

Measuring the Impact of Feedback Richness, Perceived Appraisal Accuracy and Fairness on Employee Satisfaction and Motivation in a Performance Appraisal System of a Garment Manufacturing Export Firm in Delhi, National Capital Region, A Case Study

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Abstract - *The purpose of this paper was to empirically study the relationship between factors, namely, feedback richness, perceived appraisal accuracy, perceived appraisal fairness, and effects of performance appraisal like satisfaction and employee motivation to improve performance. This study seeks to study these factors in the context of the Indian garment manufacturing export industry. A deductive approach was used with a single case study strategy. A quantitative questionnaire was administered to study the different factors by means of multiple item scales. Results indicated that feedback richness has a positive relationship with perceived appraisal accuracy and procedural fairness; perceived appraisal accuracy is positively related with employee satisfaction and employee motivation to improve performance; proved the relationship between appraisal fairness and appraisal satisfaction and motivation.*

Keywords: *Human Resource Management, Performance Appraisal System, Garment Manufacturing Firm, India, Apparel and Textile industry.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource (HR) practices have a positive effect on organizational effectiveness when an integrated approach is extensively used on it. Jyothi and Venkatesh (2006) argue that once the expectations of internal customers regarding HR practices (i.e., selection, recruitment, promotion, compensation, benefits, performance appraisal and training of employees) are met, attitude and dedication of employees see a boost. Not only does this contribute to the goodwill of the company but also increases employee retention by keeping them satisfied and motivated. Motivation encourages workers, giving them incentive to deploy their abilities. This brings forth the skills and competencies possessed by workers. When given an

opportunity, these abilities can be tapped and the resulting commitment can be put into practice (Edwards et al., 2013).

Performance Appraisal (PA) is a process within the overall performance management process. PA provides justification for HR related decisions like rewarding, training, career planning, partnership termination, relocation, and coaching. DeNisi (2000) defines performance appraisal as “the system whereby an organization assigns some scores to indicate the level of performance of a target person or group” (Ghaffari et al., 2014). The process involves determining how an employee is performing and communicating it to him along with a plan for improvement. Success of a Performance Appraisal System (PAS) depends upon how effectively it is implemented and the contribution of employee performance to the success of the organization. Instead of being a once-a-year event, performance management should be an on-going, interactive process designed to enhance employee capability and to facilitate productivity on a continuing basis (Phin, 2015).

Oxford dictionary defines the term ‘performance’ as fulfilment of implementation, conduct, and completion of certain, defined, or accepted work. Performance can be defined as results obtained, an individual’s history of success, strategic organizational goals, customer satisfaction and revenues (Ghaffari et al., 2014), behaviour (Campbell, 1990), a set of actions and efforts that staff undertakes to meet objectives, and also the tangible and measurable results obtained from these (Ghaffari et al., 2014).

Performance appraisal creates a link between individual performance and organization's strategic goals, helps employees identify learning needs and provides a framework for setting development goals, provides a basis for decisions about employees (pay and promotion), improves employee performance, and enhances effectiveness of the organization (Bednall et al., 2014).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Indian Apparel Industry

India's textiles and clothing industry is one of the mainstays of the national economy. It is also one of the largest contributing sectors of India's exports worldwide. India's overall textiles exports during fiscal year 2017-2018 stood at USD 39.2 billion (Government of India (India brand equity foundation), 2018). The Indian textiles industry is currently estimated at USD 150 billion and expected to reach USD 250 billion by 2019. It accounts for 7% of industrial production, which is 2% of GDP, and employed more than 45 million people in 2017 - 2018. It has also attracted Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) worth USD 2.97 billion between 2000 and 2018 (Government of India (India brand equity foundation), 2018).

A strong domestic consumption and export demand has led to rapid growth in the last decade. With 100% FDI enabled and the government set to invest US\$ 106.58 million in manufacturing, and US\$ 14.17 billion in technology upgradation of the textile industry by 2022, the road ahead is promising (Government of India (India brand equity foundation), 2018).

Performance Appraisal in Indian Apparel Industry

There has been very limited research linking human resource practices to productivity for firms in developing countries (Mittar and Mathew, 2014). With globalization and the liberation of international textiles and clothing trade, the global textiles and clothing trade scenario has changed. The industry in developing countries has significantly grown, and considering its manpower intensive nature, there is an urgent need for strong work practices (Mittar and Mathew, 2014).

