank you for the discussion. May we use your company name, or do you wish to stay anonymous?
2. Do you mind if we record this interview?
3. What is your background and education?
4. What is your professional title?
5. What are your Role and Responsibilities in the organisation?
6. What prior experience do you have with Employee Performance Management Systems?
7. How many peers do you have in your team reporting to the same manager as you do?
8. How many employees report to you as a manager?
9. Feedback occurs once a year or twice in a year or once in a quarter?
10. Is the feedback process 360 degrees?
11. Are you satisfied with your performance evaluation or assessment last year? Explain?
12. Were there instances in which you were satisfied with the evaluation one time and not the other time? What were the differences?
13. What are the drawbacks of the existing tool of employee performance management system?
14. What do you suggest to improve the existing system?
15. Are the tasks assigned to you directly reflected in the system or tasks to perform are assigned in another system?
16. Do you mind if your peers know about your tasks and their performance evaluation?
17. Would you like to know your peers' tasks and their performance evaluation?
18. Do you know any other organisation having a better system for managing employee performance assessment? What makes it better according to you?
19. Do you see any loopholes in the existing system? How do you think it can be rectified?
20. Do you justify ranking or performance-banding employees in the team? Why or why not?
21. If not, what do you suggest instead of a ranking system?
22. What are the criteria for promotion in this existing system? Are you satisfied with it? Why or why not?
23. If not, what do you suggest for better criteria for promotion?
24. Do you know the salary increment processes involved with this system? Are you satisfied with it? Why or why not?
25. If not, what do you suggest for a better salary hike distribution?
26. Do you suggest any other factors that motivate an employee other than salary hike, promotion, awards and recognition?

27. What do you suggest to include in the performance management system for better employee satisfaction and productivity

Appendix 2: Interview Transcript Respondent 1

Row	Person	Text	Code
1	I	May I know your education background?	
2	R1	I did masters in computer application	
3	I	Ok, what is your designation now in your current organisation?	
4	R1	I am a senior technical architect	
5	I	Can you give me a brief about your roles and responsibilities in this designation	
6	R1	I am managing two systems, one a SharePoint and another an R&D for RPA like doing a POC and making different project team capable in using it	
7	I	Ok, are you still involved in the developing or coding part?	
8	R1	Yes, still doing A to Z from R&D to deployment	
9	I	Ok, so you are doing from a business analyst role to testing?	
10	R1	Yes, don't have much support now, not through the correct process with documentation and all	
11	I	Ok, how many peers do you have? Like the number of people reporting to your manager?	
12	R1	There are 12 people including me reporting to my manager	
13	I	Ok, and how many are reporting to you?	
14	R1	Only one	
15	I	Ok, have you used employee performance management systems in other companies before this?	
16	R1	Yes, I was working with another company 10 years ago. But I don't remember the details of it now	+PM
17	I	ok	
18	R1	I think it is similar to this one only. But recently only a new concept called OKR has been introduced	
19	I	OKR stands for Objectives and Key Results, right?	
20	R1	I think Objectives and Key responsibilities	

21	I	Ok, how frequent is the feedback?	
22	R1	Now it's twice in a year, every six months	
23	I	So salary revision happens twice in a year?	
24	R1	No, salary revision happens only once	
25	I	Ok, Is there a 360-degree feedback happening?	
26	R1	No, feedback is happening downwards, which means from top to bottom only, not with peers and managers	-FU
27	I	Ok, were you satisfied with the performance evaluation last time?	
28	R1	Yes, last time was good	+ES
29	I	Ok, was there any time you were not satisfied?	
30	R1	Yes, there were instances in which I was not satisfied	-ES
31	I	Ok, what do you see as the main difference between those two evaluations?	
32	R1	We will not be satisfied if we didn't get the banding according to the work we did, we will only be satisfied if we get the band that we deserve	
33	I	Ok, the banding is like far exceeds expectation, exceeds expectation, good, often meets expectation and needs improvement, right? And some percentage of employees has to fall in each category	
34	R1	Yes, don't know the exact percentage for each category, but there is a bell curve for this	
35	I	So there is a forceful segregation, which is a limitation right?	
36	R1	Yes, it is a limitation, especially for a small team. Suppose there are only 2 or 3 people in a team. There is a chance that all of them are performing well. But still, the management has to forcefully give different bands for them to meet the bell curve, which is a limitation	
37	I	Since only one person is reporting to you, you can give that person any band, right?	
38	R1	There is a concept called approver. I am providing that person's feedback to my manager and he is the approver of many such teams and he is the one deciding which band for each based on the different feedback received applying the bell curve	

39	I	What is your opinion about different levels of evaluation, one from recommender and another approver? Is it good or bad?	
40	R1	The new ERP doesn't have a concept like this hierarchy. But the feedforward (EPMS) is still going through the old way	
41	I	Is it not good reporting to only one person rather than multiple?	
42	R1	Sharing the management responsibilities may be good but in the concept of feedforward, it is always better being reporting to just one. If it's a huge team, it will be difficult in that case. I think that is when these multiple levels have introduced	
43	I	Ok, but still, it is better to classify to small teams and one manager deciding the band for all team members	
44	R1	Yes, but the bell curve is applying at a larger team level	+BC
45	I	Ok, do you feel any drawbacks in the current feedforward system?	
46	R1	The OKR concept is good, but the system is not capable of assessing the band based on quantifying the tasks and performance. And the chance for manipulating it with favouritism is still there in the system	-PS +FM
47	I	Ok, do you see any way to limit this favouritism?	
48	R1	The advantage of this OKR system brought by the HR team is that it is open throughout the year. Objectives can have multiple subcategories and employees can add comments or update it once in a day or week or maybe even once in a month is also good. Evaluating these frequently will be better than doing all of this at the end of the year. But people rarely use it that way effectively, mostly due to laziness and that becomes an advantage for managers. This system should be utilised with maximum automation like these key results of objectives to be automatically updated with very limited inputs from employees. Time is an important factor, and the time an employee took to complete a task can be automatically taken from the system or can monitor the amount of code produced, the number of bugs removed etc are all available in the system and with all these inputs an automated system evaluates the performance, there won't be much scope for an argument	
49	I	Ok, so the tasks assigned is not available in this system, it's in another system	
50	R1	Yes, this system contains generic goals to achieve	+MP

