

Linking Political Behavior in Performance Appraisals to Distributive Justice as a Determinant of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of political behavior in performance appraisals and distributive justice on job satisfaction using self-report questionnaires gathered from employees at a government linked postal company in East Malaysia, Borneo island. The outcomes of stepwise regression analysis showed two important findings; firstly, relationship between motivational motive and distributive justice significantly correlated with job satisfaction. Secondly, relationship between punishment motive and distributive justice significantly correlated with job satisfaction. Statistically, this result confirms that distributive justice does act as a mediating variable in the relationship between political behavior in performance appraisals and job satisfaction in the studied organization.

Key words: Political behavior, distributive justice, job satisfaction, self-respect, motive, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal is viewed as a crucial decision making tool where it often used by employers to formally evaluate and develop employee performance in organizations (Ismail *et al.*, 2011; Desimone *et al.*, 2002; Noe *et al.*, 2009; Snell and Bohlander, 2007). According to Thurston and Mcnall (2010), performance appraisal will be a useful in evaluating and developing instrument when employees perceive their performance appraisals as accurate and fair. At the beginning stage of developing performance appraisal system, many employers design measurement methods based on cognitive models which emphasize on reliability and validity of instruments for measuring employee performance using a rational judgment process. This measurement method concentrates on establishing work objectives, setting performance goals, determining objective criteria to measure performance and use objective criteria to measure performance (Fletcher, 2001, 2002; Noe *et al.*, 2009; Snell and Bohlander, 2007). For example, making comparison method, rating individual, measuring results, and measuring both attributes and results are widely designed to assess employee performance based on objective criteria.

Feedbacks gained from this assessment method may be used to resolve routine personnel management functions like recruitment and selection, training and

development, compensation and career development (Cook and Crossman, 2004; Noe *et al.*, 2009; Snell and Bohlander, 2007).

A recent study of performance management highlights that many scholars argue the inadequacy of rational judgement process in guiding management to accurately and fairly measure performance of employees who work in different job categories may negatively affect employees' reactions toward their works, supervisors and organizations (Ferris *et al.*, 2005a, b; Thurston and Mcnall, 2010). In responding to the weaknesses of this appraisal system, some scholars suggest to management to practice political behavior because it is more effective, especially in occupations that require interpersonal skills, networking abilities and social influence tactics (Ferris *et al.*, 2006; Perrewe *et al.*, 2000). Research on political behavior explains that organization is a political arena and political behavior in performance appraisals is an instrument to exercise management power and influence in order to accomplish its mission (Bing *et al.*, 2011; Ferris *et al.*, 2000; Mintzberg, 1985). According to a political model, performance appraisals often occur in the context of appraisers' desires to project a favorable self image, obtain valuable outcomes for their units, portray themselves as caring individuals and avoid negative consequences and confrontations (Bing *et al.*, 2011; Ferris *et al.*, 2000; Perrewe *et al.*, 2000). Relying on the notion of this political model, the willingness of

appraisers' to properly use political skills in appraising employee performance will avoid planned distortion of performance ratings and this may decrease inaccuracy, unreliability and unfairness ratings. For example, the readiness of managers to use sincere motives in performance appraisals will determine high scores for high performers and low scores for low performers may retain and motivate employees to support organizational interests (Ferris *et al.*, 2000, 2007; Ismail *et al.*, 2011). Besides that the ability of appraisers to appropriately use political skills in understanding other aspects at work and utilizing such knowledge in manipulating performance scores to fulfill or protect their personal goals, meet particular individuals' interests and/or satisfy certain groups' interests may decrease appraisal errors (Ferris *et al.*, 2000, 2005a, b). For example, the ability of appraisers to properly use political skills in performance appraisals can assess unpredictable task performance and contextual performance ambiguity like social intelligence, interpersonal influence, networking ability and apparent sincerity may contribute to job and organizational success (Bing *et al.*, 2011; Perrewe *et al.*, 2000).