Mittar and Mathew (2014) demonstrate the linkage between HRM practices and employee performance in the garment industry in Delhi, National Capital Region (NCR). They prove that HR practices like training, performance appraisal, compensation, and recruitment and selection have a positive effect on employee performance. It was found that Performance Appraisal has the highest impact on Employee Effectiveness.

Mittar et al. (2014), in their study link HR practices with Employee Retention among middle level managers in export houses in Delhi and NCR. The study proves that the more HR practices are in place, the more the employees

remain motivated to work effectively and efficiently, and have lesser turnover intentions. It was also concluded that middle level management in apparel export houses regards training and development as the most important factors that can tie them to an organization. Esteem needs and performance appraisal follow as secondary determinants while compensation does not contribute much to motivate employees to stay.

III. THEORETICAL MODEL

The theoretical model for this research is presented in Figure 1. The antecedents for a PAS that have been identified are perceived accuracy, appraisal fairness, and feedback richness. Success of PA depends upon how the feedback is delivered. Performance is likely to be enhanced by feedback that provides correct information about current and desired levels of performance, observes changes in performance level from a previous appraisal, is focused on task details, encourages goal setting, and is not threatening to self-esteem (Bednall et al., 2014). In order to be effective, feedback should be timely, specific (Jain and Jain, 2015), and conducted at the right frequency (Taneja et al., 2012).

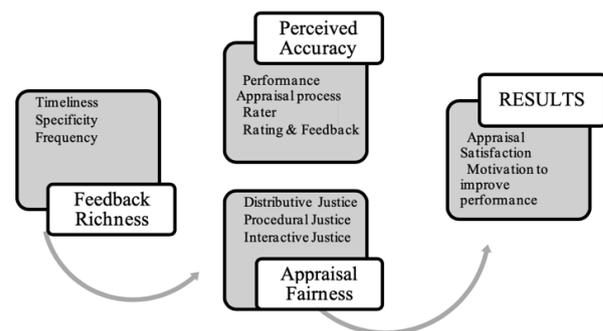


Figure 1: Model of Performance Appraisal Antecedents that Result in Employee Satisfaction and Motivation

Perceived accuracy of PA works as a function of the employees' perception of the overall PA process, rater judgement and expertise, questionnaire used, and the performance appraisal rating and feedback received (Ilgen et al., 1979). Perceived appraisal accuracy is a strong determinant of appraisal outcomes like appraisal satisfaction and employee motivation to improve performance (Taylor et al., 1995; Wood and Marshall, 2008).

Employee perception of appraisal fairness again determines appraisal effectiveness and outcomes such as appraisal satisfaction (Bakhshi et al., 2009) and employee motivation to improve performance (Taylor et al., 1995). We have evaluated appraisal fairness as a function of distributive fairness, procedural fairness, and interactive fairness. The fairness of distribution of outcomes (Greenberg, 1986) such as increments and promotions in our study ascertain distributive organizational justice.

Perception of distributive justice positively correlates with employee engagement (Deepa et al., 2014). Fairness of procedures undertaken to carry out performance appraisal and decide its outcomes constitute organizational procedural justice (Thibaut and Walker, 1975). Interactional justice is defined as the interpersonal treatment awarded people during enactment of official procedures (Bies and Moag, 1986). In our study we aim to empirically measure the interactive justice wielded during the PA process.

Satisfaction is one of the most frequently studied reactions of individual employees to PA variables like perceived fairness and perceived accuracy (Dorfman et al., 2006; Nemoroff and Wexley, 1979). It has been empirically studied as a function of system satisfaction, session satisfaction, and result satisfaction (Giles and Mossholder, 1990). Roberson and Stewart (2006) examine the relationship between perceived accuracy and appraisal fairness and employee motivation to improve performance. Feedback richness also plays an important role towards such a motivation, as described by control theory (Carver and Scheier, 1982) and goal setting theory (Locke and Latham, 1990).

IV. OBJECTIVES

- i. To study the performance appraisal system (PAS) in a Garment Manufacturing Export Firm in Delhi, NCR, henceforth to be referred to as Company A. Its level of feedback richness, employee perception of appraisal accuracy and fairness, employee satisfaction with the PAS and their motivation to perform better because of it are to be empirically measured.
- ii. To examine the relationship between feedback richness, perceived appraisal accuracy, perceived appraisal fairness, and effects of performance appraisal like satisfaction and employee motivation to improve performance.

