Politics of Performance Appraisal Effects:
A Study of Aviation Industry of Islamabad

[1] H. Naseer, [2*] M. Ahmad

[1,2] *Department of management sciences, Iqra University Islamabad, Islamabad, Pakistan*

ABSTRACT:
The organizational life pervaded with politics (some organizations more than others are). Hence, political behavior is an ordinary part of the Performance Appraisals (PAS) processes and PAS are highly prone by politics. Politics is an important determinant in the pay systems as both supervisors and subordinates have possibilities to influence the results of the appraisal process. The overall atmosphere of all organizations has an influence on the effectiveness of the performance appraisals. The core objective of this review is to accomplish an imperative review of "the politics of performance appraisal" by enticing material from diverse literatures. The study conducted in the aviation industry in Islamabad. Total sample size for this study is 100 including both senior and middle management and comprised of employees who had participated in the organization's appraisal process for at least two years. Politics often enters the performance appraisal method thus manipulating the works. Therefore, to keep the process hindered in a political game, a conscious effort needed by both the manager and those training him or her in appraisal techniques. This study provides useful insights by demonstrating the importance of effective PA in enhancing performance in aviation industry context. Moreover, this study sets out to investigate the politics of PAS in Aviation industry in Islamabad. The results revealed a negative perception that the employees held of the PAS that the system affected by subjectivity, and was influenced by some major errors.

Keywords: *Performance appraisal, Politics, Appraisal error, Attribution, Perception*

INTRODUCTION

Organizational life pervaded with politics (some organizations more than others are). Based on performance evaluation, politics is an important determinant in the pay systems as both supervisors and subordinates have possibilities to influence the results of the appraisal process. In order to affect the position of supervisors in the organization or to influence behaviors of their subordinates, they enticed to manipulate the ratings (Lawler, 1990). As the foremost distinctiveness of organizational politics are inspirations of natives to protect their own interests, to exploit control in their attempts to overcome the negative effects within the organization and to manipulate others. Hence, organization politics seeks to achieve self-interests, advantages, and benefits at the expense of others and usually it is a self-serving behavior (Murray and Gandz, 1980).

Plethora researchers have affirmed that political behavior is an ordinary part of the Performance Appraisals (PAS) processes. Therefore, PAS is highly prone by politics. For example, if PAS are going to hurt the manager

*Corresponding Author, Email: *maqsood366@yahoo.com*

then it may be irrational to provide accurate ratings (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995). Moreover, (Longnecker et al., 1987) explicitly elucidate only individual depicts the impacts of one's ratings. Quite paradoxical, they classify all types of organizational politics as a tool that assists them to balance effectiveness and survival and consequently believe manipulation as a part of good management practice.

Literature Review

The core objective of this review is to accomplish an imperative review of "the politics of performance appraisal" by enticing material from diverse literatures. Such a review is significant, as reviews of that research and the extent of recent research on performance appraisals stay conquered by a psychological approach.

Preceding research indicates that the overall atmosphere of all organizations has an influence on the effectiveness of the performance appraisals. Organizations that characterized by the climates of distrust, menace, defensiveness, low support, and poor communication are very tricky, where precious implementation of performance appraisal is a delicate procedure (Lawler, 1990; Vigoda, 2000).

Different Levels of PA Politics

When organizational politics are conferred there came some confusion concerning the proximate terms that often represented together. Hence, one of the most important synonymous is power among the commonly used and define terms. It has extensively recognized both politics and power affect the ability to secure one's goals and interests in a social system and are significant parts of human behavior. As all definitions of organizational politics, refer to informal belongings to improve the actor's percentage of organizational benefits and possessions (Beaty and Drory, 1991). Therefore, organizational politics usually related to the circumstances such as conflicts above the sources of power and possibilities to influence and power struggles.

