

The influence of participation and perceived system knowledge on perceived performance appraisal fairness

Apriliandhika Kartikadewi*, Ratno Purnomo, & Devani Indiyastuti
Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman, Indonesia

Abstract

Accurate, accepted, and fair performance appraisals are critical to the organization. The main issues in the assessment of individual performance are with respect to the accuracy of measurement and fairness of assessment results. Previous research that has been done by some researcher shows the influence of performance appraisal process to justice result. The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of antecedent factors of fairness of performance appraisal consisting of participation and perceived system knowledge. The research design using questionnaires was used to collect data in public organizations (N = 75). The test results with multiple regression indicate that participation (two-way communication and involvement) and perceived system knowledge have a significant effect on the fairness of performance appraisal.

Keywords: Participation, Performance Appraisal, Fairness.

INTRODUCTION

All organization public and private sector require a performance appraisal system to assess performance of its employees (Ikramullah, Shah, Hasan, Zaman, and Khan, 2011). Toppo and Prusty (2012) defined that performance appraisal is a systematic evaluation of individual with regard to their performance on the job and their potential for development. The activity affects the effectiveness of human resource activities within organization, such as promotion, compensation, training, development of career management and others. Performance appraisal provide important information for organization to improve decisions and feedback for employees based on their true performance. Performance appraisal is the most important factor in human resource systems in an organization, because it is the key information to make critical decisions that lead to many consequences for organization and its outcomes.

Performance appraisal is also one of the most widely researched areas in industrial and organizational psychology. Performance appraisal is important for organizations to identify employee's strength and weaknesses, to evaluate training needs, to set plans for future development, and to provide motivation as a basis to determine rewards and career feedback. It is also important for employees. The assessment serves as a feedback about various things such as capabilities, advantages, disadvantages, and potentials which in turn are beneficial to set goals, tracks, plans and career development. While performance appraisals may satisfy numerous organizational objectives, their overriding purpose is often identified as providing information and direction to employees in a manner which will lead to improve performance. In addition, the effectiveness of performance appraisal will produce more positive attitude and organizational behavior such as satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the achievement of higher performance.

Performance appraisal enables the organization and employees to recognize, evaluate and develop an individual's standard of performance (Ikramullah, Shah, Khan, Hassan, and Zaman, 2012) and to encourage poor performer to improve performance. Thus, it is vital for the organization to make performance appraisal to be more accurate, acceptable and fair for the employee improvement (Rubel and Kee, 2015). Individual performance appraisal presumes a questionable issue based on the measurement accuracy and fairness (Swiercz, Bryan, Eagle, Bizzotto, and Renn, 2012). Some researchers have found that the performance appraisal process influences performance appraisal fairness (Swiercz, *et al.*, 2012).

Rubel and Kee (2015) conceptualized performance appraisal fairness as the extent to which employees perceive their organization conducts appraisal in a fair manner that emphasizes the delivery of their skills and work behaviors. Performance appraisal fairness has important role for organization. Employee perceived performance appraisal fairness has considerable impact on employee's attitude and behavior. Fairness of performance appraisal is highly emphasized by different authors who assert that fairness in performance appraisal strengthens the feeling of employee about organization and pursue them to be more productive. Psychological experience of fairness leads individuals to be more committed to the organization and limit their thinking of quitting and alternative job search behavior (Ikramullah, *et al.*, 2012). Employee who feel that performance appraisal is unfair in their organization, they will not feel motivated to have achievement. Whereas, the employee who feels that performance is fair, they will be motivated to have good performance. Therefore, successful performance appraisal depends on the appraiser's perception of fairness regarding the appraisal system.

Performance appraisal (PA) processes can be explained by process control theory (participation and knowledge of the performance appraisal system) and social exchange theory (attitudes toward supervisor). Perceived fairness is determined by the process control (participation) by influencing appraisal decisions and the results of appraisal. Process control can affect decision making. The opportunities for expressing the opinions before decisions make subordinates able to improve their knowledge about the fairness process. When subordinates have chances to argue about their appraisals in the decision-making process, their attitudes (such as the fair process, satisfaction with the results, and the commitment to the result) and behavior become positive.

