

## EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION OF FAIRNESS, ACCURACY, OUTCOME RECEIVED AND SATISFACTION IN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL: A CASE STUDY OF AN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING UNIVERSITY

Wong Huey Siew  
Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities  
Open University Malaysia  
Email: wonghueysiew@oum.edu.my

Norfardilawati Musa  
Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities  
Open University Malaysia  
Email: norfardilawati@oum.edu.my

Aznam Zakaria  
Group Human Resources  
Open University Malaysia  
Email: aznam@oum.edu.my

Bibi Nabi Ahmad Khan  
Faculty of Business & Management  
Open University Malaysia  
Email: bibi\_ahmadkhan@oum.edu.my

Zulhairi Zakariah  
Faculty of Business & Management  
Open University Malaysia  
Email: zulhairi\_zakariah@oum.edu.my

Zulaihan Ismail  
Faculty of Business & Management  
Open University Malaysia  
Email: zulaihan\_ismail@oum.edu.my

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### ABSTRACT

Performance appraisal (PA) providing a formal mechanism for evaluating employee performance, offering feedback, and fostering development. In the context of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) universities, PA is significant due to the unique challenges faced by these institutions, such as diverse work environments, reliance on technology for online study, and the need to manage large numbers of part-time tutors, multi-administrative works and adult learners from nation-wide. PA system used in such settings can significantly influence employee perceptions of fairness, accuracy, and satisfaction, which, in turn, can affect overall job performance. This study examines employees' perceptions of fairness, accuracy, received of outcome, and overall satisfaction with PA in an ODL University. Using a descriptive research approach, data were collected from 241 employees via a Google Form survey. The study focuses on four key objectives: (i) to evaluate employees' perceptions of the fairness of appraisal criteria, (ii) the accuracy of performance criteria, (iii) the received of appraisal outcomes, and (iv) overall satisfaction with the appraisal process. The findings reveal significant insights into employee attitudes towards the appraisal system. The findings show moderate satisfaction across all dimensions. The fairness of appraisal criteria scored 2.69, indicating limited confidence in the system's objectivity. The accuracy of performance criteria received a score of 2.76, reflecting moderate dissatisfaction. Similarly, the received of appraisal outcomes (2.68) highlights issues with feedback clarity. Overall satisfaction with the appraisal criteria scored lowest at 2.61, indicating general discontent with the system. These results suggest the need for management to enhance transparency, improve feedback mechanisms, and better align appraisal criteria with organisational objectives to foster greater employee trust and engagement. This study provides valuable insights for universities and other educational institutions seeking to refine their PA systems to ensure they are perceived as fair, accurate, and satisfactory by employees.

Keywords: Performance appraisal, perception and employees

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### INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisals (PA) is a crucial component of human resource management. It is providing a formal mechanism for evaluating employee performance, offering feedback, and fostering development. In the context of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) universities, PA take on an additional significance function due to the unique challenges faced by these institutions, such as diverse work environments, nature of work, reliance on technology, and the need to manage large numbers of part-time tutors, multi-administrative works and adult learners from nation-wide. PA in such settings can significantly influence employee

perceptions of fairness, accuracy, and satisfaction, which, in turn, can affect overall job performance and organisational commitment (Beardwell & Thompson, 2017).

One of the critical challenges in evaluating performance in ODL environments is the lack of direct observation and supervision (DeNisi & Pritchard, 2016). Supervisors often rely on quantifiable outputs, such as student satisfaction scores or task completion rates, which may not fully reflect the quality of academic work (Aristovnik et al., 2020). For example, innovative teaching practices or efforts to support struggling students may not be captured in these metrics. This discrepancy can lead to frustration among lecturers who feel that their efforts are overlooked. As noted by Wang and Zheng (2022), PA in ODL settings must incorporate qualitative measures and self-assessments to ensure a holistic evaluation.

