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INVESTIGATION OF SUPPORT STAFF'S PERCEPTIONS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL EFFECTIVENESS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD

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A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in fulfilment of the requirements for the MA by Research (Business and Management Studies)

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ABSTRACT

The research was undertaken at the University of Huddersfield with support staff to ascertain perceptions about the appraisal process with regard to whether it was an effective, worthwhile tool and how they felt they engaged with the process and why. According to much research the appraisal process is renowned as an unsatisfactory process for managers and staff alike and understanding why this is may help consider a new approach. Staff were invited to complete an online survey and several were then interviewed more in depth about their feelings and experiences of the system. The investigation found that staff generally welcome some form of appraisal but that the current process was essentially out-dated and the process and paperwork needed revamping. In addition to this training was identified as a major flaw in the process as training was limited and not compulsory. Engagement with the process was lacking in many areas as a result of perceived unfairness or with poor working relationships with managers.

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1. CONEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Performance appraisals are seen as a critical process within most organisations, however the practice still seems to generate negative feelings based on the perception that they are unfair and ineffective (Shrivastava & Purang, 2011). Although this area is one of the most widely researched topics when it comes to organisational psychology it still remains that negative attitudes exist among employees and managers alike (Murphy & Cleveland, 1991). As job satisfaction for an employee can link closely to their perception of appraisals (Palaiologos, Papazekos, & Panayotopoulou, 2011) then it is essential that research continues with a view to making such a fundamental process more satisfactory for all concerned.

1.2 The organisation

This study takes place amongst support and administrative staff at the University of Huddersfield. Situated in the North of England, the University can be dated back to 1825 and has approximately twenty one thousand students which are made up of part time, full time, undergraduate, postgraduate and research students. The University is one of the largest employers in the town of Huddersfield and has around eleven hundred members of academic staff (of which five hundred and fifty are part time) and has almost a thousand members of administrative, technical and support staff. There are seven academic schools that make up the University:

- Applied Sciences
- Art, Design and Architecture
- Business
- Computing and Engineering
- Education and professional Development
- Human and Health Sciences
- Music, Humanities and Media

1.3 Background

The Researcher has been a member of staff within the Business School for over sixteen years and has been in a variety of roles and has spent more than ten years in a managerial capacity. Appraisals have been carried out with administrative staff in one form or another since the University of Huddersfield was formed in 1992 having previously been the Huddersfield Polytechnic.   The University makes very clear its vision, mission and values of the organisation in a detailed strategy map (Appendix A) which was introduced in 2013 and includes that of developing and empowering staff:
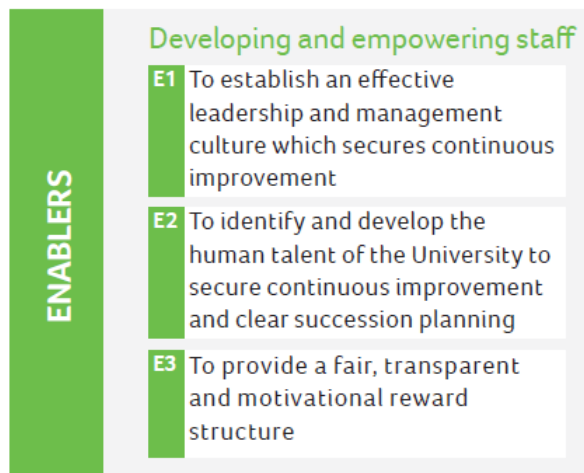
(University of Huddersfield, 2013)

In addition to this the University has set specific key performance indicators that it was expected the institute would reach by 2018, including improvements in the quality of work life survey that is carried out independently and indicates good management practice within organisations:

1. All Schools and Services to show improvement in QoWL indicators of good management practice

2. 80% of promoted posts short list internal applicants. 100% academic staff hold/ registered on programme leading to a Doctoral qualification

3. University Employee Engagement and Satisfaction measure in QoWL above sector benchmark

(University of Huddersfield, 2013)

Appraising staff can happen consciously or subconsciously and at any point during the year but the formal appraisal process is a time in which an employee's development and motivation can be explored and it should "give worth and value, to determine quality and usefulness that benefit both the individual and the organisation" (Analoui & Fell, 2002, p. 279). Others agree and suggest that the appraisal process is one of the most important processes of human resource management in forming feedback and development for staff (Cawley, Keeping, & Levy, 1998). It could be argued that for staff to feel satisfied at work, whether it be with their performance, development or even their relationships, that appraisals are imperative as "the monitoring of workers stands at the heart of the employment relationship" (Brown & Heywood, 2005, p. 659).

The Government acknowledges that staff who work long hours or unsociable hours can consequently damage their family lives and personal relationships (Hunt, 2005) and that work-life balance is crucial. The University too advocates a healthy work-life balance and a survey in 2015 indicated that "the University of Huddersfield has an exceptionally good quality of working life for most staff, when compared with a benchmark sample from other UK Universities" (University of Huddersfield, 2015). It is believed that "quality of working life is more than just job satisfaction or work happiness, but the widest context in which an employee would evaluate their job" (University of Huddersfield, 2015). So whilst it can be acknowledged that support staff at the University are in the main satisfied with their job role

(according to one survey) with 65% of employees agreeing that they have a good quality of work life, It could be argued that this also means that 35% disagree. It is also important to note that part of the survey results are based on benchmarks against other universities so is it fair to say that Huddersfield staff are more satisfied entirely or simply in comparison to other universities who may or may not have similar standards?

The University state in their Staff Handbook (Appendix B) that the reason they conduct appraisals in a systematic way is to ensure that they make the best use of the University's resources by developing their employees as this is in the interest for both the organisation and to individuals. It is a process by which employees have a formal opportunity to highlight their main achievements, discuss areas around performance and plan both short and long term goals. The appraisal process is designed to emphasise and establish priorities and result in objectives that reflect the needs of the University and also the member of staff. The University believe that if staff have the sense that the organisation values and cares about their wellbeing then they will work better and therefore the appraisal process is an opportunity to tell employees that they are valued as an employee and also a way in which to develop a person's talents to the benefit of the University (University of Huddersfield, 2017a). In order to meet these targets it could be argued that the appraisal process is a vital tool in ensuring this happens as "in order to be effective, the appraisal system must take into account the philosophy and structure of the organisation" (Hunt, 2005, p. 231).

1.4 Process

The appraisal process has had very little development in all the years that it has been carried out and is a very simple process as outlined in the guidance for managers (Appendix C).

- The appraiser and appraisee agree a date for the discussion and the manager provides the member of staff with a copy of the preparation form.
- The preparation form allows staff to prepare for the meeting and discussion for their own benefit and does not need to be shown to anybody but can be sent to the manager if they so wish.
- On the basis of the meeting, a summary of the discussion including any agreed actions points and objectives are written by the manager which staff are then asked

to review and sign if in agreement and given a copy (University of Huddersfield, 2017c).

The competency framework was introduced in 2008 with a consolidated version being produced in 2011 (Appendix D) and was an additional tool for the appraiser to look at skills and abilities in much more detail. The idea of the framework was to allow staff to clearly identify for each role what level is required and expected and gives managers the scope of using examples. There are several categories such as 'utilising technology', 'communicating clearly' and 'planning and organisation' and within each there is a list of abilities ranging from level one to level three and explanations therein of what constitutes these levels of skill. In each category there are also indicators of what is deemed to be unacceptable or inappropriate behaviours at any level. The University introduced this quite complex framework in the hope of giving managers more scope for discussion and in the ability of being able to pinpoint levels of expectations and to identify any inconsistencies which can be addressed as part of the appraisal process with individual training and development along with support and guidance (University of Huddersfield, 2017c).

1.5 Purpose of the study

This study is of particular interest for several reasons. The Researcher has first-hand experience of carrying out appraisals and indeed of attending their own appraisal and it appears that level of engagement from employees varies dramatically, it can frustrate some people, yet others welcome it, so why is this? As with any process in such a large institute it is also felt that this is not bound to be carried out consistently or using the same forms, framework etc so perhaps a review in different areas is needed. Therefore it is vital to speak to the people involved and ask them about their experience and not to pre-empt what people may think, as on the surface it could seem that people are dissatisfied but when asked individually this may not be the case. It would seem timely too to look at whether the process and paperwork needs updating. The University website (University of Huddersfield, 2017a) shows there is a wealth of training opportunities now available for the appraiser and the appraisee which has been developed over time but the process itself is still in its basic form and remains the same as it has been for over twenty years.

Lastly it could be said that the duty of a manager, particularly in line with the University's mission to empower and develop staff in ensuring the continuous improvement of the University and its future, is to take the time to explore what seems to be such an important process. There has been a vast amount of previous research (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000; DeNisi, 2000) in this area which suggests that the appraisal process is renowned as an unsatisfactory process yet it still a widely used tool. If we assume that the appraisal system is here to stay, what can the University do to ensure its effectiveness? Rock & Jones (2015) suggest that the way forward is in removing ratings altogether from the appraisal process and to instead focus on the quality of exchange throughout the year with managers and their teams. This view stems from research at the NeuroLeadership Institute which suggests that performance reviews fail to work because "social threats and rewards, like one's sense of status or fairness, activate intense reaction networks in the brain" (Rock & Jones, 2015). Similarly the BBC published an article stating that General Electric (GE) which employs three hundred thousand people across the world have also opted to ditch this "clumsy method of evaluation" in favour of looking at employees' goals and development (BBC, 2015).

In order for the study to be successful it is going to be important to fundamentally find out from employees what they genuinely think about the appraisal process. Do they feel that they engage with the process and if not, why not. It will be crucial to find out how they perceive the process and whether they think it is beneficial. It will also be interesting to ask how they think the current system could be improved and what, if anything, they would like to see change.

To summarise, the main objectives of this study, are to investigate the appraisal process as to:

- what elements of the system are effective/ineffective
- how staff feel they engage with the process and why
- perceptions of fairness and relationships within the process
- if staff feel they are a worthwhile tool

The overall aim of the study is to gain a better understanding of staff perceptions with a view to making the process more effective for both staff and managers alike.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Appraisal foundations

2.1.1 Introduction

Performance appraisal was reported by Murphy and Cleveland (1991), more than twenty five years ago, to be one of the most critical and therefore researched areas of human resource practices. It would seem that this remains the same today as research continues with some believing that "dissatisfaction with performance appraisal is at an all-time high" (van Woerkom & de Bruijn, 2016, p. 276). It is unsurprising therefore that there is a wealth of literature in this area. Whilst the main aim of this study is to analyse the perceptions that staff have about the appraisal process, it is important first of all to understand the rationale for having appraisals, the varying approaches there are and the theories behind the methods. This section has been written by incorporating the literature that can be sourced from experts in the field that have published books and journals in this area and where appropriate using the written documentation that exists within the University of Huddersfield as a point of reference.

The Human Resource Management Journal reported at the time of its launch in 1990 an increase in the interest of human resources management being related to performance and that since this time there has been considerable growth in theory and research but still with very little in the way of answers (Guest, 2011). "As competition in markets becomes more intense and global in nature, it is hardly surprising that an increasing number of organisations are recognizing the importance of performance appraisal as a key element of human resource management" (Anderson, 1993, p. 3). Yet "it has been argued that appraisal is one of the seven deadly sins afflicting managers" (Hunt, 2005, p. 230) and later in this section will explore the problems surrounding appraisals which may explain this view.

Appraisals are certainly not a new method of performance management, theory has existed for decades such as that of McGregor (1960) as cited by (Anderson, 1993) who classified performance appraisal objectives in its simplest form as being:

- *Administrative* – providing an orderly way of determining promotions, transfers and salary increases.
- *Informative* – supplying data to management on the performance of subordinates and to the individual on his or her strengths and weaknesses.
- *Motivational* – creating a learning experience that motivates and to develop themselves and improve their performance.

More sophisticated classifications have since been developed although the basic principles remain the same. Cummings and Schwab (1973) (as cited by (Anderson, 1993) later went on to view the classification as having mainly two generic areas, that of an evaluative function and a development function. More detail of this is discussed in the next section as it looks at this classification in a direct link to employee satisfaction.

2.1.2 Why do organisations carry out appraisals?

There are several reasons that appraisals are conducted within organisations. A basic summary could be that they exist for the purpose of the employer to ensure they are satisfied that the employee is functioning as they should and in-line with the expectations of the organisation (Kuvaas, 2011). Similarly the process also serves the employee in ensuring that they feel the employer and company are meeting their own needs (Hunt, 2005) and to present "what they feel are their main achievements; to discuss their performance and to make plans for the year ahead and longer term future" (University of Huddersfield, 2017c). In 1991 the Institute of Personnel Management (now known as the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development) were reportedly the first to carry out investigations into performance management and to find that essentially the process was about ensuring that managers properly manage their staff and make clear to employees what is expected of them (Armstrong & Baron, 2005). There are three main areas where the appraisal process is beneficial; to the appraisee, the appraiser and to the organisation and there will obviously be overlap in these areas as an appraisee can also be an appraiser and benefits to the individual can subsequently result in benefit for the organisation and vice versa.

2.1.2.1 The appraisee:

- Receiving feedback – Heathfield (2007) suggests that this can be the most evident benefit of appraisal in that the employee gets the chance to hear about how well they are doing. Although an employee may get every day comments from their line manager about their work, without formal feedback it can leave employees wondering how they really are doing in the context of the organisation and their role as a whole. Similarly, McKimm (2013) would also argue that failing to give feedback is a false suggestion that there are no areas that need to improve.

- Giving feedback – an employee's performance is not limited to their own skills and qualities (or lack of) and the way they are managed can equally have an impact on performance, particularly if problems exist such as a manager not giving enough attention, support or guidance (Moon, 1997).   Therefore an opportunity to report this and even of positive feedback is vital in getting an accurate overview and this giving of feedback is part of obtaining "a balanced and holistic view of performance" (Karkoulian, Assaker, & Hallak, 2016, p. 1863).   This advantage of the process can be two-fold too in that the actual act and opportunity of being allowed this input can provide the employee with a sense of importance and direct involvement in their own performance. Rowe (2014) agrees that the process of feedback in itself is an opportunity for interpersonal contact between two parties which can satisfy personal and emotional needs.

- Identify needs around training – appraisals allow the individual and the manager to assess what training developments could be undertaken in order for the employee to carry out their job to the best they can and also to feel the benefit of being 'able' to do a better job (University of Huddersfield, 2017b). By not carrying out any sort of assessment then an employee can misconstrue this as the company having no awareness or obligation to them which ultimately can result in them themselves not feeling committed to the company (van Woerkom & de Bruijn, 2016).

- Prospects and promotion – it is both reasonable and expected for any employee to look at their future and what it may hold and Jafari et al. (2009) believe that staff need to be aware of what opportunities there are and their potential for such. If it is deemed that they are not currently ready for such things then this again can be addressed and a course of action implemented to help the employee in this. Boachie-Mensah & Seidu (2012) believe that employees are more likely to accept an appraisal scheme if it offers the opportunity for promotion.   In some organisations such as the University of Huddersfield however, there are no formal links with appraisal and promotion and some

may argue that appraisal is not the place since it could take the focus away from current performance (Levy & Williams, 2004).

- Job descriptions and priorities - although you would presume that most staff know what their role is and what is expected of them (Davis, 2011), it can often be that this simply is not the case and the chance to clarify these are essential to ensure that the organisation and the employees account of what their job should entail, actually match, especially since roles can evolve over time (Armstrong & Baron, 2000). Similarly it is a chance to identify what the expectations are of additional duties if there are any so that the employee is aware of how they are being assessed.

2.1.2.2 The appraiser

As mentioned previously all the benefits that the appraisee receives (as detailed above) are in turn applicable to the appraiser, this highlights the importance of this two way process. In addition there are the advantages of being able to audit a team as a whole (DeNisi, 2000), to be informed of things that may not have been apparent and of being able to assess own management style. In turn this can result in a reduction of staff turnover, which can be costly, disruptive and timely.

2.1.2.3 The organisation

It can be argued that the appraisal process can help an organisation be more efficient and also ensure job satisfaction for employees with the simple equation being that a satisfied employee will work more productively and in turn a successful profitable business means a satisfied boss (Hunt, 2005). The more detailed benefits of appraisals are more complex issues and are dependent on factors such as how the process has been set up to achieve its initial objectives, on how the appraisal process has been designed and of course how it is ultimately carried out. (Moon, 1997). Some would argue that an organisation would fare better not by using performance appraisals, as this tends to focus on weaknesses, but instead to look what strengths the employees have and what part they play in the organisation's success (van Woerkom & de Bruijn, 2016). The University of Huddersfield state that the appraisal session should "emphasise the establishment of priorities and achievement of objectives reflecting both the needs of the University and the individual employee" (University of Huddersfield, 2017c).

Appraisals are an opportunity for employees to receive some official feedback and also for them to give feedback to their manager. It is a time in which training needs can be identified and discussions can take place regarding career prospects and possible promotions. It is also a chance to discuss the job role and descriptions and formalise objectives and priorities. It can be considered that there are multiple uses for appraisal systems whether it be to develop staff or benefit an organisation but some feel that this conflict of trying to satisfy different parties can be the reason that appraisals become ineffective (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000) because if not carried out correctly they can end up satisfying neither. In contrast to this, some would state that implementing effective appraisals are essential for developing competent staff which in turn serve as an instrument in the growth and success of an organisation (Espinilla, de Andrés, Martínez, & Martínez, 2013). Whatever the thought process is behind implementing a system however it is still believed that "the number of organisations using an 'effective' performance appraisal system is limited" (Hennessey & Bernardin, 2003, p. 73).

2.1.3 Types of appraisal

Although this study is in essence looking into staff perception about a particular process that is already in place, it is still important to understand what sort of appraisal processes exist. It is useful to try and determine why the University process may have been chosen over another. Is it the only suitable process or is it simply used because alternatives have not been considered? It is therefore appropriate to briefly review the types of appraisal processes, to be aware of what elements are effective and what could be considered in the future if the opportunity to change the process arises. There are several sorts of appraisal that have historically been used across the general management sector and some are still likely to be used today. There are several types which on the face of it appear very different but they all share one key factor and that is that they all require the appraiser to make the judgements and assessments.

2.1.3.1 Numerical rating:

The appraiser rates a member of staff based on a numerical system (for example one to five with one being low and five being high) and although this is a simple method and quick to use and allows a separation between areas which may be better or worse (Spinks, Wells, &

Meche, 1999), it does lend itself to bias and also the danger of an appraiser avoiding the extreme marking scales and opting to stay safe in the central rating area (Coens & Jenkins, 2002).

2.1.3.2 Forced choice rating:

The appraiser uses phrases and general adjectives and then comments whether this is 'most' or 'least' like the employee and then a scoring system is used to evaluate the outcome. This practice is very rarely used because although it moves away from the risk of central rating as described above (Wiese & Buckley, 1998). The effort and understanding needed however to devise a set of phrases and to analyse any meaningful results is time consuming and wrought with difficulties and for this reason is not widely used (Cascio, 1987).

2.1.3.3 Personality trait rating:

This is whereby employees are appraised in a structured way relating to a set of personality traits such as reliability, confidence, stability etc. While this method could identify areas for improvement or potential (Anderson, 1993), its downfall is that appraisers may not be able to agree on the certain meaning of types of personality and which should be assessed or could feel uncomfortable basing any assessment on a person's personality (Cardy & Dobbins, 1986).

2.1.3.4 Forced distribution:

This method begins with the appraiser identifying work qualities that it will then assess staff into areas ranging from poor, below average, satisfactory, above average and excellent. The idea being that there is a normal distribution curve and that a set amount of staff must sit within each of the areas to form or 'force' the curve. Scullen et al. (2005) acknowledge that this would need a large number of employees to become an effective tool but it does resolve issues of central tendency and being either too positive or negative. Its main problem however, lies in the issue of 'forcing' staff into categories to fit the model rather than being accurate and it then loses any effectiveness (Schleicher, Bull, & Green, 2009).

2.1.3.5 Ranking:

This is a straight forward system of placing all employees within an organisation in a list from best to worst based on their performance but Heathfield (2007) would argue that such methods rarely work due to lack of information about the parameters used to make that judgement. The benefits of this method are its sheer simplicity and the factor of the appraiser having to scrutinise and determine different levels of performance. Others believe however that ranking contributes very little in terms of appraising staff in accordance with how an organisation is performing (Coens & Jenkins, 2002; Heathfield, 2007). They question why it is important to rank somebody top of a failing business for instance or similarly of placing somebody in the bottom quartile yet are doing a fantastic job in a flourishing organisation.

2.1.3.6 Paired comparisons:

This method is based on the ranking of an employee against a series of other employees to see if they would rank higher than them or not over several different criteria and then based on a scoring system used to establish their rank amongst the work force. This would be repeated systematically for all staff in that they would be rated higher or lower than a set of their staff and given a score (one point given for example each time they rate 'higher' and zero if lower) based on the results. This approach does allow for an appraiser to determine the strengths and weaknesses of a member of staff that is relevant amongst its peers (Jafari, Bourouni, & Amiri, 2009) but it is very complex and in large companies could take a lot of time to accumulate all the cross referencing needing (Anderson, 1993).

2.1.3.7 Pay-related appraisals:

Performance-related pay (PRP) is best used where specific targets or measures can be directly linked to an individual or a team and where this is feasible in some industries it gives people a real incentive to give maximum performance and as such gives them job satisfaction (Brown & Heywood, 2005). This would be deemed acceptable by all but the reality is that there are many pitfalls to the system (Perry, Engbers, & Jun, 2009) such as ensuring consistency and fairness, for example if an individual works below standard but the team perform well then how is this assessed? "Trade unions are often hostile towards PRP schemes because they are seen as running counter to the principles of collective bargaining" (Hunt, 2005, p. 123) and "the traditional British approach has been to stress the advantage of separating performance appraisal from pay decision" (Anderson, 1993, p. 117).

2.1.3.8 Self-appraisal:

Some would see self-appraisal as giving an employee the chance to be responsible of their own work, goals and training and development needs which can be an effective motivator and a valuable source of information for the appraiser (Farh, Werbel, & Bedeian, 1988). However, this particular process is purely driven from the appraisee and they have full control of the process, which whilst empowering them it unsurprisingly can result in a very bias and one way communication from the perspective of the appraisee (Shore & Tashchian, 2002). In addition to this it is felt that self-appraisal increases communication and understanding between employees and their managers and reduces ambiguity in the process and makes resolving issues or agreements easier (Farh, et al., 1988).

2.1.3.9 Peer Appraisal:

There is evidence to suggest that peer appraisal (i.e. where colleagues are asked to carry out a review of their co-workers) can generally be quite positive yet it can also "cause disruption of peer harmony" (Drexler, Beehr, & Stetz, 2001, p. 333) . It is suggested that some employees would be more open to appraisals by a peer and that it forms the basis of a more formal structure for self-appraisals and encourages peer pressure to improve performance (Rees & Porter, 2004). Some believe that having multiple raters in the process will increase appraisal satisfaction and it also gives employees a voice and sense of control which can subsequently result in satisfaction and acceptance (Miller, 2001). Others see the system has having many pitfalls such as managers not valuing the opinions of peers, concern that results could be based on an individual's popularity and the fear of those involved about any repercussions. It is for these reasons and possibly of managers feeling they had no control in the system, that it is not a commonly used method today. This system does however allow for a variety of different perspectives to be used as it is acknowledged that it makes good sense to have other opinions as this will "provide a perspective that the supervisor alone often can't obtain" (Drexler, et al., 2001, p. 334).

2.1.3.10 Upward Appraisal:

Upward appraisal is whereby staff members appraise the skills of their managers. This process should highlight a manager's strengths and weaknesses and could then be used for

the manager's appraisal and it is thought to produce more positive outcomes than peer appraisals (Bettenhausen & Fedor, 1997). The employee feels that they have a voice within the organisation and feel valued which results in their own satisfaction yet in a study of upward appraisals Antonioni (1997) claimed there was no correlation between upward appraisals and supervisory behaviour. Some employees could perceive this as a threatening prospect and anonymity would usually need to be ensured to get the most effective results (Bettenhausen & Fedor, 1997). Guetal et al. (2009) agree and although it could be argued that those that are best placed to assess how they are managed by their manager are those themselves that there are issues of accountability and of a tendency to be lenient. In addition to this it is further stated that without following issues through then the process becomes "an empty ritual" (Analoui & Fell, 2002, p. 281).

2.1.3.11 360 degree appraisal:

Use of the 360 degree appraisal is on the increase within many organisations as it is thought that "the new world has rendered traditional boss-down based appraisal extinct" (Hunt, 2005, p. 135). The process is seen as a good way of examining a person's overall position within an organisation in how they interact with other colleagues, managers, peers, customers and external bodies and "creates an inclusive and impartial review of employee performance" (Karkoulian, et al., 2016, p. 1862). Whilst agreeing that providing feedback typically helps improve performance, DeNisi (200) also considers that sometimes this can also have an adverse effect and suggests that the design of the process is usually the contributing factor to this. Ghordpade (2000) too believes that there a benefits to the system of encompassing a range of views and also shares the view that the process can be flawed but suggests that this is due to factors such as privacy and validity. The use of the process is on the rise and although it would seem the process should be used with caution, research has shown that there can be a correlation between 360 degree feedback and "the sustainability of a just and fair work environment" (Karkoulian, et al., 2016).

2.1.3.12 The University system:

As would probably be the case with most organisational performance management processes, the University's appraisal process does not fit neatly into any one of these categories but is more a hybrid of several systems. The competency framework that is used incorporates numerical rating to ascertain level of skill (level one, two and three) in a series

of categories and the University claim that this "allows for differing levels of experience and responsibility to be reflected and reinforces the importance of learning and development" (Appendix D) . It could be argued however that this also quite easily lends itself to the avoidance of using the extreme levels of one and three and staying safe within the middle at level two.   The University process also has elements of using personality traits and behaviours as a marker. Whilst it is not specified that members of staff should have specific personalities as such, it is difficult to separate these when considering behaviours and attitudes which do form part of the framework. For instance, in the category of demonstrating flexibility and adaptability the framework specifies that inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours would include "becomes aggressive or un-cooperative when asked to do something different" (Appendix D). The use of an employee preparation form ahead of appraisals at the University asks that employees self-appraise to form a basis for discussion with their manager and these discussions may also involve some form of upward appraisal as managers are encouraged to get feedback from those that they supervise although this is not formalised in the documentation and is not to the extent of a 360 degree appraisal. The framework was not designed either to be used exclusively during the appraisal process as it claims managers will also use it "to coach and develop people on a day to day basis" (Appendix D).

2.1.4 Problems with appraisals

There are many problems surrounding appraisal and these can be more so apparent in large organisation such as the University of Huddersfield, because although there are extensive policies, procedures and training in place, it can quite often be the management of the process that lets it down (Davis, 2011). Once a process is seen to not work effectively then it is easy to see why employees begin to lose faith and do not participate as they should as they see the process as lacking integrity and validity (Cook, 1995). Harrington (1998) agrees that the concept of evaluation is not the issue and feels that appraisals "have been blamed for everything from team destruction to personal demoralisation" (Harrington, 1998, p. 230) but feels strongly that it is the implementation whereby the problems arise. It is for this reason that this study is of particular interest because "while no system is perfect, and no system perfectly and reliably measures employee performance, managers need to examine why this established process is so painful for all participants" (Heathfield, 2007, p. 7).

For performance appraisals to be effective, accurate, objective and unbiased information needs to be obtained regarding their employees but since it is acknowledged that this can be difficult it often results in managers having to make subjective opinions (Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012). It could be argued that the Human Resources department are best qualified and skilled to carry out appraisals but for the University of Huddersfield this would be impractical due to the sheer volume of staff, so instead the responsibility filters down to those that have more practical knowledge of the day to day function of that person. Davis (2011) believes however that this devolution is one of the main reasons that appraisal systems are ineffective. It is suggested that if HR design a system then roll it out to managers to implement without them having any part of the design process then this causes "confusion, resentment and a lack of buy-in" (Davis, 2011, p. 12) particularly as they then feel a lack of support from HR if they have problems using the process. Any system that is believed not to deliver anything for either the appraisee or the appraiser is unlikely to be approached with enthusiasm. It is important therefore for appraisals to result in a clear set of agreed actions for both sides to undertake (Rees & Porter, 2004). An effective appraisal process is not just about setting targets either and the University agree as their guidance to managers states that "there is little point in setting a target unless there is some means for checking progress" (University of Huddersfield, 2017a).

The time taken on appraisals is an issue often raised when considering a process. Grote (1996) suggests that up to eight hours during a year per employee are spent observing, documenting performance, undertaking appraisals, giving feedback and coaching. Whilst most managers could say that they are already overstretched, it is important to remember that this should be seen as an issue of priority and not about time and it is suggested that increasing frequency could assist with this (Lewis, 2016). Joziwak (2012) would argue that appraisals actually take less time than this but considers that when looking at this on a larger scale such as the University then the cost is tremendous. If a manager feels that they do not have the time to complete appraisals then they are in effect giving the impression to employees that this is low in their list of priorities, when they are in fact an integral part of their managerial role in which they are paid for and allocated time for. The University also state in their guidance to managers that "if you see appraisal as an administrative chore you're unlikely to devote the time and attention required" (University of Huddersfield, 2017a). With that in mind, although the process does take some time it could be said that in ratio to the hours that an employee gives to the company then they should expect this commitment back in return. The key to the manager's commitment to appraisals however will be directly

linked to how they believe the appraisal process benefits them (Mani, 2002). The Researcher is aware of this issue as they have fifteen appraisals to carry out each session but it is important to remember that "from the employee's point of view it is their opportunity to have your undivided attention to discuss nothing but them" (University of Huddersfield, 2017a). It could be argued that some paperwork is lengthy, complicated or badly designed. Whilst this can be addressed when looking at the system, it is more important to realise that the appraisal process is not about completing checklists and ensuring that paperwork is in place. More crucially it is about the engagement of staff and in ensuring that a significant discussion and review about performance takes place (Grote, 1996).