Consequently, politics emerged into the understanding of PAS at three phases; each demands a slightly diverse theoretical armory for the issues of control and political progress. They portrayed in descending order of aggregation:

1. Politics of PA model diffusion
2. Political principles of PA system change
3. Political views of performance evaluation

Therefore, alterations among all these types of PAS politics primarily result in appealing areas of research.

Politics of PA Model Transmission

Presently the scattered literature has scrutinized countless special extensive pragmatic inclinations in PA transformation and innovation. Consequently, each of the subsequent outline a part of larger alteration in HR practices.

PA System Transmission
(a) Public Sector PA

Private sector organization techniques of objective PAS and merit pay when essentially imported outcome will be a public sector P.A (Bourgault, 1993; Barbara and Townley, 1997; Prichard, 1997).

(b) Cross-Unit (Often Cross-National)

To restrain and demeanor the attitudes and behaviors of personnel in recently traditional units, organization control methods serve as a component of strategy diffusion and implementation of PA methods in escalating business operations (Singh and Rosenzweig, 1991; Farley et al., 2004).

(c) Worker Individualization

In an attempt to sever with customs of socialism and preface of appraisal and remuneration based on evaluation of individual skill tenure and performance, worker individualization becomes an extensive application of PA to non-management employee groups (Katz, 1993; Dominica and Eustatius, 1996 ; Jenkins et al., 2002). In general, it is performance and skill based pay system.

Political Values of PA System Change as Appraisal Intensification

In appraisal intensification, the aim is to improve both the levels where performance is under managerial scrutiny. Therefore, it is the propensity to pertain the conventional rater-ratee PA with diverse techniques and elegance. These techniques are as follows:

(a) Multi-Rater Process

It is primarily the implementation of international appraisal methods where we exploit several data sources on individual behavior (peers, subordinates, etc.) (Brackken et al., 2001). For example "360° appraisal".

(b) Forced Ranking Process

This technique has extended from the US. At the point, the supervisors report the populations of recruits and transmit percentages as high, average, and low player to them (Gary, 2001).

3) Political Views of Performance Rating

Politics often enters the performance appraisal method thus manipulating the works. Therefore, to keep the process hindered in a political game, a conscious effort needed by both the manager and those training him or her in appraisal techniques. Consequently, organizational behaviors compel organizational tools to adapt and bound by group and individual interactions. Following kinds of issues, be addressed

1. Appraisal lived over time, one must address how the formal rudiments of rational legal and PAS customized by diverse grouping and folks (Barlow and Graham, 1989).

2. Political will and skill (Kipnis, 1988) developed around appraisal processes. Moreover, what typical stances and social processes characterize this mobilization (Mintzberg, 1984)?

3. In minimizing any political activity, what task does the inner plan of the PA system play (Kipnis and Schmidt, 1988)?

Rating Influence and Manipulation Distortion

In this direction, researchers took steps by constructing PA rating alteration and development and by mounting forms of the situation. Certainly, the study of the politics of a rating are not amazingly different types of both rater and ratee impression management. For example, in the visage of possible coverage of criticism with bosses, various studies focus on ratee self-defense, such as promotions of folk (Watt, 1993).

Manager or Rater Issues

Plethora of researchers has shown extensive importance of variables allied the individual working with appraisal (DeNisi and Robbins, 1998; Lefkowitz, 2000; Williams an Levy, 2004). Therefore, rater effect is one of the widely considered rater variables (Williams and Levy, 2004).

A widespread description of power by Lefkowitz, (2000) is positive attention for subordinate. Study of Geoge and Forgas, (2001) advocates that mood plays an enormous role and sentiments of judgments.

In PA, raters in good mood, lean to appraise performance confidently and evoke auxiliary positive information from memory (Sinclair, 1998). Similarly, that affect strongly linked to rating leniency and peer ratings in upward than it was in conventional top-down ratings (Park and Antonioni, 2001).

