

The Relationship Between Performance Appraisal System and Employee Job Satisfaction in Higher Education Institutions in Palestine

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The Performance Appraisal System (PAS) plays a key role in the overall success of an organization. An appropriate PAS can potentially increase employee Job Satisfaction (JS). This article aims to demonstrate the level of practices and characteristics of the PAS, characterize JS levels in the workplace, and understand the relationship between the PAS and JS in Palestine's Higher Education Institutions (HEI). This article advocates to the Ministry of Higher Education to establish a Performance Appraisal (PA) model in all HEI that would meet their specific needs. It will also contribute to the development of HEI through facilitating improved services to students and society overall. Furthermore, the article identifies key factors contributing to the success of PAS in Palestine. Convenience sampling was utilized to study 370 HEI employees. A quantitative analysis was employed through SPSS that found a statistically significant relationship between PAS traits and employee JS. Clarity, trust, and fairness positively correlated with JS, whereas two-way communication correlated negatively. Substantial gender-based disparities in JS among the participants were also identified.

Keywords: human resources, Palestine, higher education, performance appraisal, appraisal system, evaluation, job satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal systems (PAS) are a cornerstone of human resource management, designed to evaluate employee performance, provide feedback, and guide development (Fletcher, 2001). Effective PAS can enhance employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational performance (Kuvaas, 2006). However, the design and implementation of PAS remain a complex challenge for organizations worldwide. This is particularly true within the context of higher education institutions (HEIs), where unique cultural, organizational, and motivational factors influence the effectiveness of appraisal systems. In the Palestinian context, HEIs face a number of challenges in implementing effective PAS. These challenges may include a lack of clearly defined performance standards, limited resources, and cultural resistance to formal evaluation. Understanding the relationship between PAS characteristics and employee job satisfaction within Palestinian HEIs is crucial for developing contextually appropriate appraisal systems that foster a positive and productive work environment.

This study investigates the relationship between four key characteristics of PAS (clarity, trust, fairness, and two-way communication) and employee job satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs. Clarity refers to the extent to which employees understand performance expectations and evaluation criteria (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Trust encompasses employees' confidence in the objectivity and integrity of the appraisal process (Mayer et al., 1995). Fairness involves perceptions of justice and equity throughout the appraisal system (Greenberg, 1987). Two-way communication emphasizes the opportunity for open dialogue and feedback exchange between employees and their appraisers (Fletcher, 2001).

Prior research suggests a generally positive association between PAS characteristics and job satisfaction (e.g., Kuvaas, 2006). However, the strength and direction of these relationships may vary in different cultural and organizational contexts. Notably, the role of two-way communication warrants further investigation, as some studies indicate the potential for negative perceptions associated with increased feedback within the appraisal process (Bannister, 1986). This study seeks to address these gaps in the literature by providing insights into the dynamics of PAS and job satisfaction within the unique context of Palestinian HEIs.

The results hold significant implications for the development and implementation of effective PAS in Palestinian HEIs. Policymakers in the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and HEI leaders can utilize the findings to design appraisal systems that enhance employee satisfaction, motivation, and ultimately contribute to the overall quality of Palestinian higher education.

NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study offers valuable insights into factors influencing job satisfaction within Palestinian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). By identifying key Performance Appraisal System (PAS) characteristics that impact employee attitudes, the research provides actionable recommendations for HEIs seeking to enhance employee well-being, motivation, and performance.

The study has direct implications for the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). Findings can inform policy development aimed at promoting effective PAS implementation across HEIs as a means to improve the overall quality of the higher education sector.

The Palestinian community also stands to benefit. A satisfied and motivated HEI workforce is essential for delivering high-quality education and fostering a knowledge-driven society. This translates into improved services for students, greater societal impact, and enhanced national competitiveness.

STUDY JUSTIFICATION

The study addresses a critical gap in the literature by examining the relationship between PAS and job satisfaction within the unique context of Palestinian HEIs. Despite the importance of employee satisfaction for organizational success, limited research exists in this specific context.

This study's findings have the potential to inform both institutional practices and MOHE policy initiatives. By prioritizing PAS that promote fairness, clarity, trust, and meaningful communication, HEIs can create a more supportive and fulfilling work environment, ultimately contributing to a stronger and more vibrant Palestinian higher education sector.

