

**Developing a Performance Appraisal System in the Directorate of  
General Health Services, the Sultanate of Oman: A Participatory  
Action Research Project**

**Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the**



**For the degree of Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)**

***By***

***Sheikha Hamed Nasser Alhajri***

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***Supervised By***

***Professor. Craig Marsh***

***Professor. Sally Sambrook***

***Professor. Babu George***

***Professor. Clare Regg***

## Declaration

*No portion of this work has been submitted in support of an application for degree or qualification of this or any other University or institution of learning.*

*Signature: Sheikha Hamed Nasser Alhajri*

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## ***Abstract***

The performance appraisal is a tool for professional development in the organization. It has administrative, developmental and strategic roles. This research is conducted in the Directorate General of Health Services in the Ministry of Health in the Sultanate of Oman. The primary aims of this thesis project are identifying the barriers to effective utilization of the performance appraisal system as a tool for professional development. In addition, to explore the factors that prevented evaluators from implementing the open performance appraisal interview. Another objective of this action research is to enable the stakeholders to have a sense of the issues of the performance appraisal system. The research design consists of a combination of case study and participatory action research. The sample was purposeful. The data collection was conducted using face to face interviews with supervisors that included 20 directors and section heads and two homogenous focus group interviews with subordinates consisting of 6 administrative staff and 8 staff nurses. The data were analyzed by thematic analysis and ten themes emerged from the data that achieved the research objectives and answer the research questions. The findings of the study consist of actionable findings that can provide a holistic picture of the research topic that encourage the project team members to build on the findings for developing the new performance appraisal system that can achieve professional development. The main finding of the study is that there is evidence for lack of a clear system for the management of performance appraisal. The implication of the study for theory and practice is that the knowledge of organization's stakeholders about the performance appraisal has changed and now they have recognized the importance of using it for professional development. The study has highlighted the need for facilitating all necessary resources in the organization for and establishing collaboration among all the departments in the management of the performance appraisal in order for the organization to implement performance appraisal effectively.

Ethical consideration was maintained before, during and after research. The ethical approval was obtained from University of Liverpool and local ethical committee in addition to gate keeper's permission and access. One limitation of the study is the scholar practitioner's inability to make holistic change in the content of the performance

appraisal report as it is a political issue and as the rules and regulations of the performance appraisal is under the control of the Ministry of Civil Service. Also, it was challenging for the researcher to create many different performance appraisal items of measurement to meet the demands of each of the departments in the organization. Another limitation is not test the new performance appraisal system by piloting it due to time constraints imposed by thesis submission requirements. Further studies are required to investigate the impact of implementing the new performance appraisal system and to create varied items of performance appraisal measurement to meet each category of employees in the Ministry of Health organization.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction:**

The primary aims of this thesis project are identifying the barriers to effective utilization of the performance appraisal system as a tool for professional development. In addition, to explore the factors that prevented evaluators from implementing the open performance appraisal interview. This study was conducted in a health service organisation called 'Directorate General of Health Services' (DGHS). The thesis will contribute to organization knowledge and practice where the organization can use performance appraisal as a tool for professional development after identifying all challenges and obstacles that prevent evaluator to conduct the performance appraisal interview with employees. Participatory Action Research will apply in the organization to ensure all stakeholders involved and participate into identify the problem and improve the management of performance appraisal system.

### **1.2 Why Performance Appraisal System in the health organization is Worth Studying:**

The health care system is a fast developing system which requires the employees to update their knowledge and manage their behavior and skills effectively. A performance appraisal system is an essential tool to assess the level of staff competency as well as to develop appropriate training programs based on the weaknesses that have been identified in order to close the gaps in the performance. Additionally, it is necessary to identify their strengths in order to use those strengths to strengthen the performance of the whole organization as well as recognize and appreciate the performance of the competent employees. Also, it strengthens the communication between evaluator and staff where they together communicate matters related to the performance and have an agreement action plan for the improvement of performance. Therefore, the PA can play an effective role in developing the skills of the staff which eventually help improve the

health care services for the end users (the community). The PA is considered as an effective tool to assess the progress of the staff and identify the potentials of the staff for the future plan. It helps the decision makers to take appropriate decisions to reallocate the staff based on their skill mix (Pettijohn, 2001). It also helps to identify the department where the employee is interested in providing health services. Moreover, it enables decision makers to identify and develop talented staff. On the other hand, it can be used as a motivational tool to reduce staff turnover (Wagner, 2010). The literature presents contrasting views on the effective management of the performance and some of the authors continue criticize its effectiveness. The performance appraisal is one of the most frequently criticized talent management practice (Lawler et al., 2012). Based on the above rationale, it is worth exploring the factors that prevent its effective utilization in the health system and take appropriate actions

### **1.3 Introduction to the Problem:**

The management of the performance appraisal system in the DGHS is conducted as a secret process where the concerned staff is not involved in the process of the performance evaluation. It is conducted annually by direct supervisors who complete the recording of the annual performance appraisal report and forward it to the personal affairs department for further administrative decisions. The new employees, whether they are subordinates or managers, are never oriented about the importance of the performance appraisal for their professional development and career pathway and how to manage it. In regards to subordinates, their PA result is required only when they intend to apply for scholarships or promotion to higher positions. As for the managers, they are not oriented about the system of performance appraisal management at time of their posting in the managerial position. In addition, there is no protocol or guidelines for the new supervisor on how to manage the performance appraisal system during the whole year. Although it is clearly identified in the job description of each managerial position that it is their responsibility to assess and develop their subordinates, it is not linked to the real process of management of performance appraisal. In fact, the top management asks them to do it at the end of the year when they receive an official letter enclosed with forms of performance appraisal report from the Administrative

department when they are asked to fill up all reports about their subordinates and return them to the same department. Therefore, it has become a normal procedure that must be carried out at end of the year in just one month's time.

Moreover, a lot of training programs are offered by the different departments in the organization but it is not based on the outcomes of the performance appraisal. There is no communication or link between the performance appraisal outcomes and professional development as the professional development department does not receive any feedback from the Directorate of Administration on the results or recommendations of performance appraisal report. Moreover, because of hierarchical structure of the organization where each level of managerial staff forwards the performance appraisal report to higher level in the organization, they think that their top management will do the needful and they do not think it is necessary to inquire about the outcome of the whole process of the management of the performance appraisal in the Ministry of Health. Moreover, the top management does not prefer anyone providing them positive criticism or asking them further questions about the issue. Again, the culture of power distance can have negative impact on the development of some managerial workplace problems (Al.Harbi et al, 2017). Consequently, this influences the process and culture of the management of performance appraisal as also the nature of the PA report plays a significant role in this issue. Again, different specialist health care workers and other administrative staff use the same performance appraisal report, particularly for the executive employees. This increases the complexity of the assessment of the staff as each category of staff has their own scope of practice.

Based on my background and prior understanding of my organization in the last twenty-two years, I believe that the absence of guidelines on how to conduct the performance appraisal and a lack of training and orientation for newly appointed managers is responsible for the mismanagement of the performance appraisal without a clear policy or vision. Although the managers are trained on how to measure the performance of the staff based on a strategic plan set up earlier, because the strategic plan is not connected to the performance appraisal items of measurement, the issue is made complex. The management of the performance appraisal has become a routine practice

at the end of the year as it has lost its importance in the complex health organization. Therefore, the present problem can be seen as a wicked problem as it is ill-formulated and the information related to the problem is confusing for most of the employees (Churchman, 1967).

#### **1.4 The Objective of the study:**

- To understand in-depth, the attitude of the health professionals towards the management of the current performance appraisal management in the Directorate General of Health Services of North Eastern Governorate.
- To assess the health professional's knowledge of the performance appraisal system.
- To create awareness among the staff and managerial staff about the importance of implementing a more transparent two-way communication plan on the staff's performance appraisal in the DGHS based on the assessment findings.
- To create an action plan for staff development based on a transparent performance appraisal system.

**1.5 The Main Research question is** *“How can we use the performance appraisal system for the development of the staff's performance?”*.

#### **1.5.1 Sub-Research Questions:**

1. What are the views of the employees and managers on the management of performance appraisal and its outcome?
2. What are the barriers that prevent managers to implement open-communication interview of performance appraisal?
3. What are the factors that prevent the managers from using the outcome of performance appraisal for developing the skills of the staff?
4. What is the knowledge and skills that the managers require in order to provide feedback to their subordinates?

5. How can the managers use the performance appraisal outcomes as a tool for enhancing their employees' performance?
6. What kind of policy changes does the top management require to bring about so that timely feedback on the performance of the employees is provided on a regular basis?

In order to achieve the above objectives, I have been engaging the participants in the action research cycle where they are informed about the research issue and the knowledge generated from them and that the knowledge provides a clear picture of the problem and is helpful in developing the new performance appraisal which will be discussed in the following chapters.

## **1.6 Background of Managerial Issue:**

### **1.6.1 DGHS and Ministry of Health background:**

Directorate General of Health Services' (DGHS), which is located in the north- eastern governorate in the Ministry of Health (MOH) in the Sultanate of Oman. The DGHS has (10) main directorates and twenty-two health institutions which consist of one central hospital, four local hospitals, one polyclinic and 16 health centres. The main service provided to the community is primary health care service with secondary health care provided by the central hospital. The head of each health center is managed by medical officer whereas the four hospitals are managed by medical officers, but each category of staff is managed by the same specialist. The directorate of administration in DGHS has the responsibility to coordinate with all health institutions and other directorates in the DGHS as well as with the Ministry of Health for managing the performance appraisal.

In regards to Annual Performance Appraisal Report, all of the staff in the Ministry of Health (MOH) in the Sultanate of Oman is evaluated through the PA report which has four types of forms that are currently in use in the DGHS. Of the four PA forms that are in use, (i. for administrative leadership and supervisors, ii. executives, iii. those in the craft & ancillary services, and iv. for medical doctors), the PA forms are attached in the appendix (No:1). The first three forms that were issued by the Ministry of Civil

Services (MCS) in 2011 are mainly used for evaluating the performance of all service staff of all ministries in the country. All of the first three forms have nine assessment criteria which are specific to each form and groups of staff. However, the forms issued by the MCS in 1991 and used for medical doctors have not been updated until today.

It has been noticed that the PA report versions that were issued in 1991 were more suitable for executive staff, particularly for health professionals as it had a scale of marks as well as more relevant to health care sector as it was similar to the medical doctors PA report. However, after issuing the updated version in 2011 by the MCS for all services ministries in the country, the Ministry of Health did not consider its different scope of practice. This is because the Directorate General of the Administration Affairs (DGAA) in the headquarters of the Ministry of Health that coordinates between the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Civil Service has the responsibility for circulating the new policies and protocols about the management of human resources to various directorates in the Ministry of Health. Since the staff of the DGAA are merely administrative staff who do not have any sort of health care professional background and not understand the scope of practice for health professional workforce, they continue to use the performance appraisal report that was issued in 1991 for medical doctors and cancelled all other versions of the performance appraisal reports and replaced them with the new version of performance appraisal reports that were issued in 2011. They believe that the rest of health professional workforce along with other administrative staff can be both assessed using the 'executive' performance appraisal report (number two). However, Literature suggests that the annual confidential performance appraisal report from the civil services ministry is always ineffective as its purpose is using it for administrative decision making and does not contribute to the learning and professional development of the employee (Purohit & Martineau, 2016). To sum up, performance appraisal report went through many reviews and modifications. However, each revision had its limitations. It seems there is a need to develop the performance appraisal system so that it can meet the needs of the Ministry of Health.

### **1.6.2 Performance Appraisal Process and Development in Oman:**

The performance appraisal reports are currently used by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and other Ministries under the umbrella of rules and regulations of the Ministry of Civil Services for administrative purposes, job promotion, and obtaining a title, position or increment (Article, 28). As per these rules and regulations, the system of performance appraisal has to be carried out yearly by the direct managers or supervisors, where the direct supervisor has to inform the employees about any weaknesses in his or her job performance with evidence (Article, 21). However, a gap has been discovered between theory and practice (workplace problem) where the PA is not used effectively for the development of the employees by communicating the PA to the concerned staff. Consequently, this failure in the communicating PA outcome to concerned employees has had a negative impact on the employees' perception in terms of its fairness and accuracy. This perception would be created through explicit discussion on the performance appraisal at various levels of the staff in the DGHS. Campbell et al. 2007), cited in Celika, 2014) argue that employees usually express dissatisfaction with both the outcomes and the process of the appraisal systems. On the other hand, an accurate appraisal of staff development is more useful and reliable than appraisal done for making administrative decisions regarding promotions and financial incentives. Moreover, such reports are more acceptable to all employees (Park, 2014).

As far as the history of performance appraisal system in Oman is concerned, it was established about four decades ago and, during this period, it underwent many changes (Shaiban, 1989). The second version of the appraisal document was implemented as a secret process except those having lower grades and without involving the staff in the evaluation and without any logical grade system due to the complex nature of the community in those days (Article, 1&7). For example, you could find some of the family members working together in one department, where the PA was conducted in secret so as to avoid family conflicts. However, after many revisions and updates on the policies of the Ministry of Civil Services which governs the Ministry of Health (MOH) policies, there has been some sort of consensus on the need to honour the rights of the employees to have access to their performance appraisal on a regular basis (Article,

101). Although the executive regulations that stipulated transparent implementation of the performance appraisal system were not strictly implemented when the new article 21 of 2011 was issued; this article specified that it was necessary to provide a written notification of the performance appraisal report to all, but it was done only with regard to those staff whose performance grade was poor. As for the rest of the performance grades, the direct supervisors had to communicate them only in general terms to concerned staff on a regular basis. It is, however, interesting to note that the current performance appraisal report does not find any place in the action plan for development that must be acknowledged by the employees and only available on the recommendation of direct supervisor and after obtaining approval of the higher supervisor (Performance Appraisal Reports, 2011). However, this practice has continued for the main reason that there is hardly any chance for external inspection of the administrative process.

### **1.6.2 Background of Omani Culture:**

Despite making several improvements in the PA reports and producing different versions of the PA system in last four decades, the culture of Omani society has had significant influence on the practice of performance appraisal management. Moreover, the people involved in the development of Oman's ministries in the early 1970s were from various Arab countries that were more educated and qualified than Omani nationals at that time as they shared the same Arabic culture and practiced the same religion. Therefore, a combination of the Arab and local Omani culture played a role in managing this sensitive administrative issue. As a result, the PA was managed as a secret process for the main purpose making administrative decisions. On the other hand, the Omani community has a complex social network of relationship where the family relationship can be extended to many different tribes having blood relationship with others. This strong relationship has both positive and negative impact on Omani citizen's social life and professional life where these aspects are transferred from the community context to workplace context. As a result, discussing individual performance was for both supervisors and staff in order to avoid any harmful consequences to their social relationship. Over the years, the management of PA became a norm and the

important thing for each organization has been to evaluate the organization's overall performance.

The evidence for this can be seen from a review of the development of the performance appraisal in the country where the modifications did not touch the items of measurements that support evaluators to evaluate correctly. Also, it did not provide space for acknowledgement of employees about their appraisal result. Therefore, it is clear that there is scope for subjective elements in the evaluation conducted by the evaluators (Alshali, 2013). It may also be noted that organizational culture provides more weightage for the supervisors than the subordinates where the evaluators can judge and control the future of their subordinates. It is true that a few employees who do not receive their annual allowance because of their poor grade in the appraisal report can appeal to higher the authority or court. However, there is no clear and fair future for the rest of the staff for their professional development and career pathway (Alshali, 2013).

### **1.7 Why the Participatory Action Research is Worth Doing:**

The participatory action research aims are identifying the barriers to effective utilization of the performance appraisal system as a tool for professional development. In addition, to explore the factors that prevented evaluators from implementing the open performance appraisal interview. By involvement the stakeholders who would plan for interventions and taking action and finally evaluate their action. Hence, this approach adopted for the research is appropriate to do the analysis of the puzzle (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Therefore, I believe involving the stakeholders and decision makers in the action research process will develop their knowledge and enhance their skills. As Smith (1997) states, the first learning for managers is to learn how to take effective action. It also stimulates a competitive environment among the staff (Byron & Khazanchi, 2012) in the organization when their staffs are assessed by valid and appropriate methods of performance appraisal. Organizational culture played a role in

developing the current performance appraisal system where the top management developed it and published it to others to be implemented without involving the other stakeholders in the development of the PA system or providing guidelines to be followed or reviewing the implementation the PA system. Therefore, with the existence of the power-distance culture (Peretz & Fried, 2012), the employees have to follow the system as for changing the culture of the members of the organization it is important for them to participate in making change from early stage.

### **1.8 Rationale and motivation for undertaking the research:**

The primary motivation of undertaking the current study is my professional development by engaging myself in the real problems in managing the human resources. Since I can apply all theories that I have taken during the DBA modules and use my pre-understanding of my organization to explore the researched issue, I believe it will help me as an employee to understand my performance level for more than two decades as well as other employees to acknowledge their performance appraisal result. Although I have worked for twenty-two years in the same organization, I have not been able to find out the main reason for these issues in practice although the top management informed me that it is a political issue and that they inherited this practice from the previous generation; and it the performance appraisal should be carried out in a confidential manner. Moreover, as I got promotion in my career till I became one of the middle line managers in the organization, I find it difficult to understand the higher authority's perception of my performance and the criteria for selecting me among other staff. In addition, this inquiry was for most of my colleagues in the organization who got promotion. As a result, like other managers I have to continue doing the management of the performance appraisal as a secrete affair since it has become a culture of the organization and no one can ask us to do it in a different way.

However, I investigated this issue during my master's studies when I discovered that performance appraisal has to be conducted as a transparent interview between the supervisor and his/her subordinates. The analysis of the issue provided me confidence to change my behavior and attitude towards the management of performance appraisal

with my staff in the department. But it was not enough as the rest of the organization continued to have the same approach. This was supported by most of my colleagues who acted as directors who believed that the current process of evaluation of staff performance is meaningless as most of the planned training is not based on the outcome of the performance appraisal. As a result, this practice has motivated me to investigate the issue further and reflect on this real problem in the first module of DBA, where I was motivated to solve this problem with the help of knowledge generated during the DBA (Salipante & Aram, 2003). Therefore, I believe the current study offers me an opportunity to resolve the problem by involving all stakeholders in the process of discussing the workplace problem by having a rich picture about the problem (Pedler, 2008).

Furthermore, the Health professional workforce deals with human beings where the organization has to assess their knowledge & competency level and plan for their professional development based on their weaknesses. This is because when there are any crises created by unqualified or incompetent health professionals, it will create a disaster in the health system. Consequently, the decision makers have to review the incident and its causes which can result in a waste of time and money. Smith and Elliott (2007) say that disaster can recur due to absence of the vision and carelessness on the part of employees and stakeholders in any organization with a poor safety system already in place. This can also happen when unskilled or ignorant employees operate the technical equipment. Smith and Elliott (2007) talk about three types of learning from a crisis management: learning from a crisis, learning for a crisis and learning as crisis. Therefore, applying action research to make an intervention is a form of learning for crisis. The positive and final motivation was evident when the top authority upgraded the organizational structure in 2015, which added a new section for professional staff development of the staff under each directorate general of all governorates in order to examine the performance appraisal outcome, improve the management of performance appraisal and plan for professional development accordingly. In this context, I believe that the new section on professional staff development appended to the updated organizational structure will have a positive impact on the findings of my study.

## **1.9 Research Design:**

I chose the case study methodology as an instrument to gain an in-depth insight into the research problem and find out how to implement the proposed new system (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Case study was combined with participatory action and the data was generated from participants consisting of evaluators and subordinates using face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The data was collected through face-to-face interviews with 20 supervisors (evaluators) and two homogenous focus groups consisting of subordinates: the first group consisted of six administrative employees and the second group consisted of eight nurses.

## **1.10 Summary:**

To resolve this workplace issue, participatory action research (PAR) is being implemented to develop the management of the performance appraisal system by bridging the gap between theory and practice (Salipante & Arm, 2003). By applying Participatory action research, the scholar practitioner intends to create the culture of acknowledging the existence workplace problem among stakeholders and decision makers and work towards the resolution of the problem as "*I am a part of the problem and the problem is a part of me*" (Pedler, 2008, p.11). Therefore, the overall is to make sense of the study's importance among the stakeholders and decision-makers, and how their participation and involvement lead to the resolution of the workplace problem as well as their development through learning in action.

## **1.11 Outline of the thesis:**

This thesis is organized and divided into eight chapters. The first chapter is about the introduction of the thesis. Chapter two discusses the literature review in details and how the literature aids my understanding of the issue. The first section of chapter three describes the case study which is combined with participatory action research using an in-depth face to face interview and focus group discussion involving the subordinates. In

the second section of this chapter discusses how the knowledge generated from participants is informed about different aspects of the problem and supports the project team members to take action. The third section of the same chapter discusses the philosophical assumptions. Chapter four discusses the result of the study and how the generated knowledge explains the nature of the problem. Chapter five discusses the overall findings and presents the literature that has been added to the current literature for the PA management. The next chapter discusses the practical applications of the intervention. Chapter seven concludes the thesis with an overall description of the study. Chapter eight describes my self-reflection and learning as an action researcher in the cycle of action research.

## Chapter two: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction:

This chapter presents the literature review on the topic of PA system management. The literature review provided me with a holistic view of the practices of other organizations that enabled me to understand the management of the PA system. Moreover, it helped me identify the challenges of management of the PA in health organizations as well as other organizations. The search strategy that I followed was an online search through Liverpool library sources as well as locally published research materials related to the topic. I searched through both management and health literature. Many articles discussed the dimensions of the PA management. However, I focused only on literature that was relevant to work-place issue chosen for my study. I used key words such as performance appraisal, assessment, performance management, health organization, challenges of the PA, PA interview, and staff development. The language I used is English and the data -based search tools utilised were Ovid, Emerald Group, Science Direct and Database CINAHL Plus.

Many scholars consider performance appraisal (PA) as a crucial human resource management function (Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2008). According to Boxall& Purcell, PA systems are “formal methods of planning and evaluating employee Performance that involve employee interviewing (typically annually) to discuss work goals or behavioural standards and individual’s achievement in terms of them” (Boxall & Purcell, 2011, p. 216). The phrase, performance appraisal’ has been defined by the Compact Oxford Dictionary (cited in Judkins 2004, p.192) as “a formal assessment of an employee’s performance at work”. Other scholars view performance appraisal as a tool for supervisors to make employees work effectively for their organization by means of rewards and recognition like promotion, pay increase or delaying promotions, withholding bonuses based on their performance (Park, 2014). However, the importance of reassessing all aspects of human resource management, especially the key aspect of performance appraisal was stressed by (Selden, Jessica & Sowa, 2011).

Ever since the Second World War, the topic of performance appraisal and face-to-face interviews has been a subject of hot debate among researchers and academic. This was more pronounced when PA was first accepted as a formal management procedure in the US (Palli & Lehtinen, 2014). Nowadays, various managements prefer using human resource development (HRD) mechanisms including performance appraisal for bringing about changes in various activities of their organizations such as changing the behavior of the employees, improving their skills and competencies (Armstron & Baron, 2002, cited in Saini, 2016). Levy (1997) highlighted three traditionally valued functions of the PA system: assessment, improvement of staff performance and staff development. Throughout the 1980s, the first two of these were given priority and were primarily used to fix various levels of pay based on performance. Today, however, the PA has been identified as an essential developmental tool (Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012). Additionally, it provides information for decision-makers to choose candidates for promotion, reward and training and identify the employees' strengths and weaknesses (Decramer, Van derstraeten, & Christiaens, 2012).

According to Selden et al. (2011), despite the fact that performance appraisal (PA) is implemented in many nonprofit organizations, little research has been conducted in these organizations and how these Human Resource Management (HRM) activities are linked to the performance or effectiveness of the organizations. On the other hand, as Cravens et al (2015) points out, the mechanism of performance appraisal provides the employees with the key information of how their actions support strategic goals and objectives of their organization. Some studies conducted on performance appraisal have revealed that the PA characteristics including appraisal purpose and source can have positive reactions from employees to performance appraisal outcomes. This may help motivate the employees to improve their performance (DeNisi & Pritchard, 2006).

This chapter is divided into ten sections and each of them discusses one aspect of the management of the performance appraisal system. The following sections in the first part present the management of PA in the DGHS at present, PA in a global health organization, and overall views about the advantages and disadvantages of PA. The second part discusses the process of performance appraisal, and the required skills of

the evaluator. The final part discusses performance appraisal interview, performance appraisal feedback and ends with the performance appraisal and staff development.

## **2.2 The Management of the performance appraisal in the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS):**

The performance appraisal is done annually for the Ministry of Health (MOH) staff just like those of other ministries under the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Civil Services. The PA outcome is used in the Ministry of Health (MOH) mainly for administrative purpose, including job promotion, obtaining a title, position or increment. Moreover, direct managers or supervisors fill up the PA report yearly by October when they receive the official PA reports just a few days before from headquarters in the Ministry of Health and the employees have no right to have a discourse on his or her performance evaluation. This practice was supported by a study conduct in India which investigated the effectiveness of the Confidential Annual Performance Appraisal Report (CAPAR) for medical officers who use the CAPAR in the Ministry of Civil Services for all service ministries (Purohit & Martineau, 2016). I believe this practice in India can have an impact on our practice in the Ministry of Health as many of the health care workforces are Indians. However, a gap has been discovered between theory and practice in Oman where the performance appraisal is not used effectively for the development of the employees. In fact, there is neither any evidence to prove that the employees are not aware of their performance outcome nor any mechanism in place to improve the performance based on transparent assessment although all the literature and regulations emphasize the importance of using the PA for staff development. Selvarajan & Cloninger (2012) state that it is an employee's right to know about the result of his performance assessment and there is a strong connection between the performance and the result of the assessment. Mamoria (1995, cited in Obisi, 2011) and Atiomo (2000, cited in Obisi, 2011) argue that although performance appraisal is usually discussed in relation to remuneration, it can serve a number of other purposes such as identifying training needs, improving present performance of employees, improving potentials, improving communication, and improving motivation and so on. Despite having sufficient evidence in the literature for the importance of discussing the individual

performance. The management of PA does not rely on the individual achievement rather than the total objectives of the department's achievement as the health care system is managed by plans and activities that have been set in each department. These goals are achieved by the staff according to the tasks allocated to them and monitored by routine observation and audits. As a result, only the overall achievements of each department are discussed in meetings and assessed accordingly.

The secretive nature of the performance appraisal has had a significant but negative impact on the employees' perception in terms of its fairness and accuracy. As the real performance of the staff is not well documented and communicated to them or, if documented, it does not reflect his/her real performance as the direct in-charge does not sit with them to discuss the performance based on real achievement, well-defined criteria or objectives. In such a situation, there is a chance for bias on the side of the manager as he or she can award any appraisal grades for the performance of the staff. Therefore, one could find many undeserving employees receiving incentives and the deserving ones losing out on the incentive. The performance appraisal is the only proof of the staff's actual performance; the system is not transparent. Therefore, in this research I would like to bridge the gap between theory and practice related to the management of performance appraisal in order to use performance appraisal as an effective tool for raising the staff's awareness about their performance and to be used as a motivational tool for improving their performance based on an accurate on their performance.

The above mentioned the performance appraisal management practices and the system in the DGHS in the Sultanate of Oman are influenced by the culture of the community rather than a solid system in place. This was supported by a study of Harbi et al. (2017) that discuss the impact of the culture on the performance appraisal management practices in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He found that the Saudi Arabian culture is highly collectivist as the Saudi Arabian management style is by and large focused on the group rather than the individual, which has the intention of strengthening the relationship between employer and employees. Therefore, the findings of this study have revealed that, although the performance appraisal system is a western model, it is

influenced by the nationality of the appraiser. If the appraiser is a Saudi Arabian, the employees cannot ask the supervisor about the outcome of his performance and the supervisor is not bound by the system to provide him required information and justification. This study has, therefore, provided me insight on how the culture can have an impact on the approach of organizational management. Therefore, the existing culture in the DGHS of Oman directs the members of the organization from top authority to individual employees to assess the overall achievement of their department and does not matter who achieved this success or which factors supported the achievement.

### **2.3 Management of Performance Appraisal in Oman and GCC:**

There is difference in the management of the performance appraisal in Oman between the private and government sectors. In the government sector, the performance appraisal report of the Ministry of Civil Services is used; however, in the private sector different approaches on management of performance appraisal is used. In some of the private institutions the performance appraisal system is effectively implemented, especially in the oil and petroleum companies as those companies were established through foreigner investment, which brought their style of the management to Oman. It may be noted that a European system which relies on open performance interview and an agreement of professional development for the management of the performance appraisal. According to this system, promotion is based on the level of performance. As a result, this culture of the management has influenced Omani employees and maintained sustainability until today in some companies although more than 90% of the employees in the companies are Omani nationals. However, some companies, particularly the parent companies that employed some of their human resources managers who worked in the government sector earlier had transferred the same culture of the management of the performance appraisal to these companies in different forms. However, they shared the same non-transparent style of secret appraisal process. On the other hand, most of the service ministries in the government sector use the same performance appraisal report with many modifications, but these modifications were influenced by the Omani culture which is collective culture to strengthen the relationship between the members of the organization. As a result, conducting

discussions on individual negative feedback creates some kind of sensitivity and both managers and subordinates do not wish to discuss each and every point in the performance and identify the areas of weaknesses in the absence of a clear system that can inform both the managers and subordinates about the system of linking the performance appraisal outcomes to performance correction for professional development.

There has been only a single study conducted locally in other service ministries by an Omani national who used the findings to obtain a PhD degree mainly focuses on performance appraisal related to the law in Oman. AlShali (2013), found that the performance appraisal is still practiced as a secret process and that only the performance outcomes of lower grades were communicated to concerned staff by their supervisors. Furthermore, he pointed out that lack of standards and the subjective nature of the content of the performance appraisal had a negative impact on the employees and the system. He also suggested that the performance appraisal report of 2011 has to be modified in order to match the nature of different jobs and meet the objectives of the jobs. Moreover, the researcher suggested it is better to inform all the staff about their performance appraisal in order to identify their weaknesses and strengths and not to be entangled in legal problems. He added that even the updated version of the performance appraisal report and its management system are influenced by organizational culture which is a reflection of the community culture as the employees of the organization belonging to the local community know each other. Consequently, the Omani nationals would like to strengthen their relationship rather than break it by creating conflict in the workplace. However, as the researcher rightly points out, the study has the obvious limitation of not having enough local studies. Although there are limited local studies on PA management in my country (the Sultanate of Oman), I believe the above study provided me with an insight into how other ministries implemented the same PA system within their organizations which are similar in the context of culture and laws. Therefore, it encouraged me to go further in my current study to analyze in-depth the same issue in my organization - to understand the obstacles that prevent implementation of a transparent performance appraisal

interview (PAI) and find practical solutions. Additionally, the management of the PA in the field of oil and petroleum companies that shared same Omani culture increased my confidence to improve and develop our PA system in the MOH.

Oman's socio-economic and political features are similar to those of other Gulf countries. Therefore, I decided to look for studies in my neighbour country of UAE where there more studies were conducted on the PA in sectors other than the health care sector like the banking sector. Cultural factors played a role in influencing the shape of management of the human resources in the Arab and Middle East countries (Branine & Pollard, 2010). study conducted by Behery & Paton (2008) who investigated the link between organization culture (OC) and PA and how they influenced the employees' commitment and job satisfaction. The findings showed a positive relationship between the PA & OC: a positive impact on the performance of the employees and organizational outcomes.

Cultural issues posed a particular challenge to the improvement of organizational performance in Saudi Arabia (Assad, 2002; Idris, 2007). A study conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by Harbi et al. (2017) concluded that the interviewees found that the PA at SACO was unfair. Their perceptions were based on a number of issues related to the influence of personal and political relationships, '*Wasta*' and the managers' interests and power. They added that the performance appraisal and culture are linked and could have an impact on performance. The findings of this study showed me that cultural factors could have influenced the thinking or behavior of the organization's members on how to prefer one system to others. Moreover, the organizational hierarchy could influence the practice of PA management. They discussed the four complimentary dimensions of PA/OC, which are system fairness, satisfaction, importance and feedback. The staff satisfaction generated by their involvement in their performance review can have a positive impact on their performance. Also, the high- power-distance can play a role among their subordinates where they have to adhere to the system without raising questions about the management practice.

A Jordanian study conducted by Abu-Doleh and Weir (2007) aimed at understanding the attitudes of human resource (HR) managers belonging to the Jordanian private and public sectors towards the management of their PA systems. It also aimed at discussing the method of implementing the PA system in both sectors. The findings of their study revealed that all those organizations conducted PA once a year and the managers were primarily responsible for conducting it. The findings also showed that the results of the PA were not reviewed regularly every year and that individual objectives were not created before implementing the PA system, whether it is the private sector or public sectors. However, this study could not find a strong link between the PA outcomes and formulating personnel development goals or matters like the pay increase.

The studies mentioned above have enabled me to understand how local culture can influence the management of the PA system in the organization although it is not sufficient to develop the system in my country. I believe that it is necessary to study the western theories for developing our PA system as my country is still a developing nation.

#### **2.4 Performance Appraisal Management in the Global Health Organization:**

Many countries are aware of the importance of monitoring and improving the performance of their healthcare systems (Greener, 2003). The management of the PA can certainly help create and implement new health policies and improve the outcomes of the healthcare system (Smith, 2009). However, very few studies have been conducted on implementation, purpose and effects of PA in terms of clinicians (Bratton & Gold, 1999; Armstrong and Baron, 2000; Redman and Wilkinson, 2001, cited in Eades & Graham, 2004). Borrill & West (2001, cited in Eades & Graham 2004) tried to identify the importance of performance appraisal and team work in the field of healthcare. An important study, commissioned by the Department of Health in the U.K, is being conducted by the Management School of the University of Liverpool into the implementation of appraisal for consultants and staff grade doctors. Britain's National Health Services (NHS) has established a healthcare performance assessment framework (National Service Framework) for aligning the health system plan with the

performance targets (Public Service Agreement), performance indicators, and incentives (Smith, 2009). Another study is being carried out with the aim of evaluating the implementation of performance appraisal for doctors in training against its professed aims, and identifying factors responsible for its failure or for not achieving success. Elsewhere other researches are taking place in order to find out if its quality is assured or not (Eades & Graham, 2004).

Purohit & Martineau (2016) conducted a study on themes around five features of an effective appraisal system - purpose, source, feedback quality, a link between the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) system and other human resource functions, and administrative effectiveness. These variables which were responsible for exerting influence on the perception of employees towards fairness and accuracy of the management of the performance appraisal and, therefore, it can be considered to indicate the level of its effectiveness. The findings of this study indicated that the overall appraisal system was ineffective as it was subjective and not multi-directional in approach. Moreover, since the feedback loop which is considered a major feature of an effective appraisal system was absent, it did not produce the desired outcomes. The study also found that ACR system had no link to other HRM functions such as training and counseling. A weak link with salary administration and promotion was also discovered. This study found that the final rating is based on the decision of the managers which might be influenced by relationship between the managers and subordinates. Therefore, the medical doctors felt that it was inaccurate and not fair as it did not achieve the desired objective of assessing the performance accurately. The findings of the study showed that there was no formal approach of sharing the ratings, comments and feedback by the appraiser with appraisee and only the staff with poor grade would get notice because he would be eligible to get annual increment or promotion. However, most of the doctors did not receive any negative remarks by their appraisers. This study concluded that there was no need to design a new format for ACR if this format was used effectively and could contribute towards achievement of the appraisal objectives of employee development, assessing performance and career development.

I believe the above-mentioned study has had a significant impact on my research approach as the domains and features of effective performance appraisal that were identified contributed to the success of my study as it enabled me to go in-depth using a similar investigation through the research questions and to go further during the interview with the participants to understand how the obstacles prevented them to implement the performance appraisal effectively in my organization. For example, absence of feedback is considered to be an ineffective performance appraisal system which has a negative impact on the morale and productivity of the employees. Moreover, it is enabled me to understand the features of effective PA that helped my organization to improve our current PA system particularly because this study used the same annual confidential PA report used in the ministries of most of my neighboring countries. Furthermore, the confidential PA report use for assessing the performance of medical doctors in India as both countries share some aspects of the cultures of both countries and many Indian health professionals have been working in the Ministry of Health in Oman for so many years. So, there could be a transfer of the culture of the management of the performance appraisal in these countries.

Treble et al, (2013) conducted a study on the domains of the individual performance review (IPR) with a framework that included: (1) performance against objectives; (2) behaviour and leadership; (3) talent management; (4) agreed future objectives. The following themes were identified from the consultant interviews: “ineffective current appraisal systems reflecting a lack of valid performance data and allotted time; a lack of empowerment of medical managers to address performance issues; IPR as a more explicit system, offering value in evaluating doctors’ performance; and the dependence of successful implementation on the engagement of the Trust executive”.

However, others believe that many health service managers complained of not having the appropriate tools for measuring and monitoring performance (Lutwama, Roos & Dolamo, 2013). Although the Ugandan Ministry of Public Service made it mandatory for conducting performance appraisal on a regular basis, in reality, this was not done seriously. As a result, the researchers mentioned above believe that the health service managers were not able to create awareness about performance management

standards all the health care workers in the districts. Moreover, they attributed this to the absence of clear tools and indicators for measuring the performance of health care workers. However, in their opinion while most of the health care workers indicated that 'target setting' was in place, most of the health service managers opined that 'pre-appraisal planning and meetings' did not occur on a regular basis. Therefore, the researchers believe that performance planning discussions and agreements between the supervisor and the health care workers must deal with performance targets and strategies (Lutwama et al., 2013). The results of this study have thus established that although standards are set up by the MoH to measure the performance of health care workers, they are not always followed by all health care workers as the latter were not aware of the purpose of performance measurement the appraiser indicators. The findings of this study reflect those of a similar study conducted in Kenya. In short, there must be an all-out effort to create awareness among all health care workers about performance management and its importance to improving health service delivery as well as their individual capabilities (Lutwama et al., 2013). This study provided me an opportunity to understand that although the performance appraisal system is available in the organization, in the absence of awareness among concerned staff and no proper communication with everyone involved in the process of management the performance appraisal, the system of performance appraisal will be useless. In other words, it contributed to my research that awareness about various systems in the organization is essential for acceptance and their effective implementation accordingly.