The unique challenges faced by ODL universities, such as remote work environments and heavily reliance on technology, make it essential for management to develop appraisal systems that are perceived as fair, accurate, and supportive of employee development. By addressing the key issues of fairness, accuracy, communication of outcomes, and overall satisfaction, this study aims to provide insights that can help to improve the PA process in ODL institutions.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

In all organisations, performance appraisal serves as an essential tool for managing and improving employee performance. However, despite their importance, many employees in the organisation often perceive PA systems as lacking fairness, accuracy, and effective feedback, which can negatively impact their overall satisfaction and trust in the system. These perceptions are critical because they influence not only individual job satisfaction and motivation but also the overall organisational effectiveness (Murphy & Cleveland, 2019).

Several studies highlight that employees' perceptions of fairness and accuracy in PA are key drivers of job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Colquitt et al., 2015; Armstrong, 2020). Yet, in ODL universities, where remote work environments and flexible roles are common, employees often feel that the PA criteria do not accurately reflect their actual contributions, leading to dissatisfaction (Levy & Williams, 2021). Moreover, the feedback provided to employees regarding their appraisal outcomes is frequently criticized for being inadequate, untimely, or unclear, further exacerbating negative perceptions (Herbert & Mouton, 2020).

Employees' perceptions of procedural justice—the fairness of the processes used to determine appraisal outcomes—are especially crucial in ODL environments. When employees believed that the PA process is transparent and unbiased, they are more likely to accept the outcomes, even if they are not entirely favourable (Elicker et al., 2006). However, in ODL universities, the absence of face-to-face interactions and the reliance on virtual performance metrics may create ambiguity and scepticism about the evaluation process (Eisenberger et al., 2014). This ambiguity often leads to perceptions of procedural injustice, which can reduce employee morale and trust in management, thereby affecting overall job satisfaction (Greenberg, 2020).

Furthermore, the concept of distributive justice, which relates to the perceived fairness of appraisal outcomes, plays a significant role in employee satisfaction (Cropanzano et al., 2007). In ODL universities, the diverse nature of academic roles, including asynchronous teaching, student support, and administrative responsibilities, complicates the assessment of individual performance. If employees feel that their multifaceted contributions are not adequately recognized or rewarded, dissatisfaction and demotivation are likely to increase (Folger & Konovsky, 1989). This issue underscores the necessity for tailored PA systems that account for the distinctive work dynamics in ODL settings to ensure fair distribution of outcomes and recognition.

This gap points to a need for more focused research on how employees perceive the fairness, accuracy, receipt of outcomes, and satisfaction with the PA process in ODL universities. While existing studies on PA have largely focused on traditional settings, the unique characteristics of ODL institutions present specific challenges that require further investigation (Boswell & Boudreau, 2020). If these issues remain unaddressed, it could lead to disengagement, reduced productivity, and lower organizational morale. Therefore, this study aims to explore these perceptions to provide insights that can guide improvements in the PA systems of ODL universities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance appraisal topic is a crucial aspect of human resource management, and it providing a structured process for evaluating employee performance, offering feedback, and aligning individual goals with organizational objectives. In the context of ODL universities, this process presents unique challenges due to the remote and flexible nature of the work. This literature review examines four key variables: fairness of appraisal criteria, accuracy of performance criteria, received of appraisal outcomes, and overall satisfaction with PA. It also introduces a theoretical framework suitable for understanding these variables and highlights gaps in the existing research, underscoring the need for this study.

### Fairness of appraisal criteria

Fairness, or procedural justice in PA is essential for fostering trust and commitment within an organization. Fairness is often defined by the perceived objectivity, transparency, and inclusivity of the appraisal process (Colquitt et al., 2015). Research indicates that when employees perceive appraisal systems as fair, they are more likely to trust the organisation, show higher levels of job satisfaction, and commit to their roles (Greenberg, 2021). However, in ODL universities, where employees work remotely and may have less direct interaction with supervisors, ensuring fairness in appraisal criteria can be challenging (Murphy & Cleveland, 2019). These unique working conditions can lead to perceptions of bias or misalignment between job roles and appraisal measures, which may not fully capture the nuances of remote academic work (Levy & Williams, 2021).