Extant research in human resource management politics highlights that political behavior in performance appraisals consists of two salient components: motivational motive and punishment motive (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995; Poon, 2004; Thurston and Mcnall, 2010). Motivational motive is often viewed as the appraiser's personal motive (self-interest) to give out high performance scores in order to stimulate, direct and endure appraises' behaviors to achieve organizational and/or departmental goals (Ismail *et al.*, 2011; Ferris *et al.*, 2005a, b; Poon, 2004; Vigoda, 2000). Conversely, punishment motive is frequently seen as the appraiser's personal motive (self-interest) to assign low performance scores in order to punish appraises who have committed misconducts in order to correct their mistakes as well as increase their work disciplines (Ismail *et al.*, 2011; Ferris *et al.*, 2005a, b; Poon, 2004; Ryness *et al.*, 2002; Vigoda, 2000).

Many scholars like Armstrong and Baron (1998), Boswell and Boudreau (2002), Lefkowitz (2000), de Waal (2003), Ferris *et al.* (2005a, b) and Ismail *et al.* (2011) state that the existence of motivational and punishment motives in the conduct of performance appraisals may discover problems employees with job performance, provide career counseling and conduct training programs to better enable employees support organizational strategy and goals. If management can properly implement such motives in its performance appraisal system this may lead to increased positive employee outcomes, especially job satisfaction

(Ferris *et al.*, 2000; Poon, 2003; Vigoda, 2000). In an organizational behavior perspective, job satisfaction is often seen as employees general attitude toward their job which is a result of their perception or appraisal of their job, a pleasurable or emotional state, a positive reaction and action tendencies toward work (Ismail *et al.*, 2011; Locke, 1976; Snell and Bohlander, 2007). Surprisingly, a further investigation about performance appraisal system reveals that effect of political behavior in performance appraisals on job satisfaction is indirectly affected by perceptions of distributive justice (Poon, 2004; Suliman, 2007; Thurston and Mcnall, 2010). Many researchers like Cropanzano and Folger (1991), Colquitt *et al.* (2001), Roch and Shanock (2006) and Salimaki and Jansen (2010) define distributive justice as individuals who perceive fair treatment (e.g., rewards or resources) by the employer. For example, the notion of this theory explains that individuals often judge the distributive justice of performance appraisals based on their perceptions of the quality of the process and social interactions that led to the appraisal. For example, individuals may usually accept unsatisfactory evaluations as fair if they feel that the appraisal outcomes are just. Conversely if individuals feel the appraisal outcomes are not fair, this feeling may strongly induce negative attitudinal and behavior outcomes (e.g., anger, dissatisfaction and frustration) in organizations (Cropanzano and Folger, 1991; Folger *et al.*, 1992; Greenberg, 1986; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997).

In a performance management model, many scholars think that motivational motive, punishment motive, distributive justice and job satisfaction are distinct constructs but highly interrelated. For example, the ability of appraisers to properly employ motivational motive (i.e., intend to motivate employees for working to achieve organizational agenda) and punishment motive (i.e., intend to prevent employees for working to attain their personal agenda) in determining performance ratings may strongly invoke employees' perceptions of distributive justice which in turn leading to higher job satisfaction in organizations (Thurston and Mcnall, 2010; Vigoda, 2000). Although, this relationship is interesting not much is known about the mediating effect of distributive justice in performance appraisal research literature (Suliman, 2007; Thurston and Mcnall, 2010). Many scholars argue that the mediating effect of distributive justice has been given less emphasized in previous studies because they give more focus on the features of performance appraisal politics and the direct effect of performance appraisal politics on employee outcomes. Consequently, the knowledge drawn from the studies may not be of any assistance to practitioners to formulate

practical strategies to handle internal and external problems in performance appraisal in dynamic organizations (Poon, 2003, 2004; Suliman, 2007; Thurston and Mcnall, 2010). Hence, it motivates the researchers to further examine the relationship between political behaviour (i.e., motivational and punishment motives) in performance appraisals and job satisfaction.