This study makes several distinct contributions to the literature on performance appraisal and employee satisfaction. First, it provides a nuanced understanding of the relationship between PAS characteristics and job satisfaction within the unique context of Palestinian HEIs. Second, the study's focus on two-way communication offers valuable insights into the potential complexities of feedback mechanisms within appraisal systems. Third, the findings have practical implications for policymakers and leaders in Palestinian HEIs, providing actionable guidance for designing contextually appropriate and culturally sensitive PAS models that foster employee well-being and contribute to organizational effectiveness.

It is important to acknowledge several limitations of this study. First, the use of a cross-sectional design limits our ability to infer causality. Further longitudinal studies may offer a deeper understanding of how PAS characteristics and job satisfaction evolve over time. Second, the reliance on self-reported data

introduces the potential for social desirability bias. Future research could incorporate qualitative methods or utilize observational data to provide a more multifaceted perspective. Finally, while the focus on Palestinian HEIs yields valuable insights, the generalizability of findings to other cultural or organizational contexts may be limited. Comparative studies across different countries or sectors would enhance our understanding of the universality of PAS dynamics.

THEORETICAL LITERATURE

HR and Performance Appraisal Systems

Human resource (HR) departments play a critical role in shaping employee-management relationships and fostering organizational effectiveness (Angonga, 2019). A strategic HR approach leverages practices like reward systems, career management, recruitment, training, and performance appraisals (PAs) to enhance personnel performance and achieve a competitive advantage. Effective implementation of these practices promotes fairness and an ethical climate, positively influencing employee behavior (Angonga, 2019).

PAs are essential HR tools that support decision-making regarding promotions, demotions, rewards, or terminations. They provide a structured framework for evaluating performance, offering a comprehensive view of employee contributions. PAs guide career development but often suffer from a lack of clarity regarding content, implementation, and management. Despite ambiguities, many organizations recognize the value of PAs in the reward process (Weinstein, 2016). A well-designed PA can aid managers in guiding staff toward institutional goals while proactively addressing challenges. Most organizations conduct appraisals annually, semi-annually, or quarterly (Selden et al., 2001). This study focuses on four key PA characteristics: clarity, fairness, trust in supervisor, and two-way communication.

Key PA Characteristics

- **Trust in Supervisor:** Trust is foundational to positive workplace relationships, productivity, and employee engagement. In PAs, trust in supervisor influences employee perceptions and job satisfaction. Research indicates a positive association between trust, organizational effectiveness, loyalty, commitment, and knowledge sharing (Colquitt et al., 2007). Social Cognitive Theory suggests that employees with greater trust in supervisors are more receptive to PAs (Mulvaney, 2019).
- **Clarity:** PA clarity underpins effectiveness and fairness by ensuring employees and managers share a common understanding of expectations, assessment methods, and outcomes. When employees grasp expectations and how their performance is measured, they are better equipped to succeed (Bilal et al., 2014).
- **Two-Way Communication:** Effective supervisor-employee communication is essential for a well-functioning PA system. It promotes employee voice and validates employees' sense of belonging (Brown et al., 2010). Two-way communication proactively addresses performance issues (Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022) and fosters a sense of empowerment and fairness, enhancing employee buy-in.
- **Fairness:** A fair PA system, based on reliable, transparent, and bias-free measures, creates a positive work environment. Employees who perceive the PA system as equitable are more likely to trust the organization and its leadership, leading to increased satisfaction and a sense of security (Frazier et al., 2010).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction reflects an individual's attitudes and emotions toward their work (Armstrong, 2006). It encompasses the degree to which rewards align with expectations and is influenced by cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors (Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022). Job satisfaction is particularly crucial for educators, who have a profound impact on young learners and society (Bogapova, 2018).