Performance appraisals are often influenced by subjective judgments and biases, which can undermine the perceived fairness, accuracy, and overall satisfaction of the appraisal process. According to *DeNisi and Pritchard (2016)*, biases such as the halo effect, recency effect, and ratter leniency can distort evaluations, making them less accurate and fair. In traditional and ODL settings alike, these biases can be exacerbated by limited face-to-face interactions and reliance on virtual communication (Murphy

& Cleveland, 2019). For instance, lecturers who frequently communicate with supervisors may receive more favourable appraisals compared to those who do not. This inconsistency can lead to dissatisfaction and a lack of trust in the appraisal process (Boswell & Boudreau, 2020). Implementing structured, evidence-based criteria and providing ratter training are essential strategies for mitigating these biases (Levy & Williams, 2021).

### **Accuracy of performance criteria**

The accuracy of performance criteria refers to how well the appraisal system reflects an employee's actual performance. Inaccurate appraisals can demotivate employees and lead to disengagement (Murphy & Cleveland, 2019). In ODL universities, the reliance on digital tools and metrics for measuring performance can present issues of accuracy. Many employees feel that traditional appraisal metrics fail to capture the full range of their work, particularly when it involves managing diverse student needs and utilizing innovative teaching methods (Herbert & Mouton, 2020). Levy and Williams (2021) argue that performance criteria must be adaptable to remote and digital environments to ensure that employees feel their work is accurately represented. Yet, existing research on appraisal accuracy has largely focused on traditional work settings, highlighting a gap in the literature regarding remote work environments like those in ODL institutions.

### **Received of appraisal outcomes**

Receiving feedback from PA is a critical part of the process that influences employee development and satisfaction. Armstrong (2020) emphasizes the importance of timely, clear, and constructive feedback in fostering employee growth and engagement. However, in ODL universities, where communication is often mediated by technology, delays or misunderstandings in the feedback process can occur. Research shows that when employees do not receive clear or actionable feedback, it can lead to dissatisfaction and confusion about their performance (Goleman, 2017). Inadequate communication about appraisal outcomes in ODL settings exacerbates this issue, as employees may feel disconnected from the institutional objectives and their role within the organization (Herbert & Mouton, 2020).

### **Overall satisfaction with appraisal criteria**

Overall satisfaction with the appraisal process is often determined by how well the system aligns with employee expectations and the broader goals of the institution. Boswell and Boudreau (2020) suggest that satisfaction is linked to employees' perceptions of fairness, accuracy, and the quality of feedback. In the context of ODL universities, the decentralized nature of work can make it difficult to develop appraisal systems that meet the diverse needs of employees (Levy & Williams, 2021). Studies indicate that employees in remote work settings are more likely to express dissatisfaction with appraisal criteria when they feel the criteria are outdated, irrelevant, or misaligned with their actual job roles (Murphy & Cleveland, 2019). This dissatisfaction can reduce engagement and undermine the effectiveness of the performance management system.

In terms of theoretical framework, this literature review will relate to two main theory. There are Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) and Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964). Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) posits that employees assess fairness in the workplace by comparing their input-output ratios with those of their colleagues. In the context of PA, employees evaluate whether the criteria used to assess their performance are equitable compared to those applied to others. If they perceive an imbalance, where their efforts and contributions are not adequately recognized, they may feel dissatisfied and demotivated (Greenberg, 2021). In ODL universities, where roles and contributions can vary widely, ensuring fairness in appraisals is a challenge that Equity Theory helps to address by focusing on employee perceptions of balance and fairness.

Meanwhile, Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) explains how employees are motivated by the belief that their efforts will lead to desired outcomes. According to this theory, for employees to be motivated, they must believe that their efforts will result in a certain level of performance (expectancy), that this performance will lead to specific outcomes (instrumentality), and that the outcomes are valued (valence). In PA, this means that if employees feel the criteria used to assess them are inaccurate or irrelevant to their actual work, they may lose motivation, as they do not expect their efforts to lead to the desired rewards (Levy & Williams, 2021). This is particularly relevant in ODL universities, where performance may be assessed through remote and digital means, creating a potential disconnect between employee effort and perceived outcomes.

