



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMICIANS TOWARDS PERFORMANCE  
APPRAISAL IN A MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

**ROSHIDI HASSAN.**

**FPP 2005 39**



**PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMICIANS TOWARDS PERFORMANCE  
APPRAISAL IN A MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

**By**

**ROSHIDI HASSAN**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra  
Malaysia, in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**November 2005**



**PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMICIANS TOWARDS PERFORMANCE  
APPRAISAL IN A MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

**By**

**ROSHIDI HASSAN**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra  
Malaysia, in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**November 2005**



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia  
in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

**PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMICIANS TOWARDS PERFORMANCE  
APPRAISAL IN A MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

By

**ROSHIDI HASSAN**

**November 2005**

**Chairman: Associate Professor Azahari bin Ismail, PhD**

**Faculty: Educational Studies**

Performance appraisal has received much attention from researchers for more than seven decades and dissatisfaction with the appraisal is a common survey finding (Cardy, 1998). Previous research findings mentioned dissatisfaction as one of the most common findings in many organizations, and this issue is no exception in the Malaysian public sector scenario. Ever since its introduction in 1993, the appraisal system has been facing with various problems especially those related to the implementation aspect and had aroused serious concern and mix feelings among the public sector employees. Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the employees' perceptions and views on the underlying elements behind their negative perceptions and



dissatisfaction toward performance appraisal implementation, the implications of such perceptions on the employees work attitude and finally soliciting their views and suggestions on enhancing the acceptance of the appraisal system.

The finding of this study is hoped to assist the government and the management of other public universities in Malaysia to understand better on the complexity and specific problems associated with the implementation of performance appraisal in the public sector especially in the higher learning institutions. Employees' views and their needs and criteria for an acceptable system could become a very important milestone for the government to ponder when planning to introduce a new appraisal system in the future. The input from this study is also hoped to assist the government and public organizations to develop and implement a more reliable, fair, acceptable and effective performance appraisal system in the future.

A qualitative research method was used in the study. The primary data for the study was obtained from the semi-structured questions used during the in-depth interviews with the participants, while the secondary data was obtained from various government publications, circulars and participants own documents. It was during the interviews that the participants' feelings and opinions toward performance appraisal were

captured. The participants for the interview were sampled using purposive and snowballing techniques. Within the interview duration period, a total of 12 participants' responses to multiple questions related to performance appraisal were obtained as the data was found saturated. Their views on the issues were captured and carefully analyzed by the researcher using qualitative technique underlined in the literatures.

The participants in the study were purposefully selected. They comprised of academicians with more than 10 years experience as academicians in the public university and as an appraisee. They were purposely sampled because the researcher categorized them as 'information rich' individuals that could help provide useful and detail information on the issues under study. Academicians were selected to be the participant for the study because of the unique nature of their job, they were usually the recipient of the 'imposed' system, highly qualified professionals and whom researcher believed able to provide critical opinion and open discussion on the issues under investigation. The data obtained from the interviews was carefully transcribed, coded, and analyzed using the steps recommended by the literatures. A narrative-style of thick descriptions was used to report the research findings.



The study revealed that the academicians were dissatisfied with how performance appraisal was implemented in the organization. They feel that performance appraisal was not properly implemented and do not seem to help them in any way to improve their job performance or personal development. They perceived performance appraisal as just another mechanism for the appraisers to reward the employees of their choice or preference. The process and spirit of implementing a fair appraisal was absent and appraisal is said to be conducted by appraisers in a manner that totally deviated from the expected process and procedures.

The weaknesses in performance appraisal implementation had somewhat caused academicians to develop negative perceptions and attitudes toward their job and the overall appraisal system. They were in the opinion that not much can be done by the appraisal system to improve their work performance as most of their suggestions and requests for professional training and development programs were not seriously considered by the management. There were several distinct elements mentioned by the participants that tend to 'disturb' their full acceptance and satisfaction of the appraisal system. Elements related to appraiser competence and biasness, clarity of performance standards, feedback, goal setting session, sufficiency of rewards allocation and training were highlighted during the interviews.