Another study conducted by Chang (2007), found that performance indicators were too "high level" and, therefore, they did not show clinical evidence-based standards that health authorities thought would be delivered locally as local health care managers might think that these super-imposed performance indicators would hardly have any impact on their local performance improvement. Chang pointed out that the NHS used balance scorecard to assess the dimensions of performance appraisal framework and ensure the performance indicators could achieve the long term objectives of the organization. Based on the findings of this study, I believe that in my organization the performance appraisal items are linked to objectives of the strategic plan or at least to

the local operational plan. Therefore, it depends on the mind of evaluators and their judgment on how to evaluate their staff. Ultimately, the whole assessment of our strategic plan is based on health indicators and there is no evidence to show specific assessors who achieved those health indicators as the assessment of performance organization is collective rather than individual.

In Korea, a number of performance management programs of varying scales in diverse healthcare areas have been developed and implemented to improve the quality and efficiency of its healthcare system. A study by Kim & Kang (2015) aimed to understand how performance management advanced the goal of a healthcare system, examine Korea's healthcare performance management system, identify the challenges of the system and suggest steps to solve them. They suggested reconnecting the performance management system to the overall health goals and developing a conceptual framework that clearly states the overall system goals. Finally, Chandra & Frank (2004) proposed some strategies for improving the PA system in a health care organization. These include conducting training for evaluators, self-evaluation, reward and recognition, open communication, value employee input, providing sufficient time to conduct the PA, reaffirming the mission, value and culture and career planning of the organization. Although the management of performance appraisal is same in all organizations, based on the above researched literature, it seems there is a need for creating performance indicators that can assess the health care objectives which develop the individual needs in terms of the individual's skills and organizational development. This could be achieved by developing a clear performance appraisal framework and it is well communicated among stakeholders in the health organization. Therefore, to ensure that the performance appraisal system meets the demands of health care setting regular reviews and updating based on health organization needs are required.

## **2.5 Advantages and Disadvantages of Performance Appraisal:**

### **2.5.1 Purpose of Performance Appraisal:**

One of the major goals of a performance management system is improving the performance of the employees and achieving other objectives (Greener, 2003; Celik, 2014; Sanyal & Biswas, 2014). Moreover, the two-fold primary objective of the performance appraisal (PA) is, according to Dusterhoff, Cunningham & MacGregor (2014), (i) contributing significantly to the achievement of an organization's goals in terms of its overall development and that of its employees and (ii) overcoming the barriers to improving their performance. Selvarajan & Cloninger (2012) is, however, of the opinion that an employee has every right to know the results of his or her performance assessment and, without doubt, a strong connection between performance appraisal and the result of the assessment cannot be denied; but there has not been adequate evidence to prove that connection (Gesme & Wiseman, 2011).

The PA has often been used as a key tool by companies that to supply them information about the performance of employees so that important decisions can be made (Lutwama et al., 2013). Furthermore, it has been observed that performance appraisal and attitudes, efforts and behaviors of the employees that imply improvements in the financial results obtained by companies are connected quite strongly (Espinilla, Andres et al., 2013). Hence, Armstrong (2010) states that performance management is a systematic process of improving an organization's performance. Selvarajan & Cloninger (2009) are of the view that performance appraisal is a useful mechanism for providing feedback to employees, which can result an improvement in their performance.

The PA which is often viewed as a formal review of an individual's recent performance which has a number of benefits for the employees such as providing feedback on their strengths, weaknesses and potential; it has benefits for the organization as well as it can provide useful information about its management, training, resourcing and corporate planning. In the commercial and public sector (Trebble et al., 2013). Evaluation of performance, the setting of goals for work, and the agreeing on future

development are some of the most widely recognized objectives of Performance Appraisals (Clarke, Harcourt & Flynn, 2013). However, in spite of the fact that these functions have been given due significance in the literature, there has been very little knowledge of how these objectives are achieved by participants in the discussions related to Performance appraisal (Palli & Lehtinen, 2014).

Performance management has three main roles to play in an organization. These are strategic, administrative and developmental roles. The strategic role or function is intended to create a link between the workers' performance and the overall organizational strategy. In the administrative sphere, performance management (PM) functions as a useful tool to provide valuable information to help the managers for making key decisions related to salary increments, promotions, recognition and rewards. The developmental function of performance management is achieved when it provides information on the strengths and weaknesses of health workers (Lutwama et al., 2013).

Selvarajan and Cloninger (2012) argues that in addition to being a tool for determining the remuneration of the employees, performance appraisal has other benefits. For instance, it helps identify the training needs and improve the performance of employees, improve their potentials communication skills and promote their motivation. However, Iqbal et al. (2015) believe that PA has a more serious impact on purposeful PA management. They are of the opinion that PA often leads to unfair practices when it is used for administrative purposes as it is closely linked to organizational decision-making particularly in relation to the employees, where it is quite natural to use the results of administrative PA with the aim of gaining personal benefits or for achieving political objectives. For example, some managers use it in order to victimize some of the employees or promote some of them although there are more eligible ones who are unjustly sidelined. Since such decisions directly affect the outcomes (pay, promotion). Therefore, Selvarajan & Cloninger (2011) believe that administrative PA is less desirable (distributive) than PA used for other purposes. They prefer developmental PA to administrative PA because they say that it has a milder effect on outcome-related organizational decisions.

Furthermore, the PA may help acquire knowledge and develop the skills of the employees (Spalkova, Spacek & Namee, 2016). Grund & Przemeck (2012) refers to several reasons for PA biases. First, since supervisors are not rewarded for accurate ratings, they may not have adequate motivation to spend their time in gathering information. Second, cognitive limitations may make them focus on some performance dimensions (Ittner et al., 2003). As Grubb (2007) points out, PA has the positive benefit of engaging, aligning, and coalescing individual and group efforts, which indirectly helps improve the overall performance of the organization. Moreover, it helps the management to identify and correct disparities in the performance of the employees.

It is clear that the PA system and its purpose has three aspects which are strategic, administrative and developmental. However, those purposes would not be achieved if there was no motivation on the part of the evaluators and employees to do it. Moreover, a clear communication about the PA purpose and how to facilitate all factors that could support achievement its purposes is essential to implement an effective performance appraisal.

### **2.5.2 Barriers towards Performance Appraisal implementation:**

Cravens et al. (2015) believe that PA is an integral part of the management control system as it provides the employee with the necessary information to find out if their actions support strategic goals and objectives. According to Murphy & Cleveland (1995), appraisers are goal directed and, therefore, some of them tamper with the ratings to achieve those goals. However, most managers consider these actions have the sanctity of a legitimate administrative authority (Longenecker & Gioia, 2000). Therefore, they believe that they can use the PA as a powerful tool for motivating, accountability and communication in relation to their subordinates besides using it as evidence for their own or department's performance and power (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). As for appraises, one of their main objectives is to obtain rewards in the form of a pay rise and a promotion based on their appraisal ratings (Milkovich & Newman, 2004). The fact that both the appraiser and the appraise seem to have differing 'self-interests', it is understanding the influence of "upward- and downward-directed

communication processes or appraiser–appraise relationship”, and comparing their impact on ‘appraisal politics’ (Dhiman & Maheshwari, 2013, p.1206).

A number of qualitative studies conducted by Longenecker & Gioia (2000) have identified the following PA factors that are necessary to mitigate appraiser politics: clarifying performance goals and standards, linking performance and rewards. Moreover, continuous feedback, well-structured PA process, conducting PA seriously, educating managers about evil consequences of manipulations and providing training to managers for the purpose of conducting the PA (Longenecker & Gioia, 2000). It has been found by some experimental studies that of face-to-face feedback and self-appraisals often lead to ‘rating inflation’ which is a core element of ‘appraisal politics’ (Ismail et al., 2012; & Poon, 2004). Dhiman & Maheshwari (2013) states that the appraiser’s and appraisee’s “manipulative actions” are meant to influence ratings for “self-serving PA goals”. More often than not, when they do it, they are inflating or deflating the performance ratings without taking the employee’s actual performance into account. This is further supported by Longenecker & Gioia (2000) when they state that whenever there are negative implications of the PA for the appraiser, he is tempted to manipulate the ratings to avoid confrontations with his subordinates. Other researchers emphasize this aspect of ‘appraisal politics’. For instance, Marrelli (2011) points out that the result of honest feedback is often a confrontational situation or even open hostility between employees. Budworth, Latham & Manroop (2015) point out that biased feedback provided by managers is one of the main reasons for the ineffectiveness of traditional PA. A number of authors like Levy & Williams (2004), Scullen, Mount, & Goff (2000), Latham & Dello Russo (2008) and Budworth et al. (2015) have supported the above view. However, if biased reports result in inefficient job assignments, the management may punish the supervisor whose report does not reflect actual performance (Grund & Przemeczek, 2012).

Another major factor that prevents the managers from sitting with their employees and providing corrective feedback to their subordinates is that the organization fails to assure the managers that proper training will be provided to them (Nikpeyma et al., 2014). According to Davis (2011), this obstacle of not being able to provide training for

conducting PA often forces these organizations not to follow the principles of validity and integrity. Most of the organizations are guilty of not provide training to their managers on open communication, listening skills, collaboration, negation skills and how to establish mutual trust etc. Therefore, Gianini (2015) emphasizes the need to boost the appraiser's ability to assess the exact nature of the job and the training requirements. Mousaabadi (2011, cited in Nikpeyma et al., 2014) believes that the appraiser needs to understand institutional constraints such as traditional, social and cultural influence and weak leadership or absence of leadership due to inadequate or non-existent training programmes in government agencies. In order to have an effective PA in an organization, the managers have to possess many management and leadership skills, especially to meet such job-related demands as "employee planning, monitoring, has the ability to observe the employees, documenting, rating, and providing constructive feedback to them"(Liu& Dong, 2012, p.159). The results of a study conducted by Gaziel (2008) among supervisors showed that some of the PA-related drawbacks like insufficient performance standards, insufficient time for observing and evaluating principals, lack of rewards for excellent performance etc. cause ineffectiveness of PA. More specifically, as Nikpeyma et al (2014) point out, such drawbacks can result in an increase in staff dissatisfaction, lack of motivation, resistance from both appraisers and employees.

Overall, a major obstacle for implementing the PA is referring to manipulation of the rating due to subjectivity (bias) of evaluators. Besides, the supervisor's lack of confidence to face the employee to discuss details of the actual performance is an obstacle in the implementing of an effective performance appraisal. Another obstacle is lack of essential assessment skills of the supervisor in order to provide the PA feedback. Therefore, the managers should be given training on conducting the performance appraisal is essential to overcome some of the obstacles that prevent the implementation of the PA.

## **2.6 The Process of Performance Appraisal:**

### **2.6.1 Techniques and Guidelines of PA implementation:**

The literature on human resource management provides information about and guidelines on various methods of conducting the PA effectively as well as managing the appraisal process, including the interview (Grote, 2000; Losyk, 2002; Caruth and Humphreys, 2008; Hammer, 2007; Palli & Lehtinen, 2014). For many years, PA practitioners adopted varied styles and techniques for conducting the PA based on the concept of "what is" rather than "how it should be". However, there has to be form of assessment on the effectiveness of the PA for the benefits of both the employees and the organization (Walsh & Fisher, 2005). Moreover, the attitudes and approach of supervisors to the PA process is also an important factor in the effectiveness of the PA system (Benson, 2010). Also, the purpose of the PA and the way it is managed by the top management is another important characteristic of an appraisal system (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995).

Lutwama, Roos & Dolame (2013) present six steps of performance management (PM) these are: having knowledge of the job and organization mission, performance planning, performance execution, performance assessment and performance review, and performance renewal and re-contracting. However, a study conducted among supervisors by Gaziel (2008) discovered several issues in the performance appraisal systems. Inadequate time for observing and evaluating principals and performance standards is one of the major drawbacks. Also, they considered the absence of required performance levels of various standards and rewards for excellent performance as significant disadvantages of the system. Nikpeyma et al. (2014) found other types of errors, including the content of evaluation, biases that creep into the process of evaluation, conflict between the needs of the employees and appraisal goals and the absence of clear but independent performance dimensions. They also noted that inadequate and correct feedback on performance appraisal is an important negative aspect of the PA. Consequently, the PA process may end up by increasing employee dissatisfaction, reducing their motivation level, and above all resistance from both

appraisers and employees. Some literature focuses on the fact that the supervisors take only a small percentage of possible performance levels while during the appraisal of their subordinates (Grund & Przemek, 2012).

Pollitt (2014) points out that establishing an ongoing system for performance-measurement, with quarterly appraisals in four areas (objectives, values and behaviors, training and development and job competencies) and one performance appraisal per year is much more effective than a paper-based system. As per the new system, the employees are reminded once a month to update their appraisal information. It allows the management to examine the system and evaluate the progress reports to obtain a clear picture of the rate and quality of progress they have made (For authors, 2014). On the contrary, Cropanzano, et al (2001) point out that in order to maintain the quality of the performance appraisal system; both structural factors and cognitive and psychological factors have to be taken into consideration. Hence, the mechanism for performance evaluation must be uniform and it must accurately measure the employees' performance (Suliman, 2007).

According to several researchers, the appraisal practices including formal review and feedback sessions as part of accepted procedures for creating work objectives, doing self-appraisals, and formulating goals for performance can positively affect the attitudes and reactions of employees to their work, their supervisors, and their organization (Levy, 1997; Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012). According to Levy (1997), the leaders of organizations who do not know the specific faults of current appraisal practices often blame the entire system and they may be forced to accept the status quo or, in some cases, try to replace old systems with new ones with the good intention of improving the responses of the employees. However, in order to ensure the new systems are effective, leaders need to provide the necessary information for making correct decisions. Nevertheless, most of the health service managers understand the importance of rewarding good performance in order to improve the performance of health care workers in the absence of standard mechanisms for rewarding good performers. Hence, the health service managers suggested several ways to recognize the quality performance of health care workers such as issuing certificates of

achievement, offering gifts for outstanding performance, end-of-year parties and words of praise (Levy, 1997). However, in case of poor performance, the management has to identify areas for improvement, formulate appropriate strategies and mechanisms for improvement, and involve health care workers for identifying and implementing solutions to improve their performance challenges. Therefore, some researchers suggest a number of solutions. These include focused training, continuing medical education and regular support supervision (Lutwama et al, 2013).

Proper techniques and clear guidelines are necessary for the effective implementation of the performance appraisal. Providing clear feedback to employees along with developing the objectives of the performance and setting up a development plan with a clear timeframe is an essential in the process of implementation of performance appraisal.

### **2.6.2 Objective of performance Appraisal Process:**

As for the outcomes of the PA study conducted by Lutwama, Roos & Dolamo (2013), performance assessment data were used mainly for subjective performance assessment to identify training needs, promotions, staff rotation and shortlist the employees for rewards or demotion. However, it is worth noting how subjective performance evaluation may create some problems. One problem highlighted by researchers is that such evaluations may not be accurate. For example, if the rater is the owner of a firm and the appraisal affects the pay of the employees, he/she may underrate the performance of his/her subordinates in order to avoid the cost (Grund & Przemack, 2012). Therefore, Dhiman & Maheshwari (2013) suggests a number of elements should constitute upward communication opportunities or voice for the appraisee. These are: suggestions for formulating standards and goals or performance planning; providing space for questioning appraiser's evidence or self-appraisals; and appealing against unfavorable decisions. The authors also present a number of elements of communication to help the appraisee's to understand their appraisals with more clarity. These include communicating the PA policies, objectives and standards clearly; providing performance feedback effectively; and effectively communicating the

final PA decision (Dhiman & Maheshwari, 2013). Other PA structural features like objective and valid criteria, appraiser's accountability to maintain judicial integrity etc. are also useful in making the process more accurate.

Selden, Jessica & Sowa (2011) rightly point out that the ultimate objective of a performance management process is to associate individual performance with organizational performance to inform the employees about the organization's objectives; priorities etc. and suggest effective ways for improving the overall performance of the organization. In addition, they highlight a number of features of the performance management system such as ongoing feedback and coaching, making performance management philosophy of development clear to the employees, targeted training to find solutions for problems, establishing concepts of fairness. However, literature provides evidence to prove that effective feedback can improve an employee's performance (Butt & Macnab, 2013). As per the data supplied by the study conducted by Selden, Jessica & Sowa (2011), a vast majority of the organizations developed training plans along with performance reviews but very few of these organizations reward their employees on the basis of appraisal process. Their study revealed that nonprofit organizations do not provide monetary rewards or incentives to their employees on the basis of performance. More often than not, they say, the front-line staff in such organizations may be more satisfied with the intrinsic rewards of their positions than monetary rewards. Therefore, they suggest that the organizations must look for other types of rewards in the performance management system like enrichment and enlargement of the scope of the job (Selden, Jessica & Sowa, 2011). Therefore, Cravens et al. (2015) refer to the need for establishing a workplace culture where the PA measures the perception of the employee regarding the workplace where there is a positive, holistic, transparent, and supportive environment and examines how it is essential for employees' success. The usefulness of the PA process for the evaluator and the staff who is being evaluated points to the effectiveness of PA (Walsh & Fisher, 2005).

The findings of the Lau & Sholihin (2005) are also significant because they reveal that employees must know how they are evaluated and whether they are being evaluated

using “proper” criteria to increase their satisfaction. Lira (2015), on the other hand, points out that the employees’ response to performance appraisal and the appraisal process is closely linked to their acceptance and validity of the outcomes of the process. Additionally, as Brumback (2011) points out, the respondents complain of lack of fairness in the performance appraisal due to lack of correct orientation given to them prior to the implementation of the appraisal procedures. In fact, this can defeat the purpose of the PA system itself. In short, a ‘good’ performance appraisal system’ is one that provides an accurate but just appraisal of individual performances (Lira, 2015).

The clear objectives of the performance appraisal process play an important role in developing an effective performance appraisal management system if the stakeholders who are involved in the performance appraisal process are aware of the objectives of the process. However, it has to begin with clearly defining the objectives of the PA, its process and how to communicate it among the appraisers and appraisee as well as the PA outcomes. Also, this has to be carried out by an arrangement between employees and the organization.

## **2.7 The Evaluator skills for managing Performance Appraisal:**

Managing poor performance is a skill that was rarely given attention by authorities for various reasons in the past. According to Davis (2011), very few organizations adhere to the principles of validity and integrity mainly due to their inability to train their managers to do performance appraisal focusing mainly on open communication, collaboration, listening skills, how to create mutual trust and so on. Gulati (2011) stresses the importance of tackling poor performance as a skill that can be taught by the organizations. Chandra & Frank (2004) deal with the deficiency in managerial skills of managers interviewing subordinates, which has to be addressed by developing appropriate training methods to conduct performance appraisal interviews effectively. However, formulating goals and providing feedback can improve their performance appraisal skills (Haines & St-Onge, 2012). Therefore, priority must be given to the management of poorly performing staff and motivating them. This will enable the

managers to make them competent, or in case they fail to do so, they can take formal disciplinary actions (Keegal, 2013).

Without a doubt, providing training to managers alone cannot solve the problem mentioned above. In order to ensure the accuracy of performance appraisal maintained the appraiser's ability to understand the nature of job behavior and identify the training requirements is very important. This requires, however, qualified and educated managers who are capable enough to evaluate their employees correctly and provide constructive feedback to them (Akbari Haghighi et al., 2011). In addition to institutional constraints such as traditional social and cultural influence, non-existence of appraisers' training programs is a major issue (Akbari Haghighi et al., 2011 and Liu & Dong, 2012). Again, it is essential for the supervisors to assess their staff on a regular basis (David, 2013). Nikpeyma et al. (2014) have identified a number of areas that appraisal training programs should focus on. These are: "good judgment methods, development of observational skills, and an increased ability to communicate and acquire information" (p.20). Finally, the appraisers have the responsibility to make sure certain essential norms such as employee fairness, accuracy, and self-satisfaction during performance appraisal are adhered to so that they can have positive reactions from the employees and motivate them to improve their performance (Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012).

Haines & St-Onge (2012) refers to the training needs of managers for the success of performance appraisal management. Other researchers place an emphasis on the interpersonal relationship between appraisers and appraisee's (Kim & Rubianty, 2011 & Harrington & Lee, 2015). Some researchers are of the opinion that the organizations should encourage their managers to 'sandwich' negative feedback "in a positive-negative-positive sequence" (Lizzio et al., 2008). Others, however, do not consider that approach as an effective one as the employees may encounter problems in focusing on the real message of such feedbacks (Asmuß, 2008). Performance appraisal often becomes inaccurate due to erroneous information-selection and organization of the collected information. Furthermore, if the evaluator is provided effective training for PA, it would be a useful tool to avoid inflated or deflated ratings (Iqbail, 2012; Whiting & Kline, 2007).

O'Boyle (2014) refers to some of the strategies adopted by managers to highlight negative feedback given to the appraisees. He also refers to two theories, viz., implicit theory and contingency theory that provide insights into how managers may have to use negative feedback techniques. Although the implicit theory of Larson (1984) propose a best practices approach, some managers are of the opinion that negative feedback tactics are more effective than others, whatever the circumstances are. They develop such a belief that they often rely on a small set of practices that may have worked well for the organization in the past and, therefore, believe that such practices will be repeated in the future. Training programs that present generic tactics that should be applied in all circumstances (Greller, 1998, cited in O'Boyle, 2014) may also influence them.

The contingency theory, on the other hand, proposes a 'best fit approach' by which the managers choose a set of tactics that, they think, are the most effective with an individual subordinate. This is important as employees vary in their willingness to receive correction (Gabriel et al., 2014, cited in O'Boyle, 2004). Along with many researchers like Murphy and Cleveland (1995) who emphasize the importance of focusing on employee characteristics for choosing negative feedback tactics, Fried et al. (1992, cited in O'Boyle, 2004) point out that many managers identify the most appropriate tactics for each subordinate and then they use them thinking that these tactics will help them achieve the managerial objectives. Finally, some researchers believe that the Negotiated Performance Appraisal (NPA) is a more useful tool for facilitators and organizational consultants to increase dialogue between supervisors and their subordinates to solve the conflict between the staff and supervisors (Billikopf, 2010). Therefore, the organization should provide adequate training to all the appraisers on how to conduct the appraisals fairly and effectively prior to the commencement of the appraisal based on the organization's performance appraisal policies and procedures. This will certainly help the employees feel that the appraisals are conducted in an equitable manner (Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012).

The managerial skills of the evaluator to manage his or her job are essential. One of these skills is managing his or her subordinates. Therefore, one of the important

elements for effective implementation of the PA is to ensure that the evaluator is well trained in the management of the PA. Also, the evaluator has to have the important skills to communicate with the employees about the appraisal and how to come out with positive outcomes in order to ensure that professional development of the staff takes place without any subsequent negative reaction from the employees.

## **2.8 The Performance Appraisal Interview:**

Since performance appraisal interviews (PAIs) decide the training needs and the career development of the workforce, they are critical to the effective use of human capital, and ultimately, to the survival of any organization (Clifton, 2012). According to Scheuer (2014), PAI is an essential management tool for the assessment of employees' performance efficiency and it can be defined as "a structured, formal interaction between a subordinate and supervisor that usually takes the form of a periodic interview (annual or semiannual) to evaluate work performance". (Scheuer, 2014, p. 408). Therefore, the PA review, evaluates, and then records each employee's performance systematically during a specific period, which help to examine an employee's weaknesses and strengths and identify opportunities for improvement (Manoharan et al., 2010). Therefore, in any organization, PA can be used as a practical and fairness tool for employee motivation and development when employees perceive their performance appraisals as accurate and fair (Linna et al., 2012).

The findings of some empirical research projects have illustrated that effective appraisal practices can bring about improvement in the productivity of employees, their job satisfaction, and commitment (Pettijohn et al., 2001; Mani, 2002; Jawahar, 2006). The PA process begins with the formulation of an employee's goals and ends with a formal meeting or performance appraisal interview (PAI) where an employee receives feedback and fair rating of his performance using standard performance criteria from his supervisor (Espinilla, Andres et al., 2013). Lutwama, Roos & Dolamo (2013), conducted a study among managers and found that the PA should be a two-way process. The health care workers should have a clear understanding of the process and the indicators for measuring individual performance should be available and known to all

the stakeholders. The study revealed that the managers had faith in the value of face-to-face interview as a tool to show health care workers their strengths and weaknesses since in the absence of such a mechanism, the employees would not be motivated to take part in the performance management. This is because PA is necessary to show them its benefits. Without a doubt, the organizations have to create a “culture of monitoring, evaluation and feedback of health information to improve the performance of health care workers” (Lutwama et al., 2013, p.11). More importantly, face-to-face interviews should be conducted in such a way that the managers are able to stimulate the employees’ input. The managers should be careful listeners, as this would provide the employees with enough opportunities for their voices to be heard (Lewis et al., 2006).

According to Dhiman & Maheshwari (2013), regular discussions on performance standards and policies, regular feedback and explanations on decisions taken are necessary to provide the appraisees relevant information for their understanding of those decisions. Moreover, PA provides opportunities for “dialogue between the supervisor and the employees to focus on the latter’s performance and development” (Mieroop & Schnurr, 2014). This would also help create a “knowledge base of an employee’s best practices” for future (Kluger & Nir, 2010). For this reason, the managers who conduct performance appraisal interviews (PAIs) usually follow interview guidelines and the “results are summarized in writing in situ or retrospect” (Scheuer, 2014). In spite of this, however, traditional PA is often criticized for being ineffective as it fails to improve an employee’s performance and may have a negative impact on his job satisfaction (Ferris, et al., 2008). This view has been supported by a study conducted by Brown, Hyatt, & Benson (2010). They point out that employees who have had a bad PAI may show job dissatisfaction and low organizational commitment.

A recent four-year longitudinal study with a sample of more than 6,000 public-sector employees revealed that a poor PA experience could have an adverse impact on the perceptions and attitudes of an organization’s employees (Linna et al., 2012). More interestingly, even if employee experience is positive, appraisal interviews can still lead to negative attitudes and lower organizational performance. This is evident in the

findings of a study conducted by Mani (2002) who found that over 40 % of public-sector organization's staff, including those who received a "good" or "outstanding" rating, were dissatisfied with their PA. Other studies, on the other hand, highlight the significance of the relationship between employee participation and PAIs and that mutual feedback correlates with the effects of PAIs (Jawahar, 2006). Again, it has also been shown that the employees' perception of justice in the PA outcomes is related to the interactional style adopted by the superior during the PAIs (Erdogan, 2002).

An opinion poll conducted in 2011 surprisingly revealed that less than one-third of over 5,000 employees who participated in the survey believed that their performance appraisal had helped them improve their performance (Aguinis et al., 2011). Certainly, such negative findings suggest that all is not well with traditional PAIs. The respondents are particularly critical about the manner in which feedback is given by the managers. Based on such negative findings, some researchers like Coens & Jenkins have even called for doing away with performance appraisals altogether (Coens & Jenkins, 2000). Consequently, several researchers have advocated appreciative inquiry to be applied in a variety of contexts, especially for developing leadership capacity in organizations (Bushe & Kassam, 2005) and improving personal relationships (Kelm, 2005). One of the notable strategies to apply appreciative inquiry to the performance management process is the feed forward interview methodology (Kluger & Nir, 2010).

Moreover, there have been very few studies on what happens in various interview situations. This is mainly because most PAI studies have relied on data supplied by questionnaires and retrospective interviews. Also, although during the past 50 years many studies on performance appraisal interviews have been conducted, real-time interaction between superior and subordinates in the interviews has not been studied on a wider scale. Again, until today there have not been any studies specifically on the manner in which reading and writing are used in PAI interactions or how they facilitate such interactions. Therefore, Palli & Lehtinen (2014) highlights the importance of written documentation as one of the major positive aspects of the PAI interview, viz., the tool for obtaining consent from them for achieving future goals.

Performance appraisal interview is an effective approach that provides an opportunity to both the supervisor and the employee to discuss their performance during a certain period of time in depth and identify ways to overcome them. The PAI is an opportunity for the employee to hear his or her voice as well. Most often the approach and attitude of the evaluator during the discussion of the performance play a role in ensuring that the employees perceive the performance appraisal outcomes clearly.

## **2.9 The Performance Appraisal Feedback:**

Performance management (PM) consists of both formal and informal feedback to employees based on their performance. The PM system is primarily a formal and systematic process for analyzing employee performance and providing oral and written feedback to employees at least on a yearly basis (Selden, Jessica & Sowa, 2011). The formal process often supplements the ongoing informal feedback given to employees by the management of an organization. Quality feedback given to the employees reflects a congenial performance appraisal environment where they can receive timely feedback from their supervisors (Kinicki et al., 2004).

According to many researcher, feedback is a two-way discussion of an employee's past performance to provide a basis for administrative decisions, concerning salary, promotion, transfer, termination in addition to employee development for the purpose of linking an employee's performance to organizational goals such (Linna et al., 2012; Budworth, Latham & Manroop, 2015). Formal feedback becomes all the more important when the management wants to inform an employee about some corrective measures (Ilgen & Davis, 2000). On the other hand, Brown, Hyatt, and Benson (2010) are of the opinion that the absence of, or limited feedback and recognition can create dissatisfaction among employees. Other researchers believe that feedback from the performance appraisal should form a basis for employees' development (Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012). DeNisi & Kluger (2000, cited in O'Boyle, 2014, p. 273) define the phrase 'feedback intervention' as a "process of providing employees with information about their performance".

According to David (2013), meaningful written feedback is essential for providing the ratees with specific guidelines for bringing about changes in their behavior later on besides instilling confidence in their ability to accomplish the goals of their organization. Also, it has been noted by several researchers that negative feedback has the important function of making it possible for performance improvements (Glassman, 2010; Heneman & Werner, 2005). One advantage of negative feedback is that it provides the employee with an opportunity to realign with achieving the goals of the organization (Locke & Latham, 2002). However, the manner in which negative feedback is given to the employee can bring about change in the interpretation of the feedback and his response to the same (Harms & Roebuck, 2010, cited in Espinilla et al., 2013). In spite of this benefit of communicating negative performance feedback, most managers do not like to give negative feedback and, as a result, the feedback is often delayed or held back (Ilgen et al., 1979; Selvarajan & Cloninger, 2012). Some researchers have pointed out that negative feedback may produce employee defensiveness because it involves a discussion of their mistakes and shortcomings and not mentioned the positive comments (David, 2013). However, managers can overcome this negative impact by inviting the employees to participate in the appraisal process. For this they have to integrate aspects that can achieve the specific goal of increasing employee motivation and efficiency (David, 2013).

Lutwama, Rose & Dolame (2013) state that the managers have to ensure the supervisors provide timely feedback to their subordinates after every PAI. According to them face-to-face discussions of appraisal outcomes are the most appropriate way of bringing out the strengths and weaknesses of health care workers. At the same time, it is true that some managers do not discuss the outcomes with the employees for fear of creating conflict between their subordinates. In a study conducted by O'Boyle (2014) on negative feedback, 35 % of managers responded that the employee's performance had improved, 40 % opined that the employees changed their jobs later on and 25 % believed that there was no tangible improvement in the performance of the employee. Without a doubt, negative feedback after a PAI is difficult for the manager and the employee. In many cases, negative performance feedback is a crucial stage in the

relationship between the employees and the manager (Billikopf, 2010). Therefore, understanding managerial negative feedback tactics is very important. Brutus (2010) rightly points out that the PA process should be implemented carefully as it is extremely emotionally charged. Thus, feedback given harshly or negatively may end up disastrously for the organization or supervisor as the employee may direct his anger towards the organization. Besides, it can dent the employee's self-confidence as well (Fedor et al., 2001).

Some studies suggest that if the employees consider their performance appraisal system as fair, it is more likely that they will demonstrate higher levels of trust and express better satisfaction with the appraisal system. This objective can be achieved if the employees are assessed by a variety of assessors such as peers, clients, etc.). Lau & Sholihin (2005) investigated how the performance measurement systems affected job satisfaction. They found that performance measurement systems in general can increase job satisfaction; however, this can occur only when employees believe that the whole process is carried out in a fair manner and their supervisor is able to win their trust. Literature also reveals that performance appraisal can have significant impact on employees' attitudes and behavior so long as they derive satisfaction from the PA. For example, Kuvaas (2011) points out that an employee's satisfaction with the PA or PAI usually influences his performance at work. As pointed out by David (2013), it is important to provide more direct feedback as it will increase positive emotions and reduce the occurrence of negative emotions, which has the additional benefit of increasing the quality of performance.

As mentioned earlier in this review, fear of creating confrontational situations, unfortunately, prevents managers from providing corrective feedback. Therefore, Grubb (2007); and Manoharan, Muralidharan & Deshmukh (2010) note that many appraisal systems perform unsatisfactorily mainly because they are irrelevant to organizational objectives that help identify the training requirements and improve their knowledge, skills, and other positive characteristics. In order to overcome these limitations of PA, a system called 'interpretive structural modeling' (ISM) has been developed to create an effective approach to train employees and thereby improve their organizations'

productivity as a whole (Manoharan et al., 2010). Although the literature shows evidence of various responses from health care workers regarding performance appraisal, some of them think that they do not receive constructive feedback on a regular basis about their performance. Some of them, say even believe that health service managers do not report the results of health care workers' performance to the external stakeholders (Luttwama et al., 2013).

Feedback on the performance can motivate or demotivate the employees. Although the feedback can play a role in correcting the performance of staff, it can cause discomfort to both the evaluator and employee, particularly if the feedback is negative. However, the level of accuracy and validity of the feedback given by the evaluator is very important in communicating negative feedback to employees as it could make positive changes in the employee and would be welcome to him or her.

## **2.10 Performance Appraisal and Professional Development:**

### **2.10.1 Strength the performance level:**

The primary goal of an effective performance appraisal should not be just helping the manager to make salary and promotion decisions based on past performance. The PA should guide the managers to develop performance improvement plans for supervisors or managers to enhance skills development. After the strengths and weaknesses of an employee have been identified, their weaknesses should be converted into training needs. The ideal scenario is one in which the employee and the manager develop a performance improvement plan sitting together (Celik, 2014). When such a situation becomes a reality, improved performance results can be realized easily. However, Davis (2011) presents some obstacles that do not help the managers use performance appraisal as a tool for the development. One of these obstacles is avoiding a written agreement between the employee and the organization for providing the required training (Nikpeyme et al., 2014).

Furthermore, Kim (2016) refers to the impact of feedback intervention (FI) on performance. The ultimate aim of the PA is to continually improve the overall mission

accomplishment of the organization (Grubb, 2007). Again, systematic PA reviews that help identify and correct mistakes in an employee's performance during a specific period should be recorded for future reference as well. This record that contains employees' weaknesses and strengths are necessary for finding opportunities for improvement and skills development (Manoharan et al., 2010).

Strengthening of the performance level of employees is the main role of the performance appraisal. Therefore, it can be achieved by a transparent system where the performance can be reviewed by the supervisor and the weaknesses of the employees can be addressed and corrected and he can plan for further interventions.

### **2.10.2 Identification of Training Needs:**

The findings of a study conducted by Lutwama, Roos & Dolame, (2013) found that majority of health care workers who participated in the study (60.1%) agreed that the analysis of their training needs was based on the findings of performance appraisal whereas only half (50.4%) of them responded positively to the question whether procedures to gather employees' suggestions for performance improvement were followed or not. A similar number of participants (49.6%) agreed that performance data was used to set priorities for personal development and that timely actions were taken when performance fell below acceptable levels. On the other hand, Saini (2016) points out that mentors or coaches and approaches used by an employee in carrying out his professional responsibilities must be considered while conducting performance appraisals because they shed light on the employees' capabilities. Additionally, a supportive environment created by the organization where the managers/supervisors provide continuous motivation to the subordinates for further development and skill enhancement is essential for achieving success in obtaining the desired outcome of the PA. Furthermore, proper communication of assessment criteria of performance appraisal and obtaining timely feedback from all stakeholders are necessary for finalizing career development programs besides providing proper counselling to the employees and developing career plans keeping in mind the horizontal and vertical development (Lutwama et al., 2013).

The identification of training needs is the responsibility of both the employee and the supervisor which can be discussed during the interview. Most importantly, the sources of the information that inform the employees about their training needs must be based on evidence and valid information.

### **2.10.3 Professional Development Plan & Employee's Satisfaction:**

Succession planning is an important function of an HR manager as part of career development (Saini, 2016). This is important for addressing the weaknesses identified or areas of potential by the PA, which in turn will result in greater employee satisfaction and lower employee turnover (Selden, Jessica & Sowa, 2011). Additionally, Cook and Crossman (2004, cited in Lira, 2015) are of the view that literature shows how 'justice' factor is crucial for the employee satisfaction with the performance appraisal process. Moreover, Clifton & Harter (2003, p. 111) believe that "individuals gain more when they build on their talents, than when they make comparable efforts to improve their areas of weakness". Again, a positive workplace culture that reflects a positive, holistic, transparent, and supportive environment is necessary for the employees to focus on their strengths. Only then can they see any value in the performance appraisal process (Evans et al., 2004; Department of Health, 2004). This study found that the PA provided regular feedback on past performance and that it (PA) was necessary to maintain progress and find out training and development needs of the employees (Department of Health, 2004, cited in Cravens, et al., 2015). As per this study, almost 90% of health care workers always had access to their supervisors when they needed support and that the majority of them (69.9%) believed that their supervisors helped them to apply different methods to improve their performance (Cravens et al., 2015). Other researchers like Noe et al. (2003) point out that performance management (PM) is essentially an evaluation of the achievement of a set of objectives over a period. It is, again, interesting to note that these researchers point out that the result of such evaluations may lead to "new requirements for employee development" in addition to creating an impact on the remuneration scheme (Noe et al., 2003).

Professional development is associated with staff satisfaction; and both concepts are the outcomes of a fair performance appraisal process and positive environment that encourages the implementation of a transparent performance appraisal and provide a professional development plan for the organization's employees.

### **2.11 Summary:**

To summarize, effective implementation of the performance appraisal is of great importance for the professional development of the employees in my organization. The selected literature for review provided me with an insight that enabled me to understand the position of the management of PA in the DGHS and knowledge regarding the best practices of PA management available in other organizations that enabled me to use the suitable practices to resolve the investigated managerial issue.

Many studies on the importance of implementing the two-way PA interview were included in the discussion between supervisors and subordinates and they provided a structure for the performance feedback as this practice strengthens the communication channel between them. Moreover, the PA is a tool that enables the researcher to identify the strengths & weaknesses of the employees and plan accordingly. However, the literature from Oman, the GCC and Middle East countries shared similar concerns in the manner in which the culture and relationships could influence the PA outcomes. Although all of them agreed that the PA was not satisfactorily implemented, they recommended providing feedback to the subordinates as well as do follow up on the PA system. Therefore, I believe there is room for improvement in the PA practices in my organization. I found a lot of literature in developed countries that examined the management of PA, and I managed to find the nature of the obstacles that could inhibit the best practices. The major challenges included a lack of time to conduct the PAI, not having trained evaluators, imperfect components of the PA report, the absence of a protocol or guidelines, organization culture and the questionable monitoring the PA management system, which could play a major role in determining the success or failure of PA management.