The Relationship Between PA and Job Satisfaction

Research investigating employee responses to PAs has highlighted key outcomes: improved performance, enhanced motivation, reduced attrition, and a sense of fairness (Alhaja et al., 2018). Numerous studies establish a connection between PAs and job satisfaction (e.g., Darehzereshki, 2013; Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022; Jarrar, 2023; Agyare et al., 2016). This link is often attributed to PAs offering opportunities for career advancement, constructive feedback, and a better understanding of one's job (Nair, 2010).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Expectancy Theory

Vroom's Expectancy Theory posits that motivation is driven by the belief that actions will yield positive performance reviews and subsequent benefits. It emphasizes that individuals are motivated by expectations, conscious choices, and a desire for a range of benefits (financial, career-related, intellectual). People make choices that maximize personal gain (Lunenburg, 2011).

Research-Based View (RBV)

The Research-Based View (RBV) is a strategic management framework emphasizing the value of a firm's internal resources as the primary driver of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). It theorizes that unique, valuable, and difficult-to-imitate resources enable firms to outperform their competitors. RBV suggests a focus on developing and leveraging employee skills, knowledge, and organizational capabilities as core strategic assets (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). In the context of PAS, RBV underscores the importance of evaluating and nurturing employee talent to align their proficiencies with current and future organizational needs.

Ethical Theory

Ethical theories provide frameworks for moral decision-making within organizations. Common frameworks like Kantianism, emphasizing duty and universal principles, and utilitarianism, focusing on maximizing overall good, help establish ethical standards for fair and just conduct (Spender, 2015). In designing and implementing PAS, organizations should embed ethical principles to ensure assessments are transparent, respectful, and free from bias. Ethical PAS builds trust and enhances employee perceptions of organizational integrity.

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory posits that organizations have responsibilities to a wide range of stakeholders (e.g., employees, customers, suppliers, community) beyond just maximizing shareholder profits (Freeman, 2010). This perspective advocates for a more inclusive approach to decision-making. When designing PAS, stakeholder theory suggests considering the impact on all stakeholders. A PAS that balances employee needs with broader organizational goals promotes long-term sustainability.

Knowledge-Based Theory (KBV)

Knowledge-Based Theory (KBV) views knowledge as an organization's most valuable strategic resource (Grant, 1996). It emphasizes that a firm's ability to create, acquire, transfer, and leverage knowledge is crucial for competitive advantage. Within the context of PAS, KBV underscores the importance of using appraisals to capture and share employee knowledge, facilitating organizational learning and innovation. PAS can be designed to facilitate knowledge transfer and collaboration between supervisors and employees.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides a framework for understanding human motivation (Maslow, 1943). It proposes that individuals strive to fulfill needs arranged in a hierarchy: physiological, safety,

belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. A well-designed PAS can address various levels of employee needs. It can promote a sense of security, recognition, and opportunities for growth, thereby enhancing motivation and job satisfaction. However, it's important to recognize individual differences and motivations when applying Maslow's theory in the workplace.

