

**THE EXPERIENCE OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FOR ETHNIC
MINORITY EMPLOYEES IN UK ORGANISATIONS**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees through their lived experiences in UK organisations. A theoretical framework of the soft model of HRM and the four goals of Guest Model of HRM: Commitment, Integration, Flexibility and Adaptability, and Quality were adopted for the study. The regimes of inequality were used as a conceptual framework in relation to the hard model of HRM. A snowball sampling method was adopted to reach the participants. The data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews. Hermeneutic phenomenology and a thick description of analysis were adopted to produce a rich textual description of the fifteen respondents. Data were analysed by using a Heuristic method of analysis. The findings reveal that some of the participants have experienced fairness and transparency in the process of their performance appraisal, similar to the soft HRM. However, the findings also indicate that most of the participants perceive that the malpractice and manipulation of the process of performance appraisal result from the power of whiteness (white line managers). The findings further evidence that the white employees are given full support by their white line managers such as training, support, a good rating in their performance appraisal and promotion, thereby taking advantage of the soft model of HRM. Rhetorically, the process, system and practice of performance appraisal are a soft approach to white employees; in reality, it is a hard approach to the ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. It is important to expose the gap between rhetoric and reality of PA that experienced by EME so that the organisations in the UK can review their human resource functions and strategies effectively. As a result, all employees irrespective of their ethnic background need to feel fair in the process of the performance management life cycle. The result of this research supports the findings of Trust et al. (1997) and Gill (1999) that the initiatives of organisations initially seems to be soft when they are scrutinised, they are a hard approach to HRM. This research identified the need that addresses the lived experience of ethnic minority employees working in UK organisations concerning performance appraisal.

Key Words: Performance Appraisal, Ethnic Minority, Soft and Hard HRM, Regimes of Inequality, Rhetorics and Realities, Power of Whiteness, Line Managers.

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Abbreviations

CSO - Case Study in Organisation

EME - Ethnic Minority Employee

EO - Equal Opportunity

HR – Human Resource

HRM – Human Resource Management

IPM – Institute of Personnel Management

MBO - Management by Objective

PA - Performance Appraisal

PM - Performance Management

PSM - Personnel Management

SHRM - Strategic Human Resource Management

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Dedication

To my mum and dad for their endless support and blessing.

The Experience of Performance Appraisal for Ethnic Minority Employees in UK Organisations.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Rationale for the Study

In both the public and private sectors, formal employee performance appraisal (hereafter referred to as PA) procedures appear to be an increasing trend. Performance appraisal is an integral part of Human Resource Management (hereafter referred to as HRM). HRM is defined as a coherent and comprehensive approach to employment and development of individuals (Guest, 1987, Boxall et al., 2007 and Armstrong et al., 2014). Performance appraisal is one of the tools of HRM to leverage the performance of employees in any organisation. The aim of performance appraisal is to measure and assess the performance of employees fairly against the assigned task and to elevate their performance by providing necessary training and support for career advancement (Gill, 1999). The line managers also have a crucial role to play in the process of the performance life cycle (Cornelius, 1999:137). She believes that the line managers have a direct responsibility to identify the performance of all subordinates, recognise employees' performance and reward them for their achievement. Similarly, Torrington et al. (1998:320) claim that the performance appraisal can be used to identify potential training, improved current performance, increase motivation and commitment by rewarding good performers and enhance career advancement opportunity for employees.

Besides, fostering performance appraisal fairly and equally aligns with the four goals of Guest model of HRM (1987): Commitment, Integration, Flexible and Adaptability; and Quality which are similar to the characteristics of soft HRM. On the other hand, studies of work performance appraisal rating have found significant differences across ethnic minorities employees' performance (Wilson, 2010 and Essed, 1991:35). They have observed that black employees receive lower grades in performance appraisal ratings when compared to their white counterparts. This evidence concurs with the findings of other researchers, in that

ethnic minority employees (hereafter referred to as EME[s]) tend to score lower performance ratings than their white colleagues (Kalra et al., 2009 and Kick, 2006). Research has also shown that in the recent past performance appraisal has been affected in different ways, leading to subtle as well as a blatant form of discrimination, especially with regard to ethnic minority employees (Van and Janssens, 2011). According to them, a subtle form of discrimination is difficult to detect. However, it has direct consequences on those employees who are experiencing it and, despite the subtlety, results in detrimental effects on their daily experiences in the workplace (Essed, 1991:21). Van and Janssens (2011) argued that the blatant form of discrimination is perceived as unfair. Akin to the observation of Nkomo (1992), she argued that there are different types of inequalities that persist in the system and practice of performance appraisal. For example, lack of equal opportunities, gender inequality, and unfair treatment which are the characteristics of Hard HRM (Gill, 1999).

Historically, black and ethnic minority employees have had little or no input in the decision-making process in both the UK and USA organisations (Bradley et al., 2010). Essed (1991:42) and Lloyd (2009) have made considerable arguments as to why ethnic minority employees find it challenging to be as productive as their white counterparts. Similarly, Blackburn (1999) argued that ethnic minority and racial groups in organisations suffer from more significant under-representation as compared to white employees. As a result, the EME might experience the process of performance appraisal in various form of oppressions such as power discrimination (Acker, 2006a), gender discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989) and racism (Essed, 1991:75). These oppressions often lead to unequal access to training, barriers in the promotion and lack of career development which form part of the characteristics of Hard model of HRM (Legge, 2005:105).

Guest (1987) believed that if the bundles of Human Resource (hereafter referred to as HR) practices (performance appraisal) are effectively used, it will enhance employees' commitment [support and motivation]. It leads the employees to be more flexible and adaptable [training opportunities] to any change in the organisation and easily integrate [talent and skills] in the production process to pursue quality excellence [high problem solving]. This portrayal of soft HRM, when put alongside the research of Essed and others as mentioned above shows that persistent ethnic inequality raises the question as to whether the lived

experience of the performance appraisal for EMEs is in line with the characteristics of soft HRM.

1.1 Research Aims and Objectives.

This study attempts to examine and evaluate the experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees through their lived experiences in UK organisations. The lived experience of the participants is made the centre of gravity of this research. Recently, there was a dearth of research on the lived experience of ethnic minority employees regarding the process of performance appraisal (Bernardin, 1984; Barlow, 1989; Newton and Findlay, 1996; Dewberry, 2001 and Baxter, 2012). To the best knowledge of the researcher, the lived experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations has not been researched previously. It leads to the need for research that addresses the lived experience of ethnic minority employees concerning performance appraisal.

This research extends to the body of knowledge to answer the following objectives:

- To produce a rich picture of the experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations.
- To examine whether ethnic minority employees' experience of performance appraisal is congruent with the goals of soft Human Resource Management.

1.2 Contribution

By answering the above research objectives, this study contributes to filling the gap in the literature in the following ways. This research tried to uncover the need for fairness from the lived experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. Most of the study is based in the US (Bernardin, 1984, Townley, 1993, Coens and Jenkins, 2002; and Baxter, 2012), there is little in the UK (Newton and Findlay, 1996; Dewberry, 2001 and Wilson, 2010) and Goksoy and Alayoglu (2013 from Turkey. None of these researchers gave a rich picture of the lived experience of performance appraisal from an ethnic minority's perspective. There is a need for research that addresses the

lived experience of performance appraisal from ethnic minority employees' perspective. This study will provide information to the growing body of literature in relation to rhetorics and realities of performance appraisal through the lens of ethnic minority employees in UK organisations.

The lived experience and the outcome of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees may or may not differ from their white counterparts. The line managers have a key role in the process and outcome of performance appraisal. This research provides information to the growing body of literature of how line managers may or may not influence (soft or and hard approach to HRM) the outcome of performance appraisal in UK organisations. As a result, it is supposed to harness the career advancement of employees, irrespective of their ethnic background.

The next section elaborates on how this thesis developed into chapters.

1.3 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis extends over six chapters. Chapter one introduces the research in an attempt to why this topic has been chosen. The rationale for the study is presented, which includes the aims, objectives, gap in the literature and the elaboration of the contribution to the growing body of literature which rendered the study feasibly.

Chapter two is an attempt to understand the theoretical framework of performance appraisal. Then the development of Personnel Management, Human Resource Management and Strategic HRM is expanded. The influence of soft and hard HRM in performance appraisal concerning the four goals of Guest Model of HRM is also discussed. This chapter also addresses the rhetorics and realities of the soft and hard models of HRM.

Chapter three connects with chapter two to discuss race, ethnicity, in-groups and out-groups, which may or may not influence the process of performance appraisal. This chapter uses Intersectionality, Social Identity Theory, Contact Hypothesis, Attribution Theory, and Inequality Regimes to examine intergroup relations in an ethnically diverse workplace. This chapter also deals with the impact of PA on race and ethnicity in organisations and the possible outcomes from the process of PA.

Chapter four familiarises the reader with the research methodology. In doing so, different models of research method and the importance of the qualitative method are highlighted. Various forms of phenomenological approach are explored, and justification is provided on why the hermeneutic phenomenology is adopted. Several samplings, interviews and data analysis methods are discussed, and each of the methods is justified as to why it may or may not be adopted in this study. The research strategy, reflexivity and ethical issues are also addressed.

Chapter five focuses on the findings and discussions of the data collected through a semi-structured interview. It expands on the three themes derived from the stories of the participants: constructed fairness, regimes of inequality and; learning and development from the outcome of performance appraisal. The findings are discussed and related to the existing literature of this research. The excerpts from the participants are used to provide evidence of the rhetorics and realities of their lived experience of performance appraisal in UK organisations, with due considerations to the aim and objectives of this study.

Finally, Chapter six provides a critical reflection on the research journey, the key findings from chapter five and discussions relating to the research objectives. It also analyses its contribution to the study and the recommendations contained therein for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the theoretical and conceptual framework adopted in this research as well as a detailed examination of the lived experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. It begins with a discussion on the development of performance management (hereafter referred to as PM) and organisational practices of measuring performance in the workplace. It goes on exploring the influences of soft and hard HRM through the Guest model of HRM; and the rhetorics and realities of such model in UK organisations.

2.1 The Development of Performance Management Practices in Organisations.

Armstrong (2015:2) observed that the first known example of a performance review took place during the Wei Dynasty. Between AD 221 and 265, the emperor employed an “*imperial rater*” to evaluate the performance of the officials (*ibid*). Even at this stage of the development of PM, doubts were expressed as to its fairness in evaluating the performance of the workers (Coens and Jenkins, 2002:35). “*The imperial rater of nine grades seldom rates men according to their merits but always according to his likes and dislikes*” (*ibid*).

2.1.1 Merit Rating

Frederick Taylor (1911) is often seen to be one of the pioneers of PM in a modern managerial context (see Armstrong, 2015:2). Even today, many organisations adopted the concept of scientific management (Armstrong, 2015:2). This concept is characterised by task specialisation, systematic observation and measurement (*ibid*). By the 1920s, Frederick Taylor (1911) invented the ‘*Man to Man comparison scale*’ (in Armstrong, 2015:2) and it was employed in many organisations. Armstrong observed that this method of appraisal was known as ‘*merit rating*’ and it was used to rate the US army officers’ judgement, leadership, integrity and cooperativeness. Therefore, it was an era of promotion based on merit. Armstrong (2015:34) opined that the success of perceived merit rating led

to its adoption in the British army. It was also adopted by organisations to keep up to date reports on workers, rating supervisors and managers. The scale was represented by a 'tick box' questionnaire to assess different qualities of the employees. It is believed that this sort of scale justifications was educational, that is, knowledge, skills and talents (*ibid*). The educational impact on employees was described as imparting knowledge in which they judged periodically on 'traits' (Armstrong, 2015:34). The traits can be in terms of the attitude towards the job, quality and quantity of the work, cooperation, integrity and sense of judgement (*ibid*). Chell (1992 in Armstrong, 2015:35) posited that *'traits represent pre-dispositions to behave in certain ways in a variety of different situations.'* Hampson (1982) opined that traits are *"more or less stable internal factors that make one person's behaviour consistent from one time to another and different from the behaviour; other people would manifest in comparable situations"*.

However, Armstrong (2015:35) argued that it is questionable to assume that traits are independent of the situations and the people with whom the subordinate is interacting. He argued that traits could not predict how a subordinate can respond in a particular case. Criticism of merits rating was often made because it was concerned mainly with the assessment of traits (*ibid*). He observed that the assessment of traits is more likely to be prompted by subjective judgement and prejudices. These critiques led to the notions of performance appraisal.

2.1.2 Performance Appraisal

By the early 1950s, the term performance appraisal (PA) emerged as an alternative to merit rating (Coens and Jenkins, 2002:34). The differences between these two types of appraisals were quite small. There was a shift towards reviewing how workers performed their assigned task rather than just assessing their traits (*ibid*). As a result, performance appraisal became commonplace in the organisation; as it offered a perception of control and reliability (Coens and Jenkins, 2002:35). They observed that during the 1950s, PA became a tool of preference that ensured alignment and control through the layers of bureaucracy in organisations. Comparing to merit rating, PA tailored according to the worker's behaviours and traits (*ibid*). For instance, their cooperation, diligence and punctuality were the focus for appraising the employees rather than individual performance outcomes. Coens and Jenkins (2002:35) claimed that 'attitude' was the focal point during the process of

appraisal. They believed that employees with good attitudes made it easier to get compliance, and it continues to be used today in the process of PA.

Concomitantly, Mathis et al. (2014:334) and Lockett (1992) believe that a performance appraisal is an essential tool for leveraging the performance of employees in organisations. They argued that PA could be adopted by management in any organisation to achieve its set objectives. According to them, there are two main objectives of PA. The first objective is to measure employee's performance objectively and fairly against allocated jobs. The second objective is to elevate the performance of an employee by identifying gaps for future training and development. Wilton (2013:176) posited that appraisal is used to record the assessment of an employee's performance, training and development needs. According to him, PA is an opportunity to take an overview of the workloads, contents, volume and attitude; look back about the achievement during a particular period which is usually six months and agree for the next period. Similarly, Armstrong (2015:37) has a common observation that PA usually records the performance and potential needs of the development of an employee. The appraisal is an opportunity to look back what was agreed about the volume, quality and target for the job assigned to the employee. Then, the line manager will rate the achievement and approve the objectives for the next reporting period (*ibid*). However, the critique of PA did not go unnoticed.

2.1.3 Critiquing PA practices in Organisations

McGregor and Smith (1975) criticised the practice of PA. They claimed that the assessment of PA should focus on the future of an employee rather than his or her past performance to establish a realistic objective. The emphasis of the PA shifted from 'appraisal to analysis' (*ibid*). McGregor and Smith (1975) advocated an approach that their managers will no longer appraise the employees. They proposed that the employees will set their short-term personal goals. The employees will evaluate their strengths, weaknesses and potential developments (*ibid*). McGregor and Gershenfeld (2006:30) posited that the employees became an active agent instead of a passive object in the practice of PA. '*He is no longer a pawn in a chess game called management development*' (*ibid*).

Furthermore, Armstrong (2015:38) believed that being an active agent, the personality of an employee will not become an issue. Instead, the line managers will need to coach the subordinates to achieve their targets. In other words, the

main factor in managing the performance of the employee should be the analysis of behaviour to achieve the goals rather than the assessment of personality (*ibid*). McGregor and Gershenfeld (2006:119) illustrated the unease surrounding the use of performance appraisal, that is, the use of personality-based ratings. They advocated a personal-based and participative approach where employees can self-appraise themselves. McGregor and Smith (1975) and Armstrong (2015:38) came up with a common observation that the process of the appraisal must emphasise on the future development of an individual rather than look at the past. Armstrong (2015:39) claimed that Management by Objectives (hereafter referred to as MBO) had overcome the critics of merit rating and traditional appraisal.

2.1.4 Management by Objectives (MBO)

The term 'Management by Objectives' was first coined by Peter Drucker (1955). He claimed that *"what a business enterprise needs is a principle of management that will give a full scope of individual strength and responsibility. At the same time, it gives a common direction of vision and effort, establishes teamwork, and harmonises the goals of the individual with the common organisational goals. The only principle that can do this is management by objectives and self-control."* MBO is a process in which managers and subordinates sit together to identify common objectives and set the goals (Armstrong, 2015:40). He believes that both individual and organisation objectives are integrated. The major areas of responsibilities of each individual are demarcated in terms of measurable results (*ibid*). These results were used in assessing the contribution and monitoring the progress of the individuals in the organisation. MBO is a dynamic system that seeks to pass the goals and objectives from one organisational level to another (Weldon, 1982). The higher-level management brings specific and measurable goals to their subordinate (*ibid*). In return, the subordinate brings particular objectives and measures to accomplish the job. Jointly, they develop a group of specific goals within a time frame. The subordinate is held directly responsible for the accomplishment of those goals. The manager and the subordinate will have a regular meeting about the progress of the task. At the end of the set period, the subordinate appraised on the result he or she has achieved. The subordinate may be rewarded for the achievement by an increase in pay or promotion (Weldon, 1982). On the other hand, if the result is not achieved, he or she may be demoted, fired or transferred to a job that will need further training (*ibid*).

Criticism of MBO soon developed where the resources of the organisation were concentrated solely towards achieving individual goals at the expense of other needs (Weldon, 1982). MBO also focuses exclusively on outcomes, and it can stifle managers because they are focused on reaching targets (*ibid*). Armstrong (2015:41) had a common observation, and he claimed that “*the demise of MBO was mainly due to the process becoming over-systematised (often under the influence of packaged-oriented management consultants).*” He argued that MBO became a top-down affair with less communication. MBO tends to focus more on the objectives of the managers rather than concentrate on corporate goals (Armstrong, 2015:41). Weldon (1982) concluded that in “*the new management system, that is, MBO... if a problem was reported, senior executive management took the position that it was ‘their’ problem and ‘they’ better fix it. (‘Their’ and ‘They’ referring to subordinate management.)*”

Weldon (1982) observed that the implementation of MBO was well-intended. However, some areas of personality traits and work performance intuitively evaluated by executive management: The Boss (*ibid*). Weldon (1982) posited that the new process, that is, MBO was falling short in organisations because it encouraged one-way communication: Boss to Subordinate. There was also too much emphasis on the quantification of objectives (*ibid*).

2.1.5 Results-Based Performance Appraisal

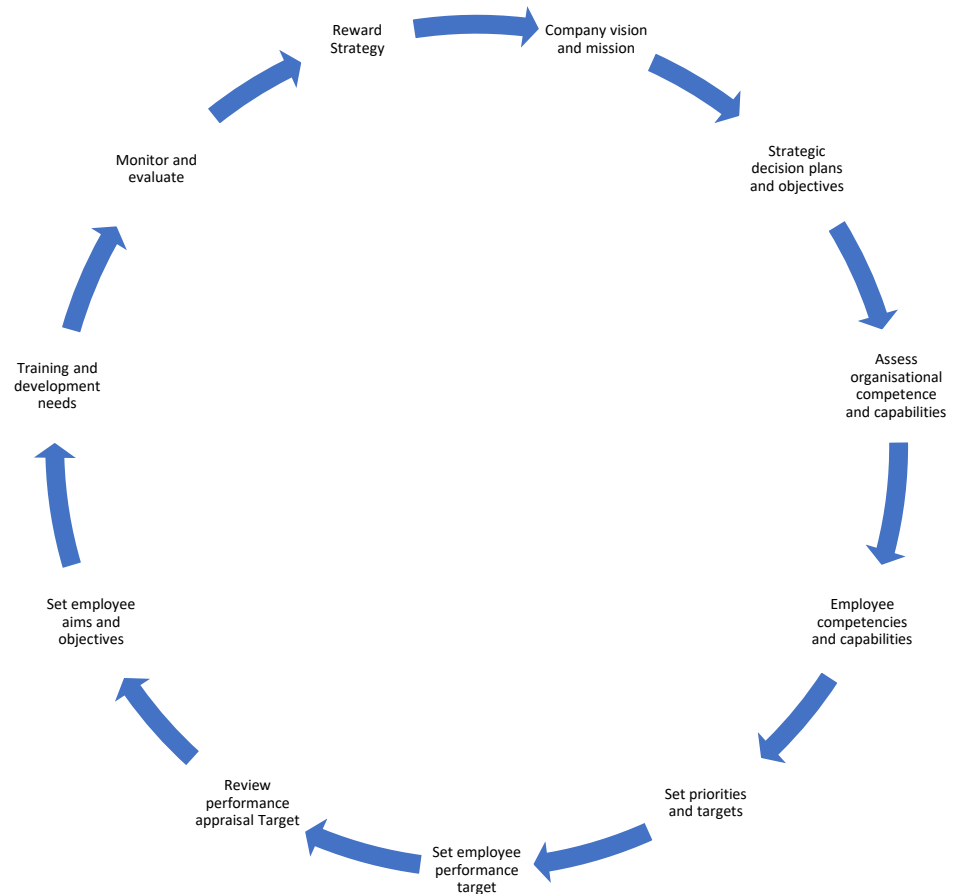
By the 1970s, a revised approach to PA was established under the influence of MBO. Such a process of appraisal was known as ‘result-based appraisal’ (Armstrong, 2015:42). It incorporated the agreed objectives and the assessment of the results obtained against these objectives (*ibid*). This method of appraisal was based on overall performance and subordinate’s objectives. During the 1980s, such type of appraisal was adopted in most organisations in the UK because there was an increase in the use of performance pay based on performance rating (Armstrong, 2015:42).

2.1.6 Performance Management and Performance Appraisal

Cornelius (2001:143) believes that performance management is a system which provides “*a means of getting improved results from the organisation, departments and individuals by understanding and managing performance within an agreed overall framework*”. Therefore, PM is a system and process of identifying, managing, measuring and developing the HR practices within an organisation.

One of the HR practices within the PM is performance appraisal. The PA is an ongoing process of evaluating employees' performance within the performance management cycle.

Figure 1: Performance Management Cycle



Source: Cornelius (2001:151).

The above figure demonstrates a PM cycle where a line manager controls, monitors and evaluates the performance of employees irrespective of their ethnic background to achieve the aims and objectives of the organisation. Therefore, working towards the PM cycle helps employees' goals, enhances their motivation and leads to career advancement.

Armstrong and Baron (1998:43) and Armstrong (2015:43) have observed that the concept of PM had incorporated some of the approaches of MBO and results-based performance appraisal. The earliest mention of the term 'performance management' was made by Warren (1972) who defined five features of PM: expectations, skill, feedback, resources, and reinforcement. All employees must

be told clearly about the expectations of the management. The employees must have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform a specific task (*ibid*). Feedback is the provision of information to employees on how they performed in terms of expectations and must be informed in clear terms. In addition to that, Warren (1972) claimed that employees must be provided necessary resources such as training, skills and knowledge to perform their job efficiently and effectively. Finally, the employees must positively reinforce to attain the desired performance.

Armstrong and Taylor (2015:334) pointed out that another early use of 'performance management' was made by Beer and Ruh in 1976. The research was carried out by Beer and Ruh (1976 in Armstrong and Taylor, 2015:334) at Corning Glass Works, where they introduced the PM system. They were looking for a system that would integrate the strengths of MBO with a better way to observe, evaluate, and help subordinates to improve their potential performance. They aimed to help managers to give feedback constructively and helpfully (*ibid*). Armstrong (2015:44) opined that by mid of the 1980s, PM was emerged in the US as a new approach to manage performance in organisations. Plachy and Plachy (1988) were the first authors to publish the book "*Performance Management: Getting Results from your performance planning and appraisal result.*" It was the first book that was devoted to PM. Plachy and Plachy (1988) coined that "*performance management is communication: a manager and employee arrive together at an understanding of what work is to be accomplished, how it will be accomplished, how work is progressing towards desired results, and finally after an effort is expended to accomplish the work, whether the performance has achieved the agreed-upon plan*".

According to Plachy and Plachy (1988), the process recycled when the line manager and the employee start planning what work needs to be accomplished up to the next performance review period. They argued that performance management is characterised by performance planning, performance review and performance appraisal. In general, performance planning and an appraisal are made annually (*ibid*) whereas performance review occurs during the routine work contacts. The line manager and the respective employee will adjust, correct or confirm their understanding of the work performed.

By early 1992, the full recognition of the existence of PM provided by Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (hereafter referred to as IPM) (CIPD, 2009). The following definition of PM was introduced by IPM (1992): “a strategy that relates to every activity of the organisation set in the context of its human resources policies, culture, style and communication systems. The nature of the strategy depends on the organisational context and vary from organisation to organisation” (*ibid*).

CIPD (2009:18) believed that PM could be successful if the following activities are met:

- Communication of a vision of all employees in the organisation
- Setting the individual and departmental performance targets that are related to the set objectives
- Conducting formal reviews of the targets and identifying any variances which may be positive or negative
- The variances must identify training, development or reward for respective employees
- Evaluating the process to improve the effectiveness
- Performance targets must be expressed in terms of measurable output, accountabilities of the outcome, and potential learning and training
- Linking performance requirement to pay

Armstrong (2015:46) claimed that organisations are more focussed on employees’ development rather than performance related to pay. The rest of the characteristics mentioned above still hold good today (*ibid*).

PM emerged in the late 1980s partly because of adverse reaction on merit rating and MBO. At first, PM has incorporated many aspects of PA, such as objective setting, rating, trait assessment, performance pay, and review. However, with the contribution of several researchers such as Warren (1972), Beer and Ruh (1976 in Armstrong and Taylor, 2015:334), Plachy and Plachy (1988), IPM (1992) and CIPD (2009), PM has been viewed differently from previous approaches. PM is regarded as a continuous process, not as a one-off appraisal. PM is not a technique or system; it is a day-to-day set of activities for the managers in an organisation (Fowler, 1990). Armstrong (2015:48) argued that the new approach to PM is a dialogue and agreement between the manager and employees rather

than top-down appraisal. Nowadays, PM is owned by the line managers rather than the HR (*ibid*).

2.2 Performance as Behaviour or Results

Armstrong (2015:52) suggests that *“if you cannot define performance, you cannot measure or manage it.”* Armstrong (2015:51) and Brumback (1988) argued that there are many different views on what performance is. They opined that performance is a multi-dimensional construct, and the measurement depends on different factors. They believed that performance could be achieved if it is defined by adopting behaviour and or result.

Campbell and Campbell (1988:145) claimed that *“individual’s performance is, to some, a function of their behaviour and that performance affects productivity, it becomes important to understand why individuals choose to behave the way they do. Only through this understanding, it is possible to predict behaviour.”* They argued that it is not about what the employees produce or the results of their task. It is about what employees do (*ibid*). Performance is multidimensional, and each dimension is characterised by similar behaviours such as demonstration of efforts of a particular job, specific task proficiency, non-specific task proficiency and written or oral communication proficiency (Campbell and Campbell, 1988:194). They uphold that the non-specific task covers dedication, persistence, motivation, and cooperation of the employees. Similar to McGregor’s Theory Y, it is assumed that employees are self-motivated to fulfil the task assigned to them (McGregor, 1960:48). They consider work as a natural part of life; they worked with the cooperation and with greater responsibility (*ibid*).

Cardy (2004:13) posited that *“from the perspective of managers, performance on a job often consists of outcomes. It is the goals or actions achieved, not the activities that are important. How many sales were made? How much waste was reduced? How many were sold? These types of questions address performance as results. What is achieved is the critical performance criterion from an outcome perspective.”* He argued that performance; as a result, perspective can be objectively measured. It can increase the productivity and bottom-line performance of an organisation (*ibid*). Cardy (2004:14) and Brumback (1988) believed that both of the approaches: result and behaviour are important. They have observed that most of the organisations prefer to focus on one approach

over another in their appraisal systems. Behavioural criteria such as group-oriented, person-oriented, flexibility and cooperation offer clear guidance to employees as to how they can improve performance (Cardy, 2004:14). He believes that behavioural criteria do not guarantee any growth in productivity and profit of the organisations. Because in the case where the objective is not achieved under such criterion, there is no information about how to improve the level of performance (*ibid*). Brumback (1988) argued that the behaviour of employees could be under control. In contrast, outcomes are beyond the control because they are influenced by various factors such as economic condition, equipment or trade unions pressures (*ibid*).

Brumback (1988) and Armstrong (2015:53) believed that a more comprehensive view of performance is adopting both criteria: behaviours and results. Brumback (1988) argued that behaviours originate from the employee and transform the performance into action. He believed that performance is *“not just the instruments for results, behaviours are also outcomes in their own right- the product of mental and physical effort applied to tasks- and can be judged apart from results.”* Armstrong (2015:53) opined that when managing the performance of an employee, both input (behaviour) and output (result) need to be taken into consideration. It was supported by Pulakos (2004:2) that at the beginning of the PM cycle, it is essential to review the expectations of the respective employees. The behaviours of these employees that are expected to exhibit and the expected result that they are going to achieve at the upcoming review cycle need to be taken into consideration (*ibid*). She argued that behaviours are essential because they reflect on how an employee supports the team, how he or she goes on getting the job done, and how he or she mentors others. However, it is a common phenomenon for some employees that behaviours can be very disruptive and challenging to work with. It might be an employee has adaptive behaviour and helpful but has never achieved any positive result. Therefore, behaviour, as well as results expectation, need to be considered simultaneously to achieve corporate objectives and strategic direction of the organisation (Pulakos, 2004:2).

2.3 Performance Management and Employee Engagement

Alfes et al. (2010) claimed that *“engaged employees perform better, are more innovative than others, are more likely to want to stay with their employers, enjoy*

greater levels of personal well-being and perceive their workload to be more sustainable than others.” They opined that PM support employees to maintain a high level of engagement which results in high performance. Such performance can be achieved if managers focus on fostering the employee’s engagement as a driver to enhance performance rather than managing performance (Bones, 1996). As a result, employees will be more engaged. They will feel that their jobs are relevant, and their voice is valued (Armstrong, 2015:209). Therefore, engaging work environments provide potential development opportunities, promote two-way communication and a balance in the employee’s lives (*ibid*). PM gives engagement a greater meaning to the work that employees do. The employees feel engaged in their job when their aims and objectives are specified and achievable. Engagement can be driven by establishing development plans and performance goals that will support the success of the employees’ career; and role development (Bones, 1996).

Role development is a continuous process where the roles of the employees are defined and clarified at the start of the PM cycle (Cornelius, 2001:151). As the work proceeds, the employees are enabled to modify and adjust their role of development (*ibid*). It allows them to acquire new skills, respond to opportunities, and develop competencies. Armstrong (2015:211) has observed that it is vital to design the role of employees according to their job characteristics. One of the leading job characteristics is skills variety where an employee will be required to perform activities that will challenge his or her ability. The second job characteristic is the task identity. It is to identify the task and complete it, and hence take pride from the outcome of the job. Enny (2016) believed that the task significance is the degree to which the outcome from the job will have an impact on the group, organisation, or the self. Autonomy is the degree to which the job provides employees’ independence, freedom, and discretion in scheduling their work (*ibid*). It will determine the process to do the job. The last job characteristic is the knowledge of outcomes which comes from feedback. It is an awareness of how employees are converting their effort effectively into performance (Ozturk et al., 2014).

Armstrong (2015:211) opined that if the design of a job will satisfy the job characteristics, then the employees will know that the task completed satisfactorily. They will feel that the job was worthwhile. The outcome of this

would be a high degree of job satisfaction and high quality of work as a result of intrinsic motivation. At the start of the PM cycle, the manager and the employee clarified their roles to achieve high-quality work and success, which reflect on job satisfaction, higher motivation, and engagement. In other words, PM contributes to employee welfare through intrinsic motivators (Ajmal et al., 2015).

2.4 Performance Appraisal Practices in the Personnel Management Era

Personnel Management (hereafter referred to as PSM) is defined as selecting, recruiting, training, and developing people in the organisation (Legge, 2005:43). She observed that PSM was characterised by controlling, monitoring and reviewing the performance of people in organisations. There are four models of PSM: The Normative Model, The Descriptive-functional Model, The Descriptive-Behavioural Model and The Critical-Evaluative Model (*ibid*). These are outlined in the following subsections.

2.4.1 The Normative Model of Personnel Management

The normative model of personnel management is defined as the maximum utilisation of people in the workplace and achieving the organisation's goal simultaneously (Legge, 2005:41). Such a model assumes that managers and employees work together as a team to achieve the goal of the organisation. American researchers had common observations of a normative model of PSM (Pigors and Myers, 1969; Glueck, 1974 and Jucius, 1975). Pigors and Myers (1969) posited that *“personnel Management is a basic management function which is characterised by organising and treating individuals at work so that they will get the greatest possible realisation of their intrinsic abilities, thus attaining maximum efficiency for themselves and their group.”* Glueck (1974) opined that *“PSM is simply matching individuals to the job that must be done to achieve the goals of the organisation.”* Whereas Jucius (1975:5) claimed that *“PSM is concerned with planning, organising, directing and controlling the functions of procuring, developing, maintaining and utilising the labour force such that the objectives for the company are attained. The objective of all levels of personnel is served to the highest. The objectives of the society are duly considered and served.”* The Institute of Personnel Management (1963) [hereafter referred to as IPM] had a different view of this model of PSM. Legge (2005:45) has observed that according to IPM *“PSM is a responsibility of all those who manage people,*

as well as being a description of the work of those who are employed as specialists." IPM (1963) argued that PSM is the responsibility for all managers, including the personnel specialists, to manage and control people. It seeks to provide fair terms and conditions of employment which satisfied people at work (*ibid*). Therefore, the IPM aims to achieve efficiency and fairness.

The normative model of PSM was viewed differently by the American as compared to the IPM (UK) (Legge, 2005: 46). She posited that the American version of this model was to achieve the highest intrinsic abilities for the employees. It was a unitarist approach to Normative model of PSM. As a unitarian perspective, the organisation was perceived as one family (*ibid*). The employer and employees shared a similar goal to achieve the same objective. The employees were loyal to the organisation and are perceived as a father and child relationship (Legge, 2005:35). IPM viewed the model of PSM as the responsibility of the personnel specialist only (*ibid*). Legge (2005:46) argued that PSM is the task for all managers, not just only the specialist. IPM perceived the normative model of PM as pluralist (*ibid*). She claimed that as a pluralist perspective, the management is perceived to be made up of influential people with their aim, objectives, and leadership styles. It was a centralised decision-making strategy. The employees needed to abide by the terms and conditions of the policies regulated by the IPM.

There are similarities between the American and the UK approach to a normative model of PSM. The common theme was about selecting, recruiting, training, rewarding, and developing employees in the workplace.

2.4.2 The Descriptive-Functional and Behavioural Models of Personnel Management

Torrington and Hall (1987:12) opined that the descriptive model of PSM is described as *"a series of activities which first enable working people and their employing organisations to agree about the objectives and nature of their working relationships and, secondly, ensures that the agreement is fulfilled."* Similarly, Sisson (1989) claimed that under this model, PSM is described *"as the written policies, processes and procedures involved in the management of people in an organisation... is primarily concerned with personnel management as a system of employment regulation: how people in work organisations are selected, appraised, trained, paid, disciplined, and so on... is concerned with the regulation*

for which managers are primarily, if not exclusively, responsible". The model of PSM is described as a series of employment regulations (Sisson, 1989). The employment regulations consist of activities and policies that management and employees agreed upon in order to meet the objective of the organisation. Descriptive-behavioural model of PSM focused on the current experience and behaviours of the personnel specialist; and how the employee perceived them (Legge, 2005:47). She believed that the personnel department covers a wide range of activities. These activities include employee development and training, health and safety, negotiations of employment contracts and the welfare of employees. However, the perceptions of employees regarding the personnel role were ambiguous (*ibid*). The employees perceived the role of personnel departments as giving out payslips, allocating car park space and distributing company newsletter to respective departments (Dransfield et al., 2004:101). They argued that the personnel function perceived as acting as a third party between the line managers and the floor workers. The personnel know too little about employment laws to resolve workers' staffing issues (*ibid*). The American managers viewed personnel managers as having 'Big hat, no cattle' (Guest, 1991a). Drucker (1955:238) opined that the personnel managers were also perceived as *'file clerk's job, partly as a housekeeping job, partly as a social worker's job, partly fire-fighting to head off union trouble or to settle it'*. He observed that the personnel were partly responsible for union grievances, pension plans, and safety issues in the workplace. All these responsibilities should be put together in one department as a 'hodge-podge' (*ibid*). In the same vein, Keenoy (1990) refers to personnel managers in Marks & Spencer as *'personnel ghetto'*.

By the late 1970s, personnel managers were obsessed with the issue of their credibility (Legge, 2005:51). She posited that *"lack of credibility might be seen as a direct result of the contrast between the high aspirations of the normative models and of failure to deliver as reflected in the behavioural model"*. She opined that by late 1970s, in the US and the UK, PSM was perceived as a lack of influence at the senior management level. Being out of touch with the business, the personnel managers promised more than they delivered (*ibid*). The personnel managers were not involved in strategic decisions. PSM was perceived as a service department rather than contributing to the organisation business strategy.

Furthermore, the descriptive-functional model of PSM tends to appear in the UK rather than in America (Legge, 2005:46). The definitions of this model stressed on the regulation of the relationship of employment. It is viewed by Torrington and Hall (1987:13) and Sisson (1989) as a pluralist approach. Organisations practice the values of a pluralist approach to come to an agreeable resolution and benefiting both the employers and the employees (Legge, 2005:46). The limitation of this approach is that the managers possess the power and control which might or might not misuse against EMEs during the process of performance appraisal or within the PM cycle. However, Legge (2005:47) argued that the main focus of this model was the regulation of employment which was considered vital for the survival of an organisation.

2.4.3 Critical-Evaluative Model of Personnel Management

Watson (1986:176) argued that critical-evaluative model PSM *“is concerned with assisting those who run work organisations to meet their purposes through the obtaining of the work efforts of human beings, the exploitation of those efforts when they are no longer required.”* He took a critical view of PSM and argued that the employment relationship between an employer and employee could not be on an equal interest. The I management aims to maximise profitability, growth, and market share (*ibid*).

Moreover, Watson (1986) viewed a critical-evaluative model of PSM as seeing management having the responsibility to exploit the employees at least cost and dispensing those efforts when not required. This model was characterised by an exploitive employment relationship rather than regulatory. Watson (1986 in Legge, 2005:47) claimed that this model could not appear in management policies of PSM and standard textbooks because employees cannot be treated like a machine or entity. Watson (1986:177) viewed PSM as one stakeholder, that is, the employer. In other words, the management has more power than the employee), which leads this study to examine if the EME’s lived experience is fair or unfair during the process of PA.

2.5 Performance Management Practices in the HRM Era

The factory system was the pillar of industrialisation (Boxall et al., 2010:22). The system expanded broadly creating in its wake a new class of managers and employees. The system resulted in a division of labour, where production tasks

were routinised and repetitive (*ibid*). As the factories size increased, so was the need for more managers and supervisors to control units of production. Boxall et al. (2010:22) observed that the factory managers were more concerned with maximising human effort regarding profit maximisation. Therefore, by the early 19th century, the foreman, through the owners, was less concerned about the human factor, the safety of job and welfare of the employees (Ferris et al., 1995:19). They observed that the foreman was responsible for all human resource activities such as hiring, training, handling grievance, and dismissal of employees. The focus was mainly on the markets, materials, and production. This type of factory management system was mostly characterised by force and fear (*ibid*).