Another area for concern for those carrying out appraisals is the prospect of giving difficult feedback. "Criticising is a difficult business and many managers fear that if they handle it badly it will backfire" (Moon, 1997, p. 22) as "even folks you get on with on a day-to-day basis can turn difficult or 'bolshie' in the appraisal situation if you handle it badly" (Moon, 1997, p. 23). The University would suggest that the way to avoid these awkward exchanges is by remembering that "criticism must always be factual and impersonal – you are criticising the fault and not the person" (University of Huddersfield, 2017a). With this is mind it is key not to avoid giving criticism but instead of improving criticising skills. How to develop such competencies is a major topic within itself but for the purpose of this research it is more important to note two key things;

- That the appraiser should look at an employee's performance and what can be done to help them and is about assessing their behaviour and not about making an attack on somebody personally.
- that the appraisal process is not used as an opportunity to express all the criticisms that have built up since the last appraisal and that constructive criticism is actually happening on a more regular basis (Moon, 1997).

It is agreed however that there is a fine balance needed as distorting performance ratings is similarly unproductive such as inflating ratings so as to keep an employee onside or to avoid confrontation (Poon, 2004) as employees may recognise these manipulations and question the political motive.

2.1.5 The Human Element

Hunt (2005, p. 31) states that "the problem with appraisals is that they are carried out by people". Human nature can therefore mean that a certain amount of prejudice or biased behaviours may either consciously or subconsciously enter the process. Often appraisals are conducted by line managers which again can be a negative start if that particular relationship has difficulties in the first instance and the appraisee instantly assumes that they will not be fairly treated. The danger with any process that is reliant on human intervention is wrought with difficulties owing to complex psychological, behavioural and subconscious thinking and Davis (2011) suggests that organisations themselves can also have inadvertent bias. It is argued that corporate companies often have their own set of rules and values such as dress codes and incentives which are in themselves an indication as to how they are perceived to value something but are an indirect bias. It is considered that this can then effect how a manager then perceives performance as "they often judge performance against environmental compliance irrespective of actual performance" (Davis, 2011, p. 12). It is accepted however that more likely to happen is that of direct bias by individuals during the appraisal process.

Stereotyping is the minds way of making sense of information around us and of grouping things together based on prior knowledge or expectations (Banyard, 2010). Dobbins et al. (1998) stated that one of the main reasons that performance evaluations are subject to bias through stereotyping is because of the preconceived ideas that appraisers have. They can result in unfair assumptions and of giving people perhaps incorrect 'labels' they are often difficult to completely avoid but Bauer & Baltes (2002) would suggest that in the main can be fairly inconsequential especially if it is acknowledged they can exist. This can become more serious and lead to extreme problems and areas for example would be those based on race, gender and disability. Some research has attempted experiments in forcing appraisers to try and control their stereotypes but the results were often that this had no effect at all and in some cases made stereotypes more powerful and in reality there is no 'cure' (Bauer & Baltes, 2002).

First impressions of a person can also affect how a person is judged and is similar in some way to stereotypes. When we initially meet a person we can form an immediate idea about a person whether it be based on a certain trait, appearance or what they say to us (Willis & Todorov, 2006). This can be linked back to a stereotype in some way and then it is automatically decided that that they must then share all the other traits that belong to that particular stereotype. In research undertaken by Bar et al. (2006) they discovered that not

only are first impression judgements made very quickly but that they are very reliant on facial impressions to judge personalities and less about intelligence and capability. In contrast to this is the issue of knowing somebody or even of appraising a friend. When we think that we know somebody then we presume to think that we are aware of their characteristics, of their good and bad points and of their particular behaviour. Whilst this may be a fair and accurate assumption in the main, it does not mean that these may not change over time or under differing circumstances (Prendergast & Topel, 1993).

Another issue that appraisers face is that of the halo effect which is what occurs when the appraiser is aware of the employee's success at work in a particular area or project and then assumes that all areas in their performance are equally as good (Cardy & Dobbins, 1986). Cherry (2016) suggests that when appraising a person you let your 'liking' of them scope your overall opinion. The appraiser becomes focussed on praising the efforts in one area and other problem areas may not even be identified and are unlikely to be raised by the appraisee Rosenzweig (2014). Similarly, the opposite can happen too whereby the appraiser focuses on an employee's poor effort in a certain task and this focus doesn't allow the appraiser to see that in fact in all other areas there has been above average performance and the appraiser is just assuming incompetence.

"Performance appraisal requires subtle psychological and social skills which may not be acquired by many managers" (Bowles & Coates, 1993, pp. 3-21) and "many managers who believe that appraisal is a good thing in principle are often far less enthusiastic in practice" (Moon, 1997, p. 19). Knowing the problems can help how the systems are approached and managed and at some point it will be important to ask if there are any subconscious negative feelings within the appraiser as the problems are not always just with the process, the employee or the organisation (Moon, 1997). The University agree and consider that "bias is rarely obvious and people are unaware that they are guilty of it" (University of Huddersfield, 2017a) but acknowledge that avoiding bias is an important factor in getting appraisals right. So it could be questioned how do managers avoid doing something they do not realise they are doing?

2.1.6 Training

"An incompetently carried out appraisal is worse than no appraisal at all, and participants will cease to have faith in either the system or the organisation" (Hunt, 2005, pp. 32-33). If

appraisals are so complex and easy to get wrong, then to look at what causes this failure should help in ensuring success. For instance, some believe that appraisals can highlight a conflicting message between the employer and employee in that the employees feel that the process is there to encourage staff but they in turn feel it is there to control their behaviour (Hunt, 2005, p. 37). Some would argue that conducting a performance review meeting should almost be an informal conversation but with clear and specific rules to follow and these would be: (Armstrong & Baron, 2005).

- Be prepared
- Create the right atmosphere
- Work to a clear structure
- Use positive feedback
- Let the individuals do most of the talking
- Invite self-appraisal
- Discuss performance, not personality
- Encourage analysis of performance
- Don't deliver unexpected criticisms
- Agree measurable objectives and a plan of action

Whatever process has been adopted the main aim is that appraisals should be carried out efficiently, and the conclusions they draw should be useful to both the individual employee and the organisation. This research is interesting when looking at the training that currently is offered to employees within the University of Huddersfield for both the appraiser and the appraisee. Current practice at the University is that all new employees to the University should attend the 'Appraisee Briefing' session held by Staff Development which aims to "familiarise colleagues with the University appraisal procedure and the part that appraises can play in maximising the potential benefits of the process" (University of Huddersfield, 2017a). It claims that following the session, employees will be able to:

- Understand how the appraisal process works
- Have discussed approaches to taking control of the process
- Understand the SMART approach to objective setting
- Have reviewed the development options arising out of appraisal discussions (University of Huddersfield, 2017a).

This session will normally be identified as part of a new employee's induction schedule, however there are no formal mechanisms in place to ensure that this has been followed through and actually attended. For staff that will carry out appraisals or may have been promoted into a position that now included line management responsibility, there is a training session specifically for 'Appraisal Skills of Appraisers' which aims to " provide an opportunity for appraisers to review and develop their skills in a safe and supportive environment" (University of Huddersfield, 2017a). The training includes looking at skills sets for effective appraisals such as listening, coaching and handling disagreement. There are scenario based case studies used and practical strategies discussed to overcome areas of concern. It also incorporates actions for developing and reviewing managers (University of Huddersfield, 2017a). This training is supposed to be compulsory to all staff undertaking appraisal but again the mechanism to ensure this does not exist. The session element of being able to review confirms that the session is suitable for those requiring a 'refresher' but with no formal requirements, does anybody take this opportunity? Similarly if staff are not regularly being trained in the skills of being an appraiser, it is quite possible too that the system itself is not being reviewed. Quite often an organisation will continue to use a method of resource simply because that is always the way that they have in the past but "once an appraisal system has been designed and implemented, it should not just be used when needed and never examined to check whether it is working properly" (Hunt, 2005, p. 206). The University see the appraisal process as being a major tool in being able to assess current performance of staff and that the ability to do so "will affect the outcome of your discussion and your credibility" (University of Huddersfield, 2017a).

2.1.7 Summary

This section has looked at the literature that surrounds the appraisal process and explored the types of processes that exist, the problems with appraisal generally and the process as a whole including why appraisals are carried out and the training issues that exist. It is relevant to note that whilst the section makes reference to several sources that this does not reflect the significantly wider reading that was undertaken but the simple fact is that most literature is in full agreement when considering these factors about the appraisal process. Even though the search of literature spans over several decades there is little variation or conflicting views at this stage including what the University purports in its own documentation and guidance. Therefore these foundations are important to know in order to form the basis

for this study but it is clear that this is not an area in need of further investigation as a topic area in itself. Instead, what actually happens in theory and practice is of far more interest as these two entities could be very different.

2.2 Appraisal perceptions and engagement

2.2.1   Introduction

Although there is an abundance of general literature around appraisals as a process, there is very little in comparison about engagement and perception. This section aims to look specifically at how staff engage with appraisals and what their perceptions are and how these may be formed. This is a relatively new area of research with regards to appraisals and it will be beneficial to look at some specific case studies that have already been undertaken. When looking at the reasons that people engage and how they view things, these fall into three fairly distinct (yet with much overlapping) subject areas; reactions and relationships, perceived use and perceived fairness.

Before looking at the areas it is first of all important to note that, whilst these are being looked at specifically in the context of appraisal processes, that in fact there are quite complex psychological processes and issues behind anything involving what is in effect human behaviour and psychology.   In its simplest form perception is about how we see a process and how we understand what it is we are seeing. Psychologists that study perception are interested in analysing our processing and interpretation of sensory information. Pennington (2002) summarised that perception happens early on in the processing of information but that these can be considered two different ways; 'bottom up' considers that processing relies on information that we get from the things we experience whereas 'top-down' relies on not just sensory experience but also from our bank of knowledge which has come from previous instances of that activity.   Another area to look at when considering perceptions of humans is that of conditioning.   Classical conditioning is when a certain stimuli that you have experienced before forms an association to a particular emotion, for example of hearing the dentist drill. The sound of the drill in itself would be neutral stimuli but paired with previous experience and association of the stimuli of pain thus an emotion is automatically triggered. This doesn't just work on negative emotions either as it can also be adapted to the positive of feeling of hearing a song that triggers happy memories (Eysenck, 2013).

Perceptions can be consciously experienced although some would argue that they are more a form of emotion or performances of culture and that they can serve to "shape the trajectory of future experiences" (Barrett, 2014, p. 293). Attitudes are also a complex mental process and are important when studying social psychology as we tend to in all aspects of social life "continually seek to discover other people's attitude, tell others our views and try to change another person's opinion" (Pennington, 2002, p. 121). Furthermore, attitudes are evaluations that people make about themselves and others and whilst they are usually gained from past experience that they serve purpose for current behaviour and also future behavioural development (Pennington, 2002).

These are important factors to consider when looking at this research in the context of its aims to find out people's feelings towards something and why these may have been formed and more importantly embedded from past experience. This merely touches on recognising that there are very intricate and complex psychological processes at play when considering perception and attitudes of people. When researching peoples' feelings this needs to be identified as a very inexact science. A more detailed psychological approach in this area would however be a very interesting development in further research.

2.2.2 Reactions and relationships

Shaun Pichler (2012), an Associate Professor of Management at California State University, undertook a study about the social context of performance appraisal and appraisal reactions and with findings that will be valuable in this research. The basis of the study was to look at literature around social context and exchange, and found that there was a direct link between the appraisee-appraiser (or rater-ratee) relationship and the appraisee's reaction and participation with the process. It further looked at whether this was always the case, even when performance was not being considered favourably.

"Performance appraisal is an opportunity for information exchange, and rater-ratee relationship quality (including, for instance, trust) is essential to the effectiveness of this process" (Pichler, 2012, p. 710). Using employee reactions as appraisal criteria is a relatively new concept, and although researchers have yet to develop a definition, one

suggestion is that employee reactions are "individual-level attitudinal evaluations of and responses to the performance appraisal process" (Pichler, 2012, p. 710). The criteria for employee reaction would look at areas such as fairness, usefulness and motivation and Pettijhohn et al. (2001) agrees that appraisal reactions are related to job attitudes therefore if the purpose of appraisal is to identify and solve performance related issues then it would make sense to evaluate this by the appraisal reaction.

> Given that the previous attempts to improve the performance appraisal process based on more traditional models (e.g. the psychometric approach) have been less successful than desired, appraisal reactions represent an alternative target for improving the process and the outcome of the process (Pichler, 2012, p. 711).

In similar research Elicker, Levy, & Hall (2006) also suggest that supervisor-subordinate (or rater-ratee) interaction substantially influences the discussion at appraisal and therefore the reactions that employees have to the process. They refer to this as leader-member exchange and that there is a distinct correlation between those with a high quality of exchange and positive reactions than with those without and this view is shared by many (Levy & Williams, 2004; Mulder & Ellinger, 2013; Murphy & Cleveland, 1991) and there are several suggested models of appraisal reaction. The first, and arguably the most simple one, is the independent antecedents model (see figure 1 below) which deals with the three areas of; relationship quality, rating favourability and appraisal participation separately to form overall appraisal reactions. This basic model aligns itself to the belief that perceptions of outcome favourability are related to employee reactions to organisation decisions.
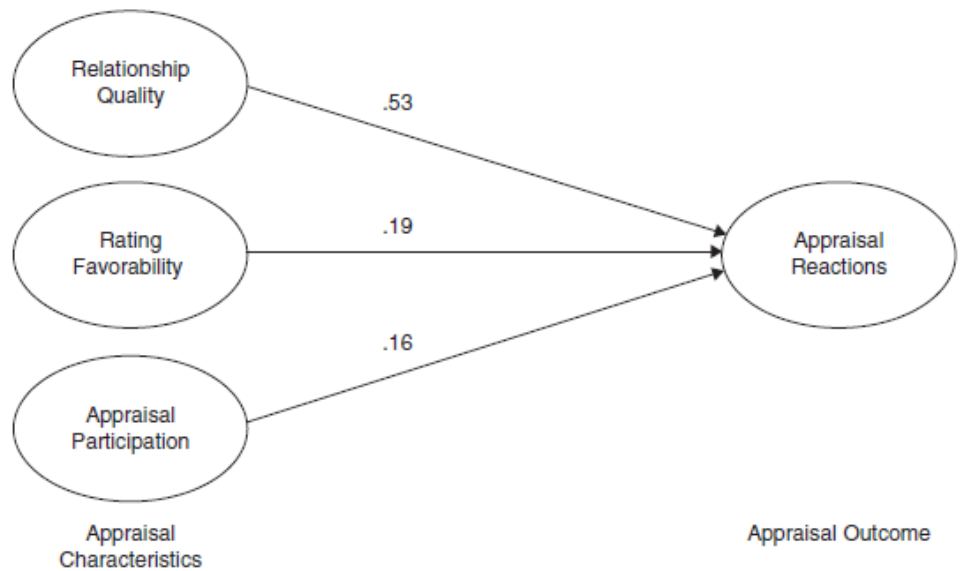
FIGURE 1. An Independent Antecedents Model of Employee Reactions to Performance Appraisal

(Pichler, 2012, p. 713)

"Leader-member exchange theory is a social exchange theory focused on how the quality of a manager-employee relationship is related to mutual obligation, support, and exchange of valuable resources" (Pichler, 2012, p. 714). It supports the belief that the quality of exchange that managers have with employees is directly linked to their relationship, therefore if the relationship is positive then the experience at appraisal is positive, the outcomes are favourable, there is a high level of trust between the rater and ratee which in turn means that the employee is provided with more information, influence and ultimately better performance in the future. This model then makes the presumption that the person being appraised will in return engage positively with the appraisal process which is an important factor in managing future performance. What is not clear however is if the positive reaction and exchange of information is accountable in itself or is it the relationship and knowledge of the appraiser that makes the engagement productive? "The social exchange literature is not clear as to whether or not exchange quality itself is a basis for positive attitudes, such as appraisal reaction or if these attitudes are explained by favourable treatment and outcome of the exchange" (Pichler, 2012, p. 715). Dipboye & De Pontibriand (1981) agree that this is something worthy of research since they believe that the perceived favourability of the appraisals are strongly linked to the reactions and acceptability of the appraisal system.

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The second model (see figure 2 below) is described as an instrumental, exchange-oriented module of appraisal reactions. The basis for this model is theory based around the employee having a voice which they believe is linked into their potential to influence any decisions that are made and perceived fairness of the process. These theories are aligned to the belief that employees prefer a process that result in outcomes that are equitable among colleagues at best but more so that they may be 'more' favourable (Leventhal, 1980). This model acknowledges that many employees perceive that to be in control of the process is the way to ensure they get the results they want and that a guarantee in the control process would make up for a lack of control in the decision process. When applying this model to the appraisal process, the appraisee feels a high sense of control over the process due to the voice they have and the quality of exchange they receive, which in turn they hope will result in a favourable outcome. This also confirms the belief that where employees believe they are truly listened to within an appraisal and judged on what they believe is fair, then this increases the positive relationship between the rater and ratee and consequently the appraisal reaction (Pichler, 2012). Similarly "employee voice in the feedback session and the resulting justice judgements are outcomes of exchange relationship and thereby will function as important mediators between the quality of the exchange relationship and PA reactions" (Elicker, Levy, & Hall, 2006, p. 532).
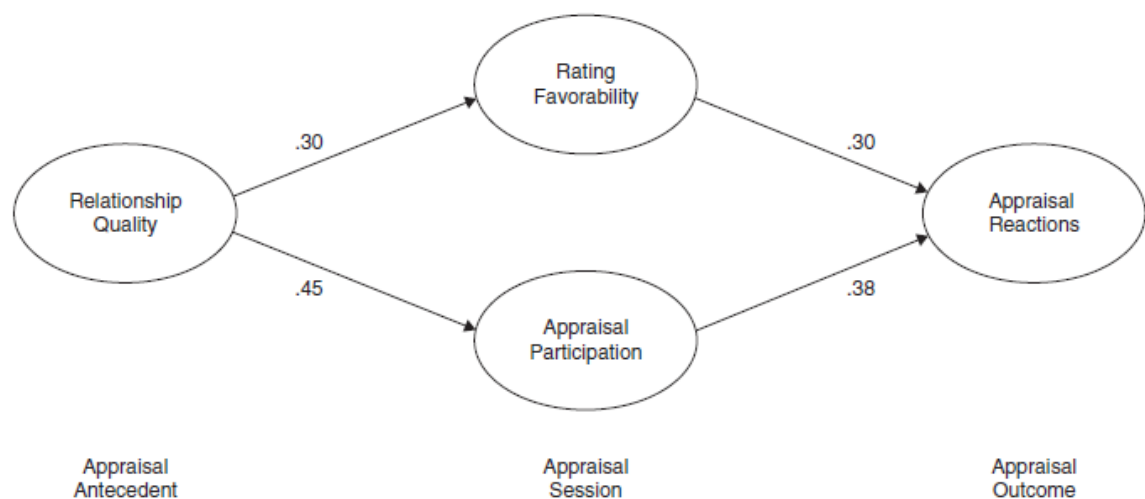
FIGURE 2. An Instrumental Model of Employee Reactions to Performance Appraisal

(Pichler, 2012, p. 721)

The third model (see figure 3 below) looks at appraisals as being a relationship quality-driven process. This model looks at the appraisal process as being mainly a social one which is ultimately influenced by the relationship between the appraiser and appraisee. This model supports the theory that there is a direct link between these relationships and reactions towards appraisal and again feeds into the notion that the simplicity of having a voice being heard is more important than influencing any outcomes. It is suggested that research around employee participation has been ambiguous in the past due to a lack of consensus around what people believe to be 'participation' (Anderson, 1993). When Cawley, Keeping & Levy (1998) undertook a study in this area they predicted that that there would be a strong correlation between participation and reaction but found that this was not necessarily the case. They found that simply participating in the process did not increase levels of satisfaction but that having their voice heard did. This model is interesting to this particular research as it also looks at the consequences of a member of a team having their voice heard, as it compounds the importance to an individual to have their voice heard amongst a group to make them feel important and appreciated even if the outcome is not one that they wanted. It becomes even more significant if this voice is then heard by a group's authority figure such as the team leader as this holds more weight to a group reaction and can be instrumental in other people's engagement.

Research suggests that perceptions of relationship quality between those making the decisions and those affected by the decisions are a lot more strongly related to how the individual views the fairness, their attitudes and behaviour than their perception of the control or outcomes they receive (Pichler, 2012). Also it is "the events of the feedback session and the resulting psychological states, in part, depend on pre-existing habitual patterns of exchange between supervisor and subordinate" (Elicker, et al., 2006, p. 532).
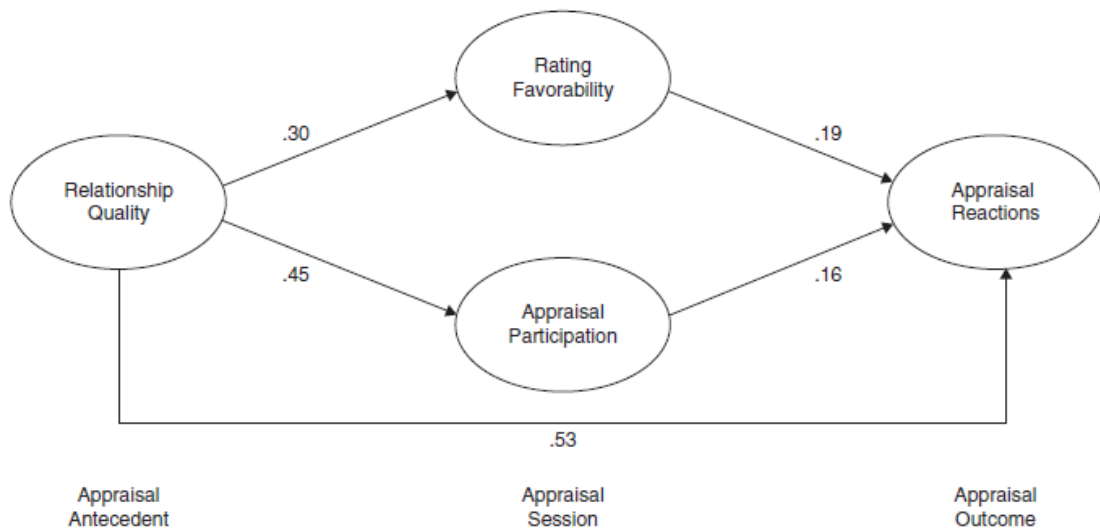
FIGURE 3. A Relationship-Driven Model of the Performance Appraisal Process

(Pichler, 2012, p. 722)

The models are quite different but have very similar themes running through them as "findings indicate that the social context within which the appraisal occurs is indeed important" (Pichler, 2012, p. 719). Whilst we can look at how an employee may engage and for what reason, the cycle continues as past experience influences future participations. "The performance appraisal process is interesting because it involves both instrumental and relational dynamics or, in other words, two potential types of exchange" (Pichler, 2012, p. 722). An alternative view is that it is not the employee's reactions that should be the main focus in the process and Taylor et al. (1995) suggest that it is the manager's reaction that is the main influence in system effectiveness as they have the control, develop them and carry them out. Pettijohn et al (2001) agrees and cites Miner (1968) from almost fifty years ago when he stated that "evidence shows less effective managers tend to be the ones most opposed to performance appraisals". Existing relationships may form the basis for some expected situations but similarly "it is expected that appraisal participation will moderate the relationship between rater-ratee relationship quality and appraisal reactions, but the form of moderation is offered as a research question" (Pichler, 2012, p. 717). To summarise, this suggests that employees will react positively to the appraisal process regardless of how they are rated if they have a good working relationship with their appraiser which is "a relatively novel contribution to the performance appraisal literature" (Pichler, 2012, p. 726).

2.2.3 Perceived use and effectiveness

Employee satisfaction with the appraisal process, the appraiser and their perceived use formed the basis of a study which will be interesting in light of this research. It acknowledges that appraisals are used within organisations for varying purposes, some of which may at time conflict with each other and then prevent them from being as productive or useful. Boswell & Boudreau (2000) explored whether the use of appraisals relates to staff attitudes as previous research tends towards appraisal purpose directly affecting outcomes and that employee's attitudes possibly differ depending on how they perceive the appraisal being used. It is acknowledged too that most research to date relies on what the appraiser provides as information as to what they perceive the process is used for and this can result in reporting of how a system is intended to be used but in actual fact may not happen in practice (Bretz Jr, Milkovich, & Read, 1992). Similarly another area of investigation is how the person being appraised views the use as they could vary from person to person and if attitudes are based on perceptions then employees can have differing views and in turn take it as a sign as to their contribution and involvement within the organisation (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000).

It can be argued that appraisals have two quite distinguished uses:

- EVALUATION - whereby it assesses salaries, promotional decisions, an employee's performance, redundancies etc. and;
- DEVELOPMENT - such as staff development and training requirements, setting aims and projects whilst identifying an individual's abilities or lack of certain skills (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000).

2.2.3.1 Evaluation

Some research indicates that using appraisal as an evaluative tool is a positive approach, in that there was found to be a direct link with employee's satisfaction about the appraisal process for instance when discussions are based around salaries and promotion. On the other hand evaluation can also be more unfavourable and mean that sensitive or negative things are being discussed and this brings about negative feeling about the use of evaluation as a means of appraisal (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000). To summarise, therefore, it can be argued that how an employee perceives the use of appraisal is determined by the appraisals rating they receive and ultimately how fair they think the outcome and process is. Another

important factor is the appraisee's attitude towards the appraiser, especially since it is quite often somebody that directly supervises them and any negative feelings that transpire from the appraisal process can transcend in to day to day working relationships (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000). Mulder (2013) agrees and refers to the evaluation process as being led by human beings and therefore that the characteristics of those receiving feedback may influence the process. This being said, the appraisal process could lead to things that the employee finds positive such as a pay increase which in turn allows a better reaction to the appraisee giving that feedback and this again can result in the perception of appraisal use being wholly dependent on the outcome and the perceived fairness (Simmons, 2002).

2.2.3.2 Development

Planning workloads and setting goals and training opportunities is another use of the appraisal process and adopts a more developmental approach between the supervisor and employee. It is thought that this approach can encourage staff to look at their skills and how they can improve within an organisation and if an organisation is seen to take a keen interest in a person's development then they will be more committed to a job and see it as a "signal of their value to the company or future in it, resulting in positive affect associated with this feedback" (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000, p. 287). The study went on to show that employees had more acceptance of the appraisal process when a developmental approach was taken and ways of improving performance were discussed. Similar research also show that issues of fairness, bias and truth are all factors which have a positive effect when development is brought into the process which reveals that generally the appraisee perceptions and attitude towards the appraisal process is 'enhanced' (Palaiologos, et al., 2011). Other studies show a similar outcome in that "it is predicted that employees are positive toward the latest appraisal of their performance and the system of appraisal to the extent they perceive that (a) they are allowed to participate in the appraisals and (b) the appraisals are goal oriented" (Dipboye & De Pontbriand, 1981, p. 248).

The figure below illustrates how the performance implications of appraisals can be uncertain and complicated. It suggests that perceived helpfulness of appraisals is only very loosely linked to performance and that any positive link was reserved for employees who "perceived that they received high levels of regular feedback" (Kuvaas, 2011, p. 131) and that ultimately positive reactions to the appraisal process have to involve perceived regular feedback before this related to work performance.
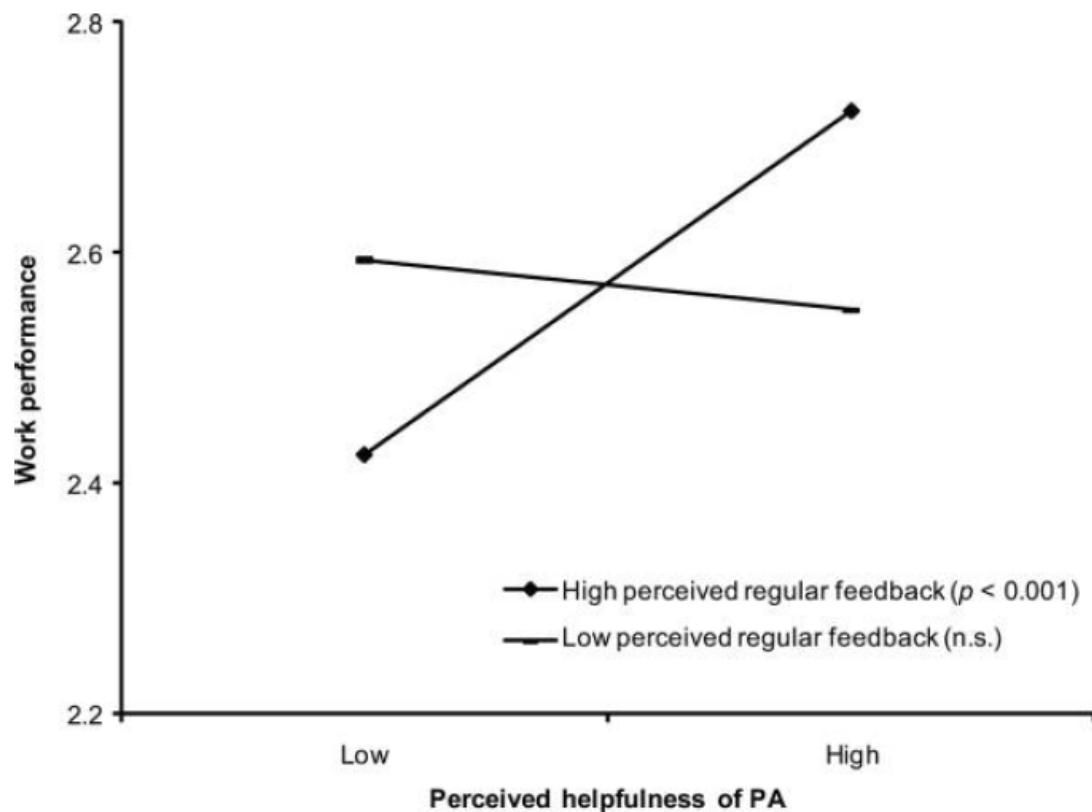
Figure 4 : The moderating role of perceived regular feedback on the relationship between perceived helpfulness of PA and work performance (Kuvaas, 2011, p. 131)

The importance of the employee's feelings play an important role in the process in that "satisfaction with the appraisal positively associated with satisfaction with the appraisal source: the supervisor" (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000, p. 288). This relationship is made more important when research suggest that employees mainly welcome developmental feedback from their immediate line manager and that those that receive this in turn feel more positive about their appraisal. Put simply, the helpful nature of the developmental approach serves to enhance how the employee views the person providing that opportunity. Similarly employees will be more positive about an appraisal system in accordance with how "they perceive the factors on which they are evaluated to be relevant to their jobs" (Dipboye & De Pontbriand, 1981, p. 248).

