



**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
MANAGEMENT STUDIES**

<https://e-journal.uum.edu.my/index.php/ijms>

How to cite this article:

Fauzi, M. F. M., & Rahim. N. B. (2023). Evaluation of performance appraisal practices and organisational justice towards work-related outcomes: A case study of a Malaysian government agency in the Northern Region. *International Journal of Management Studies, 30*(2), 301-336. <https://doi.org/10.32890/ijms2023.30.2.5>

**EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL
PRACTICES AND ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE TOWARDS
WORK-RELATED OUTCOMES: A CASE STUDY OF A
MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCY IN THE
NORTHERN REGION**

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Received: 18/4/2022 Revised: 2/12/2022 Accepted: 8/12/2022 Published: 31/7/2023

ABSTRACT

Performance appraisal practices and work-related outcomes have become a serious matter of concern to many organisations. These issues would jeopardise the employees' well-being if there is no fairness in treatment in the organisation. As a result, this research aims to evaluate the effect of performance assessment practices on work-related outcomes, with organisational justice serving as a mediator. This research examined a randomly selected sample of 127 administrative employees from a Malaysian government institution located in the northern region. It examined the relationships between performance assessment practices and organisational justice, work performance, work deviant behaviour and the mediating consequences

of organisational justice on these linkages. The research model was tested based on the Social Cognitive Theory. Results from the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) indicated that performance assessment practices positively impacted organisational fairness and work performance. The results suggest that organisational fairness mediates the correlation between the work-related deviant behaviour and the impact of performance assessment practices on work performance. Looking at the study's findings, enforcing HR practices would gain positive favour among its employees, who are vital assets in executing the organisation's agenda. As a result, the transformation programme will be more aligned, allowing it to continue providing talent to the economy by improving its performance through its employees.

Keywords: Performance appraisal practices, organisational justice, work performance, work deviant behaviour, social cognitive theory, Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

People are social beings and devote a considerable amount of time to their work place. In today's exceedingly competitive international market, organisations need to recognise the variables that affect employees' work performance and contentment. Thus, organisations must create surroundings in which employees can interact socially. One of the variables is "organisational justice", signifying a worker's perception of equality with the expected treatment in the workplace and one's behavioural responses to such beliefs (Jameel et al., 2020). Additionally, organisational justice has resulted in negative organisational outcomes. If workers believe that they are being mistreated, their response is adverse, such as by exhibiting poor dedication and conduct, including turnover and work-related deviance (Chien et al., 2020). In contrast, several investigations reported positive organisational outcomes due to fairness of treatment, which included work satisfaction, commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour and work performance. Nevertheless, more importantly, providing and developing human resources are crucial for service organisations as workers are their most valued asset. Employee selection, systematic career planning and training, performance

evaluation guidelines, job analysis and operative job valuation are essential functions of the Human Resource Management (HRM) function (Jiang & Messersmith, 2018). Saragih et al. (2021) and Mira et al. (2019) suggested that the effect of human resource management practices on worker performance is ascertained by how employees perceive and evaluate the practices that organisations adopt. This demonstrates the importance of performance assessment practices in human resource management.

The great emphasis on the importance of human resource practices is not only in the private sector, but also in the government sector. For example, in Malaysia, an agency under the Ministry of Rural Development endeavours to advocate Malay and Bumiputera goals by assisting them in becoming a dominant influence in business, education, investments and shareholdings (Hamid & Ismail, 2016). The mandate of this organisation is to guarantee the continuous socio-economic progress of the nation, particularly via the growth and empowerment of the Malays and Bumiputeras. Additionally, the objective is to enhance individuals via a three-pronged approach: to promote the community's entrepreneurial motivation, to develop a globally focused, productive workforce capable of competing on a worldwide scale and to continue shaping exceptional learners. Realising the individuals' important role in creating a comprehensive ecosystem for the further growth of the nation, this organisation launched its transformation programme in 2011, which would enable the people to keep contributing talent to the economy.

Even though this organisation has an important role in contributing to Malaysia's economic development to become an entrepreneurial nation, its influence towards the growth and empowerment of Malays and Bumiputeras comes with tremendous responsibility. This organisation is responsible for educating and empowering Malays and Bumiputeras beyond the workplace, for the purpose of shaping them to become more self-employed and creating more job opportunities for society. Therefore, human resource practices function to support the organisation via its employees, the pillar and most valued asset of an organisation. Employees will reciprocate and positively support a planned performance evaluation programme when there is an apparent benefit for them to look back on their working performance and find sources that can help them upgrade their performance. Therefore,

among the many human resource practices and functions, the key role of human resources is keeping track of employees' performance within the organisation, that is, the performance appraisal practices. In fact, employees will form negative attitudes towards their organisation, depending on the degree to which they perceive that their organisation has adopted ineffective performance appraisal practices. Employees' work performance will improve if the organisation is considered to have implemented good performance assessment activities. Several studies discovered that well-designed and effective performance evaluation methods raise employees' productivity and contentment while also minimising turnover (Aburumman et al., 2020; Hee et al., 2019).