Appraiser competence and biasness, closed reporting system, minimal feedback and the absence of clear goals were some of the flaws in implementing performance appraisal which were mentioned by the participants.

Despite the dissatisfaction with the implementation of the performance appraisal, some academicians cited satisfaction with the incentives and the amount of monetary and non-monetary rewards that were allocated for excellent performers. They were glad that the government had introduced the appraisal system to measure and reward employees work performance. They felt that performance appraisal had managed to let them know their level of performance and their boss perceptions toward them through their appraisal scores. These two elements had actually saved the system from being totally perceived as a system with little or no benefit at all to employees.

The study again discovers that the weaknesses in implementing performance appraisal had caused most academicians to have negative feelings and perceptions toward the appraisal system, the management of the organization and the program which the government introduces. Employees' dissatisfaction and resentment toward the system were manifested through the change in their attitudes and behaviours toward their job and the environment. Based



on the data accumulated from the interviews, most participants expressed how performance appraisal had reduced their confidence of the system, reduces their level of motivation, make them less concerns of the system and eventually lead to job withdrawal and low morale.

There were some valuable suggestions put forward by the participants on how performance appraisal acceptance and satisfaction could be improved. They believed that employee acceptance and satisfaction could be enhanced if the performance appraisal process is more transparent, the goals and purpose of appraisal is clearly and well defined, the appraisers are well-trained, rewards are sufficiently distributed, and the instruments used be directed towards measuring performance rather than personality traits. Having these elements included in the process of performance appraisal would reflect the sincerity and commitment of the management to provide employees with a fair system of appraisal. In addition, it was proposed that a special unit to monitor performance appraisal implementation and process be established and should consist those who are well trained, competent, and professional in conducting performance appraisal. This unit is expected to monitor the implementation and finally normalize any appraisal discrepancies that might have been committed by the various departments in the institution. In addition, the use of multi-sources of appraisal was suggested to further help enhance the



trust, fairness, satisfaction and acceptance towards the organization appraisal system.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi sebahagian daripada keperluan untuk ijazah  
Doktor Falsafah

**PERSEPSI AHLI AKADEMIK TERHADAP PENILAIAN PRESTASI DI  
SEBUAH UNIVERSITI AWAM DI MALAYSIA**

Oleh

**ROSHIDI HASSAN**

**November 2005**

**Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Azahari bin Ismail, PhD**

**Fakulti: Pengajian Pendidikan**

Penilaian prestasi telah mendapat perhatian serius daripada ramai penyelidik sejak dari tujuh dekad yang lalu dan ketidakpuasan dengan penilaian prestasi adalah suatu yang lumrah dalam setiap penemuan kajian tersebut (Cardy, 1998). Maka, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dengan lebih mendalam persepsi pekerja mengenai pelaksanaan sistem penilaian prestasi yang telah diperkenalkan oleh kerajaan di tempat kerja mereka, kesan penilaian prestasi terhadap gelagat mereka, dan seterusnya mendapatkan cadangan daripada peserta kajian ini tentang bagaimana caranya untuk meningkatkan lagi penerimaan dan kepuasan mereka terhadap sistem penilaian prestasi



ini. Adalah diharapkan agar penemuan-penemuan dalam kajian ini akan dapat membantu pihak kerajaan, organisasi sektor awam dan pihak pengurusan universiti tempatan untuk memperkenalkan dan melaksanakan satu sistem penilaian prestasi yang lebih memberi kepuasan, komprehensif, berkesan dan diterima oleh para pekerja di masa hadapan di bawah Sistem Saraan Malaysia yang baru.