Participation on performance appraisal process consists of two aspects, two-way communication and involvement in setting the objectives. Two-way communication is related to fairness perception because it gives an opportunity to exchange opinions to set the goals and provides an opportunity to clarify the rules of the game: knowing the rules of the game allows employees to make choices about how to operate within that system. Participation in the setting of performance objectives provides a means employees are able to exercise some control over the process. Participation can ensure the right objectives for employee. The more performance objectives raise the conflict, the more difficult for the employee to achieve a good performance rating.

Thus, the purpose of this research is to examine the influence of participation, perceived system knowledge on perceived performance appraisal fairness and performance rating as the moderating variable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal involves measuring job performance in which mainly captures an essential element of the performance appraisal process without specifying the actual techniques used for measurement. Dessler (2011) defined that performance appraisal means evaluating an employee's current and past performance related to his or her performance standards.

As for the definition proposed Zheng, Zhang, and Li (2012), performance appraisal is a set of structured formal interactions between a subordinate and a supervisor, usually in the form of a periodic interview, in which the performance of the subordinate is reviewed and discussed, with an emphasis on identifying weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for performance improvement and skill development. The goal of performance appraisal is to improve employees' contribution to organizational goals and work performance (Naji, Ben, and Leclerc, 2015).

The appraisal is also designed to support and improve employee's development and eliminate performance barriers (Dusterhoff, Cunningham, and MacGregor, 2014). In addition, it helps employers and employees to define, communicate and revise expectations, goals, and progression in the achievement of strategic goals (Naji, *et al.*, 2015). However, appraisers and appraisees only respond favorably to a performance appraisal system when they deem it fair and equitable. General focus of performance appraisal has been placed on how to better measure job performance, including scale development, appraisal formatting, minimizing rater and test bias, and assessing appraisal's association with job-specific in role performance.

Performance appraisal process can be classified in three aspects: observation, feedback, and planning. Observation captures the extent to which the supervisor knows about his or her subordinates' performance over time and under different conditions. Feedback encompasses the degree to which the supervisor listens to his or her subordinates and which the supervisor discusses performance-related issues with them. Planning refers to the degree to which the supervisor and his or her subordinates discuss, define, and improve goals and performance criteria.

Appraisees found appraisals to be more useful when they were specific and focused, planned and well prepared, easy to understand and when they had more involvement and control over the process. On the other hand, appraisers were more concerned with strategic issues, describing their most preferred appraisal system as linked to business strategy, challenging, value-adding, with an objective setting process, well planned, compulsory and structured. The success of appraisal systems may well depend on ratees' perceptions of fairness and their reactions to important aspects of the appraisal process. The lack of clarity and objectivity of the criteria used to measure the performance of the employees creates role ambiguity, confusion and frustration among the workers to undertake their job.

The notion of fairness has been identified as one of the most important aspects of employees' responses to performance appraisal sessions. Perceptions of performance appraisal fairness can lead to satisfaction with performance ratings, performance appraisal system, rater and appraisal feedback and to individuals' feelings of instrumental control over the appraisal process thereby enhancing their sense of psychological safety, self-worth and group standing (Gupta and Kumar, 2013).

For performance appraisal, fairness perceptions are of three main types (Narcisse & Harcourt, 2008). First, distributive justice refers to perceived fairness of an actual performance rating. Second, procedural justice refers to perceived fairness of procedures used to determine the appraisal rating. Third, interactional justice refers to perceived fairness of their performance appraisals.

Participation

Participation is subordinate encouraged to share ideas, discuss problems, and help determine the issues to be addressed. Such a definition helps guide manager's actions (e.g., inviting comments, asking for ideas, and offering employee opportunities to introduce new topics). Subordinate participation in the appraisal procedure is related to employee satisfaction and their acceptance of performance appraisal system. Employee participation is the key element of intrinsic motivational strategies that facilitate worker growth and development.

Participation provides an opportunity to influence performance targets. Participation on performance appraisal process consists of two-way communication and involvement in the setting objectives. Two-way communication between employee and their supervisor is useful in plotting an employee's progress toward their performance objectives and in providing the employee an opportunity to raise issues that are impacting on their ability to achieve the performance objectives. Two-way communications also provide an opportunity to clarify the rules of the game.