Furthermore, academics have studied the effect of fairness on employees' mindsets and behaviours, concluding that employees' views of fairness may result in significant business results, such as improved organisational involvement, job satisfaction and success (Raza et al., 2017; Jolly et al., 2021). According to a procedural justice viewpoint, perceived unfairness may foster unfavourable attitudes toward an organisation, resulting in unproductive or work deviant behaviours that can be detrimental to the organisation (Tuzun & Kalemci, 2018).

Numerous studies on human resource management variables among government agency employees have been carried out in Malaysia with the intent of determining leaders' willingness to alter their practices (Awang et al., 2020), the correlation between High-Performance Work Practices (HPWP), job embeddedness and organisational performance (Nor & Abdullah, 2020), the link between self-effectiveness and work performance (Dasan & Nawi, 2020) and the effect of human resource management variables on organisational performance (Mohd Saudi, 2014). Nonetheless, practical research on the influence of performance assessment activities and organisational engagement on work-related outcomes has been minimal.

As Mohd Saudi (2014) emphasised, performance management systems were implemented in order to boost their performance and output efficiency. Consequently, it is essential to investigate whether performance appraisal practices have an influence on workplace organisational justice and work-related outcomes (work performance and work deviant behaviour) amongst government employees

and whether organisational justice mediates between performance appraisal practices and work-related outcomes (work performance and work deviant behaviour).

From a theoretical perspective, this research is essential in contributing to the body of knowledge about human resource variables in the context of government agencies by offering comprehensive evidence for the correlation between human resource practices, justice, and work-related consequences. This is critical in achieving its primary goal of assisting Malays and Bumiputeras in education and business, as well as having a significant effect on the Malaysian economy via its employees. In addition, this research reflects the nation's objectives and offers empirical data that can assist in aligning its transition programme with the nation's goals via its employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance Appraisal Practices

Performance appraisal practices are key human resource management practices in every organisation. It has been used to make important decisions concerning numerous human resource actions and outcomes in organisations (Levy et al., 2018).

As Nurse (2005) asserts, performance assessments have evolved into a component of effective management and developed connections to other human resource management practices. Nevertheless, it is widely believed that the usefulness and strength of such connections are contingent on a variety of things. These are inclusive of the use of pertinent work performance aspects, the optimisation and interaction of appropriately set performance expectations and standards, the assignment of skilled and educated assessors who are free of appraiser biases and emotional tendencies, higher levels of system integrity, the use of timely, precise, concise, coherent and neutral comments and the justified execution of performance appraisal practices (Ulabor & Bosede, 2019).

Additionally, it is believed that if managers can properly justify or explain performance assessment practices that are not in the

employee's interest, they would be more receptive to the outcomes of performance assessment (Bauwens et al., 2019).

A central goal of performance appraisal practices is to help managers make good administrative moves such as salary modification, job promotion and terminating or retaining staff. Since performance appraisal practices are about looking into their employers' work performance (Gu et al., 2020), the rubrics for assessment must be presented as a just measurement because it would affect the effectiveness of the appraisal.

On the basis of the administrative intent of performance appraisal practices and following Cheng (2014), three key HRM practices have been determined in this research. The first is salary adjustments, which refers to the pay offered and given to an employer and how it relates to the employer's input. A performance appraisal practice is the sole action that a manager can take to look into the working dynamics among the employees. The second is promotion decisions. The findings from performance appraisal practices have been used to determine if a worker possesses the potential to be promoted (Cooke et al., 2017). Nevertheless, as only some workers are eligible for promotion, such decisions can produce a zero-sum result that could impact employers' view regarding distributive justice. The final key practice is performance standards. Outlining reliable performance standards is vital for operative performance appraisal practices because poor standards would affect perceived fairness negatively.

Organisational Justice

The employees' views of justice are determined by the organisation's scores, as well as the organisation's regulations, processes and operations, along with the perceiver's attributes, such as socioeconomic factors and personal behavioural elements (Han et al., 2018). Comprehending equality or organisational justice throughout the performance appraisal practices is imperative for organisations since it is related to employers' work satisfaction and loyalty to the organisation, as well as their ability to seek employment somewhere else. Malhotra et al. (2020) described organisational justice as a personal evaluation of managerial conduct, ethics, and moral status. They argued that organisational justice has significant benefits for

both employers and employees, including improved confidence and loyalty, improved job efficiency, increased helpful citizenship behaviours, raised happiness and reduced conflict.

Waribo et al. (2020) stated that researchers of organisational justice have classified the notion of fairness into three broad categories. The first type is the generally accepted fairness called “distributive justice”. It is viewed from a distributive standpoint and investigates the justice of a decision, where the outcomes of a specific decision are a major consideration. The second type of fairness concept is procedural justice and it looks at whether fairness is carried through during the process that produces the result. According to Waribo et al. (2020), some people may experience some inequity in distribution when they examine the process and determine that the distribution choices are fair. Interactional justice is a concept that describes the third category of fairness. Numerous academics such as Masterson et al. (2000), Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), and Han et al. (2018) have defined the interactive-oriented justice as the fairness with which an authority figure treats an individual interpersonally throughout organisational procedures and distribution of results. The concept of interactional justice is inclusive as an interpersonal component of procedural justice.