Kaedah kualitatif telah digunakan dalam kajian ini kerana kesesuaiannya dalam melaksanakan kajian berbentuk kajian kes seumpama ini. Data primer dalam kajian ini diperolehi melalui soalan soalan berstruktur terbuka, di samping soalan tidak berstruktur terbuka, yang diajukan semasa sesi temubual dengan ahli akademik yang dipilih, manakala data sekunder diperolehi daripada dokumen dan laporan kerajaan dan individu yang ditemubual. Sepanjang sesi temubual ini, pendapat dan persepsi ahli akademik terhadap pelaksanaan sistem penilaian prestasi telah di perolehi dan dianalisis. Sejumlah 12 peserta kajian yang terdiri dari kalangan ahli akademik dan dipilih menggunakan kaedah 'purposive sampling' dan 'snowballing' serta dari pelbagai jabatan telah ditemubual untuk memperoleh pandangan mereka mengenai isu dalam kajian ini. Jumlah 12 ini diperolehi apabila penyelidik mendapati matlumat yang diberikan oleh peserta ke sebelas dan ke duabelas hampir sama dengan peserta-peserta terdahulu dan tidak banyak maklumat baru

yang telah diperolehi. Peserta dalam kajian ini terdiri daripada ahli akademik yang telah melalui proses penilaian prestasi melebihi sepuluh kali, iaitu, sekali untuk setiap tahun di bawah Sistem Saraan Baru. Mereka ini dipilih kerana penyelidik menganggap mereka sebagai individu yang 'kaya maklumat' dan berupaya menyediakan maklumat yang terperinci dan jelas mengenai isu dalam kajian ini. Penyelidik telah menterjemah semula temubual, mengkod dan menganalisis segala maklumat yang terkumpul menggunakan langkah langkah dan kaedah kualitatif seperti yang telah disarankan dalam literatur. Stail penulisan bercorak deskriptif telah digunakan untuk melapurkan segala penemuan dalam kajian ini.

Kajian ini mendapati kesemua ahli akademik yang ditemubual tidak berpuashati dengan sistem penilaian prestasi yang dilaksanakan. Elemen elemen yang dinyatakan sebagai punca ketidakpuasan hati mereka termasuklah penilai yang tidak mahir dan bias, standard yang tidak jelas, kekurangan maklumbalas, ketiadaan sesi penetapan sasaran kerja, kekurangan ganjaran, dan sistem kuota. Penilai yang tidak mahir, sistem membuat penilaian tertutup, maklum balas yang minima dan ketiadaan sesi penetapan sasaran kerja yang jelas didapati sebagai antara kekurangan utama dalam pelaksanaan sistem penilaian prestasi tersebut yang membawa kepada ketidakpuasan hati dan penerimaan mereka. . .



Kajian ini juga menggariskan beberapa implikasi daripada ketidakpuasan tersebut terhadap ahli akademik. Didapati banyak kesan negatif yang timbul daripada ketidakpuasan hati ahli akademik berbanding dengan kesan positif yang diperolehi dari sistem ini. Kesan seperti hilang keyakinan terhadap sistem, kurang motivasi kerja, kurang serius terhadap sistem penilaian dan kejatuhan moral adalah antara beberapa kesan negatif yang telah dikenalpasti wujud daripada ketidakpuasan hati ahli akademik ini.

Menurut peserta kajian ini, sistem yang boleh diterima ialah sistem yang mempunyai ciri-ciri seperti ketelusan, matlamat dan sasarannya jelas dan dibincangkan, dan instrumennya hendaklah ke arah mengukur prestasi kerja daripada sekadar mengukur personaliti atau sifat pekerja semat-mata. Dengan adanya elemen elemen ini semasa proses pelaksanaan penilaian prestasi, ia boleh dilihat dan diterjemah sebagai mencerminkan keikhlasan dan komitmen pihak pengurusan untuk menyediakan dan melaksanakan system penilaian prestasi yang lebih adil dan saksama kepada para pekerjanya. Peserta kajian ini juga telah mencadangkan agar satu unit khas yang terdiri daripada ahli penilai yang terlatih dan professional dibentuk atau ditubuhkan bagi memantau pelaksanaan proses penilaian prestasi. Ia bertujuan untuk memantau dan menormalisasikan segala kesilapan yang mungkin

