

## Effect of Perceived Appraisal Fairness on Job Satisfaction

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the employees' perception of fairness in the performance appraisal system and its effect on job satisfaction of an employee. The perceived fairness in appraisal system is discussed with the help of organizational justice theory which was principally derived from Adam's equity theory and used by many researchers in organizational research. The perception of fairness in performance appraisal system consists of three main factors: Distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice and are used as independent variables and job satisfaction of an employee as dependent variable. The survey method by using random sampling technique was used to collect the data from garment firms of Pakistan which are registered under PRGMEA (Pakistan Readymade Garment and Manufacturer and Exporter Association). Data analysis were conducted by using Bivariate correlation and multiple regression analysis. The findings of the result explored that distributive, procedural and interactional fairness in the appraisal system are the three significant variables that enhances the job satisfaction of an employee in the garment sector of Pakistan. This is the first empirical study in order to evaluate the perception of employees about performance appraisal system in the Garment sector of Pakistan and this study provides significant result to understand the importance of perceived fairness and satisfaction among employees in the performance evaluation process.

**KEY WORDS:** Perceived Fairness, performance appraisal system, job satisfaction

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal is one of the instrument in human resource practices that is considered as an important topic for academic researchers and HR practitioners in last several decades in order to analyze the employee's performance(Landy & Farr, 1980; Berrin, 2002). Effective performance appraisal system is highly important for the survival of any organization while an ineffective system leads towards the organizational destruction and create dissatisfaction and confusion among employees. In an organization, performance appraisal system usually conduct for administrative or development purposes which means the system is responsible for taking decision for promotion, rewards, demotion, termination etc or use for employees' training, counseling and personal development etc.(Mejia, Balkin, & Cardy, 2012).

In many organization, the most serious issue in performance appraisal system is the perception of an employee about fairness in performance evaluation and performance review as according to Alwadaei, (2010); Kuvaas, (2007) the best way to evaluate the effectiveness of appraisal system is to analyze the responses of the employees in the organization. Responses are mainly influenced by the perception and are always vary from person to person. Whereas, perceptions are usually developed by the pleasant or bitter experiences of an individual with the system in the organization. In organizational context, the main function of employee's affirmative perception is to change the behavior of an employee and put positive effect on employee attitude such as job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment, workplacebehavior etc. Moreover, the attitude or behavior of an individual is largely affected by his perception about the reality rather than reality itself(Poon, 2002).

In Pakistan, the management practices are limited to the paper shuffling activity and in reality mostly local or public firms are dominated by bureaucratic and authoritative nature of management system(Khilji, 2002; Islam, 2004; Ehtasham, 2012). In such environment, HR practices are highly neglected and performance appraisal practices are seen to be very rare. The absence of empirical research in this area required extensive efforts of the researchers to conduct research in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the appraisal system in Pakistani context(Bashir & Khattak, 2008; Ehtasham, 2012). Rabia, Muhamad, & Saddam (2011) also recommended in their research study that it is important to investigate that firms which are operating in Pakistan have fair system of performance appraisal or not. Furthermore, many academic researchers Bernardin & Beatty (1984); Murphy & Cleveland (1995); Walsh (2003)

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also claimed that employee reaction is a “neglected criteria” in judging the success of performance appraisal system. Therefore, if employee perceived that current performance appraisal is accurate and fair enough to enhance their competency, growth rate and helps to achieve their personal developmental goal, it may significantly increase their job satisfaction.

Thus, this study explore the relationship between perception of an employee about the fairness of performance appraisal system and its effect on job satisfaction of an employee in the Garment sector of Pakistan. In this research study, perceived fairness is hypothesized as distributive justice, procedural justice and informational justice on the basis of organizational justice theory and job satisfaction as dependent variable to find out its effect on perceived fairness about appraisal system prevailing in the garment firms.

This study will be significant for HR policy maker and owners of garment firms that how they can increase the productivity of the organization with the help of performance appraisal system as this sector contributed to Pakistani export drastically in last two years from 117,000 million US dollar to 181,000 million US dollar approximately. Furthermore, it is the highest value addition industry in the textile sector of Pakistan(PRGMEA, <http://www.prgmea.org/res.asp>, 2011) and has immense potential to create over 25,000 more jobs every year (PRGMEA, <http://www.prgmea.org/res.asp>, 2014).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

Academic researcher used various names for performance appraisal system in their research like performance review, performance assessment, employee evaluation, performance evaluation, merit rating but the base line of all these terms is to judge the performance or try to improve the performance of an individual. Haji (2005) stated that it is a formal process where employee and supervisor interact with each other in order to determine the employee work performance as well as identify the strength and weakness of an employee for his career development. Performance appraisal is a part of performance management or sometimes the term used as synonym with performance management. It is an ongoing and continuous process between manager and employee that actually reflects the deep analysis of employee's daily performance(Fletcher, 1993; Haji, 2005). If the performance appraisal process has done properly than it may boost the employee satisfaction and decrease the employee retention rate(Hong, Hao, Kumar, Ramendran, & Kadiresan, 2012).

