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PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AS A PREDICTOR OF EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY: EVIDENCE FROM THE MALAYSIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

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Abstract:

Employee productivity is an important factor in determining organizational effectiveness, particularly in the public sector where employee performance contributes directly to the quality-of-service delivery. This study examines the relationship between performance appraisal practices and employee productivity, focusing on three dimensions which are appraisal accuracy, appraisal relevance, and appraisal fairness. A quantitative research design was employed, involving 127 civil servants selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire and analyzed using correlation and multiple regression analyses. The results show that appraisal accuracy, appraisal relevance, and appraisal fairness are significantly and positively associated with employee productivity. Multiple regression analysis indicates that the three appraisal dimensions collectively explain 93.9% of the variance in employee productivity, with appraisal fairness emerging as the strongest predictor. The findings highlight the importance of maintaining fair, accurate, and job-relevant appraisal practices and provide practical implications for strengthening performance management in the Malaysian public sector.

Keyword:

Appraisal Accuracy, Appraisal Relevance, Appraisal Fairness, Employee Productivity

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Introduction

Employee productivity is an important factor that contributes to organizational success, particularly in the public sector, where productivity is closely associated with the quality of public service delivery in Malaysia. Previous studies have identified several organizational and individual factors associated with employee productivity and performance, including work-life balance, job satisfaction, leadership style, and organizational commitment (Prompanyo et al., 2025; Mohd Jafri et al., 2024). These findings highlight the importance of creating a supportive workplace environment for employees. In addition, the effectiveness of public services is closely linked to employee performance. A positive working environment and organizational support may contribute to higher employee productivity and better service quality (Vemala Maduraiveeran & Abdul Lasi, 2020). Therefore, understanding the factors associated with employee productivity is important for strengthening organizational performance, particularly within the public sector.

Performance appraisal is an important human resource management tool that helps organizations evaluate employee performance, identify development needs, and support decisions on promotions and rewards (Mushtaq et al., 2025). Many companies, including global and international firms like Microsoft, have been implementing continuous feedback systems to enhance employee development and performance (Feature, 2024). Research in Malaysia also revealed that performance appraisal is positively related to satisfaction among employees, which is crucial in achieving organizational success (Bawazir et al., 2023). However, if there is an unfair performance appraisal system, it can have a negative impact on employee motivation, satisfaction, and productivity. If the appraisal systems are seen as unfair or biased, employees will not be engaged and motivated at work (Pauzi & Rahim, 2023). The Employee Performance Management System (EPMS), especially the Annual Performance Appraisal Report (LNPT) in the public sector, has been criticized on subjective, favouritism and inconsistent evaluation standards. The problems decrease confidence in the assessment system among workers and can diminish its positive effect on performance and organizational performance.

Public sector employee performance management system (EPMS) in Malaysia has a weakness in its effectiveness that comes from the problems in implementation. There are clear appraisal guidelines and procedures but not always adhered to by appraisers. The practices that are important to the process are often not followed, including setting goals, tracking progress and giving regular feedback, thus leaving evaluations at the end of the assessment period (Kamarudin, 2014). This can result in feelings of unfairness, decreased confidence in the appraisal system within the organization, and even a drop in employees' motivation and productivity. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between performance appraisal

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practices and employee productivity in the Malaysian public sector, focusing specifically on appraisal accuracy, appraisal relevance, and appraisal fairness.

Literature Review

Organizational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1987) explains how employees' perceptions of justice affect their attitudes, behaviour, and performance within an organization. The theory proposes that workers constantly assess their experiences of fair treatment at work, and these perceptions significantly influence their motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, and overall work performance. Fairness, from the employee's perspective, is manifested in three dimensions: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Greenberg, 1990; Colquitt, 2001). Distributive justice concerns the fairness of what employees receive, procedural justice addresses the fairness of how things are done, and interactional justice focuses on the fairness of how employees are treated and how communication occurs during the implementation of organizational procedures (Greenberg, 1990; Colquitt, 2001). These three dimensions offer a comprehensive understanding of how employees perceive the fairness of organizational practices, such as performance appraisal.

Appraisal accuracy, in the context of performance appraisal, refers to employees' belief that the appraisal accurately reflects their actual job performance, contributions, and accomplishments, thus promoting distributive justice. If performance ratings are based on actual performance, rather than biases or subjective judgments, employees are more likely to perceive that outcomes related to recognition, rewards, promotions, and career development are distributed. Consequently, employees tend to be more accepting of appraisal results, have greater trust in the appraisal process, and remain motivated to enhance their performance. However, if employees find that ratings are not objective or that scores do not truly reflect their work, they may become dissatisfied and feel unfairly treated, leading to decreased motivation and performance.

