ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY,

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: THE CASE STUDY OF ETHIOPIAN AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AGENCY

BY:

ABEBE AWEKE GEBRU

(ID. No. SGS/o55/2009A)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ACRONYMS

ATA**------------------------------**Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency

MoA-- Ministry of Agriculture

GTP--Growth and Transformation Plan

HRM---Human Resource Management

VUCA ------------------------------------Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous

NPS---Net promoters score

KPIS--Key Performance Indicators

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to assess the overall practice of the performance management system in the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency. The study applied a simple random sampling technique in which 117 employees who involved at least in one performance assessment process in ATA were selected and were distributed the data collection questionnaire. The SPSS software was applied for the data analysis. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed and the study findings showed majorly positive results concerning the implementation of the performance management system by the ATA. Few key improvement areas have also been obtained that need the attention of ATA's management. ATA has many strengths when it comes to implementing performance management system such as placing the right emphasis on the involvement of employees in the performance planning process of Performance Management System; but as aspired to be high-performing organization it should also always explore enhancement areas such as developing well-defined career paths for all employees roles, facilitating administrative support to enhance their present skills and to possess strong work ethics and qualifications, to highlight a few, and strive for continuous improvement. Finally, the main findings of this study are summarized, conclusions drawn and possible recommendations forwarded for the attainment of continuous improvement in the practice of performance management system within the ATA.

Keywords: Performance Management, Performance Planning, Performance Execution, Performance Review and Performance Assessmen

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CHAPTER ONE
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INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

As stated by Armstrong (2015) Performance management is managing business not a simple process of appraising people once a year, but it is a continuous process. It is a powerful means of ensuring that the organization's strategic goals are attained. It also contributes to the accomplishment of culture change and it is integrated with other key human resource activities, especially human capital management, talent management, learning and development, and reward management. Thus performance management helps to achieve horizontal integration and the 'bundling' of human resource practices so that they are inter-related and therefore complement and reinforce each other.

As also defined by Armstrong (2009) Performance management is a deliberate process of enhancing organizational performance, through the advancement of the performance of employees and teams inside a concurred system of planned goals, guidelines and competency requirements which is a method for accepting better outcomes, as one oversees performance management in a way which centers around future performance planning and improvement. This procedure entails the arrangement of feedback and

the appraisal of an employee's advancement and accomplishments, with the goal that activity designs can be readied

Performance management is the framework for managing the implementation of an organization's strategy and for how plans are translated into outcomes. Think of performance management as an umbrella notion that integrates familiar business development methodologies with technology. Shortly, the methodologies no longer need to be functional in separation but they can be composed. Each methodology can give good outcomes, but when you integrate them, you can have more. This makes a value multiplier (Adkins, 2006).

According to Kaur (2017), all organizations; huge or little, benefit chasing or philanthropic, public or private, exchanging or producing and regardless of whether occupied with standard or phenomenal activities must perform to satisfy the objective for the accomplishment of which they are set up. The effectiveness of an organization relies on whether an organization is capable to accomplish the key outcomes with productivity and responsibility. For successful performance, there must be coordination between the physical and human resources of an organization and an appropriate arrangement of performance management.

Among diverse resources found in organizations, human resources are addressed as one of the most significant assets with the responsibility of managing additional resources such as financial, material, technological and other monetary and non-monetary related resources. The human resource can be considered as a mainstay of any organization because it has the role of coordinating as well as controlling the entire activities of the organization directly or indirectly to safeguard the accomplishments of organizational goals. Different to other resources, human resource can develop sustainable competitive benefit by producing standards which are difficult to be imitated by competitors. There is no way for firms to build good team functioning professionals and environment. (Melat, 2014)

Performance management is an element of an amalgamated strategic human resource management that manages dealing with employees' development and performance. It is an ongoing course that includes setting Goals monitoring performance on a continues basis, exchanging feedback, developing employees, reviewing and assessing performance, recognizing high performance and tending to underperformance. Furthermore, it is the way toward generating a conducive workplace which helps employees' continually endeavor to deliver as well as could be expected. The ultimate purpose is ensuring ceaseless improvement and development (ATA Performance Management System Guideline 2018)

 Thus, performance management should be an important step in the organization's human resource management system and influences employee performance and then to organizational performance

A study sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (ATA Overview 2014) identified many approaches aimed at fostering agricultural growth in Ethiopia suffered from too narrow a focus and limited capacity to translate ideas into sustained action:

- A narrow approach to sectoral change focused on selected aspects of the sector only (e.g. specific value chains), often leading to disconnected interventions that failed to address underlying root causes.

- The impact of limited program management and problem-solving function with the ability to manage issues and problem solve across a large and complex portfolio of projects is compounded by the lack of capacity, capability, or appropriate mind-sets to implement sustained change.

The journey that led to the ATA's establishment began in 2009 when the Government of Ethiopia requested the Gates Foundation for technical support in order to identify what would be required not just to grow, but also to transform, Ethiopia's agriculture sector. The sector was already recognized as critical to Ethiopia's development efforts and the backbone on which industrialization and food security gains would rest. As the country prepared to design its first Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I), the Late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi wanted a robust and carefully considered diagnostic report to contribute to the overall national agriculture sector plans.

In the two years that followed, the Gates Foundation facilitated a process, led by the Ministry of Agriculture to produce eight different diagnostics and a series of recommendations for transforming the sector. The recommendations were based on learnings from other rapid growth and transformation initiatives around the world, drawing on 11 specific case studies, particularly the experiences of Taiwan, Malaysia, and South Korea. Key to the efforts of these countries was a dedicated unit that contributed strategic guidance and design of transformative interventions in pursuing sustainable change. A similar set-up, emphasizing strong management and cross-sector coordination, was recommended for Ethiopia.

As it is stated on the Organizational Strategy of the Agency, the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) is a federal autonomous agency established by Council of Ministers Regulation No. 198/2010 and Regulation No. 380/2016 with objectives directly derived from the organization's legal mandate as articulated in the in regulation,

as well as from the Government of Ethiopia's strategic priorities. These national guidelines inform the organization's strategic goals, vision, and mission. In addition, the ATA's operations are guided by a set of organizational values which define how the ATA aims to work. While the Agency's specific programmatic and geographic areas of focus have continuously evolved based on the priorities of the government at each point in time, Regulation No. 198/2010 and Regulation No. 380/2016 outline four distinct *Strategic Goals* for the agency:

- To identify systemic constraints of agricultural development, through conducting studies, and recommend solutions in order to ensure sustainability and structural transformation
- To support the implementation of recommended solutions
- To support the establishment of strong linkages among agricultural and related institutions and projects in order to ensure the effectiveness of agricultural development activities
- To manage and lead the implementation of specific solutions as projects.

The ATA has designed its operations in a manner that will most effectively allow it to meet its legally mandated activities and the strategic priorities outlined by the government. Overall, the ATA's organizational structure is defined by nine verticals, each led by a Senior Director. Five of these verticals are located that ATA Headquarters in Addis Ababa while the remaining four verticals are ATA's Regional Offices in Amhara, Oromia, SNNP (Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples) and Tigray Regions. The performance management process in the ATA is a continuous cycle which involves planning work and setting goals to be achieved, regularly monitoring the performance progress, developing the capacity of the employee to perform and evaluating performance at Mid-year and annually. Employees' performance is reviewed and evaluated in line with set performance goals and key performance indicators/target/tasks/outputs aiming continuous improvement and advancement improvement and advancement.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The various features of performance management are combined together into a performance management system – a set of inter-related activities and processes which are treated as an integrated and key component of an organization's approach and

practices to managing performance through people and developing the skills and capabilities of its human capital (Armstrong, 2015). There are multiple practices and approaches that exist in the performance management area. One of the widely recognized practices is - Goal setting based performance management.

Goal setting based employee performance evaluation process is important for the success of individual employees as well as an organization aligning individual staff performance targets with vital indicators of the organization, will significantly contribute towards organizational success. But setting performance goals can be disadvantageous to the organization if one doesn't follow-up on their progress and if non-important goals are measured, then the system will lose its effectiveness (Deeb, 2019).

As the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) aspires to be high performing organization which has a well-devised strategy and also has clearly listed measures/ Organization KPIs that tie to its strategy, employees are the biggest assets of the organization and investing in them is the organization's utmost priority. However, the current performance management system of the organization focuses on goal achievement and not as much on competency based development for all employees(example 25% of supervisors performance is evaluated considering their competency achievements and core analytics team is fully evaluated based on their competency achievements).

Therefore, the research looked into the practice of performance management system in ATA, assessed, identified gaps and provided recommendations to improve the system.

1.3   Basic Questions

1. How does the current performance planning system align with the expectations of the ATA to become a high-performing organization?
2. How do employees conside the current performance management system to be easy and effective, to execute?
3. How do employees find the current performance management system to be easy and effective, to review the performance?
4. How do employees find the current performance management system to be easy and effective, to revise goals and objectives if required?