51	I	So is it not better to put the detailed tasks here in this system itself so that manager can evaluate the performance of each task right there which doesn't allow for a manipulation as it does for a generic goal	
52	R1	Yes, but there are tasks that are not technical as well and some has multiple small tasks like testing a user story etc which can become in multiple hundreds for 6 months and that will be difficult to maintain. Hence this kind of briefing to avoid evaluating hundreds of tasks, summarising it to a goal like closing this many tickets, fixing these many bugs etc.	
53	I	Ok, but I think even if there are hundreds of small tasks, evaluating each and every small task will show more clarity	
54	R1	Yes, but need to update each task with start date, end date, notes etc and doing this for hundreds of tasks will be tedious	
55	I	Ok, but won't it be ok if there is no other system to manage tasks and only this, then it'll be manageable I guess	
56	R1	Yes, I heard there are systems which automatically picks the tasks and its details from other systems, but think it'll be complicated to implement. Even then it won't be complete. There are other tasks which are part of extra activities. To become an outstanding performer, we need to do tasks beyond what we are assigned.	
57	I	Ok, what I thought to become an outstanding performer is that, when we complete a task in, say 3 days, in which the tasks were supposed to be completed in 5 days. That is an example of outstanding performance.	
58	R1	Yes, but if there are 10 members in the team and all these 10 members performed this way, we cannot give the outstanding band to all the 10	
59	I	Yes, it is an issue that even if all the 10 members in the team are performing well, still there will be few members assigned with needs improvement performance band	
60	R1	Yes, because of the bell curve	+BC
61	I	Yes, don't you think this bell curve is outdated?	
62	R1	Many companies are still following this bell curve. I think the companies cannot execute their budget and salary hike without such a bell curve	+BC
63	I	The budget for salary hike can be distributed evenly also right. If everyone performs well, everyone gets an equal salary hike	

64	R1	But I don't think that will stop people from leaving the current company. Most of the employees want a salary hike more than the others. Should get as per the industry standard. If an employee keeps getting a salary hike of say 5%, consistently for 10 years, his salary will be half in comparison with a person who joined this company after working in 3-4 different companies in these 10 years. This can't be compared.	
65	I	But isn't there a concept called normalisation, the process which makes the salary of employees at the same level almost similar in the coming years with marginal difference in percentage	
66	R1	Ok, we can understand whether this is advantageous or not only after implementing since different people think in a different way	
67	I	Ok, but the main reason for attrition is when people think that they don't get what they deserve. right?	
68	R1	That is one case. But due to the inflation going up, people prefer to join another company bargaining the salary than just receiving the hike in the current company	
69	I	Ok, do you see any way to stop that mentality?	
70	R1	Other than monetary benefits, options are to improve work-life balance, team comfort etc. If one is not satisfied with all these, then that could be the reason for leaving the current one. But the primary concern is monetary benefits only. Companies are trying their best for maximum profit using minimum resources. A little bit of socialism can improve employee satisfaction.	
71	I	Do you have any suggestions to improve job satisfaction by modifying the existing EPMS?	
72	R1	Rewards and recognition when completing challenging tasks are one kind of motivation. But the system to derive the complication of the task and whether the employee deserves a reward for completing it within a limited time is all debatable. Remuneration is an important factor. Don't know how the system can be capable to evaluate the effort put in by an employee and pointing towards the deserved band	-MN
73	I	Ok, what is your opinion on showing the performance band of an employee, the tasks performed by that employee, the feedback received for each task etc to peers of the team. Will that be a motivation?	

74	R1	It is ok for employees who got a good band and feedback but it can affect negatively those who got a poor band and feedback. But there is one thing that can be done is, if an employee in a job level gets a particular performance band, then this is the range of salary hike they are going to get. Such kind of transparency will be better. Now people are clueless about what they get, even after getting a band, got a hike which is less than another who got a band less than mine. Things like these are also demotivating. If it is clear that this is the salary range one is going to get for a specific band and it is visible to all, everyone will work towards getting that salary change to get reflected. What happens now is, people are not sure what they get even when they get the best band. Clarity like this is the salary range an employee in this job level gets, this is the salary hike % an employee will get for different bands as per the revenue generated by the company in the year if the system has the capability to show all these factors, it would avoid disparity. This kind of transparency will be good. Right now, it's a black box, there is no clarity now. I'll be more satisfied if there is some clarity. Publishing the top performing employees, about the tasks they performed, positive feedback received, and publishing details like salary range for each job level and hike % for each band etc will make employees more comfortable and satisfied I believe.	
75	I	Ok, is the process for promotion to the next job level decided by the EPMS?	
76	R1	No, it's the manager's decision based on some manual criteria. But it also cannot be justified if the salary is not reflected along with the promotion. Salary, band, promotion all these are not mapped, that is the issue. Each LOB (line of business unit) has also control over these numbers. That is another reason for messing all these again. LOB has a limit on these hike percentages. In order to satisfy a few critical resources, have to make others unsatisfied.	
77	I	Manual interventions are the root cause of these problems, right?	
78	R1	Yes, if these numbers are fixed in the system and LOBs manual decisions don't matter, can avoid lots of confusion	
79	I	Ok, any closing words	
80	R1	Making the process as systematic as possible will be good so that one-to-one discussion is of no point. Managers schedule a one-to-one discussion after making the decisions. There is no point in defending at that time. But if the system shows that the manager has updated the task with feedback any time before making the decisions, there is always a chance to discuss	-PS -FU

		and convince the reason. This system should be something frequently updated, not once in 6 months or so.	
81	I	Ok, so improving the frequency of updating, visibility and transparency on certain factors are all keys for a better system	
82	R1	Yes, that is what I feel	-FU
83	I	Ok, thank you so much for sharing all these valuable information and time with me. Thank you very much	
84	R1	No problem.	

