



Performance Appraisal and It's Fairness on Employees

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Abstract: Performance appraisal is a crucial process in any organizations as it affects employees' job satisfaction, motivation, and career development. The perception of fairness in performance appraisals is an essential factor that influences employees' attitudes towards their work and their relationship with their managers. The review examined the perception and the fairness of performance appraisal and its effect on organizational commitment. The study made use of secondary data in the form of published information by other writers. The fairness in performance appraisals is subjective and varies among employees. Differences in perceptions can be attributed to factors such as personal experiences, organizational culture, and individual personality traits. Additionally, research has shown that the perceived fairness of performance appraisals can significantly affect organizational commitment. To ensure a fair and effective performance appraisal process, the review recommends that organizations should consider implementing strategies that promote transparency, open communication, and equal treatment for all employees. To be relevant, the appraisal must include all the pertinent criteria for evaluating performance and exclude criteria that are irrelevant to job performance.

Keywords: Performance, Appraisal, Performance Appraisal, Satisfaction, Employees

1. INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal (PA) is the process by which a group of employees' behaviors, characteristics, and performance are assessed individually over a period of time, typically

utilizing a yearly evaluation, by their supervisors (Esfahani, et al., 2014). The majority of contemporary firms use particular types of performance appraisal designed to give employees feedback on their performance

during the appraisal period. Performance appraisal is important and beneficial to both staff and employers. Performance appraisal aids in enhancing their capacities and supporting their skill development. Additionally, it aids in strengthening organizational planning and attaining the organization's primary objectives successfully and efficiently (Youssif, et al., 2017.)

Performance appraisal is a critical aspect of employee management, and ensuring its fairness is essential for employee satisfaction and organizational success (Erdogan. B., 2002).. Several studies that highlighted the significance of fairness in performance appraisals have been found to be closely linked to job satisfaction (Youssif, et al., 2017.). Biases in the performance review process can have harmful consequences for both employees and organizations, leading to talent loss and negative impacts on employee commitment (Landy and Farr, 1980). The PA is an important human resource practice and tool which provides information to many critical human resource decisions such as training and development needs (Taylor et al., 1995), compensations and benefits (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Boxall and Purcell, 2003; Holland et al., 2005), layoffs, staffing, pay increase, drug testing, and discipline (Folger and Konovsky, 1989; Konosky and Cropanzano, 1991; Cropanzano, 1991; Gilliland, 1994). It has been studied quite extensively over the last few decades, yet scholars continue to argue about the validity and merits of these systems (Landy and Farr, 1980). Due to the paradox facets of performance appraisal system, major issues related to an intricate dynamic relationship between employee satisfaction and perception of fairness are raised (Allen and Meyer, 1990).

Recently, the relationship between organizational justice and organizational commitment has been widely researched.

Several studies support the notion that fairness of performance appraisal is saliently related to employees' commitment, satisfaction and motivation to their organization (Colquitt et al., 2001; Abdul Shukor et.al, 2008; Morrow, 2011). According to Meyer et al. (1997), perception of fairness illustrates that the organization is committed to its employees. If people feel that the decisions are fair, they would respond with commitment, higher satisfaction and would be more willing to involve in 'extra-role behavior' (Colquitt et al., 2001).

In fact, researchers such as Cook et al., (2004) argue that the evaluation of performance will not be effective if it is perceived as unfair by those involved in the evaluation process. Since employees' perception of justice is important to the performance outcomes, management of the organizations was advised to have the ability to change the employees' perception of the performance evaluation (Tang et al., 1996).

The concepts and definitions stated here will describe the theories related to Fairness of Performance Appraisal, Motivation, and Satisfaction towards performance appraisal. The perception of fairness in performance appraisals is influenced by various factors, including interpersonal, procedural, and outcome fairness. To address the fairness factor in performance management, organizations are advised to prioritize transparency, goal alignment, coaching skills for managers, and equitable reward systems.

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The concepts & definitions are the concepts that are related to this research, and how it can help defining the research problem. The concepts and definitions stated here will describe the theories related to Fairness of Performance Appraisal, Motivation, and Satisfaction towards performance appraisal. The perception of fairness in performance appraisals is influenced by various factors, including interpersonal, procedural, and outcome fairness. To address the fairness factor in performance management, organizations are advised to prioritize transparency, goal alignment, coaching skills for managers, and equitable reward systems. The main objective of this review is to assess performance appraisal and its fairness on employees.