1.4 Objectives of the Study
1.4.1 General Objective

The overall objective of this study is to assess the practice and gaps of performance management system in Ethiopian Agriculture Transformation Agency (ATA) and to forward possible solution for the actual gaps.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

While conducting the study the researcher believes that the study will have the following specific objectives.

- Assess the alignment of ATA's strategic goals with an individual's performance objectives
- Investigate the current practice of planning, execution, review and assessment phases of the performance management system of ATA in light of the identified framework
- Review the challenges related to the current performance management practice in ATA
- Propose the possible solution that would improve ATA's performance management system and is implementable by the HR, based on the outcome of previous objectives

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would enable:

- The organization to obtain the necessary feedback and take corrective measure to ensure the successful implementation of a performance management system which fits well with the organizational objectives
- It broadens the knowledge of the researcher about the subject matter with a range of practical application and improves the understanding of the research ability of the researcher

- It might be input for other organizations who are interested in designing and implementing a performance management system
- It provides sufficient information to those who are interested to perform further research in a similar area

1.6   Scope of the study

Even though performance management system comes in all shapes and forms, and is applicable in all types of organization regardless of its size, nature and goal, the scope of this study is delimited only to the review of goal setting based performance management practice and its implementation in Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency focusing on the project staff, core staff and international consultants working at ATA. The study will focus employees who are working for more than six months at head office and four regional branches namely; Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regions.

1.7   Limitation of the study

Given the sensitivity of the topic under study, while conducting this research the major limitation could be the inability to use stratified sampling technique for analyzing the data obtained in a comparative manner, due to the data confidentiality issues that might crop up during the data collection through surveys. This means the researcher of this study was forced to consider the total respondent population as one group while conducting the analysis.

1.8   Organization of the study

The first chapter manages the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study and limitations of the study. The second chapter deals with the detailed discussion about related literature to the topic undertaken and the empirical literature which talks about performance management system, practice, and framework that ATA utilized. The third chapter displays the methodology used, research design, data collection method, and sampling techniques and data analysis methods of the study which is a case study analysis on ATA's performance management practice. Chapter four demonstrates the results as

well as discussion on the data analysis. The fifth which is the last chapter summarizes major findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews related literature towards the subject matter of the study concentrating on performance management practice and concepts of performance management, purpose of performance management system, performance management process, features of performance management, Performance management system in ATA, Performance management process in ATA and conceptual framework of the study have been discussed briefly.

2.1. Performance Management

Given performance management has an essential role on the achievement of organizational goals, it is important to understand its meaning in the context of organizational settings so as to help to identify the features which are involved in the process. According to the definition given by Aguinis (2013), Performance management is a continues process which mainly focuses on identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of employees and groups as well aligning performance with the strategic goals of the firm where they are working on.

a. Continuous process: Infers to Performance management is ongoing. It includes an endless process of defining targets and objectives, watching the performance, giving and receiving continues coaching and feedback.

b. Alignment with strategic goals: Performance management necessitates that supervisors guarantee that employees' activities and results are consistent with the organization's goals and, subsequently, help the organization gain a competitive advantage. Performance management along these lines makes an immediate connection between workers' performance and organizational goals and makes the employees' contribution to the organization explicit (Aguinis, 2013)

On the judgments of an organization, employees are regarded as properties in which their values are improved by development. Because of that reason, firms will engage in the

practice of human resource management to capitalize on those properties. Human resources management (HRM) is aimed at managing employees strategically who contribute to the achievement of the strategic objective of the organization individually as well collectively. Considering that employees of an organization are individuals with own mental maps and perceptions, own goals and personalities they cannot be perceived as a whole, HRM holds that the organization should be able to employ both individual and group thinking in order to obligate employees to the accomplishment of institutional goals (Armstrong, 2006).

As per the official web site of open Berkeley, performance management is stated as a continuous process that contributes to creating proper communication between supervisors and individual employees that happens all over the year and supports the achievement of organization's objectives and strategies. This communication course incorporates expectations, setting objectives, providing feedbacks detecting goals as well as reviewing the expected results **(Berkeley, 2019)**

As talked about in the previous part, the fundamentals of performance management can be abridged into, (a) Information of the organization's central mission and vital objectives and (b) learning of the activity being referred to (Aguinis, 2013). An essential goal of any performance management framework or system is to upgrade every worker's commitment to the objectives of the organization. In the event that there is an absence of clearness with respect to where the organization needs to go, or if the connection between the organization's central mission and techniques and the unit's main assignments and methodologies isn't clear, there will be an absence of lucidity in regards to what every representative needs to do and accomplish to enable the organization to get to its destination (Aguinis, 2013).

Additionally, goals or performance pointers can be characterized at the business unit, group or individual dimensions and setting goals to expect supervisors to be comfortable with the skills and abilities of the workers and with firm unit targets. There is an incentive in objectives being SMART, however, this methodology might be viewed as lacking adaptability in the advanced quick moving business arena (Pilbean and Corbridge, 2010) as cited by Abiyou (2016).

According to Pilbean and Corbridge (2010), SMART represents the below

S = Specific, Significant, Stretching

M = Measurable, Meaningful, Motivation

A = Attainable, Agreed Upon, Achievable, Action-Oriented

R = Realistic, Relevant, Reasonable, Rewarding, Result Oriented

T = Time based, Timely, Tangible

There are commentators on SMART destinations that the procedure can perceive and react to the outside and interior situations and administrators need to make preparations for the peril that instead of being a power for change the performance management process can turn into an inhibitor of progress (Pilbean and Corbridge, 2010). As indicated by these critics, the premise of ceaseless enhancement is to recognize key performance markers and to endeavor to upgrade these instead of setting targets which depend on past performance.

As it was stated by Ying (2012; 4) performance management is "a process for ensuring employees focusing on their work in ways that contribute to achieving the organization's mission is indispensable for a business organization… Supervisors and managers are responsible for managing the performance of their employees. Each organization's policy should specify how the performance management system will be performed. Organizations should adopt performance management practices that are consistent with the requirements of this policy and that best fit the nature of work performed and the mission of the organization.''
"Performance management focuses on the effective management of people to achieve organizational goals and better serve its customers and assists in creating a work environment in which people are enabled to perform to the best of their abilities. It is an on-going process through which managers and their employees gain a shared understanding of work expectations and goals, exchange performance feedback, identify learning and development opportunities, and evaluate performance results." (UNICEF 2016, 5).

2.2 Purposes of Performance Management System

The whole purpose behind performance management is to show gain improvement results from the organization, groups, and people by understanding and supervising performance inside an agreed structure of planned objectives, standards, and competency necessities. It is a procedure for setting up shared understanding about what is to be accomplished, and a way to deal with supervising and developing individuals in a way which builds the

likelihood that it will be accomplished in the short and long term. The essential goals of performance management are to build up a culture in which people and teams assume liability for the constant improvement of business forms and for their personal skills and contributions (smither and London 2009). All though, the performance management system has many purposes, in this study the six major purposes are summarized as follow (Smither and London 2009).

Strategic: It connects the organization's objectives with individual goals, along these lines strengthening practices predictable with the accomplishment of organizational objectives.

Administrative: It is a wellspring of legitimate and valuable information for building on choices about employees, including salary changes, advancements, employee retention or termination, acknowledgment of manager performance, distinguishing weak performance, layoff and merit-increases.

Communication: It enables employees to be educated about how well they are getting along, to get information on explicit areas that may require improvement, and to find out about the organization's and the manager's desires and what parts of work the manager accepts are most significant.

Developmental: It incorporates criticism, which enables supervisors to basic mentor employees and helps them improve performance on a continuous premise.

Organizational maintenance: It produces information about skills, abilities, limited time potential, and assignment histories of current employees to be utilized in workforce planning just as evaluating future training needs, assessing performance accomplishments at the organization dimension, and assessing the effectiveness of human asset intercessions (for instance, regardless of whether workers perform at more elevated amounts subsequent to taking part in a training program)

Documentation: It yields information that can be used to evaluate the prescient exactness of recently proposed selected instruments just as a critical managerial decision. This information can be particularly valuable on account of legislation.

2.3 Features of Performance Management

According to Davinder Sharman (2010) successful performance management framework's features were stated as follow:

performance management is firmly lined up with the organizational context and culture without being affected by passing prevailing fashions and strategically connected to clearly characterized organizational objectives. Hence performance measure depends on the basic achievement factors got from the corporate and business strategies.

2. performance management system is closely connected to different systems of human resource management, especially career planning, succession planning, and training and development. Be that as it may, its linkage with compensation is an ongoing issue. Many specialists feel that there ought to be a separation of appraisal for rewards from appraisal for advancement, to avoid overflow of harshness from previous to the last mentioned. Further, to get a more extensive point of view, it is proposed that peer-level directors, rather than immediate supervisors, should lead appraisal for rewards.

