

Effectiveness of Performance Appraisal System: A Proposed Model with Empirical Evidence from the Government of Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract— Effectiveness of performance appraisal system has been recognized all over the world but still there is no single criteria to measure the effectiveness of performance appraisal system and organizations are facing many problems about effectiveness in designing and implementing systems. This study will be the earnest effort to measure the effectiveness of performance appraisal system for government employees. The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of Performance Appraisal System for government employees working in the Education department of Punjab, Pakistan. The researcher has intended to propose users' and system centric framework for the effectiveness of performance appraisal system. This study will highlight the importance of effective performance appraisal system in government departments' and it will furnish various guidelines to concerned authorities for improvements in performance appraisal system for government employees of Punjab, Pakistan.

Keywords— Performance Appraisal System, Performance Evaluation Report, System Characteristics, Users' Characteristics.

I. INTRODUCTION

SINCE the last two decades, "Performance Appraisal System" (PAS) has received much attention and has become the most extensively researched and investigated outlet of human resource management (Wright, 2002). Performance appraisal system has become one of the basic and major needs in any organization to evaluate its employees' performance contiguously and continually to find out whether they improve or not and know their input in organization (Punia & Siwatch, 2009). Almost all the public and private organizations are using performance appraisal system to assess the performance of employees. Performance appraisal system plays a key role to achieve the organizational goals through the direct impact on the employees' performance (Ahmad & Ali, 2004; Chan, 2006). This is why the organizations are needed

to develop an Effective Performance Appraisal System to achieve their objectives.

Organizations are facing serious issue regarding the acceptance of performance appraisal system and they have to face substantial resistance from employees to be appraised. The fundamental reason behind this resistance is the high level of dissatisfaction among the users (Hedge & Borman, 1995; Newton & Findlay, 1996) because they perceived that current practices of performance appraisal system are unreliable and invalid for making important decisions such as promotions and bonuses (Banks & Roberson, 1985; Marshall & Wood, 2000). Bretz, Millcovich, and Read (1992) found that 77 percent, Fletcher (1993) stated that more than 80 percent and Bowles and Coates (1993) claimed that 68 percent of sample organizations of United Kingdom are unhappy with the existing practices of performance appraisal system. Researcher found that this dissatisfaction with current performance appraisal system is the major reason of inefficiency in organizations and they are trying their best to develop an effective performance appraisal but still they are not getting success (Padgett, 1988).

To achieve effectiveness in performance appraisal system, researchers of industrial/organizational psychology have studied various aspects of the systems, like, psychometric properties, rater/ratee training and fairness issues (Cook & Crossman, 2004; Dobbins, Cardy, & Platz, 1990; Jacobs, Kafry, & Zedeck, 1980; Longenecker, Liverpool, & Wilson, 1988; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Walsh & Fisher, 2005) but efforts to develop specific criteria for effective performance appraisal system have been under way because a psychometrically sound performance appraisal system will be failed if system's users (rater and ratee) wouldn't accept and support it. As a result, a performance appraisal system will not be successful unless users involved in the system perceive it effective.

The gist of Bies and Moag (1986) agent-system model is also the study of agent and system to improve the perceptions of users about the PAS. Many researchers called the rater or appraiser as agent of performance appraisal system and mostly supervisor play the role of rater (Jawahar, 2007; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000). Jawahar (2007) conducted a study to examine perceptions of ratees about the satisfaction with appraisal rater and satisfaction with the system. Murphy and Cleveland (1995) purposed that performance appraisal

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should contain both person and system components. The performance appraisal system deals with user and system parallel in the literature therefore the researcher will examine the role of users and system characteristics in the effectiveness of performance appraisal system.