V. METHODOLOGY

A deductive approach was used to test a series of hypotheses developed according to previous studies on performance appraisal. All hypotheses have been adjusted to sit within the context of an apparel manufacturing firm. This study utilized the Single Case study research strategy. In this study one garment manufacturing firm in the Delhi NCR region was selected to study the given problem. This was a mono-method quantitative study which sought to examine the impact of performance appraisal on employees in a garment manufacturing firm. The model being tested here is that perceived appraisal accuracy and fairness act as antecedents for a performance appraisal system that leads to employee satisfaction and motivation to improve performance (Selvarajan and Cloninger, 2012).

Sample

As a part of the study a representative sample of 30 employees was chosen from the Garment Manufacturing Firm (GMF) being used for the study as per the sampling criteria. Of the respondents, 83.3% were male while 16.7% were female; 6.7% of the respondents were Post-graduates, 56.7% were graduates, 30% had passed 12th while 6.7% had passed matriculation; all the respondents were engaged in managerial or supervisory positions; the average age of the respondents was 36.6 years and their average total work experience was 14 years. The respondents' average work experience at the organization in question was 7.1 years and at their current designation was 6.8 years. The questionnaire was administered in one-on-one in depth interviews to assess the employees' perception of performance appraisal.

Questionnaire

A quantitative questionnaire was used to test the chosen hypotheses. The questionnaire measured five factors, namely, feedback richness, perceived appraisal accuracy, appraisal fairness, appraisal satisfaction, and motivation to improve performance. All these factors were measured using multiple-item scales adapted from previous studies to fit the research context. The scales used are as described below.

i. Feedback Richness

The variable feedback richness was measured using a three-item scale that measured the timeliness, frequency and specificity of the feedback by one item each (Kinicki et al., 2002). A five-point likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was provided to record responses from the participants. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.843.

ii. Perceived Appraisal Accuracy

The variable perceived appraisal accuracy was measured using a five-item scale. The items taken into account were respondents' perception of the accuracy of the rating and feedback received in the last appraisal, whether or not the rater was able to accurately judge their performance, and if the performance appraisal process and the questionnaire was well equipped to accurately judge their performance. A five-point likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was provided to record responses from the participants. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.836.

iii. Appraisal Fairness

Employees' perception of performance appraisal fairness comprised of three elements, namely, distributive fairness, procedural fairness and interactive fairness. All three elements were measured using the scale developed by Colquitt (2001). A five-point likert scale ranging from 1 =

strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was provided to record responses from the participants. Distributive fairness was measured using a four-item scale that assessed the respondents' perception of how fair the appraisal rating and increment was give their efforts, work completed, contribution to the organization and performance. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.903. Procedural fairness was measured using a seven-item scale that assessed the respondents' perception of whether or not they were able to express their views and feelings during the appraisal, had influence over and could appeal the outcome achieved. It also measured if the respondents thought the appraisal procedure was applied consistently, was free of bias, was based on accurate information and upheld ethical and moral standards. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.791. Interactive fairness was measured using a four-item scale that assessed the respondents' perception of how they were treated by their superior during the appraisal process in terms of dignity, respect, politeness and any improper remarks or comments. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.993.

iv. Appraisal Satisfaction

Appraisal satisfaction consisted of three dimensions: system satisfaction, session satisfaction and result satisfaction (Giles and Mossholder, 1990) which were measured using an eight-item scale. System satisfaction

was measured using a four-item scale that took into account the respondents' satisfaction with the performance appraisal system being used by the company. Session satisfaction used a two-item scale and measured the respondents' satisfaction with the appraisal session and the way it was conducted, and result satisfaction used a two-item scale and took into account the respondents' satisfaction with the increment and feedback received as a result of the appraisal. A five-point likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was provided to record responses from the participants. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.887.

v. Motivation to improve performance

Motivation to improve performance was measure using a three-item scale (Fedor et al., 1989). The scale evaluated the respondents' motivation to improve performance due to the last performance appraisal and the increment and feedback received as a result of it. A five-point likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was provided to record responses from the participants. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.942.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Hypotheses Testing for Performance Appraisal

Null Hypotheses (Selvarajan and Cloninger, 2012) tested using Chi-square test:

TABLE 1. NULL HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Null Hypotheses		F1	F2	F3	F4	Result
Feedback Richness is independent of perceived appraisal accuracy		12	0.05	21.03	28.26	Accepted
Feedback Richness is independent of appraisal fairness.	Distributive	12	0.05	21.03	15.95	Rejected
	Procedural	12	0.10	18.55	18.65	Accepted
	Interactive	8	0.10	13.36	12.04	Rejected
Perceived appraisal accuracy is independent of appraisal satisfaction.		9	0.05	16.92	37.67	Accepted
Perceived appraisal accuracy is independent of employee motivation to improve performance.		12	0.05	21.03	38.41	Accepted
Appraisal fairness is independent of employee satisfaction.	Distributive	9	0.05	16.92	Accepted.	Accepted
	Procedural	9	0.05	16.92	Accepted.	Accepted
	Interactive	6	0.05	12.60	20.41	Accepted
Appraisal fairness is independent of employee motivation to improve performance.	Distributive	12	0.10	18.55	18.62	Accepted
	Procedural	12	0.05	21.03	25.96	Accepted
	Interactive	8	0.05	15.51	23.01	Accepted

F1 - Degrees of Freedom

F2 - Level of Significance

F3 - Chi-Square Value at The Significance Level

F4 - Sample Pearson Chi-Square Value

Analysis

The factors feedback richness, perceived appraisal accuracy, perceived appraisal fairness, employee satisfaction, and motivation to improve performance were empirically measured. In order to measure the feedback richness, feedback timeliness, frequency and specificity were examined. 63.4% of the respondents thought that they received timely feedback from their company, 50% of them felt that the feedback frequency was optimum and 53.4% agreed that the feedback was specific.

Employee perception of the appraisal accuracy was measured against their perceptions of the rating and feedback received, the ability of the rater to accurately judge their performance and whether or not the performance appraisal process was well equipped enough to accurately appraise their work on the task. Only 43.3% of the respondents agreed that the rating they received was an accurate indicator of their performance, 46.7% thought the feedback was an accurate indicator of their performance, 63.3% thought the rater was able to accurately judge their performance, and 33.3% agreed that the performance appraisal process is well equipped to accurately judge the employees' performance on the task.

Employee perception of how fair the performance appraisal system is was tested against distributive, procedural, and interactive fairness. Distributive fairness was evaluated based on how justified employees thought their performance rating was given their efforts, work completed, contribution to the organization, and performance on the job. Only 33.3% of the respondents thought that their performance rating reflected the effort they have put into their work, 30% agreed that their performance rating was appropriate and justified for their performance and the work they had completed and 40% agreed that their performance rating reflected their contribution to the organization.

Procedural fairness was assessed based on how well the employees thought they were able to express their views and feelings during the appraisal interviews, whether or not they had any influence over the outcomes arrived at by the appraisal and could appeal them, if the procedures had been applied consistently, were free of bias, based on accurate information and had upheld ethical and moral standards. 80% agreed that they were able to express their views and feelings during the appraisal process, 33.3% agreed that they had influence over the outcome arrived at by the performance appraisal, 46.7% agreed that performance appraisal procedure has been applied consistently, 53.4% agreed that the performance appraisal process was unbiased, 66.7% agreed that the process is based on accurate information and has upheld the moral and ethical standards and 56.7% agreed that they have been able to appeal the result of the appraisal.

Interactive fairness was tested by evaluating if employees felt that they were treated by their superior in a polite manner, with dignity and respect during the appraisal procedure and if any improper remarks were made. 93.4% agreed that they were treated politely by their superior and that their superior refrained from improper remarks or comments. 93.1% agreed that they were treated with dignity during the appraisal process and 93.3% agreed that they were respectfully dealt with during the appraisal.

Employee satisfaction with the performance appraisal system was measured in terms of system satisfaction, session satisfaction and result satisfaction. System satisfaction was measured in terms of whether or not the employees were satisfied with the PAS in the company and the way that it was conducted, thought it was an excellent and ideal PAS. Survey revealed that 43.3% of the respondents were satisfied with the PAS in the company, 23.3% felt the company had an excellent PAS, 33.3% were satisfied with the way the appraisal is carried out and 16.6% believe the company has an ideal PAS. Session satisfaction was assessed on the basis of the employees' satisfaction with the last appraisal session and the way it was carried out. 60% were satisfied with their last appraisal session and 56.6% were satisfied with the way the session was carried out. Result satisfaction was measured in terms of the employees' satisfaction with the last performance appraisal rating and feedback received. 53.3% were satisfied with their last performance appraisal rating while 62.1% were satisfied with their last feedback.

Lastly the level of employee motivation to improve performance in the future due to the PAS was empirically measured. 83.3% felt motivated by the last PA to improve their performance in the future, 73.3% felt motivated by the rating they last received and 80% felt motivated by the feedback they were last given.