Literature review: Direct effects model have been employed in previous studies to examine political behavior in performance appraisals, namely, 303 public sector employees in Israel (Vigoda, 2000), 127 employees from various organizations in Malaysia and 208 Malaysian employees from diverse occupations and organizations (Poon, 2003). Findings from these studies show the ability of the management to properly implement motivational motive (e.g., intend to produce mutual benefits) and improperly practice punishment motive (e.g., favoritism, biases and punishing tactics) in giving out performance ratings had decreased job satisfaction (Poon, 2003). These findings are consistent with the notion of Skinner (1954)'s reinforcement theory which states that an individual behavior is strongly motivated by particular reinforcers.

Application of this theory in performance appraisal framework shows that the ability of appraisers to treat their employees using proper motivational motive (e.g., support creativity and innovations in doing job) and punishment motive (e.g., punish malpractices in doing job) may lead to an enhanced job satisfaction in organizations (Poon, 2003; Vigoda, 2000). Thus, the hypotheses are:

- H₁: Motivational motive positively related to job satisfaction
- H₂: Punishment motive positively related job satisfaction

Further studies based on an indirect effects model were used to examine performance appraisal politics using different samples like 127 white collar employees in various organizations (Poon, 2004), 1,500 employees from 29 organizations (Suliman, 2007) and 117 employees (Thurston and Mcnall, 2010).

These studies found that the ability of management to properly implement motivational motive (e.g., intend to produce mutual benefits) and practice punishment motive (e.g., favoritism, biases and punishing tactics) in giving out performance ratings had increased employees' feelings of distributive justice on the appraisal systems which could lead to an increased job satisfaction (Poon, 2004; Suliman, 2007; Thurston and Mcnall, 2010). These findings support the notion of distributive

justice theories of Adams (1965) equity theory, self-interest model of justice and relational model of justice. According to Adams (1965) equity theory, an individual tends to compare his/her output (e.g., outcome) and input (e.g., contribution) and/or compares his/her output (e.g., outcome) and input (e.g., contribution) against that of coworkers.

If an individual perceives that he/she receives equitable outcomes (e.g., the amount of performance rating) based on their contributions (e.g., the ability to perform job and/or merit), it would invoke the feelings of distributive justice. On another note, Tyler (1994)'s self-interest model of justice also known as resource model of justice, suggests that people pursue self-interest to maximize their own resources or outcomes based on the rules of justice to increase the feelings of distributive justice.

Further, Tyler (1994)'s relational model of justice proposes that perceptions of distributive justice are formed by concerns for maintaining warm relationships within a group.

These concerns refer to balancing between the group interests (e.g., commitment) and individuals self-interests (e.g., benefits level). If the mutual interests are well maintained it would contribute to increased individuals' feelings of distributive justice.

Application of the distributive justice theories in performance appraisal systems shows that the ability of appraisers to properly use motivational motive (e.g., have practiced communication openness, moral and mutual benefits) and punishment motives (e.g., have not practiced favoritism, biases and punishing tactics) in giving the performance ratings would invoke appraisees' perceptions of distributive justice leading to an increased job satisfaction (Poon, 2004; Suliman, 2007; Thurston and Mcnall, 2010). These literatures serve as foundation for the development of conceptual framework for this study as shown in Fig. 1. Based on the framework, it was hypothesized that:

- H₃: Distributive justice positively mediates the effect of motivational motive on job satisfaction
- H₄: Distributive justice positively mediates the effect of punishment motive on job satisfaction

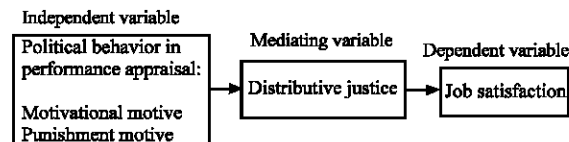


Fig. 1: Distributive justice mediates the effect of political behavior in performance appraisals on job satisfaction