Participation in the setting of performance objectives provides a means through which employees are able to exercise some control over the process. Participation can ensure that the right number and type of objectives are set for the employee. In the absence of employee participation, supervisors may impose objectives on their subordinates without regard to the complexities of the job or span of employees' control. The degree of involvement of subordinates in the appraisal has been seen to benefit the success of the system.

In the context of performance appraisal system, participation is important throughout the process. Participation of employees in the appraisal system gives employees voice and empowers them to rebut ratings or feedback that they are unhappy with. Greater employee participation is known to create an atmosphere of cooperation which encourages the development of coaching relationship, reducing tension, defensive behavior and rater-ratee which could be caused by the appraisal. Participation and perceptions of fairness as integral to employees' perceptions of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Employee participation in several aspect of the appraisal process because it has the potential to mitigate of the traditional performance appraisal systems' dysfunction as well as to engender a more human and ethical human resource management decision-making process. The first participation, according to him, should take place during the development of reliable, valid, fair and useful performance standards. Second,

there should be employee participation during designing the rating format and measurement scales. Third, it generates an atmosphere of cooperation and employee support which reduces appraisal related tension, defensive behavior and rater-ratee conflict.

These positive effects are especially able to be generalized to the design and implementation of pay systems. System implemented following meaningful consultation with employees is more effective than those which are implemented unilaterally by managers or with less employee involvement. The participation of employees functions most effectively in an atmosphere of trust, open communication and equal employee treatment. Therefore, it requires conceptual, affective and experiential education which can be reached by means of training.

Perceived System Knowledge

Perceived system knowledge is to measure the level of understanding and knowledge an employee reports having about standards, criteria, and objectives of their performance appraisal system. The implication of this construct is that employees' understanding of performance appraisal system is an important contextual variable in appraisal process. In particular, they have demonstrated when employees perceive that they understand the appraisal system and its objectives, their own ratings of their performance tend to agree with their supervisors' ratings. In other words, the leniency commonly found in self-ratings (indeed, it is typical for individuals to rate themselves more favorably than their supervisors do) is significantly reduced when employees understand the appraisal system.

Perceived system knowledge reflects the degree to which employees perceive. They have been notified about and received information regarding to objectives and standards by which they will be evaluated. Perceived system knowledge is an important predictor of both appraisal-related variables (reactions and fairness) and more general organizational variables (job satisfaction and organizational commitment). In other hand, perceived system knowledge is an important factor that has widespread and diverse implications for organizational functioning. Employees' knowledge of performance appraisal system or process ought to be an important variable in determining the agreement between employees' self-ratings and their supervisors' ratings.

In the years since the first study was conducted, managers who demonstrated perceived system knowledge were in higher levels than those who did not. Thus, perceived system knowledge is positively related to job attitudes, and appraisal reactions. This construct is related to the participation and performance appraisal. The idea here is that when employees are provided with information about system, they do not only understand appraisal system better, but also feel that they are an integral part of that system. It becomes their appraisal system, not just something handed down to them without explanation by management.

Individuals who believe that they understand the performance appraisal system used in their organization are: (1) more accepting of and more favorably disposed to appraisal feedback and system, (2) more satisfied with their jobs, (3) more committed to their organization, and (4) more likely to evaluate the appraisal process as fair than are their low perceived system knowledge counterparts. In addition, individuals who think that they understand appraisal process are more apt to respond favorably to a host of important organizational variables at a later time.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

There are two theoretical support that focus on performance appraisal process, namely process control theory and social exchange theory. Process control theory suggests that fairness perception is driven by level of control that individual are able to exercise over processes to determine the outcomes. The control has its own role in shaping people's views about fairness of the procedures and that individual's view procedure is fair when it is control by participants. They then suggests that people prefer procedures which maximize their personal outcomes and procedural control is perceived as the best means for ensuring the best personal outcome. Thus, desire for procedural control is related to the desire to achieve a favorable outcome. Therefore, it provides justification for two aspect of performance appraisal model: participation in performance appraisal (two-way communication and involvement in setting objectives) and knowledge of the performance appraisal system.