There appears to be a strong, positive relationship between perceived developmental use and employees' feelings about the appraiser and the appraisal. The relationship

between perceived evaluative appraisal use and these attitudes is less clear. Therefore, how appraisals are used in organisations and the perceptions regarding their use are fruitful areas for continued research" (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000, p. 297).

It is suggested that in places of education such as the University of Huddersfield that it should be considered that a 'stakeholder synthesis' approach is taken when looking at how professional employees perceive the usefulness of a system. By including the stakeholders in the development of the process it is felt that "the balance between control and motivation within current performance appraisal schemes" (Simmons, 2002, p. 97) will be achieved and prevent ineffectiveness in the system. Similarly how an employee perceives the purpose of the appraisal process will also "be a crucial element in determining the long-term effectiveness of the system" (Palaiologos, et al., 2011, p. 827)

Other research indicates that "in order for performance appraisal to positively influence employee behaviour and future development, employees must experience positive appraisals reactions" (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995 as cited by (Kuvaas, 2007, p. 388) but that there is no direct relationship between perceptions of appraisal and work performance. Indeed it is suggested that staff who already feel that they perform well and to a good standard, believe that "too much time and energy are being used on providing unnecessarily clear, relevant and understandable goals and feedback, and therefore react negatively to developmental PA" (Kuvaas, 2007, p. 389). Pearce (1986) reported in a similar study that where employees were given feedback indicating that they were 'satisfactory' after the introduction of appraisal that this had a negative effect and noted a significant drop in performance in comparison to those rated higher whose performance were unaffected. Whether reactions to the process are positive or negative these are always deemed to be relevant and "an unfavourable reaction may doom the most carefully constructed appraisal system" (Kuvaas, 2011, p. 123).

To summarise it is apparent that there are some extremely important factors in play when considering how the appraisal system is seen to be useful and effective to both the appraiser and appraisee and indeed as mentioned in the previous section this too can be dependent on factors between those people's relationships. These in turn are then responsible for

reactions as discussed in the previous section and how they perceive the usefulness can be reliant on how they rate the fairness of the system.

2.2.4 Perceived Fairness

This section aims to look at the views and ideas surrounding how perceived fairness can influence people's engagement and acceptance of the appraisal process.

"Literature in organisational justice suggest that organisational fairness in decision making processes may encourage employee's acceptance of and positive reaction to many organisational decisions including decision in human resource interventions such as performance appraisal system" (Sudin, 2011, p. 66). It is further suggested that by addressing concerns of fairness that employees may have about the appraisal process, in a way that staff thought was meaningful, would increase morale, satisfaction and productivity. It is important to realise that the whole point of appraising somebody, is in effect, a process of judging a person too so it is no wonder that "performance appraisal systems become one of the most intricate human resource techniques and serve as great paradoxes of efficient human resource management" (Sudin, 2011, p. 68). This is a view shared by most and agreed that it is "one of the most emotionally charged activities in business life – the assessment of a man's contribution and ability'" (Thompson and Dalton, 1970, p. 150) as cited by (Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008, p. 1152). It is of no surprise then that the subject of fairness becomes so important.

The figure below explains how some employees feel that undertaking individual appraisals can result in inaccuracy of measure in work performance, or conflict and competition with other employees. Staff tend to formulate how they perceive fairness by comparing how they perceive they receive outcomes or rewards in relation to their perceived contribution (work input) and will compare this with another worker in a similar position and is known as distributive justice. (Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008).