### 2.2 PERCEIVED FAIRNESS IN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

Perception of fairness in appraisal system is recognized as a vital criterion in analyzing the effectiveness and efficiency of the employee and organization (Jacobs, Kafry, & Zedeck, 1980).In fact, a survey conducted by Fortune magazine for top100 companies also emphasized the importance of perceived fairness in performance appraisal system among the corporate managers(Thomas & Bretz, 1994; Berrin, 2002).

There are several studies which discussed the major components of an effective appraisal system (Haji, 2005; Elverfeldt, 2005; Boice & Kleiner, 1997) but recent study claimed that the most influential component which makes the system effective and affect employee commitment and satisfaction is the fairness and trust of employees in the workplace and its system (Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004; Cook & Crossman, 2004; Suliman, 2007; Thamendren, 2011). The term “fairness” which is the main issue of the format and process of PAS and significantly affect the perception of employees about the system(Elverfeldt, 2005).

The factors which assist to predict the perceived fairness in the system are: regularity in performance feedback, supervisor knowledge about work performance standards, continuous opportunity to the employees to show their positive or negative feelings about performance appraisal review and mutual understanding and effective communication between supervisors and subordinates in setting new performance goals. Moreover, the main issue in the performance appraisal review and performance appraisal system is the perception of its employee about its fairness (Walsh, 2003).Employee satisfaction and perception of fairness in the system is mainly affected by the bureaucratic nature of the performance appraisal system where all the decisions related with employees are in hand of upper level of management. Sudin S., (2011) as cited in Choi, Tan, Wan, & Siti, (2013) indicated that employee satisfaction and perception of fairness in the system has complex and active relationship with performance appraisal system and it is highly important for the organization to focus on perceived fairness or organizational justice in the work setting. Perceived fairness (justice) in PAS has greater affect on the individual's attitude and behavior like job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions etc. and ultimately it affect the performance of individual in the workplace. Perception about fairness mainly depends on the standards followed by supervisor' in implementing the performance appraisal system by performing equal treatment and fair distribution of rewards among employees. These standards are basically developing expectation that provides the base of assessing the fairness in the system. However, harmony of behavior with expectation is considered as act of fairness while

contravene between behavior and expectation serve as act of unfairness. Moreover, Fairness is the main predictor of employee's behaviors and attitude and

subsequently perception of fairness leads towards the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of an employee with the system (Sudin S. , 2011; Greenberg, 2001).

According to the theory, the perception of fairness in performance appraisal system consists of three main dimensions as cited by many researchers, Adams (1965); Leventhal (1980); Bies, R., & Moag, (1986) in their research papers.

1. Distributive fairness
2. Procedural fairness
3. Interactional fairness

According to Elverfeldt (2005), "Distributive fairness is the degree to which rewards and punishments are actually related to performance inputs" or "fairness in the outcome" and it is considered as main predictor in assessing the job performance of an individual. The "Procedural fairness is the degree to which procedures and policies which determines the performance appraisal score are perceived as fair" while the "interactional fairness refers to fair treatment of employees by agents of the organization". Basically interactional fairness consists of two types of interpersonal treatment – interpersonal and informational fairness. Interpersonal fairness explain the nature of treatment with the employee by supervisor and top management while informational fairness refers to the information provided to employees by supervisor and top management about the procedural and distributive fairness(Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). In other way, distributive and procedural fairness should be accepted by the employee if they accept the whole procedure and outcome received. Here, it is worth mentioning that employees gives more importance to the procedural fairness than the distributive fairness and accept injustice in the result if their perception about the procedure is fair and accurate. Likewise, Employees are likely to accept the negative or adverse comments and actions against their performance if they have strong believe on the fairness in the system. However, the neglect or absence of fairness in the system leads towards dissatisfaction, lower commitment and high turnover rate. Furthermore, the perception of employee about fairness in the appraisal system actually determines the level of his willingness towards achievement of goals and meeting the expectation of the supervisor.