The literature encouraged me to select this issue to investigate it in-depth in my organization and take appropriate practices to resolve the areas of weakness in the managerial issue. Most of the literature focused on the importance of training and preparation of the supervisors in PA interviews and enhance his\her skills in observation, monitoring process, documentations, listening and communication skills and managing different personality types. Moreover, creating and modifying the content of evaluation is essential to avoid any bias in the assessment. Additionally, ensuring effective PA management is important to develop guidelines that support the supervisors and subordinates in the process of the PA. Thus, the literature that I had reviewed presented numerous advantages investigating the research issue in order to provide actionable knowledge for its resolution.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology and Method of inquiry**

### **3.1 Introduction:**

The primary aims of this research project are identifying the barriers to effective utilization of the performance appraisal system as a tool for professional development. In addition, to explore the factors that prevented evaluators from implementing the open performance appraisal interview. This chapter describes the methodological approach for this qualitative case study combined with participatory action research based on constructionist research designs on the management of PA in the DGHS. I am as insider researcher also aims at an in-depth analysis of the attitude and knowledge as well as the perception of the supervisors and health professionals in relations to the management of PA and its relation to their professional development by conducting face to face interviews with supervisors and two focus groups consisting of subordinates. The action research approach was applied to develop the knowledge and skills of the participants in order to develop a new system of performance appraisal. The first section of this chapter presents the philosophical assumption and interpretative framework, the purpose of the research and the design of the research. The middle section of this chapter presents and describes the setting, sample and instrumentation/ measures. The final part of this chapter presents data collection, data analysis, and the ethical consideration.

### **3.2 Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretative Framework:**

#### **3.2.1 Introduction:**

Philosophical assumptions can have a significant impact on the research outcome and they can produce different results based on the type of philosophy that has been used. I believe that being open to philosophical assumption has enabled me to have a picture of the approach that I have to take in terms of how I will conduct my research. What the suitable research questions that I will use and the kind of knowledge I need to collect. How I can gather the knowledge or collect data from the participants and how I will be

able to do the analysis. Finally, how the interventions will be made and which standards I can select to resolve the workplace issue (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Moreover, it will provide me with a road map of how I am working in my participatory action research project. Some researchers argue that researchers have to ensure their assumptions about “the nature of social reality” are clearly formulated in their minds and “what it means to be human (ontology) and the nature and purpose of knowledge” (epistemology) before they embark on a particular research method (Morgan & Smircich, 1980, p. 491). These researchers have provided a “rough typology for thinking about the various views that different social scientists hold about human beings and their world” (Morgan & Smircich, 1980, p. 492).

The work of Morgan and Smircich (1980) has been modified by Cunliffe (2011) who replaced the influential original typology of the subject-object continuum with three knowledge problems based on a subjectivist- objectivist continuum to highlight the different forms of knowledge and theory- building (Cunliffe, 2011). As I believe the knowledge problematic is suitable for my research project, I have decided to use the Intersubjectivism problematic in my project. Within this problematic lie various positions from the Hebrmas (1984) notion that inter-subjective agreement is a way of jointly constructing a sense of community to the nation (Ricoeurian, 1992 cited in Geiger, 2009). According to Schutz (1970) and Garfinkel (1967), two pioneers in this field, intersubjectivity is defined as a “commonly experienced and understood world of shared meanings, interpretations, and culture”. The intersubjective researchers generally focus on a micro level conversation, relationships, and insights about specific issues; and their research findings are shaped the participants’ dialectical characteristics (Cunliffe, 2011).

It is notable that researchers usually work with research participants using conversations or discussions to explore how they can jointly interpret, understand, and relate with others and our surroundings in order to search for available insights into and explanations of various aspects of organizational life (Cunliffe, 2011). The philosophical assumption that will be used for this research project is ontology nominalism and social constructionism of epistemology, which will be discussed in detail in the next section (3.2.2 & 3.2.3), and how they will be applied in this research project.

### **3.2.2 Ontology Assumption:**

The philosophical assumption that has been selected for this research is 'ontological argument' which, is essentially an issue or problem-based assumption (Creswell, 2014). The ontology concept is a philosophical assumption about the nature of reality. It is the initial step, which I have to start with and identify it prior to moving into epistemology, methodology and finally the methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Ontology has four positions: the positions of realism, internal realism, relativism and nominalism. The opposition of realism consists of one single truth and facts that exist and can be revealed. As for internal realism, although the truth exists it is obscure. In relativism, there are many truths, and the facts rely on the viewpoints of the observer. Finally, the position of nominalism does not consist of truth and the facts are the creation of human beings (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). The constructionist research designs are linked to the nominalist ontologies. Therefore, the selected assumption for ontology will be nominalist where I will start with the assumption that there is no absolute truth, and I have to clarify different truths that I will be discovered by the participants. Therefore, for the purpose of this research project, I believe that the management of the performance appraisal does not rely on one single truth and that the real management of the performance appraisal in the organization will rely on the knowledge that will be created with the help of the participants. The position of nominalist ontology was adopted because I believe I had a definite advantage – the advantage of an insider researcher who has advanced knowledge about her organization. This assumption supported me to avoid any bias in formulating the work-place problem and formulate the objectives and the research questions. Moreover, it enabled me to appreciate different forms of knowledge generated through supervisors and subordinates' analysis of the work- place problem and identifying the barriers, which supported the effective implementation of the new PA system in the organization.

Furthermore, the concept of nominalism and the inductive approach has led me to emphasize reasoning from immediate experience. Therefore, I intend to create a clear picture of multiple realities concerning the management of the performance appraisal. The investigation into the issue several truths because each individual in the

organization has different perceptions towards the management of the PA, and these perceptions will help him or her to manage it differently. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2012) rightly points out that Nominalism of Ontology may not reveal the truth as it usually draws attention to different factors concerning the practice of performance appraisal in the DGHS. The implementation of Nominalism of Ontology consists of the researcher and participants being engaged in an “inquiry and reflection process into their action for the purpose of interpreting the knowledge that has been produced and arriving at new insights and actions (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Monk & Howard (1998) opine that the varied backgrounds of participants in the research would provide different perspectives and present a rich picture of the problem. Again, the diverse experiences in the management of the performance appraisal would help develop an in- depth understanding of the problem and enable me and my project team to come out with a suitable solution (Coghlan, 2001).

Initially, the engagement in an inquiry on the management of the PA system was difficult as the participants wondered how I would ask questions for which I already had the answers to since I was an employee of the organization. However, after I had provided information about the importance of the inquiry, they were persuaded to reflect in depth on their practice helped us to come out with substantial information for creating actionable knowledge. Moreover, some of the supervisors, particularly those belonging to the administrative department believed that the management of the PA system must be done by administrative supervisors. Hence they wondered why I sought to conduct interviews with other health professionals (supervisors).

### **3.2.3 Epistemology Assumption:**

Ontology is the assumption about the nature of reality, whereas epistemology recognizes different ways of knowing the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The Epistemology of inquiry into the nature of the problem that has been investigated is social constructionism. Where the participants of this study bring in their ideas about the system of the PA and how they manage it and their perception into the importance of involving the subordinates in the PA process. Also, how all the stakeholders can be

alerted about making required change into the practice of the PA management. While commenting on social constructionism. Creswell (2013) opines that individuals would like to obtain an understanding of the world in which they live and work by developing subjective, varied and multiple meanings of their experiences. The researcher looks for the complexity of the view instead of narrowing the meaning into view categories or ideas (Creswell, 2013). The social constructionist epistemology had an impact on my study. For instance, it helped me to identify the nature of the problem and other stakeholders in the organization to consider all factors that inhabit the PA system such as inappropriate documentation of the PA, not using trained supervisors in the management of the PA, lack of follow up etc., (Johnson & Duberley, 2000).

Since my primary aim was to rely on the participants' views of the situation, the subjective meanings expressed in the participants' views had to be dealt with socially and historically (Creswell, 2014). The researcher had the responsibility of listening attentively to "what people say or do in their work setting" (Creswell, 2014). According to this author, constructivist researchers focus on the process of interaction, the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants because their background shape their interpretation and they would like to accept the interpretation of their findings that are shaped by their own experiences and background.

Since social constructionism refers to the ideas that are formed by people rather than by objective and external factors, as a social scientist the researchers should not strive to find facts and patterns in which they occur. Instead, they should focus on the construction of different meanings of their experiences, trying to understand and appreciate these varied experiences rather than searching for causes and fundamental laws to explain behaviors of the participants (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). I had to increase, therefore, my general understanding of the situation by developing different perspectives to identify the hidden issues that lead participants to manage the performance appraisal as it is being carried out at present, which would eventually enable me to have a holistic picture of the situation and the right actions will be taken to solve the problem. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) pointed out there is a connection

between the ontology and epistemology where constructionism fits nominalism. Therefore, I started my investigation into the research issue and then analyzed it through discussions of the issue with my colleagues before starting the action research cycle. This research project required the engagement of the research team in the analysis of the problem through reflection and reflexivity. The actionable knowledge was generated with the help of the experiences of participants through discussion. At the analysis stage, the data was expected to make sense for stakeholders who would have new insights about the problem before they started resolving it.

The actionable knowledge was presented to decision-makers and project team members to discuss how we could construct that knowledge to be used as a framework that provides us with a clear picture on how the plan for action would be designed to be attached as appendix no (2). The project team members were MOH employees who belonged to different departments and actively involved in the management of the PA in their respective departments. Moreover, the findings of the study supported them in resolving the problem throughout the action research cycle. The epistemology describes various assumptions regarding different types of data to be gathered and how it is related to my inquiry into the research problem. Also, I am planning to interview each of the participants to gain knowledge from the participants and find out how they obtain the knowledge related to the management of the performance appraisal. The subjective evidence that was gathered was consist of the views of the participants, as they are the ones who understand the PA and get knowledge on how they are managing it. Besides, they are going to be involved in the project for developing the new PA system in the organization. Also, since I am studying my own organization in this project, this assumption of epistemology is more applicable, especially because I am an insider researcher. The evidence of the findings also relied on the quotes from the participants.

The Interpretative Framework that is based on theories such as advocacy and participatory theories seek to bring about change in the management of the performance appraisal (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the associated Interpretative Framework can be the Transformative Framework where there are a series of actions and activities that can make a change in the management of the performance appraisal

through an action research approach cycle with the collaboration of the research participants (Creswell, 2014). The Qualitative research approach that was used to search for the issue for the case study can use this framework combined with action research where the project team is expected to participate effectively in making the change (Creswell, 2014).

### **3.3 What influenced my choice of Methodology?**

Health organization relies mainly on the quantity of data and quantitative results to take any decisions or make any interventions into the health system. This is sometimes a limitation to identify some of the health organization's problems, especially those relating to the behavior or attitude which cannot be detected by figures and numbers. However, my journey in the DBA program throughout the core modules led me to the realization that most of the workplace problems can be identified, with help of inquiry of the learning set members in the class as well as through the involvement of my colleagues in my department and that not all problems can be explored by having numbers. Therefore, it gave me confidence that I can manage and choose qualitative research approach, an approach that has helped me to apply participatory action research in my own organization as a case study

Without a doubt, the qualitative methodology uses various approaches for inquiry such as narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study (Creswell, 2013). Initially, I intended to use phenomenology, but because of my focus on developing an in-depth description and analysis of the management of the PA, rather than understanding the essence of the supervisors and subordinates' experience of its management, I did not aim at identifying the common meaning. Thus, for instance, I tried to understand the similarities as well as differences in the management of the PA system. This made me choose a case study as a suitable method for my study on the issue and the health discipline. During the pre-context in the action research cycle I found that most of the decision makers as well as the subordinates were interested in the research approach that I will be using for investigating the research problem in-depth. Also, they were more interested in this process when they learned that they

would be involved in the research from the stage of identifying the problem until the solution stage, especially because they know that they will be part of the project and not just people who apply the findings of the research project.

In addition, since I would not intend to generalize the results of the research and my primary aim is to have an in-depth knowledge of the problem to be solved. The single case that I have selected comes from a constructionist epistemology (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Moreover, I believe that applying the participatory action research will enable me to engage the affected people to be involved from early stage of change which will encourage them to have their input in the success of the project. Because, as Agyris (1994) has pointed out, sharing the responsibility of learning among the stakeholders in the organization will increase the accountability on the part of the employees in solving this problem. Finally, I was interested in selecting my organization as a case study scenario because I have pre-understanding of the context and setting as well as the nature of the problem besides having easy access to the gatekeeper as well as the participants and data.

### **3.4 Participatory Action Research Approach:**

The proposed approach of this study is applying action research in the organization rather than researching action. Participatory of action research is a form of action research in which professional social researchers operate as full collaborators with members of the organizations is studying and transforming those organizations. It is an ongoing organization learning process (Greenwood, Whyte & Harkavey, 1993). The inquiries that been used was from inside as insider research involved in the process of the research in order to intent to understand a particular situation (Evered & Louis, 1981). Action research involves opportunistic, planned interventions in real time situations and study of those interventions as they occur (Coghlan, 2001). Huff & Huff (2001) suggest Mode two as the most effective tool for an organization as it supports knowledge creation through action. Action research has been chosen with the specific objective initiating actionable research where the stakeholders and decision makers can participate in the research to resolve the problem through collaboration and participation

in order to develop a new system of performance appraisal for the employees (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

Since the research project has an impact on the stakeholders who are going to be affected by the change, it was essential to apply participatory action research. Therefore, members of the organization motivated themselves and encouraged each other to participate from an early stage in the project. Some of the participants were interested in engaging themselves in the actions for resolving an issue that took months (Eden & Huxham, 1996). In the process of change management, I intend to empower the participants through action (Elden & Levin, 1991). Therefore, some of the supervisors and subordinates who participated in data-collection were interested in participating until the end of the project. Their initiative and further interest in the project was supported by their direct supervisors and the Director General who allowed them to engage themselves in the project activities during their duty time. Therefore, action research is suitable for explaining how we explored and investigated the problem and what justification that we provide to explain our action that is applicable to each aspect we discovered (Cassell & Johnson, 2006). The participatory action research will be an opportunity for organization learning as a process of collaborative action learning and action research in an organization with the aim of solving complex problems and achieving change and improved performance at individual, team and organization level (Zuber-Skerritt & Perry, 2002).

### **3.5 Context and Purpose of Action Research:**

The context and purpose of action research is the initial step of conducting the inquiry for me as a researcher to know what sort of information is required to understand and conduct this project. Coghlan & Brannick (2010, p.8) suggest a number of questions to be asked in establishing the context and purpose: (i) Why is it important to conduct this project or study? (ii) (During the assessment of the external context) what are the economic, political and social forces that drive the change? (iii) (While considering the internal forces) what are the cultural and structural forces that drive the change?

### **3.5.1 Context:**

The Civil Service Ministry (CSM) has overall responsibility for the formulation of required policies and procedures related to the management of the human resources. For instance, this ministry is responsible for the recruitment of employees, financial promotion, scholarship, retirement and termination of employees. Therefore, the performance appraisal document is issued by the Civil Service Ministry which is responsible for providing all the ministries same PA annual report. The Ministry of Health is using the same formal performance appraisal report that is being used by other services ministries. The PA form is, however, too general to be implemented in a health organization because there are significant differences in the job descriptions of various specialties of the M.O H employees from those of other Ministries. Moreover, depending on the nature of the job of health professionals and the outcome of health services provided to patients or clients, they are required to assess the performance of individual staff. As a result, there are different management approaches of the performance appraisals system, which leads to a situation where the training requirements of the employees are not satisfactorily addressed based on the outcome of the performance appraisal. The result is total dissatisfaction with the system among the stakeholders in the DGHS. Although the policy emphasizes the need to inform the staff about his performance appraisal on a regular basis, this does not happen in the DGHS in the absence of internal standards and guidelines on how to manage the performance appraisal system.

The forces that can drive the change include the willingness of the stakeholders to make the change and improve the (PA) system. Therefore, I visited the Ministry of Law Affairs and met the law advisors there in order to ensure that the new system of the performance appraisal does not contradict the policies of the country. Assessment of internal factors such as the readiness of the DGHS to participate in and improve the performance appraisal system was carried out prior to the commencement of the action research cycles in the context and purpose stage (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). If the issues of the organization were brought to the attention of the stakeholders, they would show interest in participating in the project. I have already identified the decision makers

and other participants who are ready to participate in the project by working in collaboration with me in the analysis of the problem and developing an action plan. I searched for all the rules and regulations related to the performance appraisal by contacting various authorities such as the Ministry of Regulation Affairs and found that the direct supervisor has to provide the staff with regular feedback on the performance appraisal. I believe that in order to avoid any conflicts between my role as an insider researcher and a problem identifier, especially since I have decided to choose a red-hot issue that deserves scientific investigation (Roth, Shani & Leary, 2007).

The financial set up of the health organization in Oman is similar to that of other ministries as all of them depend on the Ministry of Finance. The appointment of new staff is mainly based on the availability of financial grades allocated to each organization and not based on the requirements of each organization. For instance, the Ministry of Finance seldom takes into account the of staff shortage. Often, some departments of some organizations have severe staff shortage whereas other departments are overstaffed, which is not given due importance while allocating those grades. Moreover, the promotion to the next finance grade is a routine process for all staff without considering their level of performance except for poor performance. The employees of the Ministry of Civil Service can get a promotion every five years without being linked to promotion to higher positions or greater responsibilities, except for the fact that some supervisors or consultants who are eligible for high salary because of the difficulty level of their responsibilities. However, because of the current economic slump that started in 2014, the government stopped promotions to higher grades. This has had a negative impact on staff satisfaction and their level of performance as well. Additionally, the typical culture of Arab countries which encourages strengthening social relationship plays a huge role in keeping the management of the PA a secret process. This aspect of the Arab culture prevents the supervisors from disclosing the annual PA report to their subordinates. The political factor affects the PA management in the MOH. Nowadays the top authority is empowered to select any person to fill up vacancies in management positions without considering the level of performance or education qualifications of the candidates. Similarly, selection of staff for higher education or

scholarship sometimes depends on some political considerations and not the requirements of the organization. For example, if one of the staff has obtained a low performance appraisal grade, it can be easily manipulated. All of these factors contribute to continuing the practice of non-transparent PA management without it.

### **3.5.2 Purpose of Action Research:**

The purpose of action research is to improve the management of performance appraisal system which can lead to a corresponding improvement in the individual staff's performance based on an authentic evaluation. Another aim of the study is to explore the factors that prevent the direct supervisors from implementing an open performance appraisal system so that they can make necessary intervention later on based on such outcomes. In order to improve the performance appraisal system, it is important to understand the stakeholders' (participants) viewpoints, their thoughts, knowledge and attitude about the issue. Therefore, applying qualitative case study research enriched the action research with valuable and actionable findings. I decided to select this problem since my role in my organization is to manage the human resources (Nurses workforce) and maintain the high level of health care provided to the patients by developing their skills and improving their performance. Therefore, I am a bit concerned about the 'role duality' in conducting action research (Williander & Styhre, 2006). Therefore, initially I wanted to investigate the issue with the nurses only as I noticed this practice while I was working as a nursing supervisor. However, the advice that I received from the undersecretary of the Ministry of Health for Administration and Finance Affairs is to include samples of all the work forces in the project as all of them use the same system for conducting the performance appraisal. This suggestion was helpful to me in avoiding the problem of 'role duality'. Moreover, the participants from different levels of supervisory positions as well as specialties helped me to understand the problem from different angles. In this context, I thought Bjorkman & Sundgren's (2005) strategies to overcome the '*role duality*' are quite useful. One important strategy that he suggests is to identify "red and hot" issues. The PA is a "red and hot" issue for this project and I have discovered that each employee in the DGHS is interested in identifying the level of his or her performance and improving it.

### **3.6 Meta Learning Approach:**

In order to obtain the benefits of implementing the action research in the organization, I tried to ensure the project team participated in the project voluntarily and all of them were concerned and involved in the issue of the PA as *“I am a part of the problem and the problem is a part of me”* (Pedler, 2008, p.11). As the researcher, I applied the Meta learning cycle of inquiry in the content, process and reflection on what was constructed, planned, acted on and evaluated studied and evaluated” at each stage of the action research cycle (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). I constructed the issues under investigation by generating knowledge from the interviews that provided the project team with the information to understand and explore the factors that had a significant influence on the current management of the performance appraisal. Moreover, the solutions suggested by the participants for resolving the problem and formulating strategies to improve the performance appraisal system will be implemented. It is similar to the action plan that the project team will reflect on with the evidence that was gathered during the construction stage for providing a holistic picture of the problem. This was helping the organization convert the problem into an opportunity for improvement. I will describe the research method, research practice and reflection in details in Chapter Eight on reflection.

### **3.7 Research Design:**

The thesis project is designed as a qualitative research project. The qualitative research approach is to use the case study methodology and the participatory action research. Although the method of observation was considered initially, when I returned to aims and research questions I found that I would not be able to gather the required knowledge from observation. Moreover, since I am an insider researcher and I know the practice of performance appraisal management was conducted as a secret process once a year I would not be able to observe this practice or procedure. Also, the research questions were aimed at conducting an inquiry for collecting valid information that can construct the problem and be able to resolve the problem. This was impossible if I used the observation tool. As a result, I rejected this method and selected case study

as it is particularly relevant to my organization; and as I believe that it will promote an understanding of the dynamics of one setting (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Moreover, a case study is used to explore or investigate process, program or activity in depth with one or more individuals (Saldana, 2011). The case study is valuable for strategic inquiry through detailed, in-depth data collecting that involves multiple sources of information. As Stake (1995) and Yin (2009) point out, the choice of a single case, performance appraisal management system in the DGHS, would help me to focus on the issue chosen. I have been working in this organization for the last twenty-two years, which would benefit me considerably in achieving the targeted research outcomes. One of the project objectives is to identify the root cause of the problem without which I could not help facilitate the required intervention. Therefore, I believe that collaboration among the stakeholders and decision makers as well as the project team are essential for the success of the project. Participatory action research enhances problem formulation, data acquisition, data analysis which helps discover the diversity of the inquiry process and the implementation process. Finally, it is important to consider the outcomes of Action Research Effort (ARE) related to the process of improving organizational functions by improving the quality of working life and learning capabilities of the employees and creating new knowledge (Bjorkman & Sundgren, 2005).

### **3.7.1 Setting:**

The study took place in the Directorate of General of Health Services (DGHS) in the northwestern region in the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Oman. The DGHS started functioning in 1990. It started along with a few directorates. More directorates and departments were added based on the demand for more health services. The present organizational structure was upgraded in June 2015 with the addition of some directorates and departments; one of these departments is the professional development departments. Today the DGHS has ten directorates and eight departments that report directly to the Director General. The role of the overall management of human resources in terms of assessment of the staff and planning for their training is played by the DGHS. All of the required data can be obtained from the sub-health institutions as well as from directorates of the same organization. The PA

form is issued by the DGHS headquarters and circulated to all departments and sub-health institutions annually and the filled up PA report is returned to the headquarters. The professional development department was added to the organization shortly before I started writing the research proposal; therefore, it was not fully activated within the new upgraded organizational structure, which is supposed to give importance to working on the problems of the management of performance appraisal. Having a complex system and divergent background of workforces and using the same form for performance appraisal in the organization have increased the complexity of the problem. Therefore, I cannot have in-depth information about the nature of the problem and know how to overcome it unless action research is combined with a qualitative case study - to have a rich picture about the workplace problem. However, being an insider action researcher can play a major role in fostering organizational capabilities (Roth, Shani & Leary, 2007), where the stakeholders focus on investigating the problem from different angles and have different views about the nature of the problem and how it can be tackled effectively.

Ethical approval for the research project was obtained from the central research and ethics committee before approaching the Director General of the DGHS, who showed interest in conducting the study in the organization (DGHS). Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2012) point out that securing access (to sources of information) can have an effect on the research outcome. The newly appointed Director General of the organization (DGHS) who has shown interest in improving the management of the existing performance appraisal system circulated internal memos to all directorates and sections in the DGHS requesting them to support the project. Subsequently, preparation for interviewing the participants commenced when I explained the purpose of the research and discussed with the participants who meet the inclusion criteria the potential benefits of implementing the outcomes of the research project in the organization to the individual and the organization at large. After this, a general meeting with the decision makers and stakeholders was held where a presentation was made for providing sufficient information to them through an overview about the action research, action learning and the problem chosen for the study.

### **3.7.2 The Sample:**

The DGHS was selected for the case study for securing a convincing sample as I belonged to the same directorate. Moreover, it gave confidence to the participants in the discussion, especially since they understood that the project was initiated to resolve a management issue in the organization that affected each one of them. The selected case is a single case as it ensures the project is in line with constructionist epistemology (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). The selection of the case study as one of the methods convinced me as an insider researcher because the other similar DGHSs are far away, which required me to be out of my work place for a period, which was not feasible for a full time employee like me.

The diversity in terms of the number of years of experiences and capacities of the selected participants provides an opportunity for the enrichment of the research-the action process (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). The chosen samples can be described as 'purposive' with specific criteria (Patton, 2015), which is suitable for this research as it would help me come out with the nature of obstacles that have been faced by evaluators and employees. In order to have a rich picture on the breadth and depth of the problem the participants consist of direct supervisors who were either directors or heads of a section who have evaluated the employees some time in their career. The total number of DGHS employees as of December 2016 was 2523. The female employees (1500) were more than their male counterparts. More than 45 of these employees in the organization act as first line supervisors. The selection of supervisors was based on their involvement in the direct management of the PA and their role in the assessment and development of their subordinates. Most of them were willing to participate in the research. However, because the method of research was qualitative, I thought it was enough to select half of them. Finally, twenty supervisors who had met the inclusion criteria, completed at least two years in the management of PA and were willing to participate in the study were chosen as the participants. The male-female ratio was 15 M: 5 F. The huge difference in the ratio was because of the fact that most of the supervisors were males. On the other hand, more than 90% of the nurse supervisors were females. The face-to-face interviews were conducted prior to focus group

discussions in order to have a full picture of the PA system. I started with the administrative focus group as their schedule was convenient for them as all of the nurse participants were involved in another event.

As for the focus group interview, which is intended to assess the perception of the subordinates towards the issue of the performance appraisal, two homogenous focus group discussions were conducted. The purpose of taking two homogenous focus groups is to ensure freedom for participants to share their experience with their own colleagues. Initially, eight participants were included in the administrative group, but at the last minute, two of them apologized citing other urgent commitments as the reason for the apology. The final strength of the group was 6 with 5 male participants and one female participant. In the first focus group, I managed to include a member of the research and ethical committee to act as facilitator responsible for taking notes and taking care of the audiotape recording. The second focus group represents the technical staffs. Since the DGHS employees are mostly technical staff, the nurses who represent around 60 % of the total staff of the governorate were included in the technical focus group, with 3 male participants and 5 female participants as specialists in order to provide them with a comfortable environment in sharing their experiences with their own specialties.

The focus group discussion was recorded using a tap-audio recorder. However, for the second focus group, I was not able to get a facilitator who could help me as she apologized at the last moment because of urgent work. However, one of the participants helped me to ensure the tape recorder was switched on; and I took notes while the participants were busy discussing the issue. Overall, the participants of the study, both supervisors and subordinates belonged to different homogenous groups with diverse backgrounds: medical doctors, nurses, pharmacists, engineers, IT staff, allied health workers, administrative and finance employees, and planners. All of those participants implement the same performance appraisal system.

Out of the 34 participants who participated in the data collection process at the construction stage, 13 participants acted as change agents; they were involved in the

full cycle of action research and they belonged to both supervisor and subordinate categories. They were interested in working throughout the project and they are still sincerely working at the implementation stage. It is interesting to note that they took the initiative to join the project and I simply agreed to their initiative as I noticed that they represented most of the departments of the DGHS. Their role in the project is important as they represent the most powerful departments in terms of having control over the performance appraisal system as well as in decision making regarding the overall management of the performance. As Hilsen (2006) opines, an open and clear discussion among the stakeholders and participants can have a major impact on the project. Their input in identifying the research problem through their answers of the research questions and their suggestions for the resolution of the problem are valuable for the evaluation process and implementation of the research findings. Moreover, the collaboration between researchers and stakeholders in action research can contribute towards attainment of greater validity in terms of the research findings (Mohrman, Gibson & Mohrman, 2001).

### **3.7.3 Instrumentation/Measures:**

Prior to the preparation of the interview guidelines and possible questions to be asked for the interview, I established a link between the research objectives and interview questions in order to focus on the issues under investigation. Therefore, (to avoid bias and get a full picture of information regarding the research problem) I used a “standardized open-ended interview protocol” (Patton, 2015). In order to test the interview questions, a pilot study was conducted with one director and one section head where I intended to examine the interview questions if they were clear enough and if I could get the required information for answering the research questions and achieve the research objectives as well. As an outcome of this pilot study, I was able to combine two questions together as same answers got as well as other two questions were not clear and I restructured them to become clear for the participants. Moreover, it helped me to know when I needed to probe the participants to get more in-depth answers. Also, the pilot study enabled me to predict how much time each interview would require. As per this protocol, the topic and the questions that required further exploration during the

face- to-face interview and focus group interviews were listed properly (Patton, 2015). The interview questions are attached to appendix No: 3. However, I used a semi-flexible approach during the interview and used laddering technique for some questions that were asked to the interviewees depending on the participants' position and response (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Although I followed a semi-loss structure for the questions in terms of its sequence in order to follow the interesting lines of inquiry and to facilitate an unbroken discussion, at the end of the interview I ensured that I covered all questions under the topic guide (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Moreover, while talking to the participants in the interview I made sure not to interrupt the interviewee in order to get a clear picture of the interviewee's perspectives. The data consisted of natural language data in order to discover the views, perceptions and opinions of both individuals and groups (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). I recorded the interview using a digital tape-recorder while writing down the non-verbal movement such as facial expressions and inflection of the voice. This provided clues for me to develop and ask secondary questions to some participants (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2012). This, I believe, helped me to identify various dimensions and discover new clues.

The questions for the supervisors focused on knowledge, skills, experiences and perception in the management of the performance appraisal as well as for the suggestion for solutions from their point of view as manager and decision makers. On the other hand, the focus group discussions focused on their experience as the managers of the performance appraisal and how the suggested solutions generated by the supervisors will be implemented (the focus group questions are attached to appendix No. 4). These actions were planned and implemented on the researcher's belief that peer learning is an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences (Zalezink, 1992). Also, sharing the knowledge and experience through the inquiry process and reflection process is helpful in improving the practice (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire, 2003).

#### **3.7.4 Data Collection:**

As soon as the ethical approval from the University of Liverpool (UoL) and local committee obtained, data was collected in November 2016 when all of the evaluators completed the performance appraisal reports for the year 2016. Therefore, most evaluators have fresh knowledge and experience in the management of the performance appraisal (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). The inquiry questions that were created by me helped develop the participants' reflection based on the experience drawn from prior actions that can be understood in new ways which was [a] driving force to construct meaning to resolve the problem (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). The action researcher is required to implement the results of the action research in his own organization, which may bring him into conflict with his organization's interests. Therefore, an appropriate time for their implementation is important (Bjorkman & Sundgren, 2005).

I obtained the trust of the participants by providing an adequate and clear explanation about the interview and the research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). The participants were scheduled over a period of one-month and well in advance, the date and time were chosen by the participants themselves to suit their convenience. The face-to-face interview with the directors and heads of section was conducted in the participant's office in the workplace. The length of the interview on average ranged between 45 minutes and 1 hour. In contrast, the two focus group discussion sessions were held on two different days in the conference hall of the DGHS as it was more convenient and suitable for the participants and it has all the required facilities during the discussion session. The length of the focus group discussion was two hours each.

**Table (1): Construct Summary for Data Collection Phases and Overview.**

Data Collection Phases	Activities with Participants	Time spent
<b>Preparation Phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide Participants Information Sheet with Informed consent forms to all participations</li> <li>• Return the forms before and in day of interview.</li> <li>• Check the informed consent</li> <li>• Organize all form in one file.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forms remained with participants from period of three days to one month.</li> </ul>
<b>Pilot phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face-to-Face interview with two supervisors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two days</li> <li>• Each interview 1:30hrs</li> </ul>
<b>Phase one</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 Face-to-Face interview</li> <li>• Interview with participant during working hours</li> <li>• Recording were transcribed verbatim at evening in same.</li> <li>• Translate each transcript from Arabic to English language/three days.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total One month/one interview/per day</li> <li>• Average two months</li> </ul>

<b>Phase Two</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative focus group interview</li> <li>• Nurses focus group interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two days in same week</li> <li>• One day two hours</li> </ul>
<b>Phase Three</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Double check of transcript by participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range from one day to three days with each participants</li> </ul>

I contacted all the participants in order to establish a rapport between the participants and me by meeting them at their offices (Patton, 2015). However, some of them had to be contacted over the telephone. Also, additional information was provided on the participant's sheet with the informed consent as attached in appendix no (5, 6). I provided sufficient time to think about their participation. The research questions that were used are semi-structured open-ended questions with the obvious intention of having the managerial staff to reflect on them and come out with in-depth information that will enhance the researcher's understanding of the problem (Easterby-Smith et al, 2012). I followed the guidelines for all interviewees and used the same questions in order to avoid bias on my part. This was done as it was necessary to ensure that the inquiry was conducted in a collaborative manner between the practitioners and stakeholders of my organization (Bushe & Kassam, 2005). In addition, I believed that it was my responsibility to investigate and find out the reasons for the creation of the problem and present appropriate solution for it (Finchman & Clark, 2009).

The participants and I became aware of the data gathered and ensured the information the cases are relevant to the current practice of the management of the PA. Consequently, being an insider researcher, I had a clear advantage over an outsider researcher as I could easily ensure a greater depth of knowledge about my organization's resources (Roth, Shani & Leary, 2007). It is well known that the

workplace is a “wicked problem where there are no right answers to resolve the problem” (Grint, 2005). Therefore, it is necessary to understand the pattern of data for planning for change in the second stage of the action research cycle (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Additionally, knowledge is generated through an insight into how the knowledge of the problem results in the creation of knowledge for the solution (Lonergan, 1992).

The interviews were recorded using the tap-voice recorder to ensure no information is lost in any manner whatsoever. In order to have a smooth and effective interview with the participants, I used the Arabic language. Then, the same language was used in the transcripts; later, it was translated into English. The translation was done by me in order not to miss any information and to ensure confidentiality. Moreover, a double check on the translation was done by another translator from outside the organization where the anonymity of the participants was maintained. Finally, the participants’ anonymity was secured by masking their names in the data bank.

### **3.9 Data Analysis:**

There were two major stages and three steps in the analysis of the data: the organization of the data and the analysis of the data. I organized the data through a five step process. The first step was reading the transcripts. After the data were gathered from the interviews on transcripts and notes, they were organized according to the serial number of each question. The interview transcripts were read quickly as a whole and I went through the notes on the first impressions. After that, the transcripts were read many times, line-by-line, until I became familiar with the information contained in the responses and had a full sense of the data. The second step consisted of labeling relevant words, sentences and actions as well as different opinions. In the third step, I determined the most important codes and created categories by bringing several codes together. The fourth step consisted of labeling the categories and determining the most relevant ones and how they are connected to each other by using categorical aggregation to establish themes or patterns (Braun & Clark, 2012). In the final stage, the results were illustrated on a word table to display the data from each of the

participants' responses. Also, the "three step heuristic process in the human knowing" was applied during data analysis. These three steps were experiences of dealing with text data, understanding the whole data about the overall system of the performance appraisal in the DGHS and making judgment about important or relevant coding that must be labeled for categorizing and helping me to plan for action together with the stakeholders and project team (Coghlan, 2009). Besides producing knowledge and action that have a direct positive impact on a group of people, the whole process can "empower them at a deeper level" as they can see for themselves how they are "capable of constructing and using their own knowledge" in bringing about the change (Marshall & Reason, 2007, p.372).

### **3.9.1 Initial Analysis:**

In the second stage, the data were analyzed through a three-step process, which is explained below. In this stage, the data was organized using a table; this provided me evidence with clarity for the findings of the study. Initially, I decided to start working on 10 interview transcripts, which lasted for two months. Because, there was a huge amount of data in addition to the purpose of sharing my initial analysis with my primary supervisor in order to familiarize ourselves with the management system of PA in the organization, and to find out if I was doing the analysis in the right way or not. However, this long process provided me with confidence in my ability to analyse on other transcripts in a comfortable manner. Some new information was added wherever I was certain about obtaining some new insight into some new aspects. Then I started analyzing the interview transcripts of the focus group which provided me with how the PA system was implemented from the subordinates' points of view. The data that was generated by the focus group provided me with some facts that could not be expressed by the supervisor during the face-to-face interview. The information provided by the supervisors and subordinates was useful for me to have a framework for data organization, and it enabled me to have a clear understanding of what information I had to focus on at later stages.

### **3.9.2 Detailed Analysis:**

After having completed the initial analysis, I started an in-depth analysis by putting my comments on each statement or sentence in the table and labeling those that were relevant to the research objectives and research questions or reminded me about the literature review that I had done. Then I started collecting all of my comments on other documents. After that, I started grouping them based on similarities and differences and if there was any other new information (Saldana, 2016). This analysis provided me with an insight and a picture to understand how the organization manages the performance appraisal (PA). Thus, in this stage which lasted three months I was able to develop the initial themes that emerged from the comments. However, those themes still required an in-depth review and discussion within the project team and among decision makers.

### **3.9.3 Tertiary Analysis:**

Now that the picture became clear, I started gathering all of my comments and organizing them into categories. Those categories were streamlined along the initial themes that I had developed in order to find out if those themes covered those categories of data or not. This approach provided a more holistic picture of the PA system. After that, I returned to my research questions to assess if the information that I had gathered answered all the research questions or not. Simultaneously I did the literature review in order to guide me in labeling relevant information and to find new data that, I believed, would add positive inputs on my research. Later on, I began to inquire whether it was worthwhile to develop some other themes that emerged from the initial themes. At this stage, I was very careful not to delete any sub-themes. I discussed them with my supervisor who agreed to my analysis. Furthermore, since I wanted to come out with actionable findings, I discussed the initial themes and sub-themes with the stakeholders of my organization in order for them to understand the PA system in the light of my research findings. Therefore, I presented the main themes along with the sub-themes to them to find out if it was possible to develop other themes from some subthemes. Their response to my initially identified themes was positive and significant enough as the findings informed them about the problems and solutions to the problem.