The impression of justice is inextricably linked to the extent of workers’ relationships with their organisation and direct managers. As per the concept of justice applied in several studies, workers’ perceptions of justice within their organisation have been associated with a range of variables, such as worker engagement, professional advancement, monetary incentives, and collaboration. Based on the research findings, distributive justice seems to have a greater impact on the work satisfaction and salary satisfaction (Sharma & Yadav, 2018), whereas procedural justice seems to have a substantial influence on the employee engagement (Pieters, 2018) and organisational loyalty (Shahid et al., 2018).

Masterson et al. (2000) demonstrate that favourable justice assessments of a worker may have an influence on the individual’s connection with the organisation by increasing dedication, increasing confidence, and influencing behaviours such as self-interested deference to collective aims and objectives. However, the social exchange component

which is measured by perceived organisational support is also has a substantial influence on the workers' actions and behaviours related to their organisational commitment (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). However, there is a need to comprehend the workers' perspective of justice that may result in better work performance (Masterson et al., 2000). One may claim that the workers' perspective of justice contributes to the building of schemas in organisational support.

Work Performance

Campbell (1990) stated that work performance is a two-dimensional concept that includes not just duties, but also environmental aspects (such as interpersonal and motivational elements). Task performance is a term that denotes work-specific conduct, such as, essential work obligations that are inextricably linked to the organisation's objectives. Contextual performance is a collection of interpersonal and purposive behaviours that contribute to the social and motivating environment in which organisational activity is performed (Nangoy et al., 2020). Additionally, it has been claimed that contextual performance has two different aspects: facilitation of interpersonal interactions and commitment to work.

On the other hand, Edgar et al. (2020) explained that work performance is anything carried out by workers during their work that is in line with the organisational goals and ideals. This can be defined as measurable (observable) behaviour. The performance comprises physical activities and activities involving an individual's psychological aspects, such as, the cognitive processes and problem-solving (Farhadinejad et al., 2020). Saether (2019) claimed that there are three components of performance, that is, the declarative knowledge (comprehension and knowledge of work tasks), procedural knowledge and skills (abilities and more detailed knowledge of the measures for performing tasks) and motivation (Berry, 2003). Determining work performance involves numerous changes, particularly in developing assessment tools with good psychometric properties. Several vital reasons exist as to why individual performance measurement is critical in the scope of work behaviour evaluation (Farid et al., 2019). First, the economic globalisation is expanding and needs integration and independence. Next, the individual work performance is necessary during economic recession periods in which human activity is greater

compared to economic activity. Third, the work performance is vital in determining the consistency and maintaining workers' resilience. When measuring the individual work performance, these three things must be preserved, developed and enhanced.

Work performance is the outcome of an individual's ability or earnestness in completing the task assigned using one's abilities, experiences and integrity in line with the obligations committed to the person (Niati et al., 2021). Work performance is the outcome of an individual's efforts in completing tasks assigned to the person based on one's capabilities, experiences, dedication and availability (Ali et al., 2019). Kang et al. (2008) said that work performance refers to the worker's ability to complete a variety of tasks connected to work demands.

From the work and organisational psychology standpoint, work performance typically has an effect on the organisation's objectives (Koopmans et al., 2011). It encompasses only those behaviours that are within the individual's control, eliminating those that are controlled by their surroundings. According to Zefeiti and Mohamad (2017), this result may be classified into three categories: financial, worker satisfaction with the superior, and staff dedication to the organisation's objectives. Additionally, it may be quantified by examining team performance, survivability, growth, adaptability and the collaborative ability to cope with challenges (Khan et al., 2020).

Work Deviant Behaviour

In general, deviance is defined as beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that are different compared to the conventional standards. Deviance is typically seen as negative (Přihodová et al., 2021). Work deviance is deviancy shown at the workplace. Noermijati et al. (2021) said that deviant acts occurring at a workplace are seen in the cases of employee turnover, non-attendance, a sign of lack of commitment and others. Employers display numerous deviant acts at their workplace. Production deviance is related to the workers' conduct that affects work quantity and quality in the organisation and can produce dismal efficiency, whereas property deviance is the mishandling or impairment done to the organisation's tangible properties or assets. These questionable actions or conduct performed in the organisation

can be seen in various ranges of severity, as small as petty theft among employers or momentous events like ethical collapses that lead to huge losses or bankruptcy (Nurmaya & Arshad, 2020). Theft is a work deviance and is categorised under property deviation. In an organisation, an opportune moment for fraud may be a source of employee deviance. This means that numerous opportunities for fraud exist and it reflects the organisation's inadequate check and control policies. Abbasi et al. (2020) reported that workers who firmly believed that they would not be caught red-handed would show a greater tendency to steal, compared to others who were afraid of being caught. If the organisational policies are severe and workers know that they will be penalised for theft, they will avoid doing so. A conflict has been identified as a significant contributor to workplace misbehaviour. Abbasi et al. (2020) stated that bullying is a gateway to confrontation, which leads to the counterproductive behaviours at work. Deviant behaviour is also known as the counterproductive behaviour. It denotes the workers' deviant behaviours that contradict the organisational norms and negatively impact the organisation. Such actions are detrimental, having an adverse impact on an organisation's overall growth, performance and profitability.