### **2.3 JOB SATISFACTION WITH PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM**

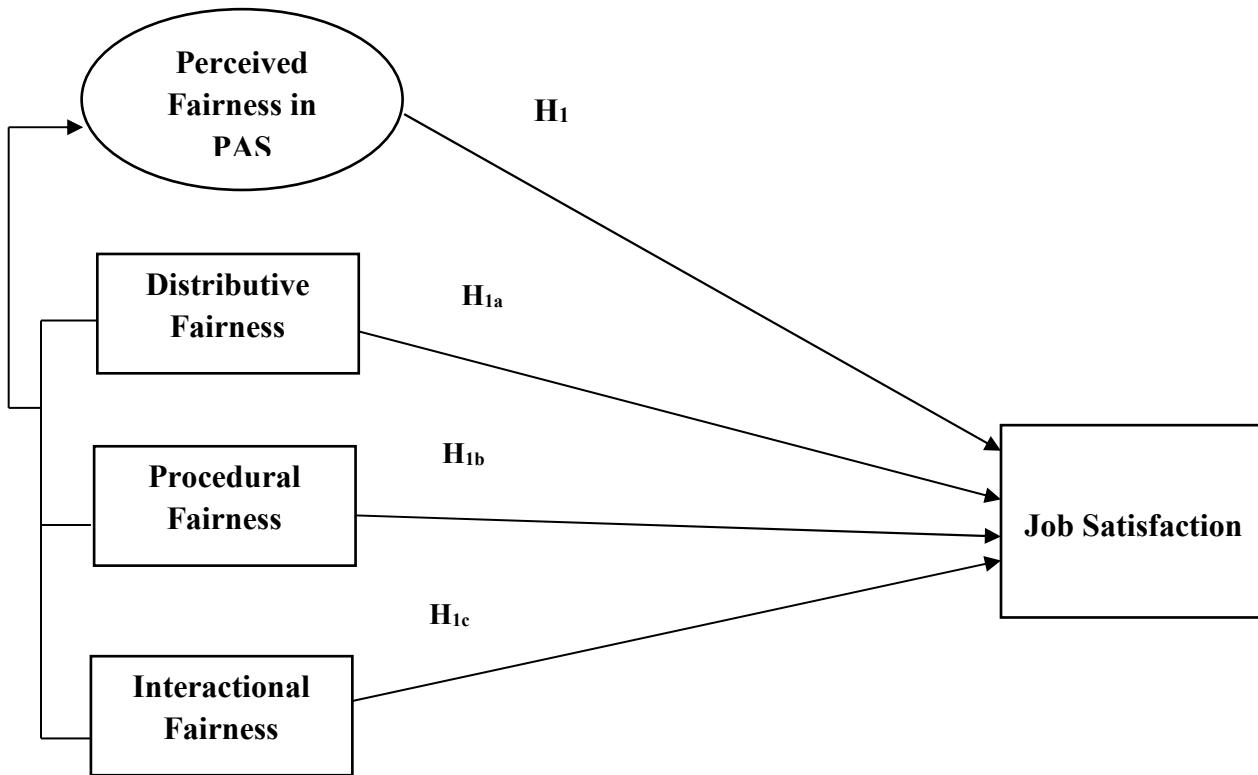
Effective performance appraisal system is highly important for the survival of any organization and an ineffective system leads towards the organizational destruction and create dissatisfaction and confusion among employees whereas satisfaction with appraisal system brings overall job satisfaction and it is also positively relate with job satisfaction(Blau, 1999; Ellickson, 2002; Pettijohn C. , Pettijohn, Taylor, & Keillor, 2001a; Pettijohn, Pettijohn, & d'Amico, 2001b; Kuvaas B. , 2006). Job Satisfaction is basically the feelings of employee about his current job experience with previous job experience as well as current expectations or opportunity available for him in the organization (Jeanmarie, 2008; Alwadaei, 2010).In most cases, employee perceived that dissatisfaction and increasing turnover rate is the result of manipulation in their performance rating which is mainly due to the supervisor personal hidden agenda. Evaluator rating procedure should be fair and should consist of proper standards because procedural fairness in the appraisal system is one of the important elements in predicting the employee satisfaction level. Moreover, informational and distributive fairness are directly related to satisfaction of appraisal rating and appraisal system while distributive, informational and interpersonal fairness have strong positive relationship with overall employees' satisfaction and satisfaction with supervision of managers (Sudin S. , 2011; Choi, Tan, Wan, & Siti, 2013).