Recent research attracted the interests of current research on how the attributions manipulate the position of ascription absorbed, and eagerness to real score in PA Process (Struthers et al., 1998). Conversely, raters judge ratees' behaviors and their repute when deciding on suitable rewards and depiction of attribution conjectures (Jonson et al., 1996). This implies that attribution is a vital part of rating procedure.

Subordinate or Ratee Problems

Another foremost hub of PA research, narrates the part of appraisal in ratee reactions to PA methods and inspiration. Usually the study focusing on inspiration sorted as

(1) The relationships between performance rewards and evaluation (Williams and Jawahar, 1997; Campbel et al., 1998).
Or
(2) The essence of the PA process that increase the motivation of rates.

There are extremely diffident evidences (Goss, 2001) all merit pay schemes are thriving despite the fact those methods appear like a good thought. In contrast, merit pay tactics rarely achieve their objectives as insightful demand and speculative hold (Campbel et al., 1998).

Likewise, (Mani, 2002) squabbles, though pay is an imperative motivator, little organizations really connect the PAS to reward in any concrete way.

Roberts, (2003) acknowledges the antecedent of ratees' work inspiration as significance of the contribution in the PAS development. The

novelist advocates very truly that contribution is crucial for any sensible PAS. To summarize Taylor et al. (2001) affirm that PAS used to improve organizational commitment, employees' levels of job happiness, and job enthusiasm.

Moreover, Williams and Levy (2004), categorized reactions of ratee as follows:
1) Reactions to the appraisal format
2) Feedback or response to multi-source appraisal and
3) Responses of the appraisal process

Superior Subordinate Relationship Issues

Researchers consider that trust problems vault the worth of PAS (Ferrin and Dirks, 2001; Williams and Levy, 2004; Teachout and Hedge, 2012) as it is a main factor for managing the supervisor worker relationship (Davis and Mayer, 1999). As a result, ratees may not willingly admit feedback from that source and will have less intensity of trust for their administrator. Therefore, Mani (2002) proposed in trust on supervisors is basic key of measurement of satisfaction with the PAS. Hence, Roberson and Kosgaard (1995) present that once employees found opportunities to self appraise and assertive trainings, they show greater affiliation and additional hopeful attitude with PAS. According to Davis and Mayer (1999), when a PAS perceived as precise and imminent, workforce portrays better trust and constructive approaches towards PAS.

Group Dynamics and Appraisal

With respect to collisions on the PAS, there was always an increasing apprehension of other multiple and intricate relations. Therefore, researchers focus spin approximately around the teams or workforce compositions. These issues are: (1) team processes, (2) impression management, and (3) the feedback environment adept by employees of organizations. Specifically, PAS convoluted for various motives in a group based atmosphere. Thus, PAS balances the individual versus team as a crucial part. Although both are important, but preferring any one of them can result in sterility deal. Feedback environment is another significant issue that crash team dynamics with respect to PA (Smither and London, 2002). Therefore, in groups exemplified by feedback-oriented customs, it is an essential element of the PA process (London, 2003). In the vision of Steelman et al. (2004), feedback has immense prospective for improving the PA process, and analytical device to categorize limitations and authorities of supervisor.

Errors or Biases in Performance Appraisal Process

There can be countless latent errors inside PAS. As raters manipulate the autonomy of the PAS negatively, so remain answerable for the entire errors. Most familiar errors of PAS are as follows:

In PAS, the halo effect is one of the most common errors. It is control of a rater's broad-spectrum intuition on ratings of particular qualities of ratee (Lance and Solomonson, 1997). Occasionally one famous attribute or new traits of the subordinate can glow the insight of the evaluator. As a result, the rater awards excellent grades to them, although their performances are not admirable.

Therefore, Lefkowitz (2000) concludes with all his extensive efforts that enhanced interpersonal connection and optimistic esteem for subordinates can fetch halo biases in PAS. Another type of error is **Horn effect** and it is the reverse of halo effect**.** Even though the performance of ratee is creditable, the rater impinges poor grades.