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Perception of Fairness of PA │          │        Satisfaction         │
├─────────────────────────────┤          ├─────────────────────────────┤
│  • Procedural Justice        │          │  • Last Performance          │
│  • Distributive Justice      │─────────▶│    Ratings                   │
│  • Interpersonal Justice     │          │  • Supervisor                │
│  • Informational Justice     │          │  • PA System                 │
└─────────────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────────┘
```
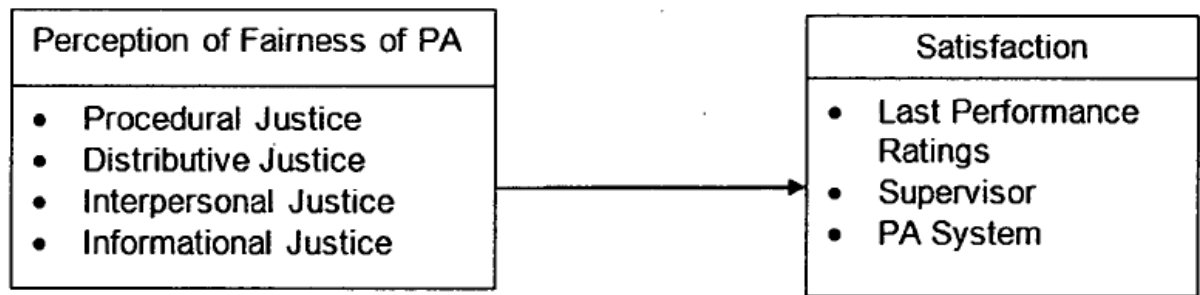
Figure 5: Research Framework of Relationship between Perception of Fairness of PA and Satisfaction (Sudin, 2011, p. 71)

The other factor is that of procedural justice. Folger et al. (1992) indicate that there are three key issues in the procedural justice model for performance appraisal: adequate notice, fair hearing and evidence. It is expected that staff get adequate notice about the appraisal process and are given a clear indication in advance of the standards and objectives expected. Quite often line managers will simply use the job description as a basis for the appraisal process but these are not sufficient as a standalone document since they usually list duties and not how they should be carried out (Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008). It is also expected that the day of the appraisal is not the first and only time that the member of staff becomes aware of their line managements opinion of their work.

As discussed previously, staff will perceive that their appraisals are a useful and effective mechanism if they feel that they are getting a fair hearing. "A fair hearing has two elements: an appraisal discussion and an opportunity to challenge an appraisal rating" (Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008, p. 1161). Folger et al. (1992) argue that empowering employees to challenge appraisal ratings is important as it can form the basis of useful discussions about performance constraints but that it in the main staff are mainly only really concerned with challenging any particular large gaps that were apparent between perceived performance and appraisal rating (Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008). To be able to demonstrate factors about performance this is then reliant on evidence and this in itself has to consider accuracy of data, possible bias of the appraiser or appraisee and inconsistencies of performance standards used within the process. It is suggested that a good appraisal system should have the ability to appeal a rating which may be considered unfair, incorrect or biased and that this "is an important component to ensure perceptions of procedural fairness" (Shrivastava & Purang, 2011, p. 644). Evidence is vital however, if producing meaningful feedback and lack

of feedback in itself will produce strong negative perceptions of fairness (Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008).

As already discussed, relationships are an important factor when analysing the appraisal process and "interactional justice" focuses on the quality of the interpersonal treatment employees receive during the appraisal process" and that four factors can be identified when employees consider how fairly they are being treated by their line manager and include; deception, invasion of the employee's privacy, disrespectful treatment and derogatory judgements" (Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008, p. 1155). In addition to this it could be argued that employees will interact better if encouraged to conduct self-appraisals as this can result in more commitment to performance goals and be more accepting of criticism as the chance for self-expression as "procedurally just, regardless of the final decision" (Cawley, et al., 1998, p. 618).

Whilst most staff can see that in an ideal world appraisals are a useful and positive experience, quite often they are viewed as "no more than a tick box exercise and are not carried out in a fair and systematic way" (Rowland & Hall, 2013, p. 201). Similarly it can be that line managers themselves find the process "unrealistic and complicated and resented time spent on paper exercises which have very little impact on the performance of people" (Rowland & Hall, 2013, p. 201) and this then results in the process being seriously flawed and perceived as unfair. If the process is considered to be unfair then this can result in demotivation and a have a negative impact on performance (Davis, 2011). "If appraisal is to contribute to organisational effectiveness, the organisation needs to understand why appraisals are taking place and why they fit with organisational philosophy, culture and strategy" (Rowland & Hall, 2013, p. 204). This is important to understand as this research looks at the appraisal process that exists and considers its appropriateness in context of the University's overall strategy. This section has illustrated that perceived fairness not only plays a large part in the overall perceptions of appraisals but also that it remains the main reason that people disengage.

This section again highlights the interlinking themes that can affect how people perceive fairness of a system as they cannot be considered without looking at how they either

perceive the usefulness of the system itself or how they consider their own reactions or relationships with others.

2.2.5 The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development viewpoint

It was with great interest and coincidental timing that towards the end of this study that the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) released a report based on a review that links very closely to this research. The CIPD was founded in 1913 and is a leading professional association in the United Kingdom that deals with human resource management in the professional world. The rationale for their review was that "despite the relevance of performance ratings within the domain of human resources management, both academics and practitioners have always had a somewhat uneasy relationship with them" (CIPD, 2016, p. 3). They suggest that many question the meaningful information that are ascertained from appraisals and others consider they should be discontinued entirely (CIPD, 2016). As it is acknowledged that the process is still widely used within most management practices that a review was needed to "understand what is known in the scientific literature about the reliability and validity of performance appraisals and the way in which this may impact workplace performance" (CIPD, 2016, p. 3).

After their investigations they concluded that "performance appraisals can have positive effects on work performance, but that these effects are highly contingent upon a wide range of moderating factors" (CIPD, 2016, p. 18). The following conclusions were formed as part of the review and have been highlighted below as being of particular interest to this study:

- Reactions to feedback, rather than the feedback itself, influence performance
- The perceived fairness of the performance appraisal process moderates the impact on future performance
- Feedback perceived as useful improves perceptions of fairness
- Negative feedback adversely affects perceived fairness
- Participation contributes to perceived fairness
- The quality of the relationship between manager and employee contributes to the perceived fairness of the appraisals
- The outcome of managers' own performance appraisal influences how they evaluate their employees

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- If raters like people, they rate their performance higher   (CIPD, 2016)

The CIPD is a professional body and experts in their field of human resources and people development.   They are established in "championing better work and working lives by improving practice in people and organisation development" (CIPD, 2017).   Therefore for them to have engaged in similar research that this study is also looking at just confirms the importance and relevance of this as an area for investigation and also validates much of the literature that is sourced for this study as it can also be found within their own review.

2.2.6 Summary

This chapter has explored the literature and case studies that already exist and looks at the appraisal process in practice and incorporates research from a large span of time. Interestingly many issues that were prevalent in the appraisal process decades ago still remain today as a concern and therefore research needs to continue to try and fathom this seemingly unsatisfactory process. It is recognised too that there are equally dominant forces that can affect the outcome of the appraisal process such as deep rooted psychological matters, social and organisational phenomena, yet each can have a direct impact and influence on each other.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the research methodology that has been used for this study. It will outline the approach that was taken, the justification for the strategy and also consider the techniques and what other methods could have been used. It will link in the aims of the study and discuss why a qualitative rather than quantitative approach has been taken. It will analyse the appropriateness of using surveys and interviews and deal with issues of reliability and sampling. The chapter will then also look in some detail about the ethical considerations that have also been taken into account.

3.2 Research strategy

3.2.1 Theory

"Theory is important because it provides a backcloth and justification for the research that is being conducted" (Bryman, 2015, p. 18). It is also an important tool in providing a structure when looking at understanding social phenomena and interpreting research findings. The idea of theory in its basic form and when related to research is that it is an "explanation of observed regularities" (Bryman, 2015, p. 18). Some social scientists such as Neuman (2002) would argue that research that does not have strong links to theory should be dismissed as being merely empirical studies however others see that fact-finding exercises have just as much merit.

As is most common when looking at social research, this particular study is in some way influenced and guided by the deductive theory. This follows the process of deduction (see figure 6) whereby the researcher begins with a theory and this can be formed from their own basic beliefs which are based on experience and concerns specifics events (Jankowicz, 2005). In the case of this study the Researcher has some experience and feedback as to how staff perceive a process, they then continued to the gathering of data, specifying how this will be collected in conjunction with the concept of the hypotheses. The findings were then analysed and the original hypotheses is either confirmed or rejected.

Figure 6 : The process of deduction (Bryman, 2015, p. 21)

The final process in the research can be more accurately described as inductive in its approach as the outcome of the research will feed back into the initial theory that started the process. The Researcher also expects that there could be unknown reasons that will come to light and will begin the process assuming nothing so this would be considered an inductive study which 'provides insightful empirical generalisations, but little theory' (Bryman, 2015, p. 23).

More traditionally it would be seen that this study has taken an inductive approach in that it is looking to explore opinion rather than prove a theory. It is not uncommon for models of research theory to incorporate both deductive and inductive theory (see figure 7) as they can be very much interlinked and it is for this reason that researchers are advised to think of these approaches as deductive and inductive 'strategies' rather than distinct rules (Bryman, 2015).
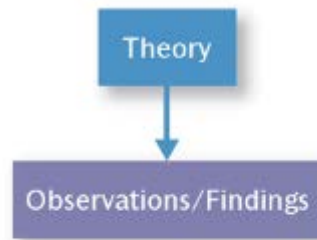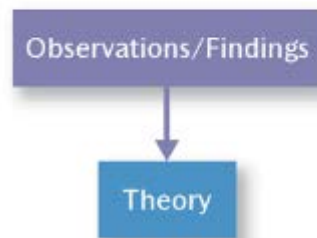
Figure 7: Deductive and inductive approaches to the relationship between theory and research (Bryman, 2015, p. 23)

3.2.2 Epistemology considerations

Epistemology deals with knowledge, what constitutes knowledge and the personal theory of knowing. It poses the question of whether preferences and beliefs count as knowledge that is worthy of reporting (Jankowicz, 2005) and the acceptance of knowledge as a discipline (Bryman, 2015). It is believed that knowledge that is confirmed by the senses are genuine sources of knowledge which are arrived at through fact finding and done so without a scientific value attributed to anything. It is possible to gather non-scientific observations without strict uses of any theories and still produce credible findings and seeks to develop theories to validate explanations (Bryman, 2015).

This research has certain elements of a positivist approach in that it begins with a theory, a prediction and seeks to determine the norm in an objective way but it lacks the detachment element and statistical data needed for a truly positivistic approach (Glesne, 2011). Therefore it is more appropriate to see this study as taking an interpretivistic approach as its purpose is to understand and search for patterns and has a personal involvement and empathetic understanding (Glesne, 2011). It is acknowledged that the 'truth can't be

determined in any absolute way' (Jankowicz, 2005, p. 111) but the study does aim to gain sufficient understanding, not in setting theories, but to predict future outcomes.

3.2.3 Ontological considerations

Ontology deals with basic beliefs and social entities. There are two main ontological positions; objectivism and constructionism. Objectivism implies that social phenomena is an external factor that is out of our control and cannot be influenced. In contrast constructionism asserts that social phenomena is constantly being accomplished and changes through social reaction and in a constant state of revision and that change is about knowledge being viewed as indeterminate (Bryman, 2015). As it has already been determined, this research does not fit neatly in to either a deductive/positivistic or inductive/interpretivistic approach and therefore it is of no surprise that the ontological position is also varied but ultimately believes that there are set issues facing the organisational behaviour and culture but that in reality these are entities that are continually being constructed and reconstructed and not set in stone forever and can be challenged (Bryman, 2015).

3.2.4 Quantitative vs. qualitative

When the idea of this research was first considered it was acknowledged that this would largely be based around human perceptions about a process and as such this would involve mainly qualitative rather than quantitative data. To explain why this approach was chosen it is important to at first try and attempt to explain the difference, although many researchers and writers of this can differ in their interpretation (Bryman, 2015). In its simplest explanation it can be said that quantitative deals with measurement of some kind and qualitative with experiences and feelings, however it can depend on the foundations of the researcher's epistemology approach.

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Deductive: testing of theory	Inductive: generation of theory
Epistemological orientation	Natural science model, in particular positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological orientation	Objectivism	Constructionism

Figure 8: Fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research strategies (Bryman, 2015, p. 32)

Figure 8 shows the fundamental differences between research strategies. Whilst this study has already confirmed that it has elements of deductive it is mainly concerned with forming theory and is inductive. Its epistemology and ontological approaches also show that it is very hard to easily distinguish in just one way.

3.2.5 Phenomenology

An alternative way of describing the strategy would be to say that it has a phenomenology approach in that it is subjective, descriptive and interpretative and "generally deals with people's perceptions or meanings, attitudes and beliefs, feelings and emotions" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 75). As with this study, it is concerned with human experience of a process and is "something that stands in need of explanation" but it is "not primarily concerned with explaining the causes of things but tries instead to provide a description of how things are experienced first-hand by those involved" (Denscombe, 2007, pp. 76-77). Moran (2001) agrees that this approach is important when assuming the role of researcher but it is argued too that it should not be approached as a line manager as it seeks to "present matters as closely as possible to the way that those concerned understand them" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 78) in avoiding trying to analyse or interpret the feedback but to ensure that the results are presented "in a way that is faithful to the original" experiences (Denscombe, 2007, p. 78). Starks & Brown Trinidad (2007) suggest this approach should also recognise that in the world of social experiences that some results may seem contradictory, irrational or even ridiculous but it is not the researchers job to try and make these fit neatly but rather to attempt to present these as methodically as is possible (Denscombe, 2007). Whilst it is acknowledged that this approach fits well with the purpose of this study, in that it all allows for complexities of the social world to be tackled, it is humanistic in approach and allows for a descriptive rather than statistical analysis, but it does have its disadvantages (Caelli, 2001). Some would argue that the main downfall is the lack of scientific rigour, the inability to formulate detailed analysis and the likeliness of generalisations (Neuman, 2002). This does not however mean that the study is without validity and credibility (this is discussed further in next section).

The online survey for instance is gathering non-scientific data as it is asking for opinions, feelings and hoping to find some sort of meaning behind perceptions. The survey aims to quantify this however for the purpose of analysis so does have a quantifiable element of placing a numerical value against the strength of belief of a set of statements. Therefore whilst this study is considered by the Researcher to be qualitative due to its subjective nature and analysis of perception it will remain aware of its quantitative traits and that often research falls into this mixed research category (Bryman, 2015). It is for this reason that there was some form of triangulation the use of a survey and some in depth interviews of both appraisees and appraisers to try and establish and form a clear point of view although it is important to address that this does not reduce the possibility of error (Denscombe, 2007.).

To summarise, some would argue that whilst most research is concerned with finding out an individual's point of view that qualitative investigation gets closer to this than quantitative which is more reliant on 'remote, inferential empirical materials' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 10). It is also agreed (Corbin & Strauss) that although it can be challenging and that results can be ambiguous one of the main reasons that people choose to carry out qualitative research is born from a personal desire to "step beyond the known and enter in the world of participants, to see the world from their perspective and in doing so make discoveries that will contribute to the development of empirical knowledge" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 16).

This section highlights the many contradictions that surround research theory and strategy. It is important not to try and pigeon hole the approach but more so to take the theories on board when moving towards the design and why they have been chosen. It is also apparent that when dealing with perceptions that this opens up a deeper issue as to how people perceive their own beliefs as well as how the Researcher forms their own and in turn represents others'.

3.3 Research Design

"Research design provides the logical framework upon which the researcher's project is conducted and enables the researcher to gather evidence that will enable the research question to be addressed" (David & Sutton, 2004, p. 134). This study in essence is an exploratory design in that it ultimately "adopted to discover what the issues might be" (Jankowicz, 2005, p. 199). As with most models and concepts an approach or design does

not always fit neatly into one specific category but perhaps it is more important to consider the quality features of the design.

3.3.1 Quality

There are three main areas when considering the evaluation of social research; reliability, replication and validity.

The subject of reliability is centred on the consistency of a measure of a concept. One way of testing reliability is to check the stability of the data you are collating and conducting a test initially and then at a later date to clarify that there is a high correlation and presumably more reliable data. This particular testing may work for more scientific approaches but for something such as a survey about perceptions then this is not feasible and it is accepted that many find this impractical and instead encourages these irregularities as it is concerned mainly with social entities that are by nature ever changing and dependent on feelings at a particular point in time (Bryman, 2015). Another way to judge reliability when dealing with subjective judgments such as in this study is inter-rater reliability whereby there is one person (in this case the Researcher) translating and analysing data. Whilst there is no easy answer to test reliability in this study and it is acknowledged that there is scope for change in answers at one time or another but this does not mean that it is not valid or credible. Most scientists would argue that if a study was not reliable, then the findings were inconsequential and that simple knowledge of people was usually based on some form of assumption. Nowadays, however, many critics would disagree and feel that when dealing with social studies in particular that all knowledge is of interest and that "assumptionless science is not possible" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 288) and simple inquiry has its place in research as with this case as its aims are to find out people's views.

Validity is very much linked to reliability and is arguably the most important quality of research in that it deals with the integrity of conclusions. Validity in this context is the agreement that a set indicator within the research is devised appropriately to gauge a particular concept. This research has what is known as face validity in that "the measure apparently reflects the content of the concept in question" (Bryman, 2015, p. 158). With regards to this particular study this has been established by other people that are in a position to consider this appropriate based on their own knowledge and experience such as

other acclaimed researchers and the Researcher's own Supervisor who has supervised similar studies.

Another quality criterion is that of replication. It could be argued that most social research, particularly in such a widely researched area as performance appraisal, is a replication of a study that has already taken place. However, true "replications in social research is quite rare" (Bryman, 2015, p. 41) as it is seen in the academic world to be seen as copying and not worthy merit yet some would disagree and feel that replicability "is highly valued by many social researches working within a qualitative research tradition" (Bryman, 2015, p. 41). This study aims to look at how staff perceive the appraisal process and if they find the process effective and useful, something that has no doubt taken place already, however it is not necessarily so that these studies have taken place by people of particular interest to the Researcher. For example there is unlikely to be an exact study such as this, which is in an administrative support role within a higher education setting and specifically within the confines of a particular institute, context, environment and under a certain institutional strategy. The Researcher in this instance can use the basis of other research and case studies in replicating certain elements that have worked for others but can also be confident in producing something relevant to the particular institute within which it is carrying out its investigation. This study deals with primary data as the Researcher has identified the subject area, designed the questions for the survey and interviews and will carry out the investigation and form the analysis. In addition there will be sources of secondary data used such as organisation documents and information from other literature in addition to the Researcher's own observations.

3.3.2 Sampling and surveys

It is not always possible to collect data from everybody, such as in the case of this study, not all staff are either relevant or available. For this reason it is accepted that a sample of the population are targeted to complete the survey. This study followed a non-probability process of sampling in that it was not random, as certain staff at the University were needed to make the study relevant, this could be described as purposive sampling as it has reached those of particular relevance and convenience sampling as access was readily available. The research was to look into the opinions of support staff so the survey needed to reach the appropriate people. Whilst distribution lists on email could have been used to identify most support staff in the University these were not felt to be an accurate sample of the population

therefore the Researcher sent all support staff within their own school (easily identifiable by a known email distribution list) but then other senior staff within other schools and sections of the University were asked to distribute to their own staff accordingly. This can be best described as snowball sampling. This also involves the other senior member of staff making a judgement about the appropriateness of distributing the survey and therefore adds to the credibility of the study (Denscombe, 2007). It also allowed for better distribution than had the survey been sent from an anonymous source as it went from somebody known and in authority, although it should be considered too that this could also have an adverse effect, particularly due to the nature of the questions to be asked. It was noted that not all schools chose to pass on the survey to any staff and this will be taken into account as "it is not good enough to assume that findings for the sample will be replicated in the rest of the population" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 13) particularly as some schools may have specific issues with staff or use of processes.

To summarise the total population of administrative, technical and support staff at the University of Huddersfield is approximately one thousand and the sample that compromised four schools and one central service totalled two hundred and fifty, with an actual response rate of ninety two. Whilst from the Researcher's point of view this approach was about entire inclusion of the appropriate population (i.e. all support staff within schools for instance) bias may still have inadvertently taken place through others who had the control of whether to pass on the invite to the survey for example or not. Some could argue that failure to engage indicates a level of resistance which in itself is interesting but not something that this research will concern itself with at this time.

3.3.3 Response rates

There can be a number of reasons as to why people did not respond to the survey such as being on leave or off sick, not reading emails, deleting surveys as staff are known to be over surveyed. Studies also show that researchers are finding that a general decline of responses to surveys in many countries and that there is a "growing tendency towards people refusing to participate in social survey research" (Bryman, 2015, p. 185). In an attempt not to alienate and put off those that had or were thinking about completing the survey, only one gentle email reminder was sent out.

There was a more apparent unwillingness to engage in the interview stage of the process and as literature suggests this is not uncommon as the topic area is often one thought not to be worthy of discussing since the feeling is that nothing will change. The Researcher believes too that this lack of participation could be down to many factors such as people being busy but more likely it needs to be considered that the intent and purpose behind it may have been questioned even though the purpose of the study was explained. Based on other research and studies that were looked at as part of this study however (Harrington, 1998; Jozwiak, 2012; Mani, 2002) it would seem fair to assume that much of this could be purely down to either people being so disillusioned with the process and not wanting to discuss their own feelings or even that they do not have much of an opinion either way and feel they have nothing to contribute. Whilst it was disappointing not to have more volunteers to be interviewed, it was felt that those that did participate had given feedback that was consistent and it could be argued is likely to be consistent with many others but there was also slightly differing views too which highlighted certain interesting factors all of which made the study worthwhile.

Therefore based on the sample and response rate the Researcher is satisfied that it was as best as could be expected without the luxury of more time and resources to put into advertising or spending more time on awareness for instance. Fortunately this study comprises a mixed method approach, so whilst each method as a standalone technique could be considered fairly weak then this triangulation does help strengthen the outcomes and allow for some meaningful data. Should the Researcher carry out any similar research in future then there would be significantly more time be allocated in campaigning and educating to the prospective participants about the value of their input etc.

3.4 Research methods

This section will look at the varying mix of methods and techniques that were used in order to research the subject area. It will consider the appropriateness and reasons for choosing them and analyse how efficient and accurate they are as a method in which to collaborate information to research the aims of the study.

3.4.1 Literature

Before beginning the research it was first of all important to analyse what literature already existed, not only to see what may prove useful and relevant to the Researcher's specific aims and to see if there were any obvious gaps or ambiguity that could shape the aims of this study. It became clear to the Researcher very early on that there was an overwhelming amount of literature in the subject of performance appraisals so for the purpose of this study this had to be very limited. It is difficult to give a review of literature in such a vast and complicated process within a confined word limit as the possibilities, comparisons, views and case studies are extremely vast. As such, the previous chapter is dedicated entirely to the literature review of books, journals and case studies and summarises the more interesting, relevant and useful findings within these.

Carrying out a literature review allows the Researcher to 'non-intrusively' collect primary text based data and as such generally does not require any interaction with those involved and allows this part of the research to remain somewhat detached. It could be argued that this distance can mean that most practical and ethical problems are limited but subsequently the inability of being able to interrogate matters such as validity and reliability does allow for an endless scope of sources of research over significant periods of time. The subject of performance appraisal has been a concern for decades so the literature spans significant periods of time which otherwise would not have been available. As with all research however, it cannot be ignored that there will be some level of bias and levels of quality when considering other people's literature, which in part can be what another person has perceived and surmised of their own research and "whether textual materials offer a window on reality, or only into the minds of their producers, is another question" (David & Sutton, 2004, p. 120).

Whilst this was the first phase of the research process it also continued throughout the entire study and was not a standalone activity. The Researcher used the University's own library to source hard copy books, made use of the online catalogues to gather more and used the internet such as Google Scholar to access even more using keywords of the research aims. As is expected though the results in search engines and such was vast and so more specific groupings of words were used such as 'engagement at appraisals' and 'perceptions of performance appraisal'. This returned a lot less and did show scope for more research in these specific areas as very little was found in the way for staff perceptions, particularly of administrative staff and in an environment similar to the University and where appraisal are not pay related. The reviewing of literature becomes a continuous cycle of activity which is

added to and reviewed to try and maintain relevance for the specific study's aims and outcomes. The process enabled the Researcher to fine tune what originally was a thought and clarify exactly the aims of the study and which research method and techniques to use as they were able to see what had worked well for others, what they would want to avoid for themselves and where gaps were.

3.4.2 Observations

Although not at all scientific in basis or approach, the Researcher's own observations were taken into consideration too. Whilst being conscious of the obvious drawbacks of bias and lack of validity and reliability of these, it would be senseless (and arguably impossible) to entirely dismiss these. Therefore it was thought advisable, yet with caution, to factor in these observations as they in themselves are 'perceptions' about performance appraisals that have a direct impact on the aims of this study. The Researcher is essentially a 'participant observer' which in itself is an oxymoron as it has the contradiction of being involved as a participant yet detached in distance to allow observation (Glesne, 2011). The process of appraisal is a live issue and the Researcher is involved in the cycle of the process throughout the year so it is difficult to completely separate oneself from the situation and be totally impartial.

The biggest challenge when dealing with this kind of technique is that when asking for people to relay what they observe, whether it be the researcher or the participant involved then we are dealing with some obvious issues that Denscombe (2007) describes as:

- Familiarity – we do not always interpret things accurately and can often instead report on what we are used to seeing based on previous events.
- Past experiences – will form how we filter out negative things and overly impress on the more positive things.
- Current state - our physiological state such as hunger can be directly linked to how we then view a situation and similarly emotions can also affect our perceptions.

This opens up again the debate previously mentioned about the complexity and use of social research as a science and the link to basic psychology which is an overwhelmingly vast area

which this study could not possibly cover but it is interesting to note and worthy of consideration throughout the study. Therefore observation is very much dependant on perception and in essence this study is really then the Researcher's perception of the participant's perception. This means that there is massive scope for misinterpretation, misunderstanding and lost truth throughout but should this mean that we never attempt to explore such matters? It is thought that with the mixed method approach of the study and elements of triangulation included that where bias and ethical issues may arise that the findings of the study are still of interest and relevant in achieving the aims that were set.

3.4.3 Organisation documents

In order to research the appraisal process it is important to see how and where this sits in the complete context of the organisation and how the organisation themselves portray the process. This involved look at the following documents:

- The University's strategy map (Appendix A)
- The University's training and guidance for appraisees and appraisers (Appendix B and C)
- The University's appraisal paperwork (Appendix D)

The documents form a very interesting basis when considering how employees view the process in relation to how the University displays their own perception and expectation of the process and what happens in practice. So whilst the strategy map encompasses the main objective of the University as a whole, the training documents for all staff give an insight into how it is expected that the appraisal process should work and what is excepted of staff with regards to engagement. Similarly when looking at the paperwork and the way that this is structured also helps to establish why participants in the research may have the views that they do. It could even be, for example, that the outcomes of this study could influence a review centrally of the paperwork and training.

3.4.4 Online survey design

An online survey that was emailed to staff was chosen as a technique as it could cover a large amount of people easily, quickly and cheaply. The survey was purposely designed so that it did not take too long to complete to try and encourage more responses. This can come at a cost however as many of the questions were statements in which they were asked to rank between one and five as to how much they agreed with it or not. Whilst this 'likert scale' does give more scope than simply asking yes or no type questions, it does open itself up to people voting middle of the road which makes interpreting scores difficult for the researcher (David & Sutton, 2004). This was helped somewhat however in analysing not just of a respondents answer to one question in isolation but in cross referencing this across their other answers to try and formulate an overall perception.

An online survey tool was chosen specifically which allowed anonymity and was formatted in a user friendly and simple fashion which again was done in the hope of increasing response rates and to encourage more open views. The Researcher undertook a small pilot and ran through the questions with a small group of staff to ensure that they understood the questions and at this time was able to tweak some questions which it was discovered held some ambiguity. The use of an online survey is fairly limited however in that the Researcher cannot prompt if a participant is not understanding the question or probe to elaborate on points of interest either but it can serve a useful purpose however in forming a general consensus for which the Researcher could then base further research into certain areas at the interview stage (Bryman, 2015). It is understood that when considering such a technique that there is "no golden formula that can guarantee success and protect the researcher from any possible criticism" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 169). Full details of the online survey can be found in Appendix E.

3.4.5 Interviews

Interviews were chosen as a technique as it was acknowledged that the survey results alone would not offer the insight and detail needed. "At the route of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 2013, p. 9) which can only be established by asking questions directly to that person. When the online survey was sent out participants were asked to make contact with the Researcher if they were willing to take part in the interview stage of the study, making this a complete random sampling. There was a disappointing amount of participants willing to take part but this could be for many reasons such as time,