During the mid-19th century, there was a rapid growth in factories due to the improvement in technology (Ferris et al., 1995:20). They posited that this period witnessed a transition from agriculture to the manufacturing industry; small scale employment: farmers and artisans to the large scale of employment: semi or unskilled assemblers and operators. At the same time, there was a growth in the corporate organisation. These corporate organisations aimed to set up layers of hierarchy to delegate responsibilities and accountabilities, departmentalisation and separation of operation (*ibid*).

The end of the nineteenth century was characterised by economic turmoil, financial crisis, social and labour unrest and prolonged unemployment (Ferris et al., 1995:20; and Callaghan, 2016). Due to growth in industrial mechanisation, there was a dilution of skilled workers (*ibid*). There was also a concentration of unskilled labour, which resulted in a fall in wages (Dawson, 1989). Due to the abundance of unskilled workers, it had fuelled the pool of unemployed labours in the market (*ibid*).

Despite advances in technology, an increase in the size of the organisation and new methods of production, there was still less focus on the management of human resources (Callaghan, 2016). As such, there was more concentration on organisation growth and technique of production (*ibid*). Practices in organisations mostly stuck to the traditional laissez-faire form of managing human resources, and the employees were viewed as a mere commodity (Dawson, 1989 and Callaghan, 2016). As a result, the centralised form of the factory management system, which was a bureaucratic system that includes the traditional way of the delegation of responsibilities in the factory, persisted (Ferris et al., 1995:20). The

lack of improvement in delegation and traditional factory management systems have contributed to the high turnover rates, low productivity, and conflict between employees and factory managers (*ibid*). These factors led to an increase in managing conflicts as well as in the union's membership. The bargaining efforts of the labour movement met with persistent and stubborn management which often refused to negotiate with unions. These practices by organisations led to the development of Human Resource practices which included an industrial relations component (Tyson, 2006:77).

The changes in HRM functions were due to the growth in global competition, local competition, change in industrial law, local and international market pressures, and advances in technology. The HRM function played a critical role in the success of the organisation. The human resource was considered as an asset, not a liability of an organisation. Several factors have led to the gradual development of HRM to this new management thinking because the organisation had lost faith in the traditional approach, that is, the personnel management to HR practices (Beer et al., 1985). The success of Japanese manufacturers during the late 1970s and early 1980s has raised concern about the Taylorist models of work in factories (Henderson, 2011). He observed that the Taylor model was characterised by low and semi-skilled workers, tight control mechanism and 'piece-rate' system. The sophisticated products, that is, the machine mostly controlled electronics and cars manufactured by Japanese. The traditional model led to a low level of job involvement and weak commitment to the employing organisation (*ibid*). Beer et al. (1984:30) opined that the traditional method of works was intrinsically difficult to produce quality output to face global competitions. The Japanese manufacturers had replaced the Taylorist model by 'lean production' model (Henderson, 2011). He posited that this model combined the best characteristics of both mass production and craft production. As a result, there was a high level of commitment and motivation of employees. It contributed to the flexibility and adaptability of employees in the workplace. (*ibid*). Besides, Ferris et al. (1995) argued that HRM was distinct from traditional Personnel Management in the sense that the PM considered employees as an expense to the organisation, while the HRM perceived employees as a valuable asset (*ibid*).

In the early 1980s, there was a significant break from the term Personnel Management or Personal Administration paradigm. HRM has been adopted in a

different way as a '*radically different philosophy and approach to the management of people at work*' (Storey, 1989:5). HRM is defined as a coherent and comprehensive approach to employment and development of individuals (Boxall et al., 2007 and Armstrong et al., 2014). Boxall et al. (2007) opined that HRM is concerned with people's contribution, which leads to the improvement of organisational effectiveness. Schneider (1987) argued that HRM is a strategic approach to employment management which contributes to leveraging the capabilities of people in the workplace. Tichy (1982) came up with four generic processes in HR process: selection, appraisal, rewards, and development. It was a new approach to HRM.

2.5.1 The UK Definition of HRM

Hendry and Pettigrew (1986) claimed that HRM "*is a coherent approach to the design and management of personnel systems based on an employment policy and manpower strategy...seeing people of the organisation as a strategic resource for achieving competitive advantage*". They argued that employees are valued resources and that critical investment in human capital led to the future growth of an organisation.

Besides, Guest (1987) suggests that "*the main dimensions of HRM involve the goal of integration, the goal of employee commitment, the goal of flexibility/adaptability and the goal of quality*." Whereas Torrington and Hall (2008:11) opined that "*HRM is directed mainly at management needs for human resources (not necessarily employees) to be provided and deployed*." They believed that the main emphasis of HRM was planning, controlling and monitoring of HR activities. HRM was identified as a general management activity and relatively distant from the workforce as a whole (*ibid*).

The development of HRM has resulted in an enlarged scope and given importance in strategic decision-making in corporations (Legge, 2005:33). Whereas, the responsibilities of the traditional personnel management primarily focused on short-term operational planning and a mid-term focus (*ibid*). Compared to today's HRM, managers need to focus on three levels of operations: operational, managerial, and strategic (Bloisi, 2007:5). The transformation of HRM functions has resulted in the inclusion of strategic activities and the expansion of managerial activities (*ibid*). She argued that the new role of the HR manager includes facilitator of organisation change, strategic business partner,

maintainer of organisation culture, employee advocate and internal consultant. The competencies of an HR manager today are different from those of traditional personnel managers (Bloisi, 2007:5). In the past, personnel managers were experts of functional activities at the operational level (*ibid*). Today, it is imperative for HR managers to have sound knowledge and skills to operate in both the managerial and strategic levels (Armstrong, 2000:21) and Armstrong and Barron, 2002:77). There are several skills that are required by HRM practitioners such as general knowledge of the business function, finance, marketing, and administration; change management, communication and planning skills (Armstrong, 2000:21).

Furthermore, (Bloisi, 2007:24) observed that there are two forces that influenced the HR practice: the internal and external forces. The internal forces of the organisation are characterised by the strategic control, structure of the organisation, and strategies of managing the human resource (*ibid*). It is the management which decides the strategy and mission of the organisation. They design the structure of the organisation to meet the strategy and mission. They integrate and organise the HRM to fit in with the structure to fulfil the strategy and the mission of the organisation (Bloisi, 2007:24).

The external forces are politics, economics, technology and culture, which need to be taken into deep consideration (Bloisi, 2007:27). The economic context refers to the economic condition of the country in which the organisation is operating (*ibid*). She observed that if a business is booming, it will be hard to find and retain staff because of low unemployment. On the other hand, if the economy is declining, it will be easier to find people because of high unemployment. However, economic turmoil may also lead the organisation to downsize and face the dilemma of redundancies (Bloisi, 2007:27). HR professionals would develop overseas operations where cheap labour is available. The political context refers to a type of government elected at the time. It also refers to whether the country is democratic or not. With every change of government, HR practitioners will need to identify the political impact on the organisation and the HR department (*ibid*). The social context refers to the leadership style, culture, and politics. An HR practitioner needs to identify the culture of the organisation and the leadership style (Moynihan et al., 2012).

Underpinning personnel management is the idea that employees have the right to decent treatment in the workplace Torrington et Hall (1987 in Legge, 2005:104). She claimed that the employees are only productive when their personal needs are satisfied (*ibid*). Whereas underpinning HRM was the idea of getting the deployment of the right number of employees and skills at the right place rather employee welfare. In this regard, there was a need for close controlling and monitoring of HR policies, systems, and activities with the business strategy. HRM activities are business-driven and focus on improving performance by acquiring and developing potential workforce. Armstrong and Baron (1998:7) claimed that *“performance management is integrated with HRM linking with different aspect especially organisational development and human resource development and reward, to achieve a coherent approach to the management and development of people.”* They argued that there is no one right way to manage performance. It depends on the structure, culture, and technology that are involved in an organisation. PM is more concerned with the continuous development of people. Managers and subordinates are jointly accountable and involved in agreeing on what they need to do the job, how they will do it and when they need to finish it (Armstrong and Baron, 1998:11). The performance will be monitored during the process of the performance management cycle: plan-act-monitor-review (Armstrong and Baron, 1998:57). However, there has been a lack of reliability and validity in the assessment of the PM (Armstrong and Baron, 1998:9). It was a severe concern for organisations due to biased rating of performance (Hutchinson, 2015:134). The impact of the rating may be positive, negative or both on employees’ development plan, career and personal life (*ibid*). Hutchinson (2013:135) argued that a positive rating would exhort employees to be more committed, motivated and show a positive attitude towards the job allocated to them. She believed that a positive rating would give employees a chance of advancement. It can improve the employees’ self-confidence and self-esteem. In this regard, these employees will be more engaged in doing their job. On the other hand, a negative performance rating will be more likely to disappoint them (*ibid*).

Concomitantly, HRM was viewed as ‘developmental humanism’ Legge (2005:105), more reminiscent of a ‘soft model of HRM’ (Guest, 1987). The emphasis of the soft model of HRM is on treating employees as a valuable

resource (Beer et al., 1985 and; Beardwell and Holden, 2001:7). Employees are considered as an asset for the organisation. HRM is primarily concerned with the process and practices of managing people (Truss et al., 1997). They claimed that the hard approach to HRM is described as dominant in the sense that employees are treated as factors of production, that is, minimise labour cost and maximise profit. Considerable attention had been given in the linkage of HRM and the business strategy in organisations, that is, Strategic HRM (*ibid*). The next section discusses the SHRM and HR practices, that is, performance management.

2.6 Strategic HRM (SHRM) and Performance Management

By the 1980s, there was an integration of HRM with the business strategy, and it referred to strategic planning (Bratton and Gold, 2007:48). SHRM was viewed as strategic planning with a long-term view of HR policies (*ibid*). They observed that HR functions were integrated horizontally and vertically with corporate planning. SHRM aims to improve the organisation's capabilities through good recruitment, selection and training policies which enhance the employees' ability, knowledge and motivation to achieve competitive advantage. SHRM also encourages better-trained employees to contribute their ideas in the decision-making process, thus motivating desired behaviour through reward and strong incentive. Bratton and Gold (2007:48) observed that SHRM brought HR functions to closer contact with the top executives of the organisation. It has helped to craft the HR functions as a strategic business partner who was very effective in dealing with the challenge and change in the work environment (*ibid*). It leads to Schuler et al. (2017) to suggest that SHRM is a process of linking human, social and intellectual capital to the business strategy of an organisation. The HR specialists have to ensure that the organisation has potential employees to do the job (*ibid*). Employees must have the right skills, tools, and knowledge to perform the job effectively and efficiently. The employees must exhibit the appropriate behaviours towards the organisation's values and cultures. Furthermore, there are two key factors which contributed to the role of SHRM (Maund, 2001:32): The Resource-Based View (RBV), Best Fit and Best Practice.

Boxall (1996) suggests that the strategic goal of RBV is *“to create firms which are more intelligent and flexible than their competitors by hiring and developing more talented staff and by extending their skills base.”* Investing in human capital

enhances employee skills, knowledge, behaviours, and motivation. In the same line, Barney (1991) observes that these resources are costly to imitate, rare and valuable. The main challenge of an organisation is to recruit, develop, retain and compensate potential employees that it needs (Jenkins, 2010: 235).

The second key factor was the need for downsizing, redesigning and restructuring the organisation, that is, the Best Fit Model (Maund, 2001:32). Such a model tailored within the environment of an organisation: Internal and external fit. Internal fit is that when an organisation starts to cut down the hierarchical structures by tight control: the smaller span of control which was traditionally a more extensive span control (*ibid*). The new structures allowed employees to self-control and take their own decision rather than the old method of external control and team-based working structure. There was a need for an effective human resource management strategy to manage a large and diverse workforce (Storey, 2007:137) in organisations: the external fit (*ibid*). Due to changes in technology and economic pressure in the 1980s, there was a need for expansion of organisations. As a result, more immigrants were recruited to meet the demand of the international market. The strategic era in the 1980s was more focussed on integrating HRM function with the overall business strategy such as marketing strategy, operation strategy, HR practices and employee behaviours. As such, human factors were a crucial component in achieving competitive advantage in both the local and international markets.

However, the Best Fit Model has been criticised by Boxall and Purcell (2003) that due to frequent changes in business environment and strategies, it is challenging to adjust the entire HR systems to new challenges regularly. They also argued that there would be a need to alternate in the treatment of employees due to regular changes in strategies which can lead to demotivation and having a negative impact on the organisation's culture. Boxall and Purcell (2003) came up with a new approach which they referred to as Best Practice. They believed that such an approach would universally support organisations in achieving competitive advantages regardless of their industry, structures or market strategies. The Best Practice is a set of HRM practices that can be universally practised in any situations (*ibid*). Pfeffer and Lawrence (1998) suggested a list of Best Practices that produces the highest organisational performance. For example, "*selective hiring, employment security, self-managed, training to*

provide a skilled and motivated workforce, high contingent compensation on performance, reduction of status differentials and sharing information.” In the same vein, Guest et al. (2012:40) had drawn up a list of Best Practices which included careful use of selection process to identify those people who could make a potential contribution. They also listed the recognition of training, which should be an ongoing activity. Guest et al. (2012:41) suggested in their list that job design needed to ensure commitment, motivation, and flexibility to employees including steps that they would have full autonomy and responsibility to use their skills and knowledge. Communication was also listed to ensure that there was a two-way communication from bottom to top and top to bottom so that all employees were fully informed.

Croonen et al. (2015) have criticised the best practice model in that each organisation is unique with different structures, policies, markets, cultures, and leadership. They argued that it is not easy to transfer tools and processes from one organisation to another. A practice developed in one organisation cannot be transferred to another company unless it is tailored within the new environment of a particular organisation (*ibid*). In the same line, Cappelli and Crocker (1996) believed that *“it is difficult to accept that there is any such thing as a universal best practice as what works well in one organisation will not necessarily work well in another organisation.”* They observed that many companies differentiate themselves through a distinct HR approach to gain competitive advantage within their industry. A distinct HR approach helps a company to differentiate itself to establish a better brand image, products, and services.

Best Fit, Best Practice and the RBV approaches have not been without their critics. However, these approaches offer a powerful tool for shaping the SHRM process (Stavrou et al., 2010). They observed that there is no absolute judgment on which approach will work the best. They proposed that the Best practice and Best fit may be complementary instead of posing as competing sets of approaches

The next section discusses how the organisation manages employees through the process and system of HR: soft or hard approach to HRM.

2.7.0 Soft HRM as Developmental Humanism

2.7.1 Harvard Model of HRM

Beer et al. (1984) opined that the Harvard model of HRM is an approach to soft HRM. They claimed that “*HRM involves all management decisions and actions that affect the nature of the relationship between the organisation and the employees – its human resources.*” They stressed that organisations needed to adopt a long-term perspective in managing employees. The employees are valuable assets of an organisation rather than a variable cost (*ibid*). Beer et al. (1984) were the first to claim that HRM had two characteristics features where the line managers need to align the competitive strategy of the organisation with the HR policies. HR had the responsibility of setting policies that govern how the HR activities are developed and implemented (*ibid*).

Beer et al. (1984)’s analytical framework of the Harvard model consists of six components. The first component is the situational factors which are influenced by external factors (Bratton and Gold, 2007:22). They believed that situational factors influenced the management’s choice of HR strategy. This incorporates management philosophy, workforce characteristic, employment regulations, society, and unions (*ibid*). The second component is the stakeholder interests. It includes the interest of the shareholders, management, employees, government, community, and unions (Bratton and Gold, 2007:22). Beer et al. (1984) argued that all stakeholders should influence HR policies. If not, in the long run; the organisation will fail to meet the need of the stakeholders (*ibid*). The HRM policy choices are the third component of the Harvard model of HRM, which is characterised by employee influence, HR flow, reward systems and work systems (Bratton and Gold, 2007:22). Employee influence means how much authority, power, and responsibility voluntarily delegated by management (Dickens, 2000). Beer et al. (1984) argued that the influence of employees should be compatible with the purpose and priorities of management. The HR flow is concerned with the managing of employees throughout the organisation (Bratton and Gold, 2007:22, and Beer et al.,1984). They posited that the HR flow includes recruitment, selection, and training; termination of employment, career development, job security, and fair treatment. According to the Harvard model, managers and HR specialists must work together to ensure that there is an appropriate flow of people to meet the strategic requirements of the organisation

(Beardwell and Holden, 2001:20 and; Bratton and Gold, 2007:23). The reward systems regulate how employees intrinsically and extrinsically rewarded for their work (Beer et al.,1984). They believed that intrinsic rewards are intangible benefits which influence the employees' job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment to the organisation. The extrinsic rewards are tangible benefits such as bonus, pensions, overtime, health insurance and flexible hours (*ibid*). Beer et al. (1984) argued that the Harvard model suggests that employees should be involved in the design of the organisational reward system. The needs of the employees must be consistent with the management philosophy, business strategy and HRM policies (*ibid*). The work system characterised by people, information, activities and technology (Beer et al., 1984). They argued that these four areas must be designed and practised coherently at all levels of the organisation. In this regard, work can be performed effectively and efficiently (*ibid*). Beer et al. (1984) claimed that the four policies must satisfy the stakeholders. They also claim that employees are the major stakeholders of the organisation. Employee influence is the central feature of an HR system. It is the responsibility of the managers to establish policies that promote employee influence (*ibid*).

Furthermore, HR outcome is the fourth component of the Harvard model. When making HR decisions, managers should ask to what extent the HR policies will influence the four C's: commitment, congruency, competence and cost-effectiveness (Beer et al., 1984 and; Bratton and Gold, 2007:23). The aim is to develop and improve employees' performance at a minimum cost without compromising with the well-being of employees, organisation, and society. The fifth component of the Harvard model is the long- term consequences. Beer et al. (1984) opined that the long-term approach could be distinguished at three levels: employees, organisation, and society. From an employee perspective, the long-term approach includes the psychological rewards that employees received in term of their performance. At the organisational level, the survival of the firm is more important by increasing effectiveness. At the society perspective, it is employing the local workforce in the organisation to ensure consistent growth in employment within the community. The last component of the Harvard model is the feedback-loop. It is argued by Beer et al. (1984) that situational factors can influence HRM policy and choices. The long-term output can influence the

situational factors, stakeholders' interest, HR policies, HR outcome, and the feedback loop. A feedback loop is a channel through which the outputs flow directly into the organisation and to the stakeholders.

Harvard Model acknowledges the presence of a wide range of stakeholders' interest, such as government, shareholders, employees and the local community as well. Harvard model based on the belief that the issues of HRM such as independent activities where each department are guided by its practice can be solved only when the line managers will allow the employees to participate in the strategic objectives of the organisation (Purcell et al., 2003:39). Fombrun et al. (1984:21) posited that the human resource cycle consists of four generic processes that performed in all organisations. The processes are selection, appraisal, reward, and development (*ibid*). Fombrun et al. (1984:47) opined that *“selecting people who are best able to perform the jobs defined by the structure, appraising their performance to facilitate the equitable distribution of rewards, motivating employees by linking rewards to high levels of performance, and developing employees to enhance their current performance at work as well as to prepare them to perform in positions they may hold in the future”*. In this regard, employees feel a sense of ownership and collective involvement in decision-making. Such a model influences the employee performance, which led to various outcomes: flexible, competent, committed and productive. These outcomes have a long-term consequence on the organisational effectiveness, societal as well as the employees' well-being. Purcell et al. (2003:40) observed that under such a model, the line managers have a crucial role to play *“in making involvement happen, in communicating, in being open to allow employee concerns to be raised and discussed, in allowing people space to influence how they do their job, and in coaching, guiding and recognising performance and providing help for the future”*. Harvard Model sees people as resources, that is, human resources. Such a model also recognises people as significant stakeholders, along with other groups such as customers and shareholders.

The Harvard model of HRM sees the employees as a valuable asset of the organisation. Such model elevates the employees' performance through HR practices (performance appraisal) by providing necessary training and support. As a result, the employees become more productive, competent, committed

towards the organisation and flexible to the task assigned which soft model of HRM (Gill, 1999) and Guest Model of HRM (1987) would suggest.

2.7.2 Guest Model of HRM

Another model of HRM considered as 'soft HRM' that has been influential in the UK is that of Guest (1987). He opined that training and development for employees thought to be a source of competitive advantage through the four goals of soft HRM, which are integration, commitment, flexibility and adaptability; and quality employees. Effective use of HR policy (PA) should be able to develop and pursue career advancement for employees within the organisation. The four goals of Guest Model of HRM discussed in the following section.

2.7.2.1 The Goal of Integration

Based on observation and theoretical work, Guest (1987) argued that the integration of employees in the strategic planning process is vital to the success of an organisation, as well as to achieve competitive advantage. Guest (1987) claimed that human resources need to integrate with the strategic plan of the organisation. In this regard, employees must work in parallel with the strategy of the organisation. The managers will need to accept the importance of human resources and reflect it in their daily decisions; it is then only that the organisation's strategic plan is likely to be more successful. The outcomes will lead to high problem solving and high job performance.

2.7.2.2 The Goal of Employee Commitment

Guest (1987) sustained that committed employees are more productive, more adaptable, show more loyalty and have less absenteeism. In the same line, Beer et al. (1985:20) suggest that employee commitment is an essential dimension because *"it can result in not only more loyalty and better performance for the organisation, but also self-worth, dignity, psychological involvement, and identity for the individual."* In the Goal of Commitment, Guest (1987) asserted that it is not only job-related commitment that is important, but the family and workgroup commitment must also be taken into consideration. In the same line, Mukanzi and Senaji (2017) observed that work-family conflicts had gained much attention because employees have to spend much time to balance work-family life. Guest (1987) and; Mukanzi and Senaji (2017) argued that if work and family life is not

balanced, it can create a work-family conflict resulting to a decrease in the employee commitment towards the organisation. The decrease in employee commitment is linked to reducing job satisfaction, increased employee turnover, and lower employee's productivity.

2.7.2.3 The Goal of Flexibility and Adaptability

The third goal of Guest Model of HRM (1987) is flexibility and adaptability. Guest (1987) has argued that a successful HRM policy must have the capacity to manage and implement the strategic plan successfully. HRM must be responsive and adaptive to unanticipated changes and pressures at any level of the organisation (*ibid*). Therefore, HR policy must be designed so that employees can be adaptive by avoiding bureaucratic systems, no rigid hierarchy, no boundaries among individual roles and group employees. Guest (1987) claimed that the flexibility of employees in the organisation depends mostly on the level of training, nature of the job, level of experience, location of job and skill acquired. According to his observation, flexibility can also be achieved if the employees at all levels of the organisation show intrinsic motivation, high level of commitment and high trust to the management.

2.7.2.4 The Goal of Quality

Finally, Guest (1987) defined the Goal of Quality in three dimensions. The first dimension is the quality of staff, where it depends on the recruitment strategy, training, and development planning in order to retain a high level of skilled staffs. The second dimension is to set, maintain and control a high level of performance. According to Guest (1987), the "goal setting techniques" is that standards and goal of performance need to be identified and agreed upon between the line managers and subordinates within the organisation. The third dimension is the intangible asset, that is, the public image of the organisation. The high quality of employee's treatment is more likely to be attracted by potential employees and high calibre candidates. It will result in a high level of quality staff, excellent performance, positive public image and a low level of grievance.

Beer et al. (1984) and Guest (1987) described soft HRM as a focus for investing on and developing human capital, rewarding employee's commitment and their hard work akin to Harvard model of HRM. They argued that such an approach has a positive impact on the employee-employer relationship. Such a relationship is based on a mutual trust which developed through employees' participation and

involvement in the organisation's decision-making process (*ibid*). The needs of the employees are being acknowledged and addressed. The soft model of HRM influences the management of employees' performance by a positive human side response through appropriate motivational, communication approach and leadership style (Legge, 1995:32). As a result, it will have a positive impact on the four goals of Guest model of HRM (1987) which is adaptability, commitment, flexibility and high quality of skills. *"The stress is, therefore, on generating commitment via communication, motivation, and leadership. If employees' commitment will yield better performance, it is also sought as a route to greater human development"* (Legge, 2005:106).

2.8 The Hard HRM on Managing Employee Performance

The hard approach to HRM can be traced back to the work of McGregor (1960: 35), that is, Theory X which is characterised by managerial control. McGregor (1960:78) concluded that the nature of Theory X led to tight control by the managers through strategic direction and performance management techniques such as performance appraisal. Under the hard model of HRM, control is more focused on the performance system, performance management, and tight control over employees' activities. Fombrun et al. (1984) referred to the hard model of HRM as the 'Michigan Model.' Fombrun et al. (1984 in Armstrong, 2010:9) opined that *"HR systems and the organisation structure should be managed in a way that is congruent with the organisational strategy."* Martin (2010:255) viewed such a model as 'matching model.' This model of HRM is associated with the management of people through the ultimate aim to increase the competitive advantage of the organisation (*ibid*). The hard model of HRM is characterised by a close direction, monitoring, and tight control of employees to achieve the organisation objectives.

The Michigan model is 'hard HRM' because it based on strategic control, bureaucratic structure and a tight system for managing employees in every aspect of the organisation (Truss et al., 1997 and Wilton, 2013:9). They believed that employees are exploited so that the cost of production can be minimised. Such practices will lead to the maximising of shareholder's wealth and the seeking competitive advantage. The hard model can be seen as an approach to scientific management practice. The model identified the needs of managing the

human asset to achieve the goals of the organisation. The management style would see employees as the only means to achieve the goal of the organisation. The hard model is much closer to free-market thinking with the use of 'hiring, firing, and cost-cutting' (Bloisi, 2007:24).

The hard HRM pays very little attention to the needs of the employees, especially regarding their performance (Gamage, 2016). Cook et al. (2016), and Gamage (2016) has criticised the influence of hard HRM on employee performance. They argued that employees are viewed as a factor of production to improve organisational performance rather than the employees' well-being and development. The main focus of Hard HRM is to recruit the number of people needed for the business and monitor them; that is; hiring and firing when necessary (Gamage, 2016). Under such a model, organisations try to minimise cost and maximise profit at the expense of the employees. It led to high labour turn over and absenteeism; and lower investment in human capital (*ibid*). Also, there is less investment in training and development of employees. That is why organisations recruit low-skilled labour to pay minimum wage and maximise profit. In the same line, Malik (2013) concluded that some organisations adopt a low-cost provider strategy by cutting back the cost of *"all non-billable activities such as soft-skill and quality management training, research and development, and marketing back-end support functions, thus confirming a hard approach to HRM."* He also added that reducing the cost of training and development can reap economies of scale and HR department cost at lowest as possible. In this regard, low-skilled employees can be fired when necessary (*ibid*).

From the above literature of soft and hard HRM, it is observed that these two approaches are viewed differently. The Michigan model of HRM assumed that people must be obtained as cheapest as possible and then exploited as much as possible in order to achieve the set outcomes of the business (Truss et al., 1997). The employees were strategically controlled and monitored in order to achieve the goals of the organisation. The model is less humanistic because Beardwell et al. (2014) and Martin (2010) believed that people are compared to plant, equipment, and raw materials. They have a common observation like Truss et al. (1997), that is, employees are compared as a machine, and they have to be fully exploited for profit maximisation. Wilton (2013:10) posited that the hard model of HRM views employees' relationship as a pluralist. It is often associated with

the exploitative practice of labour. On the other hand, the Harvard framework is associated with the concept of soft HRM (Boxall and Purcell, 2016:63). The employer-employee relationship under this model is perceived as unitarist and collectivist (*ibid*). It is assumed that everyone works together to fulfil the same goals and objectives of the organisation. Wilton (2013:9) observed that people working in BMW Hams Hall were essential resources. These employees provided exceptional personalised customer service with a high level of commitment and flexibility among the workforce throughout the organisation. Besides, Wilton (2013:9) claimed that quality is everything at Virgin Atlantic. “*The people that makeup Virgin Atlantic make Virgin Atlantic*” (*ibid*). He pointed out that the high level of standard and service provided by the employees at Virgin Atlantic led to it being the world most rated airline.

Based on the Guest (1987) model of HRM, this research work will aim to examine whether ethnic minorities employees lived experience of performance appraisal is congruent with the goals of Soft HRM. In doing so, this study will take into consideration EM employees’ perception of the lived experience of strategic integration, commitment, flexibility and adaptability, and the quality of their performance in the organisation; which may lead to the development of quality employees while maintaining a high standard of human resource practices.

2.9 The Practices of Soft and Hard Model of HRM in Organisations.

Gill (1999) believed that the dichotomy of soft and hard models of HRM originated in the US. However, it was debated by Guest in the early 1990s in the UK, after the development of the Normative Model. In the critique of normative the model of HRM, Legge (2005:105) termed a soft model of HRM as ‘Developmental Humanism’ approach “*where employees are treated as valued assets in organisations with potential personal development, worth to be trusted, and collaboration to be achieved through participation and informed choice.*” On the other hand, the hard model termed as ‘Utilitarian Instrumentalism approach’ where employees are treated as a commodity, exploiting them to maximise profit and fire them when not needed (*ibid*). The concept of the normative model of HRM has two common themes within organisations (Legge, 2005:105). She posits that the first theme is that HR policies should be integrated into the strategic planning of the organisation. The second common theme is that HR is

a valuable resource which leads to achieving competitive advantage and promoting commitment if effectively used (*ibid*). Legge (1995:40) challenged the widely-held view that *“the contradictions embedded in HRM that have facilitated the development of rhetoric that may simultaneously render strategic action problematic.”* She believed that there are issues in integrating HRM policies with business strategy.

Keenoy (1990) posited that what is good for an employer is not always good for employees. He observed that the needs of a business do not always coincide with the interest of the workforce. The treatment of employees as a valued asset is not for every organisation, especially for those who are competing on costs. On this basis, Keenoy (1990) opined that *“the theory should not be put forward as normative.”* Historically HRM models, whether in the US or the UK, the employees in organisations are valued as an asset in which the focus is on adaptability, commitment and employees as a source of competitive advantage (Storey, 2015:25). He believed that *“the image might equally be presented as resourceful humans.”* However, Tyson and Fell (1986:35) argued that ‘human resource’ might be understood and perceived in a different sense. They opined that *“human resource can be understood as a factor of production, along with land and capital, and an expense of doing business rather than the only resource capable of turning inanimate factors of production into wealth.”* Similarly, Torrington et al. (2008:53) posited that human resource emphasis on factors of production, that is, numbers and skills. In the same line, Legge (1995:66) claimed that *“Human Resources are viewed as passive, to be provided and deployed as numbers and skills at the right price, rather than the source of creative energy.”* She argued that the normative model of HRM is a single concept, but it is embedded in two opposite model: the hard and soft HRM.

“The hard HRM is as calculative and tough-minded as any other branch of management, communicating through the tough language of business and economics” (Gill, 1999). She believed that hard HRM stresses on the close integration of HR policies, process, and systems that aligned with the business strategy. From this perspective, Torrington et al. (2008:53) and Gill (1999) claimed that HR is a variable cost of production, which is regarded as an expense to the organisation rather than a valued asset. Storey (1989:26) stressed that hard HRM emphasises on *“the quantitative, calculative and business-strategic*

aspects of managing the headcounts resource in a rational way as for any other economic factor.' He believed that the hard version is more focused on the management aspect of control and centralised decision. The hard approach has similar characteristics compared to scientific management as the employees are reduced to passive objects (*ibid*). The employees are assessed on whether they possess the necessary skills to achieve the organisation's performance instead of individual performance.

In contrast, the soft model of HRM stresses the 'Human' aspect of HRM and Legge (2005: 105) referred it to as 'Developmental Humanism.' The soft model stresses the importance of integrating HR in the business strategy. Gill (1999) believed that *"the soft model focuses on treating employees as a valued asset and a source of competitive advantage through their commitment, adaptability and high-quality skill and performance."* There are some similarities between Gill (1999) and Guest (1987) regarding the soft model of HRM. Guest (1987) focused on four goals to the approach of soft HRM: "The Goal of Integration, The Goal of Employee Commitment, The Goal of Flexibility and Adaptability; and The Goal of Quality. Legge (1995:66 and 2005:105) has observed that under the soft model of HRM, employees are proactive input into the production process. The employees are capable of developing and collaborating through participation to achieve common goals of the organisation. Following on to this claim, Walton (1985) posits that the soft model of HRM is composed of policies which promote mutuality, shared goals, responsibility, influence, and rewards. He believed that the policies of mutuality would promote commitment which led to more significant human development and better organisational performance. He suggested that there is a need to switch from tight control strategy to commitment strategy. Gill (1999) argued that *"it is evident that HRM does not provide a consistent set of policies and procedures, the distinction between hard and soft forms of HRM offer management two sharply contrasting alternatives within a supposedly single approach."*

Since both the soft and hard versions of HRM give weight to strategy and the importance of the organisation, different assumptions of human behaviour and different meanings are attributed to these two models (*ibid*). In 1960, McGregor suggested that Theory X is characterised in the forms of managerial control because employees do not like to work. On the other hand, Theory Y assumes

that the employees will be self-directed and self-controlled to achieve the business strategy. McGregor (1960:48) posited that Theory Y helped to change the focus onto inspiring individuals to develop within the organisation by reorganising the management structure and finding ways to motivate themselves.

Despite recent findings and arguments, Truss et al. (1997) identified eight in-depth case studies regarding the gap between soft and hard HRM. They claimed that there are no specific examples of the soft or hard model of HRM. Truss et al. (1997) observed that *“the rhetoric adopted by the companies frequently embraces the tenets of the soft, commitment model, while the reality experienced by employees is more concerned with strategic control, similar to the hard model.”* They suggested the importance of exposing the gap between rhetorics and realities.

2.10 The Gap Between Rhetorics and Realities: Soft and Hard Model of HRM

“Even the most unsophisticated organisation has issued its statement of mission; has declared commitment to direct communication with its ‘most valued asset’- its employees; has experimented with quality circles; looked to performance-related pay; brushed down its appraisal system; reconsidered its selection procedures and declared its commitment to training” (Storey and Sisson, 1990). The ideals of HRM still fall short in reality because of the organisation’s practice and the lived experience of employees who do not match the HRM rhetoric (*ibid*). Van der Voet et al. (2013), Gill (1999) and Truss et al. (1997) have a similar finding that the rhetoric adopted by organisations encompasses the characteristics of the soft model of HRM, the commitment model but, in reality, the employees experienced a tight control which is similar to the hard model of HRM.

Concomitantly, Gill (1999) has explored the gap between rhetorics and realities in Australian organisations. She used the annual reports to assess the rhetoric and the workforce survey to assess reality. Gill (1999) came to a similar conclusion as Vaughan (1994) and Truss et al. (1997) that even the implementation of HRM policies seemed soft, but it is constrained by the hard framework. She posited that the soft model implies that employees are viewed to be worthy of investing in training and development programme. In contrast, the

hard model views these training as a cost for the organisation. Gill (1999) found that there was extensive training as suggested by Legge's (2005:105): *'Development Humanism'* which stands for a soft model of HRM. However, the aim of this training was not for the development of the employees. Instead, it was a basic training so that the employees can carry out their jobs to improve the performance of the organisation (Gill, 1999). She found that there was a technical bias in the training programme where the employees' aspirations were ignored, and the organisation's performance goals were met, as the hard model would suggest. Rhetorically, the training and development were implemented as the observation which mentioned: *"the Group's ability to sustain a competitive advantage over the long term will depend in large part on the continuous development of the Group's employees"* (Gill, 1999). In reality, Gill (1999) observed that employees were treated as a cost, and there was a need to increase output or minimise cost through changes in training and development arrangements. Also, the workforce survey of Gill (1999) revealed that the employees are expected to manage their careers at their own expense. In this regard, Argyris (1998) claimed that *"in the real world, it remains much like the emperor's new clothes. It is praised loudly in public, but privately we ask ourselves why we cannot see it"*.

Trust et al. (1997) concluded in their finding that even though the organisations adopted the soft model of HRM at the rhetorical level, *"the underlying principle was invariably restricted to the improvement of bottom-line performance"* with the interest of the organisation prevailing over that of the employees. The evidence of Sewell and Wilkinson (1992) can be seen in the study of and Trust et al. (1997) and Gill (1999): *"someone to watch over me."* Sewell and Wilkinson (1992) compared the rhetoric commitment and trust supported by HRM with the real work experience in a Japanese company that is based in the UK. The employees in the organisation were delegated responsibilities, and at the same time, the labour process was being observed through surveillance techniques. Sewell and Wilkinson (1992) debt to Foucault: *'Knowledge/Power'* and the design of Bentham: *'The Panopticon Model'*. Through advanced technology, the Japanese were able to use *'electronic panopticon'* as a means by which the management retains authority and disciplinary control through surveillance. Despite the policies of rhetoric empowerment, Sewell and Wilkinson (1992) found that the Japanese

style of HRM seemed to be aligned with the hard model of HRM because the jobs involved a reduction in employee autonomy, close surveillance and intensification through work processes. The evidence presented thus far supports the idea that *“HRM rhetoric communicate an attractive image of people trusting each other, sharing risks and rewards, and united by a strong feeling of identity, but it gives little sense of the impersonal economic rationalism that characterises management thinking in the real world”* (Vaughan, 1994). In the same line, Skinner (1982) asserts that HRM is *“Big Hat, No Cattle”* which implies HRM is powerless and manipulative. Also, Keenoy (1990) claimed that *‘HRM is a case of wolf’s in sheep clothing’*.

Notwithstanding with the above views, Gooch and Blackburn (in Cornelius, 2002:145) posited that *“in recent years there has been evidence that managers have been taking increasing responsibility for aspects of human resource management”*. For example, the responsibility for managing employees in their respective organisation. Here, Cornelius (2002:146) believes that *“good practice in those areas [especially in the management of performance appraisal cycle, which is the issue within this thesis] in which line managers are primarily involved in creating an environment in which perceptions of organisational justice can flourish and commitment to and climate of equality and diversity management can take root”*. In this area, line managers have a crucial role to play in ensuring that not only the training and development for employees but also *“fair access to opportunity and employees from traditionally disadvantaged groups [as exemplified by the EME in this case study] have freedom of opportunity when they become a member [of staff] in the organisation”* (Cornelius, 2002:172). Moreover, the line managers need to ensure that the policies and practices within the performance life cycle are continuously monitored. In this regard, Cornelius (2002:147) posited that line managers have an important role to *“play in creating an organisational environment that is attractive to people from diverse backgrounds and is supportive of their aspirations and ambitions, and importantly, promotes equality of opportunity which is ‘felt’ to be equally available to all employees, but particularly those from traditionally disadvantaged groups”*. Here, the ethical consideration concerning the process and practice of Human Resource, especially within the performance life cycle is vital. For instance, promoting equal access to training and development, equal opportunity and being

felt fair in the process of performance appraisal irrespective of the ethnic background of the employees becomes critically important. Cornelius views are valuable especially when seen within the context of McGregor (1957), Newton and Finlay (1996), Dickens (1999 in Bach, 2005:178-208) and Pierro et al. (2013). They observed that the line managers have the authority to influence the decision of the process of PA, especially the outcomes in matters of promotion or demotion, hiring or firing and reward or punishment. Cornelius (2001:143) and Torrington et al. (2017:19,253) believed that the line managers have a direct responsibility to identify and manage the performance of groups and individuals at all levels within the organisation ethically and equitably. Equitable treatment, managing diversity, fairness in training opportunities and coaching, irrespective of the ethnic background of the employees are also important considerations when it comes to considering the responsibilities of the front-line managers (Torrington et al., 2011:470). Borrowing from Dickens (1999)'s argument on *'Walking the Talk'*, the line managers undermined the equality and equitable treatment of EME.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter engaged with theories and concepts that are significant to the lived experience of PA for EME. Detailed literature has been reviewed on the performance appraisal regarding ethnic minorities employees and relates it to this study. The development of performance management in practice and the role of line managers have been discussed. In line with the objectives of this study, the Harvard model of HRM and Guest model of HRM has been elaborated in relation to the soft HRM. Having outlined how existing literature has portrayed PA and HRM in its 'soft and 'hard' variants and has raised doubts about the extent that soft-HRM might match reality, even if it is expressed in practice. The model of soft HRM does provide a template against which this study may evaluate the experience of employees, including EMEs. From the above views, it leads this research to address the lived experience of PA through the lens of EMEs working in UK organisations. The next chapter will explore the literature dealing with the position of EM employees, focussing mainly on race and ethnicity, which lay the basis for understanding fairness, felt fair and unfairness from the process of the performance appraisal for EME lived experience and the possible outcome from PA.