It took two months more for me to complete this stage and the overall analysis took a total of seven months. The summary to depict the data analysis phase is illustrated as attachment in the appendix (No. 12)

### **3.10 Ethical consideration:**

I ensured that the participants had volunteered willingly and without any sort of force on my part, the researcher. The consent form and Participant's Information sheet (IPS) (These are attached to appendix No. 5&6) were given to the participants one week prior to the commencement of the first interview. I received the signed consent forms on the day of the interview for which the schedule and place of the interview were intimated through the telephone in advance. Therefore, some of them had more than one week to read the IPS and think freely about their participation. However, one of the invited participants who acted as supervisor informed me in advance that he was not interested in participating in the research. I respected his decision without asking them for any reasons. I was able to convince the rest of the participants that no harm would occur to them as their individual data would be directly given to me. I also convinced them that their dignity would be respected as they were given full information about the purpose of the research; it was made clear to them that their participation was entirely up to them and that their privacy would be respected at all times.

In addition, they were informed well in advance that they could withdraw from the study at any time without providing me with any explanations. The Anonymity of their identity and the confidentiality of the information were strictly maintained by me throughout the study and after the study. Additionally, I convinced them that during the interviews I would not ask them any questions about their personal data and that they would be addressed using 'brother' and 'sister' for face-to-face interview with supervisors. Moreover, the numbers would be used for focus group participants instated of their names in order to avoid recording any names using the audio-tape recorder. I was totally honest and took extreme care to ensure my dealings with the participants (volunteers) were transparent. I was also able to win the trust of the participants by making sure that the participants' information sheet discussed all ethical issues.

The collected data was secured with the help of the password of my personal computer which was kept under lock in my workplace office, which prevented anyone having access to the data except for the thesis supervisor who was allowed to access it during the analysis of the data. However, the transcripts were identified by unique participant numbers. According to Creswell (2013), the researcher has to resolve ethical issues by convincing the participants that no harm would happen to them and by obtaining informed consent. This would, he says, produce more benefits than risks. Also, the researcher has to provide freedom to withdraw from the research and protect the anonymity of the participants.

On the other hand, the role of good communication and honest approach during data collection and finalizing the results of the study should not be sidelined (Bell & Bryman, 2007). In addition, creating an environment where the participants can use their ability to act and take decisions independently in an AR project may be considered as a method of trust. AR enables the participants to trust their own powers of action and decision as well as the honesty and integrity of the researcher. In this context, trust can be viewed as both the method and the result. This is in fact, the rationale behind the objective of taking up this research project, in addition to developing a better workplace and promoting well-judged individual choices, instead of those forced on them without support, faced with negative expectations, and exclusion from work life (Hilsen, 2006). The project team were empowered to generate knowledge through action and based on an inquiry into themselves and among each other; and therefore, they were able to work together and wholeheartedly throughout this project. Therefore, I believe that the success of this research project depends to a large extent on my ability to build the confidence of the participants in me and ensure that confidentiality is maintained by all means (Moore, 2007).

## **Chapter four: Data Analysis and Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction:**

The primary aims of this research project were identifying the barriers to effective utilization of the performance appraisal system as a tool for professional development. In addition, to explore the factors that prevented evaluators from implementing the open performance appraisal interview. This chapter describes the steps that are followed in the analysis of data collected by face-to-face interviews with supervisors and two homogenous focus groups consisting of subordinates from the same organization. It also describes how I arrived at the findings that helped me answer the research questions. The findings discuss 10 themes that are relevant to the workplace problem and provide actionable knowledge that are used at the stage of taking action in order to use those findings to resolve the problem of managing the implementation of the performance appraisal system in the organization.

### **4.2 Plan for Action:**

#### **4.2.1 Steps / Strategy of the Analysis:**

After the first stage of constructing the action research cycle, I stopped collecting data from supervisors as I reached a saturation point in regards to face-to-face interview with supervisors. I felt that the new data did not add any new knowledge or information (Charmaz, 2014). In the second stage of the action research (plan for action) I started transferring the data from audio-tape recorder into transcript on the same day of the interview in order to find out if the information provided by participants was clear or not (whether it required clarification or not). After I had analyzed 15 interviews transcripts, although I felt there was nothing to be added I still decided to continue up to 20 transcripts in order to find newer insights. Besides, some participants insisted that I interviewed them as they felt that this was their problem and they were interested in taking part in the research. Unfortunately, I could not obtain any new information from the transcripts of the supervisors on the management of the PA system. The both focus groups discussion were conducted in order to help me inquire myself into and discover

if there was any missing information that could be identified by the focus groups as well as explore the subordinate's views and experiences. Then the copies of interview transcripts were given to participants in order to check if they meant what was transcribed or not. Moreover, reading the transcript helped them to have a full picture of the current performance appraisal management scenario.

It is true advancement of technology supports fast and smooth analysis of data and Nvivo software is considered as a good software system for the analysis of the qualitative data. However, as I am beginner researcher I believed that I had to motivate myself to learn by action and decided to do it manually. Moreover, I was informed by my supervisor that the quality of the research findings can be ensured by manual analysis. Therefore, the analysis was performed manually on Microsoft Word as I was not familiar with the software program and because I prefer to learn by doing. All of the answers of the questions were gathered in one document in order to identify points of difference and similarity and the relationship between the responses to each question and create the unit of analysis that was related to the research questions (Saunders et al., 2009).

The concept of thematic analysis was used to analyze the data as it has been considered one of the essential methods for identifying and analyzing patterns in qualitative data (Braun & Clark, 2012). Thematic analysis helped me prepare the topic guide for areas that I have to focus on when I designed the interview questions (Gibson & Brown, 2011). In order to familiarize myself with the data I started to read the interview transcripts line-by-line and word by word. I listened to audio- recorded data and re-read the data. In the beginning, I was not able to make sense of such a huge amount of data. After reviewing the transcripts many times, I realized that I have to keep the research questions beside the interview transcripts and start coding each word, sentence, phrases that are relevant to the research questions or reminded me of the literature review that helped me formulate my research questions. I ended up creating more than a hundred codes; some of these were repeated codes, and others were new ones. A Deductive approach was used for analyzing the data since I am an insider researcher who understands the organization and the systems very well. Also, the literature that I had read helped me to formulate the research questions (Saunders et

al., 2009). In order to familiarize myself with data analysis I read about the InVio coding, which authors consider as an easy approach for novice researchers and because it is widely used in action research (Saldana, 2016).

The coding process involved multiple reading of the participant's interview transcripts. First, I gathered all the responses of participants for each question in word document as text format. I coded each key word and sentence that are relevant to the research questions and collected them in another table of word document. This enabled me to organize the data into topics and supported the development of coding categories. The resultant coding was written in a table format. After that, I create some topics that described the feature of the performance appraisal such as the purpose, PA interview, PA feedback, professional development, PA documentation, PA recommendation, and training of the evaluator as comments in the table. Again, I gathered all the answers related to the topics in a new table of word document in order to see the similarity and differences in the answers or find some new information. After I had grouped the codes, which are similar and those that are different and those that are linked to each other, I became aware of the patterns; and then I removed all interview transcripts in order to work alone with the gathered data prior to developing the themes. Some of the themes that had emerged were relevant to the research questions, and others were new. The project team members and I reviewed the codes and the developed themes. The repetition of the procedure prevented us from missing any of the codes (Gibson & Brown, 2011). Also, reviewing the themes helped us to check if it is relevant to the coded extract and the data set as a whole. I inquired myself between stages of data analysis with questions such as 'Do these themes convince me and others about the story of the full gathered data?' and so on. After many reviews of the identified themes I began to define the nature of each theme and the relationship between them. I realized that I had to collapse some themes, and split others (Braun & Clark, 2012).

Since the study is participatory action research, I developed a framework for the findings of the study for stakeholders to understand the current system of performance appraisal instead of presenting them as a written text. The framework of the current performance appraisal provided a clear picture of the process and challenges faced by

stakeholders in the management of the performance appraisal. The framework helps them make sense of what we need to understand about the current situation and helps the organization to predict what solution is required for resolving the problem (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Organizational Frameworks are presentations of the organization to help categorize data, enhance understanding, interpret data and provide common shared language (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Finally, the themes emerged from these categories of codes enabled us to understand the performance appraisal management in the DGHS and its challenges. The following table shows the initial coding that was derived from reading of interview transcripts. The structure of coding was based on the research questions.

**Table No (2 )**

RQ Numbers	Initial Codes	Refer to
RQ 1	Purpose of the PA	Refer to perception of participants on the importance of PA.
RQ 4	Evaluator skill	Refer to training and skills required to conduct PA interview.
RQ 2	Feedback	Refer to performance feedback
RQ 2	Interview	Refer to PA interview
RQ 3	PA Documentation	Refer to documentation used for PA procedure.
RQ 4	PA Recommendation	Refer to outcome recommendation of the PA.
RQ 4	Staff development	Refer to how develop the staff based on PA.
RQ 5	Suggestion for PA improvement	Refer to all interventions required for new PA system.

### 4.3 Presentation of the Results:

#### 4.3.1 Introduction:

The chapter presented structure of the findings of the face-to-face interview and the focus group discussions based on the literature review and listed the main topics that were covered by many interview questions that were answered by the participants as it is attached in appendix no (3 &4). The results took into account the research questions and the main objectives of the research. The themes that are discussed in this chapter are presented as answers of each research question. The first section of the chapter answers the first research question: “what are the views of employees and managers on the management of the performance appraisal and its outcome?” The second section answers the research question: ‘what are the barriers that prevent managers from implementing open-communication interview of the performance appraisal?’ The third section answers the question: ‘what are the factors that prevent the managers from using the outcome of performance appraisal for developing the skills of the staff?’ The fourth section answers the question: ‘what is the knowledge and skills that the managers require in order to provide feedback to their subordinates?’ The fifth section answers the research question: ‘how can managers use the performance appraisal outcome as a tool for enhancing their employees’ performance?’. The following table summary illustrate how identified themes were answered the research questions.

**Table (3): Summary linking Research Questions to 10 Themes**

Q.no	Research Questions	Identified Themes
Q1	What are the views of employees and managers on the management of the PA and its outcome?	Theme(1) Understanding the importance of Performance Appraisal and its purpose among supervisors and subordinates.  Them(2) Current process of management of performance appraisal.

Q2	What are the barriers that prevent managers from implementing open communication interview of the performance appraisal?	Theme (3) Obstacles of the performance appraisal interview.
Q3	What are the factors that prevent the managers from using the outcome of performance appraisal for developing the skills of the staff?	Theme(4) Professional Development.  Theme (5) Challenge of using performance appraisal form for professional development.
Q4	What is the knowledge and skills that managers require in order to provide feedback to their subordinates?	Theme (6) Evaluator's competency requirements.  Theme (7) Performance Appraisal Communication.  Theme(8) Performance Appraisal documentation.
Q5	How can managers use the performance appraisal outcome as a tool for enhancing their employee's Performance?	Theme (9) Rewarding and discipline system.  Theme(10) Suggestions for improving the performance Appraisal system.

#### **4.3.2 Theme (1): Understanding the importance of Performance Appraisal and its Purpose among Supervisors & subordinates:**

This section discusses interviewee responses on the subject related to the supervisors and subordinates' understanding of the importance of implementing the performance appraisal system in the organization in addition to their perception of the objectives of the current performance appraisal system in the organization. Based on the findings of the interviews, it was revealed that they had acquired a good understanding of status quo, and therefore, the initial plan of action research has to be adjusted.

An analysis of the understanding of the value of the performance appraisal (PA) in the organization by the supervisors (directors & section heads) and subordinates indicated that they had many different points of view about it. However, most of the supervisors

believed that the PA helped them “understand the strengths and weaknesses of the employees”, “correct mistakes”, “understand the level of performance”, “evaluate the staff’s performance” and “develop staff’s skills”. One of the supervisors mentioned that the PA enhanced the staff’s ability to identify his/her negative points. It is true that the staff could identify the weak aspects of his/her performance and find out if he or she was aware of them or someone informed him/her about it. Another supervisor mentioned that the PA enabled the organization to plan training programmes, help manage human resources and utilize the financial resources. Without doubt, if the human resources were managed effectively in regards to identification of the competency level of each staff, it could help the staff enhance their skills and acquire required knowledge.

As for the item related to ‘providing an opportunity for the improvement’, five supervisors opined that the PA offered the staff an opportunity to work on his/her performance and improve it. Another interviewee of (Head section12) mentioned that it helped maintain the improvement (because even small performance problems of the staff could be detected at an early stage. Easily solved rather than waiting until they have become complex problems). To document the rights of the staff, help good competition, alert staff that his/her performance was monitored by the supervisor. Make them aware of the level of their performance’, and ‘improve the quality of the work’; however, only one director understood it as a holistic view’.

Interestingly, most of the findings of the interview with the supervisors placed emphasis on the importance of the PA in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the staff and developing his/her skills accordingly. One of the supervisors referred to the importance of conducting performance appraisal in the following words: *“It gives you a holistic view of the staff and their performance during in a given assessment period” (Director1)*. One nurse in the focus group supported this view when she refers to the purpose of the PA as: *“[the tool for]the measurement of the performance” (Nurse1)*.

Although some (administrative) supervisors believe that the clinician supervisors often fail in the management of the performance appraisal. Contrary to this, one technical supervisor describes the importance of the performance appraisal and its purpose in the

following words: *“The performance appraisal is important for the organization, the evaluator, and the staff. For the organization it helps identify the strengths and weaknesses of its staff, enables the organization to plan for training needs and sustain the strengths. For the supervisor, it helps him/her manage the human resources and utilize the financial resources. On the other hand, the PA alerts the staff, makes them aware of the level of his /her performance by identifying his strengths and weaknesses and offers the opportunity for working on improvement”* (Director4). This response indicates that there is no relationship between the level of competency of the evaluator and his background, whether it is technical or administrative. However, although the supervisors showed that they were knowledgeable in doing the performance appraisal effectively, it seems that there was a gap in applying the knowledge into practice. For example, one of the subordinates opined that: *“the objectives of the performance appraisal are clear from the point of view of the Ministry of civil service. However, its implementation varies between the evaluators. The staff is not aware of the objectives of the performance appraisal”* (Nurse6).

Since the staff required maintaining high standards at work, he/she had to document his or her high level of performance for the organization and for future reference in case he/she wished to move from the organization to another organization. This was also required when he/she wanted to present evidence for participating in any competitions for a higher position or scholarship and for financial benefits in his/ her organization. Although the right of the staff to have his/her performance documented is discussed in the literature, during the interviews no one mentioned it except one section head: *“It is necessary to document the right of staff and provide the competent staff his rights and to correct the weak staff”* (Head6). In contrast to the opinion of this supervisor, the subordinates had other points of view and experience. For example, the following opinion of one of them who applied for scholarship discovered that the performance appraisal outcome is relevant: *“The reason for conducting performance appraisal is only to discover later that my application for scholarship has been rejected; because the last two year’s appraisal outcome is not satisfactory”* (Nurse 7).

One respondent belonging to the focus group believed that *"there is no scope for feedback and there is no correction plan for improvement in the performance"* (Nurse5). On the other hand, the section head (9) acknowledged that he had to see the strengths and weaknesses of the staff by identifying the best way to help him focus on his/her weaknesses and be able to develop an action plan, which would have a significant impact on the quality of care. Different views existed about the action plan arranged for the staff based on the performance assessment as this respondent opined, *"actually, the performance appraisal has no clear objectives. It is a routine activity conducted annually. I cannot see any clear result or outcome of my evaluation. I do not know what the plan of action is after the completion of my evaluation"* (Nurse2). It seems that a lack of standards and transparent system in the organization towards the management of the performance appraisal led to different opinions which could have a negative impact on the daily practice.

In the opinion of the administrative staff in the focus group, there were no clear objectives of the performance appraisal. One of them highlighted that none of the staff were aware of their level of performance and only the poor performers were informed about the PA outcome by their supervisors. Consequently, he/she would not be eligible for his/her annual financial allowance. In spite of this, another administrative subordinate made a similar remark: *"In fact, I have not heard .[of any] some staffs who have not received their annual financial allowance"* (Administrative4). Another administrative subordinate presents a scenario from his department: *"There is an instance of a staff having poor record of performance in our department. If this staff was aware that he/she would not be eligible for annual financial allowance, he/she would be more conscious of his/her performance and try to improve it"* (Administrative5). Yet another respondent belonging to the focus group highlighted that *"some supervisors are not convinced about the importance of the performance appraisal has a significant impact on the practice. There is no regular monthly or quarterly evaluation. It is done only once at the end of the year"* (Nurse8).

#### **4.3.3 Theme (2): Current Process of management of performance appraisal:**

This theme discusses all of the interview responses on the subject of how the supervisors manage the performance appraisal in the organization. The interviewees illustrated the process of management of performance appraisal and described the tools that have been used to assess the performance properly. Also, this section highlights the challenges faced by evaluators in this area. On the other hand, the subordinates in both groups shared their experience in the performance appraisal process. There was enough evidence show that the effectiveness of the performance appraisal is influenced by the attitude and approach of the evaluators. In this context, many respondents belonging to the supervisors believed that the multiple methods of assessment could help them produce a credible result. However, most of the evaluators conducted the performance appraisal for their staff based on their own belief and perceptions that guides them to decide on the most suitable method for them and their department as well. Most of the supervisors relied on their daily close observation of the tasks performed by the staff. However, other respondents mentioned that they used it to assess the progress of the staff in the assigned task. There were some supervisors whose were assessing the staff by comparing the item measurements of the performance appraisal form with work achievement. However, all of the supervisors informed that although they assessed the staff on a regular basis without informing the staff at the end of the year about his/her performance appraisal result as the procedure of performance appraisal management was carried out in secret. One of the supervisors presented a typical scenario in the previous procedure of the management of the performance appraisal in the following words. *"I do not inform the staff about the result of PA as it is a secret process because when I took charge of the section. The previous head of the section informed me that I was not supposed to inform the staff about the outcome of the performance appraisal, except those staff having poor grades"* (Head1). One of the subordinates of focus group who had completed seventeen years in the organization supported different approaches to the management of the performance appraisal, and justify this distinction in the practice: *"The absence of a clear policy on how to conduct the process of the performance appraisal is a reason for this division in*

*the management of the performance appraisal and using different approaches"* (Nurse4). However, in the following words another subordinate emphasizes the need to implement the right approach to effective management of the performance appraisal and she supports the theoretical aspect in this issue: *"If the staff is given a chance to do self-evaluation, and then the direct supervisor is ready to discuss and compare the evaluation report of the staff, then both can set up a development plan for the staff to reduce the gap found in his performance. Moreover, the policy of the performance appraisal is not implemented well. The performance appraisal system is considered only as a form to be filled up at the end of the year"* (Nurse1).

However, some evaluators involved the staff in the process of the evaluation only partially. For example, they allowed the staff to do self-assessment in paper and pencil but in the end the final evaluation would be carried out by his/her supervisor and the result is not shared with concerned staff. The following excerpt from the interview with one of the focus group participant presented evidence of this practice: *"It depends on each supervisor and what the strategies on the management of the performance appraisal are, (Nurse4)"*. As another respondent opined, some of them allowed the staff to do self-assessment because, in order to raise the level of the staff's awareness and honesty *"[using] self-assessment I can determine the honesty of the staff and his/her awareness of [the level of] his/her performance"* (Director6). The annual performance appraisal is a huge challenge as it is done once in a year and without involving the staff in the process. However, one subordinate believed that *"the first evaluation will help her to identify ... areas of weakness"*. *"The second evaluation by my supervisor", she says, "helps her inform me if I have improved or not. The final one will present the outcome of the intervention"* (Nurse1).

In fact, the employees had to be aware of what they are being appraised in their performance. Therefore, the process of doing the performance appraisal was carried out in secret as was mentioned by most of the participants who were of the opinion that they may not be aware of the criteria of the performance appraisal. This point was included in the interview and one of the supervisor mentioned that the subordinates aware about the items of measurement because the subordinates themselves filled up

the first section of the personal information as well as the second section of the previous training section. They clarified the point, some of them mentioned that this practice is not for informing the staff about the criteria but for accurately filling up the section for collecting personal information.

As for the challenges of managing the performance appraisal process, the participants mentioned that this task was taken as part of their routine work and that they did not know anything about the outcome of this process. For instance, they mentioned that they did not receive any feedback from the top management (the second line supervisor and the top authority) as the latter would not ask any of the staff about their performance. Moreover, the recommendations were not accomplished, particularly in nominating the staff for bonuses as reward or suggest specific training for the development of the staff. On the other hand, although they recommended training for some staffs, sometimes the staffs were not aware about his strengths and weaknesses as the process is carried out in secret. This opinion of the supervisors were supported by one of the participants in the focus group discussion. When she pointed out that *"one of my supervisors asked me to do the self-evaluation without providing me feedback on my self-evaluation.....On the other hand, another supervisor evaluated my performance by himself; but he did not discuss it with me and I did not know anything about the result"* (Nurse4).

Supervisors, on the other hand, were of the opinion that the annual performance appraisal could create negative reaction from the staff in addition to the fact that one assessment could do very little to help them develop their skills. Regarding the content of the performance appraisal form, all of the twenty supervisors stated that they faced challenges with the general items of measurement, as there were no sub-headings to guide them on what exactly they have to evaluate the staff as they thought those items led to different understanding by different evaluators. Consequently, it led to bias as far as the outcome of the PA was concerned. This might be true as in the words of one administrative staff: *"I can recall once one of the second line managers called me to discuss my performance appraisal result with me as he was not convinced about my PA result and he felt that I deserved a better grade. He changed my grade, but he informed*

*me not to inform my direct supervisor about this change. That was the first time in my service that I was able to see my PA result”(Administrative2).*

Interviewees from some of the supervisors' group raised their concerns about the challenges related to bias producing the PA result as it was closely related to the items of measurements. Which did not include scopes of some jobs, particularly the technical job as the form number two of performance appraisal for executive staff is currently used for all staff in the Ministry of Health in spite of their different specialties. This is based on the experience of the supervisors support the findings of previous studies that mention such errors, particularly in the content of evaluation and biases in the process of the evaluation. It is true that if the evaluation was carried out with general statements of criteria, each supervisor would be forced to create his/her own sub-headings for those criteria for each staff separately in order to meet his/her job requirements. This could be very hard for the evaluator, especially in a complex organization like the health organization. In the health organization, we can see one supervisor from a different background supervises different categories of subordinates who do their job as per the job requirements of their specialty, which will at the end provide a holistic health care to the community. Indeed, it is a challenge for the supervisor to be well-oriented for the scope of practice for each category of the staff. One section head raised concern about this challenge in the following excerpt from the interview: *“the challenge of evaluating some staff whose specialty is different from the supervisor’s specialty. For example, if a doctor evaluated the laboratory technician or pharmacy, (it could lead to discrepancies) as the supervisor was not well-oriented and did not have enough knowledge about the nature of those staffs in the other department” (Head1).*

What makes the PA process more difficult to implement is the fact that the staffs are not aware of the importance of the process do or not give any attention to the appraisal as a tool for their professional development and career pathway as none of them asks for their evaluation except when they want to apply for scholarship. One from the nurses' focus group participants referred to this problem in the following excerpt: *“As a staff I do not have that culture of asking my supervisor about my weaknesses and how I can overcome them” (Nurse1).*

Another obstacle for the supervisors was inadequate time for observation and evaluation of each item of measurement in the performance appraisal of the staff and individual items of measurement being too general. One section head mentioned that *"..... This is because it is difficult for the supervisor to sit with all of the staff"* (Head1). One of the focus group participants supported the opinion of the section head when she said, *"I have been in active service for the last 28 years and I have worked with many different types of supervisors; some of those supervisors discussed the performance appraisal outcomes with me, but some of them did not"* (Nurse8). On the other hand, other focus group participants did not agree with that view about limitation of the time for assessing them because during the interview she mentioned that *"smart applications will help save the time of the evaluator and also the professional development department will support the evaluator"*(Nurse1).

Some participants questioned the non-intervention of the quality assurance (QA) department when they had an in-depth discussion about the role of the QA in the assessment of the effectiveness of the management of performance appraisal as this program had proved that most of the national health programs were successful because the QA department managed them. All of the supervisors seriously referred to the problem of not having clear aim for doing the performance appraisal, especially when the staffs were not involved and their recommendations were not taken into consideration by the concerned authority or top management. The following excerpt from the interview highlighted this issue concerning the process of management of the performance appraisal. *"There is a manual from the civil service ministry for conducting the performance appraisal and, actually, there performance development is mentioned and not performance appraisal; and it is well explained on how to do it, but it is not practiced in reality"* (Nurse1). All of the participants are of the view that one appraisal is not enough; instead there must be at least two or three evaluations a year.

#### **4.3.4 Theme (3): Obstacles of the Performance Appraisal Interview:**

Although the civil service regulations place emphasis on the importance of providing the employees regular feedback on their performance, it does not mention that the

employees must acknowledge his/her awareness about the outcome of the performance by signing the document. As for the research question that aims at identifying the obstacles that prevent supervisors from conducting performance appraisal interview, the evaluators identified different areas and concerns, which undermined the interview process. The main reason for this was lack of standards and evidence for the performance appraisal that could help them increase their confidence to discuss the PA with concerned staff officially. Also, some supervisors mentioned that although new supervisors were appointed in the management positions, they were not oriented on the management of the performance appraisal by their organization (Director1). However, even the other evaluators who had learned from their experience that this approach of doing the PA in secret by most of the supervisors did not benefit anyone, whether it was the evaluator (the supervisor) or their subordinates whose performance was being evaluated. The following words of a director is testimony of such a scenario: *"I would like to talk honestly to you, I used to do the performance appraisal without involving or informing the staff and I did not know if I was right or wrong. This practice (PA system) was implemented and became a culture in the department before I started working in this field..... To tell you the truth, I do not know anything about my performance appraisal result until today" (Director1).*

Also, because of the staff's negative perception about the performance appraisal system, some evaluators preferred not to face the staff in order to avoid any conflicts, particularly in the absence of clear guidelines and performance documentation that could be used as evidence. This is evident from findings of the interview with the evaluators. For example, the following excerpt from focus group participants with some of the administrative staff, given below, presents a typical scenario: *"I requested my supervisor many times to let me know what my strengths and weaknesses are, but he was not ready to provide me any feedback;..., (Administrative1)".* Another excerpt from another administrative staff points to such a situation: *"For me, ever since I started working in this department for more than 25 years ago, I have not received any (results of) the performance appraisal" (AD4).*

If there were no follow up on the implementation of the PA process and in the absence of guidelines for the evaluators and staff to inform them of their responsibility towards the management performance appraisal, it would definitely lead to this kind of practice. One of focus group participant shared his concerns about his rights in the following excerpt: *“Initially the staff must be empowered and we need to inform them about their rights to know their performance appraisal outcomes and know their performance level. This will enable the supervisor to take the performance appraisal seriously and not as a matter of routine work.....Currently, no one asks about the performance appraisal and it not taken seriously by most of the health institutions, (Administrative2)”*.

The nature of general items of measurement was another reason for preventing the evaluator from conducting the PA interview and placing him in a dilemma on exactly what points could be assessed on and how to discuss them with his subordinates. All of them mentioned that these general items of measurements were very difficult to judge and argue about with their staff. The following response of a director participant who describes his difficulties in conducting the PA resulting from the too general nature of items of measurement is evidence of the above finding: *“The current performance appraisal (system) does not include all aspects of technical measurement and we are unable to assess and measure the part of the technical activities in our department....., (Director3)”*. Another response of a section head whom complaints about the ambiguity of some items of measurement supports the previous obvious observation: *“my direct supervisor evaluates me based on the items of the performance appraisal report and not based on my real performance. Also, my supervisor does not inform me about the result of my PA” (Head5)*.

One administrative director raised concerns about the turnover of a large number of staff and rotation in medical officer’s department of a health institution, which did not help the new supervisor to handle the performance appraisal very smoothly. This concern was shared by one of the focus group participants who have had experience of working with a new medial officer as she mentioned: *“There are some evaluators who do not have enough experience to deal with management of the performance appraisal, (Nurse3)*. In addition to the above issue, lack of effective documentation on the part of

previous supervisors makes it difficult for the new supervisor to sit with his assigned staff to discuss the performance appraisal outcome. This problem experienced by some section heads was supported by the response of a participant of nurses' focus group: *"I agree with respondent (1) because there is no follow up on how to conduct the performance appraisal. Only at the end of the year, the directorate of administration affairs asks us for the evaluation reports. Also, as respondent (3) mentioned, the evaluator who is only a clinician might be new to the health system and he is not oriented or trained to do it. This is not fair even for the evaluator when he gives this assignment to someone else without any preparation"* (Nurse 8).

A medical doctor who acts as the head of section for that particular health institution besides carrying out his/her responsibilities as a doctor manages a health institution. Therefore, lack of time is a major reason for him/her not to conduct performance appraisal interviews. However, other interviewees argued that the PA task could be scheduled at the end of the duty shift when there are a few patients who could be seen by other doctors. This point is expressed in the following response of a doctor participant in the interview: *"We can have flexibility and schedule some staff in a week; and for the health institutions"*(Director2).

Without doubt, some interesting responses like those of three evaluators who asked how they could discuss the performance level with the staff if the staff asked them how his/her right to financial rewards could be the same as those of other staff whose level of competency in performance was not considered. Another factor that negatively affects the performance appraisal interview is the fact that the evaluation is conducted once a year only. To make matters worse, the PA was carried out in the last two months of the year when everyone was busy with other annual reports, which they believed, were more important than other administrative reports that were not taken into consideration by the higher authority. In addition, the supervisors were afraid that if there were negative comments and staff obtained low marks or less than his expected marks, the latter might not accept the result and complain against the supervisors, particularly in the absence of effective continuous documentation about the performance appraisal progress. The following response illustrates this point: *"If the*

*result is negative or lower than the expected level, the staff will create problems and the result might demotivate the staff" (H1).*

Some supervisors were concerned about difficulties in dealing with the unique personalities of the staffs, especially when they were not prepared to deal with such personalities. This problem was presented by one of the supervisors in the following excerpt: *"Dealing with a staff having a negative attitude to work and who is in conflict with you is a big challenge for me as a supervisor, (Head8)"*. Therefore, the directors and head sections as well as their subordinates mentioned that the importance of strengthening the relationship between the supervisors and subordinates as this could reduce any tensions between them persuade the subordinates to accept the outcome of the performance appraisal result. In the following excerpt one of the supervisors stressed this point: *"...The supervisor must not be autocratic in dealing with his subordinates because the staff will not accept any negative comment if the supervisor does not have a good relationship with his staff" (Director4)*. This relationship between supervisor and staff cannot take place if there is no open communication between them; this is testified by one of the staffs in following words: *"If there is a transparent communication between the supervisor and the staff, the staff will accept negative comments" (Head5)*. Another participant from the focus group of administrative staffs said "the supervisor has to strengthen the relationship" not only by building good relationship among the subordinates at work but he has to maintain a "balance between presenting the performance problem and its solution" (Administrative3).

#### **4.3.5 Theme (4): Theme: Professional Development:**

Many inquiring questions had been discussed with concerned participants in order to identify the gap between the performance appraisal and the development of the staffs' skills in order to identify the area of limitations in the process. Although past literature emphasizes development of the staffs' skills as one of the main aims of the performance appraisal. All participants in the interview discussion mentioned that there was no professional development agreement between staff and supervisor based on the performance outcomes as there was no coordination between the written

recommendation in the official PA report and the training department for drawing up a training plan based on the individual requirements of the staff. However, in spite of this limitation, the direct supervisors believed that they are accountable and one of their responsibilities was to develop their own staff either by discussing it on a daily basis with staff who had weaknesses in his/her performance and then provide training or nominate him/her for required training programmes. However, the issue was that this happened without referring to the document of the performance appraisal and by taking their daily observations and interactions with the staff into account. I believe that nominating staff is often influenced by many factors like the close relationship between supervisor and staff. One of the supervisor in the following excerpt stresses this point: *"regarding the strengths, we send him/her to other governorates for any workshops in order to get extra allowance.... Because we have shortage of funds and there is not enough bonuses to be given to competent staff" (Director2).*

On the other hand, one of the focus group participants presented an account of just the opposite experience of this issue in the following response: *"I do not know what the level of my performance is as my supervisor has not let me know what my strengths and weaknesses are" (Administrative1).* However, another supervisor did not use to inform the staff about his/her weaknesses; instead, he indirectly informed him/her by sending him/her for training programmes for minimizing his/her weaknesses. He took such a course of action to avoid any conflicts between him and the staff (Head7).

Most of the supervisors mentioned that they could identify their subordinates training needs by observing the staff while he/she performing a particular task while three supervisors mentioned that it should be done through the outcome of the patient's care. On the other hand, two supervisors mentioned that they could identify the training needs from the task that had been assigned to the staff. Only one evaluator mentioned that he could identify the staffs' needs from the outcome of his or her report or through a health presentation to the patients. *"I can identify the training needs of the staff by assessing the care given to the patients by him/her, checking his/her skill in writing or producing any reports or by observing his/her participation in presentations for the health education" (H8).*

Again, most of the supervisors complained of the training department's failure to provide training to the staff based on their concerned specialties and training' needs. Eight of the twenty evaluators mentioned that arranging for training programs was not based on their staffs' needs. This was often done by adopting an approach of allocating seat for each department based on the percentage of the total number of the staffs of each department. Moreover, they believed this kind of training distribution was not fair as some of the senior most staffs in some departments where they were privileged to have more training opportunities than other staffs in other departments. This issue was underlined by the director of a new department in the following response: "*The process of allocating the seats for all departments in our organization does not meet the needs of each department because they are allocated a seat according to total number of the staff in that department*" (Director3). One of the subordinates from the participants of focus group supported this opinion when he mentioned "*it is not suitable for meeting my needs. We are missing the database that document details of all those who went for training. Sometimes some staff is sent for specific training courses simply for motivation and not for the development*" (Nurse6).

Despite several training limitations, the supervisors used the internal resources by using the availability of competent staff for peer learning with some expert colleagues. The response from one supervisor stresses this point in the following words: "*If the staff has limitations or weaknesses in some areas I will put him/her with competent staff for improvement. Also I assign a particular task to a weak staff and ask him/her with that competent staff in order for both of them to complete it together*" (Director3).

The following unique response from one section head that stresses the need to strengthen the staff's decision making ability regarding his/her professional development by selecting the required training programmes provided by the training department. "*We usually receive the list (of topics) for training and let the staff select what (topic) he/she wants*" (H7). In the beginning of the interview some section heads mentioned that they nominate staff for particular training programs without informing the staff about their performance weaknesses that required this kind of training. Regarding the above observation, the researcher believes that the section head might have been

too sensitive about giving some negative feedback to the subordinates to communicate the matter to the staff. Consequently, he/she prefers to nominate the staff for this training without informing him/her. On the other hand, some respondents wanted to show the staff that he/she had the authority to select his/her subordinates for training programs. This difference in approach might be due to absence of standards in the selection policy. Two newly supervisors mentioned that they only nominated staff for training when they made repeated mistakes or committed any major errors.

On the other hand, there were individual initiatives taken by some supervisors in the quarterly assessment for their own department where they used a checklist to decide if the staff meets the requirements of each assessment criteria and if they found that a staff had weaknesses in some area the supervisor selected him/her for training organized by his/her department. Other section heads, however, used peer review conducted by a multidisciplinary team who work directly with nurses in order to have a wider picture about the level of the performance of her staff. Another strategy for staff development is one that was mentioned by two supervisors, one of them a director and the other a section head. They assigned their staff greater responsibilities as a tool for staff development.

With regard to assessment of the progress of the staff in different years, most supervisors argued that there was no need to compare the performance appraisal of one particular year with the previous year since the top management never asked them about the progress in the performance of any staffs. One section head, for instance, responded "*it is important to compare, but since it is a secret process, I do not compare the results because overall the PA is not given any importance by the top management. We are only asked to fill up the PA reports*" (Head7). However, a few evaluators did compare the performance level of the staff of a number of years as they were concerned about the effectiveness of their intervention for correction. Evidence for this presented by different focus group participants like those that the one mentioned here: "*...actually, the nominating a staff for any courses rarely depends on our needs*" (Nurse5).

Another approach that the supervisors considered useful in identifying the training needs of the staff was doing self-assessment and mentioning their training needs based on their assessment. This point was stressed by one of the directors in the following excerpt: *"I can find out such requirements through self-assessment where the staff writes what kind of training they require and they must match each of the items of measurement. On the other hand, when I send the staff for training indirectly I communicate to him/her that he/she has some weaknesses"* (Director6). However, one participant in the focus group discussion did not support this view where she illustrated that as *"courses are provided based on the general needs of the department and not based on individual needs"* (Nurse1).

#### **4.3.6 Theme (5): Challenge of using performance appraisal form for professional development:**

Effective performance appraisal is one in which its outcomes can be used as a tool for enhancing the staffs' performance. However, most of the findings contradicted the literature where empirical studies in the past found the main objective for implementing the performance appraisal is to have a balance between assessment and development of the staff (Celik, 2014). During the interviews, it was interestingly found that the supervisors never thought about maintaining a balance between assessment and development of the staff. All of the participants mentioned that the content of the PA report form No. 2 which was widely used in most of health institutions in the governorate. Particularly by the executive staff, where there were nine general items of measurement which lead to bias in the results of the PA because it confused them about how and on what aspects they had to assess the staff. Therefore, since they felt that those items were irrelevant to some jobs, particularly those relating to technical staff, they believed that more explanations should be added to them. One of the supervisors mentioned in the interview *"there is no link between the appraisal outcomes and the needs for the performance development and the items of measurement are too general and not comprehensive. Again, there are no technical measurements which enable us to develop the staff. If there is scope for improvement in the performance appraisal system and staff has the opportunity to acknowledge the outcome of the PA,*

*we can appreciate the current PA system. However, the current system has no scope for that"(Director2). Also, other subordinates also supported the above view. For example, one of focus group participants (FGP) said, "the items of measurement are too general and not clear. It depends on the evaluator on how to understand them and how to evaluate them" (Nurse2). Another (FGP) presented the issue with more details: "The weight of the evaluation is more on assessment than on the development of the staff in the performance appraisal system. Also, the culture of the evaluation system is more focused on the performance assessment and not on the performance development. This is because there is no professional development plan for the staff.....A full page is about performance appraisal (assessment) and only two lines for the recommendations" (Nurse4). Another interviewee (FGP) suggested creating sub-headings to solve the issue in the following response: "Well, in order to make it clearer and more specific, it is better to create some sub-headings under each statement in order to reduce the multi-conceptualization and make the evaluation more accurate" (Nurse5).*

In order to achieve its objectives related to professional development, the PA has to be carried out in a systematic open interview discussion between the supervisors and subordinates. Since the process is conducted in secret and without involving the staff in the process, it is difficult to use the performance appraisal for the development of the staff. One respondent from focus group argued thus: *"Yes, there is no balance between performance assessment and performance development because the whole process is kept secret, (Nurse1)." Another administrative staff is of the opinion that "the secret nature of the management of performance appraisal process must be removed" (Administration 2).*

Out of a total of twenty participants (evaluators), three of them mentioned that absence of a scale for distribution of the mark for each item and having no space for justification for providing marks are responsible for not being able to identify exactly what the weaknesses and strengths of the staff are. For instance, one (FGP) mentioned that if he was going to do the analysis on the performance appraisal in order to organize training looking at the item of measurement, the (too general) items like the one on "adhering to punctuality and occupation safety" could not help him in his endeavor to finalize the list

of candidates for different training courses. This scenario was complicated whenever a supervisor's position is changed in any department, which affects continuity in the evaluation of the staffs' performance negatively.