The second Kopelman and Tziner, (2002) most common appraisal error can be the **leniency error**. By awarding low ratings to employees, numerous managers remain concerned to damage superior working affiliation with subordinate. Therefore, they offer senior ratings to ratee than they truly deserve accomplishing this motive. Consequently, to affect the future of the subordinate, lenient raters have propensity to rate subordinates at top. In additions management psychologist's claim that PA ratings acquired for bureaucrat intentions can be extra-relaxed for feedback (Williams and Levy, 2004).

The **error of strictness** emerges when raters, regardless the actual performance echelon of the ratee, confer poor appraisal. Similarly, it emerges as raters might attain performance of personnel as below maximum and exceptionally fix high standards. In the view

of Kopelman and Tziner (2002), as raters hold perception that ratee can substitute them in future, so these perceptions create this error in PAS.

Sometimes diverse raters have inclinations to rate at center of the scale relatively at extremes. The **central tendency error** happened for two main reasons:

✓ Rater try to decrease the risk of wrong judgment as lacks sufficient information of employee and
✓ Rater gives normal ratings regardless of real performance of personnel as suppose PAS are squander of time

In mass organizations appraisal held once typically or seldom twice in a year (Bersin, 2008). Therefore, for the rater, this duration between one appraisal and the subsequent could long enough to remember particulars of all personnel.

The **contrast error** emerges when rating of any personnel are biased because of another employee's performance, immediately previously evaluated. The prospect to occur is higher if rater assesses countless employees within short span (Kopelman and Tziner, 2002).

The **similarity effect** emerges as raters try to provide more score to those subsidiaries alike themselves in terms of qualities and background (Wexley and Pulakos, 1983) Similarly, when recruiters construct efforts to pretend their inclinations match those of the superior, with intentions to please superior for more favorable ratings, then they also contribute towards this error. When similarity based on contest and belief, it may result in favoritism and the possessions of "similar to me" error surfaced (Wexley and Pulakos, 1983).

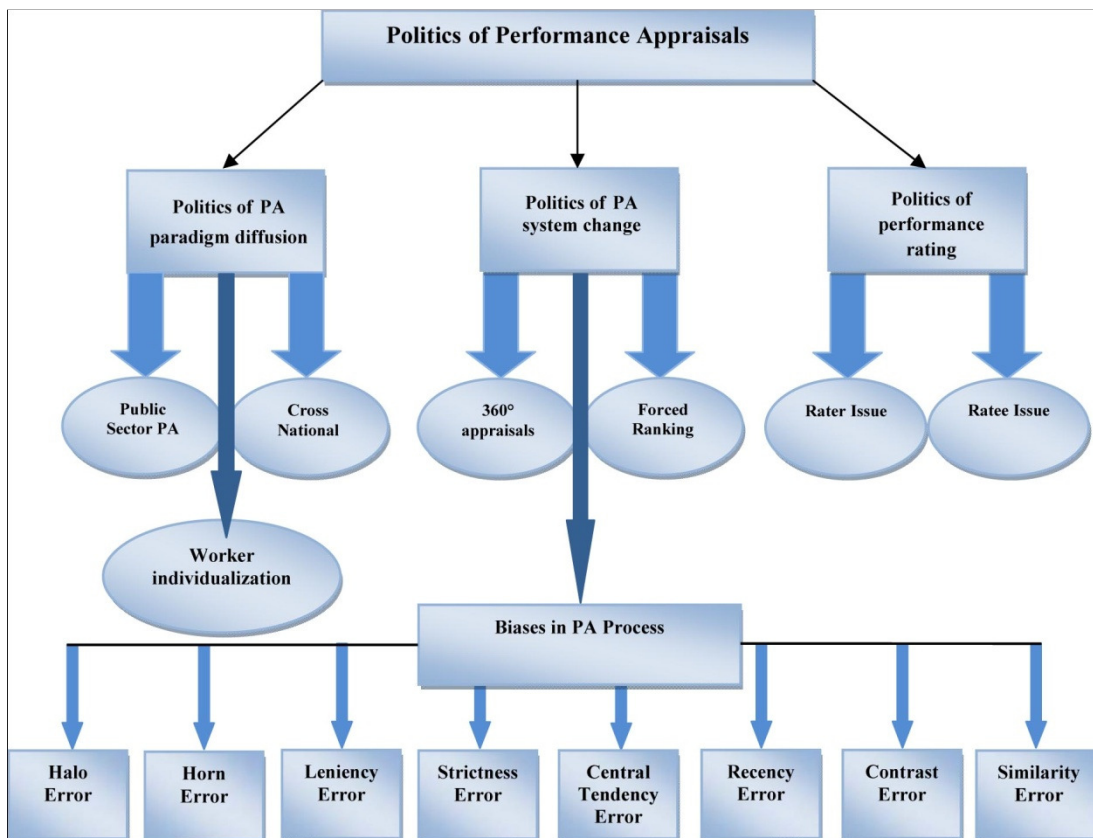Figure 1 shows Model off Politics of Performance Appraisals.