CHAPTER 3

Situating Race and Ethnicity in UK Organisations

3.0 Introduction

This chapter connects with Chapter 2 in discussing how race, ethnicity and groups relations may or may not influence the process of PA and its outcome from the lived experience of EME. Intersectionality and regimes of inequality are taken into consideration concerning intergroup relations. The final part of this chapter discusses the role of power and line managers concerning performance appraisal practices in UK organisations.

3.1 Race

The race is a concept that is used in everyday language and the term 'race' is a social construct (Creegan et al., 2003, Solomos and Back, 1996:94; and Mason, 1995:6). The race is a classification of humans into group characterised by physical traits, social, ancestral or genetic relationships (Mason, 1995:6). The study of race as a field of social science originated in the early 1930s by the work of American Anthropologists and sociologists (Solomos and Back, 1996:4). Creegan et al. (2003) opined that race was devised to legitimise and justify the unfair treatment of one group of people by another group who saw themselves as a superior group. Mason (1995:7) and; Solomos and Back (1996:25) claimed that the labelling of African people as being 'black' and 'race' allowed the development of the study of 'race relations.' They argued that the 'relation' was associated with black and white people in America and Africa. Nkomo (1992) argued that *"the meaning, transformation, and significance of racial theories are shaped by actual existing race relations in any given historical period"*. She believed that at any given historical period, the racial theory is dominant despite existing competing paradigms. Therefore, *"the dominant racial theory provides society with a framework for understanding race relation"* (ibid). It also serves as a guide for this research if any unfair treatment or bias in the process of the performance appraisal for black people in UK organisations is undertaken.

3.2 Ethnicity

Verkuyten (2005:74) opined that in anthropology, ethnicity had been a major research topic. Several authors believed that ethnicity refers to the sense of kinship, common origin and shared culture that distinguishes the ethnic identity from other social identities (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996:2; May et al., 2004:30, Verkuyten, 2005:74 and Sue et al., 2008). Hutchinson and Smith (1996:2) argued that the meaning of the term ethnicity is uncertain. It can mean 'the quality of belonging to an ethnic group or community' or 'the essence of an ethnic group,' or 'what is it that you have if you are an ethnic group,' generally in the context of an opposed group (*ibid*). May et al. (2004) observed that 'ethnicity' is an old term, and 'ethnic' is more commonly used. Hutchinson and Smith (1996:8) claimed that ethnicity could be divided into two broad camps: 'primordialist' and 'instrumentalist.'

Hutchinson and Smith (1996:8); and Geertz (1973) posited that the term 'primordialist' was first used in the book of 'Sociology of Religion.' It was distinguished by social bond such as personal, sacred and civil ties. Geertz (1973) argued that the primordialist theory could be viewed in a different tie. He claimed that 'ineffable quality' and 'overpowering' can be attached to different types of ties where a person wants to see it as coercive, exterior and given. A primordialist is attributed to blood, race, religion and language, which cannot be ignored (*ibid*). Hutchinson and Smith (1996:9) believe that ethnicity is primordial, which is in general unchanging, fixed and given by birth. Primordialist is attributed to ethnic identities (*ibid*). They claimed that primordialism in relation to ethnicity exists because there are traditional beliefs and actions towards biological factors such as families, tribes, clans, and kinship-based groupings. Compared to primordialist theory, the instrumentalist theory is a socially constructed nature of ethnicity for gaining political advantage and social support (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996:9). They argued that 'instrumentalist' treat ethnicity as a political, social and cultural resource for their gain. The 'instrumentalists' can mix and match from a variety of culture and heritage to forge their group of identities (*ibid*). (Hutchinson and Smith, (1996:9) argued that the collective action from the 'instrumentalist' would develop boundaries, structure, and ideology within the ethnic group. The cultural and psychological dimensions of ethnicity are being neglected in pursuing political and economic interest (*ibid*). There is a danger

where 'instrumentalist' might create social unrest and discrimination between the ethnic group and the group of interests based on race and class (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996:9; Davidson, 1997:98, and May et al., 2004:29).

From the above views, the subtle and or blatant forms of discrimination may or may not affect the lived experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minorities employees. Based on the observation of Essed (1991)'s study of 'Everyday Racism'; and (Geertz, 1973)'s primordialist and instrumentalist theories, this study examined whether EM employees' performance appraisal is congruent with the goals of soft HRM. The next section discusses how race and ethnicity may or may not influence the experience of PA for EME in organisations.

3.3 Race and Ethnicity in the Organisation

Race and ethnicity are salient features in the construction of identity, and they are connected (Creegan et al., 2003 and Mason, 1995:5). At the organisational level, there is a pretence that race and ethnicity are unseen by the organisation and management (Nkomo, 1992). She posited that *"most important race is one of the major bases of domination in our society and a major means through which the division of labour occurs in organisations. The race has been present all along in organisations, even if silenced or suppressed"*.

Furthermore, Essed (1991:146) and Nkomo (1992) argued that the experience of Africans-American was underrepresented, oppressed, racialised, discriminated and faced other inequalities in European society. Nkomo (1992) posited that *"one might ask why use a European fairy tale [Africans-American immigrants in Europe including the UK] to call attention to the exclusion of race in the study of the organisation? I have purposefully used a Eurocentric parable to signify the problem... In this article, the emperor is not simply an emperor but the embodiment of the concept of Western knowledge as both universal and superior and white males as a defining group for studying organisation."* Similarly, Kalra and Esmail (2009) observed that despite the National Health Service (NHS) being the largest employer in the UK, *"the senior management workforce did not reflect the diversity of either the wider NHS workforce or the UK population"*. They concluded that success rates for the equally qualified ethnic minority applicants for a senior management position are meagre compared to their white counterparts. Nearly two-thirds of the cases in the UK employment tribunal are

from the NHS (*ibid*). These cases include bullying, harassment, lack of management commitment, racism and non-recognition of EMEs' contributions (Alleyne et al., 2017). Bernardin (1984) posited that there is much-documented literature regarding the differences in performances of minorities and non-minorities. His research was based on black and white employees' differences in job performance. He concluded that there was a big difference in the PA rating between black and white employees when compared. The black employees were downgraded in their PA as compared to their white counterparts. Notwithstanding the above research by Bernardin (1984), Van and Janssens (2011) have a similar observation that *"despite the continuously important impact of blatant discrimination on the lives of minorities, it is argued that this type of discrimination is being replaced, or supplemented, by new, more subtle, everyday forms of discrimination"*.

Taking into consideration the foregoing, this chapter aims to examine how the racial and ethnic identities of the employees are affected during the process of PA. The next section will elaborate on intersectionality, where some researchers have ventured in order to address the production and reproduction of inequalities along with race, gender and ethnic lives.

3.4 Intersectionality

Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in the late 1980s. She was concerned about black women and their experience in the United States who would take legal action against discrimination on either racial or gender discrimination grounds, not both (Davis 2006 in Chandler, 2017:172). The single axis of thinking has been criticised by Davis (2008) and Collins (2012). These scholars came up with a common observation that the experience of Black women cannot be a matter of gender or racial discrimination. It might be both ways in the sense that they could be discriminated against by a black man and or woman (*ibid*). In relation to the foregoing, Chandler (2017:173) posited that *"forms of racism can be gendered, just as gender discrimination can be racialised"*. Crenshaw (1989, 1991) suggests that the experience and situation of black women in the US varied in different social positions. In this regard, she believed that the discrimination they experienced would often intersect gender, race, and class as *'intersecting oppressions'*. Davis (2006 in Chandler, 2017:173) named it as 'Triple Oppression'

and Davis (2008) as the 'Big Three.' Therefore, fighting over these forms of discrimination individually is more likely to increase the complexity of injustices towards black women (*ibid*).

Intersectionality has found a broad audience in sociology and has answered the needs of several scholars (Greene et al., 2005; Lewis, 2013; Chun et al., 2013; Carbado, 2013; Patil, 2013 and Chandler, 2017:171). Chun et al. (2013) proposed to analyse intersectionality in diverse forms of dominance. However, the question is raised: how many axes or relations should be focussed upon? As Davis (2006 in Chandler, 2017:173) claimed triple oppression: race, gender and class. There are some other axes which need to be analysed vis-à-vis the relative marginalisation of other socially relevant forms of oppressions such as disability, age, religion and immigration status (Carbado, 2013). He observed that a number of studies had been identified as an additive approach rather than examining how the social statuses intersect. Carbado (2013) suggested that scholars should be encouraged to undertake further analysis of how these statuses intersect to create different experiences. In this regard, intersectionality may be viewed from different angles (*ibid*).

Concomitantly, black women may be marginalised in ways that are similar to or different from the experiences of white women, white men, and black men. Crenshaw (1989) and Chandler (2017:174) opined that black women often experienced double discrimination: a combined effect based on sex and race; and as black Women. However, it is crucial to consider in which situation Black women are being oppressed. Chandler (2017:174) argued that *“this does, indeed, point to the need to consider the condition of black women in the condition of simultaneity but it also suggests that we need to be alert to a range of different situations; that sometimes it is a matter of considering one issue or the other, sometimes both in an additive way, sometimes both in a more complex way”*. In the same vein, Weber (1998) argues that race, class, gender and sexuality are *“historically and geographically contextual power relationship that is simultaneously experienced at both macro and micro levels”*. She believed that the nature of intersectionality intersects in all circumstances such as on societal (macro) and individual (micro) level [in this study]. No one of these can overshadow each other. She posited further that the highest social ranking such as white counterparts in the UK would have more opportunities, privileges and

power than the black people. In this regard, black people will pose the highest level of threat to be oppressed than white people. It led to the disadvantage experienced by ethnic minority employees to increase as their ranking in the social order decreases and thus may have less opportunity to progress in the organisation (Bhopal, 2019; Alleyne et al., 2017 and Nkomo, 1992). Notwithstanding the view expressed by Collins (2012) who uses the “standpoint theory” to demonstrate black women’s unique world perspective. She suggests that *“the theoretical basis of this approach relates to the specific experiences to which people are subjected as they move from a common cultural world (that is family) to that of the modern society”*. Therefore, women, especially black women, may become influential in that specific geographic location, and they feel that they do not belong to that society (*ibid*). However, the discussions on intersectionality are not a ready-made toolkit. The studies from several scholars will lead to further development of the concept itself (Carbado, 2013).

Most of the studies focused on how race, gender, class and sexuality affected the social well-being of black women (Webber, 1998; Grange et al., 2011, Pilgrim, 2012, Patil, 2013 and Carbado, 2013). Whereas Atewologun and Sealy (2014) adopted intersectionality in their study *“to examine privilege’s juxtaposition with disadvantage”*. They opined that compared to *“white and middle-class men, ‘others’ [ethnic minority employees] are typically assumed not to experience privilege”*. Their views were based on both ethnic minority women and men intersecting gender, ethnic, and identities within an organisation. However, there is a dearth of evidence on how the nature of intersectionality may or may not influence the experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. Despite the development of intersectionality as a main model of research in the studies of women, there has been little or no discussion as such in the organisation literature (Davis, 2008; Crenshaw, 1989; Greene et al., 2005; Collins, 2012 and Carbado, 2013). This study considers the lived experience of performance appraisal regarding both men and women belonging to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. However, evidence suggests that the UK organisations are poor at collecting data regarding workforce diversity on BAME (McGregor, 2017), that is, regarding their race, faith and age. Following this further, CIPD (2019) has a similar observation that there is a lack of workforce data on race, beliefs and ethnicity of BAME employees in

UK organisations. CIPD (2019) argued further that “*many employers [UK Organisations] still don’t collect even basic workforce data [BAME] about who they employ...Although 71% of employers said their company reports on gender, just 21% report on BAME diversity. A weighty 83% said they need to have better data to drive progress on race and ethnicity [including age and faith], but interview data suggests collecting the data is a challenge for many companies*”. It is also important to note that sensitive personal data such as ethnic origin, mental health, offences, sexual life and faith required a high level of consent from the employee (*ibid*). Most of the researches have focused on gender pay gap reporting, diversity and inclusion, race in the workplace, recognition, barriers to progression in organisations for women (BAME) and disabilities (McGregor, 2017; CIPD, 2017; CIPD 2018 and CIPD 2019). There is dearth research to provide a deep insight into how the faith and age for BAME employees may or may not influence the lived experience of their performance appraisal. By adopting an intersectional lens, this study will demonstrate how race, gender, ethnicity, age, faith and class may or may not affect the lived experience of performance appraisal for the participants in UK organisations.

The next section discusses the social comparison with other groups which is characterised by gender, race, ethnicity, age and belief.

3.5 In-Groups and Out-Groups

The categorisation of people into groups is based on characteristics such as age, ethnicity, language, belief and gender (Sheer, 2012). The categorisation of people of the same group is made in a way that they exaggerate the similarities when compared to other groups (*ibid*). Social comparison is characterised by prestige, status or power (Sheer, 2012). He argued that once the categorisation process is made, the social group will be compared with another social group. In this regard, the social comparison process and the status of each group are determined. Tajfel and Turner (1979) believed that some social groups have more prestige and status during the process of social comparison with other groups. They claimed that the result of social comparison has a tendency that the members of the group will take more consideration of the ideas and beliefs expressed from their group and rejecting the ideas and belief expressed from another group. Sheer’s (2012) research was based on the interaction between

supervisors and subordinates in organisations in Hong Kong. He examined the relationship between leader-followers in terms of in-groups and out-groups.

In addition, there is a similarity in the observation of Tajfel and Turner (1979); and Sheer (2012) that in-group members share a similar belief, identities and trust. They concluded that the in-group members showed positive attitudes towards each other. On the other hand, the in-group had negative likings and attitudes with the out-group members. Sheer (2012) claimed that the managers developed different types of exchange relationship with their employees. He posited that a high quality of exchange is being interacted by the in-group, which is characterised by respect, loyalty, mutual understanding and trust. There was a low quality of exchange between the manager and the out-group which rely on the employment contract, company procedure and long-distance communication (*ibid*). He described the relationship between the in-group to be “who are like us” and the out-group from those “whom we perceive to be different from us”. In the same vein, Smith (1991) opined that the study on ethnic identity development could be useful to analyse the interaction between the in-group and out-group. These groups can be referred to as minority and majority ethnic group (*ibid*). Smith (1991) posited that ethnic group “*may be defined as people who share a common history or culture, which may be identified because they share similar physical features and values and, who through the process of interacting with each other and establishing boundaries with others, identify themselves as being a member of that group*”. The concept of ethnic minority and the majority must be used to analyse the conflict between and among racial minority groups (*ibid*). Smith (1991), Quintana (2007) and Wilson (2017) observed that at some degree, the status of inequality between these two groups is inevitable because it is human nature to seek power. In this regard, they argued that oppression would be perceived for those members who belong to the minority ethnic group.

From the above evidence, the intergroup phenomenon is common in the workplace. Therefore, the quality of these relationships influenced the behaviour and attitude of these employees. There were discriminatory behaviours and attitudes in favour of the in-group at the expense of the out-group, which is termed as in-group favouritism (Sheer, 2012). Essed (1991:41) argued that power of in-group would exist as long as the members of the group stay together against the “others”, that is the out-group. It is more likely that prejudiced judgement on the

outcome of PA will be emanated between those belonging to different social groups. Based on the above study and evidence, this research will try to investigate the relationship between the rater and the ratee, and how it will influence the outcome for EMEs from performance appraisal. The following section elaborates on how prejudice can be minimised between the in-group and the out-group.

3.5.1 Contact Hypothesis

Contact hypothesis is defined as a regular positive contact within the social groups which minimises stereotyping by in-group members (Wilder et al., 1980). They observed that the contact hypothesis is the best solution where positive contacts between intergroup will minimise prejudice. Hewstone & Brown (1986) claimed that one of the most heavily studied techniques for prejudice reduction is intergroup contact. Allport (1954:281) opined that prejudice might be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. He argued that the effect would be significantly enhanced if institutional supports will sanction this contact. These supports include law, custom or local atmosphere; provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and shared humanity between members of the two groups.

In a review of 203 studies from 25 countries involving 90,000 participants, Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) found that 94% of studies supported the contact hypothesis. They concluded that prejudice diminishes as intergroup contact increases. However, they also argued that despite 94% support of the contact hypothesis, why intergroup contact has not eliminated prejudice from society? They opined that prejudice was not eliminated because it was challenging to meet the conditions as outlined by Allport (1954:281): law, custom or local atmosphere. Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) believed that in real-world environments, the fires of prejudice are fuelled by conflict and competition between groups that are unequal in statuses. For instance, Israelis and Palestinians, whites and blacks, long-time citizens and recent immigrants (*ibid*). They claimed that under conditions of competition and unequal status, contact could even increase prejudice. For example, in a review of studies conducted during and after school desegregation in the US, Walter Stephan (1986) found that 46% of studies reported an increase in prejudice among white students, 17% report a decline in prejudice, and the remainder reported no change. In the same line, Desforges et al. (1991) asserted

that the key is to craft situations that will lead to cooperative and interdependent interactions in pursuit of common goals, shifting people to re-categorise from "us and them" to "we".

Aronson & Bridgeman (1979) invented a cooperative learning technique which was known as "jigsaw classroom". It allowed them to divide the students into small, racially diverse workgroups in which each student is given a vital piece of information about the assigned topic, thereby making each group member indispensable to others. The jigsaw technique was developed specifically to reduce racial prejudice, and decades of research suggest that it is highly effective in promoting positive interracial contact (*ibid*). Aronson & Bridgeman (1979) concluded that cooperative learning techniques from a classroom led to increased self-esteem, morale, and empathy of students across racial and ethnic divisions. They claimed that there was an improvement in the academic performance of minority students without compromising the performance of majority group students. Pettigrew (1979), Wilder et al. (1980) and Beer et al. (1988) believed that socialising intergroup incites diverse employees to engage into and integrate the strategic planning of the organisation. It aligns with the goals of the soft models of HRM, that is, Strategic Integration (Guest, 1987). When committed, EMEs are happy within their group, they show loyalty, and they are more productive in the job allocated to them. This evidence shows consistency in another goal of soft HRM, that is, the employees' commitment to the organisation in which they work. Following on from this, Wilder et al. (1980) argued that the contact hypothesis is essential to promote an integrated society and reduce prejudice. In doing so, it allows the employees within different groups to be more adaptable and flexible within the organisation, in the work that they do and avoiding resistance to change. These experiences align with another goal of soft HRM: flexibility and adaptability. Lastly, positive communication within all level of management may lead diverse employees to behave positively and achieve the goals of the organisation (*ibid*). Wilder et al. (1980) opined that organisations in the UK ought to treat their EM employees fairly. In doing so, it is likely they will retain quality EM employees, as well as attract potentially more employees. This evidence aligns with another goal of soft model of HRM, which is quality employees.

However, the contact hypothesis approach has been critiqued by Nkomo (1992), Jefferys et al. (2007), Newton et al. (2006), Kalra et al. (2009) and Wilson (2010). They argued that scholars must not only study about how EM employees interact within their group. Instead, there should be more research on how EM employees' experiences are shaped within in-group and out-group, at their workplace. Tajfel and Rose (1983) held the view that the main assumption of the contact hypothesis is that positive contact between in-group (majority) and out-group (minority) will minimise discrimination and prejudice. However, the majority has the power to dominate the out-group and led to the birth of racism and discrimination (*ibid*). Similarly, Ogbonna and Harris (2006) and Jenkins (2010:237) explored the loopholes in relation to recruitment, selection, training and development of EM employees. They posited that during the process of recruitment and selection for employment, white candidates receive more favourable replies than their black counterparts do. Further investigations revealed that although black employees are recruited; organisations often refused to offer appropriate training and development (Jenkins, 2010:242). The evidence revealed that black employees experienced difficulties in coping with their routine work. They experienced discrimination for future promotion from the outcome of PA. Thus, resulting in unfavourable pay and benefit for EM employees when compared to their white counterparts, (Ogbonna and Harris, 2013). Such actions in organisations will make the task for the appraiser easier if they wish to downgrade the EM employees during the process of PA.

Following on from the results discussed above; Jefferys et al. (2007), Van et al. (2011) and Woodson (2016) and; Ogbonna and Harris (2013) argued that such types of behaviour and outcome from PA in organisations are tantamount to direct discrimination. It is blatant in form and similar in nature, like the refusal of employment and the creation of barriers to promotion due to gender and ethnic background (Wilder et al., 1980 and Pettigrew, 1979). They argued that subtle discrimination, that is, indirect discrimination is an everyday form of discrimination that EMEs face in their workplace. It is discernible in such ways as avoidance, disrespectful treatment and silly jokes (Essed, 1991:148). The section below will elaborate on the similarities and differences between one group and another social group.

3.5.2 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (hereafter referred to as SIT) was developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination, that is, between the in-group and the out-group. According to them, SIT is “the *social groups and categories to which an individual belong, will always interact with other people, not individually but as a representative of that group or category of which they belong*”. SIT states that social groups and categorisation to which a person belongs represents an integral part of their self-concept (*ibid*).

Under SIT, the identity of an individual depends on a large group of memberships, and these individuals try to seek positive social identity (Tajfel and Rose, 1983). They observed that the comparison is based on the perception of similarities and differences between the groups they belong to when compared to another social group. However, if a person can evaluate others, the self-image can result in a negative evaluation to maintain the evaluator’s self-image (Alleyne et al., 2017). Stets and Burke (2000) claimed that in SIT, a social identity is the knowledge of a person that belongs to a social group or category. They observed that “*a social group is a set of people who hold common social identification. Through a social comparison process, persons who are similar to the self are categorised with the self and labelled as in-group; a person who differs from the self is categorised as the out-group*”. They argued that there are two processes involved in the formation of social identity: self-categorisation and social comparison, which produces different consequences. The consequence of self-categorisation is perceived as similarities between the self and the in-group members. On the other hand, it is perceived as differences between the self and the out-group members. The consequence of the social comparison process is the selective application of the perceived similarities and differences effect. Stets and Burke (2000) opined that the self-esteem of the member is enhanced by evaluating the in-group and the out-group. It led to judge the in-group positively and the out-group negatively (*ibid*).

In a study conducted by Fein and Spencer (1997), participants were given feedback about their intelligence test. They aimed to test if a threat to the self will initiate stereotyping and if that can lead to discrimination towards a member of other groups. There was a mixture of feedback where some were positive, and others were negative (*ibid*). In the second half of the experiment, some

participants already received their feedback from the first group. The latter was assigned to evaluate the intelligence test for the first group. The result of the experiment proved that the participants who received negative feedback from the first half of the experiment, they evaluated the second group negatively. The participants who received positive feedback from the first group evaluated the second group with positive feedback. Fein and Spencer (1997) concluded that negative feedback from the test had threatened the self-image of the participant. They evaluated the feedback in a more aggressive way to restore their self-image. The evidence shows that a member of stereotyped groups is less likely to evaluate an individual negatively if their self-image has been strengthened.

Ideal-self is about someone who would like to be in the future. The ambition and goals in life keep on changing at different stages of life. For instance, the ideal-self at an early age, in the teenage and the adult stage is not the same. In this regard, Stets and Burke (2000) posited that people do not only think about the present instead of their potential future. Therefore, the ideal-self then is the self-concept that an individual would like to possess. They believed that ideal-self could develop from how a person feels, he or she should be; if he or she is to be accepted and respected in society. They refer to it as incongruence, which is the gap between the individual's self-image and the current experience. As a result, depression and anxiety would positively increase as an individual increase the discrepancy between the perceived and ideal-self. The next section discusses how social grouping will interpret their social behaviour in such a way to protect their self-image.

3.5.3 Attribution Theory

Fritz Heider (1958) is known as the “father of attribution theory” (Tate, 2017). He believed that one of the assumptions of the attribution theory is that individuals will interpret their living environment in such a way that they will try to protect and maintain their self-image. Social attribution theory is concerned with how people interpret events and how they relate them to their behaviour and thinking (*ibid*:16)) Tate (2017) posited that people try to understand other people's behaviour by collating information until they arrive at a final explanation or reasonable cause. Hewstone (1990) argued that under the attribution theory, members from different social groupings try to explain the social condition and behaviour for intergroup, that is, the in-group and the out-group. He observed that

the differentiation of intergroup attribution is shaped by prejudice. The majority of the in-group are likely to perceive negative assessment of the minority out-group (*ibid*).

Heider (1958:175) posited that under the attribution theory, a person would seek to understand why another person did something may attribute one or more causes to that behaviour. According to Heider (1958:176), a person can make two attributions: internal attribution and external attribution. The internal attribution is the inference that a person behaves in a certain way, such as the influence of attitude, traits, ability, efforts, character or personality (*ibid*). On the other hand, external attribution is known as situational attribution. Social attribution is the inference that a person is behaving a certain way which is outside his or her control (Heider, 1958:156). He claimed that attribution theory had been used to explain the difference in motivation between high and low achievers. Tate (2017) argued that high achievers would approach rather than avoid tasks related to succeeding. The individual believes that success is due to high ability and effort, which he or she is confident of (*ibid*). Failure is thought to be caused by bad luck or a poor exam and is not their fault (Robinson, 1983). Thus, failure does not affect their self-esteem, but success builds pride and confidence (*ibid*). Low achievers avoid success-related chores because they tend to doubt their ability and assume success is related to luck or to "who you know" (Robinson, 1983) or to other factors beyond their control. Thus, even when successful, it is not as rewarding to the low achiever because he/she does not feel responsible for the success, and it does not increase his/her pride and confidence (*ibid*).

Moreover, social attribution may influence employee motivation (Tjosvold, 1985). He observed that employees who perceive the cause of their success to be outside their control might be reluctant to attempt new tasks. The employees will lose motivation to perform well in the workplace. Conversely, employees who attribute their success to themselves are more likely to have high motivation for work (*ibid*). Thus, understanding attributions that people make can have a substantial influence on both employee performance and managerial effectiveness.

Concomitantly, social attributions are critical to management because perceived behaviour may influence managers' and employees' judgments and actions

(Bowling and Michel, 2011). For instance, managers must often observe employee performance and make related judgments (*ibid*). They have observed that if a manager attributes an employee's poor performance due to a lack of effort, then the outcome is likely to be harmful to that employee. The employees may receive a poor performance appraisal rating or can be terminated from the job. Conversely, if a manager perceives that an employee's poor performance is due to a lack of skill, the manager may assign the employee for further training and provide more instruction or coaching. Making an inaccurate judgment about the causes of poor performance can have negative repercussions in the organisation (*ibid*). The next section discusses the regimes of inequality by taking into consideration of Acker's theoretical framework.

3.6 Regimes of Inequality in Organisation

Acker (2006 A & B), in her theoretical framework of inequality in the organisation, she conceptualised the ongoing, complex and persistent inequality being produced within the organisation as "Inequality Regime". Inequality regime produced disparity in terms of power, promotion, recruitment and rewards (*ibid*). Similarly, Kirton and Greene (2009); and Blackburn (1999 and 2008) claimed that inequality regime involved in unequal social, power, opportunities and privileges between employees in organisations. It is based on their race, skin colour, ethnicity and physical characteristics (*ibid*). Pierro et al. (2013) believed that '*harsh power*' can be summed up as a hard model of HRM which is characterised by coercion, inequality, lack of opportunities, discrimination and marginalisation against EME. If the harsh power practices persist in the organisations of this study, it may influence the lived experience of PA for EME.

Performance appraisal practices have long been regarded as the most critical areas in appraising employees (Ferris et al., 1995:462). Studies have found significant dissatisfaction of ethnic minorities employees (EME) in the formal system of appraisal process (Bernardin, 1984; Newton and Findlay, 1996; Wilson, 2010; Berry and Bell, 2012; and Davis, 2016:2). They came to a common observation that there is a conflict between the appraiser and appraisees. For instance, Wilson (2010) claimed that in the US, black employees generally received a lower rating compared to their white counterparts. Bernardin (1984) concluded that the race of the rater in PA is a dominant factor where white raters

rate white employees higher and black raters rate black employees higher. In this regard, Bratton and Gold (2017:370); Dewberry (2001) and Baxter (2012) came to the same conclusion that PA is one of the complicated areas in human resources because of how ethically the PA process is being conducted and the bias in rating PA. When the employees observed unfairness in the process of PA, they felt disturbed because they have little or no opportunity to fight against the result of the PA (Bagilhole and Stephens, 1999; Goksoy and Alayoglu, 2013 and; Fernandes and Alsaeed, 2014). Inequality can be painful for those who are unemployed or suffer from low paid jobs (Bosma et al., 2012). Inequality is a symptom, and unfairness is the disease that causes inequality (*ibid*). Bosma et al. (2012) and CIPD (2013) argued that if organisations or societies have hope for the last cure, then there is a need to address the unfair behaviours that cause from unequal treatment. The result of the PA rating has a critical impact on the employees' commitment and motivation (Fernandes and Alsaeed, 2014). Therefore, employees experiencing injustice in the workplace behave negatively towards the management and the organisation (*ibid*).

Acker (2009) argued that '*inequality regimes*' can be used to recognise inequality in process and practices [performance appraisal] in organisations. From the views mentioned above, the process of performance appraisal may or may not be manipulated, especially regarding ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. However, Jenkins (1986:94) argued that "*the relationships between white managers, white workers and black workers* [EME in this thesis] *will defer from place to place and organisation to organisation*". In a similar vein, Cornelius (2001:16) posited there are ethical issues "*about the fair treatment and rights of employees* [felt fair] *affected by the practice and intervention*" in managing performance appraisal. Indeed, the line managers are the one who is responsible to "*determine the training needs of individuals*" (*ibid*:97). Despite the organisational processes and practices of performance appraisal to promote the interests of disadvantaged groups [EME in this study] and against discrimination; still, people from these groups do not feel that they are fairly treated (Cornelius, 2002:15). "*Organisations need to address the experience of minority ethnic groups after they have been recruited, and tackle potential 'treatment' discrimination once they have been employed*" (*ibid*:21). Blackburn (1999), Ogbonna and Harris (2006), Acker (2009), Dickens (2009), and Kirton and

Greene (2009) have similar observations. In that, they posit that inequality results when people in organisations have unequal access to positions, resources, training and opportunities for career advancement. The CIPD (2017) also claimed that the power of whiteness in UK organisations has failed to implement equal opportunities in different areas, especially regarding ethnic minority employees. Collinson and Hearn (1994) also claimed that “*power relations in organisations is a major reason for the effectiveness of many equality initiatives*”. They claimed further that organisations are dominated by a group who monopolised the power and defined all other groups as inferior.

Foucault (1998:20) has been mainly influential in shaping the understanding of “power”. He conceived power as “*diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive and that power constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them*”. He posited that ‘*power is everywhere and comes from anywhere*’. He sees power as pervasive and dispersive. Foucault (1998:20) expressed power as a connection to knowledge, where the use of power is positive and creative.

According to Townley (1993), power was the central focus in panopticon prison which was designed by Bentham in the late 1800s. He observed that the ‘panopticon model of power’ was characterised by centralised communication and decision making. It allowed the managers to watch the inmates without them seeing they were being watched (*ibid*). Bentham aimed to obtain power over the inmates’ minds (Townley, 1993). The inmates were being monitored through surveillance activities, controlling, checking and recording all activities. The monitoring facilitates all the offences to be judged. The inmates were not aware of when they were being watched. Therefore, the inmates behave as if they are being watched at all times, and they controlled their behaviours continuously. Townley (1993) and Foucault (1979) claimed that the ‘panopticon’ model was another means to control power over the inmates.

The gathering of information for PA operates similarly as the panopticon model, where employees are observed and monitored by supervisors (Townley, 1993). The information gathered from the observation is used to evaluate the employees’ performance. While gathering information for the PA for an appraisee is deemed to be useful; it will be dependent on what information is gathered and what may

be the impact on an EME when it comes to evaluating their performance (Townley, 1993).

A series of studies have examined the gathering of information through subjective and objective measurements of PA (Wilson, 2010 and Dewberry, 2001). Wilson (2010) posited that research investigating group differences in objective and subjective performance measurements might provide some insight into whether the raters may hold different information across intergroup. Some researchers have examined the correlation between subjective and objective performance measurements (Newton and Finlay, 1996 and Baxter, 2012). Their findings indicate that there is a correlation between the rating and the indices of performance measures such as the ethnicity of the rater and or ratee. They found differences between the objective criterion measurement and overall success. They concluded that there were differences in the meaning and nature of the criterion rather than the actual test.

Concomitantly, Dewberry (2001), Wilson (2010), and Goksoy and Alayoglu (2013) concluded that the white managers rate the EMEs objectively, that is, more closely related to their actual performance. On the other hand, their white counterparts were rated subjectively. Through subjective measurement of the PA, the white employee received a higher rating. The supervisor inflated their performance rating. The disparity in PA ratings have severe consequences in the career of the EMEs as a low rating of PA might affect their chance of being promoted or the possibility of demotion or even firing. Baxter (2012) claimed that the EMEs perceived discrimination in the PA and lack of confidence in the management of the organisation.

In PA, the role of a supervisor is vital because the process will depend on how he or she will interpret and assess the information gathered from the respective employees during the process of PA (McGregor, 1957). The supervisor or the manager has a range of powers to draw on, which can influence the decision of the PA process, and also impact on the outcome. The actions available for the rater includes promotion or demotion, reward or punishment and hiring or firing (Pierro et al., 2013). They argued that the range of options concerning power could be categorised as 'soft' and 'harsh' power.

Soft power is characterised by democracy at work, protecting human rights and promoting employees' opportunities in terms of career development (Thomas 1989). He observed that soft power has a similar role as a '*mentor-protégé*' relationship where members of the organisation help to achieve its goal. The mentor acts as a parent protecting the child, that is, the protégé (*ibid*). Therefore, the influence of soft power gives employees more autonomy and freedom to accept the demand from upper management. This strategy aligns with the Guest (1987) model of soft HRM and Foucault's (1998:20) thoughts that it may interrelate with the subject, power and knowledge. In this regard, one may assume that the strategy of soft power will be perceived positively by EMEs. It prompted MacNamara and Rounsefell (1986) to suggest that if an individual has the right resources, right skills and support of their managers, this will likely maximise the motivation and minimise the degree of vulnerability of employees in workplaces. Regarding the above assumption, it seemed relevant for the study to examine if EME can experience the soft power and or benefits from the goal of soft HRM in their lived experiences of PA in the organisations.

According to Pierro et al. (2013), harsh power is characterised by coercion, the legitimacy of position and reward. Harsh power is costly, and it is more destructive (*ibid*). There is evidence that it causes an individual to rebel, increases disharmony and creates in cohesion (Van and Janssens, 2011). They believed that when harsh power is in being imposed, EMEs may experience more disadvantages compared to their white counterparts. Nkomo and Ariss (2014) posited that it is a contemporary manifestation in organisations where white privilege creates disadvantage and inequality. They argued that relative to white men, EMEs encounter consistent and increasing inequalities due to a higher level of power. In this regard, the white employees have higher power and authority in the workplace. Since power is out of their control, the EME is less likely to be motivated because of the increase in tension, revolt and rebellion (Walker 2015).

Barlow (1989) underlined the importance of exploring the way power is imposed and operates in the appraiser/appraisee relationship, especially where EMEs are involved during the process of PA. This power relationship does have consequences on EMEs' lives and daily experiences at work (Newton and Finlay, 1996 and Barlow, 1989). Newton and Finlay (1996) observed that little consideration was given to the influence of the power of the appraiser during the

process of PA. The appraiser was more focused on the techniques of PA instead of the outcomes achieved (*ibid*). They posited that there were many criticisms regarding the judgment on the outcomes of PA, where the appraiser acts as a judge rather than a helpful counsellor. In this regard, Barlow (1989) claimed that *“appraisal system legitimate managerial actions by demonstrating that human resources are being deployed in a rational way. Also, their deficient operation allows more dominant power groups to continue to pursue their agendas unchallenged.”*

Moreover, Newton and Finlay (1996) argued that the appraiser has the power to influence the outcome of performance appraisal. The real decisions in PA are characterised by the socialisation of the majority group operating within or outside the process (*ibid*). Essed (1991:41) posited that racism is a form of power. She believed that there is a conflict between two parties, that is, between the dominant groups and dominated groups. In this view, it is relevant to study the power that is imposed and operated by an appraiser during the process of PA and the outcome of such power on EME.

From a more conventional viewpoint on power as a resource, people have used power in different ways, in different contexts and for different purposes such as political power (Westwood, 2002:19) and organisational power (Pierro et al., 2013). As an organisational perspective, managers use a wide range of powers to influence people (*ibid*). Power is connected with the availability of resources to a manager within an organisation (MacNamara and Rounsefell, 1986). They claimed that some of the resources of power are found in the formal roles of a person in his or her capacity. Other resources of power came about as part of the individual personality. The power coming as part of a formal role is called legitimate power, which is characterised by the authority of a manager (MacNamara and Rounsefell, 1986). Personal power is connected with the skill and knowledge of an individual with qualities such as self-confidence, assertiveness, friendliness, attractiveness and leading by example.

Power varies within the hierarchical level, especially in a diverse organisation (Storey, 2007:143 and; Pierro et al., 2013). The usage of such power depends on the leadership style (Moynihan et al., 2012). Power is bestowed upon managers who in return, can direct their subordinates to gain compliance. Often, questions are raised about power: where power lies, how far it extends, and how

it affects the dominant groups, dominated groups and its significance (Essed, 1991:40). She believed that being powerless can determine that an individual or group of people are being marginalised, oppressed, exploited or discriminated. It is especially true when such a comparison is made out between EMEs and their white counterparts (*ibid*). In this study, it may be the EME who is exploited by the supervisor belonging to the majority group. The manager has the power to prevent the EME from obtaining further training skills, potential opportunities and promotion, thus resulting in poor performance of PA. Therefore, a poor performance rating will indicate that the concerned employees are not performing (MacNamara and Rounsefell, 1986). As a result, it will harm the employees' future promotion, personal life and potential career prospects.