In particular, the focus in this research is employee "Performance Appraisal System" called "Performance Evaluation Report System" (PERS) in the government service of Punjab, Pakistan. More precisely, in this study the researcher will determine the level of effectiveness of performance appraisal system for government employees serving in education department of Punjab and examine the role of users' characteristics, system's characteristics and perceived fairness on overall perceived effectiveness of the performance appraisal system. Moreover, interrelation among the users' characteristics, system's characteristics and perceived fairness and effects of users' demographic characteristics will be explored.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Effectiveness of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is one of the widely researched topics in the field of industrial/organizational psychology (Levy & Williams, 2004) So there is no scarceness in the availability of performance appraisal literature. It has been defined in many ways by organizational researchers, for example, Murphy and Cleveland (1995) described performance appraisal as the "formal evaluation of an employee's job performance in order to determine the degree to which the employee is performing effectively". It is a formal process of employee monitoring and usually involves "evaluating performance based on the judgments and opinions of subordinates, peers, supervisors, other managers and even workers themselves" (Carson, Cardy, & Dobbins, 1991). Fletcher (1993) defined PA as "activities through which organizations seek to assess employees and develop their competence, enhance performance and distribute rewards".

The performance appraisal research, which had hitherto used different yardsticks for measuring the effectiveness of performance appraisal, albeit piecemeal, turned to calling for an integrative approach. Performance appraisal literature categorizes these yardsticks into the following four groups, also pronounced as criteria for judging the effectiveness of performance appraisal:

First, the utilization criterion aims to address issues raising why-related questions, concerning performance appraisal processes. Being a vital component of an organization's human resource management system, PA supports in making various human resource decisions (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Therefore, effectiveness of PA reflects on the intended purpose(s) for which the PA system is set up.

Second, the qualitative criterion helps to attain adequacy and usefulness of PA by creating fairness perceptions among its users (Giles, Findley, & Field, 1997; Jawahar, 2007). Earlier, fairness was derived from equity theory that explained

an individual's perception of outcome-related fairness (McDowall & Fletcher, 2004). However, in the recent past, the concept of fairness was more fully explained as organizational justice theory. Under the tenets of this theory, researchers have discussed varied forms of fairness, i.e., distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal (Colquitt, 2001).

Third, the quantitative criterion demonstrates the effectiveness of PA when: performance-related data are elicited through common PA methodologies, for similar ratees; analysis of the reliable data is carried out accurately; and reliability and discriminability issues are emphasized (Jacobs et al., 1980). All above points converge to rating accuracy. Over the past three decades, the main focus of PA research has been on the psychometric soundness of rating instruments and rating accuracy, i.e., reliability and validity of the rating forms (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). In context of PERS in Punjab, previous improvements had focus on one aspect of the quantitative criterion, i.e., rating form ("Crisis Group Asia Report," 2010).

Fourth and final, the outcome criterion refers to PA users' and stakeholders' favorable attitude toward PA. Literature clarifies that PA is considered effective when its key stakeholders, i.e., ratees, raters, and reviewers consider it useful (Levy & Williams, 2004; Roberson & Stewart, 2006). Therefore, PA users' reactions are considered helpful in determining the success of a PA system (Giles & Mossholder, 1990; Keeping & Levy, 2000; Roberson & Stewart, 2006). In the past, due to an overemphasis on reliability and validity of rating forms researchers remained less interested in users' reactions (Cook & Crossman, 2004; Jawahar, 2007; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Roch, Sternburgh, & Caputo, 2007). However, in early 1990s, PA researchers realized the importance of the attitudinal evaluation of PA system by its users, and thus, shifted their center of attention from the psychometric soundness of rating formats to ascertaining users' reactions, especially in the social context of PA (Keeping & Levy, 2000; Levy & Williams, 2004).

The PA system for government employees of Punjab, Pakistan has problems in respect of all four criteria of effectiveness of PA discussed in the above sub-section. For example, lack of consistency between performance evaluation criteria and job description against each post, employee job targets are not set in advance, highly subjective evaluations, irrelevance and immeasurability of job attributes. Additionally, some reporting officers also misuse their power as raters and force the officers reported upon (ratees) for obedience. In many departments, performance appraisal system is also an irregular event, job descriptions do not exist, and slight consideration is given to ratee's actual performance, and training and developmental needs. In the system, too much weightage is given to performance evaluation reports for the promotion of employees, due to which usually ratees ingratiate their raters to secure inflated (higher than actual) ratings so that they can qualify for promotion. Furthermore, most of the performance evaluation reports are overstated and even if, an

officer is notorious for corruption his/her performance evaluation reports does not reflect it.