The participants were divided into two groups – those who had some knowledge of the items of measurement and those who did not. The first group included even those staffs who were asked to fill up information about his/her personal details and the details regarding the previous training courses he/she had attended in the last two years. One director to the issues resulting from such a scenario in the excerpt: "*The items of measurement do not cover all aspects of the nature of the work. You might find that the staff is excellent in the technical aspects of the work whereas in the administrative part or his relation with colleagues may not be good,.....At the end, however, he/she will get a high score in the current performance appraisal report which is not fair for the competent staff*" (Director3'. Most of the (FGP) raised concerns over the issues mentioned above and reiterated their right to have a look at the nature of items of measurement; one of them mentioned that " *the evaluator has to inform his subordinates on what he is going to be evaluated on*" (Nurse1).

All of the staffs questioned the practice of leaving out the middle layer of staffs when opportunities for bonus and scholarships for higher studies were announced. They were unhappy about the fact that every year the top management asked for either the list of poor performers or excellent ones when those opportunities were announced. Also, not having a variety of training programmes was another reason for the evaluators to think that there were no benefits of current performance appraisal management.

Regarding the number of the performance appraisals conducted in the organization, all supervisors agreed that one annual performance appraisal was not useful to develop the staffs' skills. This is because it was conducted at the end of the year when they were too busy to have an action plan to develop the staff, especially to draw up a list of training plan to be submitted in the middle of the year. Usually all the departments received the forms for conducting performance appraisal in the month of September or October and the administration asked them to return the completed report within the

same month. This gave rise to a challenging situation for the supervisors where they filled up the PA form under pressure of limited time, without even having time to refer back to his or her internal performance documentation. One of the staffs referred to this issue in the following excerpt: *"The performance appraisal must be used as a tool for staff development and for assessment only. If the supervisor comes at the end of the year to assess the staff and give him a grade when is he going to find time to develop the staff and improve his performance? Therefore, I feel there are no clear objectives for the PA"* (Nurse5). Other respondents from (FGP) emphasized the inadequacies of one annual performance appraisal report as exemplified by the following excerpt: *"it is not sufficient to do once a year. It is necessary to conduct it quarterly because it will motivate the staff to improve his performance"* (Nurse1+ 4+5).

The absence of a clear aim for the PA system in the organization highlighted by 18 of the twenty evaluators who participated in the study led to a situation where all the forms were managed as routine tasks and they were locked up in the drawer: A section head in the following excerpt mentioned this point: *"I suggest creating guidelines and tools to help the evaluators on the evaluation process"* (Head9). In the words of another section head, the PA *"is implemented as a routine activity, which we have to carry out without having any advantages either for the staff or the evaluator"*(Head5). This view is echoed in the following excerpt from another supervisor: *"The problem is that the PA is done secretly and it does not help the staff develop his/her skills"* (Head3). A nurse participant stressed the importance of communicating the PA result to the staff for the latter's professional development: *"there is supposed to have an agreement between me and my supervisor in order for me to be aware of my (level of) performance and a plan for the development of my performance"* (Nurse1).

One director participant referred to the absence of balance between the performance assessment and performance development. He noticed that the title of form was "performance development Report", but the content of the report mainly focused on performance assessment and there was no section for staff development. It was mentioned only in the section for recommendations which actually misled the evaluator about the meaning of the recommendations and what they had to write in the

recommendation section. One section head, for example, complained *“the recommendations in the performance appraisal are not taken into consideration by the top management. They are repeated year after year, but no one takes any actions on them”* (Head6). One participant from focus group supported this opinion: *“the performance development is mentioned in the cover page of the performance appraisal report but the content of the PA report mainly focuses on the performance assessment. (In other words there is a huge gap) between the title and the content”* (Nurse7). Another (FGP) comments on this situation in following words: *“the evaluator is not prepared and not qualified enough to evaluate the staff. However, none of the evaluators were trained on how to use the items of measurement and conduct the performance appraisal interview”* (Nurse1).

The updated structure of the organization that was implemented in June 2015 has a separate section for professional development for the purpose of analyzing the performance appraisal reports and planning for training intervention in coordination with the training department and other sections and who prepare some training courses according to Five Year plan. directorates However, this new section which is useful in making the training interventions smoother has not activated until now, which was mentioned by four supervisors who highlighted the importance of its activation in order to link the performance appraisal with proper planning for professional development. However, I believe it would be a challenge to activate this section unless there was cooperation from different departments. The activation of the professional development section could be done by this project of participatory action research which aims at developing the organization and stakeholders. One of the three directors in the following words stressed this point: *“According to the updated organizational chart there is new department for professional development and the performance appraisal must be forwarded to them after evaluating the staff before sending it to personal affairs department. This department has to analyze the performance appraisal report and assess the training needs of the staff and not based on the department needs”* (Director3).

Apart from the scope of the performance appraisal and its impact on the professional development, the number of staff in each department could have an impact on the number of opportunities for the staff to attend required training courses as the shortage of the staff often prevents the staff from attending the arranged training courses. Two interviewees raised this point. The following excerpt from one of the two supervisors highlights this point: *“if there is staff shortage in a section at the time of a particular training program, the staff may miss it because of the shortage”*(Head1). One director (Director4) supports this view.

*The role of subordinates has a negative impact on implementing the performance appraisal as a tool for their development as they are concerned more about the overall grade rather than identifying areas in which they are strong or weak. One (FGP) described this culture in following extract from her interview: “Also, the current culture is that the staff is interested in finding out what overall his/her result is and he/she is not bothered about what his strengths and weaknesses are”* (Nurse4). Contrary to this view, one subordinate strongly believed that it was her right to know the weak areas in her work. As she felt that she was a part of the problem: *“for example, if I have weaknesses and the supervisor does not keep it and store (save it for future reference) without my knowledge till the end of the year, (what’s the use)? . (The supervisor) must discuss it with me and have a plan including many steps on how to overcome them. In this way I will accept the negative points mentioned by my supervisor”* (Nurse5).

#### **4.3.7Theme (6): Evaluator’s competency requirements:**

Without doubt, the success of any system depends on its management by an efficient leader. Since the main purpose of this research project is to use the performance appraisal system as a tool for professional development, which is mainly conducted and controlled by the supervisor. Therefore, it is essential for the supervisor who takes up this role to be prepared well and the higher authorities must ensure that he/she has some essential competencies in order to deal with the demands of this process. The participants in the interview discussed many characteristics and skills that the supervisors have to develop in order to be an effective evaluator.

All supervisors' opinions emphasize the importance of the evaluator being good communicators who can divide the negative comments into doses and start with positive words. One director referred to this strategy in the following excerpt "*I usually divide the negative comments in different doses*" (Head3). Similarly, half of the supervisors believed that the evaluator had to be knowledgeable and skillful in dealing with different personalities of the staff. One supervisor mentioned that he had to "*know the psychology of the staff. In addition, the relationship between the staff and [me] must be strong*" (Head13). Four of the supervisors mentioned that the evaluator had to know how to select a suitable time and suitable place to discuss with the staff his performance, especially the negative comments (Head3).

Regarding the other technical requirements for the evaluator, I was surprised to know that only two (out of twenty supervisors) in this study mentioned that the evaluator had to know the job description of each staff that was going to be evaluated by him (Head1&Director2). Other section heads stated that it was challenging for him to assess other categories of the staff that had backgrounds and job specifications that were different from him. For example, one general practitioner who acted as head of the department mentioned that it was difficult to assess staff like the lab technician: "*if the supervisor is from different field, the staff has to share the evaluation conducted by the other person from same field with the supervisor*" (Head1). One (FGP) supports this argument in the following words: "*I think it is impossible for any supervisors to understand the nature of the work unless he/she sits with him/her and helps him/her to achieve the task and not by simply asking him/her to accomplish the task without being involved in the task*" (Administrative4).

Other subordinates pointed out that the evaluator must be able to document the progress of the staffs' performance, as it would increase his confidence while conducting the performance appraisal interview. One respondent from administrative staff in focus group interview said "*the staff will accept the guidance of his/her supervisor when the supervisor has evidence for the performance appraisal of the staff*" (Administrative6). One of the main roles of the supervisor is to supervise the staffs and correct their mistakes. A section head emphasized the need for accountability for his

assessment When he mentioned that *"the supervisor needs to know how to evaluate the staff and (determine) precisely what rules she/he has to follow in the assessment"* (Head1).

All of the supervisors in the interviews agreed with the benefits of strengthening the relationship between the supervisor and the staff for persuading the staff to accept the negative comments as an opportunity for his/her development. This is illustrated by one of the section heads in the following excerpt: *"The supervisor requires training to develop his/her skills on how to deal with the staff while providing the negative and positive comments"* (Head1).

Most of the section heads opined that the supervisor has to manage the staff fairly and with a sense of justice. One supervisor mentioned that a fair performance appraisal could satisfy the staff, which would make them more committed to their work. Five supervisors mentioned that the monitoring skill of the evaluator was an essential skill for the success of the performance appraisal. Also, one supervisor mentioned that the evaluator had to know how to deal with both positive and negative points of the staff's performance in a diplomatic way; he needs to select a suitable time and place and start with what the staff likes (Head4).

Despite the fact that the essential competencies were highlighted by most of the participants, surprisingly most of them did not participate in any training on the management of the performance appraisal. One director mentioned that he learned through years of experience and that he did not participate in any courses on this subject and he wondered why concerned departments (human resource department) does not orient and update them with rules and procedures of management of the performance appraisal. In the following excerpt he mentions how he has not *"taken any courses for the last twenty years"* (Director5). Other subordinate from focus group agreed with him when he mentioned that *"in some cases the supervisor does not have necessary skills to evaluate his/her subordinates"* (Administrative5). However, in the practice there are some supervisors who refuse to take the responsibilities of evaluating their subordinates when they are not oriented and do not have any previous experience

in conducting the PA. One subordinate from the focus group refers to this issue thus: *"in our case, we have some supervisors who have been in this position for just four months only; and they refused to evaluate their staff. It has happened more than once. It is relay unfair"* (Nurse3).

Another section head mentioned the issue of dealing with those staffs having negative attitude when he says: *" Dealing with a staff having a negative attitude to work and who is in conflict with you is a big challenge for me as a supervisor. It is quite difficult to face a staff having a negative attitude"* (Head8). However, one subordinate from the focus group presented a solution to this problem in the following excerpt: *"It is the evaluator's responsibility. He has to be diplomatic and possess emotional intelligence to market his ideas. The evaluator and I as a staff have to work as a team in order to overcome the weaknesses in the performance. The evaluator has to be trained before giving him the responsibility to evaluate the others"* (Nurse1). Similarly, a section head (7) mentioned that the supervisor's role is to inform his subordinates about his/her role-that it is his responsibility to supervise them and they have to accept his/her negative comments as it is only going to benefit them, especially for their professional development.

Therefore, it is evident that some evaluators were not trained on the management of the performance appraisal, which was the reason why they faced challenges in dealing with the staff having negative. One subordinate illustrated a scenario where employees whose performance was not very good gets away with high rating in the PA: *"I know some staff who had obtained 97% in the PA despite the fact that throughout the whole year many complaints have been recorded and many explanation sessions have been held with him and he gets with high marks. When I was a member of the committee to explore complaints of the staff, I came to know most of the staff of a particular institution obtained more than 95% despite the fact that the head of this health institution always used to complaint about most of those employees "*(Administrative6). This can be more serious when the evaluator is not experienced at all. The subordinate referred to this issue in the following extract: *"In reality, the new supervisor who has not completed even three months is given the responsibility to conduct the performance appraisal report"* (Nurse3). Another subordinate referred to the same point in the following

excerpt: *" Very often it is the supervisor who takes the responsibility of the section and evaluates the staff even if he/she has not completed three months" (Nurse5).*

Based on the above discussion it seemed that there was a general agreement among supervisors and subordinates that the supervisors had to be trained in the management of the performance appraisal. Since each organization's requirements were different, the kind of training also had to be different from those of others. Hence, the organization had the responsibility of preparing training courses that were suitable for both supervisors on how to conduct the performance appraisal effectively and for subordinates on how to use the benefit of the negative feedback for their professional development. If there was a structure for training courses with protocol and standards for the management of the performance appraisal, it would help the new system to be acceptable for all.

#### **4.3.8 Theme (7): Performance Communication:**

The communication of the performance appraisal outcome can be done through different approaches, either official or non-official. This is important because action research explores the situation of how the performance is communicated in the organization in order to take the knowledge created from the discussion with supervisors for action or activities that can have a direct or indirect effect on them after gathered all of data for talked this research project problem.

Most of the tools that the supervisors had been using for communicating the PA outcome to their subordinates by means of daily observation during their routine rounds where they could observe how the task was performed by the staff. This was supported by one subordinates from (FGP) when he admitted that as gave him feedback to support [him] to be competent at work" (Administrative6). Other (FGP) stress the importance of communicating the PA results to the staff. This is clear from the words of an administration staff: *"If the supervisor asks me to finish a specific task or gives me some responsibilities, he/she will ask me. However, the total performance appraisal for the whole year is not discussed although it is important for improving my performance."*

(Administrative4). However, another respondent from other focus groups mentioned that he wants to improve his performance but complains that his supervisor does not take the initiative: *"I have not been informed about my performance appraisal result, not even about my strengths and weaknesses"* (Nurse3).

The second popular method to communicate the PA results is by conducting regular meetings where the department's staff discusses the objectives and figures as well as issues raised by them with their supervisors during the meeting. Other supervisors mentioned that they usually communicated the PA results during the monthly meeting where outstanding performances were appreciated and highlighted and the poor performances were mentioned without mentioning the name of the staff. Moreover, the poor performers were usually called privately to advise them. Contrary to this, one subordinate mentioned that *"the direct supervisor does the follow up in regular meetings, whether we achieved the objectives of each health program, in addition to reviewing all health indicators and discussing the areas of weakness and how we can improve them. The supervisor does not individually inform us about details of our performance like his/her comments on any weaknesses that we have"* (Nurse2)".

As for the competent staff, some of the supervisors did not inform the staff directly that they performed well but by nominating his name for the annual bonus so that the staff would understand that his efforts had been recognized and appreciated by his supervisors. However, this could not be applied to all staffs as the bonus budget allocation was not sufficient. This is evident from the fact that in the last three years not a single staff had received bonus in any departments. The following excerpt from the interview with one of the directors highlights this issue. *"Previously (two years ago), we used to give bonuses, but nowadays the staff get nothing. Even with availability of the bonus, earlier not every active staff [member] could get it because it depends on the total number of the staff and the budget allotted for the bonus"* (Director4).

One section head mentioned that he could find out the level of the performance of his staff by assessing the level and accuracy of the report that he had obtained from a particular staff in addition to asking the colleagues about the performance of the staff. *"I*

*collect information from the staff's colleagues", he says, "by asking (about) their opinion about the staff - to know if he/she has achieved the work objectives" (Head7). Another section head refers to 'the clinical audit and monthly report' (Head 6). for communication of PA result. However, from the point of view of the subordinate, this is not communicated to them and they do not know their performance level as one respondent from the focus group mentioned: "We have not had any discussions about my performance (appraisal) result in terms of weaknesses and strengths in the whole of my experience in the last 16 years" (Nurse2).*

The communication of the PA results showed there was a contradiction between the points of view of supervisors and subordinates where sometimes there was an agreement or contradiction about the level of the communication of the performance among them. It relied on the type of leadership and how he prepared himself to discuss the performance outcome with the staff. Also, the personality of the staff could encourage the supervisor to be transparent during the staff if he felt that he or she accepted any kind of feedback. This was highlighted by one (FGP) when she mentioned about her experience: *"They showed my performance appraisal result and discussed it with me once only over the past 18 years of my career.... Moreover, I did not have time to improve my performance since it was done once a year (towards the end of the year"* (Nurse1).

#### **4.3.9Theme (8): Performance documentation:**

Without doubt, documentation is very important in the resolution of any issues. The data that were gathered from participants in this regard was aimed at identifying gaps during, or prior to conducting the performance appraisal or after documenting the final performance results. The evidence that was found from this research indicates that there is no standard system to be followed by all supervisors in all the departments.

Evaluators can make accurate assessment of the performance based on accurate and valid documentations. Most of the supervisors mentioned that there were different types of documentation that they could rely on and it was mainly created based on the nature

of each department activities or responsibilities. One of the main registers was their own internal registers, either hard or soft, where the supervisors documented the positive and negative points related to the performance of each staff. Interestingly, in this kind of documentation, some of the supervisors had small notebooks to write any short comments on their daily observations on the performance of the staff. Despite the importance of documentation, one supervisor mentioned *"the documentation must be balanced, which must be beneficial to the staff and not harmful"* (Director3).

Some of the evaluators did not have sufficient time to record any comments and, therefore, they often relied on their memory when they conducted the performance appraisal at the end of the year. However, the subordinates wondered why the data about their performance was not available and accessible. An excerpt from the interview with (FGP) given below highlights this aspect: *"I don't think the supervisor can remember all items of measurements and our personal file does not have any evidence for the details of our grade or performance appraisal result"* (Nurse5). However, some subordinates were aware of the documentation of their achievement in the department as one of the administrative staff (FGP) testifies in the following excerpt: *"for me, as a staff, I record all my work in my computer and save it whenever it is required, (Administration 2).*

Two of the supervisors created their own progress register and checklists, which enabled them to evaluate the staff on a monthly basis. However, one of them mentioned that her internal form accommodated a lot of information that reflect the real performance of the staff that is useful for her department. However, she faced difficulty to transfer that huge amount of information to the official performance appraisal report. She described her experience of this issue in the following excerpt: *"I have my own internal evaluation and a huge amount of information, but the final PA report does not allow me to accommodate all information I have about the staff performance"* (Head9). Other evaluators like a section head mentioned that *"good evidence and accurate assessment led to accurate results; consequently, it not only benefited the staff but also protected the evaluator from any staffs' complaints"* (Head3). Two of the supervisor participants used clinical checklist to check the performance of the staff and gather all

forms of clinical checklist at the end of the year to prepare the results of the final report of the performance appraisal. (Head6). Other department supervisors who used to provide information about technical services to other departments created service delivery forms that must be signed by other departments who receive the service (Director3).

With regard to the documentation of the performance appraisal results and the documentation of the recommendations, most of the supervisors mentioned that they documented the final marks for the staff. But they did not document the details of the evidence of those marks where the staff has weaknesses or strengths. However, they did not fill up the section for recommendations because they believed that the recommendations were not taken seriously by concerned departments or top management. Only three of them mentioned that they took a photocopy of the performance appraisal report. In contrast to this, the other four heads of section mentioned that they forwarded all reports of the performance appraisal to the department of human resources affairs. They did not do any documentation of the outcome of the performance appraisal for their subordinates as they thought it was not their responsibility. It was the role of other departments to document the appraisal result (Head7, Director3, Director4 & Head2). I believe that this practice could be a reason for continuing this practice. This is because when the previous supervisor is transferred to another department or any other organizations, it is a challenge for the new supervisor to continue the performance appraisal of the staffs and identify the areas of their weaknesses and strengths. Also, the new supervisor cannot improve the quality of the staffs' performance if he/she does not have the competency required to do the PA or the opportunities for doing it. One of the (FGP) stresses this point from the nurses' focus group in the following words: "*I think it is neither fair or nor easy for the new supervisor to rely on the previous year's performance appraisal to evaluate the staff for the current year*" (Nurse6). Other subordinates were concerned about the absence of sufficient documentation of their performance as it will make it difficult for the supervisor to continue documenting his/her progress. One of the (FGP) supports this

when she mentioned that there is *“nothing at all about our performance level for any new supervisors to continue evaluating our progress”* (Nurse1).

Similarly, the subordinates were concerned about the situation where a supervisor has to rely on the old performance appraisal report. This is referred to by other nurse (FGP) *“But it has happened before, the new supervisor relying on the previous PA result”* (Nurse3). Other participants disagreed with this practice of new supervisor duplicating old results for the appraisal of a particular staff. In the following excerpt, another participant from the nurses’ focus group mentioned the possible consequence of such a practice: *“I think there might be bias if the new supervisor depends on the last year’s performance appraisal result”* (Nurse1).

One of the section heads mentioned that he did not have any records of the performance appraisal result of his staffs as his director kept those reports secretly away from him without sharing the information about the results with him. This is clear from the following excerpt: *“I don’t know the results of my staffs’ performance. This is despite the fact that our section is responsible for documenting all the results of the PA in our governorate except those of our section”*(Head13). Another (FGP) mentioned that the direct supervisor does not document their performance and that they will provide only the total marks when they apply for scholarship. The following excerpt highlights this scenario: *“the superiors do not have even the final grade of the staff’s performance. Only if the staff applies for scholarship, they will ask the directorate of the administration to get the total marks of the performance appraisal”* (Nurse2).

#### **4.3.10 Theme (9): Rewarding and discipline system:**

Timely recognition of good and poor performance is essential for managers and organizations alike. Appreciating competent staffs helps sustain their effective performance and stop turnover. On the other hand, when poor performers are aware of their recurrent mistakes in their performance, it will lead them to self-enquiry and make them more disciplined. Therefore, consideration of actions based on the outcome of

both the outstanding and poor performance is equally important for the success of all organizations.

The findings of the interview discussions provided insight into the organization's style of dealing with both performances. Most of the supervisors followed the same approach of providing rewards to good performers and giving punishment to poor performers as the current system has a limitation in achieving variety in the functioning of the organization. Regarding rewards given to good performers, most of the supervisors mentioned that they gave both verbal and written appreciation to the staff in front of their colleagues in the department as evidence. However, as one supervisor put it, the appreciation letters that were provided to the staffs could harm the supervisor later on as that staff could use it against him when drawbacks in his performance like carelessness, not being able to maintain punctuality were discovered and pointed out. In such a situation that staff could present this appreciation letter as evidence against the complaints put forth by the supervisor (Director4).

However, other section heads mentioned that all competent staffs were not appreciated and given bonus due to deficiency in funds. Two supervisors suggested nominating competent staffs for training courses as a motivation tool since bonus could be given to all of them. This pointed to a situation where training was not provided with the primary aim of developing the professional skills of the staff, based on an assessment of their weaknesses (Director2, 5). Half of the supervisors that were interviewed mentioned that they recommended bonus for their staffs in the recommendation section but the top management did not take their recommendations seriously. As a result, the competent staffs felt that they were not treated differently from the incompetent ones (All supervisors).

All of the supervisors that were interviewed mentioned that there is no consideration for the staffs that are in the category of average performers; they are not considered anything - neither training nor appreciation. One of (FGP) expresses her disappointment about the current PA system in the following excerpt: *"I don't think we have a rewarding system here"* (Administrative1). Another staff nurse from the other focus group is not

aware that the staff with poor performance is not eligible for the annual allowance as she said: *"this is the first time I have heard about it"* (Nurse2). Other section heads are able to link the awareness of the staffs about their performance when they receive motivational bonus. A section head in the following excerpt stresses this point: *'Earlier, nominating the staff for motivational bonus was an important tool. However, as the seats are limited and all the staffs cannot receive the bonus, not all of them are aware of their performance level'* (Head1).

As regards maintaining discipline, the supervisors carried out a series of activities starting with advising the staff verbally and then, if he/she repeated the same mistake. The advice would be written as advice letter and one copy was kept in his/her personal file and one copy was given to the staff and a third copy for the second line supervisors for his/her information. At the end of the year, if the staff had not improved his/her performance, he/she would get a poor grade, which meant he/she would not be eligible for financial allowance. However, two of them mentioned that there none of them (poor performers) had received annual financial allowance. For example, all departments received the circular from the Ministry of Health (MOH) headquarters asking them for a list of staffs having poor grades in the month of September in order to prepare and allocate the financial allowances in the budget for the coming year. However, performance appraisal reports were completed and forwarded only at the end of the month of October. Consequently, the list from all the departments would not have any poor performers in the absence of any performance appraisal reports for the current year. As a result, all of the staff would receive their financial allowance irrespective of the differences in the levels of competency of these staffs. This could lead to a situation where the staffs feel that the organization deals with them unfairly. This issue is well-illustrated by one of the (FGP) in the following excerpts: *"What actually happens is that the supervisor does not want headaches from the staff if the staff knows that he/she has not got his/her annual financial allowances because of his performance appraisal result. Therefore, when the supervisors are asked to provide a list of poor performers, they reply that none of the staff is a poor performer. This is because there is no follow up about the performance appraisal report. Also, the supervisors don't like to any conflicts*

*with the staff" (Nurse1). Another subordinate adds, "this might be because there was no one who got a poor grade in his performance appraisal outcome" (Nurse8).*

Although all supervisors mentioned that only competent staffs were given bonus, this argument was refuted by others (FGP) who noticed that even poor performers received bonus as mentioned in the following excerpt: *"In some cases even poor performers are nominated for bonuses in order to motivate them" (Administrative2).* However, being a member of the regional committee for the last couple of years, I believe that small and equal amounts of bonus was distributed among all of the staffs. The committee members were, however, concerned about the situation where all staff, both eligible and ineligible ones, get bonus. Moreover, this practice was implemented in order to avoid any dissatisfaction among the staff. One subordinate from the focus group highlighted this practice in the below-given excerpt: *"Secondly, all of the staff can get financial benefits or promotion whether their performance level is low or high" (Nurse8).* The consequence of this practice, which does not distinguish between outstanding performance and poor performance is expressed by one of the administrative staff in the focus group: *"If there is a link between the performance appraisal result and promotion to other grades, it will encourage staff more where the top management allocate budget for the outstanding performance. Most of the staffs are disappointed about the current system of awarding grades and promotion because all of the staffs are promoted indiscriminately to the next grade despite differences in the performance appraisal. Actually there is no significant reward or discipline system in this place" (Administrative, 6).*

As for scholarship linked to the performance appraisal, there are eligibility criteria for completing the list of candidates for scholarship. According to the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Civil Service, it is mandatory for an applicant to have scored not less than a very good grade (80%) in the last two years. Also, those staffs who apply for scholarship has to go through competition and fulfil some criteria; and one of the criteria is the result of the PA. Many supervisors mentioned that they used to receive orders from the top management for changing the actual grade of the performance appraisal of some recommended staff who applied for scholarship in order to assist them to win the

competition. This practice had a negative impact on some staffs who were more competent, eligible and deserving when they missed the opportunity to go for higher studies. One staff who participated in the focus group discussion complained against this practice, citing from his own experience in the following excerpt: *"The funny aspect of the present PA system is that my supervisor had already evaluated me when I applied for scholarship and the concerned department for scholarship asked my supervisor for details of my grade. At this stage, the supervisor changes my grade to 95% in order to get scholarship. This means I have two performance appraisal reports for the same year: one sent to the MoH to be in my file and another for the purpose of getting scholarship"* (Administrative6).

#### **4.3.11 Theme (10): Suggestions for improving the performance appraisal system:**

The purpose of this research project was to identify the factors and challenges that prevent the evaluators to conduct the PA as well as use the performance appraisal as a tool for staff development. There were many suggestions put forth by the supervisors and subordinates who believed that they could help improve the PA system. First, all of them agreed on the importance of bringing transparency to the PA system. Second, each staff had to acknowledge his/her performance appraisal outcome. Third, the items of measurement in the PA forms had to be changed from being subjective to be more objective, by creating sub-headings under each of the items. In this context, the opinion of one (FGP) is quite relevant: *"in my opinion, some items of measurement should be added to the existing items or some sub-headings should be placed under the current ones, (Nurse3)"*. On the other hand, others are of the opinion that a major obstacle in the current performance appraisal system is its content in terms of the items of measurements. For example, one of (FGP) mentioned *"the (existing) items of measurement are not applicable to all categories of the staff"* (Administrative2).

Regarding the technical items of measurement, the technical supervisors unanimously agreed that adding technical items in the PA form was essential for reflecting the real work. However, there were different views among the focus groups participants as to who should create those items of measurement. Some of them opined that they must

be created by the concerned departments and approved by the quality control section. For example, one subordinate mentioned *"each department [should] create their measurable items and then they need to sit with the QA section to review those items and approve them for its implementation"* (Nurse1). Similarly, another (FGP) mentioned *"the professional development department has to work with the QA section to develop measurable items"* (Nurse4). She added *"each department has to be involved in the formulation of items of measurement and the QA section has to take this initiative, (Nurse 4)"*. Other subordinates were also concerned about the quality of the items of measurement. This is clear from the following suggestion: *"the items of measurement must be turned into a standard policy and the tool for the evaluation must be reliable and prevent any bias"* (RN 1).

Half of the supervisors suggested allowing the subordinate to understand the level of his performance by adding self-assessment in the PA document. They believed this approach would help them take initiative in the discussion on performance appraisal. This is what is suggested by (FGP): *"I think there should be space for the staff's self-assessment, which should take place before the assessment carried out by the supervisor"* (Nurse7). However, one section head argued that it was not a good idea as some of the staff who were over-confident might give themselves high marks and when the supervisors evaluated him and gave him/her a lower grade, he/she would be shocked, which could create a conflict between them in addition to demotivating the staff later on (Head13). However, all supervisors emphasized the importance of creating awareness among the staff about the importance of the PA as a tool for their professional development. Moreover, they suggested defining 'recommendation' clearly in order to help the evaluator make the right recommendation and the same should be shared with concerned departments. One of the administrative staff mentioned *"the section for recommendations in the PA report can be shared among different departments based on their responsibilities. For example, it can be shared with the development department, training department and human resource management department"* (Administrative3). One(FGP) suggests that the recommendation section is

such that it *“must specify the categories such as training recommendations, reward recommendations and general recommendation”* (Nurse6).

Open performance appraisal system' is essential for the professional development of the staff. The (FGP) recommended that the performance appraisal must be conducted quarterly and the staff has to acknowledge it. One staff compared the performance appraisal report to a school certificate when she mentioned that *“the performance appraisal report has to be treated like a school certificate where the student can acknowledge all his marks. It is like knowing our weaknesses and strengths in order to improve my performance, There must be an interview for the performance appraisal discussion between the supervisor and staff and it has to be done twice a year”* (Nurse1).

They suggested activating the professional development department in order to analyze the performance appraisal reports and plan for training courses based on the individual needs of the staff. One subordinate from the nurses' focus group mentioned how the department of professional development could be activated. Moreover, how the quality assurance department could control and assess the implementation of the new performance appraisal system *“I think the professional development department has to set up an action plan for the development of each staff based on the performance appraisal outcome.... The quality assurance can focus on the items of measurement and the competency of the evaluator in evaluating the staff”* (Nurse4). Other subordinates in (FGP) put similar suggestions forth: *“the professional development department can focus on analysis of the performance appraisal use this analysis to come out with an action plan”*(Nurse6).

The interview findings point to the need for proper orientation and training for the evaluators to conduct the performance appraisal interview. Also, prior to transferring supervisors to other departments or out of the organization, they must hand over the documents related to each of the staffs' performance to the new supervisor. For this, the role of quality control department can in ensure the competency of the evaluator is crucial. A subordinate from the nurses' focus group stresses this point in the following

excerpt: *"it [the accuracy of the PA results] depends on the competency of the evaluator to evaluate his/her staff correctly and the Q.A department has to audit if the evaluator is competent and trained in the evaluation of the staff" (Nurse4).*

In order to ensure the performance assessment is valid and useful for the professional development, it is necessary to change the annual performance appraisal to quarterly performance appraisal, which will help make intervention and evaluate it in a short period. One of the members of the FGP opined *"in order to be fair to the staff there has to be some items of measurement to include the monthly performance appraisal for each staff" (Administrative4).* However, other supervisors argued that *monthly assessment will be overwhelming and suggested "conducting [it] every three months is enough for the evaluation" (Head3).* This view was supported by (FGP): *"I think the performance appraisal must be conducted every three months in order to enable the supervisor to do follow up so that the staff can develop his/her potential. Also, the supervisor has to plan and implement training courses for his/her staff" (Nurse3).*

Moreover, it is essential to develop guidelines to explain and describe the process of the management of performance appraisal. In order to sustain the effective performance appraisal in the organization they suggested establishing a control mechanism like the one in other health care programs by the quality control audit department. The high standard of the national health programs is evidence for the success of the quality of control department in managing the performance of the staff. This view is illustrated by the following subordinate excerpt: *"Surely if the quality assurance (QA) system is introduced in any program, it will be useful because the Q.A requires documentation of the policy of the performance appraisal management" (Nurse6).* In order to ensure continuation of performance documentation one of the (FGP) suggested that *"the quality control department can ask for the details of the quarterly performance appraisal of the staff" (Administrative6).* When some subordinates suggest *"[t]here must be a follow up on the staff's performance from the second line supervisor" (Nurse8).* Others (FGP) focus on *"follow up on the recent performance appraisal based on the last year's performance appraisal result."* She said that this was necessary to *"identify the progress of the staff" (Nurse6).* Another suggestion is auditing and supervising the previous

performance appraisal by the higher authority to find out what action plans were made and if they were implemented or not; and what impact it had on the performance appraisal of the staff.

Information technology can play a big role in implementing and managing the new system of performance appraisal and for helping the supervisors, the staff, the professional development department and the top management to have access to the PA reports. For this, they suggested turning the paper based PA system into an electronic one. Also, they wish to get feedback from the top management and have regular follow up on their performance. In context, one participant from nurses' focus group mentioned that it was necessary to *"add this to the information technology system and provide access to the evaluator and staff. This is especially necessary to ensure the rights of the staff are protected"* (Nurse5). Also, for proper documentation of the performance, one administrative staff (FGP) mentioned that the electronic medium is essential *"because some staffs are not evaluated by their supervisors for the last three years. The electronic system can give an alert to the staff if they have not been evaluated. Also, it will help the new supervisor to continue the evaluation process"* (Administrative2). Similarly, the IT can support the PA in such a way that *"the documentation system will be well maintained and the items of measurement can be (clearly) illustrated for the evaluator and for those who will develop the staff"* (Nurse2). In regards of continue monitor one nurse mentioned that *"The IT department will support new supervisors to continue the evaluation of the staff from the work started by the previous supervisor"* (Nurse3). Another subordinate opined *"The IT will help the PA system to be more accurate"* (Nurse5).

Both supervisors and subordinates also suggested that more than one evaluator should assess the staff in order to avoid bias and as it helped the supervisor whose background was different from his or her staff (Administrative2, Head3). This is very important when, for instance, a doctor practitioner evaluates a lab-technician or administrative manager evaluates a nurse or doctor (Head1). Also, some items of measurement such as those related to creativity and initiative required more than one evaluator because very often any initiative from the staff would not be accepted by the

supervisors as they often consider such suggestions as threats rather than opportunities. This is the reason why an administrative staff says *"the items of creativity and taking initiative also must be evaluated by a third party"* (Administrative2).

Without doubt, standard formats for the documentation of the performance appraisal are necessary and the system of the performance appraisal has to be uniform across all departments, as it will help any new supervisors to be familiar with the PA process. They suggested that all departments should have the same format for documenting the progress of the staffs' performance. Suggestions from the FGP also focused on changing the culture of doing the performance appraisal where the decision makers have to consider the external factors like the overload (workload) that could influence the level of the performance appraisal as they feel working under pressure is not their fault (Nurse5). In this context, one subordinate from the focus group interview mentioned that the *"PA system must identify the external factors that influence the performance appraisal outcomes"* (Nurse6). One supervisor supported the above point of view when he said *"the external factors that affect the level of performance are not mentioned in the performance appraisal report. "On the other hand, if I know that the staff is competent and has some good skills, which were utilized by the previous health institution, I would consider these factors while assessing him for performance appraisal. In all other cases, I will not consider external factors"* (Director4).