3. performance management is viewed as an ongoing process of monitoring and feedback as opposed to the yearly coincidental occasion and there ought to be the contribution of employees through focus group interviews, surveys and so forth. in all phases of the plan, execution and review process.

4. performance management includes effective utilization of technology in passing on competencies and in monitoring, gathering and giving feedback so there is least conceivable bureaucratization of administering the system.

5. performance management stresses extensive training to supervisors not simply for their very own improvement but to perform as viable coaches as the role of coaching in performance improvement is very critical.

6. performance management is a dynamic framework that is reasonable for changing working environment realities, for example, working in groups and alternative work courses of action like teleworking, work sharing and so forth.

2.4 Performance Management practice

2.4.1 Performance Planning

As it was addressed by Armstrong (2015) the performance planning as part of the performance management sequence includes understanding between the manager and the person on what the last needs to do to accomplish goals, raise guidelines, enhance execution and build up the required competencies. It too builds up needs – the key parts

of the activities to which consideration must be given. The point is to guarantee that the importance of the objectives, performance gauges and skills as they apply to ordinary work is comprehended. Employees and teams make decisions on the targets/goals and the key areas of performance which would be performed throughout a given assessment year within the organizational performance plan, that is finalized after a communal agreement made between the manager or supervisor and the employee (Panda, 2011)

2.4.2 Feedback and Performance Facilitation

These two activities are given much importance to performance management practices over the years. This time is where the employees and teams obtain awareness from their supervisor in order helping them to know the key areas of improvement and also information on whether the employee or team is contributing the expected levels of performance or not within the organization (Armstrong, 2005). Likewise, Aguinis (2009a) has also itemized that the individual employees receive open and very transparent feedback together with their needs for training and development areas. The manager or supervisor adopts all conceivable steps to ensure that the employees meet the anticipated outcomes for the organization through effective guidance and personal counseling and representing the employee or team in either on the job training or off the job training programmes which develop the competencies and improve the overall expected productivity.

2.4.3 Potential Appraisal

As indicated in the definition given by Armstrong (2006), potential appraisal alludes to the appraisal that prompts the distinguishing proof of the concealed talents and aptitudes of a person where the individual may or probably won't know about them. This as well as talked about that potential appraisal is a future situated whose key goal is to recognize and assess the potential of the employees to embrace higher positions and responsibilities in the organizational pyramid.

2.4.4 Performance evaluation

Throughout the end year performance assessment, supervisors are expected to provide a written evaluation result of their employees' success in achieving the goals and behaviors established in the plan. The assessment will be objective and based on the agreed measures of success, where possible. The common evaluation standard will be used. The

follow-up actions will be set out where required. Good performance needs to be acknowledged, whereas poor performance needs to be clearly and consistently controlled. (BC, 2016).

2.4.5   Performance improvement plan

As A. Punitha (2013) stated, a new arrangement of objectives is set up for the employee and the new course of events for the achievement of the goal is delivered. The employee has obviously conversed about the areas that the employees are relied upon to improve. Once more, this plan is mutually developed by the superior and the employee together. Hence, a new cycle of execution period starts.

McMahon (2013) on the other hand addressed that the performance improvement plan process typically involves, getting the worker's agreement that an execution problem exists. Commonly producing and talking about conceivable solutions. Assessing and concurring activities steps. Guaranteeing that the individual comprehends that improvement is his/her duty and the outcomes of inability to offer impact to the concurred solutions.
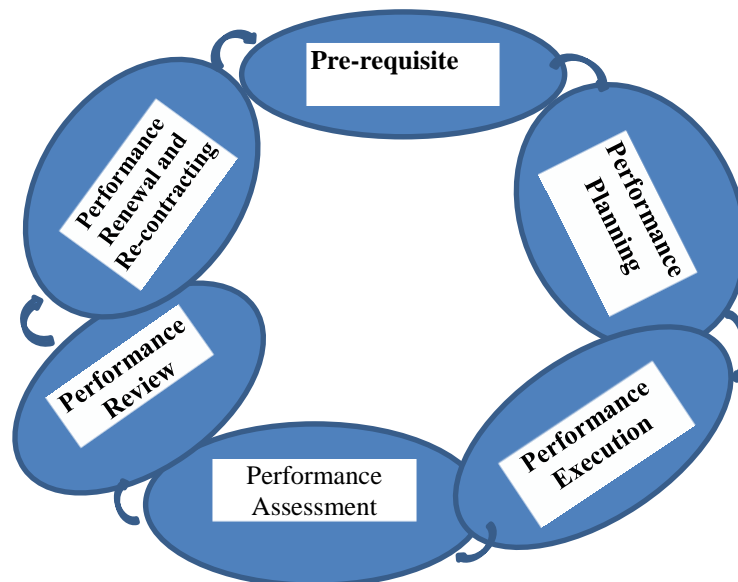
2.5 Performance Management Framework

Fig. 2.1 Adopted
Performance management
framework

Source: Adopted and modified from Aguinis (2013), Performance Management. New York: Pearson Education**.**

1. **Prerequisites** - Aguinis (2013) concreted that two important prerequisites are required before a performance management program is applied in an organization. Based on his interpretation, Knowledge of the organization's mission and strategic goals and knowledge of the job in question which is applicable for the effective implementation of the performance management system. with the mission of the team and employees contribute positive influence to the whole organization. The other very important prerequisite that has come before the implementation of the performance management system, comprehends the job in question; which is performed through job analysis.

2. **Performance Planning -** The second stage of the performance management framework is performance planning. This Planning stage comprises consultation times of supervisors' with employees in order to produce key work goals and behaviors in a way that can support the accomplishments of the organization's plan. At this stage, both the manager or supervisor and employee have the obligation to discuss the employee's career goals, ambitions, and any related development activities.

3. **Performance Execution** - The third stage in the performance management framework is performance execution. Independent teams are exclusively in charge of performance execution; however, when a team has a supervisor, at that point both the team and the manager share obligations regarding performance execution. For instance, groups should be focused on goal accomplishment and should play a proactive role in looking for feedback from each other and from the manager. The burden is in the group to impart transparently and consistently with its manager or supervisor. Additionally, teams are in charge of being set up for the performance review by directing ordinary and practical peer evaluations. Along with this line, teams have strong information about their performance as perceived by other teams before they meet the manager. The manager likewise has critical duties including viewing and recording team performance and the general commitment of the team members', refreshing the team on any adjustments in the objectives of the organization, and giving resources and strengthening with the goal that teams will be motivated to succeed.

4. **Performance Assessment-** The fourth stage in the performance management framework is a performance assessment. Employees must assess each other's performance just as the performance of the general employees. Peer evaluation is key parts of the assessment phase because they lead to more elevated amounts of outstanding workload sharing, collaboration, and performance. Additionally, team coordination and criticism improve when peers screen the performance of every single member in the team. This eventually leads to the acknowledgment of mistakes and taking ensuing actions to address these mistakes rapidly. The managers gather performance feedbacks from peers, subordinates, and from other different parties who have work affiliation with the employees and provide these remarks to the employees

5. **Performance Review**- The fifth stage in the performance management framework is a performance review. During this phase review meeting

conduct between the employee and the manager to review the assessment which was separately performed(result) and how it was performed (behaviors). In spite of its importance in performance management, the review meeting is often regarded as the "Achilles' heel of the entire process" (Kikoski, 1999) as it was cited by Aguinis, (2009a). This was on the grounds that numerous managers are uncomfortable giving performance feedbacks, especially when there comes poor performance (Ghorpade and Chen, 1995). This abnormal state of discomfort which frequently converts into anxiety and avoidance of the review meeting can be moderated by preparing those in charge of providing feedback. Giving feedback in a viable way is incredibly essential.

6. **Performance Renewal and Contracting**- The last stage of the performance management framework is renewal and re-contracting. The primary difference is that the renewal and re-contracting stage utilizes the intuitions and information acquired from the other stages. For instance, a part of the objectives may have been set unreasonably high given an expected economic downturn. This would lead to defining less goal-oriented for the upcoming review period. The researcher has drawn a lesson

from these frameworks that performance management framework incorporates a cycle that begins with pre-requisite and ends with performance renewal and re-contracting stage. The cycle isn't over after the renewal and re-contracting. and re-contracting stage. Of course, the framework starts from the very beginning and establish a discussion of pre-conditions, including the organization's mission and strategic goals. Since business sectors change, customers" inclinations and requirements change, as well as products change, there is a need to constantly screen the pre-conditions so performance planning, and all the subsequent stages, are continuing with the organization's strategic objectives (Markos, 2004) as it was cited by Fanuel Abate (2017).

According to the explanation given by "**MY HR: Human Resource for B.C Public Service"** (BC, 2016), both managers and employees must actively participate in the performance management process and have open and honest discussions on the employee's performance. Furthermore, managers must deliver continues feedback on the performance of employees. Performance management is a periodical process which includes a minimum of three basic stages such as:

- Planning;
- Mid-point discussion; and
- Final performance evaluation.