wujud dalam proses penilaian prestasi. Sebagai tambahan, penilaian dari pelbagai sumber juga dirasakan dapat membantu untuk lebih meningkatkan kepercayaan, keadilan, kepuasan dan penerimaan pekerja terhadap sistem penilaian prestasi di masa hadapan.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I am very grateful to Allah S.W.T. for giving me the time and excellent health to complete my study and to those who have provided me with generous support, guidance, and assistance over the past eight years since I began the long march to a Ph.D.

I am deeply indebted to the Chairman and members of the supervisory committee for the consistent guidance and support throughout the duration of the study. My special thanks and appreciation is dedicated to my advisor and mentor Associate Professor Dr. Haji Azahari bin Ismail, whose continuous support, guidance, trust and patience, and outstanding knowledge in the subject matter has enabled me to complete this dissertation. I would also like to thank my research committee, YM Dr. Raja Ahmad Tajudin Shah bin Raja Abdul Rashid, Dr. Shamsuddin bin Ahmad, and Dr. Jamilah binti Othman, who not only served as 'very understanding' and outstanding committee members, but above all have provided me with the meaningful comments, constructive criticism, and have spared invaluable time guiding me to the completion of the study.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my employer Universiti Teknologi MARA and the Government of Malaysia for giving me the time and monetary support to pursue and complete my Ph.D. A





million thanks also goes to the participants of the study. Their sincere and generous inputs on such a sensitive subject have provided useful insights to this study

My sincere thanks to my graduate school colleague and peer Mohd Nasarudin bin Hussein. I truly believe that, despite everything, Nasaruddin and I had more fun in graduate school than any other people. I am also very happy and honoured to express my special appreciation to all my teachers and lecturers who had taught me and to all the students that I have taught, and to my brothers and sister for the encouragement and trust that all of you have on me.

Finally, a very special tribute and acknowledgement to my family for their everlasting love, belief, support, and understanding while I have been busy pursuing my dreams. I am truly blessed that I have been surrounded with all that wonderful treatments. To my beloved mother and late father, I am very much indebted and thankful to both of you for your continuous support and 'doa' to see me successfully graduated with Ph.D. Only Allah the Al-Mighty knows how much I love both of you and how proud and fortunate I am to be your son.

"May ALLAH Bless You All".



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	ii
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	viii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	xii
<b>APPROVAL</b>	xv
<b>DECLARATION</b>	xvii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xxiii
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xxiv
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>	xxv
 <b>CHAPTER</b>	
 <b>I INTRODUCTION</b>	 1
Background of the Study	1
Performance appraisal in the Malaysian Public Sector	8
Issues related to the Implementation of Performance Appraisal in Public Service	17
Statement of the Problems	21
Purpose of the Study	25
Significance of the Study	25
 <b>II LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	 30
Introduction	30
Critics on Performance Appraisal	31
The Importance of Assessing Employees' Perceptions Toward Performance Appraisal	34
Performance Appraisal Satisfaction	36
Performance Appraisal and Employee Perception	37
The Importance of Perceive Fairness in Appraisal	39
Type of Fairness in Performance Appraisal	40
Procedural Fairness	41
Distributive Fairness	45
Interactional Fairness	47
Important Elements for Successful Performance Appraisal System	48
Performance Appraisal Purpose and Uses	50
Appraisal Instruments	52
Performance Constructs	55
Goals Setting	58