Participation in the performance appraisal process has a positive influence on performance appraisal fairness. Participation provides an opportunity to influence on performance targets. For employee, feedback is important in clearly defining the supervisor's expectations of employee and should mean that employee is not surprised with the evaluation they receive at the end of formal appraisal period. Feedback enables employees to become proactive in their own appraisals, potentially bolstering their perceptions of process fairness.

Two-way communications are useful in plotting an employee's progress toward his or her performance objectives and in providing the employee an opportunity to raise issues that are impacting on their ability to achieve performance objectives. Two-way communications also provides an opportunity to clarify rules of the game. Knowing rules of the game provides employees with an opportunity to both make choices about how to operate within that system.

The previous research found that appraisal fairness has strong positive correlations with the level of two-way communication. Research has shown that perceptions of fairness are higher when individuals are asked to participate in the development of system, when there is two-way communication in interview, and when employees perceive that standards are applied consistently. Level of two-way communication has been found positively related to performance appraisal fairness. Therefore, based on discussion above, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Two-way communication is positively influence on perceived performance appraisal fairness.

Participation in the setting of performance objectives is often seen to be the most important aspect of performance appraisal process. Furthermore, opportunity to express an opinion is important, regardless of its actual impact, as it satisfies the desire to have one's opinion considered. Empirical research provides evidence on the organizational value of participation in the objective setting. It has been demonstrated that participation is associated with a motivation to improve, a perception of performance appraisal fairness, satisfaction with performance appraisal process, and an increase in employee acceptance and trust. In other words, the analysis has firmly established that participation in performance appraisal is positively associated with a diverse number of favorable subordinate reactions.

Participation has positively associated with satisfaction with performance appraisal (session and system), with motivation to improve, and with utility of the appraisal and fairness. Participation in the setting performance objectives, difficult objectives, and higher performance rating are associated with increased levels of work overload. Higher level of involvement in the setting objectives of performance appraisal has a positive relation with performance appraisal fairness. Therefore, the following hypothesis:

H2: Involvement in the setting objectives is positively influence of perceived performance appraisal fairness.

The second aspect of performance appraisal process involves employee knowledge of performance appraisal process. Knowledge of performance appraisal system include three elements: clarity about the role of appraisals, understanding of performance objectives and acceptance of those objectives. Each of these elements of knowledge add to an employee's feelings of process control: employees are aware of why the appraisal is taking place, what they are required to do in order to be successful in the appraisal, and the appraisal's consequences. There will be no surprises for the employee during appraisal cycle, which is likely to contribute to perceptions of performance appraisal fairness.

Several studies have found that perceived system knowledge was a significant moderator of self and supervisory ratings on job performance. There was a strong relationship between employees' level of perceived system knowledge and their appraisal reactions and job attitudes. Perceived system knowledge completely mediates the relationship between organizational level and appraisal reactions. Participation in performance appraisal, attitudes towards supervisor, and knowledge of performance appraisal process has positively and significantly associated with employee perceptions of performance appraisal fairness. Therefore, based on discussions above, the study proposes following hypothesis:

H3: Perceived system knowledge is positively influence of perceived performance appraisal fairness.

In this study, the researcher proposed that performance rating will moderate the relationship between participation and performance appraisal fairness. Thoha (2015) defined that attribution theory is how people find out the clarity of their behavior's causes. When causes of behavior are presented, they are usually explained in terms of individual or personality characteristics in terms of the situation in which it occur.

Based on their attribution, employee will attribute high performance rating to internal factors and will attribute low performance rating to external factors.

Employee perceptions of their performance appraisal's fairness are useful in determining the success of performance appraisal systems. Performance appraisal's fairness is related to self-reported performance appraisal rating. Performance appraisal process consist of participation (two-way communication and perceived system knowledge). Feedback can be seen as consisting of two-way communications between employee and their supervisor. The previous study found that higher performance rating are associated with increased level of work overload. Two-way communication is a part of participation which has a significant and positive effect on performance appraisal fairness. Involvement in the setting objectives can facilitate the establishment of realistic workload targets.