While both Equity Theory and Expectancy Theory have been extensively applied in traditional work settings, limited research has been conducted on how these theories apply to the unique context of ODL universities. The distinct challenges of remote work—such as reliance on digital communication, flexible job roles, and decentralized tasks—affect employees' perceptions of fairness, accuracy, and satisfaction with PA. Existing literature has largely overlooked these factors, focusing more on conventional work environments. This study aims to fill this gap by examining employee perceptions of fairness, accuracy, receive of the outcome, and satisfaction with performance appraisals in an ODL university context. By applying Equity and Expectancy Theories, the study will provide insights that can help improve the appraisal systems used in ODL institutions, ultimately enhancing employee engagement and organisational effectiveness.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research question for this research are as follow:

1. What is the employee perception towards the fairness of appraisal criteria?
2. What is the employee perception towards the accuracy of performance criteria?
3. What is the employee perception towards the appraisal outcome?
4. What is the employee perception towards the overall satisfaction with appraisal criteria?

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the research are:

1. To examine employee perceptions of the fairness of appraisal criteria
2. To examine employee perceptions of accuracy of performance criteria.
3. To examine employee perceptions of receive the appraisal outcome.
4. To examine employee perceptions of overall satisfaction with appraisal criteria.

## CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

This research makes several important contributions to the field of performance management, particularly within the context of ODL universities. Firstly, it provides empirical insights into how employees perceive the fairness, accuracy, received of outcomes, and overall satisfaction with performance appraisals in ODL settings. It addressing a gap in the literature where traditional institutions have been the primary focus (Murphy & Cleveland, 2019; Levy & Williams, 2021). This study provides valuable insights for ODL universities and other educational institutions seeking to refine their PA systems to ensure they are perceived as relevant, fair, accurate, and satisfactory by employees.

Secondly, the research offers valuable recommendations for improving the PA systems in ODL universities by highlighting areas of concern, such as insufficient feedback mechanisms and the perceived misalignment of appraisal criteria with actual job performance. These findings will help ODL institutions develop more transparent, objective, and relevant appraisal processes that can enhance employee trust, engagement, and productivity (Herbert & Mouton, 2020; Armstrong, 2020).

Thirdly, this research contributes to organizational development practices by providing a framework for evaluating and refining appraisal systems in remote or flexible work environments, which are becoming increasingly prevalent. This framework can be applied not only in ODL universities but also in other sectors such as company practicing work from home where similar working conditions exist, broadening the study's to be more practical and relevance.

This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how appraisal systems can be improved to better align with the needs of remote employees in educational institutions. The findings will provide practical recommendations for ODL universities to enhance their PA systems, fostering greater employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. Finally, the significant of this research also introduces a theoretical framework for understanding the PA matter within ODL institution and highlights gaps in the existing literature research, underscoring the need for the study. Moreover, the feedback provided to employees regarding their appraisal outcomes is frequently criticised due to inadequate, untimely and unclear. Its further exacerbating negative perceptions (Herbert & Mouton, 2020). Thus, this gap points to a need for more focused research on how employees perceive the fairness, accuracy, received of outcomes, and satisfaction with the PA process in ODL universities. The existing literature has largely overlooked these factors, and there focusing more on conventional work environments. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap in an ODL university context. Therefore, this study is significant to provide insights that can guide improvements in the PA systems of ODL universities.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to explore employee perceptions of the PA system in ODL university. The purpose of the study was to examine four key variables: fairness of appraisal criteria, accuracy of performance criteria, received of appraisal outcomes, and overall satisfaction with the appraisal system. Descriptive research is applied for this study as it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of data to describe characteristics of the population without influencing the outcome (Creswell, 2014).

### Population and sampling

The population for this study consisted of employees from a single ODL university. Since, this is an internal research funded project, therefore, it only focus on a single ODL institution. A total of 241 employees (academics and non-academics) out of 630 employees had participated in the survey. The sample was drawn using a non-probability sampling method, as the study aimed to gather insights from a specific group of employees within the university, rather than generalizing across multiple institutions. The sample size of 241 employees was sufficient for achieving reliable results, as it provided a good representation of the university's employee population.