Overall, the suggestion provided from both supervisors and subordinates were value and produce actionable knowledge that gathered for resolving the work-place based problem. All of them agreed about the most suggestion except some supervisors were not comfortable to add self-assessment for subordinates as they thought it would create overconfidence in the staff about his/her competency and at the end would be shocked about the real evaluation from his/her supervisor evaluation. Also, creating audit check list for audit the implementation of the new PA system was not welcome to all evaluators. However, they agreed upon most of the suggestions. One difficult suggestion was about creating the technical items for each specialty in the organization. It was not taken into account for the next step in this project as it would be a challenge

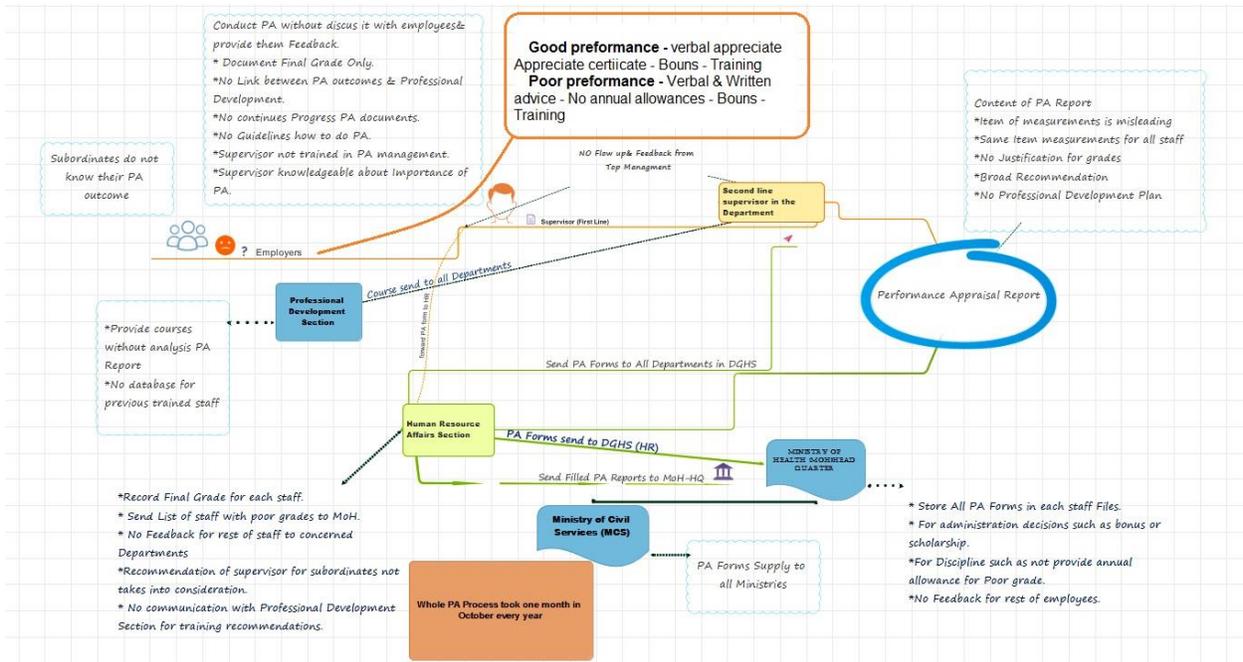
for the project team as it required some expertize in each field in addition to creating conflicting views about the political policy of the ministry.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion of the Finding**

### **5.1.1 Introduction:**

The primary aims of this research project are identifying the barriers to effective utilization of the performance appraisal system as a tool for professional development. In addition, to explore the factors that prevented evaluators from implementing the open performance appraisal interview. Therefore, the knowledge generated by learning from action that took place during the stage of planning for action enriched me with information that enabled me to transfer it to the next stage of action research. The previous chapter discussed in details the ten themes that emerged from the findings. Those themes supplied more information than I expected about the workplace issues and helped achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions. In short, the outcomes of this study helped me to have a wider and richer picture of exact root causes of the problem as illustrated in the following page. In addition, they enabled the project team and decision makers to start selecting suitable actions and activities that could help resolve the problem.

## 5.1.2 Rich Picture of Management of Performance Appraisal System in DGHS



## **5.2 Participant's knowledge about the purpose of performance appraisal:**

The findings of this research were not surprisingly related to the knowledge that the both participants of evaluators and subordinates had about the purpose and the meaning of the performance appraisal (PA). They had divergent views about this topic; most of them believed that the PA could help them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. For instance, as direct quotes from one participants as *"identify the strength and weakness of staff performance"*. This finding was supported by a previous study conducted by Trebble et al, (2013) which revealed that the purpose of the PA is to identify the strong and weak areas of the staff's performance. However, an interesting finding of my study was that the subordinates who participated in the study opined that they had not been informed about their strengths and weaknesses. The findings showed that there was no connection between what they perceived about the importance of the performance appraisal and what they practiced. One head section mentioned *"I do not know why I am evaluating the staff annually (at the end of year). Although I have been working as the head of my section for many years, until today I have not been able to know my strengths and weaknesses so far. However, my staff acknowledges their strengths and weaknesses"* (Head 7).

For instance, one supervisor mentioned that the PA was a holistic system, which was supported by a study conducted by Lutwama, Roos & Dolamo (2013), who pointed out that the PA had several roles to play: strategic, administrative and developmental roles. Therefore, I compared the findings related to the supervisors' knowledge and their practice, especially those related to the experience of subordinates. Surprisingly, the findings of the current study showed that the implementation of the PA in the organization seemed to be contrary to their own knowledge. *One subordinate said "I do not know what the level of my performance is as my supervisor has not let me know what my strengths and weaknesses are."* (Administrative1). As Brumback (2011) points out, the defect of the implementation of the performance appraisal is a lack of orientation prior to conducting the performance assessment as one head section

mentioned *"All heads of sections are supposed to receive a one-day workshop to orient us so as to do the performance appraisal (effectively) and inform us about the objectives of the performance appraisal if I have to act as head of a (particular) section"* (Head 14).

Therefore, it could be concluded that the PA system in the organization was managed by individuals in the absence of a standard system to be followed by all evaluators. This is because there were no follow up actions on the part of the top management – whether it adhered to the updated national rules and regulations which emphasized the importance of providing regular performance feedback to the staff. The current research findings were similar to the findings of the Ugandan Ministry of Public Service which made it compulsory for the concerned departments to conduct the PA on a regular basis, but concerned staff (Lutwama, Roos & Dolamo, 2013) did not take the implementation seriously.

### **5.3 Lack of balance between the performance assessment and individual performance development:**

The findings of the current study showed that the management of the performance appraisal outcomes was not linked to professional development. Although the title of the report is "performance appraisal development report", its content mainly focuses on the assessment of the staff's performance and the fact that there was no connection between the assessment and professional development. Therefore, I believe the content of the PA report was misleading and the evaluators considered it as an assessment tool rather than a professional development tool. *One director said as " From my point of view, the (aim of) the performance appraisal is not clear. I mean, it does not cover everything; it is very limited (in scope), some of the items of measurement are not directed to the nature of the work of the staff. The performance appraisal has to be holistic (more comprehensive)"(Director 3).* Iqbal et al (2015) are of the opinion that the PA often leads to unfair practices when it is used for administrative purposes.

The health organization conducted a large number of training programs, which mainly consists of the national health programs and other general training programs which

target the staff in the governorate. However, the findings presented and emphasized by both evaluators and subordinates revealed that those trainings were not based on the individual needs but on the department needs. One Director mentioned that *"unfortunately the results of the performance appraisal are not taken into consideration when the training department plans for training programs"* (Director1). For example, some staffs that had already been trained and knowledgeable about some health programs were still chosen for training on the same topics, which incurred unnecessary cost. On the other hand, some staffs that really required a particular training program were deprived of that training opportunity for some reasons like limited seats. Some participants in the interview supported this as following quotes *"The process of allocating the seats for all departments in our organization does not meet the needs of each department because they are allocated a seat according to total number of the staff in that department....., (Director3)"*. Therefore, it was quite clear that the distribution of training opportunities was quite unfair as some old staff in some departments had more training opportunities due to recurrent arrangement of such programs every year.

It was, however noted that a few supervisors had arranged training programmes based on individual needs since they were able to link nature of the performance weaknesses to the training opportunities available from time to time. However, they did this without referring to the PA report and the decision was taken based on their daily observation and interaction with the staff. In this regards one head section mentioned as *"There are no standards that you can use or solutions for supporting the poor performers to strengthen their weaknesses"* (Head 6). This finding was contrary to the finding of Selden, Jessica & Sowa (2011), who mentioned that most of the organizations developed their training plan based on performance assessment. Our findings indicated that the training selection might have been influenced by many factors such as close relationship between the supervisor and the staff, especially since there was no documentation of the list of staff who had attended the courses provided. Moreover, due to limited budget for offering rewards for motivation, some supervisors used training programs as motivational tool and, therefore, it reduced the chance for poor performers to receive training. One subordinate support this by mentioned that *"Sometimes some*

*staff is sent for specific training courses simply for motivation and not for the development" (Nurse6).*

#### **5.4 Lack of Performance Appraisal Process Guidelines:**

The research findings on PA management process revealed that in October when the department of administration sent to all departments the official PA forms to be filled up and returned within a short period. This factor had a negative impact on the PA report as it led to bias in the outcome of the report. Grund & Przemek (2012) points out several reasons for these biases. One of them is that the supervisors do not provide accurate ratings since they may not have adequate motivation to spend their time in gathering information. The short period available for the valuation was a barrier to open discussion with the staff on the outcome of the PA. This finding is supported by Gaziel (2008) who had discovered several issues in the PA systems such as inadequate time for observing and evaluating principles and performance standards is one of the major drawbacks.

The study findings also showed that inappropriate performance measuring scale in the PA report was a major reason for the inaccurate. As a result, each supervisor could give any marks without any question from others. One director mentioned as *"The items of measurement are general statements and each evaluator has the freedom to interpret it differently"*(D2). However, some of them made some improvement where create sub-items measurements as one director mentioned *"I create for each items of measurement many sub items based on the department's objectives"*(D6). In fact, some previous researchers pointed out that if the evaluators had been provided effective training on the topic, it would have been a useful tool to avoid inflated or deflated ratings (Iqbail, 2012; Whiting & Kline, 2007). For instance, the findings of my study showed that some staffs were awarded 100 out of 100 although they had not presented any evidence for outstanding performance. It is interesting to note that there was no justification for each mark awarded. Murphy and Cleveland (1995) who state that appraisers are goal directed and, therefore, some of them manipulate ratings upward or downward to fulfill these goals support this finding.

Another factor that increased the complexity of the issue was that one set of items of measurement was used for different specialties in the organization, including technical, administrative and medical. Using the same PA report form for all categories of the staff without any clear explanation about each general item of measurement and without guidelines did not help the evaluators to do the assessment correctly. there are no specific items that measure the technical procedure. Therefore, it is not helpful as far as the technical aspects are concerned. In this regards one director said *"Most of the PA report is not complete in its content. The aims are not clear and there is only one performance appraisal (form) for all categories of the staff; the technical staff requires a different performance appraisal (form). Therefore, it has to be reviewed"* (D4). Lau and Sholihin (2005) who suggests that the right criteria for the evaluation with clear explanation can increase the satisfaction of the employees supported this finding. The absence of proper guidelines led them to deal with it as a routine assignment at the end of the year. One head section express as *"Unfortunately I don't think so. I feel the performance appraisal system is implemented as a routine activity, which we have to carry out without having any advantages either for the staff or the evaluator. I don't receive any feedback about the outcome of the performance appraisal"* (Head,5). This finding is well supported by another study conducted by Gaziel (2008) who pointed out some of the PA-related drawbacks like insufficient performance standards. Also, Nikpeyma et al. (2014) found other types of errors, especially in the content of evaluation, biases in the process of evaluation, or the absence of clear and independent performance dimensions. This was evident in the current study where the evaluators were not able to use the current PA format for all categories of staff in the absence of proper guidelines. Therefore, I believe that in order to implement the PA system effectively there must be a mechanism for performance evaluation based on uniform and accurate measurement criteria for the assessment of employees' performance (Suliman, 2007).

### **5.5 The Secret Process of Performance Appraisal:**

Without doubt, the PA interview must be conducted as two-way discussions. Lutwama, Roos & Dolamo (2013), who had conducted a study among managers, highlights this.

However, my study found evidence for the issues related the secret implementation of the PA system where the performance appraisal procedure was carried out without an official performance appraisal interview between supervisor and the employee in the organization. One head section mentioned as *"it is better for the staff to be aware of and to understand his defects in order to develop himself for the next year. However, this practice which is to inform staff about his level is not available in the organisation because we do not have instructions (from the higher authorities) it is mandatory to inform the staff about the result of his performance appraisal"* (Head, 2). Scheuer (2014) emphasizes the need for conducting the PAI in order to assess the employee's efficiency. The culture of a non-transparent PA practice increases when concerned subordinates in the organization do not voice their concerns. One head section mentioned as *"The supervisor has to be fair and not to hide the result of the performance appraisal from the staff and he has to discuss the performance appraisal with them"*(Head, 12). The findings of this study contradicted the findings of a study conducted by Lewis et al. (2006) who say that managers should be careful listeners as this would provide the employees enough opportunities for their voices to be heard. However, Selvarajan & Cloninger (2012) are of the opinion that an employee has every right to know the results of his or her performance assessment. As for the findings of my study, some evaluators who were not trained in the PA process mentioned that they would not discuss the PA result with their subordinates as they believed it would be difficult to manage different personalities which might result in conflict between them and their staff. One head section mentioned *"Dealing with a staff having a negative attitude to work and who is in conflict with you or one who does not carry out his responsibilities properly is a big challenge for me as a supervisor. It is quite difficult to face a staff having a negative attitude"*(Head, 8). This was supported by a study of Varma et al. (2008) who found that some supervisors did not intend to discuss any negative feedback with their subordinates to avoid any undesirable discussions.

To make matters worse, the supervisors themselves did not receive any feedback on their own performance, which prompted them not to give feedback to their staff on their performance evaluation. One director mentioned about his experience as *"I would like to talk honestly to you, I used to do the performance appraisal without involving or*

*informing the staff and I did not know if I was right or wrong. This practice (PA system) was implemented and became a culture in the department before I started working in this field. I have been, for example, carrying out this practice (responsibility) for more than 15 years. To tell you the truth, I do not know anything about my performance appraisal result until today" (Director, 1).* This culture of doing the PA secretly spread widely among all categories of the staff in the organization. This finding was similar to the finding of Levy (1997), who pointed out that the leaders of the organizations who did not know the specific faults of existing appraisal practices often blamed the entire system and they might have been forced to accept the status quo. Moreover, the evaluators felt that the PA system was useless as they were not receiving any feedback after completing the performance appraisal from the top authority and their recommendations about their subordinates were not discussed with them or given importance by concerned departments. One head section said *"I document the grand total of the result of performance appraisal, but I don't document the recommendations since they are not taken into consideration by the top management. If the top management does not have the time to investigate, analyze and filter the performance appraisal report, I suggest allocating staffs in each health institution to analyze the performance appraisal (result) and filter the result as well as the recommendations"* (Head 5). On the contrary, other studies refer to the need for the organizations to create a culture of monitoring, evaluating and giving feedback of health information to improve the performance of health care workers (Lutwama et al., 2013).

The evaluators admitted that they informed the poor performers about the PA outcome as there was an administrative decision about that; (as per the rules and regulations) it was not allowed to give the annual financial allowance to undeserving staff. Even this rule was not implemented appropriately due to the short notice given to the supervisors by the top management. Consequently, only staff having a very low grade was informed about the level of their performance appraisal for administrative purposes and not for their professional development. This finding of my study was in sharp contrast to that of Lutwama et al. (2013) who recommended that the poor performers and their supervisors have to identify areas for improvement and develop an appropriate plan for their professional development. However, my study revealed that the staffs were not

informed about their level of performance, which created a kind of dissatisfaction among them. Researcher like Pettijohn et al., 2001; Mani, 2002; Jawahar, 2006, emphasizes the importance of implementing the PA system more effectively in order to improve the employees' productivity and commitment and evaluate their job satisfaction.

### **5.6 Variety of performance appraisal documentation:**

With regard to documentation of the PA, my study found that the supervisors used different approaches and methods for it. For instance, some of them used notebook, whereas others relied on their memory. One head mentioned "*Actually, there is no document to record the comments of the staff (about his) performance. But I have my own observation notes that (includes) the negative comments on his performance; and if the staff has corrected (his mistakes) or improved his performance, I delete them and if he has repeatedly committed a particular mistake, I inform him about it*" (Head.13)". Moreover, the finding showed that although the supervisors used a variety of methods that enabled them to assess their staff in the whole year, it was negatively affected by lack of standard documentation that could be used as reference for future evaluators or for taking any decisions later on. One head mentioned "*I do not have one to document the results of the performance appraisal, but when I need them I ask the personal affairs department to provide me the total marks of the staff. On the other hand, I don't have to record the recommendations; I can remember them as I have a few staff*" (Head 7). This finding was consistent with Lee' research as he mentioned that the inaccuracy in performance appraisal might result from appraiser's memory structure and his ability to recall the behavior of a number of rates over a considerable span of time (Lee, 1985). However, the personal affairs department was also not document the recommendation and each items measurement for government employee as one of head section mentioned "*Yes, we do have a register to document the results of the PA throughout the governorate, but the register only contains the grand total of various items of measurement*"(Head 10).

Another remarkable finding of my study is that due to insufficient time some of the evaluators recorded the final grade without documenting the details for each item of measurement in the absence of necessary periodic progress reports. This resulted in

one PA report at the end of the year; and as a result, it was not possible to formulate a professional development plan. One director mentioned *"I did not document the results of the performance appraisal as I forward them to the personal affairs section and it is their role to document it"* (Director, 3). For authors (2014) found that in their new system of managing the PA allowed the employees to update their performance progress which ultimately provided the management an opportunity to have a clear picture about the progress of staff on a monthly basis. The result of the study revealed that the current practice of doing the PA once in a year without an attached manual for clarification and explanation led to a situation where grades are given to the staff without justification. However, Linna et al. (2012) emphasizes that a fair implementation of the tool of PA form can create staff motivation and develop their performance. Others believe that many health service managers complained of not having appropriate tools for measuring the performance or any clear indicators for measuring and monitoring it (Lutwama, Roos & Dolamo, 2013).

The attitudes and approaches of the supervisors to the PA process is also an important factor in the effectiveness of the PA system (Benson, 2010). In this context, the finding of my study will not be meaningful without taking into account individual efforts. Despite several factors that crippled effectiveness of the management of PA, the finding showed that there were many individual efforts initiated by some evaluators to manage the performance appraisal effectively as they believed that the PA was the tool that could be used for the development of their department as well as their staff. The supervisors who were health professionals like staff nurses and other allied health professionals took those individual initiatives. One of head section mentioned *"I design clinical audit and the monthly report that I receive from the staff, I carry out the performance appraisal procedure for him. In this way, I avoid bias"*(Head 6). They designed formats to support them for assessing each aspect of the work which supported them to make professional development intervention accordingly. This is similar to the findings of other studies where the PA was used to review, evaluate, and then record each employee's performance systematically during a specific period; it also helped examine an employee's weaknesses and strengths and identify opportunities for improvement (Manoharan et al, 2010). However, in the current study the evaluators faced obstacles

in transferring their documented reports from their internal forms to the official PA forms as their internal forms contained a lot of information that they believed was important to be documented. The head section referred to her experience as *"I have my own internal evaluation and a huge amount of information, but the final PA report does not allow me to accommodate all information I have about the staff performance"* (Head 9).

### **5.7 Training of the evaluators on management of the performance appraisal system:**

The findings revealed that most of the supervisors were not trained in the management of the PA system. This fact was supported by participants from the department of administration who mentioned the unavailability of training and orientation for the newly appointed supervisors. Because of the frequent rotation and transfer of medical practitioners (supervisors) who managed the PA in their health institutions were not able to provide orientation and training to the new supervisors on the management of the PA system. One director raised this issue as *" most of the supervisors in the health institutions are not aware of the management of the performance appraisal and most of supervisors are new to (to the PA system); they are medical staff who are not oriented to the performance appraisal system. They do not have a permanent position as they are transferred (from time to time)"* (Director, 2). This finding of my study is against the findings of a study conducted by Liu & Dong (2012), who found that effective implementation of PA must be carried out by preparing the supervisors in the management and leadership skills such as observing the employees, monitoring, documenting and rating accurately the performance and providing constructive feedback to them.

The finding related to the essential competencies that are required for each evaluator such as the skill for strengthening relationship between the supervisor and staff is supported by earlier studies on organizational relationship (Kim & Rubianty, 2011&Harrington & Lee, 2015). My research finding that the supervisors had to be good communicators and be able to document the performance of his/her staff was consistent with previous studies. One head section emphasis as *" He should have effective communication (skills) and be fair to all staff and treat them equally; he should*

*be a good listener and he should be trustworthy" (Head,9).* An interesting finding of this study is that the evaluator must be able to select a suitable time and place to discuss the PA. Most of the evaluators and staff agreed that the evaluator must have some basic competencies to enable him to manage the PA effectively as previous studies point out (Davis, 2011& Nikpeyma et al, 2014). Although all of them emphasized those competencies, it is not put into practice. Despite the fact that essential competencies for personal development were highlighted by most of the participants, surprisingly most of them did not have any training on the management of the PA. One head section mentioned that *" I did not take any courses on how to do the performance appraisal"* (Head 10). This distinction between what they know and what they practice was found in the study of Chandra & Frank (2004) the deficiency in managerial skills of the managers in conducting the interview with subordinates must be addressed by developing appropriate training methods to conduct PA interviews effectively.

Overall, it seemed there was an agreement among supervisors and subordinates that the supervisors have to be trained in the management of the performance appraisal. I believe that both agreed that it was an indication that they discovered the gap and they knew the importance of arranging standard training programs in the PA system. Focus group participants mentioned *"We need to increase the awareness of the staff and evaluators about the importance of the performance appraisal and spread the culture of the importance of the performance appraisal. There has to be an annual training on performance appraisal management"* (administrative staff). However, as one of the objectives of this project was to identify the level of knowledge that the evaluators must have in order to implement the new performance appraisal, I believe that the findings of this study on the level of the knowledge would be considered as a driving force to implement the change later on.

### **5.8 Supervisors from different specialties and assessment of subordinates:**

The findings of this study showed that there were some challenges for some supervisors to assess some staff belonging to different categories. In this regards a head section mentioned *'challenge of evaluating some staff whose specialty is different from the supervisor's specialty. For example, if a doctor evaluates the laboratory*

*technician or pharmacy, (it can lead to discrepancies) as the supervisor is not well-oriented and does not have enough knowledge about the nature of those staffs in the other department. Therefore, I think it is a good idea to have the evaluation) using a staff from the same field. This will ensure the evaluation is more accurate and valid"* (Head 1). The general statements of items of measurement of the PA report did not help them identify the exact aspects they had to assess the staff. However, others pointed out that if evaluators used the outcomes of the PA report that they received from the head of each program (department), it would help them to evaluate the staff effectively even if they had a different professional background. Gianini (2015) who emphasized the need to boost the appraiser's ability to assess the exact nature of the job and the training requirements supports this finding.

On other hand, the study revealed that the PA had to be managed by purely administrative staff, as they believed that this task was essentially a human resource management task. One director highlighted as *"Some supervisors do not give importance to the performance appraisal management because they have other technical responsibilities in addition to the problem resulting from frequent change of posting from department to department-some of them are posted in a supervisor position for just four months and they are asked to do the performance appraisal"* (Director2). Therefore, they felt that it must not be conduct by supervisors with a health professional background. This could be the reason why some of the administrative staff did not take the PA seriously; although they had the main responsibility for dealing with the outcome of the PA at the final stage of the management of the PA reports in the organization. However, the DGHS had more than 80% of their staff who were medical professionals – including nurses and other allied health professionals and majority of the staff in this category were under their own supervisors from the same background. Therefore, lack of seriousness on the part of the administrative department was due to lack of awareness among them about the above-mentioned fact. This requires, as Akbari Haghighi et al. (2011) points out, qualified and educated managers who were capable enough to evaluate their employees correctly and provide constructive feedback to them.

The views of supervisors and employees about the performance appraisal management in the DGHS were similar. They demonstrated that they had the required knowledge about the effective management of the PA and its purpose. However, lack of a system with clear guidelines on how to do it and lack of PA communication among the members of the organization concerned with the PA in the DGHS starting from the employees to the top authorities complicated the whole process and, as a result, no one knew where the exactly the problem was. However, the findings informed us where the problem was and how we could resolve it.

## **Chapter Six: Practical Applications**

### **6.1 Introduction:**

This chapter presents the action that emerged from the study that enabled the project team (PT) to have a rich picture of the causes of the problem (Fincham & Clark, 2009). The research project team of 13 change agents volunteered to be participants in the whole project right from the beginning through the implementation and follow up of the implementation stage of the project. This project team emerged from 34 participants who participated in data-collection through face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The PT consisted of employees who represented different departments which let us avoid any trap bias in the decision making process (Braverman & Blumenthal-Barby, 2012). The findings enabled the organization to take appropriate actions to resolve the workplace issue (Clegg, 2002). The PT members decided to select solutions that could resolve the whole issue (De Bono, 1999). The factors that have been identified by the study as obstacles or challenges that prevent the evaluators using performance appraisal as a tool for the development and implementation of the performance appraisal interview enabled the project team to come out with actionable solution that can improve the performance appraisal system in the DGHS. Those solutions were managed in such a way that they covered the overall features of effective performance appraisal system. We believe that focusing on one or two features or domains on the management of performance appraisal cannot resolve the problem. Instead, it is important to look at the whole system and develop a new system of performance appraisal that requires planning activities, implementing the interventions and following and monitoring the implementation. The new PA system takes all or parts of the PA management system and predicts any challenges that could be faced by supervisors and subordinates in the implementation phase. This system tried to overcome them by developing a new performance appraisal system as it is discussed in this chapter.

## **6.2. Modifying and developing the content of the current performance appraisal report (Form 1 & 2):**

Initially, since most of the participants who generated the data agreed that the main problem of the PA system was related to the items of measurement (Nikpeyma et al., 2014), it was decided to modify the forms I & II as it was essential for learning in action for all the PT members. Moreover, those forms are used for most of organization's employees, so the benefit will be more. The PT members considered all of the political issues in this PA report since the top authority issued it, and hence they did not want to change the main items measured in order to avoid any political resistance (Bjorkman & Sundgren, 2005). For that, the PT members decided to create sub-headings for those items as attached in appendix no (8). When we presented this new look of the performance appraisal report form to the Director General and all other directors of the DGHS, some of them were criticized it saying that it was too long and would require more time from them to fill it (Gaziel, 2008). The PT decided to create a formula and turn it into an electronic format instead of using it as a paper-based tool. After conducting a pre-test on the electronic format by the PT, it was found that it would support the evaluators to use the new form very easily and it was not time-consuming.

## **6.3 Linking the performance appraisal outcome to the specific training required:**

In the previous performance appraisal report, there was no section specifically allocated for recommendations for training except for a general title "Recommendation" which was confusing to the evaluators on what kind of recommendations they were supposed to write there as attached in appendix no (1). However, in the new form, we created a specific section for training recommendations as attached in appendix no (9), considering the different types of training required. (Akbari Haghghi et al., 2011). In order to ensure that the needy departments received the required training, we created a drop box, which shared between evaluators and professional development department.

#### **6.4 Activating the professional development Department & linking PA to PD:**

Professional development department was established in June 2015 and one of its primary responsibilities was to analyze the performance appraisal report and arrange for necessary training programmes based on the individual needs and the outcome of performance appraisal report. This research project provides an opportunity to activate the above-mentioned department. We had to create a link between the evaluators and this section in terms of recommending particular courses for the staff. The PT members decided initially to start by creating a shared drop box folder between the evaluators and professional development department. Then, in order to manage the large number of staff in the governorate it was essential to develop a software as a database to manage it.

#### **6.5 Linking the performance Appraisal with the Rewarding system:**

The excellent performance must be recognized by others in order to motivate the staff to perform better and increase his/her productivity, which would reflect positively on the organization's overall performance (Jawahar, 2006). In the old performance appraisal, there was a section for the recommendation without any clear explanations. However, in the new performance appraisal system we created a section for reward as attached in appendix no (10). Overall, the direct supervisor could recommend suitable rewards to his staff and then he could send this recommendation to personal affairs department where the list would be filtered, and the final list with the recommendation for rewards would be forwarded to the top authority for further decisions.

#### **6.6 Turning the paper-based performance appraisal system into an electronic performance appraisal system:**

With the definite aim of reducing the amount of paper work effectively and saving time for the evaluators the PT obtained feedback from the gatekeepers and stakeholders of the organization and then took the decision to convert the PA system to an electronic one. At the initial stage the PT was concerned about avoiding the risks of a complex problem in a complex system in the organization (Stacey, 2011). Therefore, it was

decided to start with Excel Microsoft program in order not to misuse the time of the information technology programmer in this project until all of the gatekeepers would be able to assess the implementation of the new performance appraisal system with new items of measurement. Wherever applicable for one year and then we would decide whether to introduce the PA report and link it to soft-program database of the professional development section.

### **6.7 Adding a formula to calculate the performance appraisal marks:**

Based on the feedback that we received from the gatekeepers and stakeholders on 100 items of measurement, the PT decided to add a formula. We did this in order to ensure the accuracy of the marks that the staff obtained as well as to support evaluators not to spend time on the calculation (Grund & Przemek, 2012).

### **6.8 Involving the quality control department to audit the implementation of the new performance appraisal system:**

In order to ensure the new performance appraisal system is implemented as it was planned, it was essential to involve the quality assurance (QA) department in the development of the new performance appraisal system. Also, the QA department would be involved to ensure the sustainability of the new PA system by creating an audit checklist that would check all the processes of the PA implementation whether there were any obstacles or not. The auditing department in the DGHS would take the responsibility for the audit process and the QA department would manage these processes as well.

### **6.9 Creating self-assessment:**

Since the main objective of the research project is to make the performance appraisal system transparent, my role as scholar-practitioner was crucial, as I had to bridge the gap between theory and practice and change the beliefs of others (Hebert, 2010). Therefore, it was essential to create the culture about the importance of the performance appraisal among the staff we introduced the concept of self-assessment

once in the year in order for the staff to do self-assessment (Pollitt, 2014). The PT created an extra column for self-assessment to be used by the staff to assess himself/herself. This would enable the staff to know in which aspect they were evaluated and help create awareness about his/her level of performance in addition to providing an opportunity to prepare him/her for a PA discussion with his/her supervisor (Govaerts, Wiel & Vleuten, 2013). In order to ensure the PA was implemented in a transparent manner, we created space of the staff's signature: that he/she would acknowledge the PA outcome and comments of his/her supervisor. It would also help the evaluator to understand how the staff perceived his/her own professional skills. In order to identify the difference on the self-assessment and supervisor's assessment we created a column for the difference as well. This would give the top authority and the staff and supervisors to identify the reasons for this difference in order to help them resolve them if there were any.

#### **6.10 Increasing the frequency of the performance appraisal:**

The idea of increasing the number of evaluations emerged from an in-depth analysis of the issue of how to correct the weak aspects of a staff's performance on a regular basis (Dhiman & Maheshwari, 2013). This decision was also influenced by the thought of making most of the opportunities available for training courses that are on offer for the whole year (Celik, 2014). Besides, the staff would be more motivated when he/she knew that he/she had time before the end of the year to improve themselves (Manoharan et al., 2010).

#### **6.11 Create an awareness workshop about the new performance appraisal system:**

It would be very hard to introduce the new performance appraisal system without any awareness. Therefore, the PT presented the new performance appraisal system in an awareness workshop in which each member of the PT talked about his area of interest. Besides, their knowledge and the workplace to the implementers including the evaluators from different levels of managerial cadre as well as the subordinates. After

the workshop the top authority decided to implement it in two places – the directorate which represented the administrative job in the headquarters of the DGHS and the health centres that represented the health institutions - in order to identify the obstacles that would be faced by the implanters' departments and make necessary interventions. This implementation will be carried out in the second stage of the action research cycle as the time (deadline) available for me to submit the thesis was too short. The letter issued by the Director General of the DGHS approving the continuation of the implementation of the new PA system is added as appendix no 11.

### **6.12 Conclusion:**

In conclusion, this chapter discussed in detail the action taken and the evaluation of the action taken by various stakeholders in the first action research cycle (ARC); however, the second ARC will initiate the real implementation of this cycle. In this first cycle of action research the PT intended to start the initiative carefully it was decided not to make a complete change, which would not be accepted by stakeholders and decision makers of the organization (Goghlan & Brannick, 2010). This is because, as I mentioned earlier, the PA report form is issued by the Ministry of Civil Service and we do not know if the new system will be accepted outside our organization or not. Moreover, the implementation will start with two departments instead of all departments under the DGHS. This is an advantage for the PT as it is easier for them to do follow up and assess it (as they have other commitments). Moreover, it could be rejected by some stakeholders, particularly the supervisors having administrative background who were not willing to take the PA system from their department to the professional development department as they believed this task was purely administrative task and the health professionals who worked in the professional development department were not well-prepared for the task. Also, some supervisors considered the open performance appraisal interview to be a time- consuming affair in addition to creating conflict among some of the staff. Those supervisors who had been in the same position for years and did not have leadership skills for their positions as supervisors were worried that the subordinators would threaten their position if they professionally developed them. However, the new PA system was generally welcomed by most of the

members of the organization as well as by the top decision makers. This is evident from the circular issued by the Director General of the DGHS that expressed his commitment to implementing the new PA system. (A copy of the circular is attached as appendix no 11).

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

### **7.1 Introduction:**

The primary aims of this research project are identifying the barriers to effective utilization of the performance appraisal system as a tool for professional development. In addition, to explore the factors that prevented evaluators from implementing the open performance appraisal interview. Those factors were lack of balance between the performance assessment and individual performance development, lack of Performance appraisal process guidelines, secret process of the PA, variety of performance appraisal documentation, having insufficient number of supervisors from different specialties and absence of assessment of subordinates as well as shortage of training opportunities for the evaluators on management of the performance appraisal system. I combined case study with participatory action research for this qualitative study to achieve the study objectives and answer the research questions required for the identification of the reasons for the PA practice (Creswell, 2013). This chapter discusses how the findings were used to improve PA management and the overall implications for the study.

### **7.2 Research Implication in the Organization:**

Without doubt, the process of learning in action in the last few years of my DBA journey which culminated in the finalization of the project thesis is a landmark in my professional and personal lives. However, it is, by no means, the end of my learning journey as it has had a huge positive impact on the organization as well as for me as a scholar practitioner. First, the organization has implemented action research (AR) in the workplace for the first time to resolve workplace issues of my organization. It has enabled the stakeholders to have sense-making about how the issue was complicated and how we could come out with actionable knowledge that would resolve the problem. The involvement of stakeholders in the process of AR provides them insights about the process of reflection and inquiry into their daily practice that could create knowledge to be discussed and negotiated by others. As for the implications of this research project for me, it enabled me to practice what I learned and share my knowledge with others in

the organization. I was able to integrate the theory into practice and learn from my involvement in the action towards the resolution of the issue. It helped develop my leadership qualities and develop the health system where I obtained an opportunity to work at the national level as a member of the policy-formulation team in the department responsible for planning and developing the general policies and health system in the Ministry of Health. This provided me power to expand my knowledge and develop my professional skills through this project. Resolving the workplace issues through the development of the new PA can have an impact on similar organizations in other governorates of the country as these organizations have the same PA management system, same culture of management practice, and same rules and procedures. Therefore, I am of the firm opinion that these organizations can implement the new PA system in their organizations and take appropriate decisions regarding its implementation process. In fact, very few researchers worked on such a project that meets the workplace needs in a complex organization like mine. For various reason, the stakeholders in my organisation did not always adhere to the policies initiated by the higher authorities at the Ministry of Health. One of these reasons was the fact that the stakeholders were not involved in the policymaking and the lack of follow up by the top management on some administrative tasks or major systems like the PA management system. Therefore, the outcomes of this project that were created and developed systematically by the organization's stakeholders are expected to bring about change in those areas of the organizational practices. Thus, I as the scholar practitioner acts as a spanner that creates links between the academic and practice requirement (Salipante & Arm, 2003).

The knowledge that was created from action for resolving the identified problem was shared and discussed with decision makers and other stakeholders, which provided a rich picture about the problem and proposed resolutions, which were easy to be implemented in the practice. In the absence of such an outcome, this study would have been useless (Monk & Howard, 1998). The study enhanced my level of awareness to understand the problem in-depth and apply the dialogue approach in the discussion of the problem and enabled me to create sense-giving and sense making on the

researched issue among others (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). The system thinking that was used during the development of the new system helped me to understand the factors that could bring success or inhabit the project (Houghton & Ledington, 2004).

Being a scholar practitioner and an insider researcher made it easy for me to create a balance between academic requirements in terms of writing up the thesis paper as well as working with other staff to investigate and resolve the workplace problem. This study encouraged other members in the health organization to resolve workplace problem in addition to motivating them to obtain a higher degree and thereby boost their professional development and career through learning in action (Bourner et al., 2000). The study also motivated others to use this kind of action research for the purpose of resolving the workplace problem rather than pursuing traditional research (Coughlan & Coughlan, 2008). The study has revealed that there was a contradiction between the knowledge generated by the evaluators and subordinates regarding the management of the PA as it is implemented currently, which allowed us to conclude that the existing confusion due to lack of standards and the implementation of an unclear PA system.

### **7.3 Theoretical Implication:**

This study produced actionable outcomes with sufficient evidence to prove that there is no relationship between staff development and outcomes of the existing performance appraisal system. The study contributed to theory by identifying the root causes of the ineffectiveness of the PA in the organization as it is implemented currently. Also, it was discovered that using the standard PA report forms (form 1 & Form 2) for all different specialties of health professionals in the organization without any clear guidelines was another reason for the ineffectiveness. Again, inadequate training for a new evaluator created a situation where each evaluator tried to manage it according to his/her style and level of knowledge and experiences. Also, absence of any follow up actions and lack of coordination among relevant departments increased the complexity of the issue.

On the other hand, the study added more knowledge to the organization's knowledge bank and thereby supported it to use the PA for development of the staff and not just to

focus on administrative decisions. It helped the Department of Human Resources to consider the management of the PA by preparing new supervisors to evaluate the staff effectively and coordinate with other departments. This research project was the first of its kind that focused on the relationship between PA system and staff development through participatory action research in my organization and in my country as a whole. For instance, this study has added some theoretical concepts to the existing literature - that training of the supervisors as well as other factors such as fast rotation of supervisors and diverse documentation styles as well as lack of co-ordination can influence and affect the PA management practices. Moreover, lack of awareness among the evaluators and subordinates and the impact it can have on the top authority regarding the next implementation stages of the PA system as well as the strategic plan that plays a role in improving the outcome of performance appraisal of subordinates.

Without doubt, it is very useful to disseminate the significant findings of my study and the new PA system through different communication channels. Such as presentations in my governorate and through regional conferences that, will remove barriers to the smooth implementation of the new PA system. I can also present the same in the other conferences in the other governorates as well as in other GCC countries. Moreover, publishing my study with the help of the University of Liverpool library by writing up some articles and research papers on the findings of my study. Additionally, I can post it on the Ministry of Health website with the help of the Research and Studies Center by using its link for publication. Other local and national universities and libraries as well as other relevant health and management journals could be utilized for the purpose. As for other settings, I can request the remaining 11 DGHS under Ministry of Health to implement those findings and actions of this project. I firmly believe that the implementation will be easier since I will be moving to the in Policies and health systems Department at the Ministry of Health headquarters in the next few months' time. The above department can play a major role in widely implementing the findings of my study in the Ministry itself or in other DGHS in the other governorates.