Performance Standards	60
Performance Ratings	63
Rating Errors	66
Appraisal Feedback	68
Sources of Appraisal	72
Self Appraisals	72
Peer Appraisals	74
Multi-Source Appraisal	75
Measures of Performance	76
Rewards and Recognition	77
Implications of an Ineffective Appraisal Practices on Employees Attitude	81
Counterproductive Behaviours	81
Employee Attitude Toward Work	83
Employees Attitude Toward Raters	85
Enhancing Acceptance of the Performance Appraisal System	86
Appraisal Acceptance and Effectiveness	87
User Acceptance, Satisfaction and Appraisal Effectiveness	89
Attributes of an Acceptable Performance Appraisal System	91
Participation in the Appraisal Process	92
Rating Accuracy	97
Trained Raters	98
Thorough Performance Documentation	100
Providing Time to Observe Employee's Performance	102
Rater's Motivation and Ability to Rate	103
Opportunity for Advancement and Growth	107
Contextual Factors	109
Organizational Culture	110
Organizational Support	114
Situational Constraints	115
Politics in Performance Appraisal	118
<b>III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>121</b>
Introduction	121
Qualitative Research Approach	121
Design of the Study	124
Data Collection	126
Selection of Participants	127
Interviews	132
Language Used	138
Transcription	139



Researcher as The Research Instrument and Biases	140
Internal Validity and Reliability	142
Triangulation	142
Peer Reviewing	143
Members Check	143
Data Management and Analysis	144
Coding of Data	146
Data Analysis	147
Reporting Of Findings	149
Ethics in Qualitative Research	150
Confidentiality and Trust	150
Limitations of the Study	154
<b>IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS</b>	<b>156</b>
Introduction	156
Biographical Description of Research Participants	157
Overview of Participants' Perception toward Performance Appraisal	165
The Importance of Performance Appraisal	170
Elements in the Performance Appraisal System Associated with Academicians' Dissatisfaction	172
Performance Appraisal Use	173
Scope of Appraisal Use	173
Commitment on Developmental Use	175
Performance Standards	179
Clarity of Performance Standards	179
Consistency in Developing Standards	182
The Use of Performance Standards Guideline	185
Relevance of Performance Standards	187
Goals	188
Expected Goals	189
Supervisors Involvement	192
Feedback	197
Amount of Feedback	197
Substance in Feedback	200
Performance Rating	201
Appraisers Credibility	202
Ratings Consistency	204
Adjusting the Rating Scores	206
Rating Inflation	208
Rating Transparency	210
Opportunity to Discuss the Ratings	213
Competency of Appraisers	217
Appraiser Bias	219
Appraiser Decision Making Process	225



Appraiser Judgment	228
Appraiser Commitment	230
Adjusting to Constraint	232
Performance Documentation	234
Assessment Criteria	238
Relevancy of the Assessment Criteria	238
Nature of Weightage	241
Rewards	244
Quota System	245
Distribution of Reward	247
Implications Associated with Employee Dissatisfaction	
Towards Performance Appraisal	248
Motivation Towards Work	249
Job Withdrawal	253
Effectiveness Perception	254
Trust Towards Performance Appraisal	257
Enhancing Performance Appraisal Acceptance and Satisfaction	259
Introduction	259
Purpose of Performance Appraisal	261
Feedback	262
Content of Feedback	263
Effectiveness of Feedback	265
Frequency of Feedback	269
Credibility of Sources of Feedback	271
Criteria of Assessment	274
Development Specific Goals	277
Rating Accuracy	279
Transparency in the Appraisal Process	280
Fairness in Appraisal	283
Communicating Rating Procedures	285
Contextual Factors Associated with Academician's Acceptance and Satisfaction	287
Organization Commitment	287
Training for Raters	290
Training for Appraisee	292
Time Off	295
Trust on Employee	296
<b>V</b>	
<b>CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>309</b>
Conclusions	309
Implications	325
Recommendations	327



<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	355
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
A Letter to the Participant	378
B Interview Guide	379
C List of Codes and Categories	382
D Audit Trail	385
<b>BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR</b>	391