Concomitantly, some researchers have argued that organisational practices result in stratification of some employees in jobs with high power, pay, status and opportunities (Acker, 2006b and; Berry and Bell, 2012). These organisations practise perceived differences in the type of jobs among the employees which are based on gender, race, culture, background and status (Berry and Bell 2012). These differences create inequalities in the workplace against powerless and helpless employees (*ibid*). In this study, EME may be powerless and feel discriminated when they perceived these differences as compared to their white counterparts. Van and Janssens (2011) believe that discrimination can be in subtle and or blatant form. They opined that power "*involved clear, intentional, political behaviour, ensuring that a visible and open conflict is determined in a particular way, favouring the interests of one group*". They claimed that power works through assembling and designing 'the rules of the game'. The decisions are directed in favour of particular individuals or groups and discriminate the other minority groups (*ibid*). They posited that based on surveillance and observation, individuals are judged for their future development. The performances of the employees are being rewarded, punished or discriminated (Van and Janssens 2011). Essed (1991:46) and; Van and Janssens (2011) argued that power could work intentionally or unintentionally, which leads to discrimination against minority groups. Essed (1991:45) claimed that discrimination includes all acts such as "*verbal, non-verbal and para-verbal with unintended or intended negative or unfavourable consequences for racially or ethnically dominated groups*". She claimed that power operates 'everyday' where minority groups perceived any

direct or/and indirect form of discrimination in the workplace. In this regard, the system and practice of power during the process of PA might dominate the minority groups: in this study, it may be the EMEs in the organisations. Therefore, the power of using information gathered for PA might be accurately or inaccurately used against the target group: EME. Subtle forms of discrimination are difficult to prove (Van and Janssens, 2011). They are not punishable under the anti-discrimination regulations but will affect the EME indirectly (*ibid*).

From the views mentioned above, the power of the line manager may or may not maintain the 'status quo' of an employee within the organisation. Diangelo (2018:2) argues that whiteness confers power and status, even when white people deny or conceal the operation of racism. Acker (2006 A & B) argued that inequality regimes persist in the organisation in different ways with the power of white line managers against black employees. For instance, unequal opportunities, lack of support and training. Dickens (in Bach, 2005:203) posited that *"whatever label is used, without acknowledging through action that current organisational cultures, norms, structures, rules and notions of merit, etc. have been shaped around white...and without a shift in focus away from, at best, helping people fit into jobs...always fall short of equality in employment. A focus of equality and diversity could help in walking the talk."* Gagnon and Cornelius (2000) claimed that being an excellent employer such as valuing difference irrespective of the ethnic background of employees and acknowledging that equality is morally right, the organisations still fail *"to generate fair or 'felt fair' equality"*. Even though the organisations reported that their policies and practices of recruitment, training and opportunities do not discriminate EME, there was a *"yawning gap"* between companies' report and perceived treatment by their respective employees, especially by the EME (*ibid*).

Since the participants of this study are from an ethnic minority background, the practice, process, and the system of performance appraisal by the line managers (white) are questionable. From the above views, it seems that the approaches of white line managers to Human resource continue to be out of step with the grievances of EME. These employees [EME] do perceive that their interest is not protected and promoted in organisations. Therefore, one can argue that there is a regime of white employees which include both white line managers and their white subordinates. It leads to Regimes of Inequality as the practices are

deliberate where EME felt ignored, humiliated, unacknowledged and overlooked by their white line managers. Therefore, these actions constitute regimes of inequality where they are legitimised by line managers as genuine practices within an organisation. The practices are given priority in the short term and also in the production process. Therefore, regimes of inequality become normalised within the process of performance appraisal and therefore seen as a natural outcome for the organisation. Such actions lead to EME becoming dispensable in the process of PA; discrimination becomes the norm, and thus, regimes of inequality become a normal practice.

Moreover, Diangelo (2018:22) claims that *“whites have the collective social and institutional power and privilege over people of colour. People of colour do not have this power and privilege over white people”*. The power of whiteness (white line managers) *“can scuttle the careers of people of colour [EME] by closing certain organisations or units to minority hiring, excluding people of colour from key networking and leadership development opportunities”* (Bohonos, 2019:325). He also claims that the power of Whiteness in an organisation can create opportunities for young white employee from preferential treatment of a white line manager. For a young white employee, the privilege might appear invisible or *“if noticed it might appear race-neutral”* (*ibid*). Thomson (2004) and Hurtado (2019) have a similar opinion as Bohonos (2019) that white people are not able to articulate the nature of Whiteness because for them being white is just normal. Whiteness acquired vividness, only when it is threatened by people of colour, competing for the privilege whites enjoyed (Hurtado, 2019). Whiteness can only articulate when it compared to people of colour (*ibid*). For example, the work of Ospina and Foldy (2009) looks specifically at how ethnicity and race affect the perception of leadership, especially in the decision-making process. Their findings reveal that *“the way leaders are perceived and accepted, is affected by the power inequalities present in their organisations and society in general, with Whiteness always holding the privileged status”*. Byrd (2017) posits in his work that be it from a more structural (race) or cultural (ethnicity), whiteness *“shapes sociological perspectives of stratification and oppression. Racial identity formation is a process”*. He argued that racial and EMEs’ experiences do not only outline as different from whites but also repeat conclusively different from each other, *“which is a product of white supremacy”*. Through the relational process in

daily life, the conceptualisations of whites and people of colour [EME] shift through *“identity processes and associated ideological realisations for group memberships, meanings and social positions”* (Byrd, 2017). He believes that the power rests in the hand of the Whites to identify both racially and ethnically as individuals to pursue their limitless goals and agendas. On the other hand, the people of colour, that is, EME’s life goals are limited, and more often they are circumscribed (*ibid*). In the same vein, Diangelo (2018:112) in her work *“White Fragility”*, she claimed that *“White people keep people of colour in line and in their place. In this way, it is a powerful form of white racial control”*.

From the above views on how ethnic and race stratification (see also 3.1.1) connect to yield differential life chances, this research illuminates how Whiteness, race and ethnicity as social processes (Diangelo, 2018:18) produce or/and reproduce racism within the process of performance appraisal life cycle. This study also reveals how race and ethnicity intertwine around Whiteness that influences the process of PA. The next section elaborates the impact of race and ethnicity on the performance appraisal system.

3.7 Race and Ethnicity: Impact on Performance Appraisal

Studies of work PA have found significant differences across EMEs’ performance (Wilson, 2010 and Essed, 1991:35). They observed that in the US, black employees received a lower grade in PA ratings when compared to their white counterparts. This evidence is consistent with the findings of other researchers, in that EM employees tend to score lower performance ratings than their white colleagues (Kick, 2006 and Kalra et al., 2009). PA has been performed from different angles, such as subtle and blatant form (Van and Janssens, 2011). As per their observations, a subtle form of discrimination cannot be easily detected but has direct consequences on those employees who are experiencing it, which results in detrimental effects in the EME’s daily workplace. Van and Janssens (2011) argued that a blatant form of discrimination is a more open form of unfair treatment, and it is visible. PA outcome can also be influenced by self-categorisation (Drue and Vries, 2001), which is anchored by a group of people with similar attitudes, perception, habit and belief. This study aims to contribute to that debate in the exploration of whether the PA is blatant, subtle or both forms of discrimination from EME’s and management’s perspective.

Concomitantly, Nkomo (1992) argued that there are differences in job allocation between EM employees and their white counterparts in both the USA and the UK. Essed (1991:42) and Nkomo (1992) have observed that race is one of the bases of domination in society through which the division of labour occurs in organisations. They opined that race has been present all over organisations, even if it is silenced and suppressed. Recent studies have been dominated by comparative studies within organisations between black and white employees related to job attitude, job motivation, job satisfaction, employment opportunities and performance appraisal (Essed, 1991:243; Dewberry, 2001; Greene et al., 2005; Kalra et al., 2009 and; Van and Janssens, 2011). However, these researchers have not examined the experiences and outcomes, specifically of the PA from the EM employees' perspective. Do EM employees feel that they are under or over utilised concerning their skills, knowledge and abilities when compared to their white counterparts? The historical marginalisation of black and EME in the decision-making process in organisations is well-known (Bradley et al., 2010). Essed (1991:102) and Lloyd (2009) have made considerable arguments as to why EM employees find it challenging to be as productive as their white counterparts. It is, therefore, poignant to observe that research on how EM employees' performance contributes to the organisation has not been examined. There are several pieces of research available on EM deficit in the organisation (Essed, 1991:167 & 233; Lloyd, 2009; Bradley et al., 2010 and Bhopal, 2019). Why is this not being made transparent? Therefore, the failure to explore this particular phenomenon often leads to the perception and assumption that EMEs are not productive. They may be treated differently and regarded as deficient within the context of the organisation's performance.

This study aims to contribute to the knowledge about the exposure of EM employees to any discrimination, which may or may not occur from the lived experience of PA for EMEs in UK organisations. It is irrespective of whether the results from PA's ratings may be blatant, subtle or a combination of both forms of discrimination. This study will aim to highlight the role of the appraiser from the perspective of the EM appraisees, and whether the PA process is participative, or the appraiser is "a judge ... rather than [a] helper" during the process of performance appraisal (McGregor, 1957 in Newton and Findlay, 1996).

3.8 Are Ethnic Minority Employees Able to Achieve the Goals of Soft HRM Through the Use of PA in Organisations?

There are many differences between white and ethnic minority employees with regard to the rating of performance appraisal (Bernardin, 1984). Existing studies have tended to focus solely on the outcome rather than the EME's experience of the process of performance appraisal, and some of these studies are in the US context. For example, the finding of Bernardin (1984) reveals that white managers rate white employees higher than their EM counterparts. Jefferys and Ouali (2007); and Bernardin (1984) argued that the soft model of HRM remains a significant challenge to be achieved by EM employees. The lack of achievement of the EME is due to rater bias in the PA (*ibid*). In such circumstances, the outcomes of the PA are not aligning with the sentiments of the soft model of HRM. In line with this call, this study will explore how ethnic minority employees perceived themselves during the PA and whether they experience soft HRM within the organisations in the UK.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter discoursed on the concepts and theories that are very significant to the lived experience of performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. The theoretical framework of race, ethnicity and intersectionality lays the foundation for understanding the fairness and or unfairness in the process of performance for ethnic minority employees. Based on the above literature, this study aims to achieve one of the objectives, that is, whether ethnic minority employees' experience of performance appraisal is congruent with the goals of soft HRM. It is assumed that EMEs in organisations will be proactive and that they will be treated as a valued asset. It is also presumed that the soft version of HRM focused on treating EME as a source of competitive advantage through their commitment, high-quality skills, adaptability and flexibility within the organisation. From the views above, and considering the aim and objectives of this study, there is a need for research that addresses the lived experience of PA for EMEs working in UK organisations. The next chapter is about the methodology used in investigating the lived experience of the performance appraisal for EMEs in UK organisations.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the methodologies used in evaluating the outcome of performance appraisal (PA) by examining the lived experiences of ethnic minorities employees (EME) in the UK. The method of data collection, analysis and interpretation will be discussed. It will be followed by discussions on how the participants of this study were chosen as well as the ethical approach, protection of the data, validity, reliability and the quality of the research method.

McNeil (1990:1) argued that evidence from empirical research needs to be collected from the social world. He observed that *“there have been considerable variations and disagreements among sociologists. However, they are united in the conviction that an argument based on sound evidence is superior to an argument based on false evidence, limited evidence, or no evidence”*. In this context, empirical research means that we obtain evidence from the real world rather than ideas from abstracts or theories. Schutz (1973: 59) argued that atoms and molecules did not mean anything for a natural scientist while exploring the natural world. Whereas a social scientist will observe the daily life of an object within the social life, that is within social reality. He posited that *“the observational field of a social scientist- social reality- has a specific meaning and relevance structure for the being living, acting, and thinking within it...The thought objects constructed by the social scientists, in order to grasp this social reality, have to be founded upon the thought objects constructed by the common-sense thinking for men, living their daily life within the social world” (ibid)*.

This study aims to examine and evaluate the experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees through their lived experiences. The target participant is made the centre of gravity of this research. Recently, there was a dearth of research on ethnic minority employees regarding the process of performance appraisal. After concluding an exhaustive literature search, the lived experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in organisations in the UK is yet to be fully explored. The following sections outline

the fundamental concepts of positivism and interpretative approaches which will be explored. After an in-depth discussion, the choice of the approach will be made, and the reasons for that choice will be evident.

4.1 Models of Research Method

4.1.1 Positivism

The positivist approach to organisational research is known as “logical positivism” or “logical empiricism” (Lee, 1991). This theoretical perspective is recognised as the “*natural-science model*” of social science research (*ibid*). Denzin and Guba (1994:106) opined that the term positivism denotes the “*received view*”. They have observed that this paradigm dominated the formal discourse in social and physical sciences. They outlined positivism in three positions: ontological, epistemology and methodology.

Denzin and Guba (1994:108) described the ontological question as “*what is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it? If a real-world is assumed, what can be known about it? How things really are and how things really work*”. The ontological position of positivism is one of realism (Denzin and Guba, 1994:109 and Scotland, 2012). They believed that positivism assumed that reality exists, characterised by immutable mechanisms and natural laws. They also argued that realism is viewed as an object that is independent of the researcher. The knowledge about “*how things really are, and things how really work*” is summarised in the form of free generalisation and laws (Scotland, 2012). The basic posture of the paradigm is argued to be “*both reductionist and deterministic*” (Stewart and Hesse, 1981). Denzin and Guba (1994:108) claimed the epistemological question as “*What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower is and what can be known?*”. The epistemological position of positivism is one of objectivism (Scotland, 2012). He argued that positivists aim to discover knowledge about objective reality. Denzin and Guba (1994:110) and Scotland (2012) posited that the investigator and the investigated object are independent identities. An independent identity does not reside in the conscience of a researcher or influence an object in order to obtain the meaning (Scotland, 2012). Denzin and Guba (1994:110) observed that prescribed procedures should rigorously be

followed. In this regard, it will avoid bias from influencing the outcome of the meaning.

Denzin and Guba (1994:108) claimed that methodological position of positivism's question would be "*how the inquirer can (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?*". To that end, the methodological position of positivism is directed at explaining relationships (Scotland, 2012). Lee (1991) and Denzin and Guba (1994:110) believe that the positivist approach to methodology is experimental and manipulative. They argued that in order to identify the causes that influence the outcome, positivists had proposed hypotheses and questions to meet their objectives. "*They aim to formulate laws, thus yielding a basis for prediction and generalisation*" (Scotland, 2012). He also posited that positivists seek predictions and generalisations, which often generate quantitative information. Mills (2015) argued that the positivist approach involves manipulations of theories using formal logic and hypothesis. The rules of formal logic are applied when scientific explanations are expressed in formal logic (*ibid*). The formal logic provides a means by which it can be converted into precise mathematical formulas that can be easily expressed into functional relationships. Hanson (1969) and Feigl (1970) have observed that the scientific explanation will allow a scientist to establish a set of rules of formal logic. Euclid's system of geometry would be the best approach as to how the system of logic would work (*ibid*). They opined that the logical deduction would extract the consequences contained in the explanation or the proposition. It will lead to unanticipated discoveries (Hanson, 1969). If any proposition cannot be logically deducible from or connected to, the remaining functional relationships will be labelled as groundless (*ibid*). In this way, the scientist will use the rules of formal logic to eliminate the functional relationships that originate from his or her subjective values, opinions and bias (Hanson, 1969 and Feigl 1970).

Moreover, Scotland (2012) posited that positivists do not have the only task of how to relate the functional relationships or propositions to each other so that they are logical. However, they have an additional task of how to relate the functional relationships to the reality so that the relations are real (*ibid*). He argued that the scientific propositions posit the existence of phenomena, entities or relationships that are indirectly observable. Even if a theory is not directly

verifiable because of the unobservable entities, it can still be tested indirectly, through the observable consequences, which are known as a hypothesis (Lee, 1991). Therefore, the hypothesis is logically deducible from it (*ibid*). Ju and Choi (2017) suggest that the hypothetic-deductive logic is a particular way of applying the logic of syllogism. They observed that the major and minor premise characterises syllogism. The major premise is a general theory, and the minor premise is a set of information or facts that describe a situation. The conclusion is what the theory hypothesises to be observed in that particular situation (*ibid*).

Moreover, Behfar and Okhuysen (2018) argued that the rules of formal logic and the hypothetic-deductive logic are used to manage the theoretical propositions. They suggest that there are four requirements which must satisfy the functional relationships: falsifiability, explanatory power, logical consistency, and survival (*ibid*). In this regard, the researcher will know whether he or she is managing the relationship properly. The requirement of falsifiability is magnified when a researcher is needed to evaluate competing theories (Denzin et al., 1994:107). They claimed that the same observation could be consistent with several theories (*ibid*). However, that does not mean that the theory is the true one (*ibid*). Kura (2012) believed that there is no need to accumulate several observations that are consistent with a theory. Instead, the researcher will seek observations that will falsify or disconfirm with a theory (*ibid*). The results of the findings would be a reduction in the number of theories which will be considered viable with the surviving one. The researcher will then label it as “corroborated” or “confirmed” (Sprengrer, 2013). The second requirement which must satisfy the functional relationships is the explanatory power. It is the ability of a hypothesis to explain the subject matter it pertains to (Lee, 1991). He observed that one hypothesis could have more explanatory power than another for the same phenomenon. If a prediction is tested in theory, and the result is consistent with all laboratory experiments, then the theory is accepted for its efficiency in explanatory power (*ibid*). However, if the same hypothesis in a second theory is unfavourable, then it will be rejected for its relative deficiency in explanatory power. The third requirement to satisfy the propositions is logical consistency. The test of the logical consistency assumes that all propositions of a theory must relate to each other by the rules of formal logic (Sprengrer, 2013). The hypothesis framework emphasis on a different prediction from a theory must be compatible with one

another (*ibid*). He noted that if a prediction from a theory is contrary, then it is assumed that there is a lack of logical consistency. The last requirement is survival. The rules of deductive-hypothesis logic necessitate the on-going testing of previous theories that have been confirmed (Bowles, 1996). While falsifying, a theory must survive through empirical testing. Therefore, Lee (1991) argued that passing the empirical test can never confirm that the theory of interest is reliable or authentic.

The empirical evidence provided by the positivist approach is valuable in uncovering inequalities and discrimination against ethnic minority employees (Modood and Khattab, 2015). They have opined that a positivist approach is useful to observe a phenomenon objectively and produce the truth about it. Based on the above insights, the questions of suitability of the positivist approach in illuminating the meanings and subjectivities of ethnic minority lived experiences had been opposed by several researchers (Hall et al., 1994; Scheurich, 1997:141 and Sousa, 2010). They argued that a positivist could not observe the lived experience of EM objectively because the truth cannot be discovered apart from the context of the knower of the positivist researcher. The aim of the study is to examine and evaluate the outcomes of PA of EME through their lived experience. The positivist approach is not a valuable paradigm to elucidate the lived experience of EME subjectively, especially for this study. The next section discusses another research method, that is, the quantitative method in which researchers use to control data and predict their findings.

4.1.2 Quantitative Method

Bryman (2015:149) described quantitative research as “*entailing the collection of data, a deductive view of the relationship between theory and research, a preference for a natural science approach and positivism in particular, and an objectivist conception of social reality*”. He argued that such a method generates quantifiable data on a large number of participants from a broader population in order to hypothesis or test the data. Once the data are collected by experimental or social survey, they are analysed so that the causal connection specified by the test or hypothesis can be either verified or rejected. The result from the findings will then be absorbed by the theory that sets the whole quantitative research process going to its originals place. It is a privilege for a scientist to control and

predict an investigation which can be physical or human. When the facts cause the effect of linkage or take the form of generalisations, it is easier for a scientist to control and predict the findings.

Furthermore, Bryman (2012:166) argued that quantitative researchers failed to distinguish between social institutions and people from the real world. The measures and concepts under the quantitative method are made up by scientific researchers rather than being out there in reality (*ibid*). Lee (1992) posited that quantitative researchers assume that all participants who answer a survey do interpret the questions in the same way. However, in reality, it may not be the case (Bryman, 2012:191). The scientific researchers tend to ignore that people interpret their lived experiences around the real world that they are living. In this regard, Lee (1992) and Bryman (2012:166) argued that quantitative method relies on self-completion questionnaires, surveys or structured interviews. These methods of approaching participants do not tap into their real-life experiences (*ibid*). This research does not give any room to the quantitative method because scientific researchers do not make any attempt to consider the social process. With numerical evidence, people are treated as an object, dictated by formula and generalised the result through assumptions. Such an approach fails to take into account the uniqueness of the participants' ability to interpret their lived experiences, feelings, emotions, perspectives and act on these. This study is aiming to understand the experience of the participants as nearly as possible as they feel it in their daily life. It has been further observed by Sherman and Webb (1998:7) that a qualitative method is opposite to quantitative method because *"qualitative implies a direct concern with experience as it is 'lived', or 'felt' or 'undergone'."*

4.1.3 The Interpretive Approach

"The interpretive approach to organisational research maintains that the methods of natural science are inadequate to the study of social reality" (Schutz, 1973:59). This school of thought believed that social artefacts that the people create are different from the reality created by natural science. The social scientist collects facts and data by describing not only objectively, but also the subjective meaning of human behaviour (Moustakas, 1990:8). The latter interpreted the empirical reality in term of what it means for the observed participant. The interpretive

approach can be observed in different ways, such as phenomenology and hermeneutic (Lee, 1991).

4.1.3.1 Phenomenology

The concept of phenomenological sociology was developed by Husserl (1913 in Schutz, 1954); who argues that the world can be understood through people's perspective and how they interpret their experiences as the reality of their daily lives. Phenomenology is an attempt to understand an individual and how they perceive their existence rather than from a world perspective or prescribed ideas. Phenomenology is characterised by the understanding of an individual's emotion, behaviour, the mental and physical world (*ibid*). The phenomenological method cannot be fitted to a rule of the book, neither as a set of steps nor a set of procedures. Becker (1992:7) posited that phenomenology is the study of phenomena in the everyday world from the perspective of the experiencing person. To understand an individual, it is important to understand the context in which he or she lived (*ibid*). He argued that people are subjects, not objects and that they cannot be reduced to mechanistic processes. For a phenomenologist, people are active, intentional subjects who are aware of their surroundings or their worlds (Becker, 1992:22). He believed that each person is unique, irreplaceable and '*no one could live people's lives for them or experience exactly what they experience*'. However, it is possible for someone to feel the pain or joy, but he or she can never experience the nuances and meanings that the person experiences (*ibid*). In the same line, Schutz (1973: 62) opined that "*the postulate of subjective interpretation has to be understood in the sense that all scientific interpretation of the social world can, and for certain purposes, must refer to the subjective meaning of the actions of human beings from which social reality originates*". Phenomenologists extract the common components from the unique events and illuminate the main themes of unique experiences (Manen, 2014:42 and Becker, 1992:23). Knowing the common aspects of human experience will help the researcher to understand the target participant.

As stated above, it is crucial to understand the context in which people lived. Phenomenology is primarily a philosophic method of questioning. It is not a method of answering, discovering or determining conclusions. Sloan and Bowe (2013) believe that phenomenological research emphasises discovery, description and meaning. This method focuses on an in-depth interview which

reflects on the lived experiences. Dewi (2017) posited that phenomenology method is interested mostly *“in the primacy of lived experience of participants and invites participants to share their own experiences and respond in their ways”*. Phenomenology method is a better approach when it comes to researching discrimination practices (Cassell et al., 2017:403). Therefore, this qualitative research technique is designed to discover a phenomenon that allows unearthing previously overlooked or unnoticed issues while exploring the experience and meaning of a particular phenomenon being studied. Also, this method identifies the impact of a phenomenon. It reveals the meaning that appears to be hidden to the rest of the world rather than making inferences. This method allows a deeper understanding of the experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. The phenomenological approach is considered to examine whether EM employees can experience the goals of soft HRM. At the same time, this approach provides with a rich description that helps to understand a phenomenon through their unique experience within their world. It also helps to understand human experience rather than providing a casual explanation or generalisation for those experiences.

4.1.3.2 Hermeneutic Phenomenology

According to Wilson and Hutchinson (1991), hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with the human experience as it is lived. *“The focus is toward illuminating details and seemingly trivial aspects within the experience that may be taken for granted in our lives, with a goal of creating meaning and achieving a sense of understanding” (ibid)*. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a research methodology which is aimed at producing rich textual descriptions of the experiencing phenomena of individuals. From identification of the phenomena, a deeper understanding of that experience is sought. With the help of Hermeneutic method of interpretation, it is possible to understand the lived experience of people that this research aims to explore. Therefore, hermeneutic is understood as a philosophy and a method of interpretation. This method also examines and explores the stories of the participants in order to depict the real meaning of a phenomenon. It was achieved by selecting the themes and sub-themes that present themselves from the data. In this way, the hermeneutic method allowed the researcher to move beyond describing, generalising or assuming the data. Hermeneutic phenomenology has been given importance in research studies, in particular, where the research involves the ‘lived experience’ of employees in

organisations or society (Wilson and Hutchinson, 1991). The researcher needs to listen to the stories of the participants. The lived experience of this study encompasses the experience of each participant and of what is really happening during the process of the PA, and whether there may be any biased treatment in appraising EM employees. Notwithstanding the above discussion, a hermeneutic phenomenological analysis enables the researcher to focus on the lived experiences of EM employees in the workplace rather than theorising, generalising and giving a personal opinion.

Concomitantly, Essed (1991:4) observed that EM women lived experience in both the Netherlands and the USA result in them being discriminated in the workplace. She aimed to observe EM employees (women) lived experience in a natural context rather than based on perceptions or generalising the phenomena, which are under scrutiny. In the case of this study, the phenomenon being researched is: Can EM employees experience the goals of the soft model of HRM within the organisation? The evaluation of the participants' experience in relation to the aforementioned goals and whether discrimination is in evidence; and if so, how it stymies EM employees' ability to achieve their full potential and performance in UK organisations. The researcher needed to understand their feeling, thoughts and the hazards they have to overcome during the process of performance appraisal. Here, the belief is that hermeneutic phenomenology may be the most suitable method for studying the lived experience of EM employees.

4.2 Research Strategy

The Methodology is a theoretical analysis of methods that are applied to a field of research which includes concepts such as theoretical model, paradigm, phases and qualitative or quantitative techniques. Bryman and Bell (2015:76) argued that the methods as mentioned above do not provide solutions; instead, it offers an understanding of the theoretical framework which allows a researcher to choose the best method that will be appropriate for their specific study.

Through this study, the researcher aimed to get participants through the snowball sampling method, where a well-represented sample of EM employees was accessed for semi-structured interviews, which was tape-recorded. Any particular ethnic grouping did not disproportionately represent the prospective sample. The aim is to get a fairly even spread of different ethnic minority employees. In doing

so, a purposeful sampling method was utilised (Bell, 2015:202). Purposive sampling is a sampling technique where a researcher depends on his or her judgement on selecting people to participate in the research (*ibid*). The purposive sampling benefits this study because participants serve as primary data source due to the nature of research aims and objectives. In the same line, Etikan et al. (2016) suggested that *“it is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or set a number of participants. The researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience.”* The pool of participants consisted of male and female managers as well as administrative and technical staff. Once established, the researcher utilised a judgmental sampling strategy (Bell, 2015:429) to ensure fair representation of the participants and gender. However, this research recognised that due to the snowball sampling method, the balance of gender was not achieved. The focus of this study is on the ethnic minority employees’ lived experience of PA. There was no difference found despite being dominant male participants. The participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000:17). The interviews were tape-recorded with the full consent of the participants. Such method of interview records human experience through the construction and reconstruction of personal stories (Webster and Mertova, 2007:1). It is well suited to address issues of complexity, cultural and human-centredness because of its capacity to record and retell those events that have been most influential on us (*ibid*). Therefore, this method is much closer to reality and more honest than empirical methods.

In this regard, this study examined what happens during the process of performance appraisal and whether there was any perception of unfair treatment or discrimination in appraising EME in organisations in the UK. The interviews continued until the researcher of this study had a full understanding of the participant’s perspective and reaching a saturation stage of the data. In the view of Guest et al. (2006), Middlemiss et al. (2015) and Jackson et al. (2015), the term saturation is commonly used in qualitative research as a criterion for discontinuing the collection of data. Guest et al. (2006) believe that *“data saturation has become the gold standard by which purposive sample sizes are determined in qualitative research.”* This view seems to raise the question: “How

many interviews are needed to reach the saturation stage?" In this regard, Grady (1998:26) argued that *"new data tend to be redundant of data already collected. In interviews, when the researcher begins to hear the same comments again and again, data saturation is being reached... it is then time to stop collecting information and to start analysing what has been collected"*. A total of fifteen participants were interviewed in this study. After the thirteenth interview, all the experiences were repeating, and it was not adding new information according to the objectives of this research. Before establishing a saturation point, the researcher did another two interviews to ensure that there are no new themes that emerged from the interviews.

Strauss and Corbin (1998:136) suggest that data saturation *"should be more concerned with reaching the point where further data collection becomes counterproductive and where the new experiences do not necessarily add anything to the overall story"*. Mason (2010) has a similar observation that saturation of the data should be at a point where there are *"diminishing returns"* from new data collection. Saunders et al. (2017) claimed that data saturation stage sometimes *"give rise to a degree of uncertainty or equivocation. However, saturation is claimed, but further data collection takes place in an apparent attempt to confirm or validate it"*. For example, Jassim and Whitford (2014) posited that after their 10th interview, they begin to hear the same comments again and again. *"Therefore, it was deemed that the data collection had reached a saturation point. We continued data collection for two more interviews to ensure and confirm that there are no new themes are emerging"* (*ibid*). Simultaneously, Jackson et al. (2000) claim that saturation was established after the analysis of eight data sets. However, they recruited two more participants to ensure that the data saturation was achieved. In addition, Constantinou et al. (2017) proposed that *"given the potential uncertainty about the point at which saturation is reached, attention should focus more on providing evidence that saturation has been reached, than on concerns about the point at which this occurred"*. This study continued interviews beyond the saturation point to ensure that there are no new themes emerged from the lived experience of performance appraisal of the participants.

4.3 Ethical Consideration of the Research

According to the British Academy of Management (BAM, 2013), academic research often involves a great deal of coordination and cooperation among many people in different institutions and disciplines. Ethical standards promote the values that are important for collaborative work. Therefore, issues such as fairness, trust, integrity, mutual respect and accountability must be taken into consideration (*ibid*). The ethical standard is also essential to promote the aim of the study, such as truth, knowledge and avoiding errors (BAM,2013). The British Academy of Management (BAM, 2013) opined that the Code of Ethics encourages trust and respect from its members and non-members. BAM has a strong reputation for fairness, openness, integrity and transparency within the Management Academic community. The Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) outlined the same principles as BAM (2013) for good research. Similarly, the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2017) sets out a clear and useful framework.

The researcher conducted this study in line with the standards and guidelines set by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). Ethical approval for this research was obtained before the commencement of the fieldwork. According to the American Psychological Association's (APA) Ethics Code, a researcher needs to assess whether the research may potentially harm the participants. As part of the research, the nature of the study was fully explained to the participants through the use of detailed information sheets and verbal explanation. The information sheets included the purpose and process of the research. Prior to the collection of data, written consent was obtained from potential participants. Any participant was free to withdraw at any time during or after the interview without any obligation or even to give a reason on his/her action. At any time, the participants did not withdraw from the interview. Common to the ethics of research protocols, while doing the transcripts, the organisation was not identified, and no employee who participated in the study was identified or identifiable. The data were stored securely at all times within the researcher's computer. An external hard drive was utilised, protected by password and encryption. In any publications or reports, only anonymous data were used in the form of brief quotations.

4.4 Selection and Interviewing Participants

Prior to the selection and interviewing of participants, pilot semi-structured interviews were conducted with two participants. It was to ensure clarity as well as provide advice about the structure of the interview. It also helped the researcher to identify any issues that the interviewee may find important to consider. The researcher was anticipating further adjustments and recommendations to make the questions easy to answer.

4.4.1 Selection

The selection of participants was based on the epistemological approach to this research. The positivistic approach is not suitable to select the participants as phenomenology does not give room for generalisation (Hall et al., 1994). This research aimed at examining and evaluating the experience of PA for EME through their lived experiences in UK organisations. It was vital for the researcher of this study to ensure that the participants were of ethnic minority origin, that they were working in an organisation in the UK. It is a must for the respondents to have a minimum of three years lived experience of performance appraisal. The participants were recruited beyond the saturation point, which allowed room for a rich contextual understanding of the lived experiences in the workplace of the respondents. Fifteen participants were selected for the interview. The table 1 below shows the specific information about the participants of this study which include their pseudo name, gender, country of origin, age, faith, number of years lived in the UK, position, years of experience in UK organisations in their respective industry. The data indicates that 47% of the participants interviewed were born in the UK. The rest, that is, 57% were born in a different country. The participants came from different countries and regions such as Caribbean, Kenya, Jamaica, Nigeria, Ghana, Comoro and UK born as well. The table 2 below indicates the summary of gender, that is, ten males and five females (see section 4.2). A judgemental sampling strategy was utilised to ensure a fair representation of gender (Bell, 2015:429). However, 67% of the participants were male, and 33% were female. This study acknowledged that the fair representation of gender was not achieved due to the result of the snowball sampling method. This study also recognised such sampling led to males predominating. As a purposive and snowball sampling method is adopted to reach the participants, there is no need for underlying theories or setting a number of participants for this study (Etikan et

al., 2016). Table 3 below indicates a summary of the participant's faith. Most of the participants were Christian, and it is worth to mention that a random sampling method, that is, the snowball method is adopted to reach the participants (see section 4.4.2.3).

Table 1: Participant Demographical Information

Identified in the thesis	Perceived Experience	Pseudo Name	Gender	Country of origin	Age (At the time of interview)	Faith	Number of years lived in the UK	Position	Years of experience in UK organisations	Industry
T1	Unfairness	Atunji	M	Caribbean	35	Christian	Born in the UK	Cashier	5	Gambling
T2	Unfairness	Tau	M	Kenya	29	Christian	Born in the UK	Cashier	7	Gambling
T3	Unfairness	Harold	M	Caribbean	48	Christian	Born in the UK	Field worker	28	Transport
T4	Fairness	Twame	F	Kenya	26	Mix (Hindus and Christian)	4	Teacher	3	Education
T5	Fairness	Lucie	F	Jamaica	30	Christian	5	Teacher	4	Education
T6	Unfairness	Winie	F	Nigeria	37	Muslim	18	Teacher	16	Education
T7	Fairness	Bala	M	Caribbean	40	Christian	8	Cleaner	6	Local Government
T8	Unfairness	Mark	M	Nigeria	35	Christian	7	Staff	7	Retail
T9	Unfairness	Jack	M	Nigeria	45	Muslim	Born in the UK	Supervisor	18	Transport
T10	Unfairness	Peter	M	Nigeria	55	Christian	Born in the UK	Worker	22	Transport
T11	Unfairness	Helio	M	Comoro	32	Christian	7	Staff	7	Retail
T12	Unfairness	Alicia	F	Ghana	28	Christian	4	Staff	4	Retail
T13	Fairness	ABIM	M	Ghana	42	Christian	Born in the UK	Staff	20	NHS
T14	Unfairness	Johnny	M	Nigeria	28	Christian	7	Care worker	6	NHS
T15	Fairness and Unfairness	Sandra	F	Kenya	35	Hindus	Born in the UK	Assistant Manager	11	Banking

Table 2: Participant's Gender

Participant's Gender	
Male	10
Female	5

Table 3: Faith of the Participants

Participant's Faith	
Christian	11
Muslim	2
Hindus	1
Mix	1
Other	0

The researcher of this study used a range of data such as age and years of experience, which was vital to get a profound lived experience of the performance appraisal for the respondents. From table 2 and 3 above, it can be observed that most of the participants were male and Christian, which is due to the snowball sampling method. It is important to note that this study focuses on ethnic minority employees. Although the skewed nature of the sample means that the findings might be more applicable to the male, Christian minority ethnic population, there was an attempt to examine whether there were any significant differences between the male and female participants, and those of different faiths, but no significant differences were found. However, further research into the experience of ethnic minority women and those of different faiths would complement this study. However, this study suggests that it is the ethnicity of the participants' matters, not faith and gender (see also section 6.4).

4.4.2 Sampling

Sampling method involves taking a representative selection of the population and using the data collected as research information (Sury, 2011). Sampling theory is essential to understand in order to make sampling more efficient (*ibid*). Bryman (2012:407) posited that using appropriate sampling methods allows researchers to conduct research more efficiently and accurately, and to reduce research cost. He argued that there are generally two standard categories of sampling method: the probability sampling and non-probability sampling method. The method of sampling depends mostly on the goal of the research.

4.4.2.1 Probability Sampling Method

The probability sampling method is also known as random sampling. Frey et al. (2000:126) believed that probability samples could be rigorously analysed to determine likely errors and possible bias. This method gives everyone an equal chance of being selected. In this regard, it eliminates the researchers biasing in

the selection process because of their desires and opinions. Frey et al. (2000:126) posited that *“when the bias is eliminated, the results of the research may be generalised from the sample to the whole of the population because the sample represents the population.”* The study aims to examine and evaluate the experience of PA for EME through their lived experiences in UK organisations. Therefore, generalising, theorising, and personalising opinions do not give room for probability sampling method for this research.

4.4.2.2 Non-Probability Sampling Method

Bryman (2012:407) claimed that non-probability sampling in qualitative method tends to resolve around purposive sampling. The researcher does not seek a sample on a random basis. A purposive sampling method aims to select participants strategically so that the sample is relevant to the research questions. Bryman (2012:407) argued that *“this type of sampling is to do with the selection of units, which may be people, organisations, documents, departments and so on, with direct reference to the research questions being asked”*. Those utilised in qualitative research are mostly the stratified purposeful sampling and snowball sampling (Suri, 2011 and Bryman, 2012:409).

4.4.2.3 Snowball Sampling Method

Frey et al. (2000:133) referred to the snowball sampling method as network sampling. When a list of targeted participants does not exist, but if the researcher knows someone who has experienced the phenomenon, that person may know others and share contact information so that more participants may be added to the group. MacNealy (1999: 157) opined that *“snowball sampling is used in those rare cases when the population of interest cannot be identified other than by someone who knows that a certain person has the necessary experience or characteristics to be included”*. The snowball sampling method is a non-probability sampling where it cannot be generalised to a population. However, it can be generalised to the targeted groups which shared the same characteristics.

The sample for this research was generated by using a snowball sampling method. This method is the most widely employed in qualitative research in several disciplines across social science (Noy, 2008 and Suri, 2011). It is a sampling procedure where the researcher of the study accessed participants through the contact information provided by another participant. This process was repetitive in the sense that the participants refer to the researcher to another

participant, and so on. It involves taking recommendations from the participants of this study about other EME working in an organisation in the UK. Noy (2008) argued that snowball sampling is employed instrumentally as a fall-back alternative or a safety net when other means of obtaining information is not feasible. Snowball sampling method is particularly an informative procedure, which deserves to be employed '*on its own right and merit and not as a default option*' (*ibid*).

4.4.3 Interview

Kim (2016:162) believed that the interview is a way to create knowledge in the point of view of the participants and the researcher. It is, in fact, the way of generating knowledge through human interaction. The most important aspect of an interview method is trust and rapport between the interviewee and interviewer (*ibid*). A researcher relies on the participants' trust, generosity and openness to share what they know. The act of gathering data through interview of the lived experience of EME for this study depends mainly on the level of rapport and trust between the researcher and the participants. Kim (2016:163) claimed that the most typical types of interviews are structured, unstructured interviews and semi-structured. Kim (2016:163) observed that a structured interview is referred to as a close-ended interview. The interviewer will have pre-determined questions with no flexibility. The general response for a close-ended interview is short answers such as traditional oral questionnaires. A structured interview is intended to collect specific answers on a particular subject from different participants of a particular research.