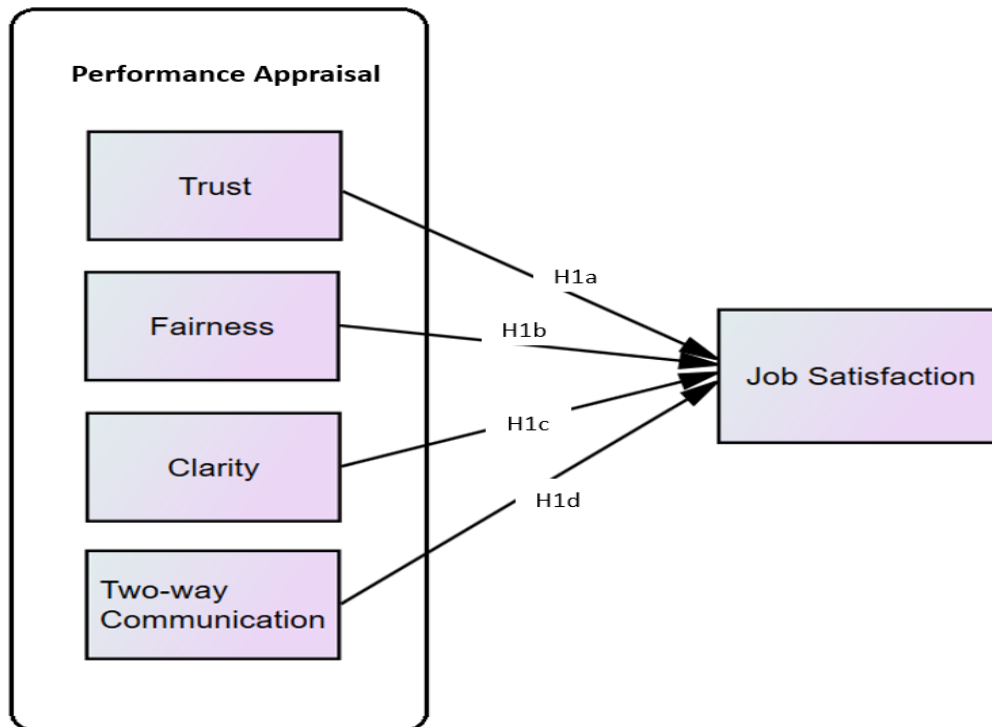
Adam's Equity Theory

Adam's Equity Theory focuses on the role of fairness in employee motivation and job satisfaction (Adams, 1963). It posits that employees compare their inputs (effort, skills) to their outcomes (rewards, recognition) relative to their peers. A perceived imbalance creates feelings of inequity, leading to decreased motivation and dissatisfaction. A PAS should ensure fair and transparent evaluations and reward systems to promote a sense of equity and enhance employee satisfaction.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study employs a conceptual framework to investigate the relationship between key characteristics of Performance Appraisal Systems (PAS) and employee job satisfaction. Based on a rigorous literature review, four critical PAS traits have been identified as independent variables: clarity (C), trust in supervisor (T), fairness (F), and two-way communication (TC). The study examines the impact of these traits on job satisfaction as the dependent variable.

FIGURE 1
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PAS AND JOB SATISFACTION



Assumptions

This study operates under the following assumptions:

- **Participant Response:** Participants will possess a comprehensive understanding of the questions and provide honest, thoughtful, and accurate responses,

- **Management Receptivity:** Senior management will value the potential insights generated by the research recommendations.
- **Management Commitment:** Senior management demonstrates a commitment to the effective implementation of performance appraisals and recognizes their importance to organizational success.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a cross-sectional quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between Performance Appraisal System (PAS) characteristics and job satisfaction among employees in Palestinian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed with SPSS Statistics Software (version 26; IBM Corp, 2019) for empirical accuracy.

Research Approach

The study provides a detailed examination of PAS implementation and its impact on employee job satisfaction within Palestinian HEIs. A quantitative approach was utilized to analyze the relationship between key PAS traits (clarity, trust in supervisor, fairness, two-way communication) and job satisfaction.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised all employees in Palestinian HEIs (N=17,477) as per data from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHE, 2022). A convenience sample of 370 HEI employees with at least one year of tenure was obtained. Participants were invited via email through their institution’s HR departments.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were utilized. Secondary data included publications, scholarly studies, and MOHE statistics. Primary data were collected via a self-administered Likert-scale questionnaire, informed by the frameworks of Dechev (2010) and Tekeste (2017), and adapted to the Palestinian HEI context.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was designed to explore the relationship between PAS characteristics and job satisfaction. It included demographic items (gender, age, education level, administrative level, monthly income) to investigate potential variations in job satisfaction.

Major constructs of the study and the individual items comprising them are displayed in table 1 as follows:

**TABLE 1
STUDY MEASUREMENT SCALES**

The Construct	Items’ code	Items’ description
Performance Appraisal		
Clarity	q1.1	I have clear job description
	q1.2	The recruitment process is very clear in my institution
	q1.3	My performance would be periodically evaluated
	q1.4	Performance appraisal management can help people understand the organization’s strategic priorities
	q1.5	I clearly understand the purpose of performance appraisal