Appendix 3: Interview Transcript Respondent 2

Row	Person	Text	Code
1	I	May I know your educational background?	
2	R2	I did a Master's in Computer Science.	
3	I	Ok, what is your designation now in your current organisation?	
4	R2	I am a Senior Test Analyst.	
5	I	Can you give me a brief about your roles and responsibilities in this designation?	
6	R2	I am managing a team of 7-8 people and assisting them to come up with a solution.	
7	I	Ok, are you reviewing the work of the team members?	
8	R2	Yes, managing the team, reviewing their work, clearing their doubts, doing estimation, providing feedback and conducting their feedforward every six months.	+PM
9	I	Ok, even if you are conducting a feedforward process every six months, does that end up in salary hikes and promotions?	
10	R2	Yes, we are setting targets and providing feedback every six months, but salary hikes and promotions are considered on a yearly basis.	
11	I	Could you please provide details about your previous companies before joining this organization?	
12	R2	Yes, before joining this company, I was working with another company for almost a year.	
13	I	Did you have a similar reviewing process of performance there?	
14	R2	No. There was no review system in that organization. They used to provide a letter from the manager if there is any hike in our salary. It was not a big team so most of the communications were done face to face. In the present organisation, we have different approaches like bell curve etc.	
15	I	The Bell curve process is important and we need to talk about it in detail at a later point in this interview.	
16	R2	Talking about the bell curve, there is an ongoing issue happening in our office. One of my team members who is reporting to me is leaving our project and joining another in our company itself. That	+BC

		employee was the best-performing candidate who had the best score among our team. Since he is leaving our project, I have pressure from the manager to reduce his score and give the highest score to some other employee who is staying in our project itself. I can't do that because I am aware of his hard work and the quality of his work. If I reduce the score as per the manager, it will affect my credibility and I am answerable to his questions. But now my manager is asking to give a report about this employee's previous track records which I already submitted and he is not happy with that. He is deliberately finding reasons to reduce the score.	
17	I	Yes, our plan is to concentrate on such issues.	
18	R2	There is clearly partiality from the side of managers. They always want to favour their people in the team even if they are underperforming. The reason behind the person leaving the project is this favouritism. The manager wanted to make his life difficult in the new project also.	+FM
19	I	How many people are reporting to you?	
20	R2	There are eight people reporting to me.	
21	I	And as you said, you are reporting to your line manager (Name mentioned), right?	
22	R2	Yes, that is correct.	
23	I	How many people are reporting to your line manager?	
24	R2	There are four people reporting to my line manager.	
25	I	So, for the eight people reporting to you, you are deciding the band of their performance?	
26	R2	Yes. I am deciding on the band for their performance. But once I submit the report my manager is asking me to change it as per the information from the HR department. But I am sure that it is his decision but we want to put it on HR. I can give higher bands to all of my team members if they are performing well. There is no compulsion on me to give different bands technically. There are targets and goals upon which we decide the bands of each team member. Saying this, most of the goals are unachievable and can be manipulated easily. My manager can easily interfere with my report and make corrections for their favourite team member. In my opinion, the targets are not properly defined. Managers can always change the definition according to their wish if they need to give someone a lower or higher band. Suppose let us take innovation as an example. Managers can argue if I say something as an innovative step from any of the team members and vice versa.	+UT +FM -WD

27	I	So, you are saying like the targets can be easily manipulated as per the wish of a manager. Correct?	
28	R2	Yes. Exactly. (Smiles)	-WD
29	I	So what is your opinion about putting the tasks we give to the team members for the feedforward process other than giving such random targets and rating the key results?	
30	R2	That would be the ideal scenario. The work we are doing for the client should be the target. The generic targets are making the team nervous and they don't know how to achieve those. If you make the tasks we do as the target it will be more clear and encouraging for the team members. Even I feel difficulty in explaining the targets to the team if they are coming up with doubts. We can't blame them. I always felt the targets given to the employees are not realistic. When I ask managers, they say that is the point of the target (Smiles). It can be manipulated easily.	-WD
31	I	So you feel like, for example- we need to put the work done on feedforward as a review for bell curve banding? Scoring will depend upon the bugs he or she was able to fix and which are detected by the client after the release.	
32	R2	Yes exactly. Then the employee will be clear about the banding criteria and we will have all the evidence to show them for the past six months. They should be able to prove to the manager that they have done something remarkable and, in this case, it is easy to track. This will make the process more transparent than what we are doing right now.	-WR
33	I	All employees have the right to challenge the decision after providing a band, right?	
34	R2	Absolutely. Since we have all the records for that period, we can explain to the employee if he challenges the low banding. These records can be given to the HR department if we feel the arguments from the employee is correct. The attitude of employees is another criterion we are considering. If he is not a team player the banding will be on the lower side. The support given by the employees after office time is also considered in the review process.	
35	I	Ok. So paraphrasing what you told, you feel it is better to give work-related targets than provide targets which can be easily manipulated according to the requirements of the managers.	
36	R2	Absolutely. That is what I am talking about. That should be in the system as targets. If the employee has done something extra than his/her work, they can mention that in the key results. There should be an option for that like an extra target or achievement. Being said that employees cant decide their targets. I am mentioning the	-WR

		additional ones after meeting the targets set by the management which is related to the quality of the work done by the employee.	
37	I	Suppose one of your employees has completed work early which was supposed to be finished at a later stage, will that be considered outstanding while banding?	
38	R2	We can't decide this in such one instance. If he is doing that on a regular basis, definitely it will be considered. But there are other factors also to be considered like the attitude of that employee with other teammates, quality of work etc. For example, there was an employee like this before who used to finish all the work before the deadline and do nothing after finishing that work. That employee used to leave office before time and it didn't leave a good impression on the management. So what I am saying is there are different factors to be considered while deciding whether an employee falls in an outstanding band. An employee who is a team player rather than a high-performing employee who is not may end up in a higher band in our organization.	
39	I	Ok. Before ending this interview, I need to get your opinion on the bell curve approach and what changes you want to make it a better system.	
40	R2	The problem with the bell curve is two employees within a band are considered equal. For example, one who is on the lower side and one on the higher side of the same band are considered as equals. This will be okay with the employee on the lower side but not for the one on the higher side. The problem arises when some of the team members are appreciated and others are not. They may be ok if none are appreciated. And by appreciation, I mean salary hikes, promotions, special mention at team meetings etc. Apart from these, I feel like the system is ok, but we need to use it properly.	+BC -MN +PS -FP
41	I	Ok, thank you so much for your valuable information and time with me. Thank you once again.	