Appraisal relevance reflects the alignment between appraisal criteria and employees' job duties, responsibilities, and organizational goals. This is related to procedural justice, as employees believe the procedures for assessing performance are fair, consistent, and relevant to their work (Colquitt, 2001). The more employees feel the appraisal process is fair, the more likely they are to believe that the evaluation criteria adequately reflect their job performance and are applied to all employees. When appraisal criteria are relevant, uncertainty and perceptions of bias are minimized, helping employees understand how they are being assessed and what is expected of them. In turn, workers are more likely to accept the appraisal process and feel motivated to work harder, as they perceive the appraisal to be both fair and meaningful. Meanwhile, appraisal fairness encompasses the fairness and consistency of the appraisal process, the overall fairness of the appraisal results, and the distributive, procedural, and interactional justice of the appraisal process (Colquitt, 2001). This variable is most closely related to Organizational Justice Theory because it incorporates all three dimensions of justice. Employees want appraisal results to be fair (distributive justice), the appraisal process to be objective and consistently applied (procedural justice), and their supervisors to treat them respectfully, honestly, and transparently (interactional justice) (Greenberg, 1990; Colquitt, 2001). These expectations are met when the appraisal system is seen as credible and trustworthy, leading to higher organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and work motivation among employees.

Individuals who perceive the appraisal system as reliable, relevant, and equitable are more likely to have confidence in the organization, be more motivated to perform, possess positive work attitudes, and ultimately be more productive (Greenberg, 1990; Colquitt et al., 2001). Employees who are treated fairly may respond positively to organizational justice by reciprocating with increased commitment and performance, while those who are treated unfairly may respond negatively, resulting in decreased morale, motivation, and job performance. Therefore, Organizational Justice Theory effectively explains the influence of appraisal accuracy, appraisal relevance, and appraisal fairness on employee productivity. The theory supports the argument that when employees view the performance appraisal system as fair in outcomes, procedures, and interpersonal treatment, it serves as an appropriate framework for investigating the relationship between appraisal accuracy, appraisal relevance, appraisal fairness, and employee productivity.

Employee Productivity

Employee productivity is the effectiveness of employees in turning input (time, skills, and effort) into good outputs for the organization. In public and private services, it is a key measure of organizational performance, operational efficiency, and service quality (Ullah et al., 2021). Productivity is generally expressed at the national level as output per worker or output per hour worked (Department of Statistics Malaysia [DOSM], 2024) and is considered one of the dependent variables that can be used to assess the performance of the workforce and organizational efficiency (Journal of Academic Studies, 2025). The definition of employee productivity is how well, or effectively public servants do their jobs to ensure that they deliver high-quality products and services within acceptable time limits and make best use of the resources available.

Comparing productivity across countries and over time is a well-established measure for assessing labour efficiency from a global perspective (OECD, 2022). Previous research suggests that HR practices, organizational support, and employee well-being are significant factors in determining productivity (Ullah et al., 2021). This is especially true for Asia among public sector workers, where fairness perceptions, HR systems, and workplace support have been demonstrated to have a substantial impact on performance outcomes (Journal of Academic Studies, 2025). Empirical research also indicates that transparent and fair performance appraisal systems have a significant impact on productivity; for instance, research in public institutions in the United Arab Emirates revealed a 22% boost in productivity once the performance appraisal system was perceived as fair and relevant (Ouabi et al., 2024). The productivity of employees is also one of the indicators measured in public sector governance, where in 2023, the labour productivity recorded was RM 96,692 per employee, and in 2024 it increased by 2.4% (MPC, 2024; Human Resources Online, 2024). In general, the results obtained in this study indicate that organizational factors, specifically in the form of performance appraisal systems, have an important influence on the productivity of employees, which is why it was chosen as the dependent variable in this study.

Determinant of Performance Appraisal on Employee Productivity

Appraisal accuracy is the first factor, which indicates to what degree a score on a performance appraisal reflects an employee's actual job performance, as assessed against acceptable criteria, observable behaviours and measurable outcomes, and not on a basis of bias or personal opinion. Appraisal accuracy has been considered a key element of a credible appraisal system in the

performance management literature, such as Ghaleb and Yaslioglu (2023) argued that increasing appraisal accuracy would help improve the validity of HR decision-making, the reliability of appraisal feedback, and increase employee acceptance of appraisal results. Existing research highlights the importance of performance standards, evaluation processes, and procedures to reduce rater bias and rater-inconsistency in the process of making accurate appraisals. Furthermore, quantitative performance measures, multi-source feedback, and 360 appraisal systems have been proven to increase the correlation between performance measures and actual outcomes. The use of HR analytics and information systems has also been enhanced in recent years, which helps enhance the accuracy of appraisals by minimizing human errors and boosting data-driven decision-making (Jetir, 2025). In general, appraisal accuracy can become a major independent variable in this study because the lack of it can lead to a lack of employee trust and a decrease in the efficiency of performance management systems.