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used a cross-sectional method which allowed the researchers to integrate the performance appraisal politics literature, interview, the pilot study and the actual survey as the main procedure for data collection. The use of this method may overcome the inadequacy of single method and increase the ability to gather accurate, less bias and high quality data (Cresswell, 1998; Sekaran and Bougie, 2011). This study had been conducted at a government linked postal company in East Malaysia, Borneo island. This company is providing day-to-day mailing services for the general public and retail customers as well as courier services. Currently, this organization has constantly invested resources to identify, evaluate and maximize the capability of its human capitals as a mean to improve its customer service. Data collection begins with an interview for which flexible interview questions covering three issues:

- Politics in performance appraisal
- Characteristics of distributive justice
- Facets of job satisfaction

Purposive sampling technique has been used in order to find those who are experienced person that can be able to provide all necessary information. Besides purposive sampling, snowball sampling technique was also carried out when the participants introduced some of their colleagues who were willing to be interviewed by the researcher. Ultimately, the sample should comprise of those who are able to provide all necessary information on issues to be studied (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Researchers was identified six experienced interviewees that include one assistant human resource manager, two supervisors and three supporting staff who have >10 years of working experience in the organization. They have worked for >10 years and adequate knowledge on political behavior in performance appraisals practiced in the studied organization. The in-depth interview was conducted to obtain clear information about the nature of political behavior in performance appraisals, distributive justice features and job satisfaction characteristics as well as the relationship between such variables in the organization.

Researchers began the initial analysis of data even after the first interview conducted by analyzing and building categories and themes and then followed with the next interview. Researchers also conducted each interview at the convenience of the informants. During the interview session, they had opportunity to stop and continue the session again based on the willingness of the informants. Data were collected until achieving saturation point of information. Transcribing of the interview session has been viewed and examined several

times and not less than twice. Validity is a concept for measuring whether a study is reliable and possess trustworthiness. It consists of four main aspects of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. In qualitative research, validity can be achieved through comparing between the description and explanation and whether or not these explanations fit perfectly to the description (Janesick, 2000). On the other hand, validity is seen as strength one qualitative research whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, participant or readers (Creswell, 2007). In order to achieve validity and reliability of a study, the interview sessions have been assessed in depth. In addition, validation and reliability also assist other researchers in studying issues related to this study. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), validity and reliability can be assured through the use of audit trail, member checks and peer examination.

An audit trail refers to the steps required to be adopted by researchers at every stage of data collection and analysis to ensure the reliability of the study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). In this study, researchers examined every step from the early stages, the preparation of proposal, construction of interview protocol and questions, data collection as well as the process of analyzing data. Member checks reconnect the researchers with the informants to confirm the data interpretation. The informants of the study were contacted for clarification of the facts that they had provided. In a peer examination technique, researchers seek feedbacks and consultation from a specialist.

Next, the information gathered from the interview was recorded, categorized according to the research variables and constantly compared to the related literature review in order to obtain a clear understanding of the particular phenomena under study and put the research results in a proper context. The results of the triangulated process were used as a guideline to develop the content and format of survey questionnaires for a pilot study. Triangulation method is another technique used to establish dependability in the study and involves the use of a variety of sources to provide a deep understanding of the events and the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The researchers used the results of interviews of the informants as the basis for the findings. Finally, a pilot study was done through a discussion on the pilot questionnaires with the six staff interviewed before. Their views were sought to verify the content and format of actual survey questionnaires. Back translation technique was used to translate the content of questionnaires in Malay and English language in order to increase the validity and reliability of the instrument (Wright, 1996). The survey questionnaire was divided into three sections. In the first, there were 7 items on motivational motive and 9 on punishment motive, all were

developed based on motivational motive related performance appraisal literature (Poon, 2003, 2004; Suliman, 2007; Thurston and Mcnall, 2010). Here respondents were given questions on performance rating criteria, procedures and consequences. In the second section, distributive justice had eight items developed based on organizational justice related performance appraisal literature. For this the questions revolves on the issues of performance appraisal criteria and procedures (Moonman, 1991; Suliman, 2007; Thurston and Mcnall, 2010). In the last section, job satisfaction had twenty items that were adapted from previous job satisfaction scales (Ismail *et al.*, 2011; Balzer *et al.*, 1997; Janssen, 2001; Rutherford *et al.*, 2009; Warr *et al.*, 1979). In this section, respondents were asked to answer the questions about satisfaction on intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics. All the items used in the questionnaires were measured using a 7 item Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree/dissatisfied (1) to strongly agree/satisfied (7). Information on demographic variables was used as controlling variable because this study focused on employee attitudes.