Based on the research by Gross-Schaeffer (2000), 75 percent of employees admit to committing workplace theft at some point in their employment. With such high percentages, it seems as if anyone may be associated with the workplace deviancy. Significant numbers of fraud cases have been reported and both large and small organisations have suffered massive financial losses. Fiscally, the cost to a firm of employee theft, fraud and other types of workplace deviance far outweighs the value of what has been stolen. These are inclusive of recruiting, interviewing and securing the organisation's cost of employing replacements. It is critical for human resource practitioners to understand these causative factors and to implement steps to prevent such misbehaviour from tarnishing the organisation's reputation.

Haldorai et al. (2020) demonstrated that all employees have the propensity to engage in this damaging behaviour at the workplace. Malik et al. (2019), Robinson et al. (2019), and Shoab and Baruch (2019) confirmed that work-related deviant behaviour is more rampant among the support personnel since it is assumed that the lower-level workers are more prone to participating in misconduct because they

have more time to take revenge on those who have mistreated them. While administrators in the majority of organisations have demonstrated an inadequate intention of implementing research findings on deviant behaviour because they view it as counterproductive, Qu et al. (2020) suggested that relatively insignificant deviant behaviours by the support staff may lead to the high-profile controversies such as those occasionally featured in the news.

Underlying Theory

The theoretical underpinnings of this research include Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, which claims that when one person gives another person a benefit, the receiver is obligated to show reciprocity. This research proposes that the performance appraisal practices have an effect on the work-related outcomes mediated by organisational justice. Distributive justice is concerned with how resources are redistributed inside organisations, with the critical idea being that not all workers are fairly treated, but that every worker believes the outcome of this distribution is equitable. By comparison, procedural justice is concerned with the concept that the delivery system should be impartial and reasonable and unrelated to the process's actual outcomes. Lastly, interactional justice is associated with workers' interactions, with a focus on whether individuals are treated in a dignified, courteous and respectful manner (Cheng, 2014). Based on this reasoning and within the context of this study, the higher the degree of justice experienced by the employees of this particular Malaysian government institution in their performance appraisal practices, the more likely they will perform at work. Contrastingly, employees of this particular Malaysian government institution who have experienced injustice in performance appraisal practices have the tendency to be less devoted to their organisations, which in turn impairs their perceptions of the organisation via work deviant behaviour.

Hypotheses Development

The research framework shown in Figure 1 was used to generate the hypotheses in this research. These hypotheses were based on the previous empirical findings of the relationships between the variables that were chosen explicitly to address the research questions.

Performance Appraisal Practices and Organisational Justice

The performance appraisal practices have a significant influence on perceived organisational fairness, since how employers treat their workers has an impact on the workers' perceptions (Fesharaki & Sehhat, 2018). Proper financial compensation, for example, is a critical aspect in establishing organisational fairness. Employees will be rewarded and disciplined commensurate with their contributions to the organisation. Compensation should be proportionate to the quality and amount of work performed. To build a fair organisation, frequent performance appraisal practices are important to review personnel achievements (Wilton, 2016). Therefore, we hypothesised the following:

H₁ : Performance appraisal practices positively influence organisational justice.

Performance Appraisal Practices and Work Performance

From the social exchange perspective, workers who view that their organisation is steadfast in offering growth prospects may feel obligated to add value to the organisation via outstanding work performance (Gardner et al., 2020). Since job satisfaction is strongly correlated with productivity in meta-analyses, research has found a significant correlation between the performance appraisal practices and job satisfaction, establishing a clear link between the performance appraisal practices and work performance (Hee, & Jing, 2018). Therefore, we hypothesised the following:

H₂ : Performance appraisal practices positively influence work performance.

Performance Appraisal Practices and Work Deviant Behaviour

Despite the paucity of evidence connecting performance evaluation practices to high levels of work deviance, other scholars assert that the scarcity of data implies that the performance appraisal practices are linked to lower levels of workplace deviance (Klotz et al., 2018). For instance, performance evaluations that place a premium on quantity over quality of output may promote more work deviant behaviour

by increasing competitiveness and reducing group cohesiveness. Supported by Jahanzeb and Fatima (2018), even though performance appraisal practices that are conducted may contribute to increasing interpersonal deviance in the workplace, other scholars feel that proper occurrences of interpersonal deviance could be reduced if the appraisal is executed affectively. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H₃ : Performance appraisal practices negatively influence work deviant behaviour.

Performance Appraisal Practices and Work Performance Mediated by Organisational Justice

Employees form their own distributive justice judgments upon getting recompense, which is usually in the form of appreciation, encouragement and incentive to acknowledge the work that they have done. Subsequently, this can affect their view of the organisation (Pan et al., 2018). When managers are regarded as fulfilling the workers' needs for organisational justice, this will result in the workers' displaying positive gratitude to the organisation through good conduct. Consequently, managers who provide fair treatment to their employees will have a beneficial impact on their employees' work performance. Sarfraz et al. (2018) argued that if workers perceive a fair trade, they will be more content and exhibit higher organisational loyalty. As a result of this reasoning, the following hypothesis was developed:

H₄ : Organisational justice mediates the link between performance appraisal practices and work performance in a substantial way.