TYPES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Negotiated Appraisal

Negotiated appraisals involve the use of a mediator during the employee evaluation. Here, the reviewer shares what the employee is doing well before sharing any criticisms. This type of evaluation is helpful for situations where the employee and manager have some tension or disagreement. (Cropanzano et al.,2007).

Management by Objective (MBO)

The management by objective (MBO) is an appraisal that involves both the manager and employee working together to identify goals for the employee to work on. Once they establish a goal, both individuals discuss the progress the employee will need to make to fulfill the objectives. When the review time concludes, the manager evaluates whether the individual has met his/her goals and sometimes offers incentives for meeting it. (Cropanzano et al.,2007).

Assessment Center Method

The assessment center method allows employees to understand how others perceive them. This helps them understand the impact of their performance. The assessment center method divides the review into three stages: pre-assessment, during assessment and post-assessment. During the assessment, the manager places the individual in role-playing scenarios and exercises to show how successful they are in their role (Cropanzano et al.,2007).

Self-appraisal

A self-appraisal is when employees reflect on their personal performance. Here, they identify their strengths and weaknesses. They may also recount their milestones with the organization, such as completing a high number of sales within a month. This type of appraisal usually involves filling out a form, and the manager may choose to follow up on this written self-assessment with a one-on-one meeting (Cropanzano et al.,2007).

Peer Reviews

Peer reviews use coworkers as the evaluator for a particular employee. This type of performance appraisal can help assess whether an individual works well with teams and contributes to their share of work. Usually, the employee reviewing the individual is someone who works closely

with them and has an understanding of their skills and attitude. (Cropanzano et al.,2007).

Customer or Client Reviews

Customer or client reviews occur when those who use a company's product or service provide an evaluation. This provides the company with feedback on how others perceive the employee and their organization. Using this type of appraisal can help you improve both employee performances and customer interactions.

Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS)

Behaviorally anchored rating scale (BARS) appraisals measure an employee's performance by comparing it to specific behavioral examples. Businesses give each example a rating to help collect qualitative and quantitative data. These examples help managers measure an employee's behavior on predetermined standards for their role. (Cropanzano et al.,2007).

2. CONCEPT OF FAIRNESS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Understanding fairness in performance appraisal process and practices is extremely important for organizations because of its relationship with employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment and, subsequently, their propensity to search for another job. Cropanzano et al., (2007) defined organizational justice as a personal evaluation about the ethical and moral standing of managerial conduct cited by Sudin (2011, p. 67). They argued that organizational justice has the potential to create powerful benefits for organizations and employees alike. These include greater trust and commitment, improved job performance, more helpful citizenship behaviors, improved customer satisfaction, and diminished conflict (Cropanzano et al.,2007).

According to (McShane & Glinow, 2000), perception is the process of receiving information and making sense of the world around us cited by Chemed Diriba (2012, p. 33). It involves deciding which information to notice, how to categorize this information, and how to interpret within the framework of our existing knowledge. As he noted most stimuli are screened out; the rest are organized and interpreted based on various information-processing activities. The resulting perceptions influence our emotions and behavior toward those objects, people, and events.

According to Armstrong (2009), perception is the intuitive understanding, recognition and interpretation of things and events. Behavior will be influenced by the perceptions of individuals about the situation they are in. Therefore, the perception of employee about their performance appraisal depends upon their understanding of themselves and interpretation of their own. The perception of employees about the performance appraisal in the selected institutions of higher education in Ethiopia had been organized and presented by posing questions about their attitudes or perceptions toward performance appraisal practice of employees. The study found out that employees are influenced by the perceptions and this also affects their performance.

The increasing-concern of most employees in many organizations nowadays is the fairness at work, which is known also as the organizational justice (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001) cited by Warokka et al., (2012, p. 6). This issue, especially, related to the performance appraisal fairness and what is behind the different performance point of each employee receives. The issue of fairness is critical to performance administration and every phase of labour management. Employees will act to restore equity if they perceive an imbalance. In

evaluating the fairness of their performance appraisal, employees will balance inputs (e.g., work effort, skills) against outcomes (e.g., pay, privileges).