convenience, not feeling comfortable talking about things, concern about the approach of the study and implications of being involved. The Researcher was aware of strong opinion within their own school and of staff that would have been both very willing and offer interesting views but for ethical reasons explained fully in the next section these were not able to be used. The Researcher interviewed all volunteers that came forward but it is acknowledged that this is not likely to represent the views of all staff or even a majority but is still relevant to determine how some staff feel.

The interviews were semi structured in that the one line survey questions were used as a basis but with scope for probing, expansion and new discussions to be allowed. It is suggested that the quality of the interview rests with the researcher having an open approach and being able to make on the spot decision about where to take the interview but that it leads to a better outcome and gathering of information but can test the interviewers intuition and knowledge (Kvale, 2008, p. 34). It also allowed the interview to flow as the aim of this study is to explore and find out what the perceptions are and the Researcher believed that there could be unknown reasons to explore. "Asking questions and getting answers is a much harder task than it may seem at first" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 47). The Researcher has experience of interviewing in relation to recruitment and selection and is aware of the basic skills required such as making candidates feel at ease, asking open ended questions with prompts or probes as required and to be able to tolerate silences. However, in the context of research these skills are tested much further. The Researcher was very conscious to try and not engage in a conversation about their own feelings and thoughts on the process for example. They were mindful that their opinion could also be conveyed without intent by simple facial gestures that might reveal agreement, surprise or disgust (Denscombe, 2007). Some of these considerations are sometimes an involuntary reaction and is something that occurs quite naturally and it just is not possible to eradicate it completely but it is at least understood that this can and will happen.

The interviews were held in a very small meeting style room which left enough room for intimacy and an informal setting whilst giving the participant room enough to feel comfortable. The interviews took place in the Business School and consideration was given to holding these somewhere neutral to give more ease to the participants however when weighing this up with convenience, availability and ability to ensure that everything was set up correctly and in the right environment, it was decided against. The "superficial similarity

between an interview and a conversation can generate an illusion of simplicity" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 174) but in reality interviewing is an extremely complex skill in itself. This technique has many disadvantages but is also "one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try and understand our fellow human beings" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 47).

3.4.6 Recording and transcribing

The interviews were recorded by the Researcher taking notes and also in audio recording too. Whilst some would argue that audio recording can mean that participants feel inhibited it has clear benefits in giving a permanent record that is complete in terms of speech, however it does fail to capture nonverbal communications (Denscombe, 2007). Transcription is known to be very time consuming, laborious and is commonly perceived to be a straightforward exercise of just writing down what was said but Denscombe (2007) challenges this for the following reasons:

- Audibility – many recordings can be difficult to hear and without sophisticated equipment and being able to track back and forth within a recording this can take a lot of time and sometimes still without any idea of what was said.
- Ability to speak with infinite sentences – the researcher has to formulate the spoken words into grammatically written sentences and to add in punctuation to make it sound in another readers ear as it did when it was said aloud which is more difficult than it seems.
- Emphasis, tone and intonation – along with accents and inflections etc. are very hard to illustrate in transcription unless you are very experienced in this field.

All of the interviews were transcribed by the Researcher. Although there are transcription packages and staff within the University that could have carried this task out the Researcher felt it was a valuable exercise in getting "closer to the data as the process brings the talk to life again" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 196).

3.4.7 How the data was analysed

The results of the survey (Appendix F) were originally produced by creating a series of pie charts which gave a clear indicator against each question the percentage of people's answers. This was useful in the first instance for example of knowing how many people had responded from each school or service. However when considering some meaningful analysis, such as the rating of all the statements within the survey, then another approach was needed. The Researcher then extracted the online survey data in an excel spreadsheet which enabled some cross referencing through pivot tables. This gave some much more interesting results. It gave the Researcher the opportunity to analyse responses in more detail, for example when asking staff particular questions it was then helpful to be able to see at the same time which category of staff they fell into or what their opinion of another statement might be in comparison. The results were presented in four main areas which were formed naturally during the research and in some way aligned to the aim and objectives of the study. Within each of these areas of interest, which are fairly significant areas, a smaller group of questions were considered together to form a more general finding than to individually look at each question in isolation. The Researcher then went through all of the transcriptions and picked out all the pieces of information of interest and included this into the relevant series of questions, along with the relevant research done to try and incorporate a complete overview of a particular area.

3.5 Ethical considerations

"Control, observation and interrogation are the hallmarks of science, but may have negative connotations when applied to humans" (David & Sutton, 2004, p. 18). Before undertaking this study, the Researcher considered what ethical implications there may be involved but they were also mindful that part of the research process at the University was also to submit an application to the School's Research Ethics Committee (Appendix G). The Researcher, as both a member of staff and a student at the University are bound by the regulations in place which determines that research should be:

> Conducted in a way that safeguards the health and well-being of those conducting or participating in the research or who may be impacted by the research. Wherever possible, risks should be identified in advance so that they can be evaluated, monitored and appropriately managed (Huddersfield, 2013).

3.5.1 Participants

The participants for this study were all adult members of staff at the University of Huddersfield and their involvement was completely voluntary. Whilst the online survey was sent out to the Researcher's own school as it was anonymous, it was decided that when it came to the interviews that these must be sourced from staff outside of their own school. Although there were willing volunteers from within the Business School that were keen to participate in this stage of the study the Researcher deemed that this would be highly unethical for many reasons. First of all there is a clear role conflict as subordinates may not talk freely to somebody that does, has, or may very likely in the future, carry out their own appraisal. This could not only put the members of staff in a compromising situation but the findings are open to great bias as some members of staff may for instance be new and keen to tell the Researcher what they think they want to hear. Similarly members of staff that have been at the University much longer, whilst providing a wealth of feedback confidently, it could put them in an awkward position and jeopardise future relationships with colleagues and the overarching responsibility of the Researcher is to ensure that "the dignity of those participating in or a subject of the research is respected" (Huddersfield, 2013).

It is acknowledged that even when taking this decision, to allow only participants from outside the school to take part in the interview stage, that this still does not eliminate the scope for conflict, bias and harm completely because they are still employees of the University. It could be argued that the University, although large in organisational size, is in reality quite a close community when considering that there is much cross University engagement. This is highlighted more so as the Researcher is of a relatively high grade and has connections that span the entire University in one way or another. So whilst opting to use participants outside of their own school the Researcher noted that this still needs to be done with caution and understanding that the relationship of power is "disproportionately located on the side of the researchers, thus codes of ethics instruct researchers to consciously consider and protect the rights of participants" (Glesne, 2011, p. 172).

3.5.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

"Participants have a right to expect that when they give you permission to observe and interview, you will protect their confidences and preserve their anonymity" (Glesne, 2011, p. 172). The online survey was anonymous and the results of these were saved on a secure

drive. The candidates that were interviewed were advised within an information sheet (Appendix H) and just before the interview stated that their comments would be confidential and only used for the purpose of this study. They were ensured that they would not be identified within the study in anyway by use of name, job title or anything that could denitrify them personally and would be included in analysis generally and not 'by person'. The participants were informed that the recordings from the interviews would be destroyed after transcription and the files would be stored on a secure drive that only the Researcher could access.

3.5.3 Informed consent

This study did not include any covert observation and the people involved were all informed upfront. The invitation to the online survey and the participant information sheet that were given to candidates ahead of the interview listed the aims and objectives of this entire study. It is easy to assume that candidates fully comply and consent based on an email so in addition to this they were also asked to complete a consent form (Appendix I) which clearly laid out what it was they were consenting to which included being recorded and that their participation was voluntary, would remain confidential and their right to withdraw.

3.5.4 Right to withdraw

Those that were invited to complete the online survey were told that once they submitted their responses that these would then not be able to be excluded at a later date but were assured this should be a problem as it would be anonymous. Those that were part of the interview stage were informed of a deadline by which they had every right to withdraw from the study with no prejudice, but that after that date it might not be possible to completely withdraw as the merging of results and analysis would have taken place. The participants in this case would be assured again of the confidentiality that the Researcher could ensure and that comments are written collectively and they would not be singled out as individuals.

3.5.5 Harm

The subject of appraisals, particularly when discussing fairness and relationships with line managers, can be very emotive. This could stir up feelings of anger, resentment and frustration as it is delving into people's personal feelings and possibly difficult events that

may have taken place involving their own development and engagement. The Researcher was mindful that should issues arise that were of concern, that whilst maintaining confidentiality, that they would ensure that the participant be signposted to help and support if it felt it was needed. Harm to the Researcher was also considered and the location was specially chosen that provided a safe environment. As well as emotional distress it could also be argued that "the most common ethical issue that you are likely to encounter concerns other people's expectations and raises hopes that something will be done" (Jankowicz, 2005, p. 65). The Researcher is aware that there are negative perceptions about the appraisal process and was extremely keen to ensure that staff realised that by investing time in the research, that this did not mean that things will change as this isn't in the control of the Researcher but that anything that did come out of the study could and may be explored.

This section has identified that this study will have bias, may carry risk etc. but that this has been considered and minimised where possible and this can in some way be clarified in that the Business School Research Committee has approved the research. They state that "all Business School staff and students undertaking research have a responsibility to undertake research activities with the highest possible standards of integrity and practice" (Huddersfield, 2013). Whist getting approval (Appendix J) from the Committee was the primary focus of the submission it was not considered just a paper chase but instead was useful process for the Researcher in ensuring they thought very specifically about the implications.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has explored the complexities of research design, looked at just how fragile the justifications can be for research methods and it would seem that there is much contradiction but should this deter social research?

4. RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the data that was collected from the online survey results and also incorporate the feedback from the interviews too. It is again, and particular at this stage of the study, of paramount importance to refer back to the objectives of the study, which were to determine:

- what elements of the system are effective/ineffective
- how staff feel they engage with the process and why
- perceptions of fairness and relationships within the process
- if staff feel they are a worthwhile tool

Each of these objectives are quite complex in terms of separating these into neat topics for discussion. However in order to present these findings in some ordered fashion it will break down the results into four key areas, whilst acknowledging that these are not stand alone issues and will cross over into each other:

- Participation and engagement
- Performance and development
- Fairness
- Relationships

4.2 Participation and engagement

How staff engage with the process can be an indicator as to how they perceive the usefulness, fairness and appropriateness.

When was your last appraisal carried out?

- 2% Not had one yet
- 95% Within the last 12 months
- 3% More than 12 months ago

How often are appraisals carried out in your team?

- 9% Every 6 months
- 88% Every 12 months
- 3% Less often than every 12 months
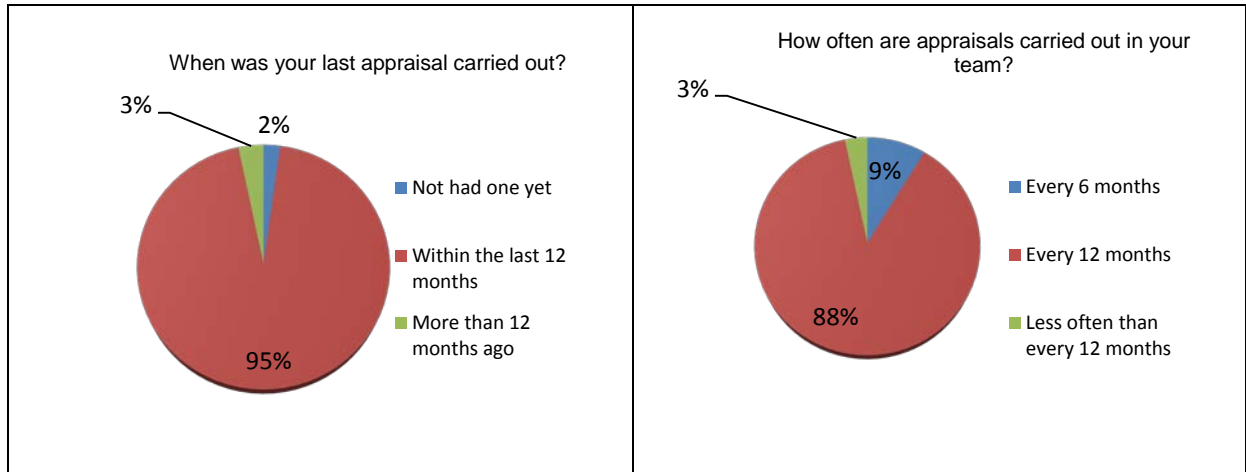
Almost all staff surveyed reported that they had had an appraisal carried out within the last twelve months. Those that had not had one could be explained due to their length of service being under a year. Of the three that responded that they had not had an appraisal carried out for more than twelve months it was noted that all of these had been working at the University for a significant period of time, one for over five years, one for over ten years and for another over twenty years. University policy states that appraisals are carried out on an annual basis (University of Huddersfield, 2017a) and it would seem that this happens for the majority of staff.   Just 9% of staff claimed that they have appraisals every six months although Lewis (2016) would argue that increasing the frequency is vital in making the process more manageable for managers in terms of time and commitment.

Was the competency framework used within the last 12 months?

- 74% Yes
- 21% No
- 5% Don't know

Did you complete the employee preparation form?

- 88% Yes
- 11% No
- 1% Don't know
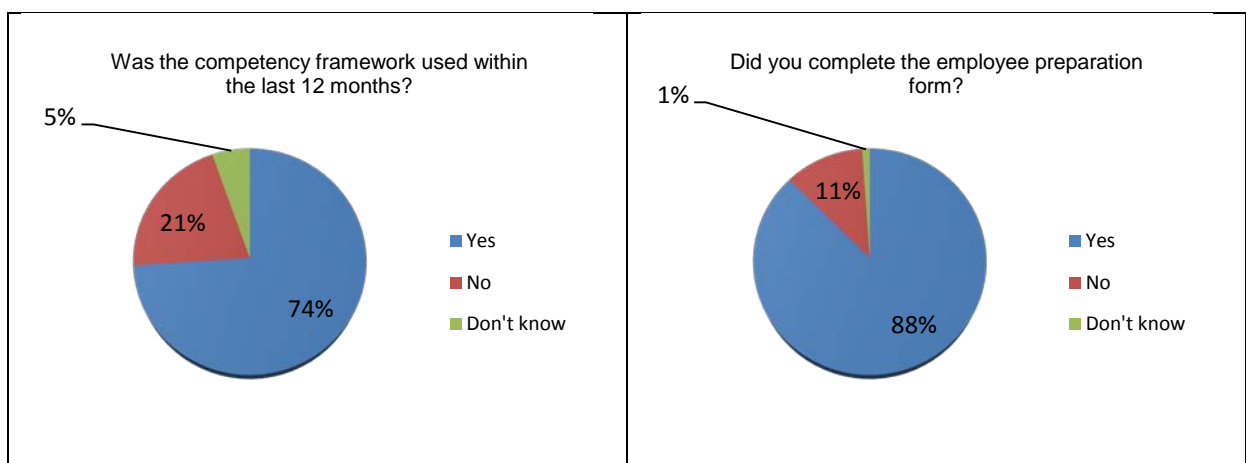
A significant number of staff (88%) indicated in the survey that they used the employee preparation form. Of those that used the preparation form most indicated that the form 'easy' to use but 'inefficient'. One participant described the form as merely a "good prompt" and another stated that their only issue with appraisals is having the time to prepare for them as a manager, alongside workloads, but acknowledged that "if you do spend the time doing the preparation, I think you get a lot more out of the process". Grote (1996) would agree that the time that managers have to dedicate can be substantial but Mani (2002) would suggest that there is a direct link between the effort that a manager puts into the process and the benefits reaped.

The competency framework is not used consistently with only 74% of respondents declaring that they are using it and from feedback in interviews it would seem that some of those that do use it, are using an edited version that the school has devised to serve its purpose better within that school. For example it was noted that one school, rather than looking at all categories of the framework, each year the management team would decide upon two specific areas to look at in line with their particular areas of interest or points of concern at that time. Similarly another member of staff suggested that the framework was too vast in its scope to provide anything specific and useful. They suggested it should be modified and staff should only give good examples in the categories that they had something to report on and perhaps then the ones where they did not have anything to offer as an example of good practice, could be highlighted then as an area for development. The literature shows that devising complicated systems can be an impossible task (Cascio, 1987) and whilst the framework can be useful in forcing a large number into ratings that are not too vague (Scullen, Bergey & Aiman-Smith, 2005) it does however become less effective when staff feel forced into categories (Schleicher, et al., 2009).

Participants felt that the competency framework was old fashioned and with comments making reference to it as being "too old to be of use" and that the process feels "tired and needs re-energising" and made comparison to how they perceived that academic staff have less stringent processes for their appraisals. It was suggested that the process should be looked at and felt that whilst using the competences was useful for difficult conversations that needed to take place with staff that it was a "bit out-dated" and suggested that in order to "keep the appraisal process meaningful, and not just a process we have to go through, we need to look at them in a different way". Hunt (2005) agrees that appraisal processes should

be systematically reviewed and Davis (2011) would suggest that all employees should be a part of developing the process in order for it to be more accepted and in turn successful.

Throughout all of the survey responses and the interview discussions the term "tick box exercise" was mentioned dozens of times in relation to the appraisal process some with an extreme view that claims "staff hate them and line managers don't want to do them, there is too much paperwork and the forms are a nightmare to fill in". This level of dissatisfaction is evident not just through this study but also it is a fairly consistent view through many others (Bretz Jr, et al., 1992; Palaiologos, et al., 2011; Pettijohn, Pettijohn, Taylor, & Keillor, 2001; van Woerkom & de Bruijn, 2016). The general consensus from this study seems to be that the paperwork can be complicated and for those managing several people can be very onerous with one member of staff saying that they had still not had the notes from their manager for a meeting that took place 6 months ago. It was suggested that the paperwork could be held on MyHR. MyHR is a part of the University's intranet that was introduced by the Human Resources department a few years ago. It was devised to enable staff take control of their own personal data, for it to be a place that all employees can access things immediately online such as payslips and a place they can change their personal details, bank details, view their absences and their job history. This suggestion from staff is important as Simmons (2002) points out that by stakeholders having input into the system, this certain amount of control can motivate them to engage in the process.
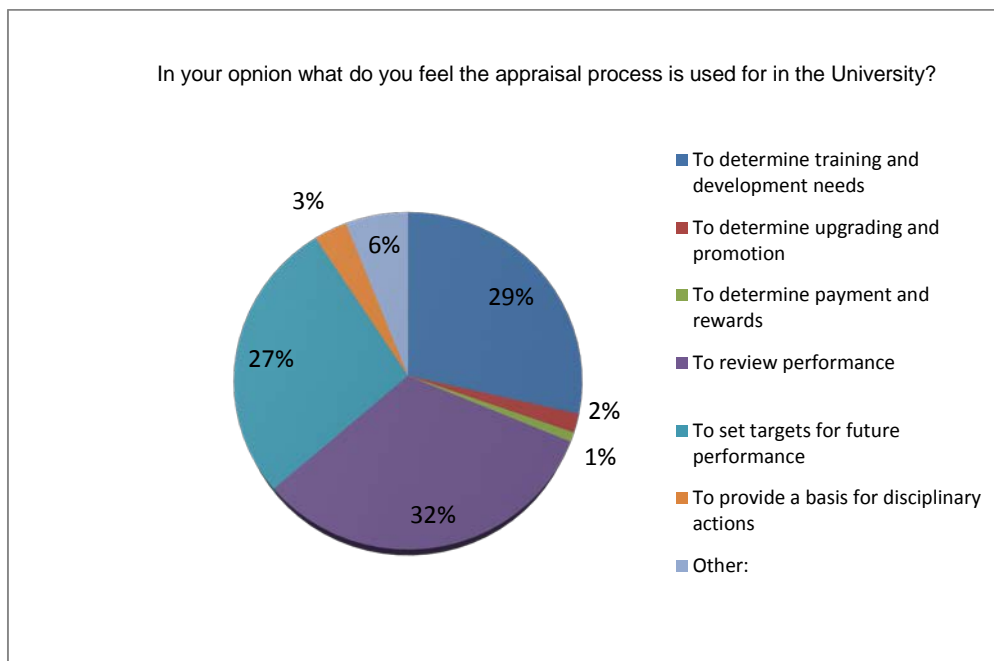
92% of staff surveyed indicated that reviewing performance and/or training and development needs were what the appraisal process was used for and Anderson (1993) agrees that these are the main principles. Interestingly the University appraisal process is not purported to be used for the basis of disciplinaries, to determine payment or upgrading yet those completing the survey had indicated that in their opinion this is not the case. It is worth noting too that these are members of staff that have been here for over 10 years which raises the question as to if this is perception or fact? Boachie-Mensah & Seidu (2012) feel that having appraisals related to pay make them more acceptable to staff however Levy & Williams (2004) believe that the University choosing not to, ensures that the issue of performance is better focussed on. Those that indicated 'other' (6%) suggested that it was for something else other than the options listed and indicated that it was just for the purpose of being a tick box exercise, which has already been identified as a term widely used throughout this study.
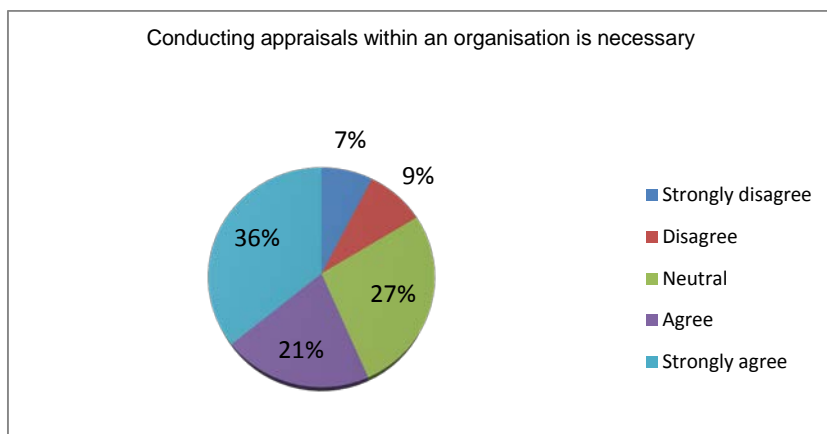
The majority of staff that completed the online survey thought that appraisals were necessary. For those that disagreed and strongly disagreed it was found that 80% of those were over 45 years old and had been at the University for over ten years.   Interestingly it was suggested that although staff felt that appraisals were necessary, they thought that the timing was all wrong and Armstrong (2000) would agree that timing should be taken into consideration. Many appraisals take place towards the end of the academic year and are timed as such as a natural end of the University cycle (end of July) and also time in which to ascertain any training or courses that staff may wish to engage with, many of which would begin at the start of term at the end of September. So whilst the timing makes sense in terms of identifying staff development and being the 'end of year' it is also a time that, for a lot of support staff, is one of the busiest in the schedule. When looking at the guidance that

is stipulated to employees and managers by the University there is no reference at all as to when appraisals should take place. There is no reference either that the appraisals should not take place more than once a year but the guidance suggest that it is tailored to a 12 month cycle.

There were certain conflicting feelings within staff because although they felt that appraisals were necessary and, that if used correctly, they could be extremely useful that they similarly felt that the University's appraisal process "is purely a tick box exercise which does not address many of the things which a good appraisal process should i.e. provide clear goals or targets to monitor performance and highlight skills gaps". Many respondents felt that the process was definitely necessary but that the University had "lost the point" and Cook (1995) would suggest that once staff lose faith in the system then they will view the process as useless. Other staff felt that the process was not needed and felt that team meetings throughout the year and one to ones with their managers served a better purpose but did acknowledge that the appraisal process did allow them to officially identify staff development needs but felt that this too could be done outside of the appraisal process. This was a recurring theme amongst many staff and that it was proposed that if the "line manager was doing their job properly then appraisals weren't needed" as issues would be dealt with throughout the year. Abolishing appraisals is a concept that many organisations are considering but still with a view to implementing alternative methods of feedback through the year (BBC, 2015; Rock, 2015) An interesting argument that was put forward was that perhaps appraisals should only be for those members of staff that wanted them which raises an interesting concept however McKimm (2013) would argue that not giving any feedback could suggest that there are no issues that needed addressing. Even if an employee is performing well it is suggested that formally giving positive feedback is also crucial (Karkoulian, et al., 2016).

I clearly understand the purpose of the appraisal process

7%
11%
17%
17%
48%

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree

I engage fully with the appraisal process

9%
12%
18%
21%
40%

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly agree
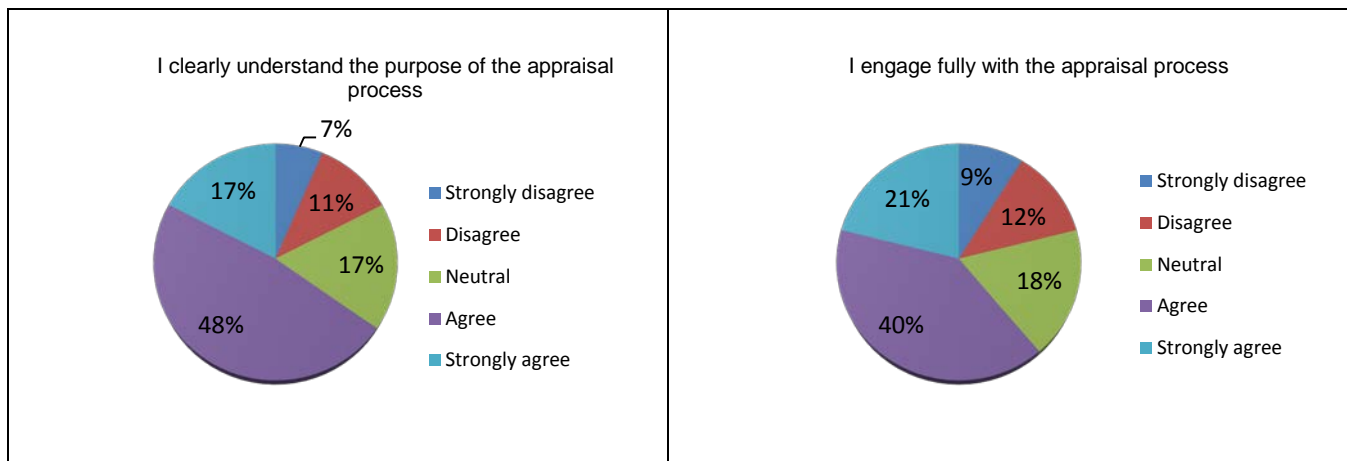
The above survey results charts show that a significant amount of people feel that they understand the purpose of the appraisal process and that they fully engage with approximately a fifth of all candidates claiming to 'strongly agree' with those statements. What is more interesting though when looking at the charts, is the quite simple yet very clear correlation between understanding and those that engage as they almost mirror each other something that Harrington (1998) predicts.   It is important to note too that almost a fifth have indicated that they disagree and strongly disagree with the statements and it is interesting to find out why this is and why this hasn't been conveyed in training. There was a real sense amongst participants of discord with the purpose of the system with some suggesting the appraisal as being "bureaucratic claptrap" and people claiming to witness "eyeball rolling and groaning" when the emails to initiate the process were sent out and it is agreed that this needs examining (Heathfield, 2007). Lack of timely training was an overarching factor many staff highlighted as an issue for concern with some respondents at interview claiming that they had done the training once but hadn't received anything more since and suggested that there should be a refresher course as happens with some other processes and the literature reiterates the importance of training (Armstrong & Baron, 2005; Huddersfield, 2017; Hunt, 2005). Other respondents declared that they didn't think that they had had any training and if they had done, it was several years ago. It was suggested that maybe the training could be put online for people to do and they could do it regularly and is similar to how the health and safety courses and refreshers are handled. It came to light during the interviews that there are no checks in place to ensure that staff have attended the training and one manager even highlighted that there is nothing in place to check that the line manager is carry them out at all. Some might consider more alarming however is that there are no checks made as to whether they are being carried out 'effectively'. They made reference to the practice of peer mentoring that happens amongst academic staff of observing each other's teaching and suggested that something similar should take place with the appraisal process, given that is it

given such apparent importance. Other indications from respondents suggest that they would welcome somebody in the Human Resources Department to observe their appraisal and some would agree that this is where the people with the most relevant skills are placed (Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012; Davis, 2011).

When asking about engagement it was mentioned that appraisals "don't get mentioned until the appraisal period" and that nothing seems to happen in-between, this very much adds to the perception of it being a tick box exercise. It was also stated that "if you have been here the process doesn't work as it should" and that it is "really difficult to be positive but after so long you just become negative about the whole process and I feel like managers don't engage". This shows that there are varying levels of understanding and engagement both of how staff perceive themselves to engage but also how they perceive that their mangers do yet this perception is crucial in ensuring effectiveness (Palaiologos, et al., 2011).

4.3 Performance and development
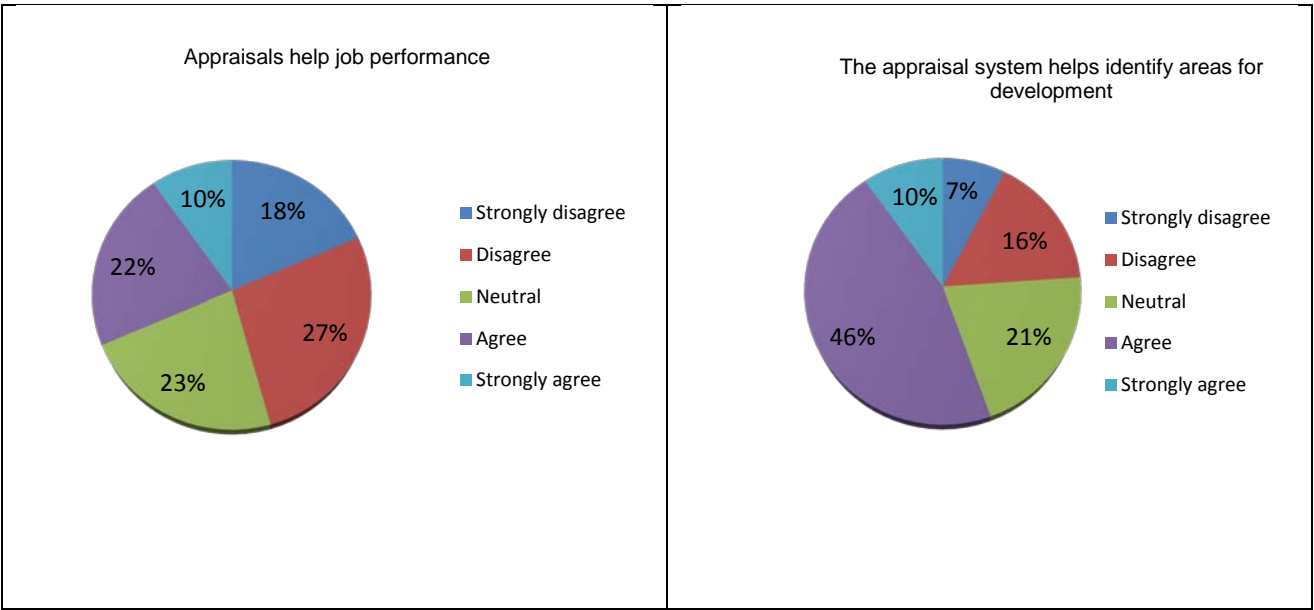
The survey results show that approximately a third of people agree with current research (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017; Karkoulian, et al., 2016; Mulder & Ellinger, 2013) that appraisals helped their job performance but in comparison more than half felt that the system had helped them identify areas for development. Of those that disagreed with both appraisals

helping job performance and development, more than half of those were aged forty five and over and had been at the University for a significant amount of time. The University would argue that appraisals are just as important for all staff even if they performing well (University of Huddersfield, 2017) and others agree that the interaction and feedback is important for development (Davis, 2011; Rowe, Fitness, & Wood, 2014). Many staff felt that the appraisal process itself was not the reason they improved job performance and also that training and development needs could be suggested or enquired at any time and that the appraisal process did not in itself become a way of identify areas for development. Respondents claimed that they felt that they already knew what was expected of them regardless of having an appraisal and that when setting goals there are "no consequences for anyone not meeting them" and so feel that the exercise can become pointless for some. There was a general trend of staff feeling that the appraisal process was not responsible for performance or development with extreme views suggesting that this rarely happens in practice as "people are scared to manage people nowadays and they do certain people's appraisals, but only because they have to and it's their job, and that's when it isn't effective".
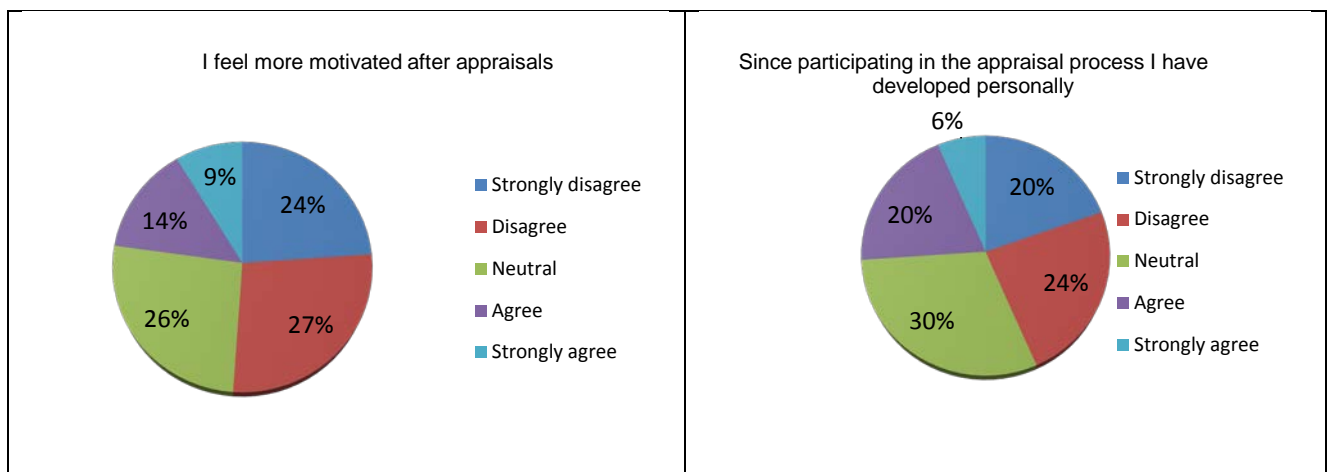
The survey results above suggests that more than 50% feel that their motivation does not stem from the appraisal process and only a quarter feel that since participating in the process that they have developed personally. A similar theme was raised that appraisals can often make staff feel "demotivated" and some expanded on this theory further by explaining that they had worked at the University for a considerable length of time and felt that having an appraisal had made no difference at all to their motivation. Kuvaas (2011) agrees that staff may react negatively to development feedback if they fell they are already performing well. They reported that in the first six years of employment they did not have annual appraisals and that in the last four years, although they do now have regular appraisals that they "feel like a tick box rather than encouragement to develop, in fact since having appraisals I feel

that I have had more responsibility taken off me" and feels that their job has become very boring at times as a result of this. Respondents refer to the process as being just a formality and that "there is no understanding or a genuine care to develop or progress employees" and Dipboye & De Pontbriand (1981) agree that this disengagement from the process will happen if the clear goals are not identifiable. There was a broad consensus that there were "no specific incentives for promotion" and felt that most job opportunities were already earmarked for somebody else but did suggest that it would be useful that instead of appraisals to have the opportunity of a six month promotion secondment. Boswell & Boudreau (2000) predicts that this can happen when appraisals are used for multiple purpose such as developing an individual but also trying to improve performance for organisational needs yet some might argue that by developing a person you are automatically making improvements that benefit the institute (Espinilla, et al., 2013).

The theme of lack of purpose identified earlier continues as employees stated that they felt that the appraisal process happens purely "because the University states that it should" and believes that the process makes no difference to what happens within their office and their working practices and it feels like a "tick box exercise that's done for the sake of it". They then make reference however to not wanting the appraisal process to be linked to pay as it was felt that this would be divisive and put too much pressure on line managers. Interestingly, when discussing motivation, pay related schemes were mentioned by others too. One respondent discussed during interview another institute at which they had worked whereby a cash sum was given to employees based on them having completed the appropriate appraisal paperwork and also a further amount relating to their actual performance. Of those that mentioned monetary reward, all felt that it could not in reality work in practice which Perry, Engbers & June (2009) also believed, but it was suggested that alternatives could be offered such as an extra days leave for instance and Brown & Haywood (2005) agree that incentives can maximise performance.

In a slightly different context one participant who carried out appraisals also felt very much unmotivated by their own personal appraisal. They felt that the discussions that they had with their own manager in the appraisal process were very much about instruction to pass onto the team and did not include any discussion about their own development and performance and lacks any satisfying of the employees basic needs (Heathfield, 2007; Hunt, 2005).

I feel that the time spent on appraisals is worthwhile

9%	Strongly disagree
24%	Disagree
24%	Neutral
24%	Agree
19%	Strongly agree

Appraisals give me a better understanding of what I should be doing

7%	Strongly disagree
17%	Disagree
23%	Neutral
28%	Agree
25%	Strongly agree
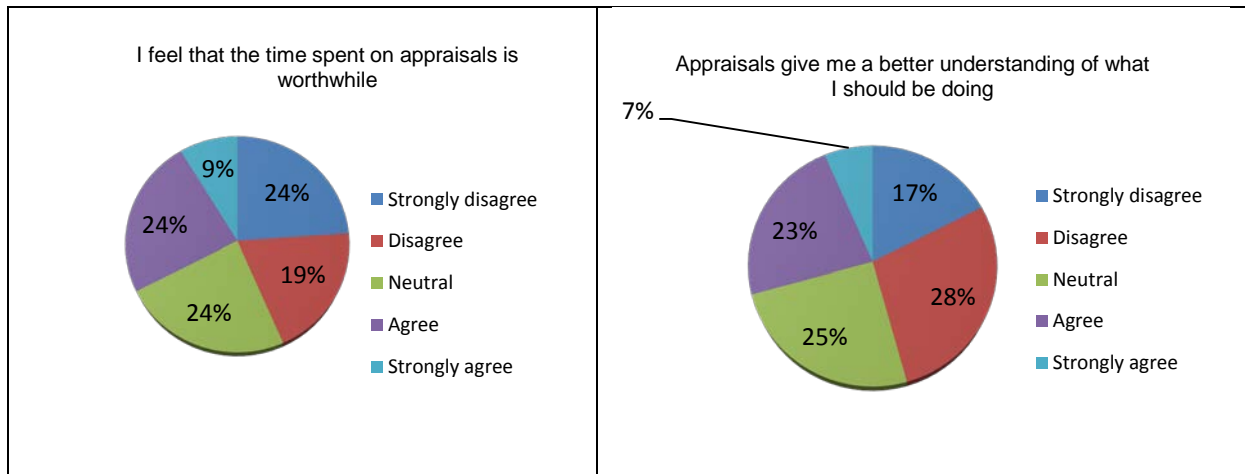
The survey results suggest that a significant amount of people (43%) disagree that the time spent on appraisals is worthwhile and with almost a quarter (24%) declaring that they 'strongly' disagree. It is important to remember that this will include those that just have their own appraisal and those that carry appraisals out too. It has already been identified that many staff have made reference to the appraisal process does not give them a better understanding of what they should be doing as they claim that regular meetings through the year have already accounted for this. Woerkom & de Bruijn (2016) would agree that it is the actual practice of any assessment of an employee that is important but how this is carried out is up for debate.

Whilst it was apparent through the survey and interview feedback that some felt that the time spent on appraisals was worthwhile it was noted that this wasn't shared by everybody. The issue of purpose and accountability was raised as it was felt that "managers do not follow up" and others criticised that "there is no real value to the appraisee in the process and if feels more like an exercise to comply with University policy". It was however suggested that the process "works well if both the appraisee and the appraiser value the process and put in the time and effort required".   An interesting consideration raised was that "appraisals are very important for staff members who do not feel confident or comfortable raising concerns and asking for feedback" as the process becomes a formal way of doing this but others still feel very opposed. It was acknowledged that whilst spending time on the appraisal process was worthwhile and did develop skills, that the process did need looking at with one suggesting that line managers currently "use the appraisal process discussions just so that it looks better for their paperwork".

The appraisal process supports the University's strategy
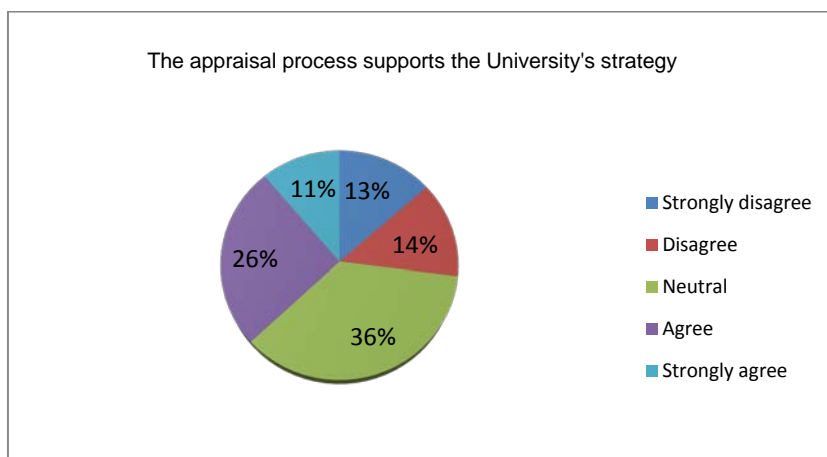
The survey indicates that just 37% of staff feel that the appraisal process supports the University's strategy. Nearly the same amount again have chosen a neutral response suggesting that they may not agree either way or that they are unsure whether this is the case or not. There are over a quarter however (27%) that felt the appraisal process did not support the strategy and this was illustrated further with comments during the interviews. A general impression from staff was that they felt that the appraisal process "should be incorporating University objectives" as does Woerkom & de Bruijn (2016) another agreed and states it would be "beneficial for all staff to be set targets based on the school strategy and key performance indicators". It was suggested that currently the targets "mainly focus on academics and research" and that there is little consideration for the support staff when considering the strategy.

4.4 Fairness

I feel that my voice is heard at appraisals

I do most, or a significant amount, of the talking at the appraisal
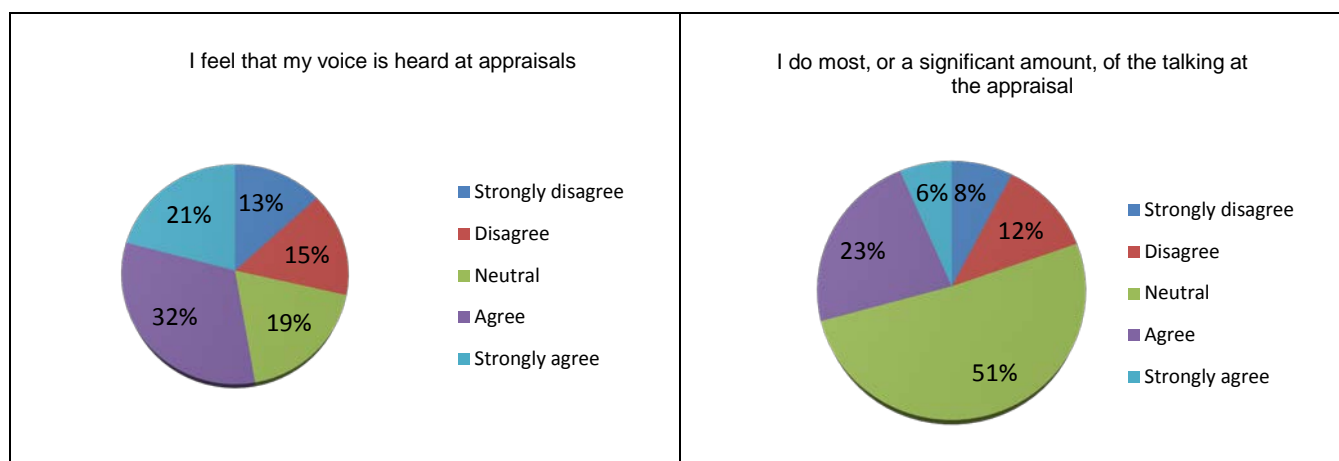
When looking at whether staff feel that their voice is heard at appraisals or that they do a significant amount of the talking then the survey results above show a very mixed response. To clarify however more than half (53%) feel their voice is heard but only 29% feel that they do most of the talking, meaning that almost three quarters (71%) either disagree or are neutral as to feeling that they talk for a significant portion of the appraisal meeting. Narcisse & Harcourt (2008) believe that this opportunity to be heard will reflect in how staff perceive the process to be fair and similarly others agree that the two way process and being able to have a right to challenge will also contribute to their perceived perception of fairness (Folger, Konovsky, & Cropanzano, 1992; Shrivastava & Purang, 2011) During the interviews this trend continued as there were very differing experiences. Some reported that they felt that their voice was heard and that their appraisal meeting was a chance for them to talk freely and openly. Many respondents were in agreement that they felt that their voice was 'heard' as in it was listened to, but that what they actually said was not dealt with and that their manager "likes to say yes I know, isn't it terrible that so and so is like that and people are like this to justify people's behaviours and then do nothing about it". Worryingly one respondent felt that their voice could not possibly be truly heard since their line manager "types as we speak" during the appraisal meeting presumably to save time later writing up the notes.
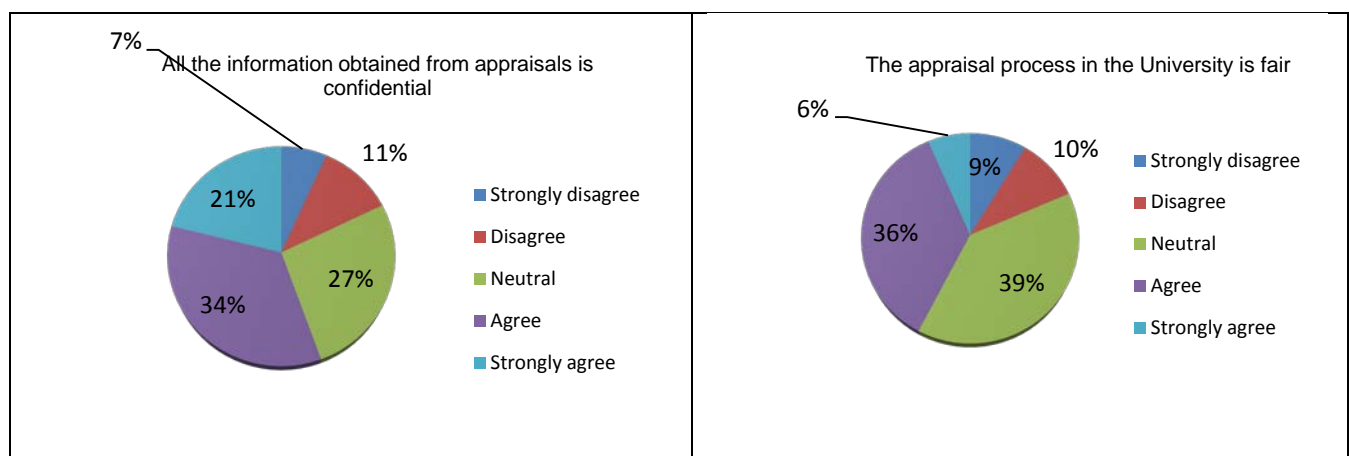
The survey results show that only 18% of respondents felt that the information obtained from the appraisals is not confidential. One participant wrote the comment in their survey response that whilst "it does provide a good opportunity for time with a line manager for frank discussions, I do not consider this to be fully confidential" and during interview another agreed and elaborated further with "no, I don't think it is because she tells me things about

other people in my appraisal so I'm fairly sure she does that about me to other people". In comparison to this, it can be seen that there are very similar response and percentages when looking at if staff perceive the process to be fair as 43% agree that the process is fair but 19% disagree and more than a third (39%) responded neutral. Rowland & Hall (2013) would suggest that it is common for staff to feel that appraisals are carried out unfairly. In interview it was suggested that not all people do have appraisals across the University but that this in itself was not fair as they felt that everybody should have one especially since "all have a contract of employment and should be accountable". Sudin (2011) would argue that if an employee considers there to be any elements of unfairness within the organisation then the reactions to appraisal will suffer as consequence and furthermore Cawley, Keeping & Levy (1998) suggest that employees will accept much more criticism at appraisal as long as they see the overall system as fair.