The population for this study is 291 employees who have worked in the various departments of the studied organization. Prior to conduct the empirical survey, the researchers had consulted the Human Resource (HR) Manager of studied organization in getting his permission to conduct this study. According to his concern about data collection process, the questionnaires were distributed using a convenient sampling to all employees through the HR office. Of the number, 150 usable questionnaires were returned, yielding 51.5% response rate. This figure met the acceptable requirements for inferential statistics (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005; Sekaran and Bougie, 2011).

Analysis on the data from the questionnaire was performed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 16.0. The process begins with exploratory factor analysis to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement scales (Hair *et al.*, 1998; Nunally and Bernstein, 1994). Next, factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was done for all items representing the research variables followed by Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Test (KMO), Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS), eigenvalue, variance explained and Cronbach alpha (α). The value of factor analysis for all items representing each research variable was 0.5 and more indicating the items met the acceptable validity standard. All research variables exceeded the acceptable standard of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's value of 0.6 and were significant in Bartlett's test of sphericity showing that the measure of sampling adequacy for each variable was acceptable. All research variables had eigenvalues >1, signifying that the variables met the acceptable standard of validity (Hair *et al.*, 1998). All research variables also exceeded the acceptable standard

of reliability of 0.70 indicating the variables met the acceptable standard of reliability (Nunally and Bernstein, 1994). Variables meeting the acceptable standard of validity and reliability analyses were used in testing the hypotheses.

Next, Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics were performed to analyze the constructs and the usefulness of the data set (Cohen and Cohen, 1983). Finally, Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test the mediating hypothesis because it can assess the magnitude of each independent variable and vary the mediating variable in the relationship between many independent variables and one dependent variable (Baron and Kenny, 1986; Foster *et al.*, 1998). According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the mediating variable can be considered if it fulfills three conditions; the predictor variables are significantly correlated with the hypothesized mediator; the predictor and mediator variables are all significantly correlated with the dependent variable; a previously significant effect of predictor variables is reduced to non-significance or reduced in terms of effect size after the inclusion of mediator variables into the analysis. In this regression analysis, standardized coefficients (standardized beta) were used for all analyses.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the characteristics of participants in the studied organization. Majority respondents were male (75.4%), aged between 26-35 years old (30.7%), Malaysian

Table 1: Participant characteristics (N = 150)

Characteristics	Values (%)
Gender	
Male	75.4
Female	24.6
Age (years)	
18-25	29.3
26-35	30.7
36-45	15.3
>46	24.7
Education (years)	
Diploma	11.3
STPM	8.7
SPM	54.0
SRP/PMR	26.0
Length of service (years)	
<1	14.0
1-5	26.0
6-10	18.7
11-15	9.3
16-20	6.7
>21	25.3
Position	
Management	43.3
Non-management	56.7

SRP/PMR: Sijil Rendah Pelajaran Malaysia/Penilaian Menengah Rendah; SPM/MCE: Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia/Malaysia Certificate of Education (O-levels); STPM/HSC: Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia/Higher School Certificate (A-levels)

Table 2: Validity and reliability analyses for measurement scales

Measures	No. of item	Factor loadings	KMO	Bartlett's test of Sphericity	Eigen value	Variance explained	CronbachAlpha
Motivational motive	7	0.62-0.83	0.84	421,53, p = 0.000	4.41	63.05	0.93
Punishment motive	9	0.56-0.87	0.93	934,17, p = 0.000	5.47	60.74	0.86
Distributive justice	8	0.54-0.77	0.92	762,42, p = 0.000	5.19	64.91	0.92
Job satisfaction	20	0.59-0.81	0.90	2042,22, p = 0.000	9.20	45.99	0.94