Appendix 4: Interview Transcript Respondent 3

Row	Person	Text	Code
1	I	May I know your current designation and role	
2	R3	I am a Program Manager, currently doing a product implementation at customer site	
3	I	Ok, since you are very senior and experienced, you can start by explaining the whole process in performance management	
4	R3	Our system to manage employee performance is called feedforward. We add some objectives to it twice a year. Then we define key results against each objective. When we perform that key areas, can say that we meet the objectives. The objective is to follow a top-down model. It means the chairman of the company has an objective. That is provided as the objective to the CEO of the company who is reporting to him. CEO divides the objective and gives it to different heads of each line of the business unit (LOB). To give an example, the objective of the chairman may be to increase the revenue from 500 million to 1 billion. That will be the objective given to the CEO. Nothing else is necessary. CEO can plan and work on achieving this. CEO divides this and provides it to different LOB heads. And the last employee in the downstream will be getting a portion of that. This top-down approach is how it is designed for objectives and KR flow. This is the approach most of companies might follow. There can be minor differences in the flavour. Basically, the aim is to how a company can achieve its goal and for that what the employee should do. Ours is a product company. There is no point in giving a goal like studying the design pattern to an employee. The employee should learn the design pattern which is useful for the industry the company is in. Most of the companies will be doing like this. But others might be doing it in a different way, a different way of executing it. The purpose is how the company reaches its goal with the employees' contribution. Employees who contribute more get more benefits. In our industry, there are people who get double promotions because of their performance. And there are also cases where employees didn't get promotions even after working at the same level for many years. I see it as an advantage in the private industry. An average-performing employee cannot grow upwards. From the employees' point of view, they should be looking at how to improve their careers. That is one aspect. Even though all this is well designed, I feel that the execution is mostly a failure. Because most of the people update the system at the last moment. Even though they get the objectives six months before, they fill in with their inputs at the time of evaluation by recollecting what they have done in the last six months. That is why I doubt the effectiveness of the	+PM

		execution. So, what I feel is, a performance cycle should have a defined plan. The employee should execute that plan. The plan should be assigned through this feed-forward system. The employee just needs to execute that. Suppose I am a software engineer and the career plan for the software engineer for the next 3 years shall be there. For example, the employee may need to do coding for 3 sprints. After that, the employee may need to attend training. This should be defined in the system and the employee and the manager should be aware of this whole plan. And after the training, employees will be doing work with what learned from the training. This way, a plan for career improvement and an evaluation cycle should be there. Otherwise, this system will be like any other tool which is to feed what we do. Then we all demand that we conduct interim reviews, but it is rarely effective. The objectives written in the appraisal cycle, most of the employees won't even check in 12 months. Will check once it is inserted and once when filled with comments. This system should be like a work-assigning tool. Otherwise, this won't be effective. This is my view.	
5	I	May I know how many employees are reporting to you?	
6	R3	Since I am managing an implementation now, most of the people are reporting virtually to me. They may not be reporting to me according to the organisational structure. After the implementation, they will go back to their old team. As o, there are around 15 people reporting to me for this implementation. And I have provided their objectives for this cycle since they are working for me in this cycle.	
7	I	Ok. So, their reporting manager for them in the system is not you.	
8	R3	Right, but I only provide their feedback to their manager, for the part they work for me. Their old manager might have given other objectives but I don't interfere in that since I don't know how they performed on those tasks. I'll add some specific objectives according to my requirement of their expected work additionally and I evaluate that only	
9	I	But the objectives are like a generic statement, not a clear-cut definition, right?	
10	R3	That is why there is a key resource area against objectives, which is more clearly defined. Objectives can't be clearly defined. That is an issue. But there can be many KRA for an objective. For example, a KRA for me is to deliver customer-satisfied products at a client site. This is not something that can be done alone by myself. The development team needs to develop this. The requirement should be very clear before starting development. So, there will be KRA for BAs (Business Analysts) regarding requirement gathering. There will be KRA for developers. KRA for me can be achieved only if these KRAs are achieved. So, objectives is like a	-WD

		summary of KRAs and it will be difficult if there are no small achievable goals as KRA against an objective.	
11	I	But there is another tool for assigning tasks like completing the development in 5 days. Why can't the same task be put here in this feed-forward system instead of there?	
12	R3	Putting all the tasks exactly here is close to impossible. Not practical in the software industry. But what we can do instead is set a goal like complete all the development within the estimated effort. So just need to verify all epics/stories are completed within the estimated time. We just need to put quantifiable KRAs there in the system. The appraiser has to verify each and every development task whether the employee completed in the estimated time frame and then only the appraiser can comment on whether the employee meets the expectation. Developers can put comments like have completed all the development tasks within the estimated time and can mention if a task is completed before the time allocated, can say reduced the cost by saving some time etc. but the KRA for me cannot be treated like this. Implement the product in six months at the customer site and if it is completed after 8 months, that means I didn't meet the criteria. But there is a provision to explain with a reason. Maybe the estimation has changed during this time period or the quality of the delivery was not good, the development team is responsible for it. So, my manager can take a call about who actually is responsible for the time and act upon it. This is all that I can say about this whole process.	+MP
13	I	Ok, let me ask another question about performance banding. Isn't there a force segregation of banding to the team by outstanding, excellent, good, meet the expectation and needs improvement, no matter how well the team is performing	
14	R3	Yes, it is called a curve rule. This bell curve rule is there in most companies. There is a thumb rule behind this bell curve rule. If there are 100 people working in a company, all 100 of them cannot be the best in performing. That is applicable here as well. A person who is performing best and a person who is performing lazily cannot be treated the same way. So doing a comparison and identifying who is performing best, better, good etc is a task for the manager. And the percentage for each band depends on the company. They can decide based on their revenue and growth. There will be differences in implementing that in a product company and in a services company. Outstanding performers in product companies will be mostly below 10%. It is actually a good thing, but hard to justify. 8 out of 10 people can be justified but for the remaining 2, it is unjustifiable.	+BC
15	I	Yes, imagine a classroom of 40 students. According to this rule, all students passing out from this class is impossible. right?	