#### **7.4 Practical Implication:**

Without doubt, the project has valuable inputs for my organization's development and correction of the weaknesses of the staff. This was done through a diagnosis of the workplace problem and collaboration between various departments. The project relied on teamwork involving different departments such as the QA department. The Professional Development Department that is responsible for developing a network between themselves and the evaluators would be able to examine the professional development recommendations and respond to training needs of the staff based on the outcome of the PA. The information technology would provide actionable knowledge by creating a database that enables the professional development department to manage the knowledge bank about each staff's professional development. Finally, yet importantly, the role of information officer who was involved in creating the formula for accurate calculation of the PA mark was a positive addition to practical implications. Also, this study had a valuable impact on activating the new department (professional development department), that would help sustain the implementation of new PA system. Overall, a discussion on the findings of the research and producing original knowledge that can be used to resolve the workplace problem gave the project team confidence in their ability to work on other problems using the same approach.

#### **7.6 Limitations of the Study:**

Action research, which uses qualitative research methodology cannot be generalized in the context as the data is generated for understanding a specific issue related to a particular setting (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Although it is true that the results cannot be generalized, the same approach can be used for developing a new system within a similar organization. One of the limitations of this study is that the implementation of the results of the study in the whole organization requires a lot of time, which was cannot be implemented due to my restricted by the thesis deadline. However, to overcome this limitation, stakeholders in the organization who gave their inputs, which will enable us to implement them in their departments later, reviewed the new system of the PA. The limitation of time was a challenge for the project team to

engage in this project as it required full working hours for each meeting which, in fact, created some obstacles for some members. Therefore, I suggested applying their critical thinking faculty inquiry strategy into their daily practice in the organization. If I had another opportunity to do action research in the organization in the future I would prepare the members of the organization first, spread the culture of action research in the organization by sharing articles on action research within them, and implement the concept of action research in resolving the issues of my department. Later, both of us we would be able to apply the process of action research in finding solutions to work place based problems. Despite this limitation, through this project the participants acquired much knowledge in finding solutions to the problems by identifying how they could solve real problems based on evidence.

Another limitation of this study is the small sample size. The number of evaluators who participated in the study was not enough to cover all categories of staff in the DGHS. However, I was able to include more participants from departments where number of employees was quite high in order to obtain insight and ensure the solutions could be found easily through their participation. The findings of the study revealed that the items of measurement were not suitable for technical staff and the representatives from the department had very little knowledge of the items of measurement and they lacked expertise and time to be fully involved in the project, which resulted in taking a longer period (approximately eight months) for developing the new system. Creating completely new performance appraisal report with new items of measurement was another obstacle for the PT as we were in a dilemma as to what extent we could bring about changes in the official PA report as it might lead to a conflicting situation.

In order to overcome the issue of 'role duality', I was careful to include in the study only those nurses who did not work under me when I was a direct supervisor or when I worked as the Director of Nursing Affairs in the DGHS (Williander & Styhre, 2006). This well-thought out move of mine to leave out those nurses who worked directly under me created discomfort for my staff; however, when I explained to them that I intended to get more knowledge that is valid and avoid any bias, they accepted my position.

Besides the above-mentioned limitation, I had expected some problems during the data collection process using audio- record of the interviews. However, because I was able to build good relationship between the participants and me promoted their trust in me. Another suspected problem was not receiving enough support and commitment from the project team members in developing the new performance appraisal document. However, by allowing the team to be a part of the problem and the problem to be part of them, I was able to obtain their cooperation in the advanced stage of my project.

### **7.6 Further Research:**

The study focused on resolving the problem and the outcome of the study are yet to be tested in the real practice. Therefore, the further study requires assessing the items of measurement to find out if they are suitable for all categories of the staff. I believe this study could be conducted by various members of the organization who participated in my project that the participants were from different like those specialist participants. Consequently, each one of them would be able to design the research for his/her group and could analyze the new items of measurement and suggest more relevant items if any of them are imperfect. Since this research project requires expertize to develop new technical items of measurements or else, it could create obstacles for the research outcomes. Further research is required for assessing the competency of the evaluators in providing feedback to their staff. This kind of research requires use of mixed methods and collecting information from different sources in order to identify the level of supervisor competencies. I believe this will help obtain more insight into the importance of the content of the findings. Further research is also required in identifying how the performance appraisal of average staff will be managed in terms of rewards and development. As the study found that these staff did not know about their level of performance compared with the excellent staff who have some knowledge of their performance outcome when they are nominated for bonus and the weak staff who receive advice or warning letters.

## **7.7 Conclusion:**

Overall, my role as an insider researcher and the active involvement of the stakeholders in this managerial issue in a complex health organization like the MOH in the Sultanate of Oman enabled me to diagnose the workplace issues in collaboration with other stakeholders in the organization. Through participatory action research methodology to meet the objectives of the research as well as answering the research questions. The finding of the project was enabled us to identify the root causes of the problem that provide us rich picture about the natural of the problem and from the problem how we formulate the new performance appraisal system. The findings showed that there was a link between different issues, which transforms the problem to be a complex one requiring close collaboration among all decision makers and stakeholders to resolve them. Therefore, developing a new performance appraisal form was not an easy task as it encountered many challenges. However, it was a good opportunity for the organization to learn from this process. Although there was some obstacles and limitations in this study but it is an opportunity for further study as well as an opportunity for project team and me to take advantage of this research and overcome it in the further action research. It was a rich learning journey me and for the participants as we were able to use all our insights and critical thinking abilities to develop the new performance appraisal system which was the main aim of the study.

## **Chapter Eight: Reflection Chapter**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The thesis of my research project was the culmination of my learning journey in the DBA program, which enabled me to identify the workplace issue and resolve it in collaboration with the members of my organization. This chapter illustrates my own reflection on the thesis and how I learned by reflecting on the steps of the action during the cycle of action research (ARC): construction, planning for action, taking action and evaluation of the action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). My diary was a useful tool to record my progress and development in the project during the last two years. Overall, the DBA journey helped build my capabilities as a scholar practitioner who could bridge the gap between theories and practice and resolve the real workplace problem (Zalezink, 1992).

### **8.2 My reflection on Action Research Cycle:**

#### **8.2.1 Construction:**

In the construction stage of the ARC I was able to identify the managerial issue of my workplace, which I considered as a red- hot topic for all stakeholders. I decided to choose this issue as I intended to obtain the power of support for implementing the change in the whole organization by involving all the stakeholders concerned. Initially, I did not think that my scope would be developing the problem for understanding how the problem could go through the problematizing process to become a wicked problem (Bacchi, 2012). By reviewing relevant literature enabled to formulate the objective of the research as actionable research questions (Levy & Ellis, 2006). Unfortunately, my initial identification of the problem and main research question acquired a political shade. Initially, the research question that presented was why is the performance appraisal carried out in secret in the organization? As a result, the National Research Committee expressed concern about its implications. This was because they thought this study is conducted on a political research, and therefore, it would not get approval for

conducting my research from the higher authorities in the Ministry. Therefore, I realized that I had to be more diplomatic about resubmitting my research proposal to the committee and not to change the whole proposal. Therefore, I made some modifications in order to avoid becoming entangled in any political conflicts. Made the change in the main research question to be read: 'how can we use the PA for professional development'?

Also, at this stage I was able to prepare the guide for interview questions that would guide me as to where I could focus on the objectives of the research and avoid any bias as I was an insider researcher (Collins, 1970). The literature that I reviewed on performance appraisal management and my research questions enabled me to come out with many questions that could include all the research questions. The setting that I decided to use was my organization, viz., the DGHS in order to learn from the insider project (Coghlan, 2001). The professional development that I got from my engagement in DBA program helped me to persuade my organization to accept my proposal for the research project as they understood that it would benefit the organization as well as participants to learn from this project. Also, by analyzing the research questions and objectives of the study I was able to identify the hot group participants who could resolve the research issue while participating in the ARC (Lipman- Blumen & Leavitt, 1999). Those participants were very interested in participating in the project from the begging and until the end. This positive response from the participants provided me strength to influence others and convince them to be a part of the project without being forced by me or the top authority. I believe thinking in a group supported us to avoid the possibility of falling into the trap of individual decision-making when we arrived at the solution of the problem (Bazerman & Moore, 2008). The involvement of diverse categories in the organization provided me confidence as the involvement of different specialists proved to be a driving force behind the success of the project besides providing an opportunity for all of us to learn from each other's experience. Additionally, the participants were chosen deliberately from different departments in order to make sure each department was represented so that he/she could communicate the progress of the project with them on a daily basis. This helped me to integrate the idea that it is important to make changes in the management of the performance appraisal that would

in turn enable them to make changes in the culture of the organization in regard to the management of the performance appraisal.

### **8.2.2 Planning for action:**

Therefore, I took the objectives of the research that were identified for interviewing the participants into consideration. During the interviews occasionally I faced some difficulty when I was listened to the participants as I was not sure where I could stop the interviewees as some of them tried to express their views in minute details and even tried to repeat some of the points. However, after a few interviews I was able to control the conversation during the interview as well as learn how probe the participants to get more insights. It was not easy to use audiotape recorder to record the interview but I learned from this experience that the proper explanation of the purpose of the research and reassure the participants about the high level of confidentiality of data was necessary for the success of doing the recording (Bell & Bryman, 2007). These experiences would encourage other 'would be' researchers to undertake qualitative research as it was evident for them that I succeeded in conducting it in my organization where the culture prevented them to conduct this kind of research as respecting the current work culture and not talking about the truth were integral parts of the organization functions.

Recording the voice was provided validity and rigor for the data where there was no chance for missing any information (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). I gained knowledge on how to transfer the electronic recorded interviews into transcript; this procedure was very hard for me at the beginning and, therefore, I had to be patient and listen to the recording many times in order not to miss any information to avoid any short cuts in acquiring information (Hammond et al., 1998). The skills that I gained from the experience of transferring words from voice to written words enhanced my learning that learning in action and learning from repetition is the right approach to master that particular skill. Regarding participants, involving them in reviewing their own interview transcripts was an experience for them to be able to create their sense-making about the full picture of the management of the performance appraisal (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Also, it helped me to know to create 'making sense' in others about the research

issues by seeing their own thoughts and talks. This collaboration of reviewing the interview transcripts provided me a sense of the level of the participants' interest in the project.

Analyzing a huge amount of data was a new challenge and experience for me, which required me to read a lot about analysis of qualitative data. At first, I was confused and wondered how I could manage a huge amount of information and asked myself what the systematic approach that could be used to come out with valid findings. Initially, I struggled with coding and had problems categorizing all the codes and come out with valid findings. Therefore, I started discussing the issue with my supervisor as well with experts in qualitative research in some local universities to explain how to manage the data for me. As I started the first step of doing the data analysis manually, my confidence gradually increased and gradually I became more and more skillful in the task and I was able to maintain the tempo for months until the very end of the analysis. Although it was a difficult task, I was able to gather a lot of information concerning the problem. Also, this experience enhanced my ability to do qualitative research in my governorate. As a sign of the success of my efforts, the top authority recognized the importance of my work in the organization by requesting me to deliver a presentation on qualitative research for health professionals.

### **8.2.3 Taking action:**

The findings of the research project were presented to the stakeholders and they were able to have a full picture of the researched management issue. The full picture encouraged me and the stakeholders to know the right direction to solve the problem and who must solve it. The selection of the right participants from all the participants for the task of finding a practical solution for the problem was a sensitive issue as many participants were happy to continue with the project. However, because I was concerned about the time available for the participants and me to manage the project, which must take a number of issues into consideration like who can make valuable input in the progress of the project, the project team were selected according to the type of department, their interest in the project, level of commitment and how competent they were in carrying out other responsibilities. The respect of each member of the project

team for me as a researcher and colleague, their actionable knowledge or their way of inquiry into each other strengthened my relationship with them. However, some of them were slow in their contribution towards the progress of the project, which I believe was due to their busy schedule. Moreover, for some of them their participation in the project was a secondary commitment. My in-depth reflection on my learning in the module of change & crisis management helped me to decide where exactly I could start the action (Weick & Quinn, 1999), and how we could implement the action research cycle into the researched problem (Brannick & Coghlan, 2014).

#### **8.2.4 Evaluation:**

After the completion of the first version of the new performance appraisal, we were able to present it to the DG and other decision-makers. The valuable comments from the floor were taken as constructive criticism that helped develop the project. However, some comments reflected resistance from some of them to the implementation of the new PA system. However, these comments helped discover the hidden agenda that could be obstacles to the implementation of the new PA system (Vince & Broussine, 1996). For instance, one point raised about the length of new performance appraisal form enabled the project team and me to make some modification in the new PA form where we added an automatic formula that could help the evaluator to do the appraisal faster than manual calculation. Some changes were made in the new PA system based on the reflection on the constructive criticism from the stakeholders (Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2004).

#### **8.2.5 Reflection on research methods and practice:**

Initially, it was difficult for me to decide my ontology and epistemology positions that would give me the right direction in selecting the methodology and method of data collection and analysis. However, after going in-depth into my intention of conducting this research I was able to select an appropriate ontology and epistemology position. After constructing all of requirements of for my research project, I started planning for action on how I have to get access to my participants and obtain their willingness and interest to participate in this project. I knew that being honest and showing respect to

the participants was the key for that. Of course, providing detailed information about the research to them was also important. Moreover, it was not easy to use audio-tape recorder to record the interview, particularly in my organization where the employees were not familiar with qualitative research methodology and with face to face interview in particular. It was peer learning for me and the participants all the way through to express our thoughts and record the same and the knowledge that was generated through the discussions.

Another type of learning from action was learning to translate word by word from Arabic transcript into English transcript. Here there was a huge amount of work to do, but the rich and interesting answers that opened the door for me to the understanding of a highly complex PA management in my organization gave me sufficient motivation to work through all of the interview transcripts. The hardest part of the work was coming out with themes for hundreds of codes that have been analyzed. It was a frustrating period during my study. In order to start this part of the work, I had meetings with many experts and researchers of some local universities and attended workshops on analysis of qualitative data. I was still afraid to start and I discussed my fear with my supervisors who provided me some research papers to see how the analysis should be. After I worked on the first three transcripts, I gained more confidence in my ability to do it. After finalizing analyzing the ten transcripts I shared it with my supervisor who was very happy about my achievement so far, especially my ability to do the coding and categorizing. I found the remaining ten transcripts and focus groups transcript easier and faster to do than the first ten. After finalizing the themes, I started the other journey of reflecting on those themes through quotations on answers of the participants. I went through many research papers containing theses related to presenting the findings of this chapter. Since it was very hard for me to start properly; and, therefore, I wrote many drafts until I became fully satisfied with my draft and sent it to my supervisor for his comments. After I studied his comments carefully and put them into consideration while finalizing the improved version. I learned from this journey that reflecting on what has been done and inquiring into myself are key to success in continuing the journey because I learned from my action and my mistakes to end with a valid piece of work.

### **8.3 What I have learned from performance appraisal system:**

My DBA journey for more than two years enabled me to link human resources management and human resources development by using the PA as a tool for the development of the staff as well. Moreover, prior understanding of the culture of my organization and knowing how to change the culture of the management of the PA as I believe that such a complex PA system must be developed through dialogue and collaboration of all departments in the organization (Isaacs, 1993). I also became aware that it is not the human resource development department that is responsible for the management of the performance appraisal should shoulder that responsibility; instead, all the departments and each staff members of these departments must share it in the organization. Therefore, I formed the project team consisting of representatives from all the departments to be aware of the need for a combined effort to implement effectively the new PA system through the application of open system thinking (Barton et al, 2009). Through the involvement in this project, I have become confident of my ability to work for any project for the development of the organization. My DBA experience, especially in the final stage of this project, helped me to be a facilitator who can implement the process of change (Hersey et al., 2007) Also, it provided me a chance to understand the organization through horizontal and vertical approaches (Baltimore, 2012). My involvement in the creation of the new PA system changed the professional practice of mine and that of my subordinates. As for me, I became more conscious of the value of each item of measurement and how it could create many important performance indicators that should be adhered to by all of us. Also, it informed me about my strengths and weaknesses. PA enabled me to evaluate my subordinates and how to correct the weakness in their performance. Additionally, discussing the PA report with them helped me understand the department from the points of view of my subordinates. Also, it offered me an opportunity to identify the potential areas for improvement in my department as well as identify the capabilities of the staff that were not taken into consideration by the old PA system. Finally, this PA project has made me realize how we can share the fruit of our efforts with other DGHS in other governorates which have similar managerial issues.

#### **8.4 What I wish I had Known:**

First, I wish I had a clear picture of the workload that the project required in terms of my engagement in the action research so that I could have managed my time more effectively. However, I overcame this limitation largely through reflection on action and then by taking some measures to manage my time effectively. Second, the dynamic interaction that had taken place within the project team took a long time to produce insightful information. The process of reflexivity demanded deep thinking in our thinking (Weick, 2002). Third, I believe that we could have prepared the project team in advance on reflexivity and generation of knowledge (Johnson & Duberley, 2003). Fourth, it was not possible to differentiate between the core project and thesis project from the beginning, which negatively affected my thesis writing initially. However, after revising my writing and reflecting on the process of action research and thesis I was able to connect the real action research stages to the thesis chapters (Zuber-Skerritt & Perry, 2002). Nonetheless, the progress of my student report helped me to formulate a plan and speed up my thesis writing. If I conducted action research again in my organization I would apply my learning through my DBA journey and take into my consideration, the above limitations and difficulties I had experienced in order to avoid any obstacles in the future.

#### **8.5 Reflection in personal development:**

My DBA journey and experience in thesis project had a positive impact on my personal, professional and academic development. Regarding my personal development, by the time I started preparing for the thesis proposal I took a decision to move from my position as the Director of Nursing to the Research and Studies Department where in order to avoid the role of duality. Moreover, based on my own experience gained from the management of the PA in my previous job and by linking it to the knowledge generated by different specialists, I was able to see how the PA system was managed in the organization as a whole. This provided me an insight that the issue is not a simple problem and, therefore, it is not easy to solve it. It required me to go in-depth to understand its root cause and to plan for intervention for reforming the whole system of performance appraisal. Understanding the whole performance appraisal system

enabled me to know who should be involved in the action of developing new performance appraisal format and what their role should be. Also, my current position as a researcher in the department of planning and research enabled me to encourage the stakeholders to be involved in the project. Therefore, I became a member the Arab Union for Human Development as I believed I could use my experience in the project to make a difference in the field of human development. In order to obtain benefits of the external experience and knowledge of other members who I believed they were more advanced in terms of expertise and infrastructure than me in human resource development. Furthermore, sharing my research findings with different sectors in the country helped me to acquire a membership in the Oman Society of Human Resource Management, where I can discuss the PA topic widely and help the findings reach more decision makers in the country. Also, I learnt from some of the private sector employees (OSHRM) how they manage their performance appraisal and how we can help each other to improve the PA system in the country as a whole. Also, having been involved in the PA system for years, I was able to change my behavior and attitude towards of PA. It inspired me to discuss the PA system in the community in order to change other people's beliefs and then their practice. As for my professional development, I became a source for my colleagues in the organization who trusted my approach on how to resolve the workplace issue where I provided them an opportunity to learn from their participation in the project and develop them (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire, 2003). My inquiry into the issue enabled the members of my organization to inquire into their own daily practices related to many managerial issues and reflect on their daily practices which enabled them to improve their practice.

As for my own practice development, I was able to evaluate staff more effectively to manage the open PA interview; I could present my subordinates' performance appraisal more confidently, without having any challenges or conflict and with the conviction that it is for their own benefits those of my organization. Although there was some negative reaction to the new approach of the performance appraisal at the beginning, when they came to know that there is an opportunity for them to improve the process during the remaining part of the year they were motivated to make change in their behavior and improve their knowledge and skills. Moreover, I became aware of the importance of

implementing the group thinking in my work (Janis, 1973). From group thinking I was able to discover other beliefs and the way of thinking and gain advantage from others of their process of thinking and how I could follow this way of thinking to make change and improve my way of thinking. Therefore, it enabled me to improve my decision making ability and make appropriate decisions that would cover the six thinking hats of decision (De Bono, 1999). I believe that the group dynamics of the project team who worked actively in designing the new system helped resolve any issues that may come up – the solutions that lead to change as they were evolved from action and how to use the inquiry approach in the organization (Janis, 1973). This experience of working with the team informed me that each member of the organization is important and I can obtain benefits from his or her involvement and insightful input to make any improvement in change.

#### **8.6 Reflection on my experience as a scholar-practitioner:**

As a scholar practitioner (SP), I learned that in order to implement any change the stakeholders have to be involved from an early stage prior to planning for any change. For this reason, I selected the approach of participatory action research (Eden & Huxham, 1996). This is because dialogues between the participants would enable them to reflect in depth on their practice and that it is applicable to me as well. Using my theoretical background in the researched issue as a foundation for turning the change into practice provided me and others in the organization showed that we can improve our practice of managing performance appraisal by applying the experience of other organizations and testing it in our organization to meet our cultural and own needs. As an SP, I realized that improvement in the practice based on evidence from the research was more reliable for the organization to accept the change (Guest, 1992). The inquiry approach and debate among project team members that was applied in the process of action research enabled me and others to come out with new knowledge that met the current needs (Tranfield & Starkey, 1998). Moreover, involving myself in the inquiry developed our process of thinking about ways to resolve the issue by considering all dimensions and aspects of management of the PA that could facilitate or inhibit the

change. Furthermore, it enabled us to identify others' thinking and how some hidden agenda could be discovered by insightful questions (Fleming & Spicer, 2003).

### **8.7 Learning in Action:**

Initially, I started by preparing my thesis proposal for my 'actionable research' using the traditional research style, particularly in the research objectives and questions. After I had received feedback from my primary and secondary supervisors, I modified the objectives and questions (Argyris & Schon, 1978). Later, when I started applying the action research (AR) cycle to find solution for the identified issue, it was very hard to use each step of AR into each of the action that we took. However, aided by inquiry and reflection and with the full cooperation of the project team I became aware that whatever solutions we had created to resolve the problem was a part of the actions taken during the action research process. I gradually realized that I was learning by doing in each of the events (Gibbs, 1988). This was evident from the comments of some members of the project team who were not involved with us in each stage or meeting; they mentioned that they did not benefit as much as other colleagues who participated throughout the new PA. We also realized that the activities that the project team (PT) members and I thought would be suitable for resolving the problem were not applicable or there were some missing information in them (Orton, 2000).

### **8.8 My Learning in Action with the Participants and Project Team Members:**

As the aims of this research project were identifying the barriers to effective utilization of the performance appraisal system as a tool for professional development and exploring the factors that prevented evaluators from implementing the open performance appraisal interview. I decided to involve participants belonging to different levels of positions and different categories in order to provide a holistic picture about the researched issue as well as to develop their skills to resolve the problem (Kirkman & Rosen, 2000). The autonomy that was provided to participants (supervisors) in the interview (which gave them freedom to produce more interesting knowledge and raise some questions to other participants) which, we believed, could help generate some valuable knowledge (Langfred, 2000). I had not thought about the questions that were

raised by the participants when I prepared the interview questions (Marquardt, 2007). As for the homogeneous focus groups, the participants actively participated in both focus groups and supplied valuable information, which gave us new insights about the researched issue (Piderit, 2000). By testing the information that I generated from supervisors during face to face interview with focus group interview with subordinates I was able to find where the gap and how I can make interventions to resolve the problem.

The project team acted as change agents and my role was more of a consultant for the management of the project (Caldwell, 2003). I was able to act as a consultant as well as facilitator for the project team where I placed the researched issue as their own issue and provided them the freedom to resolve it based on their own beliefs and experiences and using all their competencies. The PT members learned the techniques of inquiry, which helped them to reflect on their actions and generate knowledge (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). They started from an early stage by reviewing the findings and suggestions until the final stage where the new PA system successfully created. We applied the principle of action learning when we inquired ourselves about each step or action we intended to do. Additionally, all of our activities were governed by the principle of 'leaderful and their input was valuable in the project (Ralien, 2003). This process provided the participants confidence in their ability and gave them the belief that they could lead any future projects in the organization (Wageman, 2001). My PT colleagues and I obtained other benefits such as developing our ability to formulate the research problem, encourage others to participate by motivating them about the ownership of the problem and helping them solve it. Additionally, we were able to anticipate any challenges from the beginning and set up a measuring action to overcome them from early stage. Finally, we created a new performance appraisal system for the DGHS organization that we could rely on and create our strategic plan for the professional development as well as for rewarding competent staff. This achievement, we believe, could help the organization to reduce the cost of unnecessary training that was provided to undeserving staff. Finally, the members of my organization were convinced about my capabilities for making the necessary change in the management issues and turn it into a culture in the organization and in order to change existing culture first we have to

create a system that can be followed by all in the organization through collaboration and by monitoring it regularly as well as by developing and updating it based on future needs.

### **8.9 Managing the challenge:**

Implementing action research for the first time in the organization was a challenge, particularly when my organization was strongly oriented to traditional research and they believed that the findings of studies would be kept in cupboards (Bourner et al., 2000). This is because the planning and research departments of the health sectors are managed by health statisticians who are trained on health indicators in numbers and quantitative research that enable them to make decisions on statistical findings. Consequently, they are not convinced about the process of identifying the perception and the reasons behind the management of performance appraisal and the need for obtaining the results as they think it will not be beneficial for them to make the change. Therefore, it would have been very hard to convince the stakeholders about the benefits of action research. However, I had enough time at the beginning of the DBA program to orient the stakeholders about the nature of the research project and described my role as scholar practitioner in order to change beliefs and support change later on (Hebert, 2010). Moreover, I managed to persuade them to join the project and participate wholeheartedly by convincing them that through their collaboration all of us would learn from our action to develop the new PA system.

Furthermore, I learnt to deal with the possibility of bias (as I am an insider researcher) by using a topic guide and semi-structured questions for participants (Coghlan, 2001). As I mentioned earlier, in order to avoid the trap of 'dual role' I was transferred to the Department of Research and Studies (Roth et al., 2007). It was very difficult to create items of measurement for each category of staff; we focused on creating subheadings that would enable the evaluators to evaluate correctly (Bjorkman & Sundgren, 2005). However, some unplanned and unavoidable events that occurred during the process of action research like waiting for a longer period for the local ethical committee's approval from the Ministry of Health (MOH) delayed my progress. This was mainly because of their huge workload – the challenge of scrutinizing hundreds of research proposals that

were submitted to them. At first one of the comments that I received was that my topic had a political overtone, pointing to my question: why is the performance appraisal conducted in secret? Of course, after I had made some modifications I got the approval for my research project. Because of this unpleasant experience, I could advise other colleagues to submit their proposals sufficiently in advance. However, I used that time for doing more literature review on the researched topic as well as doing some reading on qualitative research methods.

### **8.10 Conclusion**

My research thesis is the fruit of my hard work in collaboration with various members of the organization, which enabled me to have in-depth knowledge about how the employees work in the organization where there was no transparent implementation of the performance appraisal system that could be followed by all of them. This journey throughout the action research cycle increased my capabilities as a consultant in my organization and as a scholar practitioner who bridged the gap between the theory and practice by link the theory from literature to generated practical knowledge from participants that could solve any workplace issues (Kieser & Liner, 2009). My engagement with others in the organization allowed us to learn from each other and learn from the action. After having completed the project, I am confident of my ability to resolve any workplace or personal issues and develop any of the systems in my organization by applying the participatory action research that relies on teamwork. Finally, my organization has to be given credit for owning the new performance appraisal system, which establishes a link between performance assessment and performance development.

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## **Appendix (1) Old Performance Appraisal Reports**



*Sultanate of Oman*  
*Ministry of Civil Service*

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL REPORT

JOB PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR SUPERVISORY JOB'S OCCUPANTS

FORM No. (1)

Sultanate of Oman

Department.....

Model No. (1): Job performance assessment for supervisory job's occupants

From / / to / /

Part 1: details filled in by Staff Affairs (dept.).

Staff's name: ..... staff No.

Date of appointment: Last academic qualification:

Position: Date of occupying this position:

Place of work: Grade:

Post classification category:

The courses obtained by staff during the current year:

Part 2: assessment factors (filled by direct supervisor):

Assessment Factors	Maximum points	Given points
- Capability of planning & organizing	15	
- Decision making & taking responsibility	15	
- Quality level at performing job duties & responsibilities	15	
- Spirit of initiative, innovation & self improvement	15	
- Improving job skills of subordinates	10	
- Confidentiality	10	
- Communicating & dealing with others	10	
- Commitment to work timings & occupational safety	5	
- Overall appearance	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

- ❖ Excellent: 90-100
- ❖ Very good: 80-90
- ❖ Good: 70-80
- ❖ Fair: 55-70
- ❖ Weak: 55>

Recommendations: -

Name of report writer:

Signature:

Position:

Date of issue:

Part3: approval of higher supervisor:

The higher head may, in case of amending the report prepared by direct supervisor, mention reasons for amendment, otherwise he/she may recognize the report as is.

Reasons of amendments:

Name:

Signature:

Position:

Date of amendment:



*Sultanate of Oman*  
*Ministry of Civil Service*

**PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL REPORT**

**JOB PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR EXECUTIVE JOB'S OCCUPANTS**

**FORM No. (2)**

Sultanate of Oman

Department .....

Model No. (2): Job performance assessment for executive job's occupants

From / / to / /

Part 1: details filled in by Staff Affairs (dept.).

Staff's name: ..... staff No.

Date of appointment: Last academic qualification:

Position: date of occupying this position:

Place of work: grade:

Post classification category:

The courses obtained by staff during the current year:

.....

Part 2: assessment factors (filled by direct supervisor):

Assessment Factors	Maximum points	Given points
- Quality level at performing job duties & responsibilities	15	
- Spirit of initiative, innovation & self improvement	15	
- taking responsibility & good conduct	15	
- teamwork & organizing duties	10	
- acceptance of advice & guidance	10	
- Commitment to work timings & occupational safety	10	
- Confidentiality	10	
- Communicating & dealing with others	10	
- Overall appearance	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

❖ Excellent: 90-100

❖ Very good: 80-90

❖ Good: 70-80

❖ Fair: 55-70

❖ Weak: 55>

Recommendations :-

Name of report writer :

Signature:

Position :

Date of issue:

Part3: approval of higher supervisor:

The higher head may, in case of amending the report prepared by direct supervisor, mention reasons for amendment, otherwise he/she may recognize the report as is.

Reasons of amendments:

Name:

Signature:

Position:

Date of amendment:



*Sultanate of Oman*  
*Ministry of Civil Service*

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL REPORT

JOB PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR CRAFT & ANCILLARY SERVICES JOBS' OCCUPANTS

FORM No. (3)

Sultanate of Oman

Department.....

Model No. (3): Job performance assessment for craft & ancillary services jobs' occupants

From / / to / /

**Part 1: details filled in by Staff Affairs (dept.).**

Staff's name: .....

staff No.

Date of appointment: .....

last academic qualification:

Position:

date of occupying this position:

Place of work:

grade:

Post classification category:

The courses obtained by staff during the current year:

**Part 2: assessment factors (filled by direct supervisor):**

Assessment Factors	Maximum points	Given points
Commitment to rules, regulations & occupational safety	15	
Quality level at performing job duties & responsibilities	15	
Honesty & Confidentiality	15	
Performing duties and respecting work deadlines	15	
acceptance of advice & guidance	10	
desire for self improvement	10	
cooperation & good conduct	10	
Overall appearance	10	
Total	100	

◆ Excellent: 90-100

◆ Very good: 80-90

◆ Good: 70-80

◆ Fair: 55-70

◆ Weak: 55>

Recommendations: -

Name of report writer:

Signature:

Position:

Date of issue:

**Part3: approval of higher supervisor:**

The higher head may, in case of amending the report prepared by direct supervisor, mention reasons for amendment, otherwise he/she may recognize the report as is.

Reasons of amendments:

Name:

Signature:

Position:

Date of amendment:



*Sultanate of Oman*  
*Ministry of Civil Service*

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL REPORT

MEDICAL DOCTORS

FORM No. (5)

**(MCS / PAR-5 / 1991)**

**\* The original text of this form is in Arabic**

**PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL REPORT FOR MEDICAL DOCTORS**

(MCS Form No. 5)

**BASIC INFORMATION**

(1) Period covered by the report : From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
Hospital / Health Institution : \_\_\_\_\_ Wilayat : \_\_\_\_\_  
Region : \_\_\_\_\_ Governorate : \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Name of doctor : \_\_\_\_\_ Nationality : \_\_\_\_\_  
Staff No. : \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth : \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Appointment : \_\_\_\_\_ Designation : \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade : \_\_\_\_\_ Class : \_\_\_\_\_ Date occupying this grade : \_\_\_\_\_

(3) Qualifications : List University degrees commencing by the last obtained.

Title of Certificate	Specialization	Year Obtained	School / College / University

(4) Training Courses : List training courses in which the doctor participated during the last three years.  
Start with the most recent course :

Subject of Training Course	Duration		Institution / Country	Title of Certificate
	From	To		

PERSONAL ABILITIES & BEHAVIOUR

FACTORS OF ASSESSMENT :

(1) Attention to Appearance :

always attentive	attentive at most times	average attention	inattentive in many cases	Not attentive	Rating
5	4	3	2	1	

(2) Acceptance of advice & guidance :

Always understanding & accepting	Understanding & accepting at most times	Average in accepting guidance	Not accepting guidance in many cases	Not accepting guidance nor advice	Rating
5	4	3	2	1	

(3) Relations with superiors :

Excellent	Good	Average	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory	Rating
5	4	3	2	1	

(4) Profession-wise relations with colleagues :

always cooperative	mostly cooperative	cooperative in general	little interest to cooperate	absolutely uncooperative	Rating
5	4	3	2	1	

(5) Ability to determine and fulfil the needs of the public :

Rating

High	Good	Needs more guidance	Needs much guidance	Unsatisfactory	
5	4	3	2	1	

(6) Reliability :

Always reliable	Reliable at most times	Needs some guidance	Needs much guidance	Does not work without continued guidance	
5	4	3	2	1	

Total

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(B) EFFICIENCY

FACTORS OF ASSESSMENT :

(7) Punctuality & adherence to working hours :

Always punctual & adherent	Punctual at most times	Punctual in general	Punctual to a certain extent	Often absent	
5	4	3	2	1	

(8) Knowledge of rules and procedures of work :

Competent	Knowledgeable in general	Average	Below average	Limited knowledge	
5	4	3	2	1	

(9) Productivity (Performance standards related to time) :

Rating

Above standards	Within standards	Average	Below average	Poor Productivity	
5	4	3	2	1	

(10) Productivity (Accuracy & Proficiency) :

Highly accurate & proficient	Good	Average	Below average	Poor	
5	4	3	2	1	

(11) Participation in the preparation of research & scientific studies :

Excellent	Good	Average	Below standard	Unsatisfactory	
5	4	3	2	1	

(12) Abreast of modern professional knowledge & skills :

Abreast	Abreast in most cases	Average interest	Rarely abreast	Not interested	
5	4	3	2	1	

(13) Spirit of team work :

Rating

Excellent	Good	Average .	Below average	Unsatisfactory	
5	4	3	2	1	

(14) Ability to work under pressure :

High capability & positive response	Good	Appropriate	Commits some mistakes	Negative response	
5	4	3	2	1	

(15) Ability to complete medical records accurately and clearly :

Excellent	Good	Average	Below average	Poor	
5	4	3	2	1	

(16) Adherence to safety and prevention procedures of work :

Always adherent	Adheres at most times	Average	Is not adherent at most times	Does not care	
5	4	3	2	1	

(17) Ability to take initiative & innovate proposals to promote systems & procedures :

Rating

Always innovative	Generally innovative	Average	Rarely takes initiative	Lacks initiative	
5	4	3	2	1	

(18) Ability for planning and organization :

Excellent	Good	average	Below standard	Poor	
5	4	3	2	1	

(19) Ability to monitor and assess subordinates' /assistants' work :

High ability	Good	Average	Below average	Poor	
5	4	3	2	1	

(20) Ability to take appropriate decisions on work-related problems :

Excellent	Good	Average	Hesitant	Poor	
5	4	3	2	1	

GRAND TOTAL

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\* Please give examples which show ability (positive factors) and others which show weaknesses (Negative factors) especially in cases where maximum or minimum ratings have been given :

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\* **Grand Total**

- Excellent : from 90 to 100
- Very good : from 80 to less than 90
- Good : from 70 to less than 80
- Satisfactory : from 55 to less than 70
- Poor : less than 55

\* **In light of the above assessment, do you feel that :**

- The qualifications and capabilities of this doctor do not qualify him to assume higher responsibilities.
- This doctor has been placed in the proper position & grade suitable to his skills & abilities.
- This doctor is proficient in his present duties and is capable to assume higher responsibilities.

\* **Recommendations :** In view of the positive & negative factors in the doctor's personal capabilities and performance, please explain how the positive factors could be strengthened and suggest ways to overcome the negative factors, specifying the kind of training required if suggested.

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Report Prepared by : \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Designation : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

\* Remarks by higher supervisor :

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Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Designation : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

(6)

**Remarks by Staff Committee**

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Signatures :

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Member	Member	Member	Member	Chairman

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

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**Countersignature by Head of the Unit**

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Signature :

Date :

## Appendix (2) Action Plan Table

SR	Activities	Role& Responsibility	Time Frame	Resources Implications
1	Modifying and developing the content of the current performance appraisal report (Form 1& 2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis The Items of Measurements</li> <li>• Create New sub-heading Items of Measurement.</li> </ul>	From April to Jun 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Team Members (Quality Control department &amp; Professional department)</li> </ul>
2	Linking the performance appraisal outcome to the specific training required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Varsity of training</li> </ul>	From April to May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional department staff</li> </ul>
3	Activating the professional development Department & linking PA to PD:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Shared Drop box</li> <li>• Crate Database</li> </ul>	From Ma to December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional department staff.</li> </ul>
4	Linking the performance Appraisal with Rewarding system:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Varieties of Rewarding Methods</li> </ul>	May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Team Members. (Human resources and Finance departments )</li> </ul>
5	Turning the paper-based performance appraisal system into an electronic performance appraisal system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an excel document to be fill electronic</li> </ul>	From April to Jun 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Team Members (Quality Control department &amp; Professional department) Project Team Members</li> </ul>
6	Adding a formula to calculate the performance appraisal marks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create formula</li> </ul>	From September to November 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Team Members</li> </ul>

				(Health Information department)
7	Involving the quality control department to audit the implementation of the new performance appraisal system in order to ensure its sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be create checklist for edit the new PA implementation</li> </ul>	From December 2017 till now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Team Members (Quality control Department)</li> </ul>
8	Creating self-assessment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create column for self-assessment</li> </ul>	Jun 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Team Members</li> </ul>
9	Increasing the frequency of the performance appraisal from one annul assessment to three times a year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create three column for PA assessment</li> </ul>	Jun 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Team Members</li> </ul>
10	Create an awareness workshop about the new performance appraisal system:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the new Performance Appraisal system to Stakeholders.</li> </ul>	October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Team Members</li> </ul>

## Appendix no (3)

### Face and Face Interview Questions for Supervisors (Evaluators)

1. Do you think it is necessary to conduct the performance appraisal (PA) and why?
2. Do you think the current PA system has a clear purpose
3. Do you think because the PA is used mainly for administrative purposes, it is not necessary to discuss the PA with your subordinates? And why?
4. How you can you communicate to your subordinates whether they have achieved the department's objectives?
5. What is the procedure that you follow when you are doing the performance appraisal? Do you have any other documents that you can return to for more evidence and give an accurate rate?
6. Do you have an effective system to document and maintain the performance appraisal outcomes as well as your recommendation? And why?
7. Is the staff aware about what the elements measurement in the performance appraisal report? And why you think it is important to know them?
8. Does the PA system help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the staff? And how?
9. How do you deal with the strengths and weaknesses of your subordinates?
10. How can you recognize the training requirements of your staff?
11. When you are planning for training, what reference do you have for using it as a basis for selection?
12. Why you think the current PA is not plays an important role in the professional development of the staff?
13. Do you think that if you have evidence for the evaluation of the staffs' performance you will have more confidence to conduct the PA Interviews? And why?
14. Other than the PA, do you have a mechanism for assessing professional development of each of your employees?
15. If the purpose of performance appraisal is professional development of the staff, How it can reduce the incidence of negative reaction from the staff towards the PA feedback interview?
16. How the transparent PA process can promote staff satisfaction?
17. How providing the negative feedback on the PA outcome can cause dissatisfaction among the staff?
18. What skills do you think you need to develop in order to provide negative feedback to your subordinates?
19. How can measurement criteria have an impact on the accuracy of performance appraisal system?