The Construct	Items' code	Items' description
Performance Appraisal		
Two-way Communication	q2.1	The PAP in this institution often results in specification of new goals
	q2.2	My manager discusses regularly my job performance with me
	q2.3	I clearly understand my manager's comments and opinions during the feedback
	q2.4	My manager recognizes me when I do a good job
Trust	q3.1	I have confidence and trust in my immediate supervisor regarding reporting to his/her supervisor
	q3.2	My manager plays a significant role in my career development
	q3.3	My manager is highly capable as manager
	q3.4	My manager has reasonable expectations from my work
	q3.5	My manager is well informed about my work
	q3.6	Performance appraisal makes me better understand what should be doing
	q3.7	PAP helps manager to manage people better
	q3.8	PAP encourages co-operation & team spirit
Fairness	q4.1	My last performance rating was free from bias
	q4.2	I am satisfied from the relationship with my manager
	q4.3	My job is fulfilling my needs
	q4.4	My manager gives me fair feedback
	q4.5	Performance appraisal in my organization is fair
	q4.6	Performance appraisal reflects objectively my performance
	q4.7	Performance appraisal influences positively individual performance
Job Satisfaction	q5.1	It feels like family at work
	q5.2	I think that I could easily become attached to another institution as I am to mine
	q5.3	I feel proud to work for my organization
	q5.4	I receive adequate training and information about the performance appraisal cycle before it starts
	q5.5	I rank my organization higher compared to other employers
	q5.6	I would recommend my organization to all my friends
	q5.7	The salary is adequate reflection of my performance

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS Statistics Software (version 26; IBM Corp, 2019).

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Summarized demographic characteristics of the sample (Blaikie, 2003).
- **Variable Construction:** Individual items for PAS traits and job satisfaction were combined into composite scores using arithmetic means (Bandalos & Finney, 2001).
- **Normality Testing:** Due to the non-normal distribution of the job satisfaction variable, non-parametric tests were employed.
- **Group Differences:** Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests examined disparities in job satisfaction across demographic variables (Field, 2018).

- **Relationship Analysis:** Multiple Regression Analysis investigated the relationship between PAS traits and job satisfaction. The model accounted for 62.6% of the variance in job satisfaction (R^2) with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research principles. Participant anonymity and confidentiality were ensured through the questionnaire design and data handling procedures. Informed consent was obtained, clearly outlining the research purpose, participant rights, and researcher contact information.

Changes and Considerations

- **Conciseness and Precision:** Unnecessary wordiness has been streamlined. Terms are clearly defined.
- **APA Citations:** Ensure all in-text citations and references follow APA guidelines.
- **Methodological Rigor:** The revised text provides a clear and well-justified rationale for the choice of methods and data analysis techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative analysis, examining the relationship between Performance Appraisal System (PAS) characteristics and job satisfaction among employees in Palestinian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS Statistics Software (version 26; IBM Corp, 2019).

Reliability and Validity

The adapted questionnaire demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.793 to 0.96. These results support the instrument's reliability in the Palestinian HEI context. As shown in table 2 of Reliability analysis, all values of Cronbach's alpha are between 0.793 to 0.96, which indicates high levels of reliability for the questions in the survey, ensuring consistent measurement of the intended constructs.

TABLE 2
RELIABILITY ANALYSIS- INTERNAL CONSISTENCY CRITERIA

Constructs	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Clarity	5	0.793
Two-way communication	4	0.88
Trust	8	0.908
Fairness	7	0.914
Performance Appraisal	24	0.96
Job Satisfaction	7	0.807

Descriptive Analysis

The sample (n=370) was predominantly male (63.2%) and above the age of 45 (45.7%). A majority held advanced degrees (Master's: 41.6%, Ph.D.: 34.3%) and mid-level positions (48.6%). Over half the respondents (52.4%) earned between \$1000-\$2000 USD monthly.

Respondents generally viewed PAS favorably, believing it should be linked to salary increases (68.1%) and promotions (75.4%). They also associated PAS implementation with organizational profitability (58.4%).

TABLE 3
RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you think that positive performance appraisal should lead to increase the salary	NO	118	31.9
	YES	252	68.1
Do you think that positive performance appraisal influences employee promotion	NO	91	24.6
	YES	279	75.4
Do you think that implementing the performance appraisal is linked to the profitability of the organization?	NO	154	41.6
	YES	216	58.4

Descriptive statistics indicated a high level of satisfaction with the PAS overall (M=3.75, SD=0.81) and its individual components: clarity (M=3.93, SD=0.80), trust (M=3.82, SD=0.86), and fairness (M=3.70, SD=0.94). However, job satisfaction was reported at a medium level (M=3.66, SD=0.78).