16	R3	Yes, the probability of everyone scoring 100% is next to impossible.	
17	I	Agree. But the student who got the least marks in comparison with the other 39 students, assume that the student still got 85% marks, still that student is failed the class even after scoring 85% marks	
18	R3	Yes, performance evaluation in the IT industry is not like grading students in school. If there is a team with all members who are high performing, then it is highly probable that there is another team with all members who are low performing. The fundamental thing to be done is to distribute this team evenly. Otherwise, it won't get balanced.	+PM
19	I	But assume a situation where a manager cautiously makes a team of high-performing employees and still during the evaluation after 1 year or so, forcefully gives a low band just because of this rule. Any solution for this?	
20	R3	There is a flip side also. Assume a team of all low-performing employees. Even then the manager is forced to find one who is better when compared with others in the team and needs to give a good band even for a low performer in that case.	
21	I	Yes, so isn't this rule outdated? And why is not possible that employees to add the tasks in the system instead of objectives and KRAs? they are adding all the tasks they are doing daily and weekly etc. supervisor just needs to validate those.	
22	R3	There are some companies that follow this. But the problem with this is that it is difficult to classify according to the band based on evaluating a task. We cannot say that if a person completes a task, it was an outstanding performance. If that person completed a task, that means the person just met the expectation.	
23	I	Ok, but if the person completes the task before the allotted time, saving cost etc, then it can be classified as an outstanding band. Similarly, if a person didn't complete the task in the allotted time, can mark that valuation as needing improvement. This way, it does not matter if all the members of the team are high performers or low performers. Everyone gets the band according to the way they perform no matter which team they are in. and also, employees who got a low band probably won't be happy with that result. They may not be satisfied and ask why they didn't get a good band, or why other members got a good band. If the tasks of each of the members with feedback are available in the system, visible and transparent, they'll have an idea about the reason for their and others' band which can be a reason for motivation to perform better next time.	

24	R3	Yes, that is true. Don't know how practical that could be. But it will be easy to prove if it is transparent.	-TY
25	I	Do you have any solution or suggestion to improve employee satisfaction using this system?	
26	R3	Employees should understand why they got that band. If the feedback is genuine, they'll be probably satisfied with the result. Just doing the task assigned will only make them get to meet the expectation band. To get an outstanding band, they need to go beyond their call of duty.	+GF
27	I	Yes, if the person came to know that a task was to be completed in 5 days, if it would have been completed in 3 days, would have got a better band	
28	R3	Yes, giving the right feedback is very important. If the employee is convinced with the provided feedback, then most will be convinced with the band as well and hence will be satisfied. So communication is the key.	
29	I	Ok, thank you very much for spending this much time with me.	
30	R3	It's ok.	

Appendix 5: Interview Transcript Respondent 4

Row	Person	Text	Code
1	I	May I know your current designation and responsibilities?	
2	R4	Senior technical architect. Responsible for AWS migration of our legacy product. So the migration of existing customers and implementation for new customers. I am managing the high level of infrastructure, pipelining, automation etc.	
3	I	How are the tasks assigned? Through a feedforward system or any other tool?	
4	R4	Task is assigned through another tool called Jira.	+MP
5	I	Can you give a brief overview of using the feedforward system?	
6	R4	Feedforward happens twice a year. There are options to set goals for a quarter, half-year or year. Appraisal sessions are to be carried out twice a year mandatorily.	
7	I	The goals were given to you, can it only be by your superior you can add additionally?	
8	R4	Yes, even I can add. Basically, targets will be set after discussing them with us. But it depends. No need to discuss this with a newly joined fresher. There will be a defined target for them. That will be given as it is. But with experienced people, what is expected will be discussed from the project perspective. So, the discussion is there with seniors. So it is different for different job levels. According to the employee's job level, the target is decided.	
9	I	Ok, so only the targets discussed can be added to the system. In case you have done an extra task, would you be able to add that too?	
10	R4	I can say it is an achievement in the system. Target is something which is expected from me and any additional thing can be updated as an achievement. The thing I do additionally is only my target, not the company. Personal goals and company goals can be different. For example, if I want to move to the business side, learning the domain is my target. But as per the company's target, I may need to do automation. So it depends.	
11	I	Ok, can the targets provided be manipulative?	
12	R4	There is a rule that the target should be clear and specific. It is not supposed to put a generic target. For example, no bugs are expected	+WD

		in this cycle. This kind of target is not supposed to be set. Even the company HR suggested adding specific targets.	
13	I	But there are other projects where this kind of generic targets are set it seems	
14	R4	Maybe. There can be deviations. Ideally, it is expected to be clear. We say and follow that. We set achievable and defined targets. Both what I receive and what I give.	
15	I	Ok, around how many targets will be there in a quarter?	
16	R4	About 4 to 6 for a quarter on average. There are different categories for targets. One could be behavioural. One could be to upskill our technical ability. One could be to improve the existing knowledge. So there can be 3 to 4 different categories as well. That is why there are so many targets.	
17	I	Have you ever felt that you didn't get the performance banding you deserved?	
18	R4	I never felt this problem personally. But there are cases I heard. I always got outstanding or band 5 which I think I deserve it. My team members also never felt this problem I believe. I gave them what they deserve. When I give them the band, I don't put it from my view only. I'll discuss it with them and I give the band when they agree. Throughout my entire career, I have given a band to my team members which they are convinced of. That is why not so many attritions in my team. People left my team only when they want to go for higher studies and location constraints.	+ES
19	I	How many employees are reporting to you?	
20	R4	5. I decide the targets for them and I decide the band to be given.	
21	I	Ok, so my question is, it is not possible to give an outstanding band for all the 5 members. There is a restriction. right?	
22	R4	Yes, we cannot give everyone the same band. We are not saying one is good and the other is bad. We are just comparing and rating according to their performance.	
23	I	But isn't there a situation where you are forced to give the lowest band to at least one?	
24	R4	Only once I have given one member the lowest band. The rest of the time, I didn't have to give anyone the lowest band. The reason is, I never give my team any surprises. This means I give targets for all and after 6 months, all of a sudden, I am saying your performance is not up to the expectation. You didn't do this and that. I never do that. That is the main difference I do. I update them on their status constantly. So there is no surprise in the appraisal	+FU +TY