Planning- The Planning stage comprises consultation times of supervisors' with employees in order to produce key work goals and behaviors in a way that can support the accomplishments of the organization's plan. At this phase, both the manager or supervisor and employee have the obligation to discuss the employee's career goals, ambitions, and any related development activities.

Mid-point Discussion- On this process, managers will have meetings with the employees under their supervision to review up to date progress in order to see the achievements of the goals agreed during the planning period, provide preliminary feedbacks as well as make any prerequisite modifications to the plan with a transparent discussion. Preferably, both supervisors or managers and employees are expected to conduct an on-going conversation throughout the year concerning the work performance.

Final Performance Evaluation

Throughout the end year performance assessment, supervisors are expected to provide a written evaluation result of their employees' success in achieving the goals and behaviors established in the plan. The evaluation will be objective and based on the agreed measures of success, where possible. The common evaluation standard will be used. The follow-up actions will be set out where required. Good performance needs to be acknowledged, whereas poor performance needs to be clearly and consistently controlled. (BC, 2016).

2.6 Empirical Review

2.6.1 performance management system in ATA

Since inception, the ATA has placed significant emphasis on employee performance system and to that end, established formal performance management practice in December 2012. From that time, this performance management system underwent major revisions to be relevant to the Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment it operates in and also to meet employees' evolving performance management requirements. The performance management process of ATA was initially focused on reviewing employee's competencies that are essential to fulfill their job requirements and also to live by the organization's core values. The six core competencies are namely content expertise, stakeholder coordination and management, leadership and team development, problem- solving and analysis, project and module management, & communication and presence. This performance management practice was revised based on the survey of the practice and the practice was revised in order to minimize the subjectivity of the performance reviews, which was the main improvement area derived from the survey feedback. It was in September 2014 that ATA revised its performance management practice to be based on the SMART goal setting.

2.6.2 Performance Management Framework in ATA

This section of the chapter briefly discusses the ATA's current performance management process. The performance management process in ATA is focused on SMART objective/ goal setting based on the six core competencies for the particular role that the employee is hired into (ATA HR Manual, 2018). It is important to note that each competency of the job holder will be targeted by SMART goals that cascade from the organizational mission, department and team objectives.

As part of the performance planning, every employee is expected to link her/ his SMART goals to the six core competency requirements of the role she/he is hired for and then align them with her/ his supervisor. For performance review and assessment, the two formal performance appraisal cycles that happen in the mid-year (December) and end of the year (June) are the two-time line boundaries to which the SMART goals will be targeted to be accomplished. By the annual performance appraisal period, the final annual performance of an individual employee against the set SMART goals for the core competencies will be evaluated, rated, and aligned between supervisor and employee. A rating scale ranging from 1 to 5 for each of the achievement of the goals is used for review during the performance appraisal process. Performance appraisal rating of 3 implies consistent (average/satisfactory) performance while the rating of 1 & 2 refers to action & attention (unsatisfactory & below satisfactory) required on the job performance. Ratings of 4 & 5 refer to exceeding & outstanding (above satisfactory & exceptional) in the job performance. It will be at the time of the two cycled performance appraisal that employee training and development, as well as self-development plans, are discussed based on the appraised job performance during the period.

It is also worth mentioning that the staff who are supervisors (senior management, middle management, as well as line managers) are also assessed through similar performance management process along with the manager of a supervisor staff will also acquire assessment feedback by a 360-degree review process from the reviewed supervisor-subordinate (s), parallel peer (s), and from upward non-direct report. The purpose of this 360-degree review process is for the manager of the reviewed supervisor can also be assisted with performance feedback during her/his write-up of the performance appraisal of the employee who is supervising others.

2.6.3 The Conceptual Framework of the Study

As mentioned in the review of related literature of this chapter, the advantages of a properly implemented performance management process are manifested by achieving the objectives of organizational, and individual employees'. On the other hand, a poorly implemented performance management practice manifests the contrasting characteristics to the advantages.

The conceptual framework of this study is thus ATA as an organization applies employee performance management process targeting to manifest the advantageous characteristics, and this study was assessed the practice of ATA's performance management system and the conclusion is reached by inferring the theoretical literature reviewed in this chapter