### Data collection

Data were collected using a Google Form survey, which was distributed electronically to all participants. The survey consisted of 7 items, each designed to measure employee perceptions of the appraisal process in relation to the four key variables. A Likert scale with four response options—ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree) was used to capture employees' attitudes toward the appraisal system. The use of a 4-point Likert scale is particularly effective in eliminating neutral responses and encouraging participants to express a clear opinion on the issues being investigated (Dawes, 2008).

### Validity and reliability

The reliability of the survey instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha, which produced a result of 0.944, indicating high reliability. According to George and Mallery (2003), a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 or above is considered acceptable, while

values above 0.8 are considered good, meaning that the items in the survey were consistent and reliable for measuring employee perceptions of the performance appraisal system.

### Data analysis

Data collected from the survey were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22.0) software. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data and provide an overview of employee responses. The focus was on identifying trends and patterns in employee perceptions of the appraisal system, particularly in terms of fairness, accuracy, receipt of outcomes, and satisfaction. The Likert-scale responses were treated as ordinal data, and appropriate descriptive statistical methods were applied to interpret the findings effectively (Pallant, 2020)

### Ethical considerations

This research followed all necessary ethical guidelines to protect the rights and confidentiality of participants. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's purpose and assured of their anonymity. Consent was obtained before collecting any data, and all responses were kept confidential, stored securely, and used solely for the purpose of this research.

### Finding

**Table 1 Performance Appraisal in Frequency and percentages (N=241)**

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The appraisal criteria (general) in which I am evaluated is fair.	24 (10)	62 (25.7)	119 (49.4)	36 (14.9)
2	The current performance appraisal system in my organisation is related to my career advancement.	17 (7.1)	64 (26.6)	117 (48.5)	43 (17.8)
3	The present appraisal system contributes to my overall organisational effectiveness.	20 (8.3)	55 (22.8)	127 (52.7)	39 (16.2)
4	The performance criteria used in the appraisal form does not actually measure my real performance.	16 (6.6)	73 (30.3)	106 (44)	46 (19.1)
5	In general, I received the appraisal outcome.	22 (9.1)	61 (25.3)	131 (54.4)	27 (11.2)
6	The productivity of the workforce in this organisation has been improving as a result of the performance management system.	19 (7.9)	77 (32)	116 (48.1)	29 (12)
7	Overall, I am fully satisfied with the criteria used in the current appraisal system.	26 (10.8)	73 (30.3)	111 (46.1)	31 (12.9)

The data presented in table1 show that while there is a generally positive perception of the PA system in terms of fairness, career advancement, and contribution to organisational effectiveness, however significant portions of the participants feel that the system does not accurately measure performance or provide clear outcomes. The management should focus on improving the transparency and accuracy of the appraisal process to address these concerns. the detail analysis will be elaborate below.

In term of fairness of appraisal criteria (research question1), 49.4% of participants agreed that the appraisal criteria are fair, while 14.9% strongly agreed. This indicates a generally positive perception, although 35.7% participants disagreed or strongly disagreed. The result demonstrates that some staff view the criteria as unfair.

Regarding career advancement related to appraisal, 48.5% participants agreed, and 17.8% strongly agreed that the PA system is related to career advancement. It reflecting that the majority feel it contributes to their career progression. However, 33.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating that a substantial minority are sceptical about the link between appraisals and career development.

For the contribution to organisational effectiveness, 52.7% participants agreed, and 16.2% strongly agreed that the appraisal system contributes to overall organisational effectiveness, showing a generally positive view, although 31.1% expressed some dissatisfaction.

When come to the accuracy of performance criteria (research question2), 44% participants agreed, and 19.1% strongly agreed that the performance criteria do not measure their real performance. This highlights a potential issue where almost two-thirds of the participants feel the criteria may not reflect their actual performance. It really needs to pay more attention to reveal the matter.