TABLE 4
SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTS' SCORES AND IMPORTANCE LEVELS (N= 370)

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Importance
Clarity	3.93	0.80	high
Two-way communication	3.55	1.02	medium
Trust	3.82	0.86	high
Fairness	3.70	0.94	high
Performance Appraisal	3.75	0.81	high
Job Satisfaction	3.66	0.78	medium

Job Satisfaction: Influence of Demographics and PAS

Non-parametric tests revealed significant gender-based differences in job satisfaction (U=11915.50, $p < .001$), with males (M=202.58) reporting higher levels than females (M=156.11). No significant differences were found based on age, education level, administrative level, or income.

Multiple regression analysis indicated that, collectively, PAS characteristics significantly predicted job satisfaction ($F(4, 365)=152.65, p < .000, R^2 = .626$). Trust ($b=0.319, p < .001$), fairness ($b=0.393, p < .001$), and clarity ($b=0.175, p < .001$) each had positive relationships with job satisfaction.

Unexpectedly, two-way communication exhibited a negative association with job satisfaction ($b=-0.122, p=.010$). This finding, while counterintuitive, warrants further exploration. It's possible the nature and quality of two-way communication within these HEIs may negatively influence job satisfaction.

TABLE 5
DISPARITIES IN JS LEVELS ACROSS SEVERAL DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Variable	Categories	N (%)	Mean Rank	Test Statistic* (P-value)
Gender	Male	234 (63.2)	202.58	11915.5 (.000)
	Female	136 (36.8)	156.11	
Age (df=3)	Below-25	7 (1.9)	195.36	1.18 (.758)
	25-35	84 (22.7)	176.79	
	36-45	110 (29.7)	182.74	
	above-45	169 (45.7)	191.22	
Education level (df=4)	High school	11 (3)	230.55	3.46 (.484)
	Diploma	19 (5.1)	208.71	
	Bachelor's Degree	59 (15.9)	175.03	
	MA	154 (41.6)	183.94	
	PhD and above	127 (34.3)	184.89	
Administrative level (df=2)	Senior (Deans, vice deans)	72 (19.5)	203.79	3.23 (.199)
	Middle (head of division, department manager)	180 (48.6)	184.97	
Monthly income (df=2)	Junior (receptionists, registrars etc...)	118 (31.9)	175.15	1.31 (.519)
	Below \$1000	79 (21.4)	195.63	
	\$1000-\$2000	194 (52.4)	185.57	
	Above \$2000	97 (26.2)	177.10	

Note. *For both Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H tests.

Discussion

The results highlight the critical relationship between PAS characteristics and job satisfaction within Palestinian HEIs. The strong positive associations between trust, fairness, clarity, and job satisfaction align with prior research. These findings underscore the importance of designing PAS that foster a sense of trust, procedural justice, and clear expectations to enhance employee satisfaction.

The significant gender disparity in job satisfaction is concerning. Further qualitative research could explore factors contributing to lower satisfaction among female employees.

The unexpected negative relationship between two-way communication and job satisfaction warrants deeper investigation. Future studies might examine the content, style, and perceived authenticity of two-way communication within HEIs to understand its potential negative impact.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary

This study investigated the relationship between Performance Appraisal System (PAS) characteristics and job satisfaction within Palestinian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). A comprehensive survey explored employee perceptions of PAS clarity, fairness, trust in supervisors, and two-way communication. The research employed a cross-sectional design with quantitative analysis, examining the impact of these PAS traits on job satisfaction levels.

Key Findings

- **Positive PAS Perceptions:** Respondents generally expressed satisfaction with their PAS, particularly regarding clarity, trust, and fairness.

- **Gender Disparity:** Male employees reported significantly higher job satisfaction than female employees.
- **PAS and Job Satisfaction:** Trust, fairness, and clarity in the PAS exhibited significant positive correlations with job satisfaction.
- **Unexpected Two-Way Communication Finding:** Two-way communication demonstrated a negative association with job satisfaction, even after controlling for other factors. This finding warrants further investigation into the quality and nature of communication within HEIs.