Figure 1: Model of literature review for politics of performance appraisals

RESEARCH METHOD

The study conducted on aviation industry in Islamabad. Total sample size for this study is 100 including both senior and middle management and comprised of employees who had participated in the organizations appraisal process for at least two years. The total number of respondents selected is shown in table 1.

It is based on collection of both interviews and survey data forms. The data collected were edited, coded and processed with the Statistical Package for Science Solutions (SPSS).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 summarizes the frequency distribution of the age of respondents. The results show that the majority of the respondents (58%) were between the ages of 30and above. A few of them (18%) were 25 years and below, and 22% were 26-30years. This distribution suggests that majority of the employees were relatively middle aged. Younger employees of the institution might manifest greater sense of anxiety during appraisal than the older ones.

However, (Gurbuz and Dikmenli, 2007) suggest that youthful as well as older employees' perception of PA generally does not vary extensively according to

their ages. This apparently suggests that younger and older employees alike are substantially similar in terms of their perception of PA errors, as well as their commitment and willingness to submit to PA.

The results in table 3 depict that majority of the respondents (55%) possessed a master degree or equivalent professional qualification, and 43% were holder of graduate degree. However only 2% had a Ph.D. qualification. There is a general notion that highly educated and trained people perform tasks within their professional competence. They tend to support established procedures and standards of performance. It is, therefore, incredible to state that respondents with higher professional qualifications and advanced academic qualifications might manifest greater co-operation, commitment, and willingness to submit to the PAS than their counterparts with relatively lower qualifications. Gurbuz and Dikmenli, (2007) findings support this view.

Table 1: The sample size of respondents in Aviation Industry

Category of Respondents	Staff Male	Staff Female	No. of Respondents (Male+ Female)
Senior Management	15	5	20
Middle Management	50	30	80
Total	65	35	100

Table 2: Age distribution of respondents

Age(Years)	Frequency	Percentage
25 and Below	18	18
26-30	22	22
30 and above	58	58
Total	100	100

Table 3: Level of education of respondents

Age (years)	Frequency	Percentage
Ph.D.	2	2
Master Degree	55	55
Graduate	43	43
Total	100	100

It is evident from the results in table 4 that majority of the respondents (74%) had worked in the organizations for between 7 and 10 years, and a further 15% for more than 11 years. In effect, most of the respondents (47%) had worked in the institution for at least 7 years consecutively. This group of employees most certainly might have gone through the PA process several times, and could consider to have gained greater insight into the system. Therefore, they might be better placed to provide relevant information to facilitate fairer assessment of the PAS. Therefore, employees who undergo PA several times acquire significant information, knowledge, and experience about its process and purpose through the feedback mechanism (Gurbuz and Dikmenli, 2007).