In relation to receive the appraisal outcome (research question3),54.4% participants agreed, and 11.2% strongly agreed that they receive the appraisal outcome, suggesting that the majority of them feel they are informed of the appraisal results. However, 34.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed, which is a notable concern for management.

Meanwhile, concerning the improvement in workforce productivity,48.1% participants agreed, and 12% strongly agreed that workforce productivity has improved due to the performance management system. However, 39.9% of them expressed dissatisfaction, indicating that many employees do not see a clear link between performance management and productivity gains.

Finally, the satisfaction with appraisal criteria (research question4), 46.1% participants agreed, and 12.9% strongly agreed with satisfaction in the appraisal criteria, but 41.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, showing a significant proportion of participants dissatisfaction.

**Table 2 Performance Appraisal in Mean score and level (N=241)**

No.		Mean	Std. Deviation	level
1	The appraisal criteria (general) in which I am evaluated is fair.	2.69	0.84	Agree
2	The current performance appraisal system in my organisation is related to my career advancement.	2.77	0.82	Agree
3	The present appraisal system contributes to my overall organisational effectiveness.	2.77	0.82	Agree
4	The performance criteria used in the appraisal form does not actually measure my real performance.	2.76	0.84	Agree
5	In general, I received the appraisal outcome.	2.68	0.79	Agree
6	The productivity of the workforce in this organisation has been improving as a result of the performance management system.	2.64	0.79	Agree
7	Overall, I am fully satisfied with the criteria used in the current appraisal system.	2.61	0.84	Agree

In term of mean score and satisfaction level, the data presented show the following message:

For the Fairness of appraisal criteria, the mean score is 2.69 (Agree level), indicating a moderate level of agreement that the appraisal criteria are fair. On the other hand, appraisal system related to career Advancement, the mean score is 2.77 (Agree level), suggesting moderate agreement that the appraisal system is linked to career advancement.

When looking at the contribution to organisational effectiveness, the mean score is 2.77 (Agree level), indicating a similar level of agreement that the appraisal system contributes to organisational effectiveness. In term of accuracy of performance criteria, the mean score is 2.76 (Agree level), showing moderate agreement that the performance criteria do not measure real performance, which is a critical point for management to address the matter.

When come to the issue whether the participants received the appraisal outcome, the mean score is 2.68 (Agree level), reflecting a moderate level of agreement on the received of appraisal outcomes. Then, for the improvement in workforce productivity, the mean score is 2.64 (Agree level), indicating moderate agreement that the performance management system improves workforce productivity. Finally, for the overall satisfaction with appraisal criteria, the mean score is 2.61 (Agree level), which shows moderate agreement on overall satisfaction with the appraisal system.

In overall, the mean scores suggest that employees generally agree with most aspects of the PA system, but there are no strong indications of high satisfaction. The moderate scores across all items highlight the need for the management to address concerns about the accuracy of the appraisal criteria and its impact on career advancement and productivity.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

The findings from this research has provide important insights into employee perceptions of PA in ODL university. The moderate scores for fairness, accuracy, outcome received, and satisfaction highlight key areas that require improvement to ensure that the appraisal system is effective and trusted by employees. This discussion examines how these findings align with or diverge from previous research and explores their implications for ODL universities.

### Fairness of appraisal criteria

The mean score of 2.69 for the fairness of appraisal criteria indicates that while employees generally agree that the criteria are fair, this agreement is weak. The finding aligns with research by Greenberg (2021), who argues that perceptions of fairness in appraisals are often compromised when employees believe that the criteria do not adequately reflect the diversity of tasks they perform. In ODL universities, where employees often engage in tasks such as developing digital content, managing virtual classrooms, and handling technical issues, traditional appraisal criteria may not fully capture these efforts, resulting in perceptions of unfairness (Murphy & Cleveland, 2019). This is consistent with the current study's findings, which suggest a need for ODL universities to revise their appraisal criteria to better reflect the actual roles performed by them.