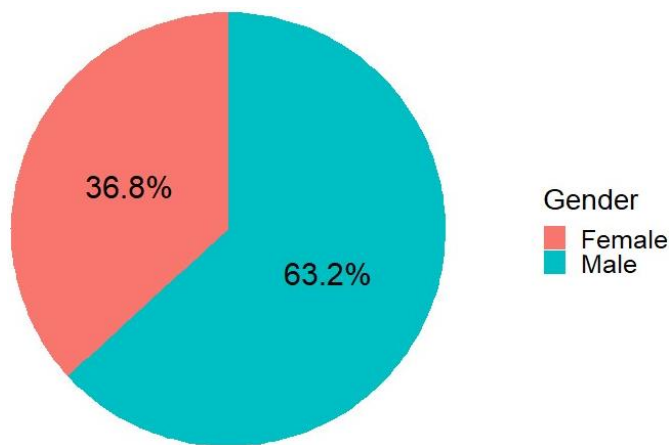
Discussion of Main Findings

The study’s demographic findings offer valuable insights into how various factors might influence perceptions of performance appraisal systems (PAS) and job satisfaction within Palestinian HEIs.

Gender Disparities

A significant gender disparity emerged, with male respondents (63.2%) reporting higher job satisfaction than female respondents (36.8%). This finding warrants further investigation to identify underlying factors contributing to this difference. Understanding these gender-specific dynamics could inform targeted interventions to enhance job satisfaction for female employees within HEIs.

**FIGURE 2
GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS**

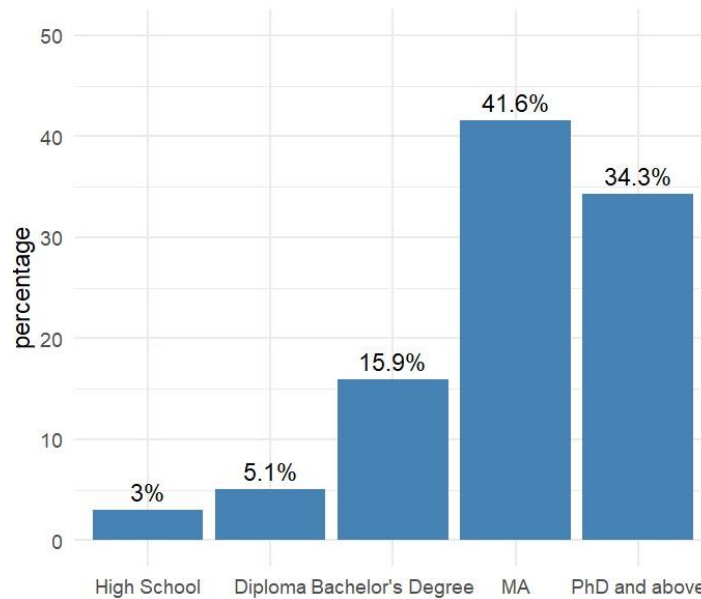


Age, Education, and Administrative Level

The age distribution reveals a substantial proportion of respondents (45.7%) above the age of 45. This experienced cohort may bring unique perspectives to the PAS based on their career tenure.

The high percentage of respondents holding master’s (41.6%) and doctoral (34.3%) degrees underscores the advanced educational attainment within the sample. It’s worth considering how educational level might interact with expectations regarding PAS and career development opportunities.

FIGURE 3
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL



Administrative hierarchy also plays a potential role, with 48.6% holding mid-level and 31.9% holding junior positions. Power dynamics and perceived influence over the PAS might vary based on an employee's position within the organizational structure.

Income and Job Satisfaction

A majority of respondents (52.4%) reported a monthly income between \$1000-\$2000. Financial compensation is a known factor influencing job satisfaction, and it would be valuable to explore this relationship further within the context of Palestinian HEIs.

Perceptions of the PAS

Respondents expressed a strong belief that positive performance appraisals should be directly linked to both salary increases (68.1%) and promotions (75.4%). This highlights the perceived importance of PAS in financial rewards and career advancement within Palestinian HEIs.