According to Bryman and Bell (2011:202), the structured interview is known as a standardised interview. Since it is a standardised interview, all the interviewees are given the same questions as a questionnaire or survey. The questions are in the same order and offer the participants a range of answers to be selected. These types of questions are called close-ended or fixed choices (*ibid*). Bryman and Bell (2011:202) observed that "*the standardisation of both the asking of questions and the recording of answers means that, if the interview is properly executed, variation in people's replies will be due to 'true' or 'real' variation and not due to the interview context.*" In this regard, the participants are given limited choices for possible answers. Bryman and Bell (2011:202) argued that the objective of a structured interview is to reduce error due to variability of the

participants. The aim is to keep the error at a minimum level. If the error is high, it will have an adverse effect on the validity of the measure (*ibid*). A structured interview is a one-way process where the interviewer will extract information or views from the participants. In other words, the interviewee will not give information or views unless it is asked. Bryman and Bell (2011:493) claimed that a structured interview is a form of power relationship where the interviewer has the right to ask a question and place the participants in a position of inferiority. They believed that the structured interview seeks to extract information from the perspective of the researcher. As this study aim is to examine the lived experience of the participants, such a method does not fit this study because the voice of the respondents will not be heard.

Kim (2016:164) and Gubrium et al. (2012:195) posited that unstructured interviews are sometimes referred to as open-ended or narrative interviews. Gubrium et al. (2012:195) opined that a researcher would often ask a general question that presents a general topic to focus on the participants. The researcher aims to collect the data from the participant's perspective without leading the participant. Kim (2016:164) argued that it is the participants who control the content, that is, where to begin the story, some details, the pacing of the interviews, and what should and should not be disclosed. The participants are the central actors who tell the story (*ibid*). The researcher is primarily assumed to be a passive listener with no set agenda in order to elicit the story of the participant (*ibid*). Gubrium et al. (2012:195) posited that in an unstructured interview, the researcher knows the questions that need to be asked but not all the possible answers. They believed that under such type of interview, the questions are flexible enough to expand the scope of the interview. Guided interviews allow a researcher to ask different but relevant questions, depending on the participants' response. However, the participants of this study may withhold crucial information because relevant questions are not asked, or interview skills fall short.

A semi-structured interview is known as a guided interview where a researcher will prepare some questions in a general order to guide him or her during the interview (Kim, 2016:163). She believed that in semi-structured interviews, a researcher would prepare general questions that he or she wants to ask. These questions are a guide for the interview, which helps the researcher to stay focused rather than to dictate its direction. Bryman and Bell (2011:466) opined

that in a semi-structured interview, the researcher has a list of questions which he or she referred to as an *'interview guide'*. The interview guide covers specific topics related to the aim and objective of his or her study. Most of the questions listed in the interview guide are asked, and a similar wording used from participant to participants. However, the questions do not precisely follow as listed because it depends on the answers of the interviewee. Bryman and Bell (2011:466) argued that some questions might be asked which are not included in the list because of an unexpected response from the participants. During the interview, the researcher has to prompt further questions such as 'can you give some examples' and 'please elaborate' to get in-depth lived experience for the participants. Jarratt (1996) and Alshenqeeti (2014) argued that the semi-structured interview allows a researcher to probe and expand the participants' responses. At the same time, the interviewer will need to keep the interview within the parameter of his or her aim and objective of the study. If the interview is set within a parameter to achieve the aim and objective of this study, then the life journey, consciousness, feelings, emotions, and lived experiences of the participant will be ignored. In this regard, Webster and Mertova (2007:15) argued that *"stories can and do relate life journey of the human species and the changes that have marked our development as thinking beings. These are stories of knowledge, discovery and exploratory voyages that culminate in our modern conception of science, the arts, human projects and practices."*

A story in Jarratt (1996)'s view, gives an avenue into human consciousness. He believed that a story is a powerful tool in tapping into the complexities of human centeredness and illuminating real-life situations. This study adopted a semi-structured interview. In doing so, such method of the interview was helpful since the phenomena being studied is the lived experience of the performance appraisal for the participants as it was viewed from their realities. The researcher did not adopt the structured and unstructured interview because the participant's voices may be ignored, suppressed or unheard.

4.5 Data Analysis

4.5.1 Heuristic Method of analysis

Moustakas (1990:15) opined that *"heuristic is a way of engaging in scientific search through methods and processes aimed at discovery; a way of self-inquiry"*

and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of important human experiences". This analytical method shows the connection between the appearance, perception and the reality of the lived experience of the target group. In the same way, Schneider et al. (2001: 264) stated that *"it is 'I' who is the person living in a world from the communities of others; I who sees and understands something, freshly as if for the first time; and I who comes to know essential meanings inherent in my experience"*. A heuristic researcher tries to discover the meaning and nature of the phenomena and then seek to clarify it directly with the participant who experienced the phenomena (Schneider et al., 2001:229). Heuristic method of inquiry is a systematic and dedicated way of gaining an in-depth understanding of human experience (Moustakas, 1990:15). It necessitates a disciplined commitment and passion for remaining with a question continuously until it is answered. In other words, through an open-ended inquiry, the answer requires a process of 'self-directed search, self-dialogue and self-discovery' to achieve the understanding of the human experience. In doing so, the researcher tries to understand the significance of the rater's outcomes of PA for EM employees in organisations in the UK, in order to see if ratings are impacted upon by discrimination, fairness, transparency and or unfairness. It was essential to utilise additional methods of analysis such as thick description which was very useful for a deeper understanding of the lived experience of the participants (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010:4).

Furthermore, Moustakas (1990:17) believed that knowledge could be discovered and illuminated through self-search, which allows a research question to flow out of the inspiration and inner consciousness of a researcher. In the case of this research, the question involves the lived experience of EME from the process of PA in organisations in the UK. A heuristic researcher will seek to understand the wholeness and the unique pattern of the lived experience of the participants in a disciplined and scientific way. Moustakas (1990:27-33) observed that there are seven phases of heuristic research, namely "Initial engagement, Immersion, Incubation, Illumination, Explication, Creative Synthesis and Validation of the research".

Table 4: Phases of Heuristic Research

Phases	Activity	Descriptions
1	Initial Engagement	Development of Research Questions
2	Immersion	Transcript interview into text
3	Incubation	Identify the phrases and sentences that capture the essence of the participants' stories
4	Illumination	Linking themes and sub-themes to the Literature review of the study
5	Explication	Development of themes and sub-themes
6	Creative Synthesis	Consistent organisation of sub-themes into themes
7	Validation	Judging and critiqued by researcher, supervisors; and peers outside the research process

These stages intend to identify the phenomenon and make it visible through the direct account of participants who have lived experience of the phenomenon.

4.5.1.1 Phase1: Initial Engagement

The first stage is the initial engagement which starts during the development of the research questions. The initial engagement invites the self-dialogue, an inner search to discover the topic and questions (Moustakas, 1990: 27). Through this process, the self-dialogue and self-engagement with the participants help to discover their lived experiences. It clarifies and expands the knowledge of the topic and illuminates the terms of the research questions. It is fulfilled through taped interviews where the EM employees' perception and the reality of their experience in performance appraisal are detailed. In doing so, as a researcher, the aim is not to generalise the results obtained from the interview. Instead, to elevate the level of discourse in written expression and produce a deeper understanding of the lived experience of PA for EMEs.

4.5.1.2 Phase 2: Immersion

Audio-tape interviews were transcribed, and a file was created for each participant of this study. The interviews were listened to over and over again in order to capture the essence of the participants' stories. It facilitated the coding process in NVivo software. The researcher approached the data with openness to uncover the meaning. 'Virtually anything connected to the research question becomes the raw material for immersion' (Moustakas, 1990:28). The researcher approached the data and uncovered the meaning of the participants' experience and fully immersed in the story to gain full understanding through the periods of silence and self-dialogues centred around the data obtained from the interviews.

4.5.1.3 Phase 3: Incubation

"Incubation is the process in which the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question...and allows the inner tacit dimension to reach its full possibilities" (Moustakas, 1990:28-29). He argued that the incubation phase is not a period of putting action on hold to do something else. Incubation is a period where additional input is stopped because living with the question has provided all the information. The undiscovered processing part needed to be sorted through, reviewed, considered, and reorganised in a new way of understanding, thinking and seeing the lived experiences of the performance appraisal for the participants of this study. In this way, it created meaning and formed an answer to the question. This stage started without planning, and the researchers may resist this phase if they lose focus or move to a different track from the question (Sela-Smith, 2002). "It is the surrender to this process that allows this to happen" (*ibid*). Moustakas (1990:29) and Sela-Smith (2002) claimed that discovery does not occur through deliberate mental operations and directed efforts. They posited that if there was an issue at the initial engagement stage, that is, no discovery of self-dialogue and self-engagement with the participants, then the immersion stage would be incomplete and confused. Therefore, the incubation stage will not work on solving real unarticulated-problem (Moustakas, 1990:29).

4.5.1.4 Phase 4: Illumination

"The process of illumination is one that occurs naturally when the researcher is open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition" (Moustakas, 1990:29). This phase occurs when the inner work of the incubation stage breaks through into

conscious awareness. It brings a new experience, ideas, understanding or meaning. The tacit dimension of personal knowledge is the internal place where feeling, experience and meaning gather together to form a picture of the world, and a way to navigate that world (Sela-Smith, 2002). Moustakas (1990:20) described tacit knowledge as a deep structure that contains unique perceptions, intuitions, feelings and beliefs. They are gathered in the internal frame of reference of an individual that governs behaviour and determines how the researcher interprets the experience. Sela-Smith (2002) opined that *“this phase may allow the integration of dissociated aspects of the self by providing insight into the meanings that were attached to the tacit knowledge”*.

Illumination occurs on its own, as a significant reorganisation of knowing happens and transformation takes place on the deep level. The world and the self are experienced uniquely. Similarities and differences of the data for each participant are identified to develop themes and sub-themes to answer the research questions of this research. The nature of this phase is that the phenomenon investigated became visible (Moustakas, 1990:22).

4.5.1.5 Phase 5: Explication

“The purpose of the explication phase is to fully examine what has awakened in consciousness, in order to understand its various layers of meaning” (Moustakas, 1990:31). After the illumination phase, the researcher began to explicate what has been discovered. It was a period where the new meaning, new understanding, new world-view and new insight take up the residence within the researcher. A major reorganisation of knowing happens and transformation take place on the deeper level of the illumination phase occurred in waking consciousness in the explication stage. The themes and the sub-themes were further explicated in order to understand the various layers of meaning. The researcher developed a detailed picture of the dominant themes. At the explication phase, the researcher of this study brought together discoveries of the meaning and organised them into a comprehensive depiction of the essences of the lived experience of EME of PA in their workplace in UK organisations.

4.5.1.6 Phase 6: Creative Synthesis

“Once the researcher has mastered the knowledge of the material that illuminates and explicates the questions, the researcher is challenged to put the components and core themes into a creative synthesis” (Moustakas, 1990:31-32). Themes

and sub-themes were crafted together to reconstruct the lived experience of the participants in order to highlight the main findings from the data. In this regard, the creative synthesis of this study represents the main components of the lived experience of EME from the process of PA in their workplace in the UK. These new feelings, beliefs, and intuitions draw some expression of creativity out of the researcher to reveal its presence to the outer world. Sela-Smith (2002) argued that these unique expressions could not be pre-planned or scheduled. It is like they are born, and the researcher is like a 'mid-wife' who is there to assist its emergence (*ibid*). "*When others allow themselves to experience the story, be it in the form of a painting, a book, a piece of music, a dance, a lecture, or anything else creative, there will be something that resonates deep agreement within the observer*" (Sela-Smith, 2002). The feedback on the quality of interpretations from the supervisors of this research was valuable. This allowed the researcher of this study to refine the arguments and explanations further in the presentation of themes and sub-themes.

4.5.1.7 Phase 7: Validation of the research

"The question of validity is one meaning: Does the ultimate depiction of the experience derived from one's own rigorous, exhaustive self-searching and the explications of others present comprehensively, vividly, and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience?" (Moustakas, 1990:32).

The judgment is made solely by the researcher because he is the only person in the investigation who has undergone through each phase of the heuristic inquiry. The researcher collected and analysed the data, that is, reflecting, sifting and judging its meaning. Moustakas (1990:33) claimed that a heuristic researcher would have to return again and again to the raw data to check the depictions of the lived experience. In return, this will determine whether the qualities derived from the data comprise necessary and sufficient meanings (*ibid*). The checking and judging of the phenomena facilitated the process of achieving an accurate depiction of the experience being investigated. In such a process, a particular vision of truth that has made their appearance continued to gain strength in both additional reflection and further evidence.

Moreover, a summary of the findings from the research is sent to the participants. The aim is to find out the accuracy of the meaning and essence of their experience derived from reflection and analysis of the transcribed interviews.

Validation was also gained by sharing the key themes in conferences. It helps the researcher to match the findings between the conclusion of this research with that of others, in order to facilitate a resonance.

4.6 Reflections on the Quality of the Research

Hermeneutic phenomenology and thick description of analysis are adopted in this study. The aim is to produce a rich textual description of the lived experience of the participants. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach is subjective, which implies that this research will have difficulty in the application of positivist ideas of reliability and validity (Hutchinson, 1991). It prompts questions about how the reliability and validity of this research can be ascertained. Clandinin and Connelly (2000:122) argued that for a researcher *“it is crucial to be able to articulate a relationship between one’s personal interests and sense of significance and larger social concerns expressed in the works and lives of others”*. In using this approach, the researcher aimed to create a deep and rich account of the lived experience of the participants regarding their performance appraisal. It is achieved by selecting the themes, and sub-themes emanated themselves from the data collected through a semi-structured interview. In this way, a hermeneutic method allows the researcher to move beyond describing, generalising or assuming the data. Heikkinen et al. (2012) and Winter (2002) believe that the concept of voice is closely related to the authenticity of thought. The credibility of this research was based on how well the participants’ voices are heard from the report. It refers to a personally unique and specific way of telling about things and expressing oneself.

Holloway and Wheeler (2010:4) posited that *“thick description”* is useful for a deeper understanding of the lived experience of participants. The concept of the thick description was applied in this study regarding the lived experience of EME in performance appraisal in UK organisations. As per Holloway and Wheeler (2010:7), thick description *“involves detailed portrayals of the participants’ experiences, going beyond a report of surface phenomena to their interpretations, uncovering feelings and the meanings of their actions”*. Following this further, they opined that thick description promotes a thick interpretation of social actions. It leads to the thick meaning of the lived experience of PA from the data collected and grasps the attention of the readers of such a study. There were

no significant differences in the observation of Ponterotto (2006:542). He claimed that thick description “*gives the context an act, it states the intentions and meanings that organise the action, it traces the evolution and development of the act, it presents the action as a text that can then be interpreted in written form and brings readers to an understanding of the social actions being reported on.*”

The study aims to reveal a deeper understanding of the lived experience of PA on EME in organisations in the UK. In doing so, a thick description was adopted to analyse the deeper understandings, thoughts, emotions and feelings of the EM employees, which evolve during the process of performance appraisal. The thick description gives allowance for the interpretations and views to be visible in the research, notwithstanding their different perceptions, perspectives and interpretations.

4.7 Reflexivity

I started my PhD in 2015. I am a Mauritian, and my religion is Hindu, which means that I am part of the ethnic minority in the UK where the English language is my second language. Before I started my PhD, I was working in an organisation in the UK for nearly three years. I did not receive any training during these years. As a result, I was not performing well in my assigned task. I had three appraisals within these periods, which I failed because of a lack of training and support from my line manager, who was a white British. In my workplace, all new staffs who were mostly white British trained by my line manager, and they got transferred to a different cluster as senior cashier, assistant manager and manager. I was still a trainee cashier doing a low-level job and, I could do anything because I needed to keep the job to pay my bills and part of my tuition fees. Due to a change in the organisational structure, I had a new white line manager who provided me with the necessary training to improve my performance and skills. These experiences of my performance appraisals were the inspiration to pursue research on the experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. I aimed to examine and evaluate the experience of the performance appraisal for EMEs in UK organisations.

Through this study, I aimed to get participants through the snowball sampling method, where a well-represented sample of EM employees accessed for semi-structured interviews, which was tape-recorded. I conducted a reasonable

number of semi-structured interviews. As an EME employee who experienced PA in negative ways, I was motivated to see if this was a common experience. I wanted to explore through the lens of soft HRM if other EMEs did experience fairness in the process of PA in UK organisations.

This research has been a learning experience for the researcher in terms of exploring the lived experience of the participants. At first, I started to find an organisation in the UK where I can pursue my research as Case Study in Organisation (hereafter referred to as CSO) which seemed very easy for me to reach the participants in one place. I requested many organisations in the UK [Supermarkets, NHS, Banks, Schools, Universities and Gambling Industries]. None of these industries has accepted my request because of my research topic and objectives. As a result, I had to change my research title, aim, objectives and research methodology. I adopted a snowball sampling method in UK organisations instead of a CSO. It is worth point out that although I am a Mauritian, my appearance is that of an Indian. It was challenging to approach the participants to build trust and win their confidence. I live in Tottenham, and I visited churches, supermarkets, local charities, local schools and underground stations as well as overground stations to reach participants. Finally, I ended up getting one participant from one of the underground stations. From that point, he started referring to his colleagues from the same company and friends from other companies: snowball sampling method. Those people I met before doing their interview were very cautious and so defensive about meeting me because of the agenda of my research. Reaching participants from different ethnicity as compared to mine was a real challenge, and I admit that it was even more difficult because of my skin colour, appearance, culture and language itself. From my experience, it is useful to have EM researchers researching EM experience because once they have the trust, they narrate their deep-rooted experiences. It is worthy to note that during the interview of some participants, I could see their eyes were producing reflexing tears in response to their harsh experiences, and some of them got a shaky voice. They were also scared of losing their job. I explained to them that I do not have contacts with any organisation in the UK or any agency. I took the time to explain the purpose of my study to every participant before the interview. I had to prove my honesty to gain the esteemed and trust of the participants. It was essential to build a rapport with them so that they feel

comfortable during the interview session. In this way, they express their deep feelings about their lived experience of performance appraisal. I finally ended up with fifteen participants before I reached a saturation point.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed discussion of the methodology and methods used in exploring and analysing the lived experience of performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. This study adopted a phenomenological approach because the researcher wished to conduct research that would allow the voices of the EMEs to be heard. In doing so, this study adopted hermeneutic phenomenology, semi-structured interview, thick description and heuristic method of analysis. The researcher conducted an ethical investigation in line with the standards and norms set by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). The next chapter will provide an analysis of the findings based on the data collected.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the lived experience of ethnic minorities employees in UK organisations in relation to performance appraisals undertaken. It is worthwhile reiterating a few points about PA in order to set the scene for the analysis. For example, Lockett (1992) defined performance (appraisal) as *“the essence of performance management is the development individuals with competence and commitment, working towards the achievement of shared meaningful objectives within an organisation which supports and encourages their achievement”*. The above definition is supported by Cornelius (1999:149) and Armstrong (2000:21), and they argued that when employees are knowledgeable and accept what they are expected to do and have participated in forming those expectancies, they will use their best efforts to meet them. Bones (1996) opines that *“performance does not need managing. It needs encouraging, developing, supporting and sustaining”*. However, the differing expectancies will be dependent on teamworking, the potential of the employees, management support, and the organisation being able to make available the processes, supports and systems. In highlighting the above definition and supporting the view of experts [Armstrong (2000:139), Cornelius (1999:191), Bones (1996) and Lockett (1992)], it is reasonable to suggest that the construct of performance management (appraisal) should go hand in hand with the theoretical perspective of soft HRM. While it may not expect the experience of EMEs to match the normative model of soft HRM exactly, the latter does provide a standard by which it may be evaluated.

The lived experience of performance of appraisal of fifteen ethnic minority employees (ten males and five females) in the UK organisations were collected through the semi-structured interview. These participants were drawn from a snowball sampling where they recommended other participants to the researcher for this study. During the interviews, some respondents who had not only narrated their direct experience of performance appraisal but also shared the stories of some of the experiences of what was happening to those employees who were

from similar or the same ethnic background as themselves. It is worth to point out that there was one of the respondents (T15) had experienced both fairness and unfairness in the process of her performance appraisal. During the first five years, T15 experienced unfair treatment and lack of career advancement. Her white line manager was not supporting her to get the necessary training as compared to her white counterparts. After five years, there was a change in her organisation structure, and she had a new white line manager. She received all the necessary training and support from her new manager, and she perceived her PA as fair.

The primary data have been gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted in similar ways to Essed (1991:62) where she allowed participants to have “*enough space to qualify the statement and to elaborate in their explanations*”. The use of a semi-structured interview in this study allowed the recording of the participants’ experience through the construction and re-construction of personal stories. There were three key themes derived from the construction and re-construction of the participants’ stories which is divided into:

- Constructed fairness (Equality)
- Regimes of inequality (Inequality and Unfairness)
- Learning and development from the outcome of performance appraisal

These themes have been explored in line with the aim and objectives of the thesis, which was to examine and evaluate the lived experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations; and in line with the two objectives of this study, namely:

- To produce a rich picture of the experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations.
- To examine whether ethnic minority employees’ experience of performance appraisal is congruent with the goals of Soft human resource management (HRM).

The analysis of the findings examined the process of performance appraisal, that is, whether the EME’s experience of performance appraisal is congruent with the goals of soft HRM. Legge (1995:32) believes that under soft HRM, employees are valued as an essential asset of the organisation. While Guest (1987) opines

that under such a model, training and development for employees are sought to be a source of competitive advantage through the four goals of soft HRM which integration, commitment, flexibility and adaptability, and quality employees. To achieve the four goals of soft HRM, the ethnic minority employees will have to be seen to be performing effectively in what Tichy et al. (1982) identify as one of the four generic processes in human resource system, that is, appraisals. In the process of integration, line managers must be seen to be effectively practising human resource management to achieve individual as well as organisational goals. There is a need for line managers to focus on HR activities such as performance planning, training, appraisal, counselling, development, recognition of high performers and further training for bad performance. As a result of achieving individual goals through HR activities, the line managers can then achieve the strategic goals set by the organisation, that is, the integration of HR practices with business strategy to achieve common goals (Legge, 2005:140). Therefore, effective utilisation of *"human resources is likely to give organisations a significant competitive advantage"* Guest (1987) as well as career advancement for employees. Concerning the goal of commitment, HRM should be able to develop *"in employees a feeling of commitment to the organisation"* (Guest, 1987).

The result of HRM practised in the above way will be demonstrated by employees being *"more satisfied, more productive and more adaptable"* (Guest, 1987). Mowday et al. (1982 in Guest, 1987) see individual employee commitment as *"strong acceptance of and belief in an organisation's goals and values; [and] a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation; [and] a strong desire to maintain membership of the organisation"*. In regard to the goal of flexibility and adaptability, organisational behaviour should avoid the development of *"powerful entrenched interest groups ... and there must be no inhibitive demarcation amongst groups of workers"* (Guest, 1987). A further characteristic of flexibility and adaptability is highly skilled managers who are prepared to embrace and manage change effectively. Allied to the above is employee's flexibility at all levels, with the displaying of commitment and high levels of trust to the organisation, as well as the demonstration of great intrinsic motivation. The goal of quality will demand employees with high levels of skills and adaptability, who are prepared to perform to the highest levels of standard. Most important is that

the organisation must be able to show that management policy and practice to be of high interest amongst employees. However, in particular, it must be seen to be amongst low-grade employees.

Being mindful of some of the key characteristics of the goals of soft HRM, their relationship with employees, and how they are detailed to apply operationally. The thesis now examines and analyses ethnic minority employees lived experiences of performance appraisals through their stories within their respective organisations.

5.1 Constructed Fairness

The above discussion sets the scene for the examination of the process of performance appraisal. As mentioned earlier, there are three themes. The first theme which is Constructed Fairness will be analysed in the following section.

5.1.1 Fairness in Performance Appraisal as a Key Aspect of Soft HRM

Guest (1987) and, Beardwell and Holden (2001:12) posit that human resources are viewed as a basis of competitive advantage. The competitive advantage is powerfully derived from reshaping the task and formal reorganisation *“in terms of the training and expertise available, the adaptability of employees which permits the organisation strategic flexibility and the commitment to the organisation”* (Beardwell and Holden, 2001:12). However, the competitive advantage can be achieved if there are equity and fairness in the process of performance appraisal in relation to training, support and career advancement irrespective of the ethnic background of employees within the organisation (*ibid*). Akin to the observation of Lockett (1992); Bones (1996) and; Torrington et al. (2017:604), they believe that the role of line managers is crucial as they are the key players in implementing the performance management life cycle. For example, fairness in the process of performance appraisal, equal access for training, improving personal and organisational performance; and employee career advancement which equates to good management practice. Torrington et al. (2017:604) believe that if line managers will translate the process of HR into practice *“and only then do such policies [will] have the power to affect employees’ perceptions, behaviours, [recognition, pay rise, status, promotion, career advancement] and performance”*.

It is evident from the above views that role of line managers in organisations is the central point to promote the implementation of HR practices [process of performance appraisal] fairly and equally. When these are achieved, the result *“tends to be high levels of trust, a strong sense of shared purpose and an enhanced capacity for recruiting, retaining, motivating and engaging an excellent workforce”* (Torrington et al., 2017:19). The role of progressive HR practices will result in employee career development, making job exciting and challenging, providing efficient training, appraising employees regularly on their performance and providing better work-life balance. It is evident to suggest that fostering the HR processes (performance appraisal) fairly and equally should go hand in hand with the characteristics of soft HRM as opined by Guest model of HRM (1987).

Having demonstrated how performance appraisal and soft HRM can co-exist is made transparent by the following comment from a participant in the research:

“It is roughly every six months they used to do my appraisal. My line managers are black. They want to make sure that we are doing our job properly by providing appropriate training and courses on asbestos, fork-lift and cutting machine. They always treat me fairly, and I am now in charge of five people. Everybody gets along with our managers and gets the same treatment, thus making it transparent irrespective if you are Black, Asian, white British or European” (T7).

The above evidence supports the view of some experts that effective performance appraisal is a developmental and motivational approach to the goals of soft HRM (Guest, 1987; Lockett, 1992; Bones, 1996; and Armstrong, 2001:21). This account of the lived experience of the performance appraisal for T7 supports the view of constructed fairness. There is no doubt about the existence of good practices of the process of performance appraisal in the organisation. T7 mentions that his line managers are supportive and they *“make sure that we are doing our job properly by providing appropriate training”*. The above evidence suggests that the recognition of the importance of training needs by the line managers seeks ways to improve the employees’ (irrespective of their ethnic background) knowledge, skills and career advancement in the organisation. Similar to the observation of Guest (1987), he believes that *“considerable attention must be given to recruitment and selection, training, appraisal and goal-*

setting” to ensure high-quality employees are maintained. Therefore, to maintain a motivated and high-quality employee [T7], the role of line managers is vital in providing full support and equal training opportunities for career advancement to all employees.

It is evident from the above excerpt that all employees “*gets along with our [their] managers and gets the same treatment*”. This evidence is akin to the observation of Torrington et al. (2017:253) that behaviours of line managers, for example, task and relationship behaviours are essential to motivate, give self-respect and increase the level of confidence of employees (T7) in organisations. The task behaviour can be observed from the above excerpt that the line managers are conscious that providing training will lead the employees to be more productive, adaptable to any unexpected changes in the organisation and improve individual’s [T7] performances. This evidence also aligns with one of the goals of soft HRM, that is, flexibility and adaptability which lead employees to be “*adaptive and responsive in the face of unanticipated pressures of all levels in the organisation*” (Guest,1987). The relationship behaviour is also termed as “*supportive behaviour*” (Torrington et al., 2017:253) which is characterised by the listening, supporting and facilitating behaviours of employees in organisations. It is evident from the above vignette that task and relationship behaviours are visible through the lived experience of the performance appraisal for T7 and align with the characteristics of the goals of soft HRM.

It has been argued that black managers rate back employees higher than their white counterparts (Bernardin, 1984 and Wilson, 2010). These researches came to a common conclusion that there was significant dissatisfaction of ethnic minorities employees in their performance appraisal process. However, T7’s lived experience of performance appraisal contradicts the observation of both Bernardin (1984) and Wilson (2010). For example, T7’s black line managers recognised different ethnic groups, that is, diverse employees and all “*gets the same treatment thus making it transparent irrespective if you are Black, Asian, white British or European*”. It leads to suggest that the black line managers in the organisation involve everyone in the process of the performance appraisal fairly and benefit everyone. The above vignette suggests that the black line managers create a culture which treats people as a human being and supports all employees to develop their potential. Akin to the observation of Guest (2002), he suggests that

employees' behaviour and attitude mediate the HRM performance relationship and some HR practices [performance appraisal] are connected with improved work and life satisfaction. *"These practices include job design, direct participation and information provision that are associated with equal opportunities, family-friendly and anti-harassment practices"* (ibid). In line with the view of Guest, the above excerpt set the scene of visible fairness of not only managing diversity in the organisation by line managers but also integrating all employees in the process of performance appraisal irrespective of their ethnic background, recognition of cultural differences and respect for every individual in the organisation. As a result, it provides job security to employees because the system of continuous career development and progression is available through extensive training opportunities in the organisation. The experience of the performance appraisal for T7 reflect good HR practices mainly in the performance management cycle by the front-line managers in areas such as involvement, training, coaching and development which sum up the goals of soft HRM.

Moreover, Torrington et al. (2011:471) claim that the participation of the racial and ethnic group in the UK labour market is lower than that of the other group, such as white British. Since the workforce is becoming more diverse, organisations in the UK need to develop diversity strategies and equal opportunities to retain and attract talents to improve work (ibid). There has been some progress towards the equitable treatment, fairness in training opportunities and managing diversity in UK organisation (Torrington et al., 2011:470). The following vignette supports the views of (Torrington et al., 2011) that the respondent is treated as an insider and that there is an improvement in 'developmental humanism' (Legge, 2005:105) by the line manager in the process of performance appraisal within the organisation.

"My line manager, who is a white British came up with an action plan before my next review. I work on it with his full support. On the day of my performance review, my line manager allowed me to justify my progress for the previous year. He was very impressed with my progress. It was a genuine performance appraisal, and all my colleagues, including the white British went through the same process of appraisal. I can see the fairness and transparency of the process. There is equal treatment in the process of our performance reviews irrespective if you are white British or any other ethnic

minority background. Despite being Black, I do not feel any discrimination or racism against me because I get along with all my colleagues and managers who come from different ethnicity including Europeans and white British” (T15).

There is no doubt that the experience of the performance appraisal for T15 aligns with the model of soft HRM. Similar to the view of Guest (1987), the line manager in the organisation is “*people-oriented throughout with an ethic of respect for the individual [ethnic minority employee], maximisation of individual talent [training opportunity], well developed, well-integrated policies and practices [process of performance appraisal], genuine consultation and involvement [support], and clear challenging goals with feedback*”. As a result, the approach to ‘developmental humanism’ opined by Legge (2005:105) influences the performance of employees [in this study is for the ethnic minority employees] in terms of highly productive, improve commitment, low absenteeism and adaptable to any change in the organisation. The experience of T15 suggests that the practices and the process of performance appraisal in the organisation are centred around the development of employees’ performance and humanist edge, which the goals of soft HRM would suggest. The line managers in the above organisation viewed the employees irrespective of their ethnic background as an asset of the organisation rather than a cost which has its foundation in the ‘consultative style’ (Legge, 2005:76). She opined that the ‘consultative style’ by line managers [for example in the above organisation] is placed on encouraging the participation of employees in practices and processes [performance appraisal], and achieving employees’ commitment through training and career development. The above experience of T15 from performance appraisal suggests a soft ‘developmental humanism’ approach with an emphasis on the integration of process and practices of performance appraisal. It can be observed from the above evidence that ethnic minority employees are treated as a source of competitive advantage and valued assets through their quality skills, commitment and adaptability.

From the above excerpt, T15 evidence that there is “*equal treatment in the process of our [her] performance reviews irrespective if you are white British or any other ethnic minority background. Despite being Black, I do not feel any discrimination or racism against me...*”. It can suggest that ethnic minority employees in the organisation are treated similar to their white counterparts in the process of

performance appraisal. It is evident from the experience of the performance appraisal for T15 exhibits the recognition and support from the line managers and the key roles that the managers play in the process of the performance management cycle. The visibility of fairness in the processes, practices and systems of performance appraisal as mentioned by T15 that she can “*see the fairness and the transparency of the process*” provides an environment that harnesses employees’ differences which creates a productive environment that enhances the talents of employees including ethnic minority employees to use their full potential. Through the lens of T15, her experience in the performance appraisal reveals the visible fairness in the process of the performance management cycle, which aligns with the characteristics of the goals of soft HRM.

Guest (1987) claims that there are very few organisations in the UK which seem to practice “*a distinctive form of HRM, although many are moving slowly in that direction through, for example, policies of employee involvement*”. Such policies are designed to maximise employee commitment, organisation integration, flexibility, adaptability and quality of work which the soft HRM would suggest. In addition to that, there is a need for attention to be given to employees [ethnic minority employees] in terms of development opportunities and provision of valued training to maximise their performance within the organisation (Torrington al., 2011:6). For this to happen “*an understanding of and commitment to ethical conduct on the part of managers*” is vital (*ibid:18*) especially in the methods used to develop employees, in the criteria adopted to promote individuals in the process of performance appraisal and to how diverse employees are managed within the organisation. The above views and practices exercise their positive impact by enhancing the employees’ talent, encouraging full contribution from employees and motivation. The below vignette aligns with the view of Guest (1987) and Torrington et al. (2011) which demonstrates the experience of performance appraisal of two respondents regarding the practices of the process of performance appraisal in UK organisations.

“Every three months, I have one to one review with my manager, who is white British. He goes through my performance for the last three months. I also have full support from my manager regarding any target that I have set by myself or by my manager, and I work towards that. We all work as a team regardless if you are Black,

white British or any other ethnicity. My line manager also provides us external training to boost our current position in our job. If you want further opportunity that is out of your role, you have that opportunity to do so. During the process of my performance appraisal, I also get the opportunity to highlight my strengths, discuss my weaknesses or anything that is bothering me. I think when it comes to fairness regarding my performance appraisals, absolutely they are very fair. Despite being Black, I can see the transparency in many opportunities that we are being offered, and I have full support from my managers to progress in my career” (T4).

“Before our performance appraisal, they will email us some documents such as the location, date and the person who will do our appraisals which is normally our line managers. We will need to confirm our availability which is very flexible. It mostly depends on when we are available kind of, they fit the time that around us, which is quite good for us. There is also a questionnaire that we have to answer several questions regarding our supervisions. Our reviews are performed in our manager’s office, which is very private, confidential and very informal environment. When we go over the questions, we are encouraged to talk about any issues for the past three months and if we want to change anything, any problems with our team or management or any ideas that we want to bring towards the team. My performance review was quite fair. There is an open talk policy for all level of management including our white line manager” (T5).

From the above excerpts, it is evident that the line managers play a vital role in enhancing employees’ performance, especially for ethnic minority employees through the system and process of performance appraisal set in place by the respective organisations. Although it is the responsibility for T4 and T5 to achieve the agreed performance, their line managers have been consistently providing them full support during the performance appraisal cycle. The above experience of the respondents aligns with the view of Torrington et al. (1998:320) that performance appraisal system can be “used to improve current performance,

provide feedback, increase motivation, identify training needs, let individuals know what is expected of them, focus on career development and solve job problems.”

The views of T4 and T5 also align with the observation of Beer et al. (1984), Guest (1987), Thomas (1989) and Wilton (2013:9) that the above organisations in the UK are people-oriented throughout genuine respect of people working in the organisation, irrespective of their ethnic background, well-integrated procedures and practices [performance appraisal system], genuine involvement and consultation with feedback.

The process, system and policy for performance appraisal enable line managers at all levels within an organisation to identify the performance of individuals and or group work irrespective of their ethnic background. They have immediate responsibility, *“which in turns provides the potential for recognition of group and individual achievement as motivational and developmental at all levels”* (Cornelius, 2001:143). It will also improve the relationship between the managers and respective employees, which is an inherent part of the system. The following excerpt reveals how the process, system and policy of performance appraisal influence employee’s effectiveness which soft model of HRM would suggest.

“I believe that my appraisals every year were always fair. The opportunities to train and learn; and opportunities to work within a set of guidelines was always there. I am consistently being assessed on my compliance with the set of procedures used by the organisation” (T13).

The above vignette supports the view of constructed fairness within the management of performance appraisal. The employee’s experience of performance appraisal is a pleasant one. T13 speaks only about positive outcomes from his lived experience of his numerous performance appraisals in his organisation. There are no evident issues of malpractice throughout his time in the organisation. T13 also highlights that a set guideline is evident in the practices of his performance appraisal by his line managers in the organisation. The above respondent’s view aligns with the observation of Bones (1996) and what is good organisational practices of performance appraisal. It is evident that the employee is provided with opportunities to develop; evidencing views espoused by Armstrong (2000:5), Lockett (1992) and Guest (1987) that

performance appraisal is the essence of developing individuals. It also aligns with the characteristics of soft HRM, especially in the goal of achieving quality employees.

“I do not see any major disagreement in my appraisals. All my reviews were generally fair, and it does reflect an honest opinion of my performance. Performance appraisal is a good system. Most of the reviews in my particular case were with my line manager. My manager assessed the work that I have done for the last six to twelve months. During my performance appraisal, there is a discussion with my manager covering various areas such as attendance, punctuality and dealing with the company’s procedures and policies, in relation to my overall work performance. There is also the highlighting of areas that need improvement or area that I have not been doing well. I found it to be very fair and we came to an agreement. In the end, I walk away feeling it was done fairly. There was always feedback written on a paper at the bottom of the performance appraisal, indicating what we both agreed to work on and improve upon” T13.

The above story illustrates clearly that the experience of the performance appraisal for T13 is congruent to the goal of soft HRM, that is, the process, system, communication and opportunities for development. The above organisation adopts a softer approach to performance appraisal in focusing on motivational and developmental approaches for both employees and the organisation. The above factors highlighted in his story suggest that the organisation practices equate to good management practice. The above evidence aligns with the observation of Torrington et al. (2017:227) that employees’ development is recognised as a critical element of performance appraisal and the focus is on an ongoing cycle of performance development. Performance appraisal process *“must have the credibility with employees, particularly in terms of fairness and accuracy, to be effective” (ibid:240)*. The above vignette also supports the view of Boxall and Purcell (2003) and Guest et al. (2012:40) that organisations need to design a set of Best Practices which include training and development, employment security and full autonomy to leverage employees’ skills and knowledge. It is also apparent that the organisation focuses on the developmental

approach of employees. It aligns with the views advocated by Boxall and Purcell (2003), Guest et al. (2012:40) and Torrington et al. (2017:236) that adopting the principle of Best Practice theory of SHRM allows employees irrespective of their ethnic background to flourish, experiencing career development and advancement as indicated by T13. Organisations practising performance appraisal as the above vignette suggests can open up new development opportunities and career progression which aligns with the goals of soft HRM, especially when achieving the goals of commitment, integration, flexibility and adaptability; and quality employee.