If employees feel that personal biasness, favoritism and corruption is involved in the rating procedure than initially they change their attitude in the workplace and later on quit the job. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with appraisal system has been highlighted by many researchers(Dargham, 2009; Sudin S. , 2011; Kavanagh, J., & M., 2007; Hannay, 2010; Choi, Tan, Wan, & Siti, 2013) and it has been found that there is active and dynamic relationship between employee satisfaction and performance appraisal system as well as satisfaction with performance appraisal system is the overall satisfaction of employee perception(Ayaz, 2006; Mullins, 1996; Choi, Tan, Wan, & Siti, 2013). Employee satisfaction occurs only when employee accepts the PAS and feels that all procedure of the system is fair and accurate. Moreover, mutual trust between supervisor and subordinates and frequent feedback to the employee also bring satisfaction among employees about the system.

On the other hand, dissatisfaction with performance appraisal is due to the difference between the actual result and expectation of the employee about rewards against their performance. Researchers suggested that such type of discrepancy or dissatisfaction with the system can be reduced if workers and supervisors both receive complete

training regarding the Performance evaluation process(Cook & Crossman, 2004) and supervisors perform fairness in each and every step of the overall procedures of performance appraisal system.

### 3. HYPOTHEZED RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



#### HYPOTHESIS

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Perceived Fairness about performance appraisal system has positive effect on job satisfaction of an employee

**H<sub>1a</sub>:** Perceived Distributive Fairness about performance appraisal system has positive effect on job satisfaction of an employee

**H<sub>1b</sub>:** Perceived Procedural Fairness about performance appraisal system has positive effect on job satisfaction of an employee

**H<sub>1c</sub>:** Perceived Interactional Fairness about performance appraisal system has positive effect on job satisfaction of an employee

### 4. METHODOLOGY

The approach of this research study is quantitative. This study investigate the effect of components of perceived fairness in appraisal system on job satisfaction of an employee as dependent variable. The measurement scale is adapted from previous study and measured on 5 point likert scale. The random sampling technique through questionnaire has been used for the collection of the data. The items of each scale has been checked through interitem consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) and in some cases modified or reduced items with proper consultation of researchers and field experts. The data is collected from the employees of Garment firms which are registered under PRGMEA (Pakistan Readymade Garment and Manufacturer and Exporter Association). The correlation and multiple regression data analysis technique has been applied for the research findings.

### 5.FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The majority of the employees were male with 85.7%. The age group of respondents with high percentage was ranging from 25 – 30 years with 31.1%. Mostly middle level management was the respondents with 67.1%. The

highest percentage of respondents for educational status falls in the option of graduation with 63.2%. Mostly employees are working with their organization from 2 to 5 years with 29.3%. Finally, The majority of Garment firms have huge management structure with 400 and above employees with 48.6%. The demographic variables are summarized in table 5.1.

**Table 5.1. Demographic Analysis**

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	CATEGORIES	PERCENTAGE (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	85.7
	Female	14.3
<b>Age Group</b>	20 – 25	17.1
	25 – 30	31.1
	30 – 35	23.9
	35 – 40	13.6
	40 and above	14.3
<b>Designation</b>	Top	11.4
	Middle	67.1
	Low	21.4
<b>Qualification</b>	Undergraduate	35.4
	Graduation	63.2
	PhD.	1.4
<b>Stay in the organization (in Years)</b>	Below 2	22.9
	2 – 5	29.3
	5 – 8	27.1
	8 – 11	11.1
	11 and above	9.6
<b>No. of employees in the organization</b>	Less than 100	16.1
	100 – 200	12.5
	200 – 300	6.1
	300 – 400	16.8
	400 and above	48.6

The items of each variable scale has been taken from valid sources after check the interitem consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha). The mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha of each variables are given in table 5.2.

**Table 5.2. Mean, Standard Deviation of all variables**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
DJP	3.5583	.94015	.872
PJP	3.6214	.86639	.915
IJP	3.6000	.83370	.885
JSP	3.6964	.90364	.897

Responses for the scale of the scale were measured on a five point scale with 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and, 5 = strongly agree.

The correlation analysis has been done to analyze the relationship of each variable with all the other variables under study at 5% significance level. The results showed that distributive justice is positively correlated with all other variables. Distributive justice (DJP) has high and significant correlation with procedural justice i.e.  $r = 0.835$  as compare to other variables. Procedural justice (PJP) is positively correlated with all the variables of the hypothesized model while it has strong relationship with interactional justice i.e.  $r = 0.849$  while Interactional justice (IJP) has positive and significant relationship with procedural justice with value of  $r = 0.849$ . The last variable Job satisfaction (JSP) has strong relationship with Interactional justice i.e.  $r = 0.833$ .