B. Users' Characteristics, System Characteristics and Perceived Fairness

In the context of various problems discussed above, the researcher has aimed to propose a PA model centering Users' and System's characteristics for effectiveness of PA system. In this regard the researcher has conducted critical review of recent literature and proposed a tentative model of Users' and System's characteristics for the effectiveness of PA system.

Management commitment and support is a crucial component of PA effectiveness (Curtis, Harvey, & Ravden, 2005; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008; Youngcourt, Leiva, & Jones, 2007). Management is responsible to define PA objectives which leads to achievement of long term goals (Boice & Kleiner, 1997; Marshall & Wood, 2000). Literature reveals that effectiveness of PA is directly linked with management commitment towards PA (Ilgen, Barnes-Farrell, & Mckellin, 1993; Longenecker & Fink, 1999; Punia & Siwatch, 2009).

Practices of PA shows that immediate supervisor is responsible to rate his subordinates and effectiveness of PA is influenced by the motivation of rater (Beer, 1981; Caruth & Humphreys, 2008; Marshall & Wood, 2000). Raters' motivation towards PA is defined as intention to rate truthfully (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Porter, Bigley, Steers, & Steers, 2002) and prior research suggests that the effectiveness of the PA is linked with the raters' motivation to rate accurately (Boisot, 1998; Fink & Longenecker, 1998; Longenecker & Fink, 1999; Tziner, Murphy, & Cleveland, 2001).

It is observed that raters are rarely accountable for their ratings (Church & Bracken, 1997). Accountability is defined as the degree to what extend the raters are accountable for the accuracy of ratings and it can be a well-defined complete mechanism by which raters can be called to account for their given ratings and it has impact on the effectiveness of PA system (Folger, Konovsky, & Cropanzano, 1992; Longenecker, Sims, & Gioia, 1987; Tetlock, 1985).

Training is prerequisite for all raters to develop their appraisal skills which ultimately lead to the effectiveness of PA (Bretz et al., 1992; Cook & Crossman, 2004). PA researchers claimed that raters' training is a nonstop practice to attain maximum effectiveness of PA system (Allan, 1994; Caruth & Humphreys, 2008). Chandra (2006) alerted that the major reason behind the rating errors of raters is lack of proper training and untrained raters don't know how to rate exactly, factually and legitimately. Training enables the raters to gather true information and judge on the bases of actual performance and rate systematically and accurately (Boice & Kleiner, 1997; Longenecker & Fink, 1999).

Self-efficacy refers to the perception of an individual about himself that either he or she is able to accomplish a specific task or not (Chakrabortya, Hu, & Cuib, 2008). Raters' Self efficacy states raters' perception about his capacity to perform the required role of rating (Bandura, 1997). Raters' self-efficacy strengthens the efforts of raters to perform and creates confidence in the attitude of raters which leads to the effectiveness of PA (Bandura, 1997, 2005; Hill, Smith, &

Mann, 1987; Marshall & Wood, 2000; Stumpf, Brief, & Hartman, 1987).

On the behalf of published literature in last fifty years, Iqbal (2012) analyzed and presents four categories of purposes of PA; administrative purposes, developmental purposes, strategic purposes and role definition purposes. PA researchers have pinpointed that system has lost its effectiveness because of ignorance of its purposes (Decotiis & Petit, 1978; Ilgen et al., 1993) and even the users don't have any clear idea about the purposes of performance appraisal (Decotiis & Petit, 1978; Kluger & Denisi, 1996).

Ratees' participation has been conceptualized and operationalized in many ways, but in general, researchers define that allowing ratees to contribute in the appraisal process is ratees' participation and it is positively associated with effectiveness of PA (Cawley, Keeping, & Levy, 1998; Giles & Mossholder, 1990; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995).

The perceived significance of performance appraisal system shows the impacts of appraisal on users' performance like openness to receive the help it offers, understanding the factors affecting the performance and taking corrective action for need based improvements (Punia & Siwatch, 2009). The outcomes of study proved that elevation in the perceived significance of performance appraisal system increase the effectiveness of system.