The five respondents above that are, T4, T5, T7, T15 and T13 evidence that their process of performance appraisal was fair, and they have a shared view of expected performance with their line managers. *“The more open a performance management system is, the more successful it is likely to be in the long term”* (Cornelius, 2001:143). In return, the fairness in the performance appraisal process improves the relation between the line managers and the employees, particularly for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. For instance, T4 mentions that *“I can see the transparency in many opportunities that we are being offered”* and T5 claims that *“there is an open talk policy for all level of management including our white line manager”*. These shreds of evidence align with the observation of Cornelius (2001:143) and Guest (1987) that recognition of individual and group performance generates more commitment and motivation. From the above excerpts, it can be observed that the line managers were more helpful rather than being merely a judge during the process of performance appraisal. In return, it generates positive and constructive relationships across the organisation as ethnic minority employees become more focused on how to perform their task effectively, similar to their white counterparts.

The analysis of the findings now turns to the analysis of the lived experience of participants by examining their stories through a lens of regimes of inequality.

5.2 Regimes of Inequality

Acker (2009) suggests that *“Inequality Regimes is an analytic approach to understanding the ongoing creation of inequalities in work organisations”*. The approach of *“Inequality Regimes”* can be used to recognised inequality in practices and processes in organisations (*ibid*). Similarly, Blackburn (1999)

opined that minority ethnic and racial groups in organisations suffer from more significant under-representation as compared to their white counterparts. From the above views, one can argue that the persistence of inequality in career progression and lack of opportunities for ethnic minority employees in organisations cannot only apply to female but also male. The outcome of such a regime is often constructed on physical characteristic and race (Blackburn, 2008). It is the result of subtle practices which are often covert. Blackburn (1999) believes that *“inequality exists not because different people enjoy different social advantages, but because the benefits of society are unevenly distributed, with some tending to monopolise them while others have little or nothing”*. He claims that inequality results in the condition where people have unequal access to positions, valued resources, services and opportunities. Inequality affects all aspects of life, such as personal and works life (*ibid*). It has also been argued by Berry and Bell (2012) that there are various forms of inequalities such as lack of career advancement, unequal opportunities and promotion within organisations, especially regarding black and ethnic minority employees.

Early equal opportunity initiatives in organisations were unsuccessful (Creegan et al., 2003). The literature on equal opportunity implementation is replete with practices by managers showing how a combination of managers and other employees engage in practices to circumvent any attempts of changing the status quo (Dickens, 2000; Bratton and Gold, 2007:23, Kirton and Greene, 2009; and Pierro et al., 2013). The managerial class with the support of whiteness (white managers) quietly resist attempts to increase action on behalf of employees from other ethnic groups who experience oppression in organisations (Creegan et al., 2003, and Ogbonna and Harris, 2006). Diangelo (2018:57-58) has a similar view that white solidarity *“is the unspoken agreement among whites to protect white advantage and not to cause another white person to feel racial discomfort by confronting them when they say or do something racially problematic”*.

Similar practices through the use of managing diversity suggest a different strategy to reduce the lived experiences of oppressive behaviour by whiteness on minority groups. These attempts at reducing the power of whiteness in organisations have failed (CIPD, 2017). Diangelo (2018:5) in her discussion on white fragility shows the results of how whiteness in organisations functions as a system, the outcome is that racism is a complex multi-layered which is infused in

organisation practices where it dominates. These behaviours set the scene for the stories of the respondents in their lived experience of performance appraisal. The results from these discussions will show continued dominance by whiteness in UK organisations. These regimes of inequality are evident in recruitment, selection, training and promotion. Where *“inequality exists in organisations, manifested in practices of stereotyping and discrimination for some job applicants and workers; and advantages positioning for certain others”* (Berry and Bell, 2012). These regimes of inequality are evidenced in the outcomes witnessed through the organisational process. For example, *“who gets hired, how they are evaluated, how they are paid, how they are promoted or fired in organisations”* (Davis, 2016:2), provides ample indication. The following vignette by a participant demonstrates the practice of regimes of inequality in operation in his workplace. Many issues arise from the respondent's statement; these include invisibility, silence, unfair treatment, lack of reward and punishment.

“I received an exceptional performance appraisal; I was told it was one of the highest in the region. To be quite honest with you, the result was pretty much the same. I received nothing special for it; I tell a lie, I received a small amount of praise from our senior managers, and that was the end of it. Base on the fact that I was so good, I was left alone. I received very little support, and I always felt that the justification was that: oh! You are very good at your job. So, you don't need any help. Whenever an employee was sick, whenever a problem needed to be sorted, they would move me to that location to work because they knew that the situation would be taken care of. It was very interesting being at the end of these appraisals. The most recent one I received showed that my shop was the most successful financially in the district. However, I have never been recognised for it, whatsoever. Even though my position is an assistant manager, for a number of months, I was working in the manager's role as there was no manager in the shop. That's where they left me, to be honest with you. There were no rewards for doing well, and punishment was always available when I did not do as well. Once again there was no help to improve the situation when it was

required. I am very fortunate because I am willing to work hard, even though managers do not recognise that, and I have never been offered further training to sort out any problems that I have faced. It is like I am invisible really.

So, when I had a bad appraisal, I received a disciplinary meeting for this. I was promised for further training. To this day, it has not happened. I was told by a senior manager to chase my line manager if I need training. My thoughts were, why should I be chasing my line manager for the training that he promised me. The action of my line manager makes me feel non-existent in the organisation” (T2).

The respondent's hard work enabled him to be rewarded with one of the best performance appraisal outcomes in his region. It was *"exceptional ... one of the best in the region"*. However, he received no monetary rewards, no promotion for the outcome from the appraisal, only praise from his senior managers. *The result was pretty much the same ... I receive nothing special for it"*. Bell and Nkomo (2001) suggest that this often happens to employees who are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Similarly, Gordon and Whitchurch (2007) wrote about receiving an exceptional award for her teaching at a UK university. However, the institution she worked for refused to acknowledge the quality work that she had performed. She stated that the whites in the organisation *"worked to inhibit [her] growth"*. What followed for the respondent was that he was left to get on with his work, he was good at his work *"so he did not need any help"*. However, he was used by the organisation to provide support and cover for other workers, whenever there was an issue or a problem to resolve elsewhere in the organisation. In the same instant, he was both visible and invisible. He was visible whenever there was a problem to resolve in the workplace. Nevertheless, he was invisible, not recognised for his excellence, to be rewarded either monetarily or promotionally. Similar to the observation of Gordon and Whitchurch (2007), the respondent's ethnicity was having a negative effect on his aspirations in the organisation. The behaviour of the organisation positions him as a *"black"* and that it is normal for blacks to be treated in the way he was being treated. The respondent was working as a manager, but he was being paid as an assistant manager. Research has been carried out that shows that there is an *"ethnic*

penalty" (Bhopal, 2019) for EME in UK organisations. The penalty occurs in numerous ways, for example, reduced wages for doing the same or similar work as a white colleague; lack of promotion and no access to the required training. He was working excessively hard when their white colleagues can relax and take things easy at work. The syndrome of EME working twice as hard as their white colleagues are well noted in research throughout the UK and the USA (Bhopal, 2019; Ogbonna and Harris, 2006 & 2013; Van and Janssens, 2011; Llyod, 2009 and; Jefferys and Ouali, 2007). All the above are exemplified in the actions of the organisation in relation to T2. He elucidates; *"even though my position is an assistant manager, for a number of months I was working in the manager's role as there was no manager in the shop. That's where they left me, to be honest with you. There were no rewards for doing well ... It is like I am invisible really"*. However, when he makes a mistake, *"punishment was always available"*. Moreover, he is not offered training and or any form of development to rectify any day to day difficulties he experienced in his job.

He concludes in his vignette by recalling that he did have a bad appraisal outcome at a later point in time. The outcome was that he was disciplined. Note, the result for the respondent, after the bad appraisal, he becomes visible; after all, he must now be punished by the organisation, his reward *"a disciplinary meeting"*. The lived experience of the respondent is akin to Dickens and Dickens (1991) observation. When they do well, they are not welcomed into the networks of the organisation. When they do not do so well, usually because of disillusionment or disappointments with their place of work; they are exercised by the *"underlying exclusionary forces located in and across institutional domains"* (in Gordon and Whitchurch, 2007). Furthermore, some wish to *"operate to problematise, if not undermine, black access to opportunities and resources that are taken for granted by whites"* (*ibid*). It should be noted that the respondent's requests for training, has gone unnoticed by his line manager and has left him embittered; *"the action of my line manager makes me feel non-existent in the organisation."*

Another EME experiences a similar outcome in another institution in the UK. The vignette below shows how priority is provided for her white colleagues.

"My personal experience is that on one occasion, I asked for training to work with children with Autism. I was told that due to lack of funding,

I could not attend the training. At the same time, two white colleagues were going on the same training that I had requested, but I was told that there was no money for training. It seems to me that my white colleagues are favoured by my managers. This is discrimination because all of a sudden, they were able to fund the training for my two white colleagues, and there is no money for my training” (T6).

Both T2 and T6, as respondents in the research, are being clearly neglected in terms of the goals of their organisations. The requests made for training are not recognised as necessary for the EME. It leads the researcher to conclude that organisations in the UK practise different HRM strategies for employees based on their ethnicities. Such practices have been noted in UK organisation by many researchers (Davidson, 1997 [UK Organisations]; Creegan et al., 2003 [UK Organisations]; Kalra and Esmail, 2009 [NHS]; Jenkins, 2010:190 [UK Organisations]; Alleyne et al., 2017 [NHS] and Bhopal, 2019 [Higher Education]). In some cases, the organisations have the support of trade unions (when they are present in the workplace) in their pursuit of different outcomes for employees from different ethnicities. The consequences, as suggested by T6, is *"discrimination"*. It is evident from the vignettes of the EME that the outcomes in relation to their treatment by organisations in the UK are far removed from the goals of soft HRM. It begs the questions, whether EMEs in UK organisations are able to envisage relationships with their employers that may be able to result in some of the aspirations as stated by Tichy et al. (1982); Guest (1987) and Legge (2005:106) when they discuss the rhetoric of soft HRM goals. The following vignette by a participant demonstrates a similar practice of regimes of inequality in operation

“One of my white colleagues and I were selected to undergo the process for promotion as a Manager. My line manager is a white British, and I feel that he has already made up his mind to promote my white British colleague. Before my performance appraisal, my manager had a negative attitude towards me, and he was not helpful for me to progress. He was not giving me the opportunity to go on training, and he was not supporting me while I was a trainee manager. It has impacted badly on my performance appraisal, and I get the worst ratings. On the other

hand, my white British colleague was receiving full support from my manager in terms of training and in-job support. After his appraisal, he got the promotion. I can see clearly that inequality between my white British colleague and myself is there, and it will always be there because I am a Black girl” (T12).

The experience of the performance appraisal for T12 evidence the power of whiteness [white line manager]. How is it possible to maintain the status quo of an employee within the organisation? The behaviour spoken about by T12 is akin to the observation of Diangelo (2018:2) who opined that “*white fragility*” is a powerful means of common white racial control, as it leverages power to maintain its hegemony. From the above vignette, the processes, system and practices of her performance appraisals may be questionable. It suggests the malpractice and the unethical ways in which the performance appraisal cycle, in this case, can be manipulated. The above evidence shows how the regimes of inequality is a multifaceted and complex system (Diangelo, 2018:109); in terms of (i) unequal opportunities, (ii) lack of support from white line managers especially for ethnic minority employees which result in (iii) poor performance and barriers to promotion in her organisation and generally for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. It also supports the view of (Acker, 2006 A & B) that inequality regime persists in organisations in different ways, as is evidenced by the actions of T12’s line manager.

Examined from a different position, one may ask: what is the role of the HR department in highlighting the line managers behaviour and how it impacts on T12 in such disastrous ways? One may also argue that the role of the HR department here is non-existent. However, its non-existent action makes it complicit in the regimes of inequality in the organisation, where the respondent resides. In the situation just discussed, Guest (1987) opined that the functions of the HRM department should be to safeguard and leverage employees career development, not destroy the chances for the integration of the employee into the organisation. Furthermore, as indicated by the respondent, her chances of becoming a manager have been substantially reduced. Practices by the organisation as described in T12’s vignette are neither congruent, nor do they enable alignment with the goals of soft HRM. These practices also do not encourage integration, flexibility and adaptability or quality amongst ethnic

minority employees within the particular organisation where she is employed. Nor will they enable ethnic minority employees ever to achieve effective performances. The above evidence suggests that T12 experiences unfair treatment during the cycle of performance appraisal. When sections of the vignette are closely examined, T12's treatment by the organisation may be categorised as a version of hard HRM. The behaviour evidenced by the line manager in favour of the white colleague in their performance appraisals leads to characterisation by those who experience it which result in low motivation, unfairness and racism (see, Gill 1999). The lack of support and opportunities for her career development and advancement are further adverse outcomes for the respondent as well as other ethnic minority employees who experience similar behaviour in UK organisations.

As a result of the outcomes experienced by T12, one can argue that her lived experience of performance appraisal in the organisation demonstrates how the organisation chooses to focus on her ethnicity. The manager wishes for the white candidate to benefit from many of the goals of soft HRM, for example, training, developing, supporting and eventually promotion which raises the employee commitment, quality, flexibility and adaptability; and integration. On the other hand, it seems that the multi-faceted strategies to disengage from the respondent incur the opposite in outcomes for the ethnic minority employee. Knowingly, the line manager utilises subtle practices against T12 that are unfair. It can be argued that her organisation has changed its HRM practices from a soft one for the white employees to outcomes that resemble hard HRM in practice for the ethnic minority employee. Why should it be so? The answer is in the evidence of how UK organisations have practised race, and how through T12's vignette regimes of inequality are further facilitated. These actions, as played out by the line manager and the white members of staff, will often lead to allegations of discrimination by ethnic minority employees. Concomitantly, she is aware of her manager's position as she states quite clearly in her vignette this happen "*because I am a Black girl*".

The complexity of race as opined by Nkomo (1992), especially when opined as a social construct is visible and blatant in her organisations' practice. Nkomo (1992) argued that it is the classification of humans into a group which is characterised by physical traits, social and genetic relations (Mason, 1995:6), that enables such

treatment. A similar treatment was highlighted by Tate (2017) when she was made invisible within her institution. Here, it becomes apparent that race is a multi-layered system of domination, and it is also an essential means by which racism occurs in the processing of the practice of performance appraisal in organisations.

The above story also supports the view of Acker's (2006 A & B) inequality regimes within the management of performance appraisal in the organisation. Regimes of inequality such as discrimination, unfairness, oppressive behaviour and marginalisation ultimately result in perceptions of racism by ethnic minority employees. The unfair treatment against the above respondent is manifested in the cycle of the performance appraisal. According to Berry and Bell (2012), such treatment (regimes of inequality) of employees may be interconnected. In this case, to favouritism for the white employees and racism as an outcome for the ethnic minority employee.

It is suggested that organisations adopting performance appraisal as experienced by T12 cannot be congruent with the goals of soft HRM for ethnic minority employees. Primarily when such actions result in inequalities, dominations, lack of opportunities and allegation of racist behaviour towards the institution by ethnic minority employees. Concomitantly, the highest social ranking, that is, white people in the organisation where the respondent works are provided with more chances, better opportunities., Through the power of white line managers, they can maintain privileges that black people find difficult to access (Webber, 1998 and Diangelo, 2018:55), and therefore cannot be as successful in UK organisations. Moreover, ethnic minority people, because of whiteness hegemony, will be exposed to the highest levels of threat of being marginalised during the process of performance appraisal. The following vignette is exemplified in the above discussion.

“We trained many British students when they joined the apprenticeship programme at my company. Once their training is completed, they are offered Managerial roles. In our performance reviews, we have been promised promotion to manager, but we are still in the same position for years still awaiting our promised promotion ... why? Is it because we are from ethnic minority

backgrounds? It is wrong, and when we complained about it to the Unions, they did nothing about it” (T3).

The above vignette demonstrates overtly the practice of inequality in the organisation, which has been consistent for years. T3 has the knowledge, skill and experience to execute his job competently because he has been training new staffs for years, and these newly recruited employees are offered managerial positions. T3 has the capabilities to become a manager, but he was not given such an opportunity in the organisation. Akin to the respondent’s experience, Tate (2017) and Acker (2006 A & B) opined that black employees who are qualified or even overqualified for the jobs that they do are repeatedly disregarded for promotion and career advancement in organisations. Sadly, T3’s experience seems to be common practice in UK organisations (Dickens, 2000 and Creegan et al., 2003). The evidence from T3 aligns with the views espoused by Acker (2006B) that *“certain hiring and promotion practices maximise the possibility that those chosen will be similar to those doing the choosing”*.

The evidence from the above vignette also shows that the respondent has been waiting for years to get promoted, which never happened. As a result, T3 shows perceived frustration and anger as he mentions that *“this is wrong and when we complained about it to the Unions, they did nothing about it”*. However, in the present climate in his organisation, it seems as if that promotion to managership may never happen. T3’s evidence suggests that there is a mismanagement of performance appraisal (Newton and Findlay, 1996), which occurs through the power of whiteness. Here, racial inequalities are maintained, and the managerial positions are disproportionately allocated, with few, if any possibilities of career advancement and promotions for ethnic minority employees.

Professional associations, government bodies and trade unions can and should act to reduce the power differences across class hierarchies and racialised practices in organisations (Acker, 2006 B). However, it is apparent from the above evidence that the employee representative institution, that is, the trades unions have ignored the practices of regimes of inequality that exist against employees from ethnic minority backgrounds. The same sentiment may be argued for other groups who experience disadvantages because of how power is concentrated in the hands of whiteness, in UK organisations. For example, the literature reveals how many attempts have been made to minimise the lived experiences of ethnic

minority employees in relation to inequality regimes in organisations in the UK; but in nearly all situations they were unsuccessful (Acker, 2006 A & B; and Creegan et al., 2003). That being the case, ethnic minority employees in UK organisations have relatively low expectations of achieving their full potential.

The practices of equal opportunity and managing diversity within the organisation were often resisted (Creegan et al., 2003 and Kirton and Green, 2009). It is achieved by the collaboration of both white line managers and other employees of the same ethnic background not wishing to "*walk the talk*" (Dickens, 2000) of equality of opportunity for all employees. On occasion, the trade union and other employee representative bodies would combine in supporting the changes required that may have contributed to some of the unfairness (CIPD, 2019). However, often, this collaboration of white managers with other white employees was successful in maintaining the status quo; especially as it related to ethnic minority employees not achieving fairness.

In relation to this respondent (T3), the goals of soft HRM which are integration, commitment, flexibility and adaptability; and quality employee (Guest, 1987) seem unlikely to be achieved in this case. It is especially so, concerning the outcomes expected, as stated by the employee. The outcomes are uncertain because of the ways he is treated in the appraisal process perceived as unfair. It is evident that the white employees are benefiting from the characteristics of soft HRM, that is, training, support and opportunities for career advancement.

One of the goals of soft HRM is the commitment which is utilised to inspire and empower employees' capabilities in organisations for career advancement (Guest, 1987). As a result, employees will be more productive, motivated and committed in their assigned jobs. Such opportunities are often unavailable to ethnic minority employees. In this regard, this respondent is a long way from experiencing the above privileges. Concerning the goals of soft HRM, Guest (1987) also suggests that high-quality employees can be maintained if organisations are practising appropriate systems and policies. From the above vignette, it also seems that only the white employees are enabled to develop their skills, ability and adaptability at the expense of ethnic minority employees. As a result of these practices, high level of trust, commitment and motivation are not experienced by ethnic minority employees. Unsurprisingly, this respondent (T3)

is very much in the category of not having any of the privileges of the white employees.

Even though there is evidence that T3 has been involved in the training of newly recruited white employees, he was not given the opportunity to be promoted as a manager. One of the roles of a manager is to integrate with daily strategic planning and decision making in the organisation (Cornelius, 2001:292), which is one of the goals of soft HRM. This is based on the theoretical work of Guest (1987), who believes that line managers have the responsibility to assist employees in integrating them into the strategic planning of the organisation. However, the evidence from the vignette above shows that only the white employees are integrated into the organisational strategic planning process. When employees are integrated into the process, it results in high job performance, high pay and high problem-solving effectiveness in achieving both individual and organisational outcomes. However, such outcomes are not privy to T3 as an ethnic minority employee in the organisation. Therefore, it may be stated that the already discussed regimes of inequality are hazardous for ethnic minority employees in organisations and threaten any possibilities of career development and or career progression.

Moreover, the evidence demonstrates that white British employees are being promoted to managerial roles and that they are engaged in the daily strategic decision-making. When the story is carefully analysed, it reveals that T3's lived experience is embraced by the characteristics of hard HRM. That is, there are barriers in the respondent integrating into the strategic planning process. This lack of opportunity may well be hindering his personal development (Tate, 2017). One can argue that the lived experience of the performance appraisal for T3 in the organisation reveals how it chooses to concentrate on his ethnic background. The issue of his day to day performance is more than partially ignored. The actions of those who are involved in administering his performance appraisal become culpable in creating artificial barriers for T3. Hence, the respondent is unable to achieve any personal goals, such as accessing training and development that may lead to possibilities of promotion. This lack places invisible stumbling blocks in the career pathway of the respondent. These invisible stumbling blocks are akin to the glass ceiling (Acker, 2009) which is "*the cumulative disadvantage of blocked opportunities*" which result in lack of career

support and development opportunities. T3's experience illustrates that his manager is giving full support to the white employees thereby taking undue advantage of the goals of soft HRM, that is, training, support and promotion, while T3 still awaits the opportunity to be trained and promoted. T3 knows that his manager is utilising subtle practices of racism against him and claims that he is not promoted "*because we are from ethnic minority backgrounds*". The view expressed by T3 is commonly practised in UK organisations. It prompts Ogbonna and Harris (2006) to say that "*it is a common practice of unwritten but widely practised policy for not promoting ethnic minority employees into organisations*". It becomes apparent that the system of race is perceived to be a major cause of discrimination, racism and other forms of unfair treatment that occurs in the process of performance appraisal in organisations against ethnic minority employees.

The lived experience of T3 suggests that the practice of performance appraisal in the organisation cannot be congruent with the goals of soft HRM. Especially when such practices incur hard HRM outcomes such as unfair treatment, barriers of promotion and lack of transparency meted out to ethnic minority employees, amongst other unmerited behaviour and which result in discrimination. Accordingly, inequality is embedded in the fabric of the organisation's regimes of inequality, where white privilege creates disadvantage and oppressive behaviour. Regimes of inequality demonstrate many more complex inequalities such as racialisation, gender inequality, lack of equal opportunities and recognition; and unethical behaviour in the system of performance appraisal which is often understated and silent (Nkomo, 1992). The following vignette by a respondent validates one of the regimes of inequality in operation.

"The first five years was a bit difficult when I had white British managers. I was doing everything as per the book and even going the extra mile in my job. My performance, commitment, work ethic and hard work was overlooked during my performance appraisals. I was training cashiers who belong to different ethnic backgrounds. After our performance reviews, only the white British colleagues get promoted to Managers, and I was still in the same position as a senior cashier. We always talk about equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion in organisations. But in

practice, it does not exist especially for us as Black ethnic minority. You always see unequal treatment in recruitments, training, performance appraisals and promotions. The low-level job such as office assistant, clerk, cashier, cleaner and office attendant is for us, I mean for Black people. The position of manager and higher-level opportunities in the hierarchy is for them, that is, for the white British people. Even though these white British people do not have necessary skills for these positions, they still get the white-collar job. So, we cannot escape from these inequalities in behaviours, treatments and favouritism in my organisation which has been created and maintained by the white British managers” (T15).

T15 has both positive (see fairness) and negative experiences (unfair), as mentioned earlier. The above-lived experience of performance appraisal reveals repeated and subtle experiences of denigration, indifference and exclusion. It makes it difficult for ethnic minority employees to cope with their daily task in the workplace, in this case, T15. Diangelo (2018:27) in her discussion on white fragility reveals the outcomes of how whiteness “*control all major institutions of society and set the policies and practices that others must live by*” in organisations. It is evident that regimes of inequality will persist as a result. In such cases, the power of whiteness will facilitate oppression and racism (Acker, 2006 A & B) in the organisation. The malpractice of the system of performance management is so embedded in the fabric of the organisation that T15 “*cannot escape from these inequalities in behaviours, treatments and favouritism ... which has been created and maintained by the white British managers*”. The above vignette evidenced that ethnic minority employees are offered low level, and low-status jobs in the hierarchy and their hard work go unrecognised, which is substantiated through the performance appraisals process. It results in mostly outcomes that are akin to those practised by organisations utilising the strategies of hard HRM.

The respondent alludes to visions of good practice by the organisation “*We always talk about equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion in organisations*”. Also, Legge (2005:105) opined that Equal Opportunity (hereafter referred to as EO) is assumed to be part of the characteristics of soft HRM. For example,

equality, diversity and inclusion where employees, irrespective of their ethnic background, are valued as important assets rather than factors of production. If EO is implemented effectively by organisations, it will enable the promotion of commitment from employees which, as a consequence encourage employees to be flexible and dedicated in the pursuit of excellence (Guest, 1987). However, EO and managing diversity initiatives in organisations were seen to be ineffective (Creegan et al., 2003). As a consequence, ethnic minority employees suffered the lived experience of whiteness's dominance and control through white managers hegemony.

Further, in the above vignette, the rhetoric and realities (Legge, 1995:40) of practices in organisations especially as they relate to EO becomes transparent when the respondent states "*but in practice, it does not exist especially for us as Black ethnic minority [employees]*". Here, the practice of EO in the performance appraisal system is neglected by whiteness (her white manager) as an irrelevance. Such practices would have little if any, the reality of fairness in the lived experience of ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. One can also argue that T15 has a lack of racial consciousness in the lived experience of her performance appraisal. Similar to Essed's (1991:78) observation, she posited that black people experience "*specific events of unfair treatment or discrimination, but they did not categorise these experiences as racist events*". From the above excerpt, T15 mentions that her performances were overlooked in her appraisal as compared to her white counterparts, the white-collar job is given to her white colleagues. The low-level jobs are allocated to ethnic minority employees, although they have better qualifications and required professional skills to take up the managerial position. The above vignette also evidences that there is an unequal treatment in the process of performance appraisal as compared to her white counterparts. All these pieces of evidence from the lived experience of the performance appraisal for T15 lead in suggesting that she has been racially discriminated. Akin to Essed's (1991: 78) belief that "*in various cases, they [ethnic minority employees] gave enough other relevant information concerning the situation for me [Essed] to make the objective conclusion that they had been subjected to racism even when they did not see the event in terms of racism*". T15 also emphasises that "*we [ethnic minority employees] cannot escape from these inequalities...created and maintain by the white British*

managers". It leads to suggest that T15 is pointing out racism in the organisation which is associated with 'powerlessness' (Essed, 1991:84) as she cannot "escape" from the regimes of inequality due the power reigns by the white line managers within the organisation.

From the above vignette, the evidence reveals that the respondent is conscious about the importance of training and development; and how such practices impacted on her career advancement. She reveals that despite the white employees not having the necessary skills, the opportunities are still given to them. The best jobs, such as the white-collar jobs are for white employees only. Guest (1987) opined that selection, training, development and recognition are interrelated in such ways that they lead to high levels of commitment of employees, development and staff retention, low labour turnover and the maintenance of the high quality of employees, especially those with high levels of skill flexibility and adaptability.

Moreover, Legge (2005:133) observes that the goal of integration is the core element of Guest Model of HRM (1987). Therefore, by integrating HRM (internal integration) and corporate strategy (external integration), organisations will seek to improve the HR practices in the "areas of recruitment and selection, management education, training and development, performance appraisal, remuneration, and rewards" McLeay (1992 in Legge, 2005:153). Therefore, by integrating HR practices with corporate strategy, it will generate employee's commitment, integration, flexibility and quality employees (*ibid*). Such outcomes should be possible, as suggested by the soft model of HRM. Notwithstanding, the characteristics of soft HRM claimed by Legge (2005) and Guest (1987), it is not evident in the lived experience of T15's vignette. Indeed, T15 experience seems to be the opposite of such a model. That makes her experience to be more in line with the hard model of HRM outcomes. For example, lack of equal chances and career development; and malpractice of the system of performance appraisal against ethnic minority employees are also revealed from the above respondent's vignette. T15 paints a depressing picture of her lived experiences. She believes that the soft model of HRM "in practice, it does not exist especially for us as a Black ethnic minority". The regimes of inequality in organisations demonstrate that rhetorically, the system of performance appraisal is adopted. It is being changed in how it is practised by organisations, especially when performance

appraisals are applied to ethnic minority employees. In practice, as is evidenced from the above vignette demonstrates, the white line managers privilege their white employee in the cycle of performance appraisal. As an outcome, it creates multi-faceted regimes of inequalities that generate barriers of opportunities, demotivation, lack of trust in the system of performance appraisal and discrimination as evidenced by T15. These invisible powers of whiteness are similar to Diangelo's (2018:112) discussion on white fragility that "*wield this power and control in whatever way is most useful ... to protect our [white employees] positions*" in organisations. The above-lived experience as voiced by T15 suggests that rhetorically the experience of the performance appraisal for white employees in the organisation aligns with the goals of soft HRM, especially when compared with the outcomes from PA of ethnic minority employees. The lived experience of ethnic minority employees in the organisation is similar to the "*big hat no cattle*" (Guest, 1991A), that hard HRM espouses.

One can argue that the lived experience of the performance appraisal for T15 and the regimes of inequality which they generate, may intersect not only race and class but also gender. Crenshaw (1989) claims these intersecting oppressions as '*intersectionality*'. From the above vignette, the experience of T15 suggests that she might be discriminated against because she is a black woman and having a different race. This view is supported by Webber (1998) that the nature of intersectionality intersects in all circumstances such as on societal and individual level. In a societal level, Acker (2006A) believes that whites are afforded the highest social ranking. So, the ethnic minority will be treated in opposite ways to their white counterparts who will have more advantage and privilege, as they are not of the same race. At the individual level, whiteness has the privilege, that is, the luxury of obliviousness because white employees do not experience the outcomes from PA ethnic minorities do and wherever possible they are enabled to have access to resources (Creegan et al., 2003). In both cases, the evidence suggests that T15 is being marginalised at the intersection of race, class and gender. The outcome of these intersections is inequalities that become a part of the fabric of the organisation, as far as ethnic minority employees are concerned. From the above vignette, the evidence demonstrates that T15 does not have the luxury of obliviousness, because she is not able to "*walk the walk and talk the talk*" (Van der Voet et al., 2013) of the dominant group.

T15 is not able to have access to the valued resources, which is controlled by whiteness through their hegemonic practices and which aligns with the characteristics of soft HRM in the organisation which she works.

Ethnic minority groups suffer from more significant disadvantage than the white employees; there is no doubt on that score (Acker, 2006). For example, she suggested as such in her development of perspectives on *“Inequality Regimes”*. These regimes of inequality include issues of class barriers, sexism, marginalisation, racism, discrimination and other forms of oppression that hinder and are hazardous to the opportunities for the advancement of ethnic minority employees at all levels of the hierarchy of UK organisations. The following vignette is illustrated evidence of the above discussion in practice.

“I can see favouritism and unequal treatment between us and a group of white British colleagues. You need to work and go with the flow of the river. I always get fewer marks in my performance reviews as compared to my white British colleagues. They get full support from my managers such as external and internal training, friendly appraisal and a good rating in their performance appraisal. Finally, they get the promotion as a manager, and this leads to assuming that I am not performing well. It makes me feel angry because I have more experience than my white British colleagues and I am the only person in the cluster that solve most of the business problems. In terms of career progression in my organisation, only the white British staffs are progressing and moving to higher position. You can see clearly that there is unequal treatment between us and the white people. It is not a good environment to work in” (T1).

The rationale behind the concept of goal of commitment (Guest, 1987) originates in the assumption that the employees will be more productive, satisfied, flexible and adaptable to any change in the organisation, as the goals of soft HRM would suggest. From the above vignette, T1’s lived experience of performance appraisal evidenced that *“It is not a good environment to work in”* such an organisation, where unequal opportunity, favouritism, lack of support from white line managers and bias in the performance appraisal system persist. Similar to the observation of Acker (2006 A & B) who opines that white employees have the

power to control resources, goals, outcomes and workplace decisions such as pay rewards, work planning, opportunities of promotion, hiring and firing. The above vignette evidence that the power of whiteness enables the white employees to achieve the goals of soft HRM, which are characterised by career advancement, integration in the organisation strategic planning and being quality employees, the status of inequality between T1 and his white counterparts is inevitable. It is so because of the hegemonic nature of whiteness in UK organisations. Based on T1's lived experience, it demonstrates the visible discrimination that persists in the organisation. *"I always get less marks in my performance reviews as compared to my white British colleagues"*. These invisible faltering blocks are similar in action in that it is *"a powerful form of white racial control"* (Diangelo, 2018:112). The evidence from the vignette suggests that T1 has the attitude to be successful in his job and make progress in his career in the organisation, despite the multi-layers of inequalities in the organisation. The respondent prefers to *"go with the flow of the river"*. He is accepting *the status quo*, through his admission, and as such, he is not expecting training and support from his white line managers. This evidence supports the view of Tjosvold (1985), who indicates that social attribution reflects those employees who perceive the cause of their lack of success to be outside of their control. As such, they may be reluctant to attempt new tasks, similar to what is currently being experienced by the respondent T1. The above vignette also evidenced that T1 has the necessary skills and knowledge; however, he is not given the opportunity to progress which is due to rater bias in his appraisal (Jefferys and Ouali, 2007; and Bernardin, 1984) which leads to assumptions by his manager that the above respondent is not performing well when compared to his white counterparts. However, the lived experience of T1 in his performance appraisals suggests that the malpractices within the cycle of the performance appraisal are not congruent with the goals of soft HRM. The evidence from the above vignette also illustrates multi-faceted regimes of inequality. For example, barriers to promotion, lack of support for career advancement and bias in the process of performance appraisal, favouritism and discrimination. These outcomes from PA suggest that the organisation is practising a hard model of HRM.

T1's seems to be experiencing the ultimate frustrations in the following comments: *Finally, they get the promotion as a manager, and this leads me to*

assume that I am not performing well. It makes me feel angry because I have more experience than my white British colleagues, and I am the only person in the cluster that solve most of the business problems. ... only the white British staffs are progressing and moving to a higher position. It is inevitable that in such circumstances as exists in the organisation where the respondent works, the question arises as to how can one change the circumstances and experiences of PA for ethnic minority employees? The respondent sees the power of whiteness, and he realises that he cannot do anything to change the status quo. He recognises that for a career progression, he must leave the present toxic circumstances in which he is working, as the friendly performance appraisal and good rating obtained by his white peers suggests that the environment is not one suited to someone like himself.

In his vignette above, T1 mentions *"a group of white British colleagues"* which means there is a difference between them and himself. T1's lived experience is similar to most of the participants of the study, in that the white line managers desire the white employees to benefit from the system of performance appraisal in terms of support, training, personal and career development which aligns with the goals of soft HRM. Here, Smith (1991) description of the in-group to be *"who are like us"* and the out-group as *"who we perceive to be different from us"* leads to the evidence of the vicious circle of unequal opportunities for ethnic minority employees, as he is different from his white colleagues; and so, should be his treatment. Therefore, his lived experience suggests that the treatment that is meted out is both oppressive and racist. He is, therefore positioned as different from us. As an employee, he does not belong to *"us"*; consequently, he is clearly marked as a minority employee. On the other hand, people who are "us" are the white employees, so the white managers can praise and privilege others like themselves and they progress through the performance appraisal system into managerial positions. This evidence is similar to Diangelo (2018:55) that ethnic minority people are marginalised in the society and or organisations because *"they are racialised within a culture of white supremacy ... a culture in which they are seen as inferior"*. T1's lived experience of the cycle of performance appraisal reveals that white appraisers maintain racism within the organisation and which keeps the white employees surrounded by protective pillows of privilege, benefits and resources. The outcome is a more palatable experience for the white

employees, revealed in through the cycle of the appraisal process. The analysis of T1's lived experience of PA makes transparent how the goals of soft HRM benefits "us", that is, the white employees at the expense of ethnic minority employees, who experiences outcomes that are cognisant as hard HRM. There is a need to recognise that the result of performance appraisals may well be affected by how the line managers approach it (Wilson, 2010). It is especially for ethnic minority employees whose white line managers respond to in organisations of this research as inferior.

Performance appraisal is one of the complicated areas in Human Resources because of how ethically the process of performance appraisal is being conducted by line managers in organisations (Baxter, 2012 and Dewberry, 2001). For example, there may be rater bias, lack of training opportunities and lack of promotions within the process of appraisal. On the other hand, positive ethical behaviour in performance appraisal can result in higher employee loyalty and engagement; encouragement for employees' career development, cultivation of high-performance teams and reduction in turnover which align with the model of soft HRM. From the above evidence, T1 experience suggests that there is a bias in the process of his performance appraisal because despite being the most experienced in his team, he ended up with the worst rating when compared to his white counterparts. Rhetorically, the outcome from the bias in performance appraisal leads to assuming that T1 is not performing well. T1's lived experience in the performance appraisal results in demotivation and lack of trust in both the management and the system of performance appraisal because he mentions that *"this makes feel angry ... and ...not a good environment to work in"*. The evidence also illustrates the unfair treatment, favouritism and unequal opportunities during the cycle of the performance appraisal in the organisation which form part of the characteristics of hard HRM. From the evidence above, it is suggested that the lived experience of the performance appraisal for T1 is in practice; it is hard HRM.

The regimes of inequality are the interlocking processes and practices that result in consistent inequalities in organisations, especially for the ethnic minority employees. For example, race (Creegan et al., 2003), unfair treatment, lack of equal opportunities and discrimination (Legge, 2005:47), locks ethnic minority employees into a spiral that is downwards. It is represented by continuous feelings of oppression, making them take the ultimate decision of leaving the

organisation, in order to escape the nightmare treatment. The following vignette authenticates one of the regimes of inequality in the process.

"My white colleagues seemed to be more favoured by our managers, and they always get the chance to go on training courses even if they are not necessarily able to take on the skills that they received through training. I did not have the opportunity to go much on training. Is it because I am black? Where do I stand regarding career progression and promotion as compared to my white colleagues? These inequalities such as favouritism and treatment have helped them to get the promotion; it is so simple" (T6).

The above vignette exemplifies the understated experience of T6 in terms of the lack of support and opportunities for advancement; lack of training and career building. Guest (1987) claims that the goals of soft HRM can only be achieved if it is supported by capable management who can prevent influential and engrained groups from developing within the organisation to maintain the status quo for employees, irrespective of their ethnic background. In return, it will ensure transparency and fairness in HRM practices. It will result in achieving the four goals of soft HRM, namely commitment, integration, flexible and adaptability; and quality employees. T6's lived experience of performance appraisal shows an opposite picture of what Guest (1987) claimed. It is akin to a window dressing of the cycle of the performance appraisal system in the organisation. For instance, the white line managers wish the white employees to benefit from the training and development opportunities which will enhance their skills and capabilities to pursue excellence and ensure promotion. The above evidence also illustrates the power of whiteness which enlightens the career progression of white employees. Here, the aim is managerial positions or positions of superiority for others like themselves. This evidence is similar to Diangelo (2018:24) confirming that *"people of colour are seen as inferior because institutions are controlled by whites, and white dominance is unremarkable and taken for granted"*, and there is little if anything that ethnic minority employees can do to deter whatever actions whiteness wish to impose on them.