Perception of Respondents for PA Politics
Perception of the Halo Effect

Table 5 elucidated that approximately 45% of the respondents perceived that most of the raters had the tendency to view positively all behaviors of subordinates because the rater liked a particular behavior of the subordinate. Nearly 33% of them also thought most of the raters committed this error, whilst 14% claimed all of the raters committed it and about 92% of them believed that some or most or all raters manifested this bias during appraisal. This is perhaps the second most common appraisal error according to the results of the study.

The principal raters in the organizations included heads and supervisors of the various Departments or Units, and co-ordinate by the HR section. Furthermore, a Quality Control Unit was in place. Its functions included streamlining the appraisal process to assure procedural fairness, and resolving contentions that arose from appraisal outcomes.

Perception of the Horn Effect

The results in table 6 divulged that about 67% of the respondents were of the view that most of the raters had the tendency to consider negatively all behaviors of a subordinate, because the rater disliked a particular behavior of the subordinate. Approximately 18% of them believed that some of the raters committed this error during appraisal. Meanwhile, about 12% of them claimed all the raters committed the error.

The occurrence of this error may be inclined by vague personal disagreements between some raters and ratees. However, ratees in good relationship with some aggrieved raters received higher ratings even if their performance was not commendable. One important risk with this scenario is that high performers who eventually receive lower ratings might become demotivated, and this could result in reduced productivity.

Tables 4: Years worked by employees in the organization

No. of Years	Frequency	Percentage
Between 2-6	11	11
Between 7-10	74	74
Above 11	15	15
Total	100	100

Table 5: Halo error by raters

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Know	3	3
None	5	5
Some	33	33
Most	45	45
All	14	14
Total	100	100

Table 6: Raters committing Horn Error

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Know	1	1
None	2	2
Some	18	18
Most	67	67
All	12	12
Total	100	100

Table 7: Respondent's perception of raters committing recency error

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Know	1	1
None	4	4
Some	43	43
Most	29	29
All	23	23
Total	100	

Perception of the Recency Error

It could be observed from table 7 that about 43% of the respondents believed some of the raters were influenced by some subordinates' frequent display of behaviors that they

(raters) liked when appraisal time was approaching. In addition, about 29% of them held the view that most of the raters committed this error when appraising subordinates whom they had insufficient information on their overall work-performance. However, 4% of them believed none of the raters in the institution committed the recency error.

In most organizations PA conducted annually, that corroborates the assertion by Bersin (2008) that in most organizations the process often tends towards the annual appraisal.

Without having, the raters routinely document employee accomplishments and failures throughout the whole appraisal period, the raters are forced to recall recent employee behavior to establish the rating, thereby

committing the recency error. Consequently, the appraisal report might not be comprehensive enough to provide useful feedback on the ratee's true performance.

Perception of the Error of Strictness

From the results in table 8, nearly 31% of the respondents perceived that some of the raters had very high rating standards. Almost 9% of them claimed that most of the raters were the strict type who had the tendency to give low ratings even though the employee's performance might be relatively commendable. Meanwhile, 57% of them were of the view that none of the raters displayed such tendency. This error occurs apparently due to intrinsic crave of some raters to create the impression that they are perfectly placed, and are unwilling to give high ratings to an appraisee even if the ratee's performance is highly commendable (Kopelman and Tziner, 2002).

Table 8: Respondent's perception of raters committing strictness error

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Know	0	0
None	57	57
Some	31	31
Most	9	9
All	3	3
Total	100	100

Table 9: Respondent's perception of raters committing leniency error

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Know	2	2
None	33	33
Some	59	59
Most	3	3
All	3	3
Total	100	100

Perception of the Leniency Error

As the results in table 9 show, about 59% of the respondents perceived that some of the appraisers had the tendency to give, unusually high ratings to all ratees unless they (ratees) had a clear deficiency, or they (raters) might not want to adversely influence the future of subordinates. Approximately 3% of them thought most of the raters committed the leniency error. However, nearly 33% believed none of the raters committed this error. It was the least common appraisal bias, according to the results of the study. This is not in accord with Kopelman and Tziner (2002) findings that indicate that leniency error is generally the second most common appraisal error in organizations. Majority (65%) of the respondents perceived that some or most or all raters committed this error.