The continuous research on the rating instruments has added an important aspect, accuracy of PA system (Landy et al., 1978). Accuracy of PA system is a way to check the validity, reliability of rating formats which offers an error free system (Longenecker et al., 1987). Perceived accuracy refers to the true estimations of rating which are acceptable for ratees (Balzer & Sulsky, 1990). Literature reveals the strong relationship between high degree of perceived accuracy and effectiveness of PA (Balzer & Sulsky, 1990; Carson et al., 1991).

Derives behind the privacy is the belief that judgments should not be shared with others who are not vested interest in the outcomes (Tetlock & Kim, 1987). Raters and reviewers are responsible to authorize the final ratings and they have direct access to information regarding the performance of ratees (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984). Researchers identified that the perceived privacy or confidentiality can influence the effectiveness of PA (Abu-Doleh & Weir, 2007; Landy & Farr, 1980).

Distributive fairness is about the perception of individual regarding the fairness of rewards with respect to attained goals or contributed efforts (Colquitt, 2001; Greenberg, 1986c; Greenberg & Folger, 1983). Distributive fairness refers to the perceived fairness of an individual's outcomes in proportion to the individual's inputs as compared with the outcomes and inputs of relevant others (Bartol, Durham, & Poon, 2001).

Procedural fairness is perception of individual about the procedures used to make decision about rewards and to what extend the process is independent and rational for all (Greenberg & Folger, 1983; Mount, 1983, 1984; Pooyan & Eberhardt, 1989). Procedural fairness is measured by assessing the process of procedural rules (Colquitt, 2001) and the process used in making and implementing resource allocation

decisions (Bartol et al., 2001). Fairness issues concerning the methods, mechanisms, and processes used to determine outcomes.

Interpersonal fairness shows fairness about the truthfulness, respect and propriety give to employees by supervisors (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). It involves raising questions about the type of ‘interpersonal sensitivity’ and other aspects of social conduct that characterize social exchange between parties, including the explanation offered for certain decisions made about the individual.

Informational fairness refers to the equality about the adequacy of explanation like specification and timeline. Informational fairness acts primarily to alter reactions to procedures, in that explanations provide the information needed to evaluate structural aspects of the process (Bartol et al., 2001).

III. CONCLUSION

In the light of international literature the scholar has identified the users’ characteristics; management commitment, raters’ motivation, raters’ accountability, raters’ training and raters’ and self-efficacy, System characteristics; purposiveness, perceived participation, perceived significance, perceived accuracy, and perceived privacy, and perceived fairness; distributive fairness, procedural fairness, interpersonal fairness and informational fairness. These characters have significant impact of the effectiveness of performance appraisal system. In line with the performance appraisal literature, the researcher has proposed a model centering Users’ and System’s characteristics for the effectiveness of PA. Figure 1 shows the proposed model.

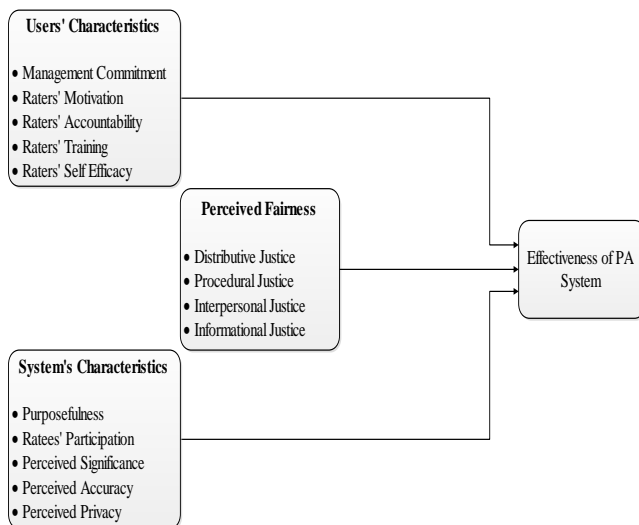


Fig. 1

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