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Performance planning        │
├─────────────────────────────┤         ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Performance Execution       │ ◄──────  │      Performance          │
├─────────────────────────────┤ ◄──────  │  management practice      │
│ Performance Review          │ ◄──────  │                           │
├─────────────────────────────┤         └──────────────────────────┘
│ Performance assessment      │ ◄──────
└─────────────────────────────┘
```
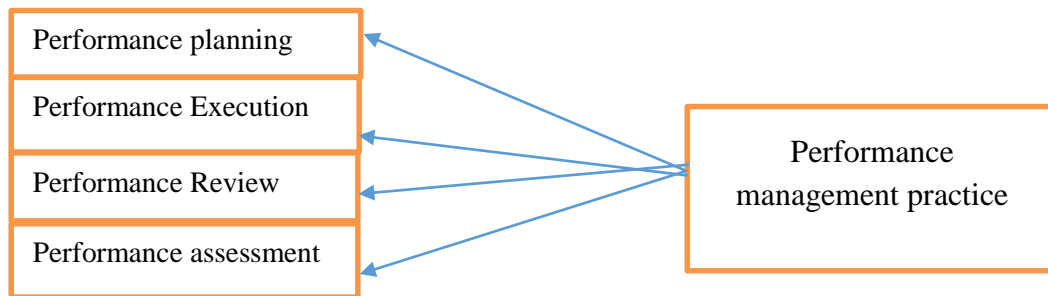
Fig. 2.2 Adopted Conceptual Frame of the Study

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter talks about the methodology of the study and the topics covered such as the research design, data source, data collection methods, sampling techniques and methods of data analysis. The section likewise will consider the data validity, reliability, ethical considerations and the organizational profile of the contextual analysis

3.2 Research Approach

This research was conducted to evaluate the performance management practices of the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA). The study is a quantitative study and descriptive in its design. As the structured method carried out, the study is a type of case study with a perspective on understanding the full-multi-dimensional image of the performance management practice with regards to ATA. It assessed the procedure in light of the contemporary human resource performance management concepts that the researcher applied quantitative approach and the research design because the study is an empirical analysis that explores the current status of performance management practice with regards to ATA in which facts accumulated and conclusions made dependent on those realities.

3.3 Data Source

Data was collected by both primary and secondary data collection methods. The primary data was collected from staff working in the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency both at Addis Ababa and branches in the four regions namely Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and SNNP through questionnaire. Therefore, Employees of ATA were asked to fill the designed close-ended questionnaire.

In addition, different documents such as performance management policy, Performance Management System Guideline and HR-annual reports of ATA were reviewed to capture various data about the study used as a secondary data sources.

3.4 Data Collection Method

The close ended questionnaire was filled by ATA staff whose performance has been evaluated at any rate for one year. The survey was chosen because of the benefit of low cost in time and money as well as it is easy to manage.

On the other hand, various documents such as annual reports, performance management system approach, Performance Management System Guidelines, strategy of ATA and booklets on the history of ATA were reviewed by the researcher in order to help understand the subject matter as well as get awareness how ATA practically implemented performance management.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

The study used simple random sampling approach in which the performance process of staff who have involved in one performance management evaluation processes in ATA were randomly selected as respondents of the questionnaire.

ATA has 454 employees and from 454 employees 117 were chosen from the headquarter and regional offices by purposive sampling method because of the nature of the jobs of some staff were working on field works at the time of the data collection. So to compute the test estimate from the complete population the accompanying method Slovin's method (1960) sampling formula, which is proper for little size population was utilized.

$$n = N/(1+E^2*N)$$

Where N is the population size

E ----is the margin of error

n -----is sample size

In this case, N=454

E=8% or 0.08

By inserting this value, we get:

n=454/ (1+(0.08)^2*454)=116.24≈117

simple random sampling was inspecting method for the study in light of the fact that the study considered representative samples from staff. This study trusted that employees who were passed through the performance management practice would give dependable information that can support content validity to the survey presently utilized performance management practice with regards to ATA pointed towards the development of employees learning and performance in the making of alignment to ATA's strategic goals. The study applied sample responses of all staff, so the acquired background data in the performance management process is valid and dependable.

3.6 Method of data analysis

The data that was acquired through questionnaire was examined qualitatively by using statistical software with (SPSS-20). Descriptive statistics is linked to show, analyzed distinctive classifications of test units concerning the ideal attributes. So as to investigate the primary data in this study, descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviation, percentages and the frequency of an events are utilized.

Reliability of sample test

Table 3.1 Case Processing Summary

	N	%
cases	30	100.0
Total	30	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 3.2 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.893	30

Source: Own SPSS-data, 2019

Cronbach's alpha, α (or coefficient alpha), developed by Lee Cronbach in 1951, measures reliability, or internal consistency. "Reliability" is how well a test measures what it should. For example, in our survey questionnaire, high reliability means the questionnaire

measures the various components of performance management, and low reliability means the questionnaire measures something else.

Cronbach's alpha tests to see if multiple-question Likert scale surveys are reliable. These questions measure latent variables — hidden or unobservable variables like a person's conscientiousness, neurosis or openness. These are very difficult to measure in real life. Cronbach's alpha tells us if the questionnaire we have designed is accurately measuring the variable of interest.

In this case, the Cronbach alpha for the questionnaire is 0.893, indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale with this specific sample.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns dependably develop as the researcher plans the research, looks for access to organizations and to people, a collection of data, analyzing data and reporting the data. As an Ethics is characterized by Saunders et al. (2009) alludes to the appropriateness of the researcher's behavior in connection to the rights of the individuals who turn into the subject of the study. In this study, the researcher gave a clear explanation of the purpose and sort of access required which able to address the concerns of the organization. The staff members replied for the study voluntarily and had the right to withdraw themselves from filling the research questionnaire. Finally, the confidentiality of data given by participants and their anonymity was also ensured.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSION

This part of the study summarizes the data collected from the respondents of the questionnaire. In the initial part of the chapter, the respondents' contextual information is summarized followed by the demonstration of the responses. The responses are furthermore analyzed and discussed as interpreted in accordance with the relevant literature. In the accompanying segment of the section and the responses to the questionnaire are displayed, analyzed/interpreted, and discussed.

Data was collected using a five-point **Likert scale** and was inserted into SPSS version 20 to get the required yield of the frequency distribution for each of the data introduced in this section.

4.1. Demographic information of the Respondents

In this section, the researcher analyzed the respondent's profile which incorporates sex, age, level education and service years of respondents who were associated with this study.

Table 4.1 Gender, Age, Level of Education and Service Years of the Respondents

Profile	Variable	Frequency	percent
Gender	Female	33	28
	Male	84	71.8
	Total	117	100.0
Age	18-28	25	21.2
	29-39	40	33.9
	40-50	28	23.7
	≥51	24	20.5
	Total	117	100.0
Level of Education	PhD	9	7.7
	Second Degree	79	59.0

Profile	Variable	Frequency	percent
	First Degree	39	33.1
	Diploma	0	0.0
	Total	117	100.0
	<1 Year	36	30.5
Service Years in	2-5 Years	61	51.7
the ATA	>5 Years	21	17.8
	Total	117	100.0

Source: Own data 2019.

4.1.1. Respondents' Gender

As demonstrated in table 1 out of the 117 respondents, 71.8% (84) were male respondents that took the biggest share of the complete respondents and the remaining 28% (33) were female respondents.

4.1.2. Respondents' Age

The SPSS results demonstrated that the biggest proportion of the respondents in table 2, fall on the age group between a scope of 29 – 39 years' age range, which is 33.9% (40 respondents), the second slightly biggest proportion of the respondents aged between 40 – 50 years' age range, which is 23.9% (28 respondents). The third biggest proportion of the age group are 18-28 and ages laid ≥ 51 years, draw equal percent or number which is 21.2% (25 respondents for each).

4.1.3. Level of Education of the respondents

The data gathered demonstrated that the biggest proportion of the respondents, which is 59.3% (70 respondents), had an education qualification of second degree and the second biggest proportion of the respondents, which is 33.1% (39 respondents) had an education qualification of first degree. The rest of the respondents, which is 7.6% (9 respondents), an education qualification of Ph.D.

4.1.4. Service Years in ATA

In view of the data gathered through the questionnaire, the large segment of respondents 51.7%(61respondents) fall inside the scope of two to five years of experience in ATA, the second highest proportion of 36 (30.5%) of the respondents have below one year of experience, 17.9%(21 respondents) had more than Five years in ATA. It is the researchers

trust that these blend of respondents were sufficient in finding the precise data in light of the fact that most of the respondents have two to five years' experience in ATA, which gives them a chance to mirror their opinion on the accomplishments gotten by ATA and clearly understand the present performance management practice with regards to ATA to identify gaps of the system by looking at the past and the current.

Reliability test by Cronbach's Alpha for the performance management practice components

Corrected Item-Total Correlation is the correlation between each item and a scale score that excludes that item (uses all the other items, but not that one). Items with negative item-total correlations probably aren't good items. Given that one of the four items in our question set has negative values, all the items in our questionnaire are good items.

Also if any of these items are deleted, the Cronbach alpha will be lower than the current value of 0.893. So all items in the question set should be retained for higher internal consistency.

4.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.2.1. Performance planning

Performance planning is a stage where the manager and the employee agree on what will be accomplished for the future and how it's going to be executed. In light of this, the researcher evaluated employee's opinion on the first stage of performance planning and the result is analyzed and presented as follows

Table 4.2. Employee responses to performance planning

Questions on performance planning		Responses						Mean	Standard deviation
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total		
My individual goal is aligned with the strategic objective of my organization	Frequency	2	4	24	62	25	117	3.89	.838
	percent	1.7	3.4	20.5	52.9	21.4	100		
	Frequency	5	3	9	63	37	117	4.06	.940

My individual goal setting is carried out with the discussion of my supervisor	percent	4.3	2.6	7.7	53.8	31.6	100		
While setting a goal my supervisor clearly illustrates the expectation from my performance	Frequency	6	6	19	55	31	117	3.85	1.039
	percent	5.1	5.1	16.2	47	26.5	100		
I clearly understand the goal setting system in the ATA	Frequency	1	6	36	44	30	117	3.82	.906
	percent	0.9	5.1	30.8	37.6	25.6	100		
During the performance planning discussion, my supervisor and I reach an agreement about my development plan to enhance my performance	Frequency	6	9	27	48	27	117	3.71	1.075
	percent	5.1	7.7	23	41	23	100		
My performance goals are realistic and attainable	Frequency	2	5	9	69	32	117	4.06	.823
	percent	1.7	4.3	7.7	59	27.4	100		
My performance goals are aligned with my team, vertical and organizational objectives	Frequency	4	6	14	74	19	117	3.84	.880
	percent	3.4	5.1	12	63.2	16.2	100		
Performance development plans and formal procedure for identifying potential leaders are being instituted for everybody and supported by senior management	Frequency	10	24	55	25	3	117	2.89	.926
	percent	8.5	20.5	47	21.4	2.6	100		
Overall Mean								3.77	0.37

Source: Own data, 2019.

As per Aguinis (2009) performance planning is a basic stage where the most essential issues such as outcomes, behaviors, and development plan are discussed and agreed.