4.5 Relationships
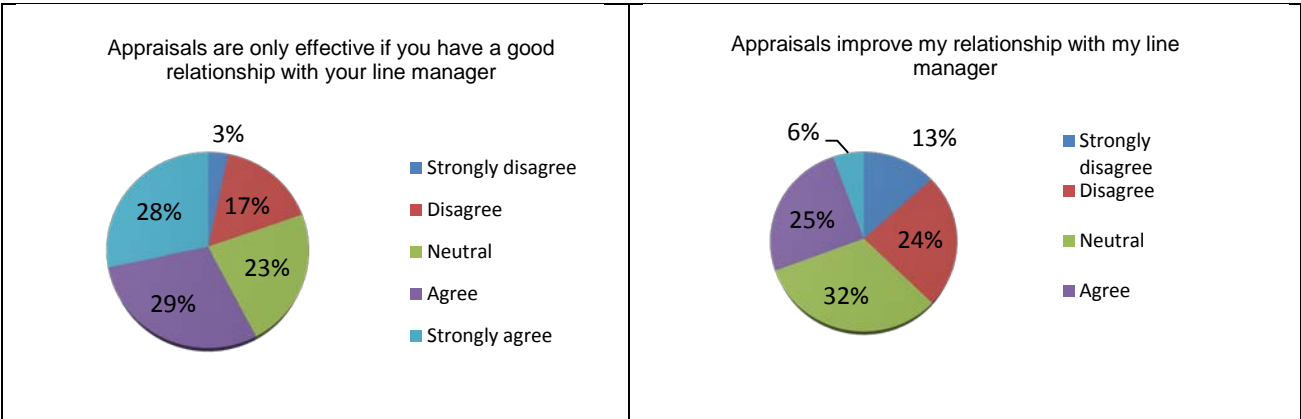
The majority of people surveyed believed that line manager relationships do not affect appraisals and just over a quarter stating that the appraisal process helps improve relationships with their line manager. Respondents elaborated further within their survey response to indicate that there were some very strong and varying opinions on the subject of relationships within the appraisal process. One example was given suggested that having "a good line manager who is available at any time to discuss matters, appraisals seem surplus to requirements" and another agreed that having a good relationship with their managers meant that "you have a good two way door open policy" and then nothing in the appraisal comes as a surprise, making it more productive. It was considered however that this may not be the same for everybody as somebody stated that they have had experience of two line

managers and whilst one was easy to work with that the appraisal process with another was relatively unproductive as that manager was able to "make life at work very difficult". Some staff feel that the "success of appraisals depends on whether your manager likes you or has an axe to grind", Many would agree that the relationship quality of appraisee and appraiser is a significant element of a successful appraisal (Elicker, et al., 2006; Mulder & Ellinger, 2013; Murphy & Cleveland, 1991; Pichler, 2012). Another survey respondent suggested too that the relationships during the appraisal process could also be dependent on the line manager's view of the situation and suggest that this can have a negative effect on appraisals "if your line manager is not engaged with developing herself and does not see the need for other to engage in this activity".

During interview one participant was adamant that a line manager's relationship with staff should not make the appraisal process more effective and that they felt that view was one of the main problems with appraisals. They strongly believed if a manager had a good relationship with their staff that this could then result in them not dealing with issues effectively, either during the year or as part of the appraisal process. They suggested that some line managers need more training on "how to manage and be a leader to put that into practice at appraisal" and that you "don't have to be friends to resolve issues". They acknowledged that on a friendship basis that in some way the appraisal process does improve relationships and make for a more effective appraisal but only in as far as "it's great, you go away, you chat, you might talk another other people, where you will gain information". This one particular member of staff, however, felt due to their own personal relationship with their line manager that they felt their appraisal experience was much more open and different to other peoples and that at times they would push these boundaries purposely for a reaction. They explained further though that whilst it can at times be good to have more information than they felt others may get that at times this was also a burden and then can make them feel aggrieved by their line manager for putting them in that position.

A shared view amongst many staff indicated that perhaps the person carrying out the appraisal should not be your direct line manager as this could result in "a conflict of interest and cause clashes" that they recall from personal experience. There was an apparent consensus across many staff that different approaches should be trialled with one stating "wouldn't it be lovely if it was all mixed up and different people appraise different staff". When probed further it was suggested that having a good relationship with your manger can

often mean that the lines of authority are blurred, particularly for staff that have worked at the University for a considerable amount of time and that "you do build friendships and form relationships". This is in stark contrast to the literature and studies undertaken by those such as Pichler (2012) who determined that the quality of exchange between employee and employer resulted in a more positive reaction from those being appraised and their perception of the effectiveness and fairness of the process.
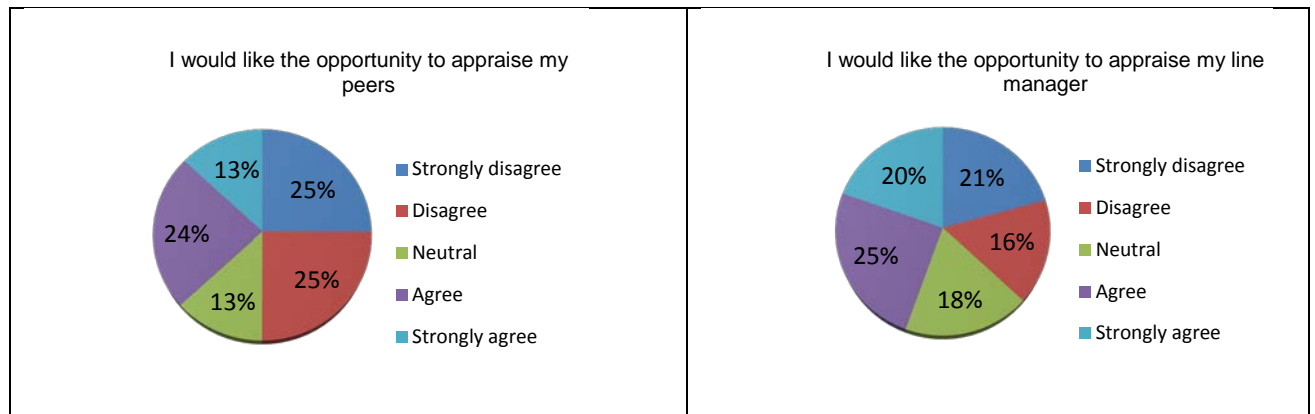
The survey results show that just 37% of staff would like the opportunity to appraise their peers and Rees & Porter (2004) believe that some people would me more willing to listen to feedback from their peers but 50% disagreed, with a quarter of all staff indicating that they in fact strongly disagreed with wanting the chance to be able to do that and Drexler, Beehr & Stetz (2001) agree that it can cause conflict. In comparison slightly more however (45%) indicated that they would like the opportunity to appraise their line manager as they agree with the literature in that it gives them a voice and ability to critique their manager as they are the best placed to do so (Bettenhausen & Fedor, 1997; Karkoulian, et al., 2016). There was less resistance too of appraising managers than peers with just 37% opposing this and agreeing with other literature that suggested the process can have an adverse effect (Analoui & Fell, 2002; DeNisi & Kluger, 2000; Ghorpade, 2000). This trend was continued during discussions at interview too as very few people had the desire to be able to do this and those that did like the idea, felt that in reality it probably wouldn't work out well and it could be very awkward. One respondent felt that they would quite welcome the opportunity but felt that their peers and line manager might not be quite so welcoming of it because "I know too much, when you've been here a long time you know where to dig, and how to get a reaction" whilst they say this was not in a way to "trip them up" it was felt that this could be their opportunity to raise directly with their line managers "how they're dealing with people as individuals and as a team".

5. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

5.1 Overall conclusion

When the Researcher first began this study it was with the expectation of being able to interpret and explore how staff perceive the appraisal process through their own eyes whilst being mindful not to approach this as a Line manager and to simply represent the findings (Denscombe, 2007).   It was also, some would argue, unrealistically expected that the research might add something different to the already vast amount of literature that exists (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) but in reality the study supports much of the literature and studies that have already taken place. The study did however meet its objectives and has been able to identify some interesting areas and possible recommendations for the future.

The objectives of this study were to determine:

- what elements of the system are effective/ineffective
- how staff feel they engage with the process and why
- perceptions of fairness and relationships within the process
- if staff feel they are a worthwhile tool

5.1.1   What elements of the system are effective/ineffective?

The more successful elements of the system seem to be that of identifying staff development and training needs which research shows is the main principle (Anderson, 1993) yet it is widely considered by staff that other mechanisms are in place that already deal with this and more effectively and timely than the appraisal process which is felt to only be done as a means to an end rather than with any real purpose.

A major discovery within this study is the distinct lack of training and monitoring of the appraisal process at the University, both of those carrying out the appraisal and those being appraised. The literature highlights how the process, of what is effectively 'judging' a person, can be wrought with difficulties (DeNisi, 2000; Hunt, 2005; Moon, 1997) and that success of

the process hinges on its implementation (Fletcher, 1997; Guest, 2011; Mohrman Jr et al., 1989). In addition to this the University itself refers to the importance of it being a crucial tool in managing and developing people and performance (Huddersfield, 2017). So why is it that there are no checks in place to ensure that training has taken place and similarly ensuring that appraisals are being carried out at all, let alone that they are done so to an acceptable standard? The literature suggests that Human Resources are best placed to take a more active role since they should have the specific skills required (Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012; Davis, 2011) but as this is unlikely to be feasible in such a large institution, might they consider instead at least implementing and overseeing the checks and monitoring?

Another trend of dissatisfaction and ineffectiveness of the process that staff report is that of time. This is a combination of the time taken by managers that have several appraisals to implement, of staff completing what they view to be extensive and complicated paperwork and the time of the year that the process takes place. It could be argued that any worthwhile mechanism will and should take time and commitment (Grote, 1996) and questioned that if there was a more satisfactory system in place and the benefits of it were being reaped (Mani, 2002) then would time still be considered a factor? Staff feel that annual appraisals are not adequate and perhaps as they occur just once a year that this adds to the perception of being an obligatory exercise rather than a meaningful exchange. Other considerations such as increasing frequency could be looked at (Lewis, 2016) and reviewing the time of year that they are carried out to ensure they are suitable for all involved which in turn should increase engagement (Armstrong & Baron, 2005).

5.1.2   How do staff feel they engage with the process and why?

Staff participation varies and is usually due to a link in perception of how they see the process being useful to them (Boswell & Boudreau, 2000), being fair (Rowland & Hall, 2013) and sometimes about the relationship they have with their managers (Pichler, 2012). There is an apparent desire within staff, even amongst those that are fairly resistance to any appraisal process, in considering new and, some may argue, extreme transformations with what is being considered a redundant and out-dated process. It is important to remember going forward that having stakeholders involved in the change process will aid future engagement (Simmons, 2002). Staff have illustrated throughout the study that having a voice that 'is heard' in the organisation is an important element of appraisals (Cawley, et al., 1998; Elicker, et al., 2006) and therefore instrumental in governing perceptions of

engagement and fairness. Staff have a real desire in that they want to see their inclusion in the University strategy and a more obvious link to the targets and performance indicators and it is agreed that this would instantly improve engagement (Espinilla, et al., 2013).

5.1.3   Perceptions of fairness and relationships within the process

Fairness and consistency is a shared concern in that staff feel that the current process, although it is claimed is one system for all, is not necessarily the case. Everybody's experience is varied and in some cases non-existent and subsequently their perception of fairness is formed from this (Sudin, 2011). Some would argue that one size should fit all but could the system truly be fair if the same process was not applied to all staff (Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008).   When considering alternative means of appraisal such as peer and upward appraisal as a way of gaining a more fair and overall picture (Karkoulian, et al., 2016) this study aligns with the literature and there seems no real appetite in being able to formally appraise peers and managers seeing this as a potentially hazardous situation (Drexler, et al., 2001; Rees & Porter, 2004) even when considering the merits of having those best placed to comment (Antonioni, 1995; Gueutal et al., 2009). Similarly staff seem generally uninterested in applying pay, promotion and rewards to the appraisal process because they consider these can be an incentive and often view themselves (Boachie-Mensah & Seidu, 2012) worthy of them but that in practice and in ensuring fairness the implications would be enormous and make them counterproductive (Perry, et al., 2009).

5.1.4   Do staff feel they are a worthwhile tool?

It would seem that there is a general feeling that appraisals should exist and can be an effective and worthwhile tool but that the process has room for improvement and the literature supports that it should be systematically reviewed (Hunt, 2005). It is important to remember too that we are dealing with the uncertainty of perceptions, so even if staff perceive that they are not a worthwhile tool, it could be argued; is it the process that is in need of changing or the perception that needs challenging, since much of these can be based on past experience and attitudes (Barrett, 2014; Pennington, 2002).

This study was undertaken with a view to gauging staff perceptions about the appraisal process and to represent these views as fairly as possible. Throughout the study there were no areas that were discussed that held a unanimous view and there were varying responses

and levels of agreement, which you would expect with any system and it is accepted that not everybody will be satisfied with one process (Palaiologos, et al., 2011). It is interesting to note however that there are still staff that are generally very satisfied with the system so maybe it should not be disregarded altogether as it is acknowledged that designing such systems is a complicated business (Cascio, 1987). Of real concern for the University however, is that there are such inconsistencies in practice, participation and acceptance of the system. So whilst abolishing the system, as research indicates is happening more and more (BBC, 2015; Jozwiak, 2012; Rock, 2015), may be too radical of a step for the University, it may nevertheless consider some recommendations resulting from this study.

5.2 Recommendations

The overall aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of staff perceptions with a view to making the process more effective for both staff and managers alike. As a result of this study's findings and from direct suggestions from participants too, the following recommendations are being proposed:

- Consider the timing of appraisals (do they need to take place in the summer?).
- HR to monitor that appraisals have taken place.
- Consider an observation scheme either from other independent managers or by the HR department.
- Increase frequency from every 12 months to every 6 months.
- Make training compulsory as part of induction (probation period not signed until done).
- Make the refresher sessions compulsory annually (with checks by HR) for appraisees and appraisers.
- Review paperwork, with staff involvement (Davis, 2011).
- Review University's strategy to incorporate administrative and support staff targets.

At the time of writing up this study, the Researcher was made aware that there was a review taking place centrally at the University around the appraisal process and the findings of this study will be put forward to form part of this review.

5.3 Limitations of the study and further research

This study is limited in that it is restricted to certain schools that took part and with limited numbers participating, however as the study was seeking perceptions of staff and not one view then this has met its ultimate aim. If the Researcher were to take this exploration further it would be interesting to look at having a wider inclusion and investigate why certain schools chose not to participate. Should a similar study be carried out in future the Researcher would be mindful of the need of time in which to allow for better awareness campaigns to ensure better participation, and would then perhaps contemplate using more focus group style interviews which may welcome more debate and open discussion.

The study was restrictive in that it was researching support staff within a specific environment which were the subjects of interest to the Researcher but it would be interesting if carrying out further research how the perceptions of academic staff within the institute were in agreement or varied, especially since it was identified that there was a perception by support staff that they were treated differently. Other variations to the study which would provide a fascinating insight would to be look more closely at the psychological factors or equality factors such as gender and age to see if they had any bearing on the outcomes and of people's perceptions and why. Similarly it would be an intriguing cross reference to duplicate a similar study at other large institutions such as a local council authority or the NHS.

The possibility of adding to what is already an tremendous amount of literature is boundless and since appraisal still remains such an unsatisfactory process it is likely that this will continue (Pettijohn, et al., 2001; Poon, 2004; Shrivastava & Purang, 2011).

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APPENDIX A

Our strategy map
2013 – 2018

VISION

Our Vision:
To be an *inspiring, innovative* University of *international* renown

MISSION

Our Mission:
To deliver an accessible and inspirational learning experience, to undertake pioneering research and professional practice, and to engage fully with employers and the community

VALUES

Our Values:
Ambition, Student focussed, Pioneering, Integrity, Respect, Excellence (ASPIRE)

STAKEHOLDERS

Our students can expect:
- **S1** An education that challenges and creates excellent career opportunities
- **S2** To learn from staff at the leading edge of knowledge and application
- **S3** High quality physical and supportive learning environments

Our partners can expect:
- **S4** A responsive and flexible University that delivers high quality work efficiently and effectively
- **S5** To deal with leading experts in their field
- **S6** High quality and fit for purpose facilities

AIMS

Inspiring
- **A1** To inspire our students to attain the highest academic and professional standards
- **A2** To inspire our students to enjoy an outstanding University experience
- **A3** To inspire employable and enterprising graduates

Innovative
- **A4** To increase the number of our research active staff and the quality of their outputs
- **A5** To increase the quantity and quality of our postgraduate research student community
- **A6** To increase the quality and range of our external research, enterprise and innovation income

International
- **A7** To become an increasingly popular destination of choice for world class international students
- **A8** To ensure our international students have an inspiring world class student experience
- **A9** To become ranked as an outstanding international university

ENABLERS

Developing and empowering staff
- **E1** To establish an effective leadership and management culture which secures continuous improvement
- **E2** To identify and develop the human talent of the University to secure continuous improvement and clear succession planning
- **E3** To provide a fair, transparent and motivational reward structure

Financial sustainability
- **E4** To generate sufficient cash to meet strategic investment plans and economic contingency
- **E5** To maintain financial strength
- **E6** To ensure all Schools and Services maintain financial and operational viability

Efficiency and effectiveness
- **E7** To improve core processes and performance
- **E8** To increase academic time for research and innovation
- **E9** To create a sustainable environment which enables the University to meet its strategic objectives

University of
HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

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Key Performance Indicators
2018

Inspiring

1. 75% 1st/2:1
2. Top 10% among mainstream English universities in NSS
3. Top 10% among mainstream English universities in DLHE

Innovative

1. 60% academic staff publishing at international level, 100% at national level
2. To achieve and maintain a PGR community of 1000+ FTE
3. £18m research, enterprise and innovation income

International

1. Top 25 among mainstream English universities for the percentage of international students on campus
2. Top 10% of International Student Barometer
3. International QS 4 Star rating

Developing and Empowering Staff

1. All Schools and Services to show improvement in QoWL indicators of good management practice
2. 80% of promoted posts short list internal applicants. 100% academic staff hold/ registered on programme leading to a Doctoral qualification
3. University Employee Engagement and Satisfaction measure in QoWL above sector benchmark

Financial Sustainability

1. Minimum 10% margin for sustainability and investment
2. To remain in the top 10% among mainstream HEI's in the HESA Security Index
3. All Schools and Services to maintain agreed budgetary norms

Efficiency and Effectiveness

1. Evidence of annual improvement in the KPIs
2. 20% reduction in admin in average academic workloads
3. Top 10 among mainstream English universities for the quality of the Estate.

Using Appraisal

Appraisee's Guidance Notes

Why have appraisal?

The purpose of appraisal is to make the best use of the University's resources by developing its employees in a systematic way – in the interests of the University and individuals. It provides employees with a formal opportunity to present what they feel are their main achievements; to discuss their performance in general; and, to make plans for both the year ahead and their longer term future. It is important that the session emphasises the establishment of priorities and achievement of objectives reflecting both the needs of the University and the individual employee.

Who does it apply to?

Everyone. All staff have some form of appraisal.

Who carries out the appraisal?

In most cases it will be you and your line manager. This person is best placed to understand your role and how that role may develop. A few staff may report to more than one line manager. In this case one person will conduct the appraisal but will ensure that it covers all aspects of the person's role. If you have reasons to object to your proposed appraiser you must raise these directly with the Dean or Director. However, the appraiser would not be changed unless you could provide objective evidence to support your belief that you would receive a fair appraisal.

What's discussed?

Looking at your job description and any priorities and targets that were set in the last review you will both consider what progress you have made in meeting these. You'll be able to reflect back over the last 12 months. There shouldn't be any surprises, appraisal doesn't replace the normal feedback on your performance you should receive. You'll also consider what training and development you need to help you achieve your goals over the next 12 months but also to help to develop your role and achieve longer term career goals.

Many people don't want further career development. However, you will want to consider how you can improve and develop your current role… looking at new ways of working, support to implement new procedures, systems etc…

How does it work?

You and your appraiser agree a date for the appraisal discussion. Your manager will give you a copy of the self assessment form.

The self assessment form will help you prepare for the meeting and discussion. you should use this form for your own assistance and you may choose not to show it to anyone. However if you share this form with your manager s/he will need time to consider your needs and suggestions.

On the basis of this discussion, the agreed main action points and objectives for the year ahead will be written on the performance review form by the manager. You will have the opportunity to read it and may ask your manager to change things. You will also be able to add your own comments. You and your manager should sign the form. A copy will be given to you and your manager will keep a copy.

What can I do if I don't agree with my appraiser's assessment?

If you don't agree with your manager's assessment of your past performance you should try to persuade your manager with evidence. If you don't agree on development needs you should again try to persuade your manager by demonstrating how the development will improve your performance in your current and future roles. If agreement cannot be reached you can record your comments on the summary form. If you feel you have been unfairly treated or that the procedures have not been followed you should raise this through the grievance procedure. Advice on the operation of this procedure is available from your trade union or personnel.

What should I expect from my appraiser?

Through the process you have the right to expect:

- ♦ To receive fair and consistent treatment
- ♦ To have sufficient time to prepare
- ♦ To respond to criticism
- ♦ To receive reasons and explanations for your manager's opinions
- ♦ To be listened to
- ♦ Honesty

What about the Capability procedures?

These are very different procedures. Appraisal focuses on improving performance through developing an individual's skills, their role and their career. The capability procedures are used in a very small number of cases where performance is unsatisfactory. If the capability procedures are being used this process will continue and you won't have an annual appraisal.

Using Appraisal

Appraiser's Guidance Notes

Why have appraisal?

The purpose of appraisal is to make the best use of the University's resources by developing its employees in a systematic way – in the interests of the University and individuals. It provides employees with a formal opportunity to present what they feel are their main achievements; to discuss their performance in general; and, to make plans for both the year ahead and their longer term future. It is important that the session emphasises the establishment of priorities and achievement of objectives reflecting both the needs of the University and the individual employee.

Employees who feel that the organisation values their contribution and cares about their well being work better. The review is a key opportunity to achieve renewed commitment to the University by telling employees that their role – no matter how small – is valued by the organisation. The key questions are how can you improve things for your employee and how can they develop their talents to the benefit of the University.

What procedure is followed?

The procedure is as follows:

(a) Agree a date for the actual appraisal discussion, in consultation with the employee
(b) Give the individual a copy of the employee guidance notes and a self-appraisal form. You should make sure you give this information to the individual at least two weeks before the session. Remember the self-appraisal form is for the employee's use. They can choose not to use it. They may decide to share this information with you but they don't have to.
(c) The appraisal discussion takes place, centred on the headings on the self-appraisal form
(d) On the basis of discussion, agree priorities and targets for the year ahead. Note these on the appraisal record
(e) Consider longer term goals, both how an employee may develop their current role and any career goals they may have.
(f) Identify any training or development support the employee needs to achieve immediate targets or to assist them in achieving longer term plans. Record these
(g) Return the record to the employee and ask her/him to sign it. If they disagree with any of the action points they should record their disagreement on the back of the form and record any written comments they wish to make
(h) A copy of the appraisal review form should be given to the employee and you will keep a copy

(i) Your manager (or the individual responsible for co-ordinating training and development) will want to review appraisal forms to assess Departmental/School/Service training needs and to monitor the scheme

(j) Schools/Services should identify general non-specific training needs and notify the head of staff development so that these can be incorporated into the central programme.

Assessing current performance

Assessing current performance is central to appraisal. It is from this that training needs and future objectives are set. Your ability to do this will affect the outcome of your discussion and your credibility.

An important aspect of getting it right is the ability to avoid bias. Bias is rarely obvious and often people are unaware that they are guilty of it. The main types of bias, and ways of avoiding them are listed below:

Main types of bias	**Prevention**
• Someone does something particularly good or particularly bad and you allow that impression to colour your judgement	o Base appraisal on actual performance
• You allow recent events to outweigh less recent ones. It is often difficult to remember what someone did 9 – 10 months ago but it should carry the same weight as something that happened last week	o Keep records of regular informal appraisals rather than relying on memory
• Assumptions that are rooted in stereotypes and you must try not to allow these to influence the assessment of performance	o Base appraisal on actual performance and question your own values
• Different managers will prize different skills and attributes. These are often influenced by your own likes and dislikes. Remember your way of doing things will not be the only way or the best way	o Identify own bias tendencies and guard against them

Preparation… things to think about and problems to avoid

If you see appraisal as an administrative chore you're unlikely to devote the time and attention required. This lack of preparation may lead to disagreements during the discussion and poor working relationships.

The discussion will involve you giving feedback on performance. Beware that you're not seen as "standing in judgement". You need to help each individual evaluate her or his own performance. If the session becomes too judgmental the individual is likely to become defensive and you're likely to concentrate on areas for improvement and be over critical.

If you allow an individual to be passive or you dominate the discussion the individual is likely to be more defensive and again there will be a tendency to disagreement.

If you see the appraisal discussion as an interview you probably regard the appraisal as something you do to your employees. Try to see the session as a discussion between you – you both share a common interest in achieving a positive outcome from the discussion. It should be a "conversation with a purpose". To achieve this you will need to be honest and accurate in the feedback you give and you will need to listen.

As a manager you'll have several appraisals to complete as well as your other duties. However, from the employee's point of view it is their opportunity to have your undivided attention to discuss nothing but them.

You need to understand the job rather than make assumptions about it. Remember, few understand the job as well as the person who's doing it. Even if you've done the job in the past your understanding will not be as relevant or as thorough as theirs.

Preparation…before you start things to do and think about

1. Be prepared

Make sure you give yourself time to prepare. As a minimum you'll need to check files and check data.   You'll also probably want to talk to colleagues, team members or other managers they've completed work for. In this way you can try to get accurate feedback.   You should also give a preparation form to the appraisee. They may choose to give the form back to you before the discussion – make sure you read it carefully taking note of any areas of agreement or disagreement. You shouldn't have waited until this time to praise or to correct something that is wrong. The appraisal should link to a system of continuous feedback and communication that operates. The appraisal discussion is not the time for surprises. You will be discussing issues that have arisen throughout the year and you must be able to back up your comments with examples. Remember you are collecting facts and evidence regarding performance rather than hearsay or unsubstantiated opinions.

2. Venue and Timing

Appraisals need uninterrupted time so schedule them in your diary and make sure you won't be disturbed – divert the phone, put a polite notice on the door. When booking in time consider the time you'll need and double it – that way if the discussion takes longer than you think you won't have to rush. Try not to let the discussion run over an hour – if it does it's worth arranging a follow on rather than carrying on when you're both tired. Appraisal discussions require concentration and energy and you should make sure you're not trying to do too many in a short space of time.

3. Relevant Data

Make sure you have all relevant data to hand. This may be particularly helpful when referring to contentious matters. If you refer to something as evidence to your viewpoint have the information with you – it can save arguments and misunderstanding.

4. Atmosphere

Put yourself in the employee's place… they are likely to be nervous and may even be dreading the event. Alternatively they may approach the meeting thinking it's all a complete waste of time. It's important to create the right atmosphere. Create an informal atmosphere – don't sit on opposite sides of a desk; offer tea, coffee; make sure you're not interrupted. Create a positive atmosphere by allowing them to speak and keeping your tone positive and open. Remember you don't have all the answers so when you reach a difficult area ask for their solutions – on balance they are probably better placed to come up with one.

5. Structure

Remember you both don't want to waste time so structure the meeting so you and your employee get the most out of the time spent in the review. Think about how you are going to structure the review – what areas do you want to cover. You'll also need some flexibility to allow the employee to have input and for them to raise any issues you weren't previously aware of.

6. Praise and criticism

Praise is vital. Without encouragement and praise the good performer can give up. Praise is best when it is specific. Rather than the general "well done" or good work, remember to be specific – praise a specific example that demonstrates their strengths. In dealing with criticism be positive. Rather than seeing a fault with the person try to consider issues as abstract problems e.g. "I always appreciate the speed of your reports but how do we improve the accuracy" rather than "your reports are always full of mistakes". Criticism must always be factual and impersonal – you are criticising the fault not the person. Remember you too may be criticised. Your instinct may be to be defensive. However, if you do you are likely to destroy any trust that has been built up and the meeting may develop into a row. Clarify the criticism and agree to consider it.

7. Appraising friends

Some of the people you review may be friends or people you've worked with day in day out over a number of years. It may seem very odd to sit down formally with them to discuss their work. They may feel that it's pointless since they see you everyday. However, the closer you work together on a daily basis the more important it is to stand back from things from time to time to gain a sense of perspective.

8. Dealing with poor performance

The review is an important time for trying to get to the real cause of any areas of consistent poor performance… and to find ways of correcting that situation. You need to try and identify what the problem is and tackle it not in terms of who's fault it is but how to control the problem. Is it something they can control? Is it something you as their manager can control? Is it something you could influence? However, if poor performance is the main issue this should be addressed through the capability procedures. Appraisal focuses on improving performance through developing an individual's skills, their role and their career. The capability procedures are used in a very small number of cases where overall performance is unsatisfactory. If the capability procedures are being used an appraisal will not take place.

9. Development

As a manager you should improve the existing skills of your staff; try to develop any new skills the School/Service or University may need and try to develop skills to prepare people for other roles and responsibilities. This isn't a simple matter of sending someone on a course but requires thought and consideration. Think carefully how an individual can develop existing skills and learn new ones through a variety of techniques. Remember most work related learning – both positive and negative – happens on the job. You have an essential role in organising a positive outcome. Think about the future. How can an employee's role be developed to create greater flexibility? How will you prevent someone from becoming bored? Think about succession planning – how can you develop staff so that they can step up to cover absences or be promoted. Consider individual's career aspirations, what can assist them to make the next step, both in the University and for another employer. Not everyone wishes to pursue career change. Many employees are happy in their current role and do not wish to progress further. However, they will need to consider how they can improve and develop their existing role – considering new ways of working, support for new procedures or systems etc…

10. Closing the meeting

Remember to summarise the main action points from the meeting so that you both agree on what is happening next. Set a date in a few months time to check on how things are going – an informal review of progress to see if any targets need modifying. Finish on a positive note.

The Discussion… a summary of points to remember

Effective appraisal discussions:

- Start on time - a punctual start tells the individual that they and the discussion are important
- Have a positive start - you need to give the right first impression – welcoming them, demonstrating that you're prepared, not searching for paper or finishing off other tasks. Remind the appraisee why you are both there.   It is likely that they are feeling apprehensive and uncertain, especially if this is their first appraisal. Clarify the purpose and emphasise that this is the opportunity for constructive discussion.
- Have a relaxed but businesslike style - you are equal partners in the discussion and are aiming for agreement and should be willing to compromise on non-critical issues
- Involve the individual - the ratio of talking should be in the individual's favour
- Are open and honest – it is easy to avoid being straight with someone if you believe this will upset working relationships. However, there needs to be an open exchange if the discussion is to serve any purpose. You will be asking for comments and it is possible that these may include criticisms of you.   Listen to what is being said and consider it carefully before responding. There may be something to learn. In receiving criticism don't deny it, become defensive, argue or justify yourself.   Listen carefully, evaluate the comment and if true, identify what can be done.   If the criticism is not true then try to identify how this impression has been formed and agree changes.
- Use accurate language – try to be accurate, precise and descriptive
- Are calm – sometimes the issues can be uncomfortable, and a common reaction to criticism is to criticise back. This can often lead to a downward spiral. Stay calm and detached
- Focus on the future – whilst the discussion examines past performance it should focus on what the individual will do differently in the future -–what can be learnt from the past that will help future performance and development
- Are not over-prescriptive – you will want to specify what has to be achieved but should refrain from telling someone how to do it.   You should encourage the individual to work out how they are going to achieve things themselves. Your aim is to reach agreement that is acceptable to both of you. This will be more successful than imposing your own ideas without discussion. Ask for the appraisee's ideas.