RESEARCH METHOD

The respondents in this research were all permanent employees of public organizations. The total number of the respondents were 75 persons. Non-probability sampling technique that used in this research is purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique is sampling with certain consideration (Sugiyono, 2012). The criteria of the sample in this research were: 1) employees that have been work more than one year; 2) not outsourcing employee; and 3) permanent employee.

Since in general, performance appraisal in an organization conducted in a range of period six months until one year. Employees who have carried out performance appraisal will be more experienced and understand the system of performance appraisal. Therefore the researcher can get the relevant information.

The instrument used to collect primary data in this research is a questionnaires. Scale used in this research is Likert Scale. This scale is used to measure a person's response about the social objects (Suliyanto, 2011). The answer from each instrument using Likert scale have gradation from positive to the negative one. If the item is positive, the largest number placed on the "strongly agree". However, if the negative items, the largest number placed on the "strongly disagree". Likert Scale is always odd and neutral or undecided. Each item is given a choices of responses that are closed (Suliyanto, 2011). Likert scale is designed to examine how strongly subjects agree or disagree with statements on a five-point scale with the criteria score 1 for strongly disagree until score 5 for strongly agree scale.

Perceived performance appraisal fairness is measured by six items from Tang and Sarsfield-Baldwin, the degree of two-way communication under performance, planning and evaluation system will assesses with six items from Tang and Sarsfield-Baldwin, involvement in the setting objectives is measured by five items from Wenzel and Kristin, and perceived system knowledge is measured by eleven items from Williams and Levy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Male respondents are more than the female, 69.33% compared to 30.67%. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the respondents are male. The most of respondents are greater than 40 years old. As we know that the age of company is old, so many employees who have been aged. It is also means that the company consists of many senior employees who have more experience than junior employees. Employees who have a lot of experience can give good influence for the company with their good performance because they can work optimal. Education level of employees give effect on their job productivity. The high education level means that the job productivity is also high. The most respondents have education level on bachelor. Data from all questionnaire are collected and the table below will show the statistic descriptive and correlation from all variables.

Table 1. Result of Statistic Descriptive

Variable	Mean	SD	Correlation				
			1	2	3	4	5
Two-way Communication	3.7978	0.56771	-				
Involvement in the Setting Objectives	3.7520	0.76182	.348**	-			
Perceived System Knowledge	4.1467	0.45102	.282*	.261*	-		
Performance Rating	3.7867	0.93423	.130	.039	.054	-	
Performance Appraisal Fairness	4.0000	0.54822	.533**	.432**	.563**	.153	-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Based on data in table 1, it can be explained that two way communication to involvement on the setting objectives have a weak correlation ($r = 0.348$, $p < 0.01$). Two-way communication to perceived system knowledge have a weak correlation ($r = 0.282$, $p < 0.05$). Two-way communication to performance rating also have a weak correlation ($r = 0.130$, $p > 0.05$). Two-way communication to performance appraisal fairness were highly correlated ($r = 0.533$, $p < 0.01$). Involvement in the setting objective to perceived system knowledge have a weak correlation ($r = 0.261$, $p < 0.05$). Involvement in the setting objective to performance rating have a weak correlation ($r = 0.039$, $p > 0.05$) and involvement in the setting objectives to performance appraisal fairness have a weak correlation ($r = 0.432$, $p < 0.01$). Perceived system knowledge to performance rating have a weak correlation ($r = 0.053$, $p > 0.05$). Perceived system knowledge to performance appraisal fairness were highly correlated ($r = 0.563$, $p < 0.01$) and performance rating to performance appraisal fairness have a weak correlation ($r = 0.153$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 2. Result of Multiple Regression Analysis on Performance Appraisal Fairness

No.	Variables	Regression Coefficient	Sig.
1.	Two-way communication (X_1)	0.333	0.000**
2.	Involvement in the setting objectives (X_2)	0.147	0.027*
3.	Perceived system knowledge (X_3)	0.501	0.000**

** Significant at the 0.01 level

* Significant at the 0.05 level

Table 2 shows the results of multiple regression. First hypothesis stated that two-way communication is positively related to perceived performance appraisal fairness. From the multiple regression results found that t statistic value of two-way communication variable of 3.788 is greater than t table value (1.667) or sig. value 0.000 is less than α (0.05). It means that two-way communication has a positive and significant influence on perceived performance appraisal fairness. Therefore, the first hypothesis is supported.