A major contributory factor for the occurrence of this error, as the respondents claimed, was that raters generally preferred to maintain good working relationship with subordinates to confronting the discomfort and conflict usually associated with communicating poor appraisal results to ratees. This is consistent with Murphy and Cleveland (1995) submission that raters' motivation to give elevated ratings is driven by their inclination to maintain good working relationship with ratees. A key implication of this error is that the final appraisal results may not be useful for developmental purposes, since ratees' performance deficiencies may be concealed.

Respondents' Views of Importance of PA to Their Career Goals

The views of respondents about the importance of PA to their individual career goals and development are presented on table 10. The results indicated that about 69% of them held the view that PA was important to their individual career goals and development. Additionally, nearly 13% of them were of the view that PA was highly important to their career objectives and ambitions. In contrast, about 11% were of the opinion that PA was highly unimportant or simply unimportant to their respective career goals, while about 11% indicated that it was somewhat important to their career objectives.

Table 10: Respondents views of PA importance to their career

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Highly unimportant	0	0
unimportant	7	7
Somewhat important	11	11
Important	69	69
Highly Important	13	13
Total	100	100

Explaining their responses, the respondents (11%) who thought PA was unimportant to their career goals contended that appraisal in the organizations was just a formality, and therefore a waste of time. This assertion might be due to lack of knowledge and appreciation of the purpose of PA in general. It could also indicate failure on the part of the institutional authorities to create sufficient awareness and conditions to generate interest in employees for PA. In support of their responses, the majority of respondents (61.5%), who believed PA was important to their career ambitions, explained that feedback on appraisals enabled them to identify their individual strengths, weaknesses, and direction in their job performance.

This way, they were better placed to fairly assess their training needs and learning desires, to access appropriate guidance, counseling, and support for further development.

Implications

This study set out to investigate the politics of PAS in Aviation industry in Islamabad. The results revealed a negative perception that the employees held of the PAS that the system affected by subjectivity, and was influenced by some major errors, the most common of which were the similarity and the halo effect biases. There was very little employee involvement in formulating criteria, agreeing performance standards and objectives for the appraisal. In spite of their perception of PA errors, the majority of employees were committed and willing to submit to the process. Most employees viewed the system as important to both their individual career goals as well as the objectives of organizations. There was irregular and inadequate feedback on appraisal outcomes to all employees, except in the case of very poor performers. Appraisal was conducted only once in a year, and this created fertile grounds for the occurrence of the recency error.

The findings have serious managerial implications for training, motivation, and provision of resources for effective PA. In order to minimize, if not completely eliminate, perceived appraisal errors, as well as establish a more rational system, certain approaches are recommended. Regarding halo effect and leniency error, precise definitions of the job-related behaviors being rated are required. This would help reduce the tendency for appraisers to rely on their individual interpretations. To help reduce the occurrence of recency error, the use of appraisal diary should be considered.

CONCLUSION

This study would enable the superior to routinely employee accomplishments and failures throughout the whole appraisal period. Concerning similarity bias, performance standards must be clearly defined. Furthermore, institutional authorities should strive to provide regular and adequate feedback to subordinates.

Although the study provides useful insights by demonstrating the importance of effective PA in enhancing performance in aviation industry context, the results need to be interpreted subject to the usual limitation of survey research. In particular, the focus was on perception of employees within the aviation sector and in only few organizations. Therefore, the findings cannot be described as a reflection of the general state of affairs across other sectors and industry. Based on the observations in the study area,

future research should focus on case studies of other sectors and organizations in other locations and be directed at other PA error.

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