- Give priority to significant issues – when examining issues focus on significant and important aspects. Trying to deal with all aspects of the job will be ineffective and may generate hostility
- Give full recognition to the individual's achievements and strengths – noting specific examples of good work and express appreciation to the

individual for work done. Give specific feedback and refer to specific incidents you've observed or been told about – give clear examples.

The Outcomes

In identifying future action you need to be practical and realistic. Targets set at the end of the discussion should be:

- ☐ Specific
- ☐ Measurable
- ☐ Achievable
- ☐ Realistic
- ☐ Timed
- ☐ Relate to the individual's development at work
- ☐ Relate to the School/Service and University's objectives
- ☐ Are challenging

People need to know what is required, when it's required and what priority it has. Targets should focus on areas where the need for improvement and/or development is greatest or where progress has been limited in the past. Targets should be precise enough to avoid future argument about whether they have been achieved or not, but not so precise that you state the method by which the target is achieved. The appraisee must be allowed scope to determine how they will achieve their targets.

Deadlines should be set but staggered to avoid overload. Often it is better to set shorter timeframes to maintain enthusiasm and overall targets can be broken down into smaller time limited tasks.

Targets should be challenging and stretching in order to develop the individual and give a sense of achievement. They must be realistic since if the individual doesn't believe they are they are unlikely to commit to improvement. There is always a danger when setting targets that other factors may change rendering the targets irrelevant, too difficult or too easy. It is important that targets are not dropped at the first sign of difficulty as this rapidly discredits the process and allows people to make excuses. By reviewing the targets you will be able to identify what action needs to be taken to overcome a problem rather than abandon the target.

There is little point in setting a target unless there is some means for checking progress. The method of monitoring should be established when targets are set so that appraisees are not taken by surprise or feel spied upon by a manager who has no trust in them.

In setting targets, consider:

- How significant is this target to the School/Service objectives?
- How urgent is this?
- To what extent is this target measurable?
- How will this target be measured?
- How clearly is the target described?
- Does it describe the results that are expected?
- When should the target be achieved?
- Does the target describe the real end result?
- To what extent is the target challenging, will it stretch the individual?

In addressing training and development needs consider the individual's strengths and weaknesses. You should also consider the work demands in the future and consider whether existing skills or knowledge will need updating. Be careful not to make promises on training that either time or budget make unrealistic.

Consider the targets carefully. What training and support will the individual need to assist them? Will this be external or internal course, on-the-job training, coaching, reading, work shadowing, secondment to a new area or new role?

At the end of the discussion summarise the main points, in particular what action has been agreed. Agree what should be recorded on the appraisal form and complete the form there and then where both you and the individual can sign or record points of disagreement.

Training and Development… a manager's responsibility

Developing the skills, knowledge and confidence of employees is the most important part of the appraisal. All managers have a personal responsibility for the training and development of their own staff. Managers assist the process of development through:

- Acting as role models. Managers who commit themselves to continuous development are likely not only to improve their own performance but that of their staff. In this way a "learning culture" is developed.

- Acting as coaches helping staff to assess their own performance, identifying their own learning needs, developing a learning plan, reassessing competence and reviewing progress. The essence of coaching is to help the learner recognise and take advantage of the learning opportunities that occur in the workplace environment.

- Preparing staff for formal training programmes. Managers can prepare members of staff who are about to take part in formal training by discussing the content of the course and how it might apply to their job and department. A debriefing afterwards is important for evaluating the value of the course and exploring how the individual will implement new learning.

- Acting as mentors. This may not necessarily be to subordinate staff but may be to other managers or staff in other departments.

- Providing immediate feedback. In addition to performance review managers need to ensure that immediate feedback is given. People don't learn unless they are encouraged to take risks. This may mean that mistakes are made. By adopting a constructive approach managers will help staff learn from those mistakes and understand why something went wrong. The importance of favourable feedback should not be underestimated as a means of reinforcing positive performance and motivating staff.

- Delegating. New skills can be developed when a manager delegates, making sure that staff know exactly what is expected, has been given

appropriate guidelines and knows that help and assistance is readily available.

Demonstration

Telling or showing an employee how to do the job and allowing her/him to get on with it. It is direct and the employee is actively involved. However, it also needs reinforcement and feedback to be effective.

Coaching

Informal but planned development meetings between manager and employee. Effective coaching takes place within a general development plan for the employee. It should provide motivation, structure and feedback.

Discovery

This approach is more applicable for the development of knowledge rather than skills. The principle behind this approach is that people will learn and retain more if they find out for themselves, as long as they are given direction on what to look for and help in finding it. It operates by identifying what someone needs to know; establishing where the information required is available; provide the employee with an outline of the information s/he has to obtain e.g. a series of questions or mini projects; identifying assistance available; agreeing a timetable and monitoring progress including review and feedback.

Job rotation

This aims to broaden experience but it can be extremely inefficient and frustrating unless carefully planned. The experience of different roles and responsibilities should be carefully planned to meet a training requirement to acquire news skills or knowledge. Each rotation needs careful supervision to ensure that the individual is given the right opportunities to learn.

Job Instruction

The sequence of job instruction should follow four stages:

- Preparation
- Presentation – explanation and demonstration
- Practice and testing
- Follow up

The instructor, who may or may not be the employee's line manager, must have a plan for presenting the subject matter and using appropriate learning methods. Presentation consists of a combination of telling and showing, where explanation is as simple and direct as possible and a clear demonstration process is followed. The learner imitates the instructor under guidance and this is followed up through the training period by advice and assistance to help with particularly difficult tasks or overcome temporary setbacks.

Assignments and projects

Assignments are a specific task or investigation whilst projects are broader studies or tasks. They encourage initiative in seeking and analysing information, originating ideas and preparing and presenting results. They should be linked to a coaching programme so that learning is properly absorbed.

Guided reading

Knowledge can be increased by asking employees to read books, hand-outs etc… Reading as part of a development programme will only be effective if the employee considers it relevant and where follow up takes place.

Courses

These may be one-off or a series of courses and may cover a range of training techniques and may or may not lead to formal qualification. Clear objectives should be set for any course prior to attendance and the manager needs to ensure that learning methods proposed are appropriate to the desired learning outcomes. A debriefing must follow to assess the learning achieved and further techniques should be applied to use and develop new skills and knowledge.

Self-managed learning

The learner decides the pace for covering materials through reading, TV, radio, web access, etc… This method relies heavily on the motivation of the individual and therefore needs support at work through effective coaching and feedback and opportunities.

Communication Skills…Listening and questioning

1. Active Listening

Active listening can assist you to discover whether someone fully understands the message you are sending and will help you understand the messages that are sent to you. In this way it cuts down on confusion and misunderstanding and therefore saves time. Active listening is a lot more than not talking and involves:

- *Paraphrasing*

To show you have been listening and understand, paraphrasing means restating what the other person has said in your own words, as accurately as possible. Not only does it check your understanding but it also allows the sender to clarify their message.

- *Clarifying*

Clarifying enables you to focus on detail and can be used when the sender is being vague. Not only does clarifying aid your understanding but also it sends the message that you really do want to listen and understand what the sender is saying.

- *Encouraging*

This aims to keep the person talking with minimal input. It may be achieved by repeating a word or short phrase or simply involve nodding the head accompanied by "mm" or "yes". The sender may then carry on confident that you are listening. Beware that you don't overuse this approach!

- *Silence*

This ensures that you listen to what someone is saying rather than butting in when you think you've understood enough. It allows people to think about what has last been said and make a considered response. This approach is particularly useful when dealing with sensitive issues and can help to defuse potentially explosive situations.

- *Summarising*

A summary provides a final check for clarity after certain actions or decisions have been agreed.

2. Questions

- *Open Questions*

This type of question opens up an area of enquiry and allows someone to expand on a subject in the way they choose. For example, "Could you tell me more about…?" "What ideas do you have about….?"

- *Hypothetical Questions*

These encourage the use of imagination to work through ideas. For example "How would you handle a difficult situation involving…?" Sometimes, when asked hypothetical questions people give the answers they think others want to hear rather than answering as to how they actually would behave.

- *Closed Questions*

Closed questions invite single word answers, usually yes or no. They are useful if you want a specific piece of information or when you want to stop someone rambling on. However, they do not allow for a free flow of information and when used in excess they become threatening.

- *Don't ask…*

Double questions – where you ask more than one question at the same time – since you won't know which question the answer relates to. Don't ask leading questions or answer your own questions since neither approach provides information and can be very frustrating for the person trying to answer.

3. Body language

● *Sound*

The way you use your voice will convey your message differently. Your voice may be too quiet, too loud, or have a sarcastic edge to it.

● *Habits*

Are you aware of any habits you may have, for example, tapping your pen or fingers when bored? These can be very off putting to someone you are trying to communicate with.

● *Eye Contact*

Maintaining eye contact is an important way of showing you are interested in what someone is saying. However, do not stare at someone as this quickly becomes intimidating.

● *Posture*

Consider how you sit or stand when communicating – does it help to convey your message? Think about the space you allow between yourself and other people – some may find sitting close claustrophobic whilst others find it reassuring. You need to be sensitive about how others feel.

Understanding and Managing Conflict

When conflict occurs the results may be positive or negative depending on how those involved choose to approach it. Conflict arises from:

- Differences in needs, objectives, values
- Differences in perceiving motives, words, actions and situations
- Differing expectations of outcomes
- Unwillingness to work through issues, collaborate or compromise

Conflict becomes unhealthy when it is avoided or approached on a win/lose basis. Animosities will develop, communication will break down, trust and mutual support will deteriorate and hostilities result. When sides are chosen productivity will diminish or stop. The damage is often very difficult to repair.

Conflict is healthy when it causes people to explore new ideas, test their position and beliefs and stretch their imagination. When conflict is dealt with constructively people can be stimulated to greater creativity which leads to a wider choice of action – a win/win situation for all involved.

Assertive

Win/Lose

This approach is confrontational, assertive and aggressive where one party must win at any cost. Used in contexts where a position is deemed to be the only way or where someone must prove superiority

Problem Solving

A person is problem solving when they believe the needs of both parties are legitimate and important. They have a high respect for mutual support, are assertive and co-operative. This approach is often applied when parties will openly discuss issues so that a mutually beneficial solution can be found without anyone making a major concession – a win/win situation

Compromising

This approach is taken when good relationships are maintained and all parties get something of what they want but each must give something up.

Avoidance

A person is non-confrontational; they ignore or pass over problems. Often people behave in this way because they feel attempts to resolve conflict may create greater problems or may damage relationships. They may also feel that the differences are too minor or too great to resolve

Accommodating

Co-operative approach, even at the expense of own personal goals since someone believes that it is not worth risking damage to relationships

Unassertive

Uncooperative   **Cooperative**

University of Huddersfield

School Administration & Technical Staff

Consolidated Competency Framework

November 2011

University of
HUDDERSFIELD

What is this document for?

- This document describes the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours (competencies) required to deliver success across the School Administration & Technical Service
- The competencies are described at three levels: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. This allows for differing levels of experience and responsibility to be reflected in the Framework, and reinforces the importance of learning and developing to meet the requirements of changing roles within the University.

Who will be using it?

- The Competency Framework applies to EVERYONE in Technical Services and School Administration.

Why is it important?

- For each role we will clearly identify what level is required so that everyone understands exactly what is expected from them - some competencies may not apply to all roles
- This will help managers to explain, with examples, what competencies are important – not all indicators will apply to every role, but 80% should apply if the competency is considered to be relevant to a particular role
- For each competency we have included negative indicators (shown at the bottom of each page). These are to help people to understand behaviour that is inappropriate and unacceptable
- People will be expected to **consistently** demonstrate the level of competence required for their role, over a period of time

- If people are not currently operating consistently at the level expected, we can be clear about individual training and development needs and we can address them by providing support and guidance
- Overall, this will improve each person's contribution to the success of the School

How will it work?

- The competencies will be included in the annual appraisal process
- Managers will use the competencies to coach and develop people on a day to day basis
- Development of the competencies will be informally reviewed regularly and will then be formally assessed as part of each person's review

Delivering excellent customer service

Utilising technology

Working in partnership

Taking ownership for delivering results

Communicating clearly

Demonstrating flexibility and adaptability

Understanding the environment in which we operate

Making informed decisions and taking action

Planning and organising

Continually improving ourselves and our service

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Delivering excellent customer service

Recognises who our customers are, prioritises activity to reflect this and uses effective communication techniques to build positive relationships, making customers feel valued and respected

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
• Recognises who our customers are and that their expectations of the quality of service will be high • Understands the importance of placing emphasis on delivering excellent customer service but needs guidance and support to do this • Treats all customers with respect • Takes action to ensure that customer's names are pronounced and spelt correctly • Acts promptly to resolve issues that have a direct impact on the customer • Readily acknowledges customers - with eye contact and/or a greeting • Aims to understand customer queries and then finds an appropriate colleague who can help • Recognises that all customers are different and have different needs	• Explains information to customers in a clear and simple way, using appropriate language • Takes account of cultural differences and modifies own approach accordingly • Puts customers at ease and makes them feel valued and important • Acts quickly to address customer queries/requests for information – offering 'hands on' support where appropriate • Asks open questions to fully understand the customer's queries • Provides accurate instructions to customers • Understands when it is appropriate to refer customer's questions to others • Takes account of the different needs of customers when answering questions/providing solutions • Produces user-friendly documentation for customers to use • Shapes customers expectations about what can and cannot be done, in a positive way focusing on what can be done	• Listens carefully to a customer's problem or request and asks questions to get to the heart of the issue; does not make assumptions about what they need/want • Provides customers with an answer and checks the customer's understanding of the answer/solution • Prioritises tasks and activities in a way that places emphasis on tasks that impact directly or indirectly on the customer • Proactively anticipates customers needs and ensures they consider ways of promoting services to customers • Looks for ways to educate customers around the most common query areas, aiming to make customers' lives easier • Recognises where systems and processes are not customer focused and finds ways to improve these • Understands that customers may be unreasonable and uses a range of techniques to deal with difficult customers without compromising the level of service provided

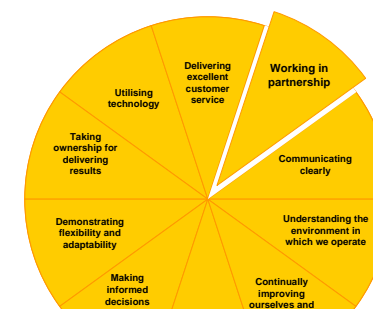*Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours at any level*

- *Treats all customers the same, and doesn't recognise that some customers need a different approach*
- *Makes excuses to customers without explaining reasons*
- *Avoids contact with customers preferring to complete other tasks e.g. does not answer the phone*
- *Is rude or dismissive of customers, failing to offer help and advice*
- *Fails to recognise the importance of the customer on the continued success of the University*
- *Demonstrates apathy towards their role and their contribution to customer service*
- *Appears to take delight in telling customers all the things that can't be done rather than focusing on what can be done*

Working in partnership

Builds partnerships with colleagues (academic staff, members of central support functions, and other Administration & technical staff) to deliver a consistently high quality service to customers

N.B. Our partners may be members of our own team or School, colleagues from other parts of the University, suppliers and other external organisations

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
• Recognises the importance of working in partnership with other groups/departments within the University to deliver a consistent, high quality service • Understands who we should be working in partnership with, but sometimes requires guidance and support to do this • Is courteous, professional and honest; does not make excuses • Shares knowledge and information with others when prompted/asked • Demonstrates loyalty and commitment to the University, the School and to all colleagues – doesn't blame others when things go wrong • Respects difference and diversity • Understands own team's purpose and goals • Participates in activities within own team • Is viewed as a trusted and reliable member of the team	• Listens to and respects others' views when they are different from own • Understands others' perspectives and the challenges they face in their own roles • Proactively shares information and knowledge within own team and beyond, where appropriate • Shows courtesy and respect regardless of hierarchy • Considers the others views and the impact on others before acting • Understands and maximises own strengths and contribution within own team • Trusts fellow team members to get the job done without checking up on them • Provides support and encouragement to others both verbally and actively • Recognises who needs to know what and communicates this appropriately • Challenges colleagues assertively whilst remaining calm and professional	• Shares best practice with other colleagues • Ensures best practice is adopted and delivered consistently across the School • Actively attempts to break down barriers between Functions, Departments, Schools to ensure strong working relationships are built • Creates and uses networks across Schools and Central Services to ensure consistency in delivering high standards of service • Builds highly effective working partnerships based upon equality, fairness, respect and trust • Recognises the potential for conflicting objectives and priorities between different teams/functions and works to overcome these to create a shared sense of purpose • Ensures all stakeholders are consulted – encouraging people to have their say • Looks for opportunities to work together across teams to avoid duplication of effort and maximise efficiency

Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours at any level

- *Fosters or supports a "them and us" culture e.g. between academics and support staff*
- *Is unwilling to share own knowledge and experience with others – prefers to be the source of expertise*
- *Unwilling to share their views (e.g. in team meetings)*
- *Doesn't provide an opportunity for others to contribute, presenting own views forcefully and aggressively*
- *Focuses on own priorities and agenda at the expense of others*
- *Fails to complete tasks, putting pressure on others within the team*
- *Doesn't tell everybody everything if they don't need to know (i.e. copying each other in on emails)*
- *Is unwilling to "muck in" having the view, 'that's not my job'*
- *Lacks trust in others, constantly checking up on them*
- *Does not respect the needs of colleagues to work quietly – disrupts the team (e.g. too much chatting)*
- *Fails to pass on messages compromising the quality of colleagues' work*
- *Makes derogatory comments about colleagues*

Communicating clearly

Communicates clearly with others verbally and in writing

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
- Recognises the importance of communicating effectively with customers and colleagues but sometimes needs support and guidance to do this effectively - Recognises that a range of communication methods can be used – i.e. face to face, email, telephone - Pays full attention when communicating with others - Keeps negative emotions under control when communicating with others (i.e. anger, frustration, use of inappropriate language or becoming openly upset/distressed) - Plans verbal and written communications before delivering them, checking with others - Uses fact to face or telephone contact wherever possible - Uses straightforward language, avoiding the use of jargon, acronyms and slang	- Chooses the most appropriate method of communication for the message and delivers this professionally (i.e. vocabulary, tone of voice, body language) - Communicates in good business English/language - Uses non-verbal communication (e.g. body language, eye contact and voice tone) to build rapport - Demonstrates genuine empathy and interest in others - Is pleasant and positive in communications even in difficult/sensitive situations - Modifies own style and language to reflect the communication needs of the other person - Listens actively and attentively - Thinks about the message to be conveyed and structures verbal or written communications clearly and logically - Checks that the message has been understood as intended - Provides an appropriate amount of detail in communications – i.e. enough for the message to be understood, but not so much that the key message is swamped - Uses tact and diplomacy, considering the impact of the message	- Listens carefully to get to the heart of the issue; does not make assumptions - Reads signs from others, tailors style to meet audience's needs (i.e. more detail, less detail) - Considers a range of options/methods when communicating to a broad audience and selects the most appropriate style and approach (i.e. email, face to face, newsletter) - Uses different questioning techniques and active listening to build rapport - Consciously varies the pace and style of the conversation to achieve the best outcome e.g. when dealing with complaints/issues - Talks confidently to groups of different sizes and in different settings - Presents verbal and written material in an appealing and engaging way - Uses different influencing styles to achieve desired outcomes - Ensures messages are delivered consistently within teams by sharing and agreeing proposed content

		• Recognises the appropriate style for specific communication (ie formality and protocol when writing minutes)	

Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours at any level

- *Uses jargon and acronyms and does not check understanding with others*
- *Avoids communicating with others*
- *Uses email rather than communicating face to face when this would be most appropriate*
- *Uses inappropriate language*
- *Puts too much or too little detail into verbal or written communications, making them difficult to understand*
- *Communicates aggressively or submissively*

Understanding the environment in which we operate

Demonstrates an understanding of the context in which we operate e.g. Higher Education, the University and the provision of technical & administration support to Schools

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
• Has an understanding of what needs to be achieved in own role but doesn't understand how this contributes to the overall effectiveness of School Administration and Technical Services • Demonstrates a basic knowledge of who does what within the School • Has a general understanding of the range of products and services provided by the School e.g. courses • Has an awareness of the School's annual timetable • Recognises the need to demonstrate professional conduct (i.e. appropriate dress, language, presentation of materials etc) • Shows understanding of and commitment to the School's goals	• Shows an awareness of the School's overall direction and the challenges faced • Has detailed understanding of own area (i.e. own course if an administrator, Aggresso if in finance) • Demonstrates a good understanding of the range of services offered by the School • Understands how own role contributes to the overall objectives and success of the School • Demonstrates an understanding of Higher Education (e.g. student fees) and the University of Huddersfield's philosophy (e.g. widening participation) • Understands the importance of the University's role within the local community • Complies with regulatory and legislative requirements (e.g. when booking placements for students, providing data for OFSTED, applying financial regulations etc) • Demonstrates enthusiasm and commitment for the School, the University and the Higher Education sector • Manages own tasks and activities to deliver against the School's objectives • Recognises the School's strengths and why students choose to come here to study	• Is able to clearly explain the School's strategic direction and objectives • Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the range of services offered by the University, (i.e. Student Services Counsellor) • Shows a good knowledge of the Higher Education sector • Shows an understanding of key stakeholder groups, and how they can influence performance within the School e.g. External bodies • Demonstrates an understanding of external activities, influences and trends that may affect the School e.g. changes in legislation/technology • Demonstrates and actively promotes a strong sense of the "University of Huddersfield vision"

Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours at any level

- *Fails to focus own effort on School priorities, and creates own priorities instead*
- *Lacks interest in understanding the bigger picture and longer term issues, is too "insular"*
- *Focuses only on their role and the tasks within it, without considering the wider impact*
- *Lacks energy and commitment for the School, the University and the Higher Education Sector*
- *Appears apathetic towards any activity or event outside their own list of tasks e.g. 'their job'*
- *Does not attend briefings and events that set out the School's direction and the challenges of the future*
- *Does not pay attention to personal image, including personal hygiene (need for professionalism)*

Continually improving ourselves and our service

Actively seeks and implements ways of working that improve the service we provide, learning and developing new skills to enhance what we do

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
• Understands the need to look for ways to improve the service we provide • Listens to new ideas with an open mind • Demonstrates some awareness of own strengths and weaknesses • Demonstrates a willingness to learn but lacks understanding about how to develop self • Listens to feedback from others with an open mind • Is willing to learn from others	• Constructively challenges working practices and suggests improvements to the way things are done • Proactively seeks out new and improved ways of working within own role/team • Builds on others' ideas • Feels confident to suggest and introduce new ideas • Encourages and welcomes feedback from others on own ideas • Uses own creativity and flair in day to day work, within guidelines • Gets involved in activities e.g. meetings to brainstorm new ideas, project teams, freshers' fair, internal focus groups • Takes initiative and acts upon development needs for own role, seeking coaching, training and new experiences • Responds positively to feedback on own skills or performance • Proactively uses the competency framework to identify own development needs • Keeps up to date with essential training and development for own role • Learns from successes and setbacks • Demonstrates an energetic and positive attitude	• Actively seeks good ideas from outside the School/University that could work within the School – learning from others, benchmarking • Focuses improvement on the things that will add most value to the service(e.g. by prioritising tasks and developments) • Seeks and acts on feedback from customers and colleagues, to enhance the service • Seeks and acts on feedback from others to enhance personal approach • Provides on the job coaching and support for other colleagues • Actively seeks out current thinking around own area (i.e. Marketing, IT) • Looks for opportunities to develop both personally and professionally • Is proactive in getting involved in informal day to day development activity (i.e. volunteering for projects etc)

	towards development
	• Takes time to prepare for Appraisals

Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours at any level
• *Sticks to the existing way of doing things – says 'this is the way we've always done it here' when there is a better way* • *Is unwilling to suggest new ideas and dismisses others' ideas* • *Believes training is only for people who want to progress to a different role* • *Is apathetic towards development - shows no interest in developing self and positively resists support to do this* • *Responds negatively to feedback from others* • *Fails to learn from successes and setbacks* • *Makes the same mistakes repeatedly and/or continues to behave inappropriately, in spite of feedback and coaching* • *Is unaware of own strengths and weaknesses*

Planning and organising

Plans and organises tasks, activities and events to reflect and support the University's annual academic timetable

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
- Understands the need to plan and prioritise tasks - Recognises that the University and the School's activities operate within a defined timetable - Plans day to day activities with guidance and support, using appropriate tools i.e. diary/checklists - Seeks confirmation of priorities when confronted with unusual/unexpected situations	- Focuses own efforts on the priorities for the School, in line with the academic timetable and deadlines - Prioritises own time to get things done - Carries out day-to-day activities based on a good understanding of the team's priorities - Plans out tasks in a detailed and methodical way, recognising the people and resources that need to be involved and making sure these are available in advance - Understands lead-in times (e.g. production and printing of materials) and takes account of these when planning activities - Keeps others up to date on progress - Shows consideration and respect for other people's time and priorities - Recognises that there will be peaks and troughs in the workload and takes action to minimise the impact of these - Continues to work effectively through peak workloads, recognising that this is a key feature of the University environment - Makes others aware of lead-in times and influences	- Scopes complex and unfamiliar pieces of work accurately to understand what is involved - Accurately estimates the resources that are required for complex and longer-term projects - Identifies key milestones when planning projects - Prepares contingency plans and reviews them when problems or new situations occur - Handles conflicting priorities and re-plans as necessary - Uses planning tools for bigger and more complex pieces of work (i.e. Gantt charts, Critical Path Analysis etc) - Takes action to avoid "fire-fighting", supports and encourages others to do the same

	their planning to meet deadlines	

Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours at any level

- *Frequently under or over-estimates the time taken to complete tasks*
- *Works to own timetable, rather than the timetable determined by the University environment*
- *Doesn't take time to plan activities and resources up front – just works from one task to the next*
- *Always appears to have a "last minute panic" to meet deadlines where this could have been avoided*
- *Fails to recognise the significance of the academic timetable*

Making informed decisions and taking action

Ensures effective decisions are made by collecting and analysing information, involving the appropriate people and

evaluating the impact and consequences of our actions

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
• Knows what decision should be made but tends to refer to others • Makes decisions within clear guidelines in own area of work • Uses only information that is easily available or accessible to back up decisions but does not seek out additional data	• Considers the implications of decisions for different stakeholder groups e.g. other teams within the School and/or University • Makes decisions based on facts and/or figures • Identifies and obtains the information needed to make a decision • Identifies need to escalate issues/decisions and ensures escalation is managed appropriately • Considers the risks and consequences before taking action • Considers consultation needs for each decision, ensuring all the appropriate people are involved at the right time • Keeps people informed of decisions, ensuring everyone understands the rationale • Makes decisions using own judgement/initiative - interpreting guidelines • Makes objective, impartial decisions • Anticipates problems and takes appropriate action	• Uses knowledge, experience and judgement to work outside established guidelines and processes when making decisions • Makes decisions which consider the wider and long term impact on the School • Recognises the value of different sources of information • Gathers and analyses data from a number of different sources to validate/evaluate options and support decisions • Ensures risks are highlighted and managing actions identified before decisions are finalised • Ensures decisions are made at the right level and involves key stakeholders in the decision making process • Provides scope and parameters to others to allow them to make informed decisions • Takes account of and responsibility for the risks and consequences of making or failing to make a decision • Completes a "feedback loop" to cross-check data and revisit decisions

Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours at any level • *Is reluctant to make decisions* • *Fails to consult others when appropriate and makes decisions in isolation* • *Constantly seeks reassurance before making routine decisions in own area of work* • *Fails to escalate issues for them to be resolved* • *Fails to take account of the risk or potential consequences of making or failing to make a decision*		

Demonstrating flexibility and adaptability

Responds positively to changes, demonstrating flexibility and willingness to do things differently

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
• Recognises the importance of taking a flexible approach but requires support and guidance to do this • Is willing to try new ideas when asked to do so • Remains positive when faced with new and different experiences • Always willing to have a go, in spite of uncertainty/ambiguity	• Keeps an open mind - open to new ideas, regardless of their source • Is enthusiastic about new ideas and views change constructively • Continues to work effectively in a changing and unfamiliar environment • Responds positively, optimistically and flexibly to changing circumstances • Sees change as an opportunity to learn and develop personally • Willingly accepts unfamiliar tasks • Enthusiastically learns and adopts new ways of working • Understands and manages own reactions to change • Provides constructive feedback on change	• Supports others in managing their own reactions to change by being accessible and open, providing assistance and encouragement • Offers support at times of change – getting involved in change projects • Promotes a positive response to change amongst the team • Adapts positively and in a timely way to changing circumstances, modifying style and approach where necessary • Effectively responds to and handles unfamiliar and ambiguous situations • Supports and explains changes to others focusing on the benefits and opportunities • Takes action to minimise/remove barriers to change

Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours at any level

- *Follows the guidelines and procedures to the letter without recognising when there is a need to take a more flexible approach*
- *Acts as if roles are static and fixed e.g. 'that's not in my job description'*
- *Says 'why should we have to do that' when asked to carry out different activities*
- *Looks for the negative aspects of a situation*
- *Becomes aggressive or un co-operative when asked to do something different*
- *Gives up easily when faced with new and different experiences*
- *Fails to act when faced with uncertainty and ambiguity*

- *Fails to recognise when there is a need for change*
- *Challenges new ideas with resentment and hostility*

Taking ownership for delivering results

Takes responsibility for completing tasks to the required standard and within deadlines

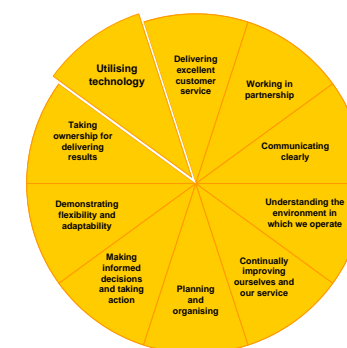| Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
• Recognises the responsibilities of own role but may need support in achieving these • Is reliable - does what they say they will do • Maintains effectiveness in spite of personal issues • Consults procedures manuals or asks colleagues when uncertain • Demonstrates the ability to work independently on familiar and routine tasks • Works to agreed standards • Escalates any problems related to own tasks • Looks for additional work when own tasks have been completed • Completes tasks accurately and checks own work, minimising errors	• Ensures own understanding of the work that needs to be done (what, how and by when) and to what standard • Always aims to deliver according to agreed standards and timescales • Takes personal responsibility for achieving own objectives • Takes ownership for understanding information which affects your work e.g. goes and finds out without waiting to be told • Sticks with tasks until they are finished • Runs several tasks in parallel if required • Persists in the face of obstacles and looks for other ways to complete tasks/achieve goals • Continues to work calmly and effectively under pressure • Seeks appropriate support when confronted with a difficult situation • Demonstrates personal resolve and energy to get a task done • Is proactive in taking corrective action when things are going wrong • Recognises the difference between working effectively and working hard	• Monitors own performance against standards and targets and makes necessary adjustments to achieve results • Continues to work effectively and deliver to a high standard in the most challenging situations • Demonstrates personal resolve, energy and commitment to complete tasks • Shows persistence and tenacity in the face of obstacles, finding ways to overcome the most difficult of challenges

Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours at any level

- *Says 'I don't know - you will have to speak to someone else' OR 'that's not my responsibility/job' without referring to the right person*
- *Requires constant supervision and support despite having had training/coaching*
- *Starts things but does not complete them*
- *Completes preferred or favourite tasks rather than tackling what really needs to be done*
- *Gives up when faced with obstacles*
- *Makes many mistakes and does not take corrective action when things go wrong*
- *Regularly misses agreed deadlines/standards*
- *Does not feel accountable for own objectives/performance*
- *Blames others for mistakes/covers up mistakes*

Utilising technology

Learning new technology and utilising it fully to enhance the service to customers

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
• Inputs data accurately using a keyboard and mouse • Creates simple documents using existing templates and protocols • Operates office equipment to reproduce documents in accordance with operating manuals • Demonstrates a general awareness of University IT policies and procedures (i.e. Data Protection, Freedom of Information requests) and works within them • Is open minded to use of technology and is willing to learn • Stores information in the most appropriate format e.g. database, manual filing	• Is able to utilise systems/applications required to carry out own role effectively (e.g. email, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Blackboard, Wisdom, ASIS, Agresso, shared drives) • Makes effective use of the information available via IT systems to carry out own role, e.g. ASIS, shared drives • Uses multimedia and audio-visual equipment correctly and with confidence • Inputs and accesses information using a range of systems, utilising available functionality • Utilises appropriate technology to educate others • Uses own initiative to identify and resolve basic technical problems • Takes on developments in technology as they occur • Recognises and uses the most relevant package for the job – ie Access vs Excel	• Ensures the School fully utilises existing technology • Looks for ways to enhance the existing technology within the School, ensuring all available functionality is fully utilised, where appropriate • Understands the technology that is available within the University and how it is being utilised • Champions the use of technology within the School • Demonstrates expert knowledge in the systems relating to own role • Looks for ways to extract and manipulate data from a range of existing systems

Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours at any level

- *Is reluctant to use technology*
- *Sets up and maintains paper-based systems when technology could clearly help*
- *Repeatedly makes technical errors that impact on University systems*

APPENDIX E

Survey: to investigate the perceptions of support staff about the appraisal process

1. How long have you worked at the University for:

   o Under a year
   o 1-4 years
   o 5-9 years
   o 10-19 years
   o 20 years or more

2. Which School do you belong to?

   o Applied Sciences
   o Art, Design and Architecture
   o Business
   o Computing and Engineering
   o Education and Professional Development
   o Human and Health Sciences
   o Music, Humanities and Media
   o Other service or support area within the university

3. What salary grade are you on?

   o Grade 3
   o Grade 4
   o Grade 5
   o Grade 6
   o Grade 7
   o Grade 8
   o Grade 9
   o Grade 10

4. What gender are you?

- o Male
- o Female

5. What age group are you?

   - o Under 25
   - o 25 -34
   - o 35 – 44
   - o 45 and over

6. When was your last appraisal carried out?

   - o Not had one yet
   - o Within the last 12 months
   - o More than 12 months ago

7. How often are appraisals carried out in your team?

   - o Every 6 months
   - o Every 12 months
   - o Less often than every 12 months

8. Was the competency framework used during any appraisal in the last 12 months?

   - o Yes
   - o No
   - o Don't know

9. Did you complete the employee preparation form?

   - o Yes
   - o No
   - o Don't know

If yes, did you find it: (tick all that apply)

- o Easy
- o Complicated
- o Efficient
- o Inefficient

10. In your opinion, what do you feel the appraisal process is used for in the University? (tick all that apply)

- o To determine training and development needs
- o To determine upgrading and promotion
- o To determine payment and rewards
- o To review performance
- o To set targets for future performance
- o To provide a basis for disciplinary actions
- o Other: please specify

11. Please rate the following statement about the appraisal process from 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly agree and 5 strongly disagrees:

- o conducting appraisals within an organisation is necessary

- o I receive specific and accurate feedback from my line manager about my performance

- o I feel more motivated after appraisals

- o Appraisals are only effective if you have a good relationship with your line manager

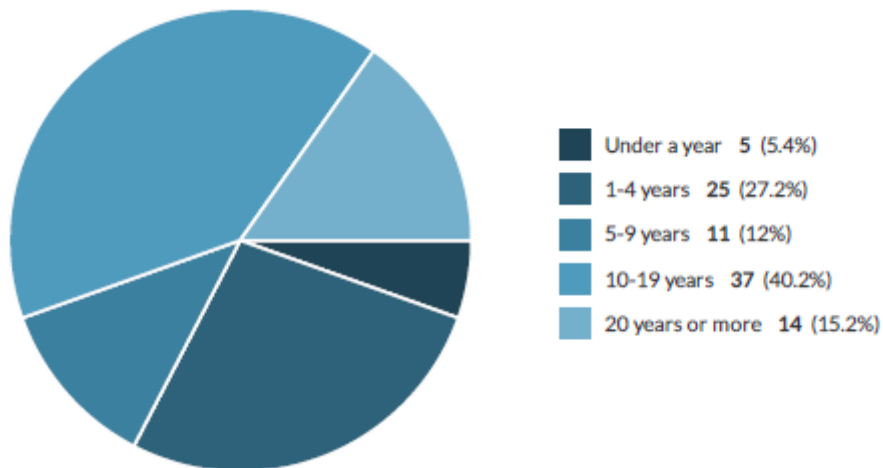- o Appraisals improve my relationship with my line manager

- I feel that my voice is heard at appraisals

- I do most, or a significant amount, of the talking at the appraisal

- I feel that the time spent on appraisals is worthwhile

- Appraisals help job performance

- Performance goals are clearly defined at appraisals

- The appraisal process supports the University's strategy

- Appraisals provide me with the opportunity to set personal goals

- All the information obtained from appraisals is confidential

- Appraisals give me a better understanding of what I should be doing

- The appraisal process in the University is fair

- I clearly understand the purpose of the appraisal process

- Since participating in the appraisal process I have developed personally

- The appraisal system helps identify areas for development

- I engage fully with the appraisal process

- I would like the opportunity to appraise my peers

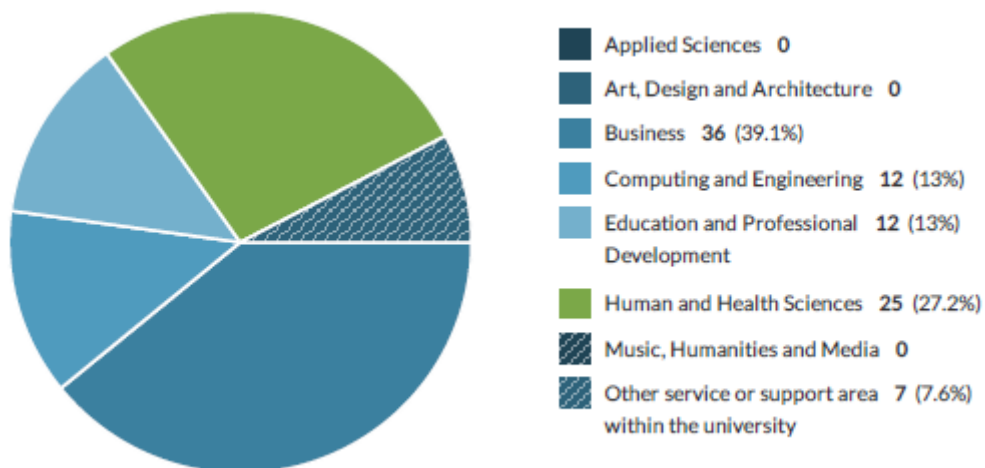o   I would like the opportunity to appraise my line manager

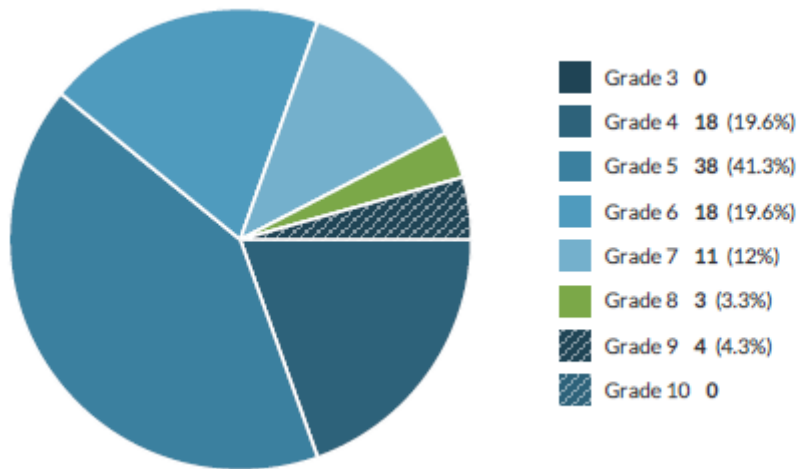Any additional comments you feel would be beneficial to the research:

APPENDIX F

1. How long have you worked at the University for?

Under a year   5 (5.4%)
1-4 years   25 (27.2%)
5-9 years   11 (12%)
10-19 years   37 (40.2%)
20 years or more   14 (15.2%)

2. Which School do you belong to?

Applied Sciences   0
Art, Design and Architecture   0
Business   36 (39.1%)
Computing and Engineering   12 (13%)
Education and Professional   12 (13%)
Development
Human and Health Sciences   25 (27.2%)
Music, Humanities and Media   0
Other service or support area   7 (7.6%)
within the university

3. What salary grade are you on?

■	Grade 3	0
■	Grade 4	18 (19.6%)
■	Grade 5	38 (41.3%)
■	Grade 6	18 (19.6%)
■	Grade 7	11 (12%)
■	Grade 8	3 (3.3%)
▨	Grade 9	4 (4.3%)
▨	Grade 10	0

4. What gender are you?

■	Male	13 (14.3%)
■	Female	78 (85.7%)

150

5. What age group are you?

■	Under 25 **3** (3.3%)
■	25 - 34 **18** (19.6%)
■	35 – 44 **27** (29.3%)
■	45 and over **44** (47.8%)

6. When was your last appraisal carried out?

■	Not had one yet **2** (2.2%)
■	Within the last 12 months **87** (94.6%)
■	More than 12 months ago **3** (3.3%)

7. How often are appraisals carried out in your team?

■	Every 6 months 8 (8.7%)
■	Every 12 months 81 (88%)
■	Less often than every 12 3 (3.3%) months

8. Was the competency framework used during any appraisal in the last 12 months?

■	Yes 68 (73.9%)
■	No 19 (20.7%)
■	Don't know 5 (5.4%)

9. Did you complete the employee preparation form?

Yes 77 (87.5%)
No 10 (11.4%)
Don't know 1 (1.1%)

10. If yes, did you find it: (tick all that apply)

Easy 30 (29.4%)
Complicated 14 (13.7%)
Efficient 16 (15.7%)
Inefficient 34 (33.3%)
N/A 8 (7.8%)

11. In your opinion, what do you feel the appraisal process is used for in the University? (tick all that apply)

To determine training and development needs — 62 (28.6%)

To determine upgrading and promotion — 4 (1.8%)

To determine payment and rewards — 2 (0.9%)

To review performance — 70 (32.3%)

To set targets for future performance — 59 (27.2%)

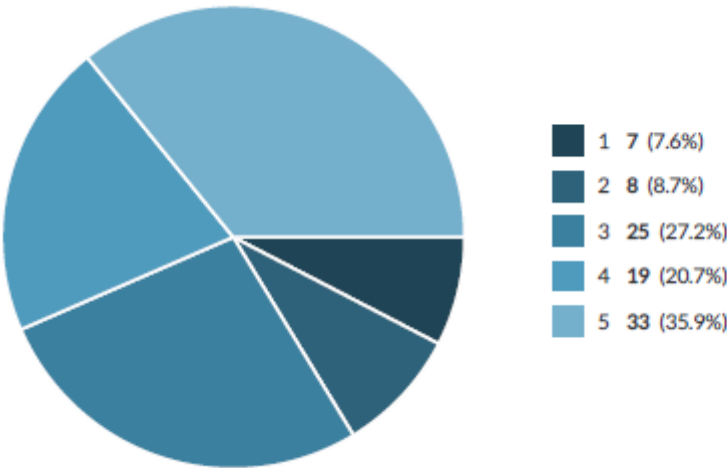To provide a basis for disciplinary actions — 7 (3.2%)

Other — 13 (6%)

If you selected Other, please specify:

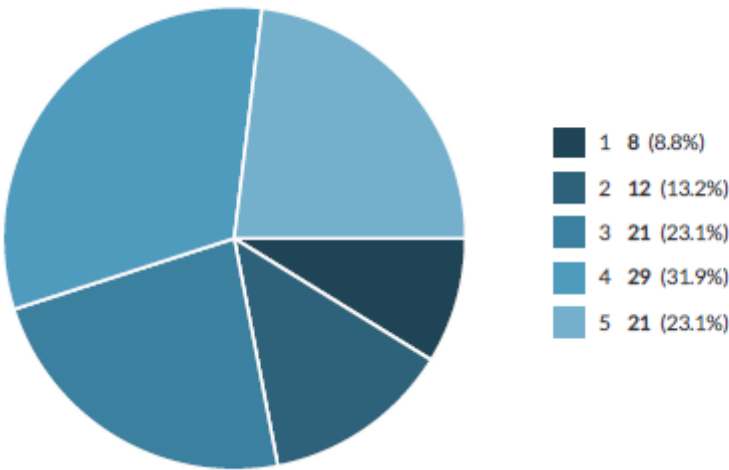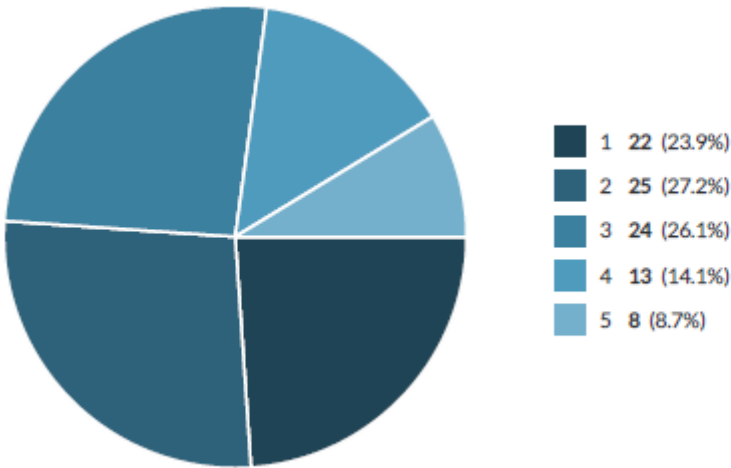| Showing all 13 responses	
Mainly as a tick box exercise - because we have to do it	237693-237686-18525790
Paper exercise	237693-237686-18525812
None of the above, paper exercise	237693-237686-18525835
a chance to review the past year and preparation for the next.	237693-237686-18527359
I'm not sure that it contributes to any of the above. I think it is more of a tickbox exercise.	237693-237686-18527454
I feel like they do it because they have to	237693-237686-18530631
to some extent to tick boxes, expecially with staff who have a lot of experience and a clear track record in meeting high standards of performance and achievement.	237693-237686-18573227
It is merely a 'box ticking' exercise and a waste of time	237693-237686-18608305
To tick a box	237693-237686-18611422
Just to get it done	237693-237686-18612172
to tick a box	237693-237686-18619843
Box ticking	237693-237686-18620964
Tick box exercise to some extent	237693-237686-18799109

STATEMENTS

Strongly disagree vs strongly agree (1-5)

12. Conducting appraisals within an organisation is necessary

1	7 (7.6%)
2	8 (8.7%)
3	25 (27.2%)
4	19 (20.7%)
5	33 (35.9%)

13. I receive specific and accurate feedback from my line manager about my performance

1	8 (8.8%)
2	12 (13.2%)
3	21 (23.1%)
4	29 (31.9%)
5	21 (23.1%)

14. I feel more motivated after appraisals

■	1	22 (23.9%)
■	2	25 (27.2%)
■	3	24 (26.1%)
■	4	13 (14.1%)
■	5	8 (8.7%)

15. Appraisals are only effective if you have a good relationship with your line manager

■	1	3 (3.3%)
■	2	15 (16.3%)
■	3	21 (22.8%)
■	4	27 (29.3%)
■	5	26 (28.3%)

16. Appraisals improve my relationship with my line manager

1	12 (13.2%)
2	22 (24.2%)
3	29 (31.9%)
4	23 (25.3%)
5	5 (5.5%)

17. I feel that my voice is heard at appraisals

1	12 (13.2%)
2	14 (15.4%)
3	17 (18.7%)
4	29 (31.9%)
5	19 (20.9%)

18. I do most, or a significant amount, of the talking at the appraisal

1	7 (7.6%)
2	11 (12%)
3	47 (51.1%)
4	21 (22.8%)
5	6 (6.5%)

19. I feel that the time spent on appraisals is worthwhile

1	22 (23.9%)
2	18 (19.6%)
3	22 (23.9%)
4	22 (23.9%)
5	8 (8.7%)

20. Appraisals help job performance

1	17	(18.5%)
2	25	(27.2%)
3	21	(22.8%)
4	20	(21.7%)
5	9	(9.8%)

21. Performance goals are clearly defined at appraisals

1	13	(14.1%)
2	18	(19.6%)
3	23	(25%)
4	28	(30.4%)
5	10	(10.9%)

22. The appraisal process supports the University's strategy

1	12	(13.5%)
2	12	(13.5%)
3	32	(36%)
4	23	(25.8%)
5	10	(11.2%)

23. Appraisals provide me with the opportunity to set personal goals

1	15	(16.5%)
2	8	(8.8%)
3	17	(18.7%)
4	37	(40.7%)
5	14	(15.4%)

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24. All the information obtained from appraisals is confidential

1	6 (6.7%)
2	10 (11.1%)
3	24 (26.7%)
4	31 (34.4%)
5	19 (21.1%)

25. Appraisals give me a better understanding of what I should be doing

1	16 (17.4%)
2	26 (28.3%)
3	23 (25%)
4	21 (22.8%)
5	6 (6.5%)

26. The appraisal process in the University is fair

■	1	8 (8.7%)
■	2	9 (9.8%)
■	3	36 (39.1%)
■	4	33 (35.9%)
■	5	6 (6.5%)

27. I clearly understand the purpose of the appraisal process

■	1	6 (6.5%)
■	2	10 (10.9%)
■	3	16 (17.4%)
■	4	44 (47.8%)
■	5	16 (17.4%)

28. Since participating in the appraisal process I have developed personally

■	1	18 (19.6%)
■	2	22 (23.9%)
■	3	28 (30.4%)
■	4	18 (19.6%)
■	5	6 (6.5%)

29. The appraisal system helps identify areas for development

■	1	7 (7.6%)
■	2	15 (16.3%)
■	3	19 (20.7%)
■	4	42 (45.7%)
■	5	9 (9.8%)

30. I engage fully with the appraisal process

1	8 (8.9%)
2	11 (12.2%)
3	16 (17.8%)
4	36 (40%)
5	19 (21.1%)

31. I would like the opportunity to appraise my peers

1	23 (25%)
2	23 (25%)
3	12 (13%)
4	22 (23.9%)
5	12 (13%)

32. I would like the opportunity to appraise my line manager

■	1	19 (20.7%)
■	2	15 (16.3%)
■	3	17 (18.5%)
■	4	23 (25%)
■	5	18 (19.6%)

33. Please write here if you have any additional comments that you think would be of interest for this research.

Showing all 28 responses	
Have them for people who want them, but most people have the nouse to raise issues (appraiser or appraisee) during the year without a formal tick box excercise	237693-237686-18526015
Where does the appraisal go, after it is done with the line manager? Does anyone else review these or is it just a tick box. My appraisal has been the same for many years, i have noticed	237693-237686-18527412

n/a	237693-237686-18527494
The appraisals system is a tick the box exercise. Staff hate them and line managers don't want to do them. There is too much paperwork and the forms are a nightmare to fill in.	237693-237686-18528409
Appraisals are very important for staff members who do not feel confident or comfortable raising concerns and asking for feedback, it ensures that there is a formal way to do this.	237693-237686-18533066
Over the 10 years I have worked at the University I do feel that whether I have had a yearly appraisal or not it has not made any difference to my motivation to work hard. The first six years I did not have yearly appraisals and the past four years even though I have had yearly appraisals I do feel that these have been a "tick box" rather than encouragement to develop. In fact since I have had yearly appraisals I feel that I have had more responsbillity taken off me and my job can be quite boring at times becuase of this. Please note though I do enjoy working at the University.	237693-237686-18560823
I was driven to answer 3 for many of these questions where, for example, the fact that I have developed personally since involvement in the appraisal process started does not mean that this development is in any way a result of the process, but I didnt want to disagree strongly as that looks like I'm saying the appraisal process is useless for personal development. Many of the questions do not allow for the comment that I can see the value of appraisal for SOME staff at SOME points in their career or post, but as a very experienced, fully qualified and (still!) highly motivated productive member of a team, being appraised by my line manager who is a peer and who constantly feeds back appreciative comments or productive suggestions, I feel that the process is not a particularly effective use of either of our time. I would prefer an ongoing reflective dialogue with my manager in which we review, evaluate, plan and resolve as the job/event/moment/term unfolds.	237693-237686-18573227
I think that it would be beneficial for all staff to be set targets based on the school strategy and KPIs.	237693-237686-18576985
The Appraisal process works well if both the appraisee and the appraiser value the process and put in the time and effort required.	237693-237686-18578611
I feel if a manager does their job properly the appraisal is not necessary as all the elements are dealt with throughout the year. Most people just consider it a paper exercise which has to be done but is not really beneficial.	237693-237686-18608534
That your manager and line manager should not be the same person as this causes conflict of interest and can causes clashes. I know from personal experience.	237693-237686-18609166
Promotion could be linked to performance and subsequently the appraisal system. There are no specific incentives for promotion opportunities. Most jobs tend to have "someones name" on them. A 6 month trial secondment type promotion would benefit me rather than appraisals.	237693-237686-18609411
I completely engage in the appraisal process and appreciate that for some people it feels like a chore, however, I think when we do it only once a year, it doesn't help these feelings as it is hard to show the full potential if people see it is a once a year tick box exercise. If you have a good relationship with your manager and you have a good two-way door open policy, nothing in the appraisal should come as a massive surprise, more as a chance to record development and longer term goals.	237693-237686-18609552
I think the appraisal system is unnecessary, team meetings and one to ones with the line manager achieve much more. The appraisal system does nothing except maybe identify staff development requirements, which can be done without resorting to wasting time on appraisals.	237693-237686-18610024

The appraisal system rather than opening up opportunities can result in the opposite, if your line manager is not engaged with developing herself and does not see the need for others to engage in this activity	237693-237686-18610014
For the Employee Preparation Form, including one or two examples where development is needed for each of the six elements and further four competencies seems extreme. There is the potential for between 20 and 40 examples. I think it would be better to make both sets of examples optional. If examples can't be given, then this highlights areas where development is needed and action required.	237693-237686-18619881
The competency stuff is too old to be of use - appraisals feel tired and need re-energising. I feel that appraisals are conducted less strictly and thoroughly for academic staff	237693-237686-18624929
Success of Appraisals depends on whether your manager likes you or has an axe to grind.	237693-237686-18628528
I think appraisals are required but that the University should re look at the process. The competences can be useful if you have to have a difficult conversation otherwise they are a bit outdated. In order to keep them meaningful and not just a process we have to go through need to look at them in a different way	237693-237686-18640285
There is no real value to the appraisee in this process. Level and volume of work do not appear to be appraised for consideration of a regrade or engaging additional support. It feels more like an exercise to comply with University policy. It does provide a good opportunity for time with a line manager for frank discussion although I do not consider this to be fully confidential.	237693-237686-18640692
When you have a good line manager who is available at any time to discuss matters, appraisals seen surplus to requirements.	237693-237686-18640675
I think the appraisals are very important, however they don't get mentioned until the appraisal period approaches. Nothing seems to happen in between.	237693-237686-18642871
My last appraisal took place over 6 months ago, I never received the notes for this from the Manager.	237693-237686-18642990
The only issue I have with appraisals is having the time to prepare for them alongside workloads but if you do spend the time doing the preparation, I think you get a lot more out of the process	237693-237686-18648006
I believe that there are areas in the University where having an appraisal is an important way to access training and development. In my office this is not the case - if anyone is interested in training or development this is discussed at the time, rather than waiting for an appraisal. The appraisal has become a process that takes place because the University states it must, not because it makes any difference to our working practices. We have been involved in some of the competency procedures, but this makes no difference to what happens in the office, and feels like a tick box process done for the sake of it. I would strongly disagree that appraisals should be related to pay, as I feel this is unfair and would, in many cases, be too subjective, plus putting pressure on the appraisers. It would also be divisive in the workplace. I am an appraiser for my staff, and nothing ever happens because of the appraisal, but only because of the good working practices in the office during the year.	237693-237686-18745648
I have two line managers which made the appeal process difficult for me as one of my managers is really great to work with whereas the other can make life at work very difficult.	237693-237686-18773093
The appraisal process in my experience in recent years, seems to be just a box my manager needs to tick off. There is no understanding or a genuine care to develop/progress. It is just a formal process. None of our concerns are heard - and our voices are not heard at all.	237693-237686-18774042
I found it difficult to answer some of the questions because I think that an appraisal process	237693-237686-18790109

I found it difficult to answer some of the questions because I think that an appraisal process is necessary and can be extremely successful if used correctly however my experience of the University appraisal process is that it is purely a tick box exercise which does not address many of the things which a good appraisal process should ie provide clear goals / targets to monitor performance and highlight skills gaps etc.

237693-237686-1879910Y

APPENDIX G

THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD

Business School Research Ethics Committee

POSTGRADATE RESEARCH STUDENT ETHICAL REVIEW FORM

Please complete and return via email to <u>alex.thompson@hud.ac.uk</u> along with the required documents (shown below).

SECTION A: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT

Before completing this section please refer to the Business School Research Ethics web pages which can be found under Resources on the Unilearn site (Ethics Policies and Procedures). Applicants should consult the appropriate ethical guidelines.

Please ensure that the statements in Section C are completed by the applicant (and supervisor for PGR students) prior to submission.

Researcher(s) details	Lindsay Smith (0267870)
Project title	Investigation of support staff's perceptions of performance appraisal effectiveness at the University of Huddersfield
Award (where applicable)	Masters by Research
Supervisor details (where applicable)	Joanne Blake
Project start date	January 2015

Issue	Please provide sufficient detail for your supervisor to assess strategies used to address ethical issues in the research proposal. Forms with insufficient detail will need to be resubmitted.
Aims and objectives of the study. Please state the aims and objectives of the study.	I currently work within the Business School at the University of Huddersfield and have carried out appraisals with administrative staff for many years and often hear negative things about the appraisal process. The overall aim of the research is to look at the appraisal process from the point of view of the admin/support staff and to find how they really feel about the process as this could influence how they are approached in the future. . The objective will be to look at: • What elements of the system are effective • Whether appraisals motivate staff and if they perceive them as fair • If the process is a worthwhile tool in helping them develop
Brief overview of research methodology The methodology only needs to be explained in sufficient detail to show the approach used (e.g. survey) and explain the research methods to be used during the study.	A survey will be sent out to all admin support staff in the University. It will be an anonymous survey and with no obligation to complete. (Survey attached). Following the survey I then intend to hold interviews/focus groups (depending on respondent numbers) to allow a chance for participants to expand on the answers from the survey and to get more detail to analyse.
Does your study require any permissions for study? If so, please give details	No, but the School Manager of the Business School is supportive of the research and other School Managers across the University are also aware of it.
Participants Please outline who will participate in your research. Might any of the participants be considered 'vulnerable' (e.g. children)	All participants are adults and employees of the University of Huddersfield. All participants will be completely voluntary.
Access to participants	Participants for the survey will be identified through the

Please give details about how participants will be identified and contacted.	University's email distribution list. Participants for the interviews will be sourced from volunteers who email me direct to say that they wish to be part of the further process of being interviewed.
How will your data be recorded and stored?	Any data that is stored will be on the K drive of my employee computer drive and will be password protected. The files will not be accessed anywhere other than at the University.
Informed consent. Please explain how you will inform your participants about the study and whether they will be in a position to give informed consent.	All participants will be made clear about the objectives of the study when they are invited to complete the survey and also attend the interviews. This will be done via email for the survey and the information sheet and the consent form for the interview and will put the study in context and make clear the aim of the research.
Right to withdraw Please identify whether you are offering your participants a right to withdraw from the study and/or to withdraw their data from the study and how this will take place. If you are not offering a right to withdraw, please explain why.	Participants to the survey will be advised that the survey is anonymous and they will not be able to exclude themselves once the survey has been submitted but will assure them that the survey is anonymous. For those that volunteer to be interviewed they will be asked to sign a consent form and read an information sheet ahead of the interview. I will explain to participants that after the interview, and once I start collating interview feedback and merging this with the survey feedback, that it may not be possible for me to guarantee their ability to completely withdraw. I will however explain to them that the comments and issues raised will be written about collectively and there will not be any comments assigned to individuals or any way that these would be written about in the dissertation which would make them identifiable.
Confidentiality Please outline the level of confidentiality you will offer respondents and how this will be respected. You should also outline about who will have access to the data and how it will be stored. (This information should be included on Information your information sheet.)	Participants will be assured that all information gathered is purely for the purpose of the study. Only the researcher will have access to the survey results. Only the researcher will know who was directly involved in the interview process. Named people or details will not be published or included in the final dissertation
Anonymity If you offer your participants anonymity, please	Participants will be informed in the email directing them to the survey that the results will be completely anonymous. I am using an online survey tool which

indicate how this will be achieved.	ensures anonymity.
	Participants to the interview will be informed that their comments will not be used for anything other than the study in question and that names will not be used and/or any reference to job titles which would make them of people they may comment about identifiable. The participants will be aware that the interviews will be audio taped and destroyed after transcription and that these will remain on a secure drive. I will refer to individuals within the transcription and the dissertation as participant A, B, C etc. and I will keep a log of which these refer to, which only I will have access to and will be password protected.
Harm Please outline your assessment of the extent to which your research might induce psychological stress, anxiety, cause harm or negative consequences for the participants (beyond the risks encountered in normal life). If more than minimal risk, you should outline what support there will be for participants. If you believe that that there is minimal likely harm, please articulate why you believe this to be so.	Due to the nature of the study it could be that this arouses high emotional feelings within the participants. I will be asking them about their perceptions of a process that is very personal to them, about how it makes them feel, about work relationships within the process and about their own development and engagement. It could also mean discussing previous difficulties and specific events they have encountered. It is impossible to predict where the discussions may go especially if emotions, anger, etc. take over. Whilst being mindful about their anonymity and confidentiality should a situation arise where I think that the participant needs help and support then I will signpost them to experts in this area for help such as wellbeing services or dependent on the issue urge them to discuss it with their line manager (if appropriate). I would also want to follow this up with the participant to ensure that they have sought help/support or are managing the situation. If any uncomfortable conversations happen within the interview I will also remind the participants that they have the right to withdraw and stop the interview at that time and without any prejudice. I am very aware too that there is a role conflict within the study as I am potentially asking staff about their appraisals which I may have carried out in the past or

	may in future. It is for this reason that I intend only to interview participants that have volunteered from outside my direct role and preferably in a different school. Although my own team are keen to share their views (and they will be invited to complete the survey) it would be unethical to ask them to be interviewed as some staff, particularly new to the University, could feel under pressure to please, as could longer serving staff who also may not talk as openly as they think they might once in the situation and ultimately this sort of bias data wouldn't benefit the study and could potentially harm the participant. Whilst I acknowledge that this does not completely eliminate the conflict, harm or bias aspect I do believe it will keep it to a minimum.
	For those that are interviewed I need to be mindful of their expectations about the participation. If they invest the time and give their consent and then talk with honesty and feeling I do not want them to be disappointed or feel insignificant if perhaps then their particular input isn't used.
	Although the study is looking at a process that perhaps could be amended if the research highlighted this, I will have to make it very clear to participants that this doesn't mean that anything will change as a result of it as this isn't within the full control of the researcher.
	With regards to considering possible harm to myself, I will be carrying out interviews in an office with secretarial assistance outside the room and access to a phone, other people and a panic button.

Retrospective applications. If your application for Ethics approval is retrospective, please explain why this has arisen.

SECTION C – SUMMARY OF ETHICAL ISSUES (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT)

Please give a summary of the ethical issues and any action that will be taken to address the issue(s).

SECTION D – ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT)

Please supply copies of all relevant supporting documentation electronically. If this is not available electronically, please provide explanation and supply hard copy.

I have included the following documents

Information sheet	Yes	☐x	Not applicable ☐
Consent form	Yes	☐X	Not applicable ☐
Letters	Yes	☐X(email)	Not applicable ☐
Questionnaire	Yes	☐X	Not applicable ☐
Interview schedule	Yes	☐	Not applicable ☐x Interviews to take place last 2 weeks in January

I confirm that the information I have given in this form on ethical issues is correct. (Electronic confirmation is sufficient).

and (for PGR students only)

Affirmation by Supervisor (where applicable)
I can confirm that, to the best of my understanding, the information presented by the applicant is correct and appropriate to allow an informed judgement on whether further ethical approval is required

Supervisor name/signature:

Date: 16.11.2016

Name of applicant (electronic is acceptable)

Date   16.11.2016

All documentation must be submitted electronically to the Business School Research Ethics Committee Administrator, Alex Thompson, at alex.thompson@hud.ac.uk.

All proposals will be reviewed by two members of BSREC. If it is considered necessary to discuss the proposal with the full Committee, the applicant (and their supervisor if the applicant is a student) will be invited to attend the next Ethics Committee meeting.

> **If you have any queries relating to the completion of this form or any other queries relating to the Business School's Research Ethics Committee in consideration of this proposal, please do not hesitate to contact the Chair, Dr Eleanor Davies (e.davies@hud.ac.uk) ☎ [47] 2121 or the Administrator Alex Thomson (alex.thompson@hud.ac.uk) ☎ [4**

APPENDIX H

<u>**Participant Information Sheet**</u>

Investigation of support staff's perceptions of performance appraisal effectiveness at the University of Huddersfield

Introduction

I currently work within the Business School at the University of Huddersfield and have carried out appraisals with administrative staff for many years and often find very differing opinions about the appraisal process. It is for this reason that I am carrying out research as part of my Masters by Research course.

Purpose

The overall aim of the research is to look at the appraisal process from the point of view of the admin/support staff and to find how they really feel about the process as this could influence how they are approached in the future. It will look at what elements of the system are effective; whether appraisals motivate staff and if they perceive them as fair; if the process is a worthwhile tool in helping them develop

What you will do

You will be asked to take part in an interview which could last for approximately one hour. Interviews will be recorded, transcribed and saved anonymously on a secure drive.

What happens to the information?

All information obtained during the study will be confidential and the information will be anonymised and used only for the purpose of the Masters by Research dissertation.

I hope that you feel able to help with this study. If at any time you decide that you do not want to continue to take part in the study, you are free to withdraw up until the point of writing up the dissertation which is expected to be at the end of February 2017.

Lindsay Smith
Lindsay.smith@hud.ac.uk

APPENDIX I

Consent form

Title of the research: Investigation of support staff's perceptions of performance appraisal effectiveness at the University of Huddersfield

Name of Researcher: Lindsay Smith

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project and the Researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that any information recorded in the investigation will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
- I consent to being a participant in the project.
- I consent to being audio recorded as part of the project.
- I understand that I will not be able to withdraw from the research after the end of February 2017 when the data has been merged for analysis.

Name of participant: _____ Signature: _____

Date:_____

Researcher name:_____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX J

File | Message | McAfee E-mail Scan

Ignore | Junk | Delete | Reply | Reply All | Forward | More | Meeting | IM | OneNote | Move | Rules | OneNote | Actions | Mark Unread | Categorize | Follow Up | Translate | Find | Related | Select | Zoom

Delete | Respond | Move | Tags | Editing | Zoom

You replied to this message on 01/12/2016 15:58.
This message was AutoForwarded.
Click here to download pictures. To help protect your privacy, Outlook prevented automatic download of some pictures in this message.

From: Alex Thompson   Sent: Thu 01/12/2016 15:54
To: Lindsay Smith; Lindsay Smith U0267870
Cc: Eleanor Davies; Joanne Battye; Martin Smith
Subject: RE: Ethics approval form and documentation - BUSETHICS16/17:017

Message | Reviewer Proforma - BUSETHICS1617 017.docx (20 KB) | Reviewer Proforma - BUSETHICS1617 017 completed.docx (21 KB)

Dear Lindsay,

I have been asked to forward the following to you:

Following consideration of the two reports from the reviewers, the decision is approve subject to conditions.

The applicant has demonstrated a good awareness of issues that arise from collecting data from respondents in the context of her work environment and has offered a good explanation of this will be managed. Given the applicant's position in the Business School, the risk of role conflict in this situation is high and therefore ethics approval is granted subject to the following condition:

-    Respondents must not be drawn from support staff in the Business School

Dr Eleanor Davies
Chair of the Business School Research Ethics Committee

Attached are the comment forms from the Reviewers.

Regards,

Alex Thompson
Course Administrator
📞: 01484 472529
✉: m.a.thompson@hud.ac.uk
🖥: www.hud.ac.uk
University of Huddersfield Business School
University of Huddersfield | Queensgate | Huddersfield | HD1 3DH

Connect to social networks to show profile photos and activity updates of your colleagues in Outlook. Click here to add networks.

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