According to Warokka et al., (2012, p. 7), organizational justice researchers divide the concept of fairness into three primary types. The first is "distributive" justice where the fairness of the outcomes of a particular decision is the main consideration. The second is "Procedural" justice which is concerned about the fairness of the process that lead to the outcome. The majority of research conducted in the organizational justice's field has put these two areas as the foundation in the last twenty years (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001). Those studies indicate that people will accept a certain amount of unfairness in distribution if they perceive that the process by which the distribution decisions were made is fair

The third type of justice is often referred to as "interactional" justice. Many scholars define interactive-oriented justice as the fairness of the interpersonal treatment that one receives at the hands of an authority figure during enactment of organizational processes and distribution of outcomes (Bies & Moag, 1986). The interactional justice concept has been included as an interpersonal aspect of procedural justice. It also plays as a distinct construct along with procedure-oriented and distributive justice (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).

In 2007, Robbins and Judge resumed their findings and reinforced distributive, procedural, and interactional justice as the three different components of organizational justice. Perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment (Robbins & Judge, 2007) as cited by (Warokka et al., 2012, p. 12). In reality, the objectives often vary and differ from one's perception due

to every person has different behavior and thought. Therefore, it is common that there is more disagreement among people's view. Factors that influence someone's perceptions are from their nature and characteristics, which include his or her attitudes, personality, motives, interest, past experiences and expectations. Employees want fair dealing in performance appraisal system, which is a vital component of organization's HRM. The literature reveals that fairness perceptions about various components of performance appraisal system have very serious implications not only for employees, but also for an organization (e.g. Bernardin & Beatty, 1984; Latham & Wexley, 1994) as cited by Ikramullah, M. et al. (2011). If employees have an opportunity to change their ratings (Gabris & Ihrke, 2001) or have given simply right to raise their voice against ratings which they perceive unfair (Cawley, Keeping, & Levy, 1998; Gabris & Ihrke, 2001) then this will result in fair perceptions of performance appraisal system.

Similarly, employees' satisfaction with various aspects of performance appraisal system, like, performance targets setting and performance feedback are related to fairness of appraisal system Blau (1999). The study of fairness or organizational justice came out from Adam's equity theory in the social-psychology literature (Adams, 1965). Employees' perceptions of fairness depend on one or more of their perceptions concerning the various organizational outcomes which they receive from the organization (distributive justice), procedures used to make those decisions (procedural justice) and the treatment which they receive from organization or agents (i.e. managers) (interpersonal justice) and all the required information related to various outcomes is provided within an organization (informational justice) (Ikramullah, et al., 2011, pp. 94). The most important variable to be considered in line with the performance

appraisal system or practice of an organization is the perception of employees. Perception as defined in Oxford advanced dictionary is: “understanding or thinking something or somebody in a particular way”. Perceptions of employees about the targets, outcomes and uses of performance appraisal results would be beneficial depending on a number of factors. For example, employees are more likely to be receptive and supportive of a given performance appraisal program if they perceive the process as a useful source of feedback which helps to improve their performance Mullins (2007, p. 43). Employees are likely to embrace and contribute meaningfully to a given performance appraisal scheme if they perceive it as an opportunity for promotion, and as an avenue for personal development opportunities, a chance to be visible and demonstrate skills and abilities, and an opportunity to network with others in the organization.

On the other hand, if employees perceive performance appraisal as an unreasonable attempt by management to exercise closer supervision and control over tasks they (employees) perform, various reactions may result. Performance appraisal will be effective if the appraisal process is clearly explained to, and agreed by the people involved Anthony et al., (1999). The human resource system can become more effective by having a valid and accurate appraisal system used for rating performances of employees (Armstrong, 2003; Bohlander & Snell, 2004). The impact of fair performance appraisal on employee’s motivation can be determined through the fairness of the performance appraisal. Colquitt (2001) indicated that it the fairness of Performance Appraisal is determined by distribution fairness, procedure fairness, and interaction fairness. A fair performance appraisal system can influence employee motivation to improve productivity..

4. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SATISFACTION

Since performance appraisal systems allows communicating strategies, goals and vision, of the employees and their levels of commitment to organizational goals and, therefore, become more affectively committed to their organization. There are main critical consequences of performance appraisal in organizations. According to several scholars, the five benefit areas of an efficacious performance appraisal system include: (a) determines and explains and communicates pay decisions, (b) provides the subordinate with development information and support, (c) fosters mutual task definition and planning of future work goals, (d) documents and recognizes subordinate's performance and allows the subordinate to provide feedback about feelings, € supervision and definition of work (Latham & Wexley, 1981; Landy & Farr, 1983; Lawler, Mohrman, & Resnick, 1984; Bernardin & Beatty, 1984; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995) as cited by Walsh (2003, p. 23). There are many suggestions about attributes that make procedures perceived as fair. In this study these attributes are referred to as fairness rules. Some researchers emphasize more instrumental value of the procedures while others focus on the relational side of the procedures. (Maaniemi & Hakonen, (2011, p. 14) expanded the attributes of the fair procedures to six items. These items or rules can be interpreted in performance appraisal context as follows:

Consistency: maintaining consistency in performance standards over time and among employees.

Bias-suppression: constraining self-interest by discussing performance expectations and discrepancies.

Accuracy: training managers and employees to record performance accurately throughout the

period and use this record to prepare and justify performance evaluations.

Correct ability: instructing managers to listen to the employees' opinions and change the evaluation if appropriate.

Representativeness: discussing concerns of the employee and manager throughout each stage of the process.

Ethicality: using procedures that are compatible with existing moral and ethical standards.

Different research findings of respondents suggested that performance appraisal system fails to communicate the feedback to employees on time, employees are not clear about the purpose of performance appraisal, the timing of performance appraisal and employees have no opportunities of learning around their work place specifically like: in sharing of information for improvement and employees' participation in making suggestions (Eniye Dargie, 2007, p. 52 & Desalegn Amlaku, 2010, p. 73).

The philosophy of performance management emphasizes the importance of employees planning how they are going to achieve their objectives, and then obtaining feedback data themselves. The rapid development of management information systems in recent years has increased the capacity to provide quantitative and timely feedback.

Based on previous studies, there are four activities in the performance appraisal cycle in organizations, namely, (a) defining the performance, (b) measuring and evaluating the performance, (c) giving feedback to the employee, and (d) applying the results in the different organizational system as noted by Warokka et al., (2012, p. 7). By using this performance appraisal method, an organization can evaluate the level of performance of an employee and keep the record of their performance achievement as well. Meanwhile,

one important function of performance appraisals is to encourage, guide, and improve employee performance. To be effective, the performance appraisal must be relevant and the measurement standards must be clear. Relevance refers to the degree to which the performance measurement includes the necessary information; that is, information that indicates the level or merit of a person's job performance.

To be relevant, the appraisal must include all the pertinent criteria for evaluating performance and exclude criteria that are irrelevant to job performance. Most authors agree that the performance appraisal practices are effective if formats are designed taking into account the nature of the job employees are accomplishing, their positions, and qualifications etc. Moreover, appraisal criteria should be updated from time to time with changes taking place in the external environment and allowing employees to be involved in setting performance standards so as to enhance the connection between employee job and performance criteria. The other key issue is that management should not unnecessarily interfere in the process (Meseret Yazachew, 2007, p. 76).

In addition, it has been reported that the management's contribution in employees' job performance is low due mainly to absence of absence of identified mentors and coaches, low gap filling roles of performance managers and absence of autonomy and finally, weaker performance planning in the public enterprises in comparison to the private sector (Mathias Nigatu, (2011, p. 58).

Despite the widespread use of the aforementioned methods, there are dissatisfactions and problems with the feedback systems associated with single source performance appraisal (Gurbuz & Dikmenli, 2007) cited by (Boachie-Mensah & Awini, 2012, p. 76). In response to the concerns raised,

considerable emphasis has been placed on developing multisource feedback systems. It is useful to implement a variety of the appraisal methods simultaneously in an organization to a wide range of job-performance information for effective decision-making.

6. EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS ON PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Mohrman et al., (1989), cited by Warokka et al., (2012, p. 6) documented some potential benefits of highly performance appraisal policy, such as increased motivation to perform effectively, gaining new insights into staff and supervisors, distributed rewards on a fair and credible basis, and encouraging increased self-understanding among staff as well as insight into the kind of development activities that are of value. Richards (2010) found that performance appraisal can provide an indication of areas of training needs as well as direction for leadership development, performance improvement, and succession planning. According to Murphy & Cleveland (1991), when the following criteria are met, performance appraisals are most likely to be perceived by employees as accurate and fair:

- a. Appraisals are conducted frequently;
 - b. There is a formal system of appraisal;
 - c. Supervisors have a high degree of job knowledge;
 - d. Employees have an opportunity to appeal ratings;
 - e. Performance dimensions are seen to be highly relevant;
 - f. Action plans are formed for dealing with present weaknesses; and
 - g. The organizational climate is cooperative rather than competitive
- cited by Walsh (2003, p. 24).

Most employees that they get much lesser than the effort they are required to exert on performing their jobs (Berhan Ayenew (2007, p. 66). According to his , majority of the

respondents' perceptions were due to poor recognition of performance appraisal process that leads to low organizational commitment.

If an appraisal within a company is carried out without any rules, transparency, and prospect of things linked to it, it might cause severe problems including damage to the climate at workplace and decrease in productivity. In general, according to Smither (1998) cited by Warokka et al., (2012, p. 6), perceptions of fairness arise from consideration of the outcomes received (outcome fairness); the procedures used to determine those outcomes (procedural fairness); and the way in which the decision-making procedures were implemented and explained (interpersonal fairness). This description of the components of fairness draws heavily on the area of organizational fairness. Therefore, to handle the issue of managing organization effectively, it is important to any top management to set a performance appraisal system accurately to meet the employees' sense of fairness.

7. CHALLENGES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

There are so many challenges confronting performance appraisal and these include:

- a. The main issue in the practice of performance appraisal activity is the fairness of the evaluation decision. Raters have problems evaluating the performance appraisal in a proper way. Performance of individual employees that is not measured accurately can lead to dissatisfaction with the system.
- b. One of the factors that contribute to employee's dissatisfaction is that raters are not knowledgeable and do not have the required skills. This will affect the process of evaluation because bias, unfairness and unreliability may occur. Although there is a formal evaluation form and a set of standards to be

followed, employees seem not to trust the tools of evaluation.

- c. There is an issue of subjectivity in the performance evaluation in the public and private sector. It is written in black and white to be as objective as possible, however, during the implementation of performance appraisal, the evaluation becomes subjective. The subjectivity of the evaluation discourages employees on supporting the measurement of performance appraisal. Therefore, the objective of the performance appraisal is not achieved.
- d. The quota system practiced in certain organisation also creates dissatisfaction among employees. Only a small portion of the employees will get salary increment either vertically or diagonally. Therefore, although the employees may perform well, they may not get a reward because it depends on the quota system. This will lead to a decrease in work performance, self-esteem and loyalty to the organisation.
- e. The appraisal decision nowadays is confronted with a great deal of criticisms and comments from the employees and their unions. There are several issues being put forward such as the raters' ability, accuracy of the system, fairness, discrimination, quota system and other aspects.
- f. Performance appraisal should suit the organisation's culture. Research findings strongly suggest that multinational company's managers should carefully design the appropriate system for foreign operation based on the different cultural factors of the country.

8. CONCLUSION

Performance appraisal is a very important process in any organizations as it affects employees' job satisfaction, motivation, and

career development. The perception of fairness in performance appraisals is an essential factor that influences employees' attitudes towards their work and their relationship with their managers. It is imperative that the performance appraisal practices of an institution is fair in its every aspect so that the employees would be satisfied and motivated to undertake their jobs effectively and diligently. The performance appraisal practice must be linked to work and the organizational goals, otherwise employees will be dissatisfied and their contribution towards the attainment of the goals of the organization will be lower.

The fairness of performance appraisals is a multifaceted issue that significantly impacts employees and organizations. Addressing biases and ensuring transparency and equity in the performance appraisal process are crucial for enhancing employee satisfaction, commitment, and overall organizational performance. Implementing a fair performance appraisal is essential for employee engagement, motivation, and retention. The perception of fairness in performance appraisals is a vital aspect of employee well-being and organizational success. By understanding and addressing employees' perceptions of fairness, organizations can create a more just and equitable work environment, leading to increased job satisfaction, better employee-manager relationships, and improved organizational commitment.

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