Results from Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables considered in the study. Correlation analysis is a statistical tool used to describe the degree to which one variable is linearly related to another (Levin and Rubin, 1998). Here it is used to study the degree of association between the variables feedback richness, perceived accuracy, perceived fairness, appraisal satisfaction and motivation to improve performance. The inter-correlations for the variables in question are displayed in Table 2.

Feedback Richness showed a strong positive correlation with Perceived Appraisal Accuracy (value ~ 0.68) and Procedural Appraisal Justice (value ~ 0.59). Perceived appraisal accuracy has a strong positive correlation with Appraisal Satisfaction (value ~ 0.67) and a weak positive correlation with employee Motivation to improve

performance (value ~ 0.45). Distributive appraisal fairness has a weak positive correlation with appraisal satisfaction (value~ 0.332) and motivation to improve performance (value~ 0.32). Procedural appraisal fairness has a strong positive correlation with appraisal satisfaction (value~ 0.65) and motivation to improve performance (value~ 0.66). Interactive appraisal fairness has a weak positive correlation with appraisal satisfaction (value~ 0.30) and a strong positive correlation with motivation to improve performance (value~ 0.57).

TABLE 2. RESULTS OF CORRELATION ANALYSIS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feedback Richness	1						
Perceived Accuracy	0.68	1					
Procedural Justice	0.59	0.67	1				
Interactive Justice	0.39	0.42	0.46	1			
Distributive Justice	0.37	0.71	0.50	0.22	1		
Appraisal Satisfaction	0.59	0.67	0.65	0.29	0.33	1	
Motivation to Improve Performance	0.47	0.45	0.66	0.57	0.32	0.44	1

Preferences of Managers in a GMF in India

During data collection and analysis certain patterns emerged across the levels of hierarchy of the sample. These patterns are context specific and illuminate the preferences of managers with regards to the performance appraisal process in a GMF in the Delhi NCR region in India.

The lower level management preferred a manual performance appraisal system, middle level management preferred an online system, while the senior management wanted both online and manual options to administer the performance appraisal. The lower and middle level management used the term ‘appraisal’ synonymously with ‘increment’; only the senior level management connected it with non-monetary benefits. The middle and senior level management favoured a 360-degree appraisal system which would require appraisal from superior, subordinate, peer, and self; lower level management favoured appraisal from only their superiors. All three management levels wanted both administrative and developmental purposes to carry out performance appraisal. A bi-yearly frequency for performance appraisal was statistically favoured.

VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this research was to empirically study the relationship between feedback richness, perception of performance appraisal accuracy, perception of

performance appraisal fairness, appraisal satisfaction, and motivation to improve performance due to the existing scenario of performance appraisal in the context of the Indian Garment Manufacturing industry.

The research supported the hypothesis that feedback richness has a positive relationship with perceived appraisal accuracy and procedural fairness. Interestingly feedback richness did not show any relationship with distributive and interactive fairness. Consistent with the research of Selvarajan, T. T. and Cloninger, P. A., (2012) on performance appraisals, results indicate that perceived appraisal accuracy is positively related with employee satisfaction and employee motivation to improve performance.

The research validates the existing body of research on the relationship between appraisal fairness and appraisal satisfaction and motivation (Dorfman, Stephan, and Loveland, 1986; Nemeroff and Wexley, 1979) to improve performance and proves that a positive relationship exists. Perceived procedural fairness proved to have a strong relationship with appraisal satisfaction while distributive and interactive fairness had weak positive relationships. Distributive and interactive fairness had strong relationship with employee motivation to improve performance while procedural fairness had a weak relationship with the same.

Contextual nuances also emerged in this study and the preferences of the managers in the Indian garment manufacturing industry came to the fore. The lower and middle level management used the term ‘appraisal’ synonymously with ‘increment’; only the senior level management connected it with non-monetary benefits. All three management levels unanimously had both administrative and developmental purposes to carry out performance appraisal and favoured a bi-yearly frequency. While the middle and senior management was comfortable using an online PAS, the lower level management was not and favoured a manual system instead.

VIII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

The study has been conducted on only one apparel export firm on a representative sample size of 30 employees. Therefore, the results obtained may not represent the industrial average for the apparel export firms in Delhi, NCR. This study can be conducted on apparel export firms across the country on a larger representative sample size to determine the existing scenario with regards to performance appraisal in the apparel manufacturing industry. Further it can be compared to similar studies conducted in other industries to identify the gap in the HR practices pertaining to performance appraisal extant in the various sectors.

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