20. What challenges that prevent you to implement the face to face PA interview?  
How we can overcome those challenges?
21. What is the role of quality assurance management in the performance appraisal management?
22. How can you allocate the time for the PAI?
23. Is the result of the performance appraisal is consider by top management?
  
24. Did you take courses on management of performance appraisal and how to deal with staff?
25. What other suggestions and interventions do you think can help conduct an effective PA interview?
26. Did you receive follow up about your staff from top management?

## **Appendix no (4)**

### **Focus group questions**

1. Did you have a clear picture of the role of performance appraisal?
2. Do you get feedback about your performance appraisal and get an opportunity to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the performance?
3. Do you get any feedback on the progress of your performance from time to time during the year?
4. Do you think the current items of measurement in performance appraisal report form (2) is sufficient to assess your performance?
5. Do you believe we can easily promote the philosophy of accepting negative feedback on performance appraisal among employees?
6. How do you think the quality assurance management system can manage the quality of performance appraisal system in the DGHS?
7. How do you think information technology can facilitate the process of management of performance appraisal system?
8. Do you have a database that can help the new supervisor to do follow- up on your performance appraisal?
9. Do you think there is a balance between performance evaluation and performance development?
10. Do you think annual performance appraisal is enough to assess your performance and develop the weak aspects of your performance?
11. Do you think the training courses you attend are based on your actual needs?
12. In your opinion, what are the methods and systems that can support the use of performance appraisal system as a tool for developing your performance?

## **Appendix no (5) Participant Information Sheet**

### **Participant Information Sheet Guidelines**

#### **1. Title of Study**

The attitude of the Ministry of Health staff in the Sultanate of Oman towards Performance Appraisal Management and its influence on their Performance.

#### **2. Version Number and Date**

Version 1

Date: 11 /05/2016

#### **3. Invitation Paragraph**

You are invited to participate in the research thesis titled “The attitude of the Ministry of Health staff in the Sultanate of Oman towards Performance Appraisal Management and its influence on their Performance” for my doctorate in Business administration that is offered by the University of Liverpool (United Kingdom). It aims at improving the current management of the performance appraisal system in the organization. Before you decide whether to participate in my research or not, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it involves. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask me if you would like to be given more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Please also feel free to discuss this with me, the researcher, or any colleagues and supervisor if you wish. I would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

***I would like to sincerely thank you for spending your valuable time to read the following guideline questions answers.***

#### **4. What is the purpose of the study?**

The study intends to investigate in depth the management of performance appraisal in your workplace and how the system is perceived by the employees and the evaluators and to come out with valid data that will help the researcher to plan for action that will develop the current management of performance appraisal. The researcher intends to disclose the findings of performance appraisal management system to concerned staff in order to discuss the strengths and weaknesses with the evaluator (direct supervisor) and to formulate a development action plan according to the outcomes of the performance appraisal.

#### **5. Why have I been chosen to take part?**

You have been chosen to participate in this study as you are a staff/ evaluator who is involved in the process of performance appraisal and the outcome of this process is affected you directly either positively or negatively. The participants will be either staff or direct supervisors such as the director or head of section. Therefore, I would like you to participate freely in this study and you have the right to withdraw from the study anytime during the study.

#### **6. Do I have to take part?**

You are not forced to participate in this study. In fact, it is up to you to accept the invitation to or not. Instead, if you are willing and interested in the whole process, you are called upon to be part of this research project. Hence, you may withdraw from it any time during the study without providing any reason.

## **7. What will happen if I take part?**

If you take part in this study you have the opportunity to understand the system of performance appraisal in depth throughout the focus group discussion with some of your colleagues and your interaction among the group will support the organization to have valid data that can help the decision makers to make intervention in the current performance appraisal. Also, as direct supervisor you will have a face-to-face interview which will help you understand and identify the factors that prevent you from implementing an effective performance appraisal system as well as you will have an opportunity to help improve the current system of performance appraisal. The data will be collected by the researcher herself in order to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of data is maintained. The focus group discussions and face-to-face interview will be recorded using an audio-tape and the names of participants will not be mentioned anywhere in the data recorded. The nature of the questions will be semi-open structured which are relevant to the knowledge and skills required for the management of performance appraisal system. The researcher will have a topic guide that will be followed during the interview and she might be required to ask further questions to obtain the answer that will achieve the objectives of the research project. The estimated time you need to spend in the focus group discussion is two hours and one hour for the face to face interview. The interview will be conducted once only unless anything happened to the data collected such as damaging the data or losing them. The access of data will be by only researcher and access by supervisors. The findings of study will be presented in a meeting where you can attend to discuss the action plan that is required to improve the current performance appraisal. The researcher and selected project team will design the guidelines and protocol on how the management of performance appraisal must to be carried out. The language that will be used in the interview will be Arabic, but if you wish to do it in English, it can be done and the researcher will translate it into English from the tap-recorder into the soft transcripts. The place to conduct the interview will be in the

main meeting room of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) during duty hours and if you prefer to do it after duty hours, it is up to you.

## **8. Expenses and / or payments**

There is no direct payment or expenses for your participation.

## **9. Are there any risks in taking part?**

There is going to be no harm or risk that can affect you on account of your participation as confidentiality and anonymity of you and your participation will be maintained throughout and after the study. I can assure you that the results of the study will be used only for improve the performance appraisal system of the MOH without making the participants' identity public. Also, the information that you provide during the interview will have nothing to do personal matters; instead it will be related to the work and the appraisal system which the Ministry of Health intend to investigate into in order to understand the situation and to know your thoughts on how to improve the management of performance appraisal.

## **10. Are there any benefits in taking part?**

Yes, there is an advantage for you as a participant as you will help the performance appraisal system to become transparent between the staff and employee and direct supervisor. Therefore, in the future you will have access to your performance appraisal outcome and you will discover your strengths and weaknesses and the opportunity to develop yourself with the mutual consensus of yourself and your direct supervisor. Also, the findings of the study will be communicated to you after the data

analysis that will be done by all participants, and the project team together with the researcher will develop a plan to improve the performance appraisal system.

### **11. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?**

If you feel unhappy at any time during the study, you are free to withdraw from the study without any consequences. Also, you can request the researcher to double check any of the information that you provide to the researcher and feel it is not to detect. Moreover, if you encounter any problems, please feel free to contact me, the principal investigator (Sheikha Hamed Al-Hajri on my mobile no: 0096899454596 and email: [sheikhaalhajri4@gmail.com](mailto:sheikhaalhajri4@gmail.com) or contact the co-principal investigator (Professor. Babu Georg on his mobile no: 01.601.255.4431 and email [babugeorge@live.com](mailto:babugeorge@live.com)). If you become unhappy and your problems are not solved as you desire them to be, you can contact the Research Governance Officer at [ethics@liv.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@liv.ac.uk)) and provide to them the name of the study and researcher name with details of your issues.

### **12. Will my participation be kept confidential?**

Confidentiality of the information will be maintained throughout the study as the notes and the cassette recorded will be accessed only by the principal researcher (student) and co-principal researcher (supervisors) and your name will not be mentioned in any place in these records or in the transcripts. The personal computer will be used for analysis of the data and the computer is secured by the researcher. Also, the pickup for the record and data will be secured by researcher. The findings of my study will be used to make intervention for the purpose of improving the performance appraisal system and they will be mentioned in the project thesis only and will not be used for other purposes. According to the policies of the university, the data will be stored for five years. However, if you wish to destroy the data before completing the five year period, it is possible. However, please note that the estimated deadline for the submission of the thesis is July, 2017.

### **13. What will happen to the results of the study?**

According to the rules and regulations of the university, the data will be stored for five years. However, your workplace has the right to have the findings of the study for the purpose of understanding the management of performance appraisal in your institution for the purpose of any necessary intervention. However, in such a case, your identity will not be revealed anywhere in the study. . Also, the findings will be presented in the conference and management journal without mentioning your name anywhere.

### **14. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?**

You are free to withdraw at any time of the study and it will be up to you to decide whether or not the information provided by you will be used by the researcher for her action research.

### **15. Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

If you have any further questions related to this research project, please feel free to contact the researcher in the following contact details:

Sheikha Hamed AL-Hajri,

Mob: 99454596

Email: [sheikhaalhajri4@gmail.com](mailto:sheikhaalhajri4@gmail.com).

Also, you can contact the thesis supervisor

Professor. Babu Georg on his mobile no: 01.601.255.4431 and email [babugeorge@live.com](mailto:babugeorge@live.com)) and the University of Liverpool.

**Appendix no (6) Consent Form:**

**Committee on Research Ethics**

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**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**Title of Research:** The attitude of the Ministry of Health staff in  
**Project:** the Sultanate of Oman towards Performance  
Appraisal Management and its influence on  
their Performance.

**Researcher(s):** Sheikha Hamed Alhajri

**Please  
initial  
box**

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated [DATE] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.

4. I agree to take part in the above study.

Participant Name	Date	Signature
Name of Person taking consent	Date	Signature
Researcher Signature	Date	

**Principal Investigator:**

Name: Sheikha Hamed Al-Hajri

Work Address: Directorate General of Health Services

Address: Directorate of Planning & Research

Work Telephone: 25570723- Mobile no: 0096899454596

Email: [sheikhaalhajri4@gmail.com](mailto:sheikhaalhajri4@gmail.com)

## Appendix no (7): New Performance Appraisal Forms (1)&(2)

### Performance Appraisal Form (1)

1	<b>Capability for Planning and Organizing (15 marks) :</b>	self - scoring	1st Trime ster	2nd Trime ster	3rd Trime ster	Annu al Aver age	Differe nce
1.1	Setting Priorities & Establishing Goals						
1.1 .a	Formulates goals in line with his/her institutional goals.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
1.1 .b	Uses sound judgment and insights while ordering projects.	0.5	1	0	1	0.7	0.2
1.1 .c	Capable of formulating goals that can help his/her colleagues come out with the best performance.	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.8	0.3
1.1 .d	Is able to create action plans and strategies in goal setting.	1	0	0.5	1	0.5	-0.5
1.1 .e	Creates checklists and deadlines for every goal.	1	1	0.5	1	0.8	-0.2
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>-0.2</b>

1.2	Organizing Skills	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
1.2.a	Is able to organize the department efficiently (work based on mutually agreed strategic planning).	0.5	1	1	1	1.0	0.5
1.2.b	Distributes schedules and follows up work among subordinates.	0.5	1	1	1	1.0	0.5
1.2.c	Capable of organizing projects/ tasks to prevent overlaps or gaps in responsibilities.	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.8	0.3
1.2.d	Is able to have access to required items or information.	1	0.5	0.5	1	0.7	-0.3
1.2.e	Capable of organizing short term and long term tasks.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>3.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>1.0</b>

1.3	Planning Skills	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
1.3.a	Contributes to formulating plans/ policies/ practices that can improve performance and productivity.	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.8	0.3
1.3.b	Is able to make realistic plans (Smart Plans).	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.8	0.3
1.3.c	Utilizes technology most effectively to make and implement plans.	1	0.5	1	1	0.8	-0.2
1.3.d	Implements contingency plans when existing plans require alteration or refinement.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
1.3.e	Is able to update planning strategies in his/her department by thinking analytically & provide evidence.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>11.5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12.83</b>	<b>1.33</b>

2	<b>Decision making &amp; taking Responsibility (15 marks)</b>	self-scoring	1st Trimes ter	2nd Trimes ter	3rd Trimes ter	Annua l Avera ge	Differe nce
2.1	Making wise decisions ( 5 marks)						
2.1 .a	Relies on facts while making decisions	1	0.5	1	1	0.8	-0.2
2.1 .b	Gets the employees participate in the decision-making process that affects them and their work.	1	0.5	1	1	0.8	-0.2
2.1 .c	Capable of making timely decisions.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
2.1 .d	Capable of explaining with clarity the rationale behind the decisions that are taken.	1	1	0.5	1	0.8	-0.2
2.1 .e	Is able to clearly explain the costs and benefits of the decisions taken.	0	0.5	0.5	1	0.7	0.7
<b>subtotal</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>

2.2	Handling Pressure and Stress	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
2.2.a	Is able to stay positive and confident when he /she is under extreme pressure (become a role model for others).	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
2.2.b	Capable of adjusting schedules, priorities, and strategies to deal with greater job pressures effectively.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
2.2.c	Capable of putting in extra energy and hours when he/ she is under extreme pressure.	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.8	0.3
2.2.d	Supports his employees to develop stress management skills.	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.3	-0.2
2.2.e	Is able to prevent or reduce the severity of pressure situations with the help of his planning skills.	0	0	0.5	1	0.5	0.5
<b>subtotal</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>

2.3	Problem Solving	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
2.3.a	Capable of resolving conflict situations before they get out of control (identify potential causes).	0.5	1	1	1	1.0	0.5
2.3.b	Capable of analyzing problems and solving them effectively.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
2.3.c	Capable of gathering and analyzing facts efficiently.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
2.3.d	Is able to identify the root causes of the problem.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
2.3.e	Capable of finding effective problem-solving solutions in his/her department.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>4.5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>

3	<b>Quality Level at Performing Job-related Tasks &amp; Taking Responsibility (15 marks)</b>	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
3.1	Performance Level and Productivity						
3.1.a	Is able to create strategies to improve his/her own performance.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
3.1.b	Capable of motivating himself/herself to perform at an executive level.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
3.1.c	Provides suggestions for increasing/improving productivity.	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.8	0.3
3.1.d	Capable of converting challenges into opportunities.	1	1	0	1	0.7	-0.3
3.1.e	Has the ability to make any tasks remarkable ones within a given period of time.	1	1	0.5	1	0.8	-0.2
<b>subtotal</b>		<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>-0.2</b>

3.2	Accuracy and Meeting Deadlines	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
3.2.a	Capable of planning and organizing work to meet deadlines on a regular basis.	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.8	0.3
3.2.b	Is able to meet deadlines without affecting quality.	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.8	0.3
3.2.c	Capable of completing and maintaining accurate records (evidence available).	1	1	0.5	1	0.8	-0.2
3.2.d	Is able to continuously focus on accuracy (able to discover and correct errors).	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.7	-0.3
3.2.e	Helps others ensure accuracy in the records.	1	1	0.5	1	0.8	-0.2
<b>subtotal</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

3.3	Responding to Performance Appraisals and Coaching	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
3.3.a	Accepts feedback in his performance appraisal with an open mind and is ready to take corrective measures.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
3.3.b	Takes immediate corrective measures based on the recommendations in the PA report.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
3.3.c	Always follows specific action plans to improve his/her performance based on the PA report.	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.8	0.3
3.3.d	Capable of making timely changes after receiving coaching.	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.8	0.3
3.3.e	Capable of monitoring and reviewing the performance of his/her subordinates.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>12.5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0.5</b>

4	<b>Spirit of Initiative, Innovation &amp; Self-improvement (15 marks)</b>	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
4.1	Initiative and Innovation						
4.1.a	Asks for tasks instead of waiting for them.	0.5	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.0
4.1.b	Capable of generating appropriate ideas in order to improve existing policies or procedures.	0.5	1	0	1	0.7	0.2
4.1.c	Has given outstanding ideas for the purpose of reducing costs.	0.5	0	1	1	0.7	0.2
4.1.d	Is ready to work extra hours when if required.	1	0.5	1	1	0.8	-0.2
4.1.e	Creates strategies that limit any potential threats.	1	0.5	1	1	0.8	-0.2
4.1.f	Is not chained by traditional problem-solving approaches, strategies, or expectations.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
4.1.g	Is open to completely new ideas, and strategies	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
4.1.h	Capable of building a proactive mindset among his subordinates	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
4.1.i	Is able to reward subordinates for suggestions that are implemented.	0.5	0	1	1	0.7	0.2
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>

4.2	Self-improvement	self - scoring	1st Trime ster	2nd Trime ster	3rd Trime ster	Ann ual Aver age	Differ ence
4.2 .a	Works continuously to increase his knowledge concerning work policies and procedures.	1	1	0	1	0.7	-0.3
4.2 .b	Maintains a logbook containing his/ her creative ideas for continuously enhancing them.	0.5	0	1	1	0.7	0.2
4.2 .c	Participates in seminars and training programs on topics of his specialty.	1	1	0.5	1	0.8	-0.2
4.2 .d	Work as a mentor on a daily basis ( Sharing knowledge and skills with colleagues and subordinates).	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
4.2 .e	Attends continuing education program as speaker.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
4.2 .f	Participates in research programmes.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		5.5	5	4.5	6	5.2	-0.3
<b>Total</b>		12.5	10.5	12.5	14	12.33	-0.17

5	<b>Improving Job skills of Subordinates</b>	self - scoring	1st Trime ster	2nd Trime ster	3rd Trime ster	Annu al Aver age	Differe nce
5.1	Helps build employees' motivation by building their skills.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
5.2	Assists the subordinates to identify their learning needs.	0.5	0	1	1	0.7	0.2
5.3	Manages his time to monitor his/her subordinates.	0.5	0	0.5	1	0.5	0.0
5.4	Identifies and addresses areas where the employees/subordinates need further training and development.	1	0.5	1	1	0.8	-0.2
5.5	Creates and implements various training programmes to meet employees' learning needs.	1	0.5	1	1	0.8	-0.2
5.6	Provides timely feedback to enrich employees' learning.	1	0.5	1	1	0.8	-0.2
5.7	Regularly meets his employees to discuss their new ideas.	1	0.5	0.5	1	0.7	-0.3
5.8	Is able to employ delegation as a method to improve employees' performance and confidence.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
5.9	Helps build the leadership skills of subordinates	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
5.10	Recognizes outstanding performance of subordinates/employees.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>-0.67</b>

6	Confidentiality	self - scoring	1st Trime ster	2nd Trime ster	3rd Trime ster	Annu al Aver age	Diff eren ce
6.1	Makes sure that discussions on personal affairs of any staff do not take place in public areas.	1	1	0	1	0.7	-0.3
6.2	Maintains awareness when confidential telephone conversations or unplanned meetings are held.	1	0	0.5	0.5	0.3	-0.7
6.3	Ensures that 'all in use' hard copies of confidential matters are kept in folders or placed facedown when he/ she is out of work stations.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
6.4	Always takes care not to leave confidential information on computer monitors when he/she leaves his/her work stations without locking it.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
6.5	Always takes care to collect all printed information from shared printers and photocopiers without delay or fail.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
6.6	Ensures that all confidential information is archived and fully secured.	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.8	0.3
6.7	Ensures that all outdated information is shredded or placed in the Confidential Bin for recycling.	0.5	1	1	1	1.0	0.5
6.8	Ensures that all filing cabinets or drawers containing confidential information are locked whenever the staff member leaves the room/workstation.	0.5	1	1	1	1.0	0.5
6.9	Always takes care not to discuss confidential information with individuals who have nothing to do with it.	1	0.5	1	1	0.8	-0.2
6.10	Refrains from using emails and social media to send confidential information to concerned individuals.	1	0.5	1	1	0.8	-0.2
<b>Total</b>			<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>

7	Communicating and Dealing with Others (10 marks)		1st Trim ester	2nd Trim ester	3rd Trim ester	Ann ual Aver age	Differ ence
7. 1	Creates a climate that can help subordinates/ colleagues to communicate effectively.	0 .5	1	1	1	1.0	0.5
7. 2	Uses dialogue effectively to encourage subordinates/ colleagues to communicate with clarity.	0 .5	1	1	0.5	0.8	0.3
7. 3	Helps develop and implement policies in such a way as to enhance communication.	0 .5	1	1	0.5	0.8	0.3
7. 4	Helps build cooperation within the department and between departments.	1	1	1	0.5	0.8	-0.2
7. 5	Builds teamwork within and between departments.	1	1	1	0.5	0.8	-0.2
7. 6	Treats all employees with utmost respect and trust.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
7. 7	Always adheres to the professional code of conduct.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
7. 8	Creates an excellent professional bond with clients.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
7. 9	Has a positive impact on the attitudes and performance of his subordinates while communicating with them.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
7. 10	Has a strong sense of fairness that is clearly evident while communicating with others.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>8. 5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9.33</b>	<b>0.83</b>

8	Commitments to Work Timing & Occupational Safety	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
8.1	Is always punctual (arrives and leaves on time).	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.8	0.3
8.2	Always utilizes the working hours for the benefits of the work.	0.5	1	1	1	1.0	0.5
8.3	Always arrives on time for meetings and attends them seriously.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
8.4	Has proved his actions are highly effective to maintain the lowest accident rate in his department.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
8.5	Has taken part in extra training programmes to make sure he is fully prepared for emergencies.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
<i>Total</i>		<b>4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.8333333</b>	<b>0.8333333</b>

		self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
9	Overall appearance ( 5 marks)						
9 · 1	Always takes care to comply with and strictly adhere to the uniform and dress code of MOH.	1	1	1	0.5	0.8	-0.2
9 · 2	Always takes care to keep his/ her uniform neat and clean (properly washed and ironed).	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
9 · 3	<b>Hair &amp; Hijaab;</b> <b>Male:</b> always keeps his hair neatly trimmed above collar level. <b>Female:</b> always keeps her hair neatly tied back and kept off the shoulders (uses only black or white ribbons to tie the hair; does not use distracting headbands or hair clips to tie the hair). <b>Hijaab:</b> Takes care to avoid non-fancy colors and patterns for hijaab.	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.0
9 · 4	<b>Nails:</b> Always ensures his/her nails are trimmed and kept clean on duty (without any nail polish).	1	0.5	0.5	1	0.7	-0.3
9 · 5	Always makes sure his/ her identification badge is worn on the left side of the chest with front side facing the onlookers without hiding it under the coat or hijaab.	1	0	1	1	0.7	-0.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>-0.83</b>
<b>Score</b>		<b>74.5%</b>	<b>78.0%</b>	<b>85.5%</b>	<b>95.0%</b>	<b>86.2%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
		<b>Go od</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Excel lent</b>	<b>Very good</b>	

**Performance  
Appraisal (Form 2)**

1 Quality Level at Performing Job-related Tasks & Taking responsibility (15 marks)							
1.1	Performance Level and Productivity	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
1.1.a	Formulates strategies to improve the personal performance.					0.0	0.0
1.1.b	Maintains the highest standards in performance as per the professional policies and procedures.					0.0	0.0
1.1.c	Provides suggestions to enhance productivity.					0.0	0.0
1.1.d	Is capable of turning challenges into opportunities.					0.0	0.0
1.1.e	Is capable of producing a remarkable task within a suitable time.					0.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

1.2	Accuracy and Meeting Deadlines	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
1.2.a	Is able to plan and organize work to meet deadlines consistently.					0.0	0.0
1.2.b	Always meets deadlines without affecting quality.					0.0	0.0
1.2.c	Is able to complete and maintain records accurately (evidence available).					0.0	0.0
1.2.d	Is able to continuously focus on accuracy (able to discover and correct errors).					0.0	0.0
1.2.e	Helps others ensure accuracy in the records.					0.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

1.3	Responding to Performance Appraisals and Coaching	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
1.3.a	Accepts feedback on his performance appraisal with an open mind and is ready to take corrective measures.					0.0	0.0
1.3.b	Is able to formulate corrective action plan based on the coaching that he/ she has received.					0.0	0.0
1.3.c	Is fully committed to implementing the agreed action plans to make improvements noted on his/ her performance appraisal.					0.0	0.0
	Makes timely interventions in emergencies as per the coaching he/she has received.					0.0	0.0
1.3.d	Has not received any 'advice letter' or warning during the past six months.					0.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>		0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00

2 Spirit of Initiative, Innovation & Self-improvement (15 marks)							
2.1	Initiative and Innovation	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
2.1.a	Asks for tasks instead of waiting for them.					0.0	0.0
2.1.b	Is able to suggest suitable ideas to improve policies or procedures.					0.0	0.0
2.1.c	Has given outstanding ideas to the organization/department to reduce costs.					0.0	0.0
2.1.d	Is always ready to work extra hours whenever it is required.					0.0	0.0
2.1.e	Creates strategies designed to prevent any potential problems that can affect the smooth functioning of the department.					0.0	0.0
2.1.f	Is not overly affected by traditional problem-solving approaches, strategies, or expectations.					0.0	0.0
2.1.g	Builds a proactive frame of mind among his colleagues.					0.0	0.0
2.1.h	Is ready to accept totally different ideas, and strategies.					0.0	0.0
2.1.i	Capable of moving forward with new ideas (implement new ideas into practice).					0.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

2.2	Self-improvement	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
2.2.a	Works continuously to update his knowledge base related to work policies and procedures.					0.0	0.0
2.2.b	Maintains an 'ongoing' log of his/ her creative ideas for the purpose of continuously enhancing them.					0.0	0.0
2.2.c	Attends seminars and training programs on topics related to his specialty.					0.0	0.0
2.2.d	Functions as a 'work' mentor to his colleagues/ subordinates on a daily basis ( sharing knowledge and skills)					0.0	0.0
2.2.e	Takes part in continuing education programmers as a speaker.					0.0	0.0
2.2.f	Takes part in research activities.						
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

3 Taking Responsibility & Good Conduct							
3.1	Taking Responsibility	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
3.1.a	Effectively completes assignments on a priority basis.					0.0	0.0
3.1.b	Is capable of consistently putting up solid performance in all aspects of his/ her work.					0.0	0.0
3.1.c	Accepts responsibility if decisions don't produce desired results.					0.0	0.0
3.1.d	Is positive and confident when he/she is under severe pressure.					0.0	0.0
3.1.e	Keeps commitments and helps his/her colleagues to keep their commitments.					0.0	0.0
3.1.f	Demonstrates readiness to take up higher responsibilities.					0.0	0.0
3.1.g	Accepts the rotation in different departments (as per the job. description)					0.0	0.0
3.1.h	Works independently and produces consistently outstanding work.					0.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

3.2	Good Conduct	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
3.2.a	Clearly understands the impact of his decisions (costs and benefits of his decisions).					0.0	0.0
3.2.b	Has shown evidence of new problem-solving strategies and solutions in his assigned tasks.					0.0	0.0
3.2.c	Makes decisions giving due consideration to rules and regulations of the department.					0.0	0.0
3.2.d	Has the ability to resolve conflicts (if there were any).					0.0	0.0
3.2.e	Makes decisions with based on facts and figures.					0.0	0.0
3.2.f	Makes appropriate decisions based on personal experiences.					0.0	0.0
3.2.g	Is able to manage situation under pressure.					0.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>		0	0	0	0	0	0

4 Team Work & Organizing Duty Roster							
4.1	Team Work	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
4.1.a	Is committed to teamwork within and between departments.					0.0	0.0
4.2.b	Is able to make every member of his team feel his/she is important.					0.0	0.0
4.2.c	Has demonstrated a spirit of cooperation.					0.0	0.0
4.2.d	Never lets problems and conflicts spill out of the team/department.					0.0	0.0
4.1.e	Keeps team members well-informed (about developments in the organization).					0.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

4.2	Organizing Duty	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
4.2.a	Is always able to obtain required items or information from their sources.					0.0	0.0
4.2.b	Gets tasks and jobs done on a priority-basis.					0.0	0.0
4.2.c	Always gives priority to the most important tasks.					0.0	0.0
4.2.d	Is excellent in multi-tasking that requires multiple skills.					0.0	0.0
4.2.d	Is able to determine the role and priority of totally different tasks.					0.0	0.0
<i>Subtotal</i>		0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
<i>Total</i>		0	0	0	0	0	0

5	Acceptance of Advice & Guidance	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
5.1	Is always willing to receive career guidance (listens to, respects, considers and accepts the views of superiors).					0.0	0.0
5.2	Is always reasonable while trying to get others accept his opinions during performance appraisal conversations.					0.0	0.0
5.3	Is always well-mannered (has pleasant mannerisms).					0.0	0.0
5.4	Gives importance to performance appraisal feedback and has improved his performance significantly based on the feedback given.					0.0	0.0
5.5	Is always committed to enhancing his knowledge and skills based on advice that he/ she receives.					0.0	0.0
5.6	Is capable of identifying suitable plans to improve his /her performance.					0.0	0.0
5.7	Always focuses on the training that he/ she receives from time to time.					0.0	0.0
5.8	Takes suitable measures to follow the action plan and improve his/her performance.					0.0	0.0
5.9	Is willing to accept advice from colleagues.					0.0	0.0
5.1	Always works hard to turn weakness into opportunity.					0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

6 Commitments to work timing & Occupational Safety							
6.1	Commitments to work timing	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
6.1.a	Always arrives and leave on time.					0.0	0.0
6.1.b	Utilizes the working hours maximum for the benefits of the work.					0.0	0.0
6.1.c	Attends meetings on time.					0.0	0.0
6.1.d	Responds promptly to 'call' out of the working hours.					0.0	0.0
6.1.e	Has very few 'recorded/granted' permission to leave work.					0.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

6.2	Occupational Safety	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
6.2.a	Demonstrated interest in developing his/her knowledge of safety issues.					0.0	0.0
6.2.b	Has taken strong actions in his department to lower accident rate to the minimum in the department.					0.0	0.0
6.2.c	Has taken part in several 'safety awareness' programs to improve safety.					0.0	0.0
6.2.d	Has taken part in extra training programmers to meet emergency situations.					0.0	0.0
6.2.e	Maintains high standards in personal safety.					0.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal</b>		<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.0</i>
<b>Total</b>		<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

7	Confidentiality	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
7.1	Makes sure that discussions on personal affairs of any staff do not take place in public areas.					0.0	0.0
7.2	Maintains awareness when confidential telephone conversations or unplanned meetings are held.					0.0	0.0
7.3	Ensures that 'all in use' hard copies of confidential matters are kept in folders or placed facedown when he/ she is out of work stations.					0.0	0.0
7.4	Always takes care not to leave confidential information on computer monitors when she leaves his/her work stations without locking it.					0.0	0.0
7.5	Always takes care to collect all printed information from shared printers and photocopiers without delay or fail.					0.0	0.0
7.6	Ensures that all confidential information is archived and fully secured.					0.0	0.0
7.7	Ensures that all outdated information is shredded or placed in the Confidential Bin for recycling.					0.0	0.0
7.8	Ensures that all filing cabinets or drawers containing confidential information are locked whenever the staff member leaves the room/workstation.					0.0	0.0
7.9	Always takes care not to discuss confidential information with individuals who have nothing to do with it.					0.0	0.0
7.1	Refrains from using emails and social media to send confidential information to concerned individuals.					0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

8	Communicating and Dealing with Others (10 marks)	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
8.1	Always demonstrates willingness to listen to clients.					0.0	0.0
8.2	Always demonstrates willingness to listen to subordinates/colleagues.					0.0	0.0
	Always demonstrates ability to use body language effectively.					0.0	0.0
8.3	Always explains matters to clients using simple and clear terms.					0.0	0.0
8.4	Always informs clients and allied desk/office staff about any changes.					0.0	0.0
8.6	Treats all employees with utmost respect and trust.					0.0	0.0
8.7	Always adheres to the professional code of conduct.					0.0	0.0
8.8	Creates an excellent professional bond with clients.					0.0	0.0
	Has a positive impact on the attitudes and performance of his subordinates while communicating with them.					0.0	0.0
8.9	Always demonstrates willingness to listen to superiors.					0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

9	Overall appearance ( 5 marks)	self - scoring	1st Trimester	2nd Trimester	3rd Trimester	Annual Average	Difference
9.1	Always complies with and strictly adheres to the uniform and dress code of MOH.					0.0	0.0
9.2	Always makes sure his/ her uniform is neat and clean (properly laundered and ironed).					0.0	0.0
9.3	<b>Hair &amp; Hijaab:</b> <b>Male:</b> always keeps his hair neatly trimmed above collar level. <b>Female:</b> always keeps her hair neatly tied back and kept off the shoulders (uses only black or white ribbons to tie the hair, does not use distracting headbands or hair clips to tie the hair). <b>Hijaab:</b> Takes care to avoid non-fancy colors and patterns for hijaab.					0.0	0.0
9.4	<b>Nails:</b> Always ensures his/her nails are trimmed and kept clean on duty (without any nail polish).					0.0	0.0
9.5	Always ensures his/ her identification badge is worn on the left side of the chest with front side facing the onlookers and not concealed under the coat or hijaab.					0.0	0.0

**Appendix no (8)**

**Professional Development Recommendation**

	<b>Developmental Recommendation</b>	<b>Title of Training</b>	<b>Recommended/Period</b>
1	Training Course		
2	Clinical attachment		
3	Coaching (individual/group)		
4	Counseling/advice		
5	Self-learning		

First line supervisor.....

Second line supervisor .....

Professional Development Section.....

**Appendix no (9) Rewarding Recommendation**

<b>Sr</b>	<b>Rewarding Recommendation</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
1	Motivation allowance	
2	Exceptional allowance	
3	Higher position	
4	Appreciate certificate	
5	Nominate for committee	
6	Scholarship	

First line supervisor .....

Second line supervisor .....

Director General.....

**Appendix no (10): Director General Commitment Letter**

Sultanate of Oman  
Ministry of Health  
Directorate General of Health Services  
North Sharqiya Governorate  
(D.G.'s Office)



سلطنة عُمان  
وزارة الصحة  
المديرية العامة للصحة  
محافظة شمال الشرقية  
مكتب المدير العام

To Professor Craig Marsh

Pro-Vice- Chancellor for International Partnerships&

Director of Lincoln International Business School

University of Lincoln, UK.

First Supervisor for Sheikha Hamed Alhajri

Doctor Business Administration Student at

University of Liverpool, UK

**Subject: Developing a Performance Appraisal System in the Directorate of General Health Services, the Sultanate of Oman: A Participatory Action Research Project**

We have great pleasure to inform you that we are ready to implement in the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) the findings of the Participatory Action Research which aims at investigating managerial issues and using the research findings to resolve them. The scholar practitioner researcher, Ms. Sheikha Hamed Alhajri, has been actively working on the above-mentioned project in collaboration with stakeholders and project team members to design the new performance appraisal system which is linked to professional development. As a Director General of the DGHS, I am interested to implement the findings of the new Performance Appraisal System in our organization with the full cooperation of my team in the organization and facilitate all resources for its success.

**Dr. Salim Moosa AlAbri**

**Director General**



ص.ب: ٢٧٥ إبراء-الرمز البريدي : ٤٠٠ - هاتف: ٢٥٥٧١٦٠٦ - فاكس : ٢٥٥٧١٦٠٥  
P.O Box : 275 Ibra - POSTAL Code : 400 - Tel. : 25571606 - Fax : 25571605

**Appendix no (11) Local Ethical Approval Letter**

Sultanate of Oman  
Ministry of Health  
Directorate General of Planning and Studies



سلطنة عمان  
وزارة الصحة  
المديرية العامة للتخطيط والدراسات

Ref. : MoH/DGPS/CSR/PROPOSAL\_ APPROVED /36/2016

Date : 26.9.2016

رقم: .....  
تاريخ: .....  
موقع: .....

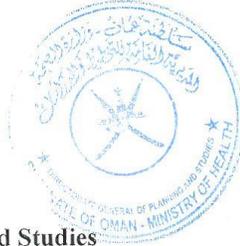
Sheikha Al-Hajri  
Principal Investigator

Study Title : "The attitude of the Ministry of Health staff in the Sultanate of Oman towards Performance Appraisal Management and its influence on their Performance. (MoH/CSR/16/4994)"

After compliments

We are pleased to inform you that your research proposal "The attitude of the Ministry of Health staff in the Sultanate of Oman towards Performance Appraisal Management and its influence on their Performance" has been approved by Research and Ethical Review & Approve Committee, Ministry of Health.

Regards,



Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Al Qasmi  
Director General of Planning and Studies  
Chairman, Research and Ethical Review and Approve Committee  
Ministry of Health, Sultanate of Oman.

Cc  
Day file

**Appendix (12) Table (2): Summary to Depict the Data Analysis Phases (Thematic Analysis)**

<b>Data Analysis Phases</b>	<b>Data Analysis Stages</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>Organizing the Data</b>	<b>Initial Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading the transcripts as a whole.</li> <li>• Organized all (20) Participants answers for each question in one document.</li> <li>• Read each transcript as a whole for second time.</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis Phase</b>	<b>Detailed Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The transcripts read many times line by line.</li> <li>• Labelling each word or sentence relevant to research questions.</li> <li>• determined the most important codes.</li> <li>• created categories by bringing several codes together in one table.</li> </ul>
	<b>Tertiary Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• labelling the categories and determining the most relevant ones and how they are connected to each other.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• putting my comments on each statement or sentence in the table and labelling those that were relevant to the research objectives and research questions or reminded me about the literature review.</li><li>• Then I started collecting all of my comments on other documents.</li><li>• started grouping them based on similarities and differences and if there was any other new information.</li><li>• started gathering all of my comments and organizing them into categories.</li><li>• I returned to my research questions to assess if the information that I had gathered answered all the research questions or not.</li></ul>
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