In the above scenario, the regimes of inequality are manifested in such a way in the fabric of the organisation that the above respondent claims that *"this is the*

reason that I am not progressing in the task that I am assigned.” Entrenched by a lack of training and support, is it any wonder that the outcome is to question *“Is it because I am black?”* What are the avenues that are left open for T6 to relieve the frustrations being experienced? She has been deprived of all the opportunities that would help her to achieve her aspirations. In her vignette, there is an air of inevitability, an acceptance that it is beyond her control to do anything about the position in which she finds herself. Akin to the view of Tjosvold (1985), it seems that T6 may be internalising and blaming herself for the lack of performance.

From the above vignette, it is evident that the lived experience of the performance appraisal for T6 suggests different forms of discrimination, that is, race discrimination (Essed, 1991:45 and Creegan et al., 2003), gender discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989) and power discrimination (Acker, 2006 A & B). The lived experience of her performance appraisal is such that the oppressive behaviour that she is facing under the multi-dimensional regimes of inequality within the management of white line managers is puzzling her. It leads the respondent to question her performance, *“It also makes me think that what is wrong with me? ... Is it because I am black?”* Here, the burden of multiple discrimination is raising doubts about her own abilities in her mindset. Notwithstanding the questioning of her skills and performances, she is still aware of the fact that some of her white colleagues, despite having the training and gaining promotion, they are unable to fulfil their managerial responsibilities. The evidence of the various forms of oppression experienced by the respondent may be suggesting that T6 is facing overt discrimination.

Another issue that may be considered in the analysis of the respondents lived experience of performance appraisal is that of the ethical practices of HRM. Guest (1987) posited that HR practitioners must have ethical responsibilities to ensure fairness and transparency in HR activities, especially in recruitment, selection, training, performance appraisal and promotion. Guest’s views are echoed by Bratton and Gold (2017:370) when they state that *“the centrality of ethics in the employment relationship is evident in the core HR processes”*. Furthermore, HR professionals are known as the *‘guardian of ethics’ (ibid)*. If the practices being experienced by T6 in her organisation is ethically examined; one will have to conclude that the line manager in the vignette provided by T6 is

colluding with the HR professionals to marginalise the EME deliberately. If this is not the case, then how come the HR department and their professionals are not able to identify the outcomes from PA that the employee is experiencing? A possible explanation is that her organisation has racialised her. A consequence of her racialisation is that she will almost certainly be marginalised (Essed, 1991:121). Her racialisation and invisibility are powerful traits of white fragility, which will assist in the positioning of the respondent. As a result of her positioning, it is evident that the regimes of inequality have been steadfast in ensuring a lack of equal opportunities on training and development, lack of fairness in allocating promotions and unequal treatment in providing the support from her white line managers. The position of the respondent by the organisation and its HR professionals, including her line managers helps in supporting the arguments made by Nkomo and Ariss (2014) and Acker (2006 A & B). That is, the ethnic minority employees encounter consistent and increasing inequality because white line managers have high levels of power and authority in their organisations. It's further prompted Acker (2006A) to suggest that at any given historical period, inequality and racial theory are dominant in organisations, despite existing and competing paradigms. Earlier researches by other researchers (Creegan et al., 2003; Solomos and Black, 1996; Mason, 1995 and Nkomo, 1992) are also supportive of Acker's finding, in relation to ethnic minority employees lived experiences in organisations.

The existence of racial theories in both society (macro-level) and organisation (micro-level) fosters the practices by white employees against ethnic minority employees. As a result, one may question how ethnic minority employees (in this case is T6), can ever reach their full potential in organisations. It is particularly so, if unequal opportunities, discrimination and racism are persistent in the process of performance appraisal practices in organisations. It is, therefore, evident that the lived experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees, that is, T6 is not congruent with the goals of soft HRM in the regimes of inequality within organisations.

Guest (1987) argues that good practices of EO and managing diversity in organisations will result in the diversity of skills, knowledge and experience. In turn, these good practices will deliver high calibre employees with better problem-solving skills, ethical, strategic decision making, creating greater flexibility and

adaptability within the organisation. However, it may also be suggested that from the stories that have been highlighted by the respondents of this study, there is malpractice of equal opportunities, inclusion and managing diversity practices concerning the system of performance management (appraisals) in UK organisations. Conversely, there is little doubt that the power of whiteness in organisations is playing a key role in the regimes of inequality. Within the regimes of inequality, the ethnic minority employees struggle to achieve the same or similar outcomes to their white counterparts. What is happening is that in reality, the white line managers, with the support of HR practitioners (Guest, 1987), in organisations use ethnic minority employees as a scapegoat (Legge, 2005:362) to garnish the system of performance appraisal as an efficient one when in fact, it is not.

Moreover, the regimes of inequality confirm Tackey et al. (2001) opinions that *"little attention is given once minority group members gained access into organisations. Thus, although much more is known about providing minority groups with access to a wide variety of jobs, there is less knowledge known about how they are provided with opportunities for advancement, career building and development in organisations"*. The findings from Tackey et al. (2001) reveal that ethnic minority employees were less likely to be promoted than their white counterparts, despite having similar or more years of work experience and better educational qualification. This research found evidence that supports Tackey et al. (2001) findings of yesteryear. Tackey et al. (2001) suggested that *"the availability of training and development, as well as career progression opportunities, are equally important in influencing the level of performance of any individual working within the organisation"*. As a result, it will leverage the employees' skills which are a characteristic of soft HRM (Guest, 1987). Both Ichniowski et al. (1996) and; Coombs and Bierly (2006) concluded that *"bundles of HR practice [will] give rise to a superior output of quality performance, and that the magnitude of these performance effects was 'large'."* (in Bratton and Gold, 2017:76). However, they also argued that there is *'no one or two silver bullets'*. In this regard, they are suggesting that some HR practices should be coming together to make the whole of HRM most effective.

At the same time, significant attention has been paid to setting organisational goals and directions so that the business performance of the organisation can be

measured and evaluated. Measurement and evaluation are significant because they enable the organisation to identify how and whether improvements are being made. This position is supported by the well-known dictum that *'if you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it'* Prince (2018). It stands to reason then that finding ways to measure performance in the organisation is a major preoccupation for leaders, managers and employees (Moynihan et al., 2012). At the same juncture, these leaders, managers and employees are often unaware of how such applications are embedded in the organisation's practices and actions (Bratton and Gold, 2017:120). Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is important to remember that performance management has other responsibilities, especially where individuals are concerned; these are about promotion and careers of employees, seen as a *'control purpose'* (ibid). They are also aiming to improve performance of employees through discussing their development requirements within organisational objectives, and the identifying of training needs and planning an execution strategy to ensure the necessary improvements are actioned, commonly known as the *'development purpose'* (ibid).

It is within the context of this thesis that performance appraisal, a part of the performance management mechanism, can be seen to providing an analysis of the employees' capabilities and potentials; while at the same juncture, it is allowing measured, evaluated and informed decisions about individual performance. Therefore, it is about managers and employees devising ways of ensuring the simulated performance that is required in order to achieve the organisation's objectives.

The above considerations need to take into consideration when other contextual factors, for example, the issues of equalities and or the management of diversity in organisations. In doing so, particular problems can occur, especially when the equality and diversity agenda surfaces. The evidence is there in quantity (Dickens, 1999; Creegan et al., 2003; Ogbonna and Harris, 2006; Kirton and Greene, 2009) in the management of employees and the motives and values that are invoked about issues of equality (in this thesis issues of race and gender, in UK organisations are the matters to be considered). Most importantly, when judgement is being made about EME; the contributions they make and leadership positions they are offered; and whether UK organisations are *'walking the walk*

and talking the talk' (Van et al., 2013), in relation to their practices on equality and diversity management.

Having discussed the issues of equality and diversity management derived out of the outcome from performance appraisal for employees in organisations which is influenced by leaders and managers, the below excerpt will make it apparent from a participant's lived experience in action.

"I went through all the training that they asked me to do, meeting all the criteria and targets. After my performance appraisal, I didn't get any promotion. My line manager didn't give any reason why I was not promoted. To be fair, in that company, there was somebody outside the company who got the job as a manager. I was putting all my time and effort into the job, but it was he who got the promotion. I think it was very unfair. I can only think it is because I am not a white person, as most of the managers of the company and supervisors that get promoted are only white" (T12).

From the above vignette, the evidence suggests that white employees are favoured by their white line managers for managerial positions at the expense of ethnic minority employee in the organisation (Essed, 1991:41). The outcome from the performance appraisal in the eyes of the respondent suggests that she is doing whatever the organisation is asking of her. She was *"meeting all the criteria and targets"*. However, the lived experience of T12 evidence multifaceted complexities of oppression, leading to possibly discriminatory racial actions against her within the organisation. For example, after the process of her performance appraisal, she neither received any feedback nor was she provided with the reasons why she was deprived of the position of manager. The behaviour by the organisation is classical in making her invisible and also not recognising the earlier efforts she had made, that is, *"I was putting all my time and effort into the job"*. That is, despite the organisation, providing her with all the ammunition, that is, they acted in ways which may be seen as compatible with a soft HRM strategy, especially in regard to the provision of training. Later, she was not seen as necessary in the eyes of the organisation, to be informed as to why she was passed over for the managerial position. Her evidence corroborates with the literature on how EME becomes either unrecognisable or invisible when the

organisation chooses to do so (Wilder et al., 1980 and; Van and Janssens, 2011). Such behaviour for EME illustrates the realities of their organisational lives (Crenshaw, 1989; Essed, 1991:146, Creegan et al., 2003; Acker, 2006A; Carbado, 2013 and; Alleyne et al., 2017) that is the unfairness of whiteness and the recognition of "*I am not a white person*". The vignette evidenced that only white people become managers in this organisation. So, for many ethnic minority employees, racism remains a reality, whether through their lived experiences of the organisational process such as performance appraisal or as a result of the relationships between themselves and their white line managers and or other white employees (Newton and Findlay, 1996). This reality is further extended when EMEs are being considered for promotion, especially if there is a consideration for leadership roles of managerial responsibilities (Bratton and Gold, 2017:449).

The outcomes for EME serve to uphold the status quo and therefore, exclusion of ethnic minority employees from leadership and managerial positions. Akin to the lived experience of T12, Nkomo (1992) opined that "*race is one of the major bases of domination [which] occurs in organisations. Whenever EME is in evidence in institutions "race has been present all along in organisations even if [it has been] silenced or suppressed" (ibid). As a result, ethnic minority employees encounter many obstacles and hazards in their daily life in their workplace. Such actions and practices invoke Essed (1991:280) claims in her theory of "everyday racism". These obstacles can be in the forms of "white in-group preference in the distribution of resources [favouring white sub-subordinates for the managerial position]; economic exploitation [unfair treatment in the process of performance appraisal]; petty harassment of Black women [racism]; discouragement of their aspirations [demotivation]; and refusal to acknowledge the positive contributions they make [lack of recognition by the organisations]"(ibid:280).*

The following vignette reveals the dilemmas for EME in UK organisations. It is especially so when it comes to issues of obtaining a job, measuring and evaluating individual performance (the process of performance appraisal) and getting promotion into leadership or managerial level jobs, especially when white employees manage EME.

"The glass ceiling always exists in this country because when you are looking for some jobs, ... They will always take a white person.

A Black, Indian, Caribbean or African person will never get a job, especially in a managerial position. When they want to employ someone, they will look at the skin colour, and they will say to us: sorry someone has already got the job. ... Even so, if we do get a job, we will struggle to get a promotion. We will get a low-level job, and most of the time, we will fail our performance appraisal. To my understanding, you will never get promotion. There are many footballers in this country who are black and how many football managers are black? I do not think even if you are qualified; you will ever become a manager, or get any further promotion? It will never happen in this country because discrimination is there, and it will always exist as long as we are in England” (T10).

This respondent is clear in his articulation of the outcomes from performance appraisals. *“We will fail”* them. He is straightforward about his lived experience of performance appraisal in UK organisations; they are a failure for him, and others like him. Furthermore, he suggests that the types of jobs that are available will be *“low-level job”*, irrespective of the EME level of qualifications. *“I do not think even if you are qualified; you will ever become a manager”*.

For the respondent to carry such a negative aspiration in the workplace is actually highlighting that he is already aware of the stereotypes and labels that are common amongst whites about EME. In that regard, he is maybe tampering his expectation, even before he is informed of the negative outcomes from the measurement and evaluation of his performance. By expressing his thoughts in these ways, he may be sheltering himself from the expected disappointments that are likely in the future. Such profound views of what is most likely to occur in UK organisations to EME, about their lived experiences in the workplace shatters any beliefs about meritocracy for EME. It is as if this respondent is fully aware of whiteness narratives of EME. That is, there is a perception that ethnic minority employees are *“intellectually inferior and cannot be trusted in organisations”* (Nkomo,1992). In his vignette, he is identifying some of the hazardous ways of life for the EME in UK organisations. Similarly, he is advocating the thoughts of whiteness' behaviour, that is perpetuating such stereotypes. Such prejudices lead to views that racism between the *“whites and people of colour* [ethnic minority

employees] *continues to exist in every institution across society, and in many cases, it is increasing rather than decreasing*" (Diangelo, 2018:23).

Furthermore, the respondent draws on information from the public debate about the lack of managers from EME in UK football; that is about the underrepresentation of Black managers in the sport and the invisible ceiling that they encounter. Otherwise, known as the glass ceiling, which acts as a barrier for EME in their quest for upward mobility in UK organisations. He is demonstrating that in every facet of organisational life, the lived experiences of EMEs are similar, if not the same. The evidence in his vignette suggests that racism demeans and devalues ethnic minority employees by denying them equal access and opportunities; and treating them as lesser beings (Kalra and Esmail, 2009). Wilson's claim that racist behaviour in organisations by white continue to marginalise EME while fulfilling their labels that they are "*backwards, inferior and barbaric*" (Wilson, 2017).

The following vignette sums up how UK white managers control the performances of appraisals processes and outcomes for EME. They act in ways that suggest that as the appraisers, they are "*playing God*" (Newton and Findlay, 1996).

"During my reviews, I have not been given any chance to justify my past performance. Before my review, my manager, who is a white British, have already made up his mind regarding the rating of my performance at work. If I try to justify my performance, then he finds another way to make the situation worse for me. It is not the same situation for my white colleagues because they always get a pay rise and/or promotion after their performance reviews. You can see clearly that it is not fair. So, it is better for me to get along with my manager during my performance review, agree with everything and sign the appraisal form. The same situation happened to one of my colleagues, and he said to my manager that it is not fair. My colleague complained the situation to the head office, and no action has been taken against our manager. My manager was not happy with my colleague because he complained about him. After couple of days, my manager was not giving him enough hours to work as he was on zero contracted hours. He ended up leaving the job" (T11).

The above vignette displays the overt bias in the process of performance appraisals of T11. For example, the above respondent has *"not been given any chance to justify [his] past performance."* The respondent's evidence shows how the appraiser, that is, the white line manager undermines what should be a participative process between appraiser and appraisee. According to Newton and Findlay (1996), the appraiser should be a *"helper"* rather than being a *"judge"*, and that too a hostile judge in the respondent's case. It should be noted from the vignette, how the appraiser is seen as manipulating the process of appraisal, for his ends. The line manager (appraiser) *"has already made up his mind regarding the rating of my performance at work"*.

Furthermore, the line manager used his power to create a situation, that was even more difficult for the respondent. *"If I try to justify my performance, then he [the appraiser/line manager] find another way to make the situation worse for me [respondent]"*. Firstly, he (the line manager) used his capacity to overcome the resistance from the respondent. In doing so, he exerted his will to produce the result that was consistent with his interest and hidden objectives. If the respondent attempted to disagree with the ratings, i.e. *"If I try to justify my performance, then he finds another way to make the situation worse for me"*. One should note the power in action of the white line manager, who used his ability to influence the outcomes of the performance appraisal for his own agenda. As a result, the white employees seemed to be awarded creditable ratings. T11 evidenced from his story that the *"they"* (white colleagues) *always get a pay rise and/or promotion after their performance reviews"*. This evidence aligns with Newton and Finlay's (1996) view that *"the appraisal system therefore merely provided the 'window dressing' of rational and efficient HRM, while the 'real' decisions (such as those regarding promotion) were based on social evaluations operating outside of the appraisal process"* (whiteness versus ethnicity [racialised] operates outside the process). The respondent capitulated to the excessive powers of his line manager and decided that *"it is better for me to get along with my manager during my performance review, agree everything and sign the appraisal form."* The respondent chooses to comply and take his punishment. The behaviour evidence here is akin to that of the slave plantation of over two hundred years ago. *"The slave master whips the slave; silently, the slave takes his punishment"* (Greene et al., 2005); what was his alternative? To run away?

In this case, the respondent's only choice was to accept his punishment - in silence (my emphasis), and this behaviour has taken place in the 21st century, in a UK organisation.

The final act of hegemonic power displayed by the line manager was to withdraw any benevolence he had for the EME when he complained to the HRM department. The "*manager was not happy with my colleague because he complained about him*". So, the line manager usurped any residue of power and dignity that the respondent's colleague, the employee, had. The line manager refused to offer him further working hours. The lived experience of the respondent was to suffer in silence. If he had to be recognised by the line manager, he had to be subservient. The episode ends with the respondent's colleague leaving the organisation; both are EMEs.

White line managers, it seems, inflate ratings for white employees; while at the same time, it seems they deflate ratings for ethnic minority employees (Baxter, 2012). The outcome in both scenarios was an abuse of the performance appraisal process in UK organisations. The evidence of such practices according to Ogbonna and Harris (2006) was that these actions in UK organisations make the task of white managers easier, as they facilitate the career advancement of their white subordinates, while EMEs experience the "*concrete ceiling*" (Davidson, 1997:98). Their white counterparts do not have to go through the same process because they "*have the collective social and institutional power and privilege [of whiteness] over people of colour [ethnic minority employees]*" (Diangelo, 2018:2). The above action, as just described, leads EME to suggest that the white people will hold both societal and institutional positions in organisations. In this way, the white people infused their racial prejudice into the policies, practices and systems to create privileges and ensure that they take all advantages available to them (Bratton and Gold, 2017:335).

The following vignette illustrates how the outcome from performance appraisal makes ethnic minority employees feel helpless, silenced and suppressed because of the power of whiteness in the racially toxic environment that is organisations in the UK.

"My white manager discriminates against us in discreet ways, that they think we cannot see, but we are aware of what they are

doing. For example, you do not have the same chances for doing training, no opportunities for promotion, and in the performance review, we always get the lowest mark when we compare our appraisals with the white guys. Even though they know that we work twice as hard than our white colleagues, they feel like we are stupid, but we know what they are doing. We keep quiet because we need a job and we have families to look after” (T8).

The above respondent claims blatantly that “*my manager discriminates against us [EME] in discreet ways*”. For T8 to claim such a negative view so overtly, it suggests that he was conscious of the actions and results from white employees’ behaviours. He is also indicating that discrimination is embedded in the fabric of his organisation. This evidence is relevant to the observation of Van and Janssens (2011) that negative aspirations into the workplace are so widespread that it can increase the feelings of disrespect, low self-worth and compromise of one’s identity. That is precisely what T8 felt. It is especially so, when “*they feel like we are stupid*”. It leads to suggest that the respondent understands the complexities that ethnic minority employees face from the outcomes of performance appraisal in UK organisations. The complexities involved in accepting simultaneously; racial discrimination, a disadvantaged position in the organisation; and a lack of opportunities for career development and advancement; allied with our [T8] silence and the lack of recognition by the organisation leads the white employees to think that we [T8] are simple-minded. However, what they fail to be aware of is that EMEs do have strategies of their own. In this regard, T8 mentions that “*...we know what they are doing*”. When the feeling of inferiority and racism surfaces, it encourages a great deal of anger and stress for EME. It generates the feeling of marginalisation, silence and invisibility in ethnic minority employees in organisations. These outcomes for EMEs are the opposite of the goals of soft HRM.

The vignette below is quite scathing seeing how the process of performance appraisals has become quite divisive, and outcomes are biased from a purely EMEs standpoint. One is being reminded of how whiteness uses the hegemonic power at its disposal to inflict as much damage as is possible on those who are less powerful (Crenshaw, 1991; Walker, 2015 and Bhopal, 2019)

“We are still being used as a scapegoat. A less serious error made by a black person will be taken into the process of performance review and something put on record that is being done in my company. When more serious errors are perpetrated by white people, such issues do not impact on their performance review. That is why I said that we are being used as a scapegoat to tick boxes” (T14).

So, when the feeling of inferiority surfaces for EMEs, from the actions by UK organisations and in particular white employees, it feeds into outcomes such as marginalisation, invisibility and lack of rewards. Is it, therefore, any wonder that ethnic minority employees show displeasure when they become conscious of the fact that they are being used as *“scapegoats”*? Such practices by whiteness and specifically in this research in UK organisations have permitted some experts and theorists to argue that ethnic minority employees will always be oppressed and disadvantaged within institutions and or societies (Creegan et al., 2003; Nkomo, 1992; Essed, 1991:53; Moynihan et al., 2012, Walker, 2015 and Bhopal, 2019). The roots of racism can be traced back to chattel slavery and onwards through the 17th century; into, for example, colonisation and neo-colonisation in the modern era (Brown and Cunliffe, 1981). Even in the postmodern era, despite legislation in the UK, for example, Equality Act 2010; EMEs are unable to combat the subtle form of discrimination, differential treatment and racism (Sue et al., 2008 and Wilson, 2017) that whiteness perpetrates. These early beliefs are being acted out today. Racism is a system (Diangelo, 2018:101). This system can be observed in the ways in which EME discuss their positions in UK organisations (Jenkins, 2014:195). The evidence of the above respondents shows that in UK organisations, there is a long, long way to go before EMEs can claim equality of outcome from the PA with their white counterparts.

The thesis now turns to analyse the expectations of EME in relation to learning and development in performance appraisal through the lived experience of the participants of this study.

5.3 Learning and Development from the Outcome of Performance Appraisal

This section aims to analyse how the expectations of EMEs in the areas of learning and development in performance appraisals are dealt with. The analysis will be carried out from the perspective that in the UK, performance management and in particular performance appraisals, is about learning (see Armstrong and Baron, 2000:217). If this is so, and it is not being questioned in this thesis; then the route to improve the organisation performance and learning is *"generally interpreted as increasing the capabilities and potential of individuals (employees) to perform more effectively now and in the future and the development of transferable skills to enhance career and employability prospects"* (ibid:217). In this regard, all employees should be experiencing this area of the performance appraisal process positively. It should be so because organisations, whether public or private, should be in the business of continuous improvement for their institutions. However, the analysis of the lived experience of EME in UK organisations in the areas of learning and development through their performance appraisals evaluations will mostly contradict the thoughts of Armstrong and Baron, above. What is revealed in the thesis by the participants concerning learning and development in performance appraisals is mostly otherwise?

However, before analysing the vignettes, it is worthwhile discussing how learning and development within organisations are conceptualised. If the concept of the learning organisation by Senge (1990:129) is utilised, organisations only learn through its employees who learn. The individual learning by the employees does not necessarily mean organisation learning will be expected. Nevertheless, without employee learning, no organisational learning can be guaranteed. The concept of employee learning and development and; organisation learning and development is symbiotic, according to Burgoyne (1994) [managing by learning] and Cornelius (2001:89) [the learning organisation]. They suggest that learning organisations must be able to adapt to their context while developing their employees to match the expectations of the organisational context. Here, Guest (1987) soft model of HRM, that is, the goal of integration and Beer et al. (1985)'s concept of congruence in HRM are alike. Both propose that all employees ought to be fully integrated, wherever this is possible, into the business. The objective

of the integration and congruence strategies is to gain "*identity of interest so that what is good for the company is perceived by employees as also being good for them*" (in Guest 1987). Congruence and integration as perspectives within soft HRM presuppose that "*if human resources can be integrated into strategic plans, if human resource policies cohere, if line managers have internalized the importance of human resources and this is reflected in their behaviour, and if employees identify with the company, then the company's strategic plans are likely to be more successfully implemented*" (ibid).

Furthermore, the bundles of HR practices are most commonly seen as recruitment, selection, training and development, performance management (appraisal), diversity management and reward system (Beer et al., 1984; Guest, 1987 and; Bratton and Gold, 2007:22). When the bundles are seen within the domain of line managers; Skinner (1982) suggests that the attitudes and behaviours of line managers will play a key role in manipulating the outcomes of HR practices, in particular, those of performance appraisal. It is mainly so as performance appraisal as a practice assumes the development of employee's skills, knowledge and pursuit of excellence. In return, these practices will also enhance employees career development opportunities, as well as their learning potentials.

Moreover, the extensive research that has provided evidence regarding the concern of the practices of performance appraisal: for example, Newton and Findlay, (1996) [playing God]; Wilson (2010) [rater's bias]; Baxter (2012) [bias in the process of performance appraisal]; Fernandes and Alsaeed (2014) [lack of equal opportunity] and; CIPD (2019) [unfair behaviours] ought also to be considered. Notwithstanding the deductions from the research as mentioned earlier findings, Bratton and Gold (2017:81) argued that such research findings "*identify only the general presence of HR practices and do not offer insights into the coverage of employees actual experiencing in those practices*", especially concerning the outcome from performance appraisal.

It is within the above discussions that the following vignettes will now illustrate how line managers (white line managers) in this research have acted as the main protagonists behind the performance management (appraisal) and the outcomes that led to a contradiction in management thought. This contradiction in management thought results in a lack of career development and advancement

of the respondents (in this case, ethnic minority employees) in this research, in UK organisations. The following vignette looks at the early formulation of the employer-employee promise and trust (Wilson, 2010), which are made at the interview to select the employee. The expectations created by the promises and trusts through the communications which take place at the meeting demonstrates that the employee (respondent in the research) is confident that some level of career development will be forthcoming from the employer. However, the lived experience of the employee shows that the performance reviews undertaken have provided none of the career development opportunities promised. Therefore, the early trust between the employee and the employer is now non-existent.

“When you attempt to join a company, they will promise your personal career development. However, after my performance reviews, it makes me think about the career development promised now seems impossible to achieve as long as I am in this organisation. I do find a lot of frustrations in the performance reviews that I have undertaken. It affects my confidence at work, and I settle for less. It makes me sometimes feel that maybe I am not good enough at my job, but that is not the case. However, this is not the same situation for the white people at my workplace, as they are provided with all the opportunities necessary to achieve their career development by the line managers who are white, while the black employees seem to be neglected by them. As black people, we have been working here for twelve to fifteen years. What about our career progression?” (T14)

Notwithstanding the breakdown in the trust between the parties, the respondent makes the point that career development opportunities will never happen as long as he remains in this organisation. T14’s self-confidence is impacted upon, and he now *“settles for less”*. This admission leads to him to believe that the organisation’s evaluation of his performance in the performance reviews process may be correct. The actions of the organisation and its impact become a self-fulfilling outcome for the employee. He stops short of condemning himself, only when he compares the outcome for him with his white colleagues, whose results from the performance review process are different. The difference in outcome occurs in his opinion because his white colleagues are *“provided with all the opportunities necessary”* to

ensure they fulfil their career achievements which are in relation to the career development opportunities available within the organisation. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the difference in outcome for white and ethnic minority employees is the result of their ethnic differences. The respondent suggests that as *“black people, we have been working here for twelve to fifteen years”*, and there is no career advancement for them. This conjecture is supported when the respondent further states *“what about our career progression?”* He is now comparing the outcome for all the black employees working for the employer for twelve years or more with their white counterparts, and he sees a different pattern of behaviour occurs.

On further reflection, he once more thinks about his outcomes (*“progression”*) from the performance review process. The respondent is unable to find suitable answers as to why his experience of the performance review process is not similar to his white counterparts. So, he provides his feeling, *“I do find a lot of frustrations in the performance reviews that I have undertaken”* and he sees differences in the performance review process between how it operates for him and others like himself. He observes that EMEs are treated differently by line managers in the performance review process in his organisation. The use of the word *“neglected”* by the respondent (T14) provides strong evidence that he perceives the differences in how white employees and EMEs are treated by white line managers in the performance review process in the organisation in which he is employed.

This occurrence evidenced in research conducted by some writers mentioned above, example Wilson (2010), Baxter (2012)], Fernandes and Alsaeed (2014) and, CIPD (2019). For example, Fernandes and Alsaeed (2014) argued that African American employees (in this study is the ethnic minority employees) face *“employment process bias, push into minority positions, lack of access to network and mentor’s difficulties in advancement and promotion, and psychological and emotional maltreatment.”* In the same vein, Baxter (2012) observed that there was a consistently worse rating for black employees in federal and other public institutions. It was due to rater bias, where white supervisors rate their white employees higher than the black employees (*ibid*). The decisions and actions by the white line managers appear to be conscious and intentional because it is made *“impossible”* according to the respondent for ethnic minority employees to move up the career ladder via the existing performance review evaluation process.

Moreover, it leaves the respondent at the bottom of the hierarchy, stuck in a low-level job. This hidden barrier further knocks the “*confidence*” of T14, because he had wrongly perceived that career development opportunities would have been possible for him in the organisation.

From the discussion above, it seems unlikely that EMEs will wish to be integrated into their organisations, based on T14's reflections and lived experience in his organisation in the performance review process. Here, Guest (1987) sees the goal of integration of employees as having “*a greater willingness to accept change and fewer delays and barriers caused by conflicting understandings and priorities*” of policies and behaviours of those in the position of power (the line managers). Notably, in how they relate to EMEs in their performance reviews as the outcomes achieved in career development opportunities and possibilities of career advancement for EMEs in UK organisations is, to say the least very limited indeed.

The goal of employee commitment in Guest (1987) model of soft HRM will now examine through the lived experiences of respondents in the research. Here, the issue is, can EMEs be persuaded to commit to their employers, when the evidence overwhelmingly shows respondents as deeply troubled about their career development and career attainment?

In this regard, the employees' commitment will be evaluated in terms of how they “*seek to enhance organisational and job commitment*” (Guest 1987). Here employee attitudinal commitment ought to be imperative. It is defined by Mowday (1982 in Guest 1987) as the ‘*relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation*’. Furthermore, they argue that commitment is characterised by “*strong acceptance of and belief in an organisation's goals and values; [employee] willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation; [and employee having] a strong desire to maintain membership of the organisation*” (Guest, 1987). The extracts from respondents' vignettes may be suggesting that EME questions not only their commitment to their employers but also the employer's commitment to them as employees. The following story from respondent T12 sheds some light on where her commitment lies.

"When I started in this company, I was being told that I will have the proper training to get promoted and many opportunities for career progression. So, I did whatever I have been told to do and more. I have

pushed myself and given so much of my time to work, but I have never offered a managerial position. After my appraisals, my white line manager does not talk about my career development plan. It is humiliating because I am not going anywhere, that is, in my career. My manager is not helping me to grow."(T12)

In the early stages of her employment with this organisation, the vignette shows that this respondent was fully committed to her employer. She demonstrated behavioural attributes that are undeniably supportive of her employer. Her behaviour informed by the promises she received, that is, proper training and many opportunities for career progression. Based on the promises, she started her tenure of employment with a strong work ethic, she did what she was told to do and more. It seems that she was immersed most of her time into her work, demonstrating a high level of participation, with a strong perception of a fair and a reliable organisation. Her feelings of importance because of her commitment, suggested that she believed she was working for an employer who is caring, sincere and dependable. For her, there was no role in conflict and or ambiguities. Her job was a challenge, and she was aiming to fulfil the promises made by her employer of becoming a manager in the future. All seemed well at the start as her commitment to the organisation combined with her perception of what she thought was an organisational commitment was to result in what should have been employee satisfaction and other job-related behavioural commitment. For example, a willingness to accept what she was told to do. All the above inevitably will result in a long tenure with the employer. However, things started to change after her performance appraisal; there was no talk about career opportunities and development planning. It is evident that her perception of a caring employer started to change, as after other performance reviews meetings her line manager did not demonstrate any sign of enthusiasm for discussions on her prospects for promotion through a review of a career development plan.

"Instead, I can see only my white colleagues progressing are with the support of our line managers who are also white. I am stuck in one place, and I am not growing in my career. How can I be committed to a place that is treating me in these ways?" (T12)

The above vignette captures the respondent's lived experiences in several ways. Firstly, it shows the control of her white line manager over her career development

through the process of the performance review. Essed (1991:30) argued that ethnic minority employees *"in white-dominated societies often experience economic exploitation through the race"*. Similarly, Acker (2006) sees such behaviours as not just about control but also compliance. She argues that *"organisational controls are, in the first instance, class controls, directed at maintaining the power of managers, ensuring that employees act to further the organisation's goals, and getting workers to accept the system of inequality."* As the employee is from an ethnic minority background, Acker (2006) also suggests that there is likely to be *"racialised assumptions and expectations embedded in the ... content of controls and in how they are implemented"*. She also argues that such controls through the organisation by white line managers are made possible by *"hierarchical organisational power ... drawn from ...hierarchical race relations"* (*ibid*). A characteristic of race relations in the UK organisation is the concentration of EMEs at the bottom of the hierarchical structures (Creegan et al., 2003).

The respondent also speaks about being *"stuck in one place"*, and her *"career is not growing"*. Such utterances by the respondent bring into view issues about racialised groups and the glass ceiling. In the same vein, Essed (1991:35) posits that EMEs *"are confronted with artificial ceilings created by individuals [white line manager in this study] who have control over the distribution of work and promotions and who regularly review the performance of [black] women"*. Sometimes it is difficult for EMEs to get a promotion all *"contributes towards the difficulties in cracking the concrete ceiling"* (Davidson, 1997:98). Furthermore, Acker (2006) suggests that the controls utilised by line managers are often *"diverse and complex and impede changes"* in the fight against inequality outcomes in organisations. Here, the assumption is that the respondent has been experiencing a lack of development in her career for some time as she notes the progress of her white colleagues.

Concerning Guest (1987) model of soft HRM and the goal of commitment; the theoretical proposition that commitment brings for employees is questioned. It is especially so, in relation to *"longer tenure"* (*ibid*) by employees in their employment. In this particular setting, this respondent is now questioning her commitment to the organisation, which is *"treating me (the respondent) in these ways"*.

The issue of discrimination and unfairness meted out to this respondent should be visible by the HRM department, if there is one in the organisation. However, Kelly

and Dobbin (1998) point out that the *"legitimacy of inequality, fear of retaliation, and cynicism limit support for change"* (in Acker, 2006) in organisations. Moreover, it makes inequality practices invisible, especially to those who are in power (Essed, 1991:39). The line managers, mainly white line managers, as they are usually always privileged, and as such, they will not give up the privileges they have easily.

A further comment on the respondent (T12) position shows how she is impacted upon by the unfairness in relation to her career development opportunities. In the below vignette, she states how the lack of promotion has affected her lifestyle and mental health. Notwithstanding, it is a sad reflection on the way her organisation is treating her; she reflects on what could have been a different outcome if she was white. Here, she sees herself as having to pay an ethnic penalty in the organisation, and by extension, in the UK labour market because of her ethnicity.

"Not having a promotion has impacted on my financial status too. It has also impacted on my career aspiration and my mental health. I want to earn a bit more to get a mortgage and to do something more with my life. I sometimes think if I was a white person, I would not be where I am now." (T12)

Research in the UK on the impact of race relation (Race Relations Act, 1976) and equalities (Equalities Act, 2010) legislations has shown that initially they may have reduced ethnic discrimination (Rafferty, 2012). However, he suggested that the reduction in discrimination against EME, was mainly in the public sector (this research was mostly conducted in the private sector); while there was little or minimum change in the private sector. Other research shows that although EMEs *"achieved outstanding educational attainment, they are still getting lesser job opportunities than UK born white population"* (Rafferty, 2012). The findings from such research also suggest that employment discrimination is still very much alive in UK organisations, especially in the private sector.

Furthermore, and in particular with specific emphasis in relation to this research; other research by Liversage (2009) see discrimination as the leading cause of why EMEs are still suffering from a higher unemployment rate when compared with their white counterparts. It is particularly true for EMEs employed in jobs where they are overqualified (Botcherby, 2006). So, the ethnic penalty alluded to by the respondent concerning financial remuneration and a lack of career

development and advancement and generally for his treatment by the organisation, is confirmed by research from the Labour Force Survey [LFS] (2010). The data from the survey shows that there is an "*ethnic penalty*" (LFS, 2010) existing in the UK labour market, as a result of employers' actions. This thesis is evidencing that EMEs are still experiencing the outcome of inequality and lack of job promotion opportunities nine years on, according to the LFS research. It is therefore evident that there are other ethnic penalties in many areas of employment for EME. It is not just unemployment and lower job status as evidenced by the LFS (2010); it may also be evident in career opportunities, career development and advancement and financial remuneration (findings in this thesis). A consequence of these various ethnic penalties is that they may be causing mental health issues for EMEs, as stated by the respondent (T12). For further discussions on EMEs and mental health issues, as a result of experiencing discrimination and inequalities in employment in UK organisations (refer to Alleyne et al., 2017).

The goal of adaptability and flexibility in Guest (1987) model of HRM will now examine through the vignettes of the respondents. It is worthwhile identifying what the goal of flexibility and adaptability means in the soft HRM model. Guest (1987) opines that organisations must "*avoid rigid, hierarchical, bureaucratic structures; it must prevent powerful, entrenched interest groups from developing, and there must be no inhibitive demarcations among groups of workers or between individual roles*". Furthermore, employees ought to demonstrate flexibility; that is, employees should be able to move freely between job roles as well as having "*flexible skills*" (*ibid*). Such antecedents amongst employees are only possible "*if employees at all levels display high organisational commitment, high trust and high levels of intrinsic motivation*" (*ibid*). The likelihood of these respondents displaying the characteristics that Guest (1987) states are required will now be examined. The following vignette by a respondent suggests that he is attempting to be both flexible and adaptable to be successful at his job. He states:

"I am trying to add more knowledge and skills to fit in, but I am getting things used against me. You know to be quite honest; the performance appraisal is just one tool that can be used to evaluate performance, but it is a weapon against many employees. The performance appraisal is the tool of

domination and fear. That's why whether I have performed superbly or just average, my white line managers will always let me down in my performance appraisal evaluation" (T2).

The respondent's attempts to be flexible and adaptable, by adding an increased level of knowledge and skills to fit better his job role are received negatively by his employer. The specific actions that Guest (1987) suggests should be avoided, that is, powerful interest groups and inhibitive demarcations amongst employee groups are happening against the respondent. He recognised the role of how performance appraisal in the organisation ought to be utilised, that is, to evaluate employee performance. However, the respondent mentions that rather than using the process of appraisal positively, the dominant group, that is, line managers use the performance appraisal process against employees as a *"weapon"*. His lived experience of the performance process as a tool becomes one of *"domination and fear"*. In other words, line managers are *"playing God"* (Newton and Findlay, 1996). With this type of environment in the organisation in which he has been employed, the likelihood of flexibility and adaptability occurring for this EME is minimal.