As appeared on table 2, 74%(87) of the respondents have confirmed that their performance goals are aligned with the strategic objectives of the organization, 5.1%(6) are not aligned whereas the remaining 20.5%(24) are neutral.

On the second question, the employees were asked about the practice of goal setting in ATA and 85.4% answered that they are participants of the goal-setting process. On the

other hand, 6.9% and 7.7% of the respondents respectively confirmed that they were not part of the planning discussion and are neutral about the goal-setting process.

Performance planning is the primary cycle where employees will be empowered to have clear knowledge about the system, an opportunity to discuss and agree on planned performance, and on an opportunity to solicit feedback by considering technical and behavioral measurements If the goal setting practice is not part of the performance management process, employees will likely end up unproductive and ineffective. Subsequently, making employees participate in performance planning and setting goals will increase their performance, create a sense of ownership and positive performance culture geared towards achieving organization goals.

The third question aims to understand the extent of employees' performance planning alignment in terms of the expected performance from the employee. Accordingly, 73.5% concurred there is an alignment in terms of what is expected from each employee that whereas, 16.2% are neutral about the process and 10.2% they have limited awareness about their expected performance level. Hence, we can deduce that the ATA employees have a clear understanding about the level of performance ATA expects from them.

Based on the fourth question, the study tried to gauge employees understanding of ATA's goal setting process. As a result, 63.3% of the respondents replied that they are aware of the goal setting system,14.1% are not aware. The remaining 30.8%) of the respondents are neutral about the system. Accordingly, it can be inferred that familiarity with the goal setting system is made clear to the mass.

The other issue was regarding supervisor and employee agreement with respect to development plans. 65% of the respondents expressed their agreement that their individual development plan is agreed with their supervisor, 12.8% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree and while 23% remain neutral. Having in place an agreed individual development plan in an organization, it can to enhance employee performance, can seek out areas of improvement from the organization and can ensure clarity as well as communication between the organization and the employee. Therefore, based on the findings, it can be inferred that ATA has put in place a performance planning process in which the majority of its employees are a part of and support employees contribute towards achieving organization as well as individual performance goals.

The sixth inquiry in the performance planning preparation was about how the individual performance goals are realistic and attainable. Subsequently, 86.4% % of the respondents strongly agree and agree. However, 7.7% are neutral about this and 6% disagree and strongly disagree. This demonstrates that 86. 4 % of the respondents agree that their goals are realistic and attainable.

The next question was regarding individual performance goals alignment with respect to the team, vertical and organizational objectives. Accordingly, 84.2% of the respondents replied that there is alignment with their respective team, while 12% are neutral and 8.5% disagree and strongly disagree. This shows that the ATA has individual performance goals of employees aligned with the team, vertical and organizational objectives. However, there is limited support by the organization senior management on the formal procedure for identifying potential leaders as 47% of the respondents remain neutral to the process, and close to 30% disagree and or strongly disagree. Only 24% agree that the organization has instated a mechanism derived from the performance management system to empower future leaders within the organization. The overall mean registered close to 4 illustrates that there is proper performance planning with the agreement between manager and employee in ATA.

In summary, ATA's performance planning process is employee oriented, drives towards achieving organization and employee professional development goals, and is jointly owned by the organization as well as the employee. This shows: the performance planning process suits employees demand and organization strategic objectives however with some caveats for improvement as the majority find the commitment of the organization falls short in empowering future leaders.

The major findings taken from the performance planning practice of ATA are:
- The vast majority (74%) of the respondent's result demonstrated that employee performance goals are aligned with the strategic objectives of the organization
- 85% of the respondents indicated that employees in ATA are given full chance to participate in the goal setting process
- Employee performance planning alignment with expected employee performance is confirmed by the great majority (73.5%) of the respondents
- The broad outcomes of the respondents (63.3%) showed that they have a clear understanding of ATA goal setting process

- 65% of the respondents confirmed that their individual development plan is agreed with their supervisor during the process

- As the results indicate 86.4% of the respondents assured that their goals are realistic and attainable

- The great majority of the respondents replied that their performance goals are aligned with their team and organizational objectives

- The results of the survey indicate that there is limited support from the organization's senior management towards creating a formal procedure for identifying potential leaders

4.2.2. Performance Execution

Performance execution is a joint effort by the employee to deliver on agreed performance goals and by the organization to provide support to the employee. In order to assess organization performance execution, the following questions were surveyed.

Table 4. 3 Employee responses on Performance Execution

Performance Execution		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total	Mean	Standard deviation
		Responses							
Performance problems are dealt quickly and consistently	Frequency	6	24	59	26	2	117	2.95	.839
	percent	5.1	20.5	50.4	22.2	1.7	100		
I am involved actively in improving the performance management system of the ATA	Frequency	11	29	38	34	5	117	2.94	1.045
	percent	9.4	24.8	32.5	29	4.3	100		
ATA's performance management practice is time-consuming	Frequency	7	32	32	35	11	117	3.09	1.091
	percent	6	27.4	27.4	29.9	9.4	100		
Current performance management system helps me to improve my leadership and project management skills	Frequency	6	22	41	40	8	117	3.19	.991
	percent	5.1	18.8	35	34.1	6.8	100		
Current performance management system supports me in developing my communication skills	Frequency	11	23	36	39	8	117	3.09	1.087
	percent	9.4	19.7	30.8	33.3	6.8	100		
	Frequency	9	32	27	43	6	117	3.04	

Performance Execution		Responses							
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	total	Mean	Standard deviation
Current performance management system supports me in developing my subject matter expertise	**percent**	7.7	27.4	23	36.6	6	100		1.078
The entire process of ATA performance management system is carried out objectively	**Frequency**	5	18	49	40	4	117	3.18	.887
	percent	4.3	15.4	41.9	34.1	3.4	100		
I receive regular actionable feedback on my performance.	**Frequency**	11	23	35	37	11	117	3.12	1.123
	percent	9.4	19.7	29.9	31.6	9.4	100		
The ATA performance management system helps employees to set and achieve their goals	**Frequency**	5	14	37	50	11	117	3.41	.966
	percent	4.3	12	31.6	42.7	9.4	100		
Overall Mean								3.11	0.14

Source: Own data, 2019.

Performance management is an on-going process by which the speed and transparency of addressing performance problems lay the foundation to build trust and credibility. According to the responses, 22.2% and 1.7% of respondents agree and strongly agree that performance problems are dealt quickly and consistently across the organization. However, 50.4 % remain neutral to the question and 5.1% and 20.5% strongly disagree and disagree respectively. In such a manner, 76% of respondents which comprises the majority number, responded that tackling performance problems are not addressed timely and consistently across the organization.

Respondents were also asked about their active involvement in the improvement of the performance management system and 33.3% of the respondents fill that they are part of organizational performance improvement process, 32.5 are neutral and 34.2% fill that are not given the opportunity to be part of the improvement effort. This analysis demonstrates that there is no uniform practice throughout the agency as some of them are involved in

the improvement process and others are affecting employees sense of ownership towards the organization performance objective.

Performance management implementation period is assessed to determine employees' and the organization's commitment to the system and hence to the organization performance objective goals. Accordingly, 39.3% of the respondents believe that the ATA performance management practice is not time taking, 27.4% prefer to remain neutral whereas 33.4% fill that the ATA performance management practice is time-consuming

The next question assesses whether ATA's performance management system helps individuals improve their leadership and project management skills. The study found out that 34.1% and 6% strongly agree and agree that the current performance management system provides an opportunity to develop their leadership and project management skills respectively. On the other hand, a significant number of employees i.e., 35% remain neutral and 5.1% and 18.8% strongly disagree and disagree.

The other question assesses was in what manner has ATA performance management system supports individual employees in developing their communication skills. Accordingly, 40.1% replied that the system supports them their communication skills development, whereas 30.8% remain indifferent and the remaining 29% replied that the system does not support their communication skills.

Respondents were also asked about how the current performance management system of the organization support their subject matter expertise development and 42.6% of agree that they get the support. On the other hand, 23% remaining indifferent while 35.1% fill that the system does not support their subject matter expertise skill and knowledge development. We can understand from the responses that the majority remain indifferent and disagree. This shows that the current performance management system of ATA does not support employees subject matter expertise development. Henceforth, ATA, as aspired to be a high performing organization, should create a system that caters towards employees' development in all dimensions including content knowledge and expertise development.

The seventh question was related to the objectivity ATA performance management system in which 37.5% of respondents confirmed that the system is carried out objectively. However, the majority 41.9% replied that they are neutral and19.7% of the respondent remaining fill that the implementation of the performance management system lacks objectivity. Based on this, it can be inferred that the ATA's goal-setting

based performance management system is scrutinized by subjectivity reflected by managers, directors and the senior management.

Concerning regular actionable feedbacks about employee's performance, notwithstanding the data gathered from the survey questionnaire, 41% of the respondents answered that they received regular actionable feedbacks on how they can improve their shortcomings and keep up their quality of work going. Whereas 29.9% of the respondents remain neutral showing that they have a negative frame of mind. The remaining 29.1% strongly disagree and disagree with getting actionable feedback. This entails that the majority of the respondents are either indifferent to the feedback process and system or disagree that the system is not yielding towards actionable feedback.

providing regular actionable feedback is the most widely recognized justification for an organization to ensure its performance sustainability as employees identify how well they performed a task over a certain period and they get feedback to keep up and keep improving. Accordingly, the research infers that there is a significant misalignment between the organization management and its employees on how performance feedback system management effectiveness.

The last question assessed how ATA performance management system helps employees set and achieve their performance objectives. Accordingly, 52.1% of respondents replied the system helps set and achieve their objectives, 31.6% remain neutral and 16% of the respondents said they do not agree that the system helps them set and achieve their objectives The result of overall mean which is 3.11 in the performance execution demonstrates that most of the respondents keep neutral towards execution of planned activities but still some of the respondents believe that there is performance execution practice as per the agreed plans.