Organisational Justice as a Mediator between Performance Appraisal Practices and Work Deviant Behaviour

Provided that supervisors execute efficient performance appraisal practices of their subordinates, non-discriminatory performance appraisal practices may demonstrate leaders' commitment to employees in a shared social engagement. As a result, it can be interpreted as an outcome that an employee earns, which may affect the employee's output/input ratio (Saad & Elshaer, 2017). Therefore, when managers practice equal treatment with their employees, they

will reciprocate by performing better in the workplace (Selvarajan et al., 2018) and vice versa. Furthermore, irrespective of their interpersonal justice perceptiveness, workers with strong ideals of interpersonal justice or justice orientations, are unlikely to exhibit work deviant behaviours (Holtz & Harold, 2009). Hence, the ensuing hypothesis was posited:

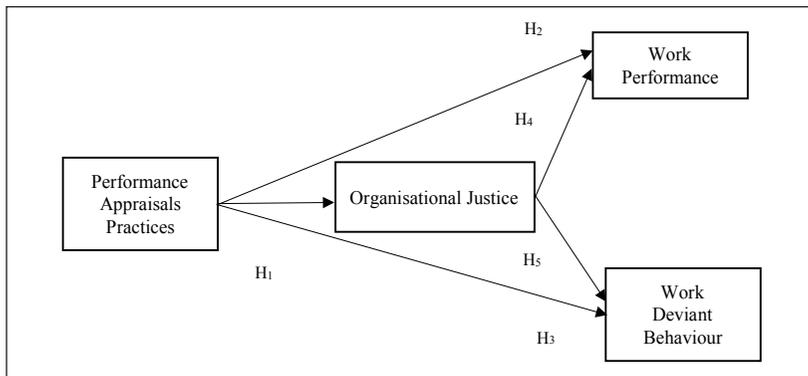
H₅ : Organisational justice mediates the link between performance appraisal practices and work deviant behaviour in a substantial way.

Research Framework

The research framework (Figure 1) involves the independent variable (performance appraisal practices), dependent variables (work performance and work deviant behaviour) and mediator (organisational justice).

Figure 1

Research Framework



METHODOLOGY

Population and Sampling

This research utilised the purposive sampling technique by selecting participants to look at the most suitable stance in providing suitable information because they either possess the required information or

adhere to the specified sampling criteria. The research population in this study comprised 150 administrative staff working in the administrative centres and learning institutions located in the northern region. The details are provided by the Human Resource Department. Executives, officers and managers were chosen for this research because they conformed to the following inclusion criterion:

- a) They are involved in the public organisation's operations;
- b) They are involved in the efficient administration of their respective units or departments; and
- c) They are involved in providing financial loans to Malay and Bumiputera businesses and learners.

To establish the minimum sample size for data collection, Roscoe's (1975) rule of thumb was used. Most studies require sample sizes ranging from 30 to 500, with the minimum sample size representing thirty percent of the population.

Data Collection Procedures

Each measuring item in this study was derived from previous empirical research. As a result, no pre-test was mandatory. Nonetheless, a pilot test of the questionnaire was performed to confirm its accuracy and suitability, as well as to fine-tune the procedures for administering the instrument (Malhotra et al., 2006). Following Isaac and Michael (1995), ten to thirty (30) respondents were set as the optimum for pilot studies. Therefore, in light of the above, ten sets of questionnaires were sent to the administrative personnel via email, and a small change to the measurement items was made to allow for a more precise example of the questionnaire's terminology, which would aid in their comprehension. A postal survey was employed to gather data throughout the actual data collection, which took place over three weeks in September 2020. One hundred and fifty sets of questionnaires were delivered to five administrative offices and three educational institutes managed by this government agency. The respondents received a hardcopy questionnaire that they accessed and responded to during the data collection process. After numerous follow-ups, 144 questionnaires were collected, yielding a 96 percent response rate. Nonetheless, only 127 questionnaires were usable because 17 were removed due to incomplete data. Hence, only 127 cases were used for data analysis. Regardless, Roscoe's (1975) criterion of acceptable sample size was met.

Measurement Items

The measurement for performance appraisal practices was divided into three constructs, namely salary adjustments (5 items, $\alpha = 0.92$), promotion decisions (5 items, $\alpha = 0.88$) and performance standards (5 items, $\alpha = 0.87$), based on a scale by Cheng (2014). The sample items included were: “The pay I get in my company is related to my performance”, “I think every employee in my company is judged using the same promotion standards” and “I think every employee in my company is evaluated using the same performance standards”. Next, the measurement of organisational justice was divided into three constructs, namely distributive justice (4 items, $\alpha = 0.90$), procedural justice (5 items, $\alpha = 0.90$), and interactional justice (5 items, $\alpha = 0.90$), in accordance with the scales developed by Kang (2007), Moorman (1991) and Niehoff and Moorman (1993), respectively. The sample items included were: “My work schedule is fair”, “Job decisions are made by the general manager in an unbiased manner”, and “When decisions are made about my job, the general manager treats me with kindness and consideration”. Subsequently, work performance was assessed with the use of six items ($\alpha = 0.77$) derived from the scales of Brockner et al. (1992) and May et al. (2002). The included sample items are: “I almost always perform better than what can be characterised as acceptable performance”, finally, the measurement for work deviant behaviour was divided into two constructs: interpersonal deviance (7 items, $\alpha = 0.78$) and organisational deviance (12 items, $\alpha = 0.81$), based on the scale by Robinson and Bennett (1995). Sample items included are: “made fun of someone at work” and “taken property from work without permission”. Each question was graded on a five-point Likert scale; with one (1) signifying strong disagreement (strongly disagree) and five (5) signifying strong agreement (strongly agree). Age, gender, education level, service length and duration of years in the present position were gathered to learn more about the sample.