Table 3: Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics

Variables	Min.	SD	Pearson correlation (r)			
			1	2	3	4
Motivational motive	5.2	1.20	(1)			
Punishment motive	5.1	1.32	0.76**	(1)		
Distributive justice	5.0	1.34	0.76**	0.78**	(1)	
Job satisfaction	5.1	1.06	0.65**	0.69**	0.75**	(1)

Significant at **p<0.01; reliability estimation are shown diagonally (value 1)

Certificate of Education (54%), working experience of <5 years (26%) and non-management employees (56.7%). Table 2 shows the validity and reliability analyses for measurement scales. The factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was done on 44 items covering the four variables; motivational motive (7 items), punishment motive (9 items), distributive justice (8 items) and job satisfaction (20 items). Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Test (KMO), a measure of sampling adequacy was conducted for each variable and the results indicated that it was acceptable. The results of these statistical analyses showed that all research variables exceed the minimum standard of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's value of 0.6 and were significant in Bartlett's test of sphericity, all research variables had eigenvalues >1, the items for each research variable exceeded factor loadings of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 1998) and all research variables exceeded the acceptable standard of reliability analysis of 0.70 (Nunally and Bernstein, 1994). These statistical results confirm the validity and reliability of measurement scales used for this study as shown in Table 2.

Table 3 shows the Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics. The mean values for the variables are from 5.0-5.2, signifying the levels of motivational motive, punishment motive, distributive justice and job satisfactions ranging from high (4) to highest level (7). The correlation coefficients for the relationship between the independent variable (i.e., motivational motive and punishment motive) and the mediating variable (i.e., distributive justice) and the relationship between the independent variable (i.e., motivational motive and punishment motive) and the dependent variable (i.e., job satisfaction) were <0.90 indicating the data were not affected by serious collinearity problem (Hair *et al.*, 1998). The measurement scales having met validity and reliability requirements were used to test research hypotheses. As shown in Table 4, the results of testing direct effect model indicate two important findings; first, motivational motive

Table 4: The results of multiple regression showing the relationship between political behavior in performance appraisals and distributive justice

Independent variables	Mediating variables (Distributive justice)
Motivational motive	0.44***
Punishment motive	0.39***
R ²	0.57
Adjusted R ²	0.56
F	96.86***

Significance at ***p<0.001

Table 5: The results of multiple regression showing the relationship between political behavior in performance appraisals and job satisfaction

Independent variables	Dependent variables (Job satisfaction)
Motivational motive	0.26**
Punishment motive	0.39***
R ²	0.35
Adjusted R ²	0.34
F	38.98***

Significance at; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 6: The results of multiple regression showing the relationship between political behavior in performance appraisals, distributive justice and job satisfaction

Variables	Dependent variables (Job satisfaction) step 1
Motivational motive	0.04
Punishment motive	0.20*
Distributive justice	0.49***
R ²	0.45
Adjusted R ²	0.44
F	39.57

Significance at *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

significantly correlated with job satisfaction (r = 0.65, p<0.01), therefore H₁ was supported. Second, punishment motive significantly correlated with job satisfaction (r = 0.69, p<0.01), therefore H₂ was supported. In sum, these findings prove motivational and punishment motives as important predictors of job satisfaction in the studied organization.

Table 5 shows the outcomes of multiple regression analysis that were produced based on mediating model testing procedure as advocated by Baron and Kenny (1986). Based on this procedure, the mediating effect of distributive justice in the hypothesized model exists when it meets three conditions; firstly, the independent variable must affect mediating variable in the first equation. Table 6 shows that political behaviour in performance appraisal politics (i.e., motivation motive and punishment motive) significantly correlated with distributive justice (β = 0.44, p<0.001; β = 0.39, p<0.001), signifying that political behaviour in performance appraisals act as an important determinant of distributive justice.

Secondly, the independent variable must affect the dependent variable in the second equation. Table 6 shows that political behaviour in performance appraisal (i.e., motivational motive and punishment motive) significantly correlated with job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.26, p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.39, p < 0.001$) showing that political behaviour in performance appraisals act as an important determinant of job satisfaction.