The main findings in the performance execution practice illustrate:-

- Tackling performance problems are not addressed timely and consistently across the organization.
- The analysis shows that there is no uniform execution practice throughout the Agency

- The majority of respondents indicated that the performance management practice in the agency is time-consuming
- The system lacks supporting employees subject matter expertise development
- The majority of respondents kept reserved but still, goal setting based performance management system is scrutinized by subjectivity
- The majority of respondents confirmed that there is regular actionable feedback. However, Significant misalignment between the management of the organization and its employees on performance feedback system managements effectiveness is inferred
- The system helps employees to achieve their performance objectives

4.2.3. Performance Review

A key component of performance management process where employee and supervisors discuss performance goal, achievements, drawbacks and areas of performance improvement This process is normally called an evaluation meeting or evaluation discussion. The evaluation meeting is essential to provide feedback for employee performance in which the employee will also have the opportunity to reflect on organization-wide performance development efforts. The below survey questions helped structure performance review sub-process and how ATA employees perceive it.

Table 4.4 Employee responses on performance review

Performance Review		Responses						Mean	Standard deviation
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total		
I am aware that mid-year review is one of the components of the performance management practice of ATA	Frequency	3	3	8	59	44	117	4.18	.867
	percent	2.6	2.6	6.8	50.4	37.6	100		
I have been into the mid-year performance review discussion in the	Frequency	8	20	19	46	24	117	3.50	1.194
	percent	6.8	17	16.2	39.3	20.5	100		

current performance year.									
I am aware that performance rating is one of the components of the performance management practice of ATA	**Frequency**	1	4	12	58	42	117	4.16	.809
	percent	0.9	3.4	10.3	49.6	35.9	100		
Performance result based on career paths for all employees are well defined, communicated and implemented as well as a succession plan is in place	**Frequency**	15	39	37	22	4	117	2.67	1.034
	percent	12.8	33.3	31.6	18.8	3.4	100		
Employees are given strong administrative support to enhance their present skills and possess strong work ethics and qualifications	**Frequency**	10	33	42	28	4	117	2.85	.994
	percent	8.5	28.2	35.9	23.9	3.4	100		
My annual and mid-term performance review meetings are meaningful and productive	**Frequency**	8	13	35	56	5	117	3.32	.971
	percent	6.8	11.1	29.9	47.9	4.3	100		
Overall Mean								3.45	0.64

Source: Own data, 2019.

The questions were designed to assess ATA's bi-annual performance review process and employee's participation. Based on the first question, 88% replied that they are aware of the mid-year review process as being the key component of ATA performance management tool. However, very few 4.2% disagree that they have awareness about the performance review process while the remaining 6.8% remain indifferent to the process awareness. As per the literature, while having a mid-year performance review discussion, it is ideal to keep the discussion concentrated on constructive feedback where the ultimate objective being supporting employees achieve their performance goal (Aguinis 2009).

The second question tries to identify whether or not employees are being part of the mid-year performance discussion in which 59.8% of the respondents consider themselves to been part of the process, 16.2% remain neutral and the rest 23.8% confirmed that they were not made part of the current mid-performance discussion.

A clear understanding of performance evaluation rating by the organization is relevant to ensure employee's confidence in the system. Sense if commitment, responsibility and proactive leadership proliferate as performance rating is fair and considerate of organization objective and the employees. The research tried to assess employee's performance rating understanding and found out that 85% of respondents were aware and understand the system, 10.3% were indifferent and 4.3% are not aware at all. Even though there are very few employees who lack awareness manifested through understanding, the outcome demonstrates that the agency has made it possible for its employees to have awareness and understanding about the performance management rating system.

The fourth question was focused on how the performance results are defined, communicated and implemented to employees and the existence of a succession plan based on employees' career path. However, only 22.2% of the respondents confirmed these results are defined, communicated, implemented, and succession on the plans does exist, but 31.7% of the respondents remained neutral and the remaining 46.1% disagreed.

Regarding the fifth question, only 27.3% answered that employees are given strong administrative support to enhance their skills and professionalism in ways that meet their demands. However, 35.9% remain neutral indicating that they are not given strong administrative support to enhance their skill sets. The rest, which comprises of 36.7% disagree that there no is such practice in the organization.

The last question was about assessing annual and mid-term performance review discussion are found meaningful and productive by the employees. Accordingly, the research found out that 52.2% of the employees' agreed that annual and mid-year employee performance review discussions are meaningful and productive, 28.9% remained indifferent and 17.9% opposed the meaningfulness and productivity of employee annual and mid-year review discussions. The overall mean indicated in the above table 4 is 3.45, which exhibits the availability of practice of performance review in agricultural transformation agency (ATA)

The major findings scored in the performance review practice includes:

- The vast majority of the respondents (88%) showed that they are aware and understand the mid-year review process is a key component of ATA's performance management system

- The broad outcome that comes from the respondents indicated that the significant proportion of participants in the survey confirmed they are part of the mid-year performance review discussion

- The largest portion (85%) of the respondents asserted that they are aware and understand employee performance rating system in ATA

- A large number of the respondents assured that performance results are not defined, communicated, implemented and there is no succession plan based on the employee's career path

- 35% of the respondents remain neutral with a negative frame of mind and 36% disagreed that there is strong administrative support to improve employees' skill and professionalism towards their demand

- The majority of respondents agreed that mid-year and annual employee performance review discussions are Productive and meaningful

4.2.4. Performance Assessment

Performance assessment is an evaluation process by which the desired behavioral degree or standard and the results expressed in the performance planning stage have been accomplished during the particular timeframe. In the following table, we will examine how ATA employees conceive the process.

Table 4.5 Employee responses on performance Assessment

Performance Assessment		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	Mean	Standard deviation
At ATA, ratings are based on actual performance and not personal feelings	Frequency	7	14	49	40	7	117	3.22	.948
	percent	6	12	41.9	34.2	6	100		
High levels of performance are often rewarded	Frequency	7	14	36	47	13	117	3.38	1.033
	percent	6	12	30.8	40.1	11.1	100		
My performance is measured against the performance expectations and objectives agreed during the performance planning process	Frequency	5	13	25	58	16	117	3.57	1.003
	percent	4.3	11.1	21.4	49.6	13.7	100		
I believe that the ATA performance management practice is fair	Frequency	6	14	39	54	4	117	3.31	.914
	percent	5.1	12	33.3	46.2	3.4	100		
The performance management system in ATA helps me to identify my improvement areas that I can focus on	Frequency	8	16	35	47	11	117	3.32	1.048
	percent	6.8	13.7	29.9	40.1	9.4	100		
As part of the assessment process, I am also given the opportunity to evaluate myself by filling out a	Frequency	1	8	20	57	31	117	3.94	.893
	percent	0,9	6.8	17	48.7	26.5	100		

self-assessment form									
I am comfortable to have an open discussion with my supervisor on my performance	**Frequency**	4	5	24	51	33	117	3.87	1.012
	percent	3.4	4.3	20.5	43.6	28.2	100		
Overall Mean								3.52	0.29

Source: own data, 2019

Based on the first question, 40.2% of the respondents attest that ratings have been given based on actual performance, however, still a significant number of employees, 41.9%, keeps neutral and the remaining 18% confirmed that the rating is not free from personal feeling and subjectivity no matter the reality of the performance delivered.

The second question, which is about performance recognition 51.1% responded that high levels of performance are rewarded, whereas 30.8% remain neutral. The remaining 18% confirmed that high levels performance is not rewarded by the organization, telling as that some high-level performances are not rewarded. Such practices will damage both employees' performance goals and the organization objective. If high performing employees are not rewarded, employees become discouraged and demotivated to contribute and drive success with the understanding that their performance will be treated unfairly not to mentioned unevaluated, no matter how much they will deliver on their performance goals

The third question was about expectation in which 63.3% of the respondents agree that individual performances are measured based on the expectations and objectives agreed during the planning process. Whereas 21.4% remain neutral and the rest 15.4% the respondents answered that the high levels of performance are not measured based on the agreed expectations and objectives at the planning stage.

Regarding the fairness of ATA performance assessment practice, 49.6% of the respondents replied that the ATA performance assessment practice is fair but a great

number of respondents which is 33.3% remain neutral and 17.1% of attesting that the assessment practice is not fair.

The next question which was about how the performance management system in ATA helps employees identify his/her improvement areas that the individual can work on. Based on the outcome 49.5 replied the system helps identify their improvement areas whereas 29.9% remain indifferent. The rest 20.5% answered that the system does not help employees identify their improvement areas.

Based on the assessment procedure, employees are requested to fill out the initial performance assessment round which in practice it assumes that the organization has a system to notify all employees. Accordingly, the research found out that 75% of the respondents are given the opportunity to evaluate themselves 17% remain neutral and 7.7% showed their disagreement towards this practice. According to available literature, if both the supervisor and the employee are given a chance to make an assessment and had significant discourse for the expected outcomes, it will create a better way for managers to assess fairly and ethically for the employee performance (Aguinis 2099a). The employee's participation in the assessment stage will result with the delivery of relevant data, guarantees the buy-in from users of the system, reduces fears and tensions, decreases resistance to change and develop a commitment to the system. The results showed that the ATA has performed great work but still needs additional effort to make this process smooth and free from biased trends.

The final question was to measure the extent of how employees feel towards open discussion with their respective supervisor on their performance. Thus, the large share of respondents, 71.8%, replied that they are comfortable to hold discussions with their supervisors 20.5% remain neutral and the rest other 7.7% extended their disagreement that they have not been able to create and hold discussions with their respective supervisors

Based on this result, ATA has done enough to make sure the culture of exchanging feedbacks and on setting up an assessment system to conduct of performance evaluation. However, there are some employees who still remain neutral to the cause and some their disagreement, which as an organization, it can be considered as a natural form of performance management effort, it also signals for additional work by the ATA so as to bring all on board in the performance management system, in particular, the culture of

exchanging feedbacks should be prioritized to enable employees follow performance goal execution and to create a professional coaching environment within the organization. The overall mean which is 3.52 in Table 5 demonstrates that there is a positive perception of staff towards the employee performance assessment practice in ATA.