Key PAS characteristics were evaluated by participants:

- **Clarity:** Respondents reported high levels of clarity within the PAS, suggesting a strong understanding of job descriptions and expectations.
- **Two-Way Communication:** This area received a medium-level rating, indicating room for improvement in fostering open and effective communication between employees and managers.
- **Trust:** Participants expressed high trust in their supervisors, a crucial foundation for a fair and effective PAS.
- **Fairness:** Perceptions of fairness within the PAS were also high, which is strongly associated with positive employee attitudes.

PAS and Job Satisfaction

While respondents generally viewed the PAS favorably, overall job satisfaction was reported at a medium level. This suggests other factors beyond the PAS itself likely influence job satisfaction within HEIs.

Statistical Analysis

Multiple linear regression revealed a significant gender disparity in job satisfaction, with males reporting higher levels. No significant differences were found based on age, education level, administrative level, or income.

Importantly, trust, fairness, and clarity within the PAS all demonstrated statistically significant positive relationships with job satisfaction.

Unexpectedly, two-way communication exhibited a negative association with job satisfaction. This finding suggests that simply increasing communication might not be sufficient; the quality, content, and context of communication could play a more decisive role in how it impacts job satisfaction.

Conclusion

This study offers valuable insights for HEIs and policymakers seeking to enhance employee job satisfaction. Recommendations include:

- **PAS Refinement:** Prioritize continuous improvement of PAS clarity, fairness, and trust-building measures to maximize positive impact on job satisfaction.
- **Address Gender Gap:** Targeted strategies to address gender-based disparities in job satisfaction are essential to promote a more equitable and inclusive work environment.
- **Investigate Two-Way Communication:** Conduct qualitative research to understand the context-specific factors influencing the negative correlation between two-way communication and job satisfaction.
- **Holistic Approach:** Integrate these findings with broader HR initiatives focused on professional development, open feedback channels, and employee empowerment to create a more supportive and fulfilling work environment within Palestinian HEIs.

Limitations

Quantitative survey methods primarily capture perceptions rather than behaviors. Triangulating data with qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups) could provide a more nuanced understanding of PAS implementation and its impact. Additionally, potential cultural and linguistic nuances in a diverse Palestinian HEI workforce warrant careful consideration in future research.

Future Research Directions

This study provides a foundation for further exploration of the relationship between PAS characteristics and job satisfaction within the context of Palestinian HEIs. Potential avenues for future research include:

- **Mixed-Methods Approach:** Integrating qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups) with the current quantitative findings would provide richer insights into employee experiences and perceptions. This could help elucidate the unexpected negative association between two-way communication and job satisfaction.
- **Expanded Scope:** Replicating the study across a broader range of HEIs and potentially other organizational sectors would enhance the generalizability of findings.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Examining the relationship between PAS changes and job satisfaction over time would provide insights into the long-term impact of PAS interventions.
- **Moderating Factors:** Exploring potential moderators (e.g., personality traits, job tenure, organizational culture) could deepen our understanding of factors that influence the PAS-job satisfaction relationship and offer opportunities for customization.
- **Cultural Context:** Cross-cultural comparative studies could investigate the role of cultural values and norms in shaping employee perceptions of PAS and its impact on job satisfaction.
- **Technological Integration:** Research is needed to examine how the increasing use of AI and other technologies in PAS affects employee perceptions, fairness, and ultimately, job satisfaction.

- **Managerial Training:** Investigate the impact of targeted training for supervisors on PAS implementation and the subsequent effects on employee satisfaction.
- **Employee Empowerment:** Evaluate how incorporating self-appraisal, peer feedback, or other forms of employee voice into PAS influences perceptions and job satisfaction.
- **Generational Considerations:** Explore whether generational differences (e.g., Millennials vs. Gen Z) influence how employees experience and respond to various PAS characteristics.
- **Remote Work Adaptation:** As remote work becomes more prevalent, studies are needed to compare the effectiveness and employee satisfaction related to virtual vs. traditional in-person PAS methods.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Investigate how aligning PAS with broader HR initiatives (e.g., development programs, sustainability goals) can create a more integrated and impactful approach to enhancing employee satisfaction.

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