Data Analysis

The research model was scrutinised using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach. The measurement model was first validated using Anderson and Gerbing’s (1988) two-step method (validation of the measurement and reliability).

The structural model was then examined to determine the hypothesis correlation. To analyse the data, the Smart PLS M2 Version 3.0 and the two-step analysis method were applied. Finally, the bootstrap technique (i.e., a 500-sample resampling) was employed to ascertain the loading, weight and path coefficient levels of significance.

Table 1

Result of Descriptive Analysis

Demographics	Categories	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	46	36%
	Female	81	64%
Age	21–30 years	14	11%
	30–40 years	93	73%
	41–50 years	11	9%
	50–60 years	9	7%
	SPM/STPM/STEM	84	66%
Education Level	Diploma	30	24%
	Bachelor’s Degree	10	8%
	Master’s Degree	3	2%
	PhD	0	0%
Job Tenure	Less than 1 year	3	2%
	Between 1 and 5 years	19	15%
	Between 6 and 10 years	33	26%
	Between 11 and 15 years	27	21%
	Between 15 and 20 years	29	23%
	More than 20 years	17	13%
Experience in the current position	Less than 1 year	6	5%
	Between 1 and 5 years	39	31%
	Between 6 and 10 years	18	14%
	Between 11 and 15 years	17	13%
	Between 15 and 20 years	37	29%
	More than 20 years	10	8%

RESULTS

Respondent Profile

The data collected were analysed after the useable questionnaires were identified, which was 127. The respondents’ demographic details are as follows: in terms of gender, 81 (64%) respondents were women, 93 (73%) respondents were between the age of 30 and 40 years old,

84 (66%) respondents were SPM/STPM/STEM leavers, 33 (26%) respondents had been employed in their organisation between six and ten years, and 39 (31%) respondents had been working in their current positions between one and five years (see Table 1).

Descriptive Statistics of the Latent Constructs

Descriptive analysis is the process of transforming raw data into a format that is simpler to comprehend and analyse (Sekaran, 2003). All characteristics in the research were gauged on a 5-point Likert scale, which ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The mean values of the four latent variables were between 3.86 and 4.21. On a 5-point Likert scale, the standard deviation value was determined to be between 0.79 and 0.97. All of the mean values of the variables were discovered to be greater than 2.50. The respondents rated themselves very high in terms of Work Performance (4.21) and moderate in terms of Organisational Justice (M = 4.03) and Performance Appraisal Practices (3.90). Finally, the respondents rated themselves very low for Work Deviant Behaviour (3.86). The greatest and lowest dispersion values, as measured by standard deviation, were seen for the work deviant behaviour with 0.97 and work performance with 0.79, respectively (see Table 2).

Table 2

Result of Descriptive Analysis

Variables	No. of items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Performance Appraisal Practices	15	3.90	0.91
Organisational Justice	14	4.03	0.93
Work Performance	6	4.21	0.79
Work Deviant Behaviour	19	3.86	0.97

Assessment of Measurement Model

To evaluate the measurement model, the convergent validity was assessed first, followed by the discriminant validity. To ascertain the Convergent Validity (CR), indicator loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability are frequently used. As

previously suggested, all loadings and CR values were above 0.7, while the AVE was above 0.5 (see Table 3).

Table 3

Result of the Measurement Model

Constructs	Scale	Items	Loadings	AVE ^a	CR ^b
Salary Adjustments	Formative	PA_1	0.765	0.691	0.931
		PA_2	0.824		
		PA_3	0.839		
		PA_4	0.874		
		PA_5	0.867		
Promotion Decisions	Formative	PA_6	0.81	0.76	0.94
		PA_7	0.87		
		PA_8	0.90		
		PA_9	0.91		
		PA_10	0.85		
Performance Standards	Formative	PA_11	0.82	0.74	0.92
		PA_12	0.84		
		PA_13	0.89		
		PA_14	0.90		
		PA_15	0.822		
Distributive Justice	Formative	OJ_1	0.83	0.75	0.90
		OJ_2	0.81		
		OJ_3	0.72		
		OJ_4	0.81		
Procedural Justice	Formative	OJ_5	0.841	0.72	0.91
		OJ_6	0.769		
		OJ_7	0.804		
		OJ_8	0.895		
		OJ_9	0.871		
Interactional Justice	Formative	OJ_10	0.84	0.70	0.90
		OJ_11	0.80		
		OJ_12	0.80		
		OJ_13	0.87		
		OJ_14	0.86		

(continued)