Second hypothesis stated that involvement in the setting objectives is positively related to perceived performance appraisal fairness. From the multiple regression results found that t statistic value of involvement in the setting objective variable of 2.258 is greater than the t table value (1.667) or sig. value 0.027 is less than α (0.05). It means that involvement in the setting objectives has a positive and significant influence on perceived performance appraisal fairness. Therefore, the second hypothesis is supported.

Third hypothesis stated that perceived system knowledge is positively related to perceived performance appraisal fairness. From the multiple regression results found that t statistic value of perceived system knowledge variable of 4.658 is greater than the t table value (1.667) or sig. value 0.000 is less than α (0.05). It means that perceived system knowledge has a positive and significant influence on perceived performance appraisal fairness. Therefore, the third hypothesis is supported.

Finding of this research explains that two-way communication has a positive and significant influence on perceived performance appraisal fairness at. This relationship indicated that the better level of two-way communication, so the higher level of perceived performance appraisal fairness. Two-way communication commonly conducted by supervisor or manager to subordinates when discussing performance appraisal. Two-way communication between supervisor or manager is useful for planning work improvement and give opportunity for employee to consult about several issues in achieving goals.

This research also explains that involvement in setting the objective has a positive and significant influence on perceived performance appraisal fairness. This result indicates that the employees who have a high level of involvement in setting the objectives is higher in perceived performance appraisal fairness than the employees who have a low level of involvement in setting the objectives. The involvement of employees in determining goals will make them have high willingness in job accomplishment and pleasure when doing the job in team with their peers and supervisor. Moreover, employees is also believed that the goals based on team decision made. Besides that, employees is also feel that they are important part of the whole team, thus they have responsibility to achieve the goals. Participation in the setting of performance objectives was often seen to be the most important aspect of the performance appraisal process. Higher level of involvement in the setting objectives of the performance appraisal has a positive relation with performance appraisal fairness.

This study result is also explains that perceived system knowledge has a positive and significant influence on perceived performance appraisal fairness. This condition indicates that the better level of employees' perceived system knowledge is always followed by the higher level of their perceived performance appraisal fairness. There was a strong relationship between employees' level of perceived system knowledge and their appraisal reactions and job attitudes. Furthermore, Knowledge of the performance appraisal process has positively and significantly associated with employee perceptions of performance appraisal fairness.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the research were to examine the effect of participation (two way communication and involvement) and perceived system knowledge on performance appraisal fairness. The results of the research consist of: first, two-way communication has a positive and significant influence on perceived performance appraisal fairness. Second, involvement in the setting objectives has a positive and significant influence on perceived performance appraisal fairness. Third, perceived system knowledge has a positive and significant influence on perceived performance appraisal fairness.

Two-way communication, involvement in the setting objectives and perceived system knowledge is very important in organization. Decision making at public sector organization make consider about the individual performance rating. If they want ask opinion about the performance appraisal fairness, decision making should not immediately give judgement due to attribution. As an effort to improve the employees' perceived performance appraisal fairness, public sector management need to pay attention on several performance appraisal process.

First, in two-way communication policy supervisor should discusses, gives guidance, ask suggestion and discusses the result about performance appraisal. Second, involvement in the setting objectives subordinates should participate, have to contribute and influence in the goal setting of performance appraisal as well as supervisor should discusses the goal setting of performance appraisal frequently. Third, employees' perceived system knowledge subordinates should understand the criteria, and performance standard of performance appraisal process that are implemented in their organization. And for supervisor should communicates clearly about the objectives of the performance appraisal system. The way can be done by create and build the strong teamwork through establish the positive cooperative and harmonious relationship and supervisor needs to demonstrate the high trust to the employees and always listen for feedback from the organization members. Management of public sector also need to apply the effective of performance appraisal systems to improving or sustaining the employee performance, otherwise they will waste of time to development and implementation.

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