		meeting. I ensure they know whether they are on the right track or not. If there is anything to be corrected, I inform them as quickly as possible. So that they also don't get deviated. So usually, they will be on the right track. Usually, what others do is they give the targets for 6 months and at the end of the 6 months they will give a band according to their performance and the manager explains the reason for that band which may sound surprising to the members. This is not happening in my team because I constantly give them feedback. I try my best to help them to be on track without much criticising. So even if say to one that your band is low this time, they'll also be convinced since I have constantly communicated with them for improvement. Even a member who got band 1 was also convinced.	
25	I	There is a limitation that only this much % of employees shall fall in this band and all. Have you faced any such difficulties like giving an inappropriate band due to this constraint?	
26	R4	I usually recommend the exact band they deserve to HR. sometimes HR comes back saying it is not possible. There are instances where I fight hard that I cannot change the band since they are well deserving and I won the fight. And there are instances where huge pressure from the top that it is not possible at all and I have to compare them again to find out who is better than the other and gave a band accordingly.	
27	I	Won't that person have got dissatisfied due to that?	
28	R4	Yes, there was dissatisfaction with the person who got downgraded. But explained the reason by showing the comparison. Convinced that there is a valid reason why the other one is not selected for downgrading. It's like the second rank holder is disappointed that the other one got the first rank, but the valid reason first rank holder has more marks than the second rank holder, so there is no dispute. That way, we convince the employees why we gave the other person a better band than you.	-ES
29	I	Instead of saying first rank and second rank, what if we are saying both have got grade A, like in the education system	
30	R4	But competition is very important in the company. A company cannot work in a socialist way. They all joined the company after performing well in the interview. Now they will perform better only if there is healthy competition. If there is no competition everyone may underperform	
31	I	If one underperforms, they will lower grade. Is there a way to avoid forceful segregation inside the same grade question	
32	R4	We are not ranking all employees. We are grading only. Instead of grades A, B etc, we are just using the terms band 5, 4 etc.	

33	I	Ok, so banding is kind of grading only.	
34	R4	Definitely. That is what we do.	
35	I	So, you are saying there is no scope for improvement in banding.	
36	R4	What I am saying is the process is right, but the way people implement might be wrong. The problem is most managers, what they do is, they surprise their employees with a rating and banding. That is the issue. What I understand is, if 100 people are leaving the company, 65 of them are leaving because of this issue with their manager. The rest of the majority are leaving may be because of their salary concern. I am talking about those who are settled. Freshers definitely will leave for better remuneration. Once settled, the most reason for leaving is their manager only. There might be many small issues, but all explode at the time of appraisal. So, the system is not the problem. The way the people implement is the problem.	+PS -FP
37	I	What do you suggest to bring all the managers to implement this in the proper way like yours, frequent feedback and interaction with no surprises?	
38	R4	There is a provision inside the process. We can set the target with an expected end date anything from 1 day or 1 week or 1 month or 1 year. So this provision is there to put an end date according to the achievable target. But providing the feedback is a personal choice. A target for 1 month is because it is achievable in that short span of time. But sometimes, need to provide daily feedback in that case. So it all depends. We cannot generalise. The feedback required will be depending on the nature of the work, target etc. and definitely also depends on how the employee performs on that target. That is another point. The thing that can be generalised is, targets should be mutually agreeable. Provide regular feedback. If they are not on the right track, the manager should give feedback that they are not on the right track and make sure that they have the time and infrastructure available to execute that target. That is, if the work assigned is different and the target given is entirely different from that then it won't work. For example, a target is set to do automation. And they are also given a target which requires at least 9 hours of work. That is not mutually complementing.	+FU
39	I	Ok, so the system can prompt if there is a conflicting target	
40	R4	System may not be able to identify the targets with conflicting nature. Because there can be multiple targets at the same time, to be done in parallel. So, the system cannot confirm that is conflicting.	
41	I	Ok, is there a way to avoid generic targets?	
42	R4	I don't think the system can do anything on that, it's a manager's personal or individual choice. Target-to-target and person-to-person	

		can only be done. What we can do in the system is we can set a reminder or alert for feedback or check. If a target is set and 25% of the time is over, then it can send an alert to the manager to check whether this target is on the right track. Even I too forget sometimes. A reminder not to forget would be good.	
43	I	Ok, so both the employees and managers should check this feedforward system daily to check things are on track as the main problem is they check once in six months to input or update.	
44	R4	Yes, if not daily, at least once a week would be the minimum. Daily they have to check their day-to-day activities.	+FU
45	I	So, if there is a target to be completed in one month and after one week, the system sends a reminder to both the employee and manager to check whether 25% is completed or not. You are suggesting something like this right?	
46	R4	Yes. it will help in tracking	
47	I	Ok, another thing I want to check with you is, what is your opinion regarding transparency. Like, the targets and the feedbacks received against those targets are visible not only to that specific employee but also to other peers at the same level	
48	R4	It is not at all recommended, that is the worst thing which could ever happen. Why because, when I put the feedback to an employee, it contains all the problems in executing it, what all are the drawbacks in doing it, all will be detailed. If this is a one-to-one communication, that employee will take it in a positive sense. Whatever negative feedback I gave, that employee will take it in the right sense. But if it's shared with another person, it may not go well. We should try our best to avoid blaming someone in front of others. That employee may never take it in the right sense in that situation.	
49	I	Ok, understood. Then what about sharing the feedback of targets which got outstanding band only?	
50	R4	No, the targets with the outstanding band does not mean that it is completely perfect. There can be drawbacks or scope for improvement even in that as well. One gets the outstanding band maybe because that is the better one when compared with others. That does not mean there are no drawbacks to that. There can be many negative feedbacks even for that but maybe not as much as others.	
51	I	Ok, so you don't even recommend they know about where they stand among their peers	