Thus, Table 6 shows that relationship between distributive justice and political behaviour in performance appraisal (i.e., motivational motive and punishment motive) positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.49, p < 0.001$), therefore H_3 and H_4 were fully supported. This result is consistent with Baron and Kenny (1986)'s mediating model testing condition where the previously significant effect of motivational motive was reduced to non-significance after the inclusion of distributive justice into the analysis. While, the previously significant effect of punishment motive was not reduced to non-significance but the strength of the relationship between such variables was decreased after the inclusion of distributive justice into the analysis. Statistically, this finding confirms that distributive justice does act as a mediating variable in the relationship between political behavior in performance appraisals and job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that distributive justice does act as an important mediating variable in the relationship between political behaviour in performance appraisal and job satisfaction in the studied organization. In the context of this study, HR managers and/or managers have been using the standardized policies and rules set up by the stakeholder to determine equity in performance appraisal systems. In the administration of performance appraisal system, the majority of the employees perceive that motivational and punishment motives have been properly exercised in the performance ratings process. These practices have increased the employees' feelings of distributive justice and this may lead to an increased job satisfaction in the studied organization. There are three major implications of this study, theoretical contribution, robustness of research methodology and practical contribution. In terms of theoretical contribution, the findings of this study reveal two important outcomes; first, feelings of distributive justice have mediated the effect of motivational motive on job satisfaction. Second, feelings of distributive justice have mediated the effect of punishment motive on job satisfaction. These findings show that the notion of

distributive justice has successfully played an effective mediating role in the performance appraisal model of the studied organization. Thus, the findings of this study have also supported and broadened studies by Poon (2004), Suliman (2007) and Thurston and Mcnall (2010). With respect to the robustness of research methodology, the survey questionnaires used in this study have met the acceptable standards of the validity and reliability analyses. Thus, it could lead to produced accurate and reliable findings.

In terms of practical contribution, the findings of this study could serve as guidelines by managers to improve the implementation of performance appraisal systems. This objective may be achieved if management considers the following suggestions; firstly, management development program needs to focus on strengthen managerial political skills by practicing communication openness, strengthening social networks and applying situational approach to enhance integrity, trustworthy, sincerity and security in evaluating and developing employee performance for the interests of organization. Secondly, performance appraisal training content and methods should be updated in order to increase understanding of appraisers and appraises about the proper criteria for allocating performance ratings and the appropriate process and systems of determining performance ratings in organizations. Thirdly, high commitment management culture needs to be encouraged in order to motivate appraisers and appraises practicing good interpersonal communication, active participation in decision making, friendly counseling sessions and positive problem solving techniques (e.g., explain the reasons and justifications for giving performance ratings to their subordinates) may decrease employees' misconceptions and increase their appreciations toward the policies and procedures of performance appraisal system. Fourthly, positive human capital development programs need to be emphasized by management to inculcate spiritual belief, moral values and positive attitudes based on god desires (divinity). These positive values will change appraiser and appraise objectives to serve for god and serve for improving the quality of employee work life through honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and ethics. These suggestions have the potential to induce positive personal outcomes (e.g., satisfaction, commitment, performance and avoid deviant behavior) in organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study proposed a conceptual framework based on the political behavior in performance appraisal research

literature. The results of exploratory factor analysis showed that the measurement scales used in this study met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses.

Outcomes of stepwise regression analysis confirmed that distributive justice did act as an effective mediating variable in the relationship between political behavior in performance appraisals (i.e., motivational and punishment motives) and job satisfaction. This result has supported and extended performance appraisal politics research literatures mostly published in Western organizational settings.

Therefore, current research and practice within performance appraisal politics need to consider perceptions of distributive justice as a key element of performance appraisal systems. These findings further suggest that the readiness of management to incorporate distributive justice into performance appraisal systems will strongly increase positive subsequent employee outcomes (e.g., satisfaction, commitment, performance and ethics) and thus may lead to an enhanced organizational competitiveness.

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