Constructs	Scale	Items	Loadings	AVE ^a	CR ^b
Work Performance	Reflective	WF_1	0.87	0.73	0.94
		WF_2	0.83		
		WF_3	0.85		
		WF_4	0.83		
		WF_5	0.86		
Work Deviant Behaviour	Formative	DWB_1	0.82	0.78	0.93
		DWB_2	0.73		
		DWB_3	0.82		
		DWB_4	0.79		
		DWB_5	0.75		
		DWB_6	0.87		
		DWB_7	0.85		
		DWB_8	0.84		
		DWB_9	0.76		
		DWB_10	0.89		
		DWB_11	0.87		
		DWB_12	0.83		
		DWB_13	0.86		
		DWB_14	0.79		
DWB_15	0.87				
DWB_16	0.87				
DWB_17	0.81				
DWB_18	0.88				
DWB_19	0.81				

Notes: Average variance extracted (AVE) = (summation of the square of the factor loadings) / {(summation of the square of the factor loadings) / (summation of the error variances)}

b. Composite reliability (CR) = (square of the summation of the factor loadings) / {(square of the summation of the factor loadings) / (square of the summation of the error variances)}

After examining the convergent validity, discriminant validity was tested to ensure that the measurements were not related. Assessment was made using Fornell and Lacker’s criterion based on the square root of AVE for every variable (diagonal values). The Fornell and Lacker’s criterion result (see Table 4) showed that each variable (diagonal values) was higher than the correlation between the variable (diagonal values) and other variables (off-diagonal values).

Table 4

Result of Fornell and Lacker's Criterion

Constructs	Performance Appraisal Practices	Organisational Justice	Work Performance	Work Deviant Behaviour
Performance Appraisal Practices	0.75			
Organisational Justice	0.62	0.81		
Work Performance	0.35	0.52	0.85	
Work Deviant Behaviour	0.40	0.48	0.73	0.79

Note: diagonals (in bold) denote the squared root of average variance extracted (AVE), whereas other entries characterise the correlational links.

Assessment of Structural Model

Three hypotheses were proposed for the direct relationships between performance appraisal practices and organisational justice, work performance and work deviant behaviour. Based on the findings, only two hypotheses were supported. Performance appraisal practices had a positive influence on organisational justice ($\beta = 0.382, p < 0.01$) and work performance ($\beta = 0.225, p < 0.01$). As such, hypotheses H_1 and H_2 were supported. On the other hand, H_3 ($\beta = 0.054, p > 0.1$) was not supported (see Table 5).

Table 5

Analysis of the Path Coefficient and Hypotheses

No	Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	Std Dev.	t-value	Decision
H_1	Performance Appraisal Practices → Organisational Justice	0.38	0.02	4.19***	Supported
H_2	Performance Appraisal Practices → Work Performance	0.22	0.03	3.03**	Supported
H_3	Performance Appraisal Practices → Work Deviant Behaviour	0.05	0.72	1.09	Not Supported

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$ (2.33), ** $p < 0.05$ (1.645), * $p < 0.1$ (1.28) (based on one-tailed test)

Additionally, two hypotheses were proposed for the mediating effect of organisational justice on the relationships between performance appraisal practices, work performance and work deviant behaviour. Two mediating hypotheses were tested using the indirect effect approach with bootstrapping method (1000 resamples), as recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2004; 2008). The results indicate that the organisational justice significantly mediates the relationship between the performance appraisal practices and work performance ($\beta = 0.82, p < 0.01$). In addition to that, the organisational justice also significantly mediates the relationship between performance appraisal practices and work deviant behaviour ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.01$). Overall, the results of mediating effect suggest that H_5 and H_6 are supported (see Table 6).

Table 6

Analysis of the Path Coefficient and Hypotheses

No	Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	Std Dev.	t-value	Decision
H_4	Performance Appraisal Practices \rightarrow Organisational Justice \rightarrow Work Performance	0.82	0.41	2.38**	Supported
H_5	Performance Appraisal Practices \rightarrow Organisational Justice \rightarrow Work Deviant Behaviour	0.29	0.23	1.74**	Supported

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$ (2.33), ** $p < 0.05$ (1.645), * $p < 0.1$ (1.28) (based on one-tailed test)

Variance Explained (R^2)

Hair et al. (2011) stated that an R^2 value represents the degree of variation in a certain endogenous variable that can be explained by exogenous factors. The R^2 values of 0.26, 0.13, and 0.02, indicate that the variation explained by external factors is substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively (Hair et al., 2011). The R^2 results for this investigation are displayed in Table 7. The factors of performance assessment practices explained 31.9 percent of the variation in organisational justice, 31.0 percent of the variation in work performance and 61.9 percent of the variation in work deviant behaviour. Applying the standardised values proposed by Hair et al. (2010), all the current investigation’s exogenous factors were able to clarify the variation in the endogenous variables to a considerable degree.

Table 7

R² Values in the Model

Endogenous Variables	R ²
Organisational Justice	0.319
Work Performance	0.310
Work Deviant Behaviour	0.619

Goodness of Fit Index

In accordance with the recommendations of Wetzels et al. (2009), the research computed the Goodness of Fit GoF values that can function as cut-off values for the global validation of PLS models. For this investigation, the entire (primary effect) model had a GoF value of 0.518, which is greater than the cut-off value of 0.36 for a significant R² effect size. Consequently, the findings suggested that the model had more predictive ability than the baseline (GoF small = 0.10, GoF medium = 0.25, and GoF big = 0.36) (see Table 8).