52	R4	No, they don't need to know that. They just need to focus on their targets as this is not a horse race. Because that can take it to un-healthy competition.	
53	I	Ok, I was thinking of something like gamification, like a leader board and all to find out who is the best performer this month, like that.	
54	R4	Not possible. We cannot say one person is the best performer in a project because, for example, sales have a different target. If the team is only having sales employees, I can create a leader board based on the sales they generate. But it's not like that in the IT field. Some will work on a change request, some will work on bug fixing. Some will be exploring new technology. Some will be doing sup-port activities. The job methods and work can be different. So, we cannot say one is better than the other. And that too it's not their choice one is working in R&D and the other is working in bug fix-ing. This may be possible to apply in other business areas, but I don't think it is possible in IT.	
55	I	Ok, coming to the final part, do you see any scope to improve the existing feed-forward system or any suggestions?	
56	R4	One suggestion I already recommend is to send timely reminders. Anything other than is, make the target with more clarity, mutually agreed and not to give surprises. These are the few things I always talk about in appraisals. Kind of advice.	
57	I	Ok, a provision can be checked whether the target is mutually agreed upon or need more clarity. And a mandatory updating kind of validation to avoid surprises.	
58	R4	Not once a month, but dividing the duration of the target into 3 to 4 sections and sending reminders in between. Once in a week if the duration is one month, once in a month if the duration is 3 or 4 months.	
59	I	Ok, like every 25% duration completion.	
60	R4	yes	
61	I	Do you have any suggestion to implement in the system to avoid in-ternal politics	
62	R4	Involving HR also in this system is one way to avoid internal poli-tics. Normally HR expects us all to do the performance well and properly. But these are individual choices on how to do it. It's a be-havioural aspect.	
63	I	And I think when the target is completed or achieved, the manager shall update the feedback right on the end date itself so that manipu-lation over it later is not possible.	

64	R4	Yes, that option is already there, but people rarely follow that strictly.	-FP
65	I	Yes, it should be mandated, some kind of validation should be there.	
66	R4	Yes, ok. That is correct. But maybe that is why managers put all the targets once at the end of the cycle. And mostly the end date of the majority of the targets will be the end date of the cycle.	
67	I	Ok, dividing a big target into small achievable targets for the short term would be better, right?	
68	R4	Yes, that is always better. One problem now is earlier there were dedicated managers available for all these activities, now after moving to the agile model, everyone including managers has some individual activities and this appraisal management is just a side-line activity. We are not in the early waterfall model now. So, there is no one completely dedicated to managing a team. This means even managers have targets to achieve. Their activity not only managing the team. Everyone contributes individually these days.	
69	I	Ok, any concluding suggestions?	
70	R4	Nothing else. There should be trust between the managers and the team. If they trust each other, everything will go smoothly. A good manager should always try to protect the team, without blaming anyone in particular, the whole team should take the responsibility. If the team knows management supports them to the maximum, they will return the same. If such trust exists in the team, even negative feedback will be taken positively and in the right sense. Praising can be done in front of others but negative feedback should always be one-to-one. Then we get together once in a while. So, there is a rapport in the team. Because of this rapport, we all support each other.	
71	I	Ok, thank you so much for your time.	
72	R4	Ok, bye	

Appendix 6: Interview Transcript Respondent 5

Row	Person	Text	Code
1	I	We are recording this call for our transcription work and this is a confidential interview where we are not publishing the name of the person and organization involved.	
2	R5	Okay.	
3	I	Could you please provide your designation details?	
4	R5	Sure. I am working as a Senior Technical Architect.	
5	I	Could you please explain your role in the team in your organization?	
6	R5	I am managing a team of seven and I am doing a technical role also. So, both technical and managerial roles. Our client is in the airline domain and we are managing their loyalty programs. We have developed an entirely new system for them which can calculate the loyalty points when travelling with partner airline companies and own company points. We have released the service already and we are in support service right now apart from adding features according to the requirements of the client.	
7	I	Our thesis is regarding the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) and we need details from people who are using it for our research purpose.	
8	R5	Ok.	
9	I	As we are aware, you are using the feed-forward system for the same, I want to check whether the work you are doing is directly reflected on this system.	-WR +PM
10	R5	No.	
11	I	Could you please explain who is setting objectives and targets for you?	
12	R5	My line manager is taking care of this. He/she will assign objectives and targets for me, upon which my review is conducted after the time period set for it.	
13	I	Could you please provide us with an example for better clarity?	
14	R5	Sure. Our feed-forward system is dividing a year into four quarters starting from April every year. Suppose this is the Q1 quarter, there will be an objective for the next quarter (Q2) assigned to me. For example, I have an objective for the next quarter already assigned to	

		me which is to increase the income from our client. For this, I have to work with our clients and conduct meetings. I still have an ongoing project happening parallelly. The working structure of our organization is very hectic because of our contracts with clients. We are winning projects by cutting down the time required to execute the task by half. That is our USP. In this scenario getting another project from the client is impossible. I am a technical person and if the objective is to complete AWS certification, I can manage. Here I need to win business even though I am not a business development person. So what I am saying is, the objectives have nothing to do with our job description.	
15	I	Oh. But you can challenge this with the management, right? Since you are not a salesperson.	
16	R5	Yes, I can challenge that. But what I understood was, this was actually an objective of my line manager and he has assigned that to me (laughs). There are other senior architects in our team and he has given the same objective to them also. Managers will receive incentives if they achieve this objective and 50% of that will be shared among the senior architects and the other 50% goes to the manager. This doesn't make any sense! There are other employees who have informed the management that it is not their job to increase the revenue of the organization.	
17	I	Are you doing the same thing to the employees who are reporting to you? I mean are you transferring your objectives to the team reporting to you as well?	
18	R5	No, I am particular about this with my team. I have testers and developers in my team and I am setting objectives related to their work like doing AWS courses and things like zero bugs, no escalations from clients etc. I am sure my team are not directly engaging with clients and if I transfer my objectives to them, they definitely can't meet that. Training programs and online courses will be an asset to the employees as well as our company. It will be helpful for our projects also.	
19	I	Talking about AWS certification and courses, are you providing any time period for the employees to do that?	
20	R5	Actually, I am asking them to do the preparation in one quarter and complete the certification/test in the next quarter.	
21	I	Are you giving any work-related objectives in the feedforward? The above-mentioned things are all out of usual work, right?	
22	R5	Yes, we have work-related objectives also. For the whole year, the total points for it are 100 points. There will be five objectives with 20 points each. It will usually consist of task-related criteria like	