The main findings itemized in the performance assessment process of ATA includes:

- A Large number of participants (40.2%) of the survey showed that the performance rating is free from personal feelings and subjectivity but almost the same number (41.9 %) of respondents remained neutral.

- The majority of the respondent (51.1%) shows there is performance recognition in the agency but still a significant number of respondents (30.8%) remained neutral

- The broad outcomes of the respondents (63.3%) indicated individual performances are measured based on the expectations and agreed objectives

- The significant proportion of participants (49.6%) replied that the ATA The system installed by ATA helps employees to identify their improvement areas

- The vast majority (75%) of the respondents assured that employees are given the opportunity to evaluate themselves

- The big share of the respondent's result (71.8%) confirmed they are comfortable to hold discussion with their supervisors.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter focuses on the summary of the major findings of the research questions, conclusions and recommendations forwarded in light of the relevant literature developed by scholars and responses of research participants.

5.1 Summary of Major findings

The main objective of this study was to assess the practice and challenges of performance management system in the Ethiopian Agriculture Transformation Agency by having the following basic questions to be addressed.

In order to address the above basic questions, descriptive research design was employed by using the quantitative approach of data gathering. Data were gathered through questionnaire and document review was made to increase the validity of the data obtained.

To collect representative data, 117 questionnaire copies were distributed by using simple random sampling technique. Out of which, 117 of the questionnaires were collected.

The data collected from target respondents through the questionnaire was compiled and summarized by using SPSS statistical software. The variables were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean values, and standard deviation. Finally, information obtained through a close-ended questionnaire and document review were thematically analyzed and interpreted.

Major Findings

According to the data analysis presented in the previous chapter, there were majorly positive findings concerning the implementation of the performance management system by the Ethiopian Agriculture Transformation Agency. The key strong points of ATA includes; strong alignment between the employee and the supervisor in performance

planning, alignment of the performance management system with the strategic objective of the organization, focus of the system on realistic and attainable goals and employee's awareness of the performance management system, ability to have open discussion with supervisor on individual's performance and opportunity for self-evaluation,

On the other hand, few improvement areas obtained from respondents that need the attention of ATA's management is: Performance development plans and formal procedure for identifying potential leaders are being not instituted for everybody and not supported by senior management, Non- involvement of staff actively in improving the performance management system of the ATA, Non-availability of well-defined and communicated career paths for all employees, Non-availability of strong administrative support to enhance their present skills and possess strong work ethics and qualifications.

5.2 Conclusion

Performance management is a process for setting up a shared understanding of what is to be achieved at an organization level. It involves the alignment of organizational objectives with the individual's agreed measures, skills, competency requirements, development plans and the delivery of results. The focus is on performance improvement through learning and development in order to achieve the overall business strategy of the organization. Holistically, performance management integrates a multitude of elements that contribute to the effective management of the human resource.

Performance management is a systematic process which a manager can use to get the team members to achieve the team's objectives and targets, improve overall team effectiveness, develop performance capabilities, review and assess team and individual performance, and reward and motivate. Effective performance management requires the identification of tasks and accountabilities, definition of competencies necessary to be successful in a position, ensuring that team members have the required competencies, having in place a system to develop competencies, providing timely feedback on how effectively the team members are applying their respective competencies to accomplish their tasks and achieve the goals and rewarding and motivating effective performance. In the event that performance does not meet established requirements, the manager must understand the corrective processes and methods that can help improve employee performance.

From this study, it has been noted that the ATA has placed the right emphasis on the involvement of employees in the performance planning process of Performance Management System. Based on the evidence obtained from the analysis, employees claimed that they are participating in performance planning. In addition, respondents had a chance to jointly agree on the standards of performance measures and set individual development plan in alignment with their managers. Employees are also aware of the performance evaluation objectives and performance standards as well as the importance of having an agreed individual development plan.

Concerning the practice of performance management in ATA, respondents feel the ability of employees to assess their own performance and have a discussion with their supervisor which helps them to evaluate themselves where they are and where they want to be in the future, were good practices that the organization follows.

As a result, considering the fact that regardless of the type, size and objective of an organization, performance management system is a globally contemporary practice all over the world which helps the organization, team and individual to be more effective in their day to day activities to bring about the desired objective and for the successful growth and development of each, one can conclude that ATA has many good qualities in implementing performance management system but as aspires to be a high-performing organization it should also always explore for enhancement areas and strive for continuous improvement.

5.3 Recommendations

In considering the major findings of the study and the conclusions are drawn, some efforts were made to forward possible recommendations by the researcher for the attainment of continuous improvement of the performance management system in the ATA.

1. Develop a formal procedure for identifying potential leaders based on the inputs of the Performance Management system within the organization and get the buy-in of the senior management for implementation of the identified procedure
2. Define a mechanism to involve staff members actively in improving the performance management system of the ATA
3. Develop well-defined career paths for all employee roles in the organization and communicate it

4. Facilitate the provision of administrative support for employees to enhance their present skills and possess strong work ethics and qualifications

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

<div align="center">

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

</div>

Questionnaire for the study of Practices of Performance Management System of agricultural transformation agency (ATA)

Name of student: Abebe Aweke

Dear Respondents,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect primary data for conducting a study on the topic; "Performance Management Practice'' in Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency as a partial fulfillment to the completion of the master's program in Business Administration at St. Mary's University. In such a manner, I kindly request for your time to provide me with reliable information with the goal that the findings of this study would meet the expected result. I **unequivocally guarantee you for the confidential treatment** of your answers. I would like to thank your voluntary participation for the accomplishment of my research study.

Sincerely

Abebe Aweke

Student, Masters of Business Administration

Directions

PART I – General Information of respondents:

1. **Gender:**　　　　Female_____　Male_____

2. **Age:**

 18- 28 years_____29-39 years_____40-50 years_____and ≥ 51 years_

3. **Highest Level of Education**

Ph.D._____Second Degree_____First degree _____ Diploma_____

4. Service years in the ATA

<1year _____ 2-5 years_____ > 5 years_____

Part II. **Questionnaires on Performance Management**

The following sets of statements aimed at helping to assess your feelings or perceptions of the performance management practice in the ATA.

Please place a mark (**X**) in the box that represents your appropriate level of agreement.

Key for Scales: - **1= Strongly Disagree. 2 = Disagree. 3= Neutral. 4= Agree. 5= Strongly Agree.**

No	Questions /Descriptive Statements	Scaling Rate				
		1	2	3	4	5
	Performance Planning					
1.	My individual goal is aligned with the strategic objective of my organization					
2.	My individual goal setting is carried out with the discussion of my supervisor					
3.	While setting a goal my supervisor clearly illustrates the expectation from my performance					
4.	I clearly understand the goal setting system in the ATA					
5.	During the performance planning discussion, my supervisor and I reach an agreement about my development plan to enhance my performance					
6.	My performance goals are realistic and attainable					
7.	My performance goals are aligned with my team, vertical and organizational objectives					
8.	Performance development plans and formal procedure for identifying potential leaders are being instituted for everybody and supported by senior management					
	Performance Execution					
9.	Performance problems are dealt quickly and consistently					
10.	I am involved actively in improving the performance management system of the ATA					
11.	ATA's performance management practice is time-consuming					
12.	Current performance management system helps me to improve my leadership and project management skills					
13.	Current performance management system supports me in developing my communication skills					

No	Questions /Descriptive Statements	Scaling Rate				
		1	2	3	4	5
14.	Current performance management system supports me in developing my subject matter expertise					
15.	The entire process of ATA performance management system is carried out objectively					
16.	I receive regular actionable feedback on my performance					
17.	The ATA performance management system helps employees to set and achieve their goals					
	Performance Review					
18.	I am aware that mid-year review is one of the components of the performance management practice of ATA					
19.	I have been into the mid-year performance review discussion in the current performance year.					
20.	I am aware that performance rating is one of the components of the performance management practice of ATA					
21.	Performance result based on career paths for all employees are well defined, communicated and implemented as well as a succession plan is in place					
22.	Employees are given strong administrative support to enhance their present skills and possess strong work ethics and qualifications					
23.	My annual and mid-term performance review meetings are meaningful and productive					
	Performance Assessment					
24	At ATA, ratings are based on actual performance and not personal feelings					
25	High levels of performance are often rewarded					
26	My performance is measured against the performance expectations and objectives agreed during the performance planning process					
27	I believe that the ATA performance management practice is fair					
28	The performance management system in ATA helps me to identify my improvement areas that I can focus on					
29	As part of the assessment process, I am also given the opportunity to evaluate myself by filling out a self-assessment form					
30	I am comfortable to have an open discussion with my supervisor on my performance					

Thank you.

Appendix 2

DECLARATION

I, Abebe Aweke Gebru, declare that this thesis is my original work, prepared under the guidance of Dr. Worku Mekonnen. All sources of materials used for the thesis have been accordingly acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree

Abebe Aweke Gebru _____

Name **Signature**

St. Mary's University, Addis Ababa **May, 2019**

Appendix 3

ENDORSEMENT

This thesis has been submitted to St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Dr Worku Mekonnen   _____
Advisor   **Signature**

St. Mary's University, Addis Ababa   **May 2019**