Table 8

Goodness of Fit (GoF)

Construct	AVE	R ²
Organisational Justice	0.786	
Work Performance	0.885	0.319
Work Deviant Behaviour	0.893	0.310
Average	0.855	0.315
GOF	0.518	

DISCUSSIONS

The principal aim of this research is to explore the connections between the performance evaluation methods, organisational justice, work performance and work deviant behaviour. Conceivably, the function of organisational justice was examined in mediating the connection between performance appraisal practices and work-related outcomes. The PLS analysis revealed that performance appraisal practices

influenced organisational justice positively. This outcome is consistently aligned with those of Getnet et al. (2014) and Lambert et al. (2020). Hence, possibly, the administrative staff perceive that the decisions made in their organisation are based on systematic, standardised and accurate processes, thus, improving the perceived organisational justice. Besides, it is possible to assume that decisions are made in accordance with the workers' actual performance. Therefore, rewards in the organisation are given impartially. Additionally, the employee's performance standards practices are documented, clearly explained and fully understood. Consequently, the perceived organisational justice has the tendency to be enhanced by the performance appraisal practices. Next, results from the PLS analysis indicated that performance appraisal practices positively influenced work performance. These results corroborate those reported by Gardner et al. (2020). From this finding, it is possible to assume that the administrative staff believe that their organisation is arranging activities that will provide them with new knowledge and skills, which could influence their perceived investment in employee development. Consequently, it might induce a feeling of obligation to serve the organisation via increased work performance.

The ultimate outcome of the direct analysis showed that performance evaluation practices had a detrimental effect on work deviant behaviour. This finding is consistent with research conducted by Arthur (2011), Shamsudin et al. (2014). As a consequence, it is fair to anticipate that when unfavourable human resource management practices have been implemented, particularly poor performance evaluation practices, workers will reciprocate by engaging in work deviant behaviour. According to the social cognitive theory, this study provides support in terms of employees who have experienced injustice in performance appraisal practices and have the tendency to be less devoted to their organisations, which in turn impairs their perception of the organisation via work deviant behaviour. Thus, a negative relationship is possible because the administrative staff of this Malaysian government institution view HRM activities as organisational help that they respond to the company, which is in line with the findings from Allen et al. (2003). Concisely, good favours are presented in response to good contributions, whereas bad favours are given in response to bad contributions.

Interestingly, the mediation research revealed that organisational justice mediates the link between performance appraisal practices and work-related results (work performance and work deviant behaviour). This finding is consistent with that of Cheng (2014), who discovered that perceptible organisational justice has an influence on the functioning of performance appraisal practices. In addition, Han et al. (2018) revealed that the procedural fairness is the strongest predictor of work performance and deviant behaviour. This result suggests that employees who allegedly have higher levels of justice will feel obligated to care for the organisation through excellent work performance. In contrast, employees who do not perceive justice will damage organisational effectiveness as a reaction, by engaging in work deviant behaviour.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study's research framework is congruent with Bandura's social cognitive theory (1997). The results demonstrate that performance assessment practices have an influence on work-related outcomes via the mediation of organisational justice. This demonstrates its resemblance to social cognitive theory. In addition to that, this research complements the literature on human resource factors in the context of a Malaysian government agency by emphasising the importance of indirect correlations between performance appraisal practices, work performance, and work deviant behaviour through organisational justice. The findings are different from those in past studies, as this research was conducted among administrative staff. The notion is that the employees regard the performance appraisal practices as organisational help, which they then return to the organisation in the form of good favours for good contributions and bad favours for bad contributions; this is consistent with the social exchange principle.

From a practical perspective, this research recommends that workers be treated with dignity and respect and that managers make objective decisions to minimise the employees' work deviant behaviour. Moreover, a preferable and equitable performance appraisal process that promotes the positive execution of established and official procedures, as well as the treatment of authorities when those procedures are carried out, can motivate staff to exhibit

positive organisational, job, or interpersonal behaviour. Besides, this organisation must take measures to assure its workforce that its performance appraisal practices are regarded positively. Tuzun and Kalemci (2018) mentioned that an organisation that adopts appraisal practices and provides a variety of attractive benefit packages is able to retain productive workers. This is vital because the workforce is a key part of the country's continued social and economic growth, especially by empowering Malays and Bumiputeras with more skills and capacity.

Certain restrictions apply to this research. Based on the study data's self-report, Harman's single factor test was used to ascertain the probability that the results could be explained. Additionally, having been a cross-sectional study, its results may have been different if the research had been conducted longitudinally. Moreover, only a limited number of people were surveyed. Accordingly, future researchers may use a comparative approach to explore the interactions of organisational justice, performance assessment practices, work performance and work deviant behaviour among administrative staff from other agencies.

In-depth interviews and focus groups with the administrative staff should be considered in future studies to pinpoint additional variables that can enhance organisational justice, performance assessment methods and work performance, while minimising work deviant behaviours among administrative staff from various other Malaysian states. In any research paradigm, a longitudinal research provides more robust conclusions and evidence and this current study may be incorporated in a longitudinal study as well. Researchers may perform a comparative study among other states in Malaysia to determine the dominant culture. Furthermore, future research may determine if results from this research are applicable to other Malaysian government agencies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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