		zero bugs, leading a team etc. Mostly work-related tasks will be one or two and the others will be general.	
23	I	Did you ever feel unsatisfied after feed-forward in your tenure in this organisation?	
24	R5	Yes. I can give you an example. The same objectives were given to me in different quarters. It was to add one more team member to our project. But this required approval from the client and the client was not okay wh that even after requesting to add one more member. Since they are our clients and we are providing service to them, I can't pressurise them to add one more member. I was not able to meet this expectation from our management both times. I have already updated this to our manager but the feedback I got was "could have been done better" the first time and "target not met" the second time. I think this was not fair, but anyway, I didn't create an issue over it.	
25	I	Due to this feedback from management, your performance band was on the lower side, right?	
26	R5	Yes, It affected my performance band. We have bands starting from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lower band. For this review, I was awarded band 2.	
27	I	What is your personal opinion about that scenario?	
28	R5	I was not happy since the objectives given to me were not related to my work and I felt like they deliberately reduced my performance band. I was not happy with their decision.	
29	I	Do you have any recommendations to improve the satisfaction of the employees regarding the reviewing system? (EPMS)	
30	R5	I know one of our clients is using a system called career navigator in their organization. It is the best system I have come across till now. Suppose I am a software engineer who joined that company, I need to complete no of courses in their system within a year. Then I am automatically promoted to senior software engineer. My work-related details and value-added services done for the project will be reflected in the system. So, everything is based on that single system which is easy to understand and motivates the employee. In our organization, we can get promotions only through contacts. If you know a decision-making person, you can climb up and the reviews don't matter.	-PS
31	I	What are the differences you find in the system you are using in your organization when you compare it with the one you mentioned above?	

32	R5	In the client's system, there are 25 tasks/objectives assigned to an employee for a year. These are purely work-related or helping to do the work more efficiently. This system is connected to all the details of an employee so that it is easy to find any information and it is transparent also. Managers and their superiors are able to view the progress of an employee and the grading is done by the system itself even though managers can comment on it. If the task is completed it's a "Yes" automatically else a "No". So, management won't be able to twist the objectives according to their wish. Favouritism can also be removed from the equation. These are the advantages of the system used by the client than the one we are using right now.	
33	I	Ok. Consider this scenario, you have seven employees reporting to you. Assume that everyone has performed extremely well. How would you rate them in the performance band?	
34	R5	In that case, I would like to discuss the situation with my delivery manager. We can't give everyone a band 5 rating since it is directly proportional to the increment in salary in the next year. That needs a huge fund which is not possible in our organization. We will consider other factors such as the attitude of the team members etc to break the tie and provide band 5 to one employee, band 4 to two employees and the remaining employees' band 3.	
35	I	Are there any restrictions from the management regarding performance banding? Like you can only give maximum to this much percentage of employees and so on?	
36	R5	Yes, there are restrictions from managers because the fund available for the increment of salary is limited. But there are no percentage barriers also. With that limited fund, we will decide how much can be given to each employee according to their performance. Employees will leave if they are not satisfied with the appraisal received which will affect the ongoing project. This is a tricky situation and we need to find a balance for the satisfaction of the team members.	
37	I	You mentioned about career navigator used by your client, right? Do they also face these issues regarding the appraisals? Do you have any idea regarding that?	
38	R5	No. They provide similar salary increments for equally performing employees. As far as I know, our client is financially in a better position and they don't have any constraint to do so. Since the system is deciding the increment, employees are happy with the outcome also.	
39	I	Yes, that would be nice.	
40	R5	And I am sure that no other projects in our organization are following our client's method.	

41	I	What do you feel about the system followed by your company? Are you satisfied with the bell curve system?	
42	R5	I feel like the bell curve system followed by our organization is outdated. We need to implement new methodologies in the review system. Most of the employees here are not satisfied with our bell curve system.	+BC -ES
43	I	Ok. Understood. Could you please provide your recommendations to improve the satisfaction of the employees? As you mentioned, the employees working for your client who is using career navigator are more satisfied. right?	
44	R5	In our organization only very less people are getting appreciated. That too on a yearly basis. This needs to be changed. We need to introduce spot recognition and other perks for the employees in a more frequent manner. Even if it is not involved with money, we need to appreciate their hard work and quality of work. This will be a great motivation for the employees.	-MN
45	I	Is your client doing these for their employees?	
46	R5	Yes, they are doing this on a weekly basis. They have an employee of the week, of the month and so on. And employees winning those titles are appreciated somehow. That will make a big difference. For example, if somebody wins the Star of the Week award, he will receive a special cap which the winner needs to wear inside the office. This is a type of recognition a whoever sees this person will understand he/she is the star of the week. They are implementing so many appreciation programs like this for their employees. If we start implementing such programs, I feel like the attrition rate of our organization can be reduced.	
47	I	What are the other drawbacks you feel for the system you are using in your organization?	
48	R5	I don't think the problem is with the system. It is with the way we are using our system. We and our client are using similar systems but here, the objectives are twisted and there is no transparency. Only the line manager is getting involved in our process. For the client, it is open for all the higher management and the HR department is actively involved in the process. Here only the manager will update the score, nobody knows what is happening behind and higher management doesn't know the employees also.	+PS -FP -TY
49	I	Do you have anything to add to this point?	
50	R5	Yes, I have seen management giving fake promises to stop someone leaving from the company. My manager has asked me to inform someone in my team who was not happy with the project that next year we will try to provide you with an increment or an onsite	-GF

		opportunity. I think this is a bad approach. If management is not happy, they have to inform that the employee and it is that employee's decision to leave or stay in the organization. Management cannot give fake promises and deny increments.	
51	I	Do you have any specific number of objectives that you have to assign the employees?	
52	R5	No. That is upon the managers. They can decide that. The only thing is total should be 100 points. We can divide it as per our wish. We have given timesheet submission on-time objectives for employees (Laughs).	
53	I	What do you think about integrating all systems into one so that employees, as well as managers, will be able to get all the details required on the same platform instead of searching multiple platforms?	
54	R5	That is a very good idea. Most of our clients are doing the same. Even the employees feel motivated if their performance rating is available on their platform or the tasks they need to complete. If you are busy with your work, most of the time you won't check such things if you need another application to find out the status of the tasks etc.	+MS
55	I	I got all the details required from the interview, if you have any other things to add you can mention that now.	
56	R5	I have nothing more to add. Let us wrap it now.	
57	I	That you so much for spending your time on this interview.	
58	R5	No problem. Bye!	

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