**Table 5.3: Correlations of all variables**

		DJP	PJP	IJP	JSP
DJP	Pearson Correlation	1	.835**	.791**	.791**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	280	280	280	280
PJP	Pearson Correlation	.835**	1	.849**	.807**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	280	280	280	280
IJP	Pearson Correlation	.791**	.849**	1	.833**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	280	280	280	280
JSP	Pearson Correlation	.791**	.807**	.833**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	280	280	280	280

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Moreover, Multiple regression analysis technique is used to investigate how independent variables collectively affect the dependent variables and further test the hypothesis. In this research study, Distributive justice (DJP), Procedural justice (PJP) and Interactional justice (IJP) are the independent variables whereas Job satisfaction (JSP) is the dependent variable.

**Table 5.4. Job Satisfaction (JSP) Model Parameter Estimates**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.264	.124	2.134	.034
	IJP	.489	.065	.452	7.583 .000
	DJP	.255	.055	.265	4.652 .000
	PJP	.211	.069	.202	3.054 .002

a. Dependent Variable: JSP

**Table 5.6. ANOVA of Job Satisfaction Model**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	170.677	3	56.892	274.780 .000
	Residual	57.145	276	0.207	
	Total	227.821	279		

a. Predictors: (Constant), IJP, DJP, PJP  
b. Dependent Variable: JSP

The table 5.6 shows that p-value of ANOVA is 0.000 which indicates that model of JSP is highly significant as the p-value is much less than 0.05.

**Table 5.7. Model summary of JSP**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.866	0.749	0.746	0.45502
a. Predictors: (Constant), IJP, DJP, PJP				
b. Dependent Variable: JSP				

The findings of multiple regression analysis shows a significant relationship between Job satisfaction and three constructs of perceived fairness in performance appraisal system i.e. Distributive justice, Procedural justice and Interactional justice whereas Interactional justice has highest effect (0.489) on Job satisfaction of an employee in the Garment firms of Pakistan. Previous literature also indicates that procedural, distributive and interactional fairness have strong relationship with overall employee's job satisfaction (Sudin S. , 2011; Choi, Tan, Wan, & Siti, 2013).The R square value shows that 74.9% variation in the job satisfaction is explained by the significant constructs of perceived fairness in performance appraisal system. The Adjusted R square value indicated that 74.6% variation exists in the model for Job satisfaction explained by linear relationship of independent variables.

## 6. RESULTS OF HYPOTHEIS TESTING

**Table 6.1. Summary of Hypothesis Testing**

<b>H<sub>1</sub></b>	<b>Perceived Fairness about performance appraisal system has positive effect on job satisfaction of an employee</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H<sub>1a</sub></b>	Perceived Distributive Fairness about performance appraisal system has positive effect on job satisfaction of an employee	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H<sub>1b</sub></b>	Perceived Procedural Fairness about performance appraisal system has positive effect on job satisfaction of an employee	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>H<sub>1c</sub></b>	Perceived Interactional Fairness about performance appraisal system has positive effect on job satisfaction of an employee	<b>Accepted</b>

### CONCLUSION

This research study investigated the perceived fairness in performance appraisal system and its effect on job satisfaction of an employee. Overall, the findings of the study shows that perceived fairness in appraisal system effect the job satisfaction of an employee in the Garment Sector of Pakistan. In addition to this, Job satisfaction of an employee is highly correlated with the interactional fairness in the appraisal system. It means that employees of the garment firms perceived that their supervisor treat them with kindness and show concern about their rights as well as able to suppress personal biasness during performance evaluation process. Furthermore, employees of Garment firms are satisfied with their job and they accept that the appraisal system exists in their organization is fair enough in terms of procedures, outcome received on the basis of performance and treatment of top management with the employees. Researchers also asserted that acceptance of appraisal system in terms of fairness and accuracy of the system among employees is the main source of providing job satisfaction to the employee(Gary E. R., 2003; Elverfeldt, 2005).Moreover, job satisfaction of an employee brings effectiveness and efficiency in the work and ultimately leads towards the profitability of an organization. The findings of this research study will be significant for HR Practitioners, Managers, Policy maker and owners of garment firms that how they can increase the employee performance and productivity of the organization with the help of performance appraisal system and its fair perception among employees.

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