### Accuracy of performance criteria

The mean score of 2.76 for the accuracy of performance criteria is also moderate, reflecting a perception that appraisals are not entirely accurate in measuring employee performance. This finding is in line with the work of Levy and Williams (2021), who suggest that in remote and digital work environments, performance criteria can be misaligned with actual job roles, leading to perceptions of inaccuracy. In ODL settings, where performance may be assessed through digital tools and online interactions, traditional metrics may overlook the more nuanced aspects of an employee's role, such as virtual mentorship or student engagement. The findings from this study highlight the need for more context-specific performance metrics that capture the full range of employee contributions in remote environments.

### Received of appraisal outcomes

The mean score of 2.68 for receipt of appraisal outcomes indicates that employees are not entirely satisfied with how they receive feedback from appraisals. This supports the findings of Armstrong (2020), who emphasizes the importance of timely and clear feedback in ensuring that appraisals are effective. In ODL universities, where feedback is often delivered through digital channels, employees may experience delays or find the feedback to be lacking in detail. Herbert and Mouton (2020) suggest that digital communication can lead to misunderstandings or a lack of depth in feedback, which can result in employees feeling undervalued. The current findings imply that ODL universities should prioritize improving the timeliness and quality of feedback, ensuring that it is constructive and actionable.

### Satisfaction with appraisal criteria

The overall satisfaction with appraisal criteria scored 2.61, reflecting weak satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Boswell and Boudreau (2020), who argue that employee satisfaction with appraisal systems is closely linked to perceptions of fairness and accuracy. When employees feel that appraisal criteria are outdated or irrelevant, they are less likely to trust the system. In ODL universities, where roles are often varied and decentralized, appraisal systems that do not account for the specific demands of remote teaching can lead to dissatisfaction. The current study suggests that ODL universities need to regularly update and customize their appraisal criteria to ensure they align with the actual work performed by employees.

The findings from this study confirm that employees in ODL universities have moderate perceptions of the fairness, accuracy, received of outcomes, and overall satisfaction with the PA system. These results align with much of the existing literature, which highlights similar challenges in both traditional and remote work environments (Greenberg, 2021; Levy & Williams, 2021). The implications for ODL universities are clear: appraisal systems need to be updated to better reflect the complexity of different teaching roles, ensure timely and meaningful feedback, and align more closely with career advancement and organisational goals. By addressing these areas, ODL universities can improve employee trust in the appraisal process, increase motivation, and enhance overall organisational effectiveness.

### CONCLUSION

The findings from this study reveal critical insights into the PA system in ODL universities, highlighting significant areas of both strength and weakness. While employees perceive the appraisal criteria to be somewhat fair and accurate, the overall satisfaction with the system is moderate, reflecting a disconnect between the appraisal process and the unique demands of their tasks. The study confirms that appraisal systems in ODL environments are often associated to traditional evaluation metrics that fail to capture the full scope of employees' contributions, such as digital content creation, multi-tasking role, virtual student support, and innovative teaching methods. This misalignment has led to moderate dissatisfaction with the appraisal process, particularly in terms of feedback quality and its impact on career advancement. The findings align with broader literature, indicating that remote work environments require tailored appraisal systems that address the complexities of digital nature, highlighting the need for a re-evaluation of current practices.

In light of these findings, ODL universities must move beyond conventional performance metrics to develop appraisal systems that are transparent, relevant, and adaptable to the evolving nature of remote work. Enhancing the appraisal process requires not only updating performance criteria but also improving the delivery of feedback, ensuring that it is timely, personalized, and constructive. Additionally, universities must strengthen the link between performance appraisals and career progression, making pathways to advancement more explicit and equitable. By doing so, ODL institutions can foster a more engaged, motivated, and productive workforce, ultimately driving both individual and organisational success. Failure to address these critical gaps could result in a continued erosion of trust in the appraisal system, leading to disengagement and higher turnover in a sector already facing significant challenges. Future study should focus on some other aspects such as top management perception to performance criteria, the link between job performance and promotion, etc. last but not least, we would like to acknowledge and express our deepest appreciation to the support and funding provided by the management.

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