Later on, in his vignette, he alludes to the fact that irrespective of whether he does very well or averagely, the reality is that his white line manager poorly evaluates him. Any opportunity to impress and therefore leverage career development opportunities will be suppressed by any of the following as evidenced by the following researchers: rater bias (Wilson, 2010), the bias in the process of performance appraisal (Baxter, 2012), lack of equal opportunity (Fernandes and Alsaed, 2014) and unfair behaviours (CIPD, 2019). For instance, CIPD (2019) argued that *"in the UK there is a long way to go to be able to claim there is equal access to employment and progression opportunities across ethnicities"* as evidence from T2. The opportunity for the employee to be operating on a level playing field with his employer, because of the powerful interest group, that is, line managers acting against him is bordering on almost zero. So, he is fearful of the outcome of his performance review process, see the extract below from his vignette:

"I'm always scared by the result of my appraisals because I know they will let me down, and it will impact badly on my career progression aspirations." (T2).

It seems that there is a common thread running through the outcomes of the performance review process for these EME. Because of their ethnicity, their career development opportunities and career aspirations are thwarted.

"This is the reason I am still in the same position, and I don't see any career progression opportunities now and or in the future. So, when the opportunity for alternative employment arises, I will definitely be quitting this job" (T2).

Similar to other respondents in this research, he is experiencing the glass ceiling, inequalities, discrimination, and being denied the privilege of fulfilling his career aspirations. Not surprisingly, he intends to vote with his feet when the opportunity arises, by finding a different job.

Guest (1987) suggests that attempts of adaptability and flexibility *"should result in more effective utilisation of human resources ... [and that] It should also result in greater cost-effectiveness although the costs of training and possibly of providing high pay and job security have to be taken into account"*. Here, the possibilities of EMEs accessing training, receiving high pay and levels of job security are indeed farfetched. These privileges (high pay, training and job security) seem to be exclusive privileges the white employees, at least in the environment in which most of these respondents are employed, that is, the private sector. As previously discussed above, rather than experiencing privileges, ethnic minority employees are suffering from ethnic penalties (LFS, 2010). Guest (1987), in his model of soft HRM, espoused the theoretical proposition of flexibility and adaptability as a goal. In doing so, he suggests that flexibility and adaptability amongst employees should result in the ensuring of human resources in organisations having positive capacities. However, according to the lived experiences of these respondents, who are EME plying their trades in private organisations, which is the landscape of this research; Guest (1987) theoretical proposition is nothing more than a pipe dream (Legge, 2005:185).

The goal of quality in Guest (1987) soft model of HRM and how it should theoretically relate to organisation and employees alike will now be discussed. The

intended outcomes will be highlighted. The vignettes of the respondents in this research speak loudly in how the expected outcomes and their lived experiences differ, especially as they relate their treatment by line managers (the organisation) in relation to career development and career advancement in their respective organisations.

Guests (1987) highlighted three concerns in relation to the goal of quality in the organisation. Firstly, *"quality of staff"* (ibid) and that the organisation has the policies and practices to ensure the quality of employees appointed, developed and retained does have high levels of skills, adaptability and abilities. The second concern is the *"quality of performance"* (Guest, 1987) which is supported by the organisation's capabilities to set and maintain high standards in measuring the validity of performance. Here, the role of line managers in the performance review process is of uttermost importance. It will be especially *"if high commitment, trust and motivation are to be maintained"* (ibid). An important point is cited by Guest (1987) as far as this research is concerned; that is' *"it is particularly important that management policy and practice is perceived to be of high quality by lower grade employees"*. Research (Jenkins, 1986; Davidson, 1997 and Creegan et al., 2003.) has shown that in both the private and public sectors in the UK, ethnic minority employees experience the glass ceiling and mostly categorised as lower grade employees. Most of the respondents in this research would more than likely fit into those who Guest (1987) classified as *"lower grade employees"* (the thesis emphasis). It is these respondents whose vignettes will be highlighted. The final concern Guest (1987) posits that it is *"the public image of the organisation and in particular its human resource policies"*. This concern, although significant, in relation to the two previous concerns is not as vital to this research as the focus is on the lived experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minorities employees in UK organisations.

Notwithstanding the concern, Guest (1987) suggests that *"considerable attention must be given to recruitment and selection, training, appraisal ... goal-setting ... and job design"*; if the organisation is to ensure that high-quality policies are to be maintained. These practices will be aimed at the utilisation of employees through the organisation *"providing high quality challenging jobs"* (ibid).

Through the above details around the policies and practices that organisations should empower employees for effective performance. Guest (1987) posits a

theoretical proposition that such policies are *"designed to ensure the recruitment and retention of high-quality staff to undertake demanding jobs, supported by competent management will result in high-performance levels"*.

Below is an extract from a respondent's lived experience of how she is treated by the organisation and by extension, the respondent's line managers.

"I am very passionate about my job. But to go into an environment that is not always accepting of my views or my contribution to the workplace, it is very demoralising. I want to go to work and be happy and be empowered to do the best that I can" (T6).

The respondents view that her job is clear. Such passion shows the commitment, integration, flexibility, adaptability and trust of and in the organisation. However, all the employees' positive perception is shattered when she becomes aware of how the organisation, through her line manager, views her ideas and contributions at work. She is demoralised by what she is experiencing. The concerns raised by Guest (1987) and the necessity for the organisation to implement them for positive outcomes to occur between employee and employer are not evident in the respondents lived experience of performance appraisal in the organisation. At the same juncture, the respondent is indicating what will make her happy and will empower her to produce high performances for the organisation. The practices she is hoping to derive from the actions of her line manager are not forthcoming. See her further comments below:

"When I do not have the guidance of how well I am doing, and I cannot see any career progression. It is quite a confident sapping because I am always second-guessing myself rather than just being confident at my job and about my performance at work" (T6).

It is the responsibility of line managers to provide the necessary guidance to their subordinates (Cornelius, 1999:142) if the employee's performance is to be in line with the intentions of the line manager. However, most importantly, it should aim to attain the organisation's objectives. The goal-setting that is a specific requirement as suggested by Guest (1987) above is either unstated, not clear, or missing. Such line management is akin to the marginalisation of employees (Dickens, 2000). It is especially where EMEs and equality issues are a concern. It

prompts Dickens (2000) to suggest that *"EO issues can be contested or resisted as irrelevant or marginal ... defined by those in a position of power"*; sometimes in relation to how those in a position of power choose to evaluate what is essential to the organisation, at a specific point in time. These actions may apply to either the production life cycle or the image of the organisation which to portray to other employees, who are deemed to be not from a minority group. The above vignette highlights how employees may be unceremoniously sacrificed, irrespectively of whether the action leads to difficulties for the employee. Here, the marginal treatment and its outcome for the employee become irrelevant.

Furthermore, research shows that EMEs in UK organisation are easily dispensed with, or their treatment and the consequences are a matter of little concern to the dominant groups (line managers) (Creegan et al., 2003). The employee is saddened by such outcomes, as she was not informed by those who should provide the information. She is, therefore, unable to work towards the specific goals that are ascribed. The comments below shed some light on how the employee experiences such a marginal treatment.

"If I knew what the goals are, then I can work towards them. That does not always happen, and it does not give me a good feeling"
(T6).

The actions of the line manager of the respondent may be two-fold. Firstly, they may be making it easier for the line manager to undervalue the respondent's performance during the review process, or it may just be plain and simple an act of direct discrimination. Through such actions, the outcome for the respondent is that she is left wondering:

"Where I am and where I am supposed to be going, in terms of development and progression in my career" (T6).

Such outcomes lead some EMEs to maybe taking a pathological approach to the consequences of what is happening to their career development and career advancement opportunities, because of the organisation's practices. See respondent's (T3) vignette below:

"I don't care about my career progression because I have been working here for years, and I am still in the same old position. I am just waiting for retirement".

It seems that cynicism has taken over this employee mindset, as he is powerless to do anything about the actions of the line manager. After all, he has experienced it seems all the vagaries that EMEs experience in organisations, at the hands of his white manager. The result is that he does not care about:

"The result of my performance appraisal because as usual, the white people will be promoted as a manager. I come to do my job, get my pay, and I am happy with no choice" (T3).

Here, one can argue about the role of the UK government as a regulator in organisational practices. The Equality Act, 2010, became law to tackle discrimination, protect the rights of employees at work and to provide equality of opportunity for all employees, irrespective of their ethnic origin. However, Acker (2006) posits that such legislative practices have failed due to the power, privilege and resistance by white line managers. To change the attitudes away from the oppression and marginalisation of EMEs, organisations should promote an open culture of respect and dignity (Cornelius, 1999:57); and practice the four goals of Guest (1987) model of soft HRM. These goals espouse and value difference in all employees, regardless of ethnic or racial background. This view is also supported by CIPD (2019) and Cornelius (1999:56), who posits that HR policies have a critical role to play in setting expectations to reduce the hegemony such as zero tolerance of racial discrimination. *"However, policies alone will not bring about change; they need to be brought alive by the behaviour of everyone" (CIPD, 2019)* [including white line managers, senior management and HR practitioners] in the workplaces throughout the UK.

The next section discusses the outcomes of the lived experience of the performance appraisal for the participants concerning the four goals of Guest model of HRM: Commitment, Flexibility and Adaptability, Integration and Quality.

5.4 Rhetorics and Realities of the Lived Experience of Performance Appraisal for EMEs in UK Organisations.

So far, this chapter discussed the in-depth findings and analysis of the participants' lived experience of performance appraisal in UK organisations. The sections below assess the relationship between the rhetoric around soft HRM and the realities of performance appraisal from the EME perspectives. It is observed from the lens of the participants that the line managers have a crucial role to play in managing and rewarding their performance which derived from the outcome of performance appraisal. The experience of the performance appraisal for some of the participants of this study reflect good practices of HR policies such as the performance management cycle by the line managers, for example, training, coaching, and development which sum up the goals of soft HRM. Some of the participants perceived fairness in the process of performance appraisal, and they felt that they were treated as a source of competitive advantage and valued assets through their commitment, quality skills, and adaptability. The experience of some participants also exhibited the recognition and support received from their line managers, especially in the process of PA life cycle. They perceived that their contribution and hard work had been recognised during the process of their performance appraisal and that their performance review was a participative process. From the stories of some of the ethnic minority employees in UK organisations, there are no evident issues of malpractice of performance appraisal which align with the goals of soft HRM.

However, most of the participants in this research revealed the unfairness and non-recognition of their performance during the process of their performance appraisals, which resulted in a lack of career advancement. This study evidenced that white line managers manipulated the process of the performance appraisal for their ends, or to benefit white employees. Some of the findings demonstrated that white line managers provided EME with support and training, which portrayed a soft HRM approach. However, the efforts and performances for ethnic minority employees were not recognised during the process of performance appraisal conducted by white line managers. Therefore, PA was not seen as necessary by the white line managers in measuring the evaluation process. The action of line managers provided the reasons as to why the EME were often passed over in matters of promotion. The stories of the participants also portrayed how white line

managers control the process and outcome of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. One of the respondents even claimed that he was not “*given any chance to justify*” his past performance. The action of the appraisers, that is, the white line managers seems to be ‘*playing God*’ rather than the process being participative. The findings from this study also revealed that the white line managers are inflating the performance ratings of white employees while at the same time deflating ratings of ethnic minority employees. As a result of such action, it makes it easier for the white line managers to boost up the career advancement of white employees. In this regard, ethnic minority employees remain rooted to the “*sticky floor*” (Dickens, 1999), continuously experiencing the glass ceiling (Acker, 2006b) and so becoming invisible and inconsequential in most cases during their employment in UK organisations.

The four goals of Guest model of HRM (1987), that is; commitment, flexibility and adaptability, integration and quality form part of the characteristics of soft HRM. In the next section, these goals are critically evaluated from the lived experience of the performance appraisal for the participants.

5.4.1 The Goal of Commitment

The participants of this study perceived that attention was given to them by their line managers in terms of development opportunities and provision for training to elevate their performance in respective organisations. This study found that some of the line managers were seen as helpful during the process of performance appraisal. The recognition of EME’s performance during the process of appraisal generates positive relationships across the organisation. Such practices exercise their positive impact by enhancing the ethnic minority employees’ talent, encouraging full contribution from employees, motivation and commitment.

However, due to the lack of career progression and unfairness from the outcome of the performance appraisal for other respondents, the theoretical proposition that commitment brings for employees is questioned. It is especially so because of the way the white line managers are treating the ethnic minority employees as low-grade employees and the perceived bias in the rating of their performance which is opposite to the white employees within the same organisation in the UK. Some participants mention that there could have been a different outcome from the performance appraisal process if they were white which could have a positive

impact on their commitment and their career advancement as the soft model of HRM would suggest. This research evidences that there is a weak link between commitment and the outcome from the performance appraisal of ethnic minority employees in UK organisations.

5.4.2 The Goal of Flexibility and Adaptability

In his model of soft HRM, Guest (1987) sees flexibility and adaptability as an organisation must have the capacity to avoid bureaucracy's hierarchy, prevent influential groups within the organisation to develop and inhibitive discriminations among groups. It is evident from the lived experience of the performance appraisal for the participants that some of the line managers were supportive, and others were not during the performance management cycle. Some of the line managers viewed the employees irrespective of their ethnic background as an asset of the organisations. Some of the respondents in this study perceived that the support, training and constructive feedback from their line managers elevated their performance, skills, knowledge, flexibility and adaptability to do their assigned task. The perceived flexibility and adaptability by the some of the EMEs suggest that the practice and the process of performance appraisal in the organisation are centred around the development of employees which align with the characteristics of soft HRM. The excerpts from the participants reveal that the line managers have the subjective and objective power to decide on the outcome from the performance appraisal of employees, irrespective of their ethnic background within the organisation.

This study also highlighted that the white line managers are "*playing God*" during the process of performance appraisal rather than being a participative process, especially when ethnic minority employees are concerned. One of the respondents perceives that his white line manager uses the process of performance appraisal against ethnic minority employees as a "*weapon*." As a result, ethnic minority employees may not be flexible and adaptable in their assigned task due to lack of training and support, skills and ownership. The privilege of training opportunities, support, and career advancement seems to benefit only white employees, as attested by some of the vignettes from this study. The lived experience of the performance appraisal for some of the respondents of this study suggests that the theoretical proposition of flexibility and adaptability

(Guest, 1987) as a goal espoused by the soft model of HRM is a soft guise and in practice, it is a hard approach to HRM.

5.4.3 The Goal of Integration

The third goal of soft HRM is integration, where Guest (1987) proposes that of integrating Human Resource into line management. It happens when some of the line managers are responsible *“for coordinating and directing all resources in their business unit, including human resources, in pursuit of the bottom line”* (Legge, 2005:167). Therefore, the line managers have a crucial role to play in integrating the bottom line [employees] to achieve their goals and hence, senior managers, that is, strategic goals (*ibid*). Some of the findings averred the visible fairness in managing diversity and integrating employees in the process of performance management cycle, irrespective of their ethnic background. In doing so, the line managers achieved both individual’s goal (career advancement) and strategic goal (competitive advantage), that is, integrating HR practices with the business strategy to achieve a common goal. Through the stories of some of the participants, they perceived career advancement and progression through extensive training opportunities and visible fairness in the process of performance appraisal similar to their white counterparts. The line managers are not only enhancing the talents, skills, and knowledge through the system and process of performance appraisal. They were also encouraging the full contribution and commitment of the participants of this study to integrate them to achieve corporate goals such as high-quality production, high problem-solving skills and excellence services. The integration of the process and system of performance appraisal with the business strategy seems to align with the soft HRM.

However, evidence from the findings of this research also reveals that, at the bottom line, some ethnic minority employees do not feel supported by their line managers within the cycle of performance appraisal. The unfair behaviours, limited or no access to networking, mentor’s difficulties, rater’s bias in performance appraisal and barriers to promotion by white line managers evidenced in this research. It makes it almost impossible for ethnic minorities employees to integrate into the business in their respective organisations in the UK. In practice, the white employees seem to be more integrated into the business strategy with the support of the white line managers, as evidenced by this study. These white employees

are equipped with skills, knowledge, training, fair performance review and hence better career advancement as soft HRM would suggest.

5.4.4 The Goal of Quality

Finally, the goal of Guest model of soft HRM (1987) is quality which involves in three dimensions, that is, quality of staff, performance and public image. The quality staff comprises of a high standard of recruitment, training, performance appraisal and potential career advancement as soft HRM would suggest. In return, there will be highly trained employees, a high standard performance which will reflect the right image for the organisation. As evidenced from the stories of some of the participants' lived experience of performance appraisal, the line managers create a culture which treats all employees, irrespective of their ethnic background, as a human being and support all employees to achieve their potential. Well-Integrated procedures and practices of performance appraisal, equal opportunities for training and support make the participants feel valued and respected within the organisation. As a result, it elevates their performances, skills, talents and knowledge to become quality employees which soft HRM would suggest. The role of line managers as a mentor and trainer in monitoring activities, managing performance of employees, and counselling is essential in contributing to "*quality improvements*" (Legge, 2005:245).

However, some of the participants did not perceive that their line managers are supporting or empowering them to become a quality employee. Some respondents of this research were perceived to be more likely to fit into those jobs that are classified as lower grade jobs because of lack of training, blocked opportunities and unfair treatment during the process of performance appraisal. How can these participants produce high performances and aim to pursue excellence if they are debarred from receiving training and support from their white line manager within the organisation? Some of the respondents perceived that their organisations adopted the policies and practices of performance appraisal to ensure that quality employees are developed. Some of the participants feel that their line manager ensured that their white subordinates are developed and retain high levels of skills, abilities, and talents to pursue excellence. One of the respondents perceived that she would be happy if her line manager empowers her to produce high performances for the organisation. Instead, the white employees were empowered around the policies and practices of performance appraisal with the support of their

white line managers. As a result, these practices enhance the white employees' career advancement and pursues quality employees as soft HRM would suggest.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the in-depth analysis of the lived experiences of PA for EMEs in UK organisations. It was determined that some of the participants experienced fairness in the process of the performance life cycle. However, most of the participants perceived unfairness and bias in the process of their PA. The stories of the respondents also highlighted the role of line managers played in the process of PA. As evidenced from the vignettes of the participants, most of them perceived that their white counterparts are favoured to achieve their career development, indeed with the support of their white line managers, which is congruent to a soft model of HRM. This research evidenced that the regimes of inequality are manifested in the fabric of organisations in the UK. Most of the EMEs in this study perceived that they had been deprived of training opportunities, lack of career progression and development. Therefore, the perceptiveness of being marginalised and underprivileged from all or most opportunities by their white managers suggest that it is a hard approach to HRM. The next chapter provides a critical reflection and conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter 6

Critical Evaluation and Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

This final chapter provides a critical evaluation of some decisions made during the process of this thesis, discussions of the findings, contributions to the study and the recommendation for further research.

6.1 Critical Assessment and Reflection on the Research Journey

At the beginning of this thesis, my prime interest was to understand the experience of performance appraisal from an ethnic minority perspective. The participants must have at least three years of working experience in the UK. The choice of minimum three years' experiences in the UK was adopted because I wanted a profound experience where the participants pass through at least three performance appraisal (yearly), or six appraisals (every six months) or nine appraisals (quarterly) within the three years. Due to my limited understanding of ethnic inequalities, discrimination, racism, lack of opportunity and lack of career advancement for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations; I aimed to enrich my knowledge of these phenomena. That was possible thank to the guidance and advice of my supervisors. I highly value their input particularly, with their pertinent questions when redrafting the original proposal leading to drafting the literature review and research method. It became clear to me that the experience of appraisal for ethnic minority employees is very complex as they may or may not be marginalised, discriminated and oppressed in their workplace. Then I realised to get in-depth insights into the lived experience of the participants of this study; I have to adopt one of the methods of the interview, which is known as a semi-structured interview. This method of data collection proved useful in the end as it is an opportunity to listen to the participants' real stories. It is well suited for the exploration of the perceptions of participants regarding sensitive and complex issues and also enable probing for more clarification and information on the data collected. As a result of approaching the respondents through a snowball sampling, it gives them a chance to open up about their lived experience of performance appraisal in their workplace. Some of the respondents were

cautious about meeting me because of the agenda of my research. They do not want to take the risk of losing their job. After explaining to them my real motive and that I have no contacts with their organisation or any agencies, the respondents agreed open up and to share their experience of performance appraisal.

It is worth mentioning that before adopting a snowball sampling method, I applied the purposive sampling method in an attempt to get fair representation from each group of males and females in one organisation: a case study in an organisation (CSO). I approached many organisations in the UK, such as private, private/public listed, and public organisations. My emails were addressed to the HR Director [gatekeeper] and CEO of each of the organisations with an expectation that as they are familiar with these types of research, and I will be most welcome to pursue my interviews regarding the experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees. It is regrettable to say that none of the organisations has accepted my request because of my research agenda, that is, my research objectives.

As a result of the refusal of my request to pursue interviews in one of the organisations in the UK, one can prompt the following questions: Why one of the organisations in the UK did not allow me to interview their employees [ethnic minority] regarding the experience of their performance appraisal? Are these organisations anxious that the reality will come out regarding the process and practice of performance appraisal of ethnic minority employees in their workplace? All these questions reminded me of the work of Philomena Essed (1991): *Everyday racism*, Stella Nkomo (1992): *The Emperor has no clothes* and Karen Legge (2005): *Rhetorics and Realities*. Bearing in mind about the ethic, transparency, and reliability of my research, the respondents have their voice through the semi-structured interview to open up about the challenge experienced in the process of performance appraisal in their workplace. My supervisors advised me to do the transcription after each interview undertaken. After the thirteenth interview, all the experiences seemed to be repetitive, and it was not adding new information as per my research objective. Before reaching a saturation point, I did another two interviews to ensure that there are no new themes that emerged from the interviews.

As mentioned earlier, bias, marginalisation, discrimination, and racism may influence the lived experience of the performance appraisal of the participants. However, five respondents presented themselves as having a positive experience of performance appraisal. For example, fairness in performance appraisal, training opportunities, supportive line managers and career advancement. It is worth to mention that among the five respondents, one of them has both positive and negative experiences in their workplace. Through the repetitions of perceived fairness, good practice of appraisal, unfairness, discrimination, racism, and bias from the participants' lived experiences of PA. This research comes up with the themes of constructed fairness, regimes of inequality and; learning and development from the outcome of PA. The discussions and feedback from my supervisors led me to take an in-depth insight into the data to draw out the invisible realities. Although acknowledging that a researcher with a different ethnic background may adopt a different research method and yield different research findings, I argue that this thesis holds the validity and attempt to provide a credible interpretation and evaluation of the lived experience of the performance appraisal for the respondents.

The next chapter provides the key findings that emerged from the lived experiences of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations.

6.2 Key Findings in Relation to the Research Objectives

This section reviews the two objectives of this thesis, placing them within the context of the findings through interviews of ethnic minority employees regarding their experience of performance appraisal in UK organisations.

The first objective of this research is to produce a rich picture of the experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. The second is to examine whether ethnic minority employees' experience of performance appraisal is congruent with the goals of soft Human Resource Management (HRM).

6.2.1 To Produce a Rich Picture of the Experience of the Performance Appraisal for Ethnic Minority Employees in UK Organisations.

Findings from this research revealed that five of the respondents perceived positive experience in the process of their performance appraisal, which was labelled as constructed fairness. Their experiences reflected well-integrated policies and practices of the performance management cycle. The findings disclosed that the line managers, irrespective of their ethnic background, were supportive in providing training opportunities, equal treatment in the process of performance appraisal as compared to their white counterparts and they also have equal access to development opportunities. The findings also revealed that fairness in the process of performance appraisal improved the relation between line managers and these employees, irrespective of their ethnic background. However, other participants have the opposite experience of performance appraisal. The findings also brought out in bold the perceived malpractice of the process of performance appraisal by white line managers in UK organisations. These respondents perceived unfair treatment during the process of performance appraisals, such as discrimination, unfairness, oppressive behaviour and marginalisation ultimately results in perceptions of racism by ethnic minority employees. It is observed that through the power of white line managers, racial inequalities were maintained and the managerial positions were disproportionately allocated, with few, if any, possibilities of career advancement and promotions for ethnic minority employees. The collaboration of white managers with other white employees was seen to be successful in maintaining the status quo, especially as it related to ethnic minority employees not achieving fairness in the process of performance appraisal.

6.2.2 To Examine Whether Ethnic Minority Employees' Experience of Performance Appraisal is Congruent With the Goals of Soft HRM.

Concerning the second objective, this thesis examined whether the lived experience of the performance appraisal for the respondents is congruent with the goals of soft HRM. Good practices of HR policies [performance appraisal] generate quality employees (performance and skills), enhance commitment which is associated with high participation, feelings of importance and perceptions of fairness; integrate employees in the planning process, adaptive and responsive to any unanticipated change in the organisational structure. The

above characteristics of soft HRM were perceived by some of the respondents of this study, that is, visible fairness and transparency in the process of performance appraisal. Recognition and support of line managers enable some of the participants to use their full potential with possibilities of career advancement. However, this study also found some negative experiences of performance appraisal where employees (ethnic minority) felt that they have been deprived of training opportunities and unfairly treated as compared to their peers (white counterparts) and sought of legal actions (Trades Union) against their respective organisation. As revealed by this research, the forms of inequalities perceived by the respondents are unequal access to position, lack of training, discrimination and bias in the process of performance appraisal, which hard HRM would suggest.

The key findings within the regimes of inequality illustrated the malpractice and manipulation of the process of performance appraisal, which occurs through the power of whiteness (white line managers). The findings also reveal that the white line managers were seen as giving full support to white British employees such as training and excellent performance review, which resulted in promotion, thereby taking advantage of the goals of soft HRM. While ethnic minority employees, as evidenced by the lived experience of their performance appraisal from this study, are still waiting for the opportunity to be trained and promoted. The findings evidenced that despite the white employees do not have the necessary qualifications and skills, and the chances are still given to them. The power of the white line managers played a crucial role in the regimes of inequality where ethnic minority employees struggle to achieve the same outcomes as compared to their white counterparts. The regimes of inequality in UK organisations demonstrate that rhetorically performance appraisal system is adopted. In practice, as evidenced by the lived experience of the participants of this study, the white line managers privilege their white employees in the cycle of performance appraisal. As a result, the regimes of inequality generated among others a lack of trust in the system of performance appraisal, discrimination, demotivation, and barriers of opportunities, especially for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. The practice of performance appraisal, as evidenced in this study, cannot be congruent with the goals of soft HRM. Especially, when such practices incur in hard HRM outcomes such as barriers of

promotion, lack of transparency and unfair treatment meted out to ethnic minority employees which result in discrimination.

This chapter deals with the key findings of the research to the body of knowledge. Participants' lived experience of the performance appraisal in UK organisations are discussed therein. The outcome of the performance appraisal was also discussed concerning the soft and hard HRM. The next chapter elaborates on the contribution of the research.

6.3 Contribution of the Research

Most studies of performance appraisal have examined the situation in the USA (Bernardin, 1984 [Job Performance], Townley, 1993 [PA], Coens and Jenkins, 2002 [Abolishing PA], and Baxter, 2012 [Performance Rating]). There is little research on the topic from the UK and what there is (Newton and Findlay, 1996 [Playing God: PA], Dewberry, 2001 [Performance Disparities] and Wilson, 2010 [Bias in PA]) does not provide a rich picture of the lived experience of performance appraisal from an ethnic minority's perspective. This study provides a critical assessment of performance appraisal in the UK, showing the power of whiteness [line managers], and the lack of equal opportunities in training and career advancement for employees, irrespective of their ethnic background. The empirical findings from this research suggest that the systems, policies and practices of performance management life cycle developed by UK organisations must move beyond rhetoric to affect the organisational practices of PA, irrespective of the employees' ethnic background. The process, system and policy of performance life cycle are embedded in the strategy of the organisations. Here, the main focus should be in the transparency of reporting HR based performance indicators, that is, the non-financial reporting (see Cornelius, 1999:140). She argued that *"performance management can be used to manipulate employees in a negative sense, where power plays, and the manipulation of appraisal and associated rewards are misused carrots and sticks to make employees do what the manager wants them to do... little attention paid to the views of employees"*. In this regard, the organisations need to have an external audit check of the performance appraisal of employees similar to the audited financial reporting, which is a legal requirement. It is also important to

ensure that what advocated in the policies of performance appraisal (Rhetoric) is acted out in practice (Reality) by respective organisations.

This study interviewed different ethnic minority employees from various industries [Gambling, Banking, Retail, NHS, Education and Local Government] within UK organisations [see Table 1]. There were variations in age, gender, years of experience, industry and their ethnic background; however, most of the participants' faith was Christian. The research of Baxter (2012) was based in one the federal government in the USA: Disparities in federal employee performance rating. Another study, for example, Wilson (2010): Bias in supervisor rating in PA, was pursued in one organisation in the UK: Banking. Nevertheless, this study adopted a different method where the sample of the respondents (EMEs) represents in a variety of UK organisations. It gives a more in-depth insight into how the process and practices are adopted in different UK organisations. It also gives an insight into the lived experience of PA for EME in a wider variety of UK organisations. This research offered insight into the growing body of existing literature on the different ethnic minority employees working in a variety of UK organisations regarding their lived experience of performance appraisal. It also provides the treatment by the line managers during the performance management cycle as compared to their white counterparts within private and public sectors in the UK.

It is important to note that this study evidenced that most of the respondents' line managers were white. The EMEs in this study perceived they had less chance to get promoted to managerial position than their white peers. Only five respondents out of fifteen perceived that their white line managers were supportive in the process of their performance appraisal. They perceived themselves to have equal access to training and career advancement as compared to their white counterparts. However, most of the participants perceived negative career effects and their lived experience of performance appraisal was that it was not a participative process. Evidence from the respondents of this study espoused that most of the white line managers were playing God rather than being a helper within the process of performance appraisal, which was not perceived to be the same for their white counterparts. The research of Newton and Findlay (1996), Dewberry (2001) and Wilson (2010) came to a similar conclusion that there is bias in rating PA, especially when EMEs are concerned. For instance, Dewberry

(2001)'s study was on "*performance disparity between white and of ethnic minority trainee lawyers in England*". The ethnic minority includes the Black Africans, Black Caribbean, Asians and other non-whites. Dewberry (2001) concluded that the poor performance of ethnic minority lawyers (trainee) was due to wholly or partly to racial discrimination by the supervisors/examiners, that is, the bias in the performance appraisal. Dewberry (2001) adopted a quantitative method through hypothesis and generalising the data from Bar Vocational Course between 1992 and 1995. Although there is a similarity in the finding of Dewberry (2001), the researcher of this study adopted a different approach, that is, providing evidence from the lived experiences of PA for EMEs: the participant's voice. The researcher did not generalised any data or made any hypothesis. This study adopted a thick description method to analyse the deeper understandings, feelings, thoughts and emotions of the respondents which evolved in the process of PA. This research provided information to the growing body of literature regarding the agenda of white line managers in the performance appraisal life cycle, that is, the power and influence of whiteness that harnesses the career advancement for white employees at the expense of ethnic minority employees. The line managers have a crucial role to play in employees' development which leads to career advancement, irrespective of their ethnic background. The organisations will need to redefine the role of their line managers, that is, from supervisor to coach. The line managers cannot run the shop floor on a full-time basis and coaching as well. In this regard, as a coach, they will be an active participant in the process of the performance life cycle and employee development. For all of this to work, the management will need to provide extensive training skills to coach, the skills to assess existing and potential training for employee's development including personal development, irrespective of their ethnic background.

Finally, the evidence from the participants' stories sheds some light on the rhetoric and realities in the process of performance appraisal life cycle, especially the role of line managers (white) that influence the outcome of PA. Similarly, Gill (1999) observed the gap between rhetorics and realities of the soft and hard model of HRM concerning workforce management in Australia. She concluded that rhetorically the Australian organisations embraced the HRM policies and process, which is the soft approach to HRM. However, in reality, the employees

faced technical bias in the training program, and their career advancement was ignored, which a hard HRM would suggest. It is important to note that Gill (1999) findings were based on annual reports to assess the rhetoric and the workforce survey to evaluate the reality of workforce management regarding the training of employees. This study comes to similar conclusions as Gill but employing a different methodology and in a different national context. This research thus contributes to the growing body of literature regarding the gap between rhetoric and realities in the process and practices of the performance management life cycle, through the perception of ethnic minority employees working in both public and private UK organisations. The process, practices and system of the performance management cycle at the rhetoric level is soft. In reality, it is a hard approach to HRM because the organisation provided all necessary ammunition to the line managers for a fair and transparent process of PA. As evidenced by this study, the white line managers privileged their white counterparts at the expense of the EMEs. Organisations should promote an open culture of dignity and respect. As a result, it can minimise the unfairness, racial discrimination and bias in the process of performance appraisal. Albeit, this research addresses the lived experience of PA for ethnic minority employees in line with the aim and objectives.

6.4 Further Research

Further research may be carried out to examine the experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations. Below are the propositions for further studies.

This research has been conducted on ethnic minority employees working in UK organisations. Other studies may focus on specific ethnic minority background such as Asian, East European, Indian and or Pakistani. The research may lead to an insight into whether there is effectively fairness in the process of the performance appraisal for other ethnic employees working in UK organisations. Understanding and closely monitoring the experiences of these groups may also support career development, equal opportunities in training and support from line managers.

Secondly, the research points the need for a Case Study in UK organisation (CSO) regarding the experience of the performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees. As mention earlier in this study none of the organisations in the UK approached by the researcher gave a chance to interview their ethnic minority employees regarding their experience of performance appraisal. It, therefore, begs the question of the mystery surrounding the rhetorics and realities of soft and hard HRM in the practice of the process of performance appraisal within an organisation. This study firmly supports further research in a CSO to enable an in-depth insight into recruitment channels, recruitment procedures, selection, and also take subsequent actions once ethnic minority employees are offered a job within UK organisations.

Finally, there is a need for further research on a different approach perspective of the experience for performance appraisal within an organisation in the UK. That is different ethnic employees with diverse ethnic line managers and the same ethnic group of employees with the same ethnic line managers. As evidenced in this research, the snowball sampling method led to males predominating and mostly Christians. This study points to the need for researching into the experience of PA of ethnic minority women and more among those of other faiths. Such an approach and perspectives may help to understand and assess the circumstances that lead to any discrimination, bias, favouritism, racism, inequality, or career advancement for ethnic minority employees persisting within the UK organisation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.0- Ethics Approval (amended)

Note: Change of DOS and Title of the thesis (See appendix 1.1)



19th July 2018

Dear Mahendra,

Project Title:	The Experience of Performance Appraisal for Ethnic Minority Employees in UK Organisations
Researcher:	Mahendra Kumar Ramgoolam
Principal Investigator:	Dr Olajumoke Okoya
Amendment reference number:	AMD 1819 02
UREC reference no of original approved application:	UREC 1617 46

I am writing to confirm that the application for an amendment to the aforementioned research study has now received ethical approval on behalf of University Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

Should you wish to make any further changes in connection with your research project, this must be reported immediately to UREC. A Notification of Amendment form should be submitted for approval, accompanied by any additional or amended documents:
<http://www.uel.ac.uk/wwwmedia/schools/graduate/documents/Notification-of-Amendment-to-Approved-Ethics-App-150115.doc>

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site:

Research Site	Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator
London	Dr Olajumoke Okoya

APPENDIX 1.1- Ethics Approval (Before amendment)



2nd May 2017

Dear Mahendra,

Project Title:	The Impact of Performance Appraisal on Ethnic Minority employees in UK Organisations
Principal Investigator:	Professor John Chandler and Dr Gil Robinson
Researcher:	Mahendra Kumar Ramgoolam
Reference Number:	UREC 1617 46

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered by UREC on **Wednesday 22 March 2017**.

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with your research project, this must be reported immediately to UREC. A Notification of Amendment form should be submitted for approval, accompanied by any additional or amended documents:

<http://www.uel.ac.uk/wwwmedia/schools/graduate/documents/Notification-of-Amendment-to-Approved-Ethics-App-150115.doc>

Any adverse events that occur in connection with this research project must be reported immediately to UREC.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator
London	Professor John Chandler and Dr Gil Robinson

APPENDIX 2 – Participant Consent Form

Consent to Participate in a Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants.

Title: The Experience of Performance Appraisal for Ethnic Minority Employees in UK Organisations.

Name of Researcher: Mahendra Kumar Ramgoolam

Please tick as appropriate:

	YES	NO
I have the read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.		
Your interview will be audio-recorded using a small tape recording device. You are required to consent to voluntarily accepting to having this undertaken		
I confirm that the University of East London Equality and Diversity Policy has been explained clearly to me.		
I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential as far as possible. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the experimental programme has been completed.		
I understand that maintaining strict confidentiality is subject to the following limitations:		

Limitations of confidentiality may apply where disclosure are made of imminent harm to yourself or others or criminal activity. Any such disclosure may be reported to the relevant authority.		
Anonymized quotes will be used in proposed future publications.		
Your name or any other identifiable features about yourself will not be used in future publication.		
Proposed method(s) of publication dissemination of research findings include in conference papers, journals, research forums and perhaps in a book.		
I consent to having information obtained from me for future data use.		
I consent to being contacted in future by the researcher if the need arises.		
It has been explained to me what will happen once the programme has been completed.		
I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time during the research without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I understand that my data can be withdrawn up to the point of data analysis and that after this point it may not be possible.		
I will be given full opportunity to review, edit or erase any parts of my recording regarding to this research.		
I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications.		

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Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant's Signature

.....

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS):
MAHENDRA KUMAR RAMGOOLAM

Investigator's Signature

.....

Date:

APPENDIX 3 – Participant Information Sheet

University of East London
Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD
Telephone: 020 8223 6683
Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk

Research Integrity

The University adheres to its responsibility to promote and support the highest standard of rigor and integrity in all aspects of research; observing the appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks.

The University is committed to preserving your dignity, rights, safety and well-being and as such it is a mandatory requirement of the University that formal ethical approval, from the appropriate Research Ethics Committee, is granted before research with human participants or human data commences.

The Principal Investigator/Director of Studies

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Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Project Title

The Experience of Performance Appraisal for Ethnic Minority Employees in UK Organisations.

Project Description

The aim of the study is to examine and evaluate the experience of performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations.

Research objectives

- To produce a rich picture of the experience of performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees in UK organisations.
- To examine whether ethnic minority employees' experience of performance appraisal is congruent with the goals of Soft Human Resource Management.

As a participant of this research, you will be interviewed about your lived experience of performance appraisal in the organization you have been working. This interview will be audio recorded by use of a tape-recording device. The researcher will also take notes as appropriate during the interview. During the audio- recorded interviews you will primarily talk about your experiences and not make reference to other third parties in your discussions. You will be given the full opportunity to review, edit or erase any parts of your recording.

Your views will be respected and you will be treated in accordance with the University of East London Equality and Diversity Policy which will ensure that your participation in this research does not put you into any disadvantage.

Confidentiality of the Data

Your identity will be protected during the data analysis and reporting. The information provided will be anonymized and coded. The data will be stored electronically in a password protected server and further for manual data there will be secured storage in lockable filing cabinet.

Location

It is proposed that the research will be conducted in specific locations convenient (low noise, good lighting), secure (day time) and accessible as agreed between the researcher and the participant in location within London.

Remuneration

This research is self-funded, an academic research and therefore you will receive no remuneration for your participation.

Disclaimer

Your involvement in this project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your consent at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied upon communicating a desire to do so to the investigator.

University Research Ethics Committee

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

**Catherine Fieulleteau, Research Integrity and Ethics Manager, Graduate
School, EB 1.43**

**University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD
(Telephone: 020 8223 6683, Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk)**

For general enquiries about the research please contact the Principal Investigator on the contact details at the top of this sheet.