Appraisal relevance is the second factor that affects performance appraisal. It is the extent to which the criteria used in making performance appraisals are consistent with job tasks, organisation goals, or significant performance measures. It ensures that evaluations of employees are based on strategically important and job-related criteria and not on arbitrary or unrelated criteria, which improves the usefulness of the appraisal system. While not as common an idea as that of appraisal relevance as an independent construct, the literature highlights the need for consistency between appraisal criteria and job analysis and organizational objectives for meaningful appraisal (Roberts, 2003). If appraisal systems are deemed relevant, people are more likely to have a clear idea of what is being appraised, and to see the appraisal process positively to improve their performance and advance their careers. In addition, modern performance management systems focus increasingly on constant feedback and goal alignment and adaptation, making it ever more important to maintain the relevance of the appraisal system to new, changing organizational goals (Jetir, 2025). Thus, appraisal relevance is an important component of the clarity, usefulness, and developmental value of performance assessments.

The final one is appraisal fairness. This factor involves how employees perceive their performance measures and performance outcomes to be just, fair, and impartial. It is grounded in the theory of organizational justice, which contains three components: distributive justice (fairness of outcomes), procedural justice (fairness of processes), and interactional justice (fairness in interpersonal treatment in evaluation) (Abdullah & Malik, 2022). The studies carried out to date indicate that there is a high correlation between the perception of fairness of performance appraisals and the attitudes of employees, including satisfaction, trust, and acceptance of the results of the appraisal.

Appropriate appraisal practices can, for example, improve employee motivation and performance by fostering relationships between leaders and followers, which further promotes trust in leaders (Shah et al., 2024). Furthermore, appraisal fairness influences cognitive appraisal of the system as well as emotional and behavioural reactions like organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Jetir, 2025). As a result, the fairness of appraisal is seen to have a significant influence on employee reaction to performance management and is therefore treated as an independent variable in this study.

H1: Appraisal accuracy is positively associated with employee productivity.
H2: Appraisal relevance is positively associated with employee productivity.
H3: Appraisal fairness is positively associated with employee productivity.

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Figure 1 portrays the research model for this study.

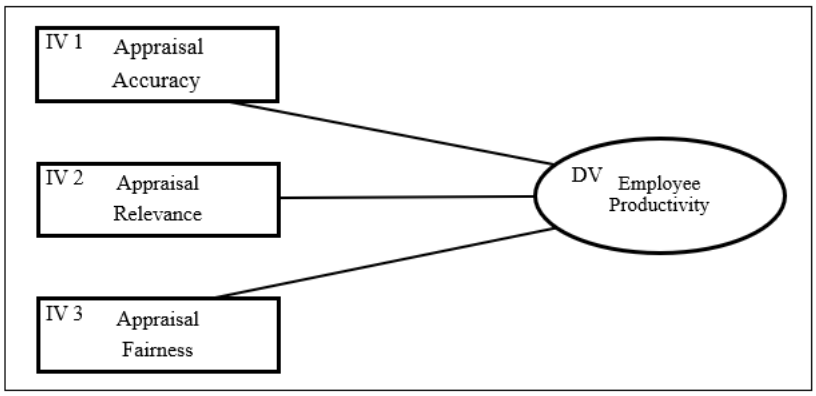


Figure 1: Research Model

Methodology

The study was conducted at the Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA), Malaysia. According to Kumar et al. (2013), sample size refers to the total number of respondents included in a study. A total of 127 civil servants participated in this study. The sample size was considered adequate based on the rule of thumb proposed by Roscoe (1975), which suggests that a sample size between 30 and 500 is appropriate for most behavioural research. In addition, the sample exceeded the minimum guideline for multivariate analysis, which recommends a sample size of at least 10 times the number of variables included in the analysis. As this study involved four variables, a minimum of 40 respondents was required; therefore, the sample of 127 respondents was considered sufficient for the statistical analyses conducted in this study.

Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire from 24 May 2026 to 5 June 2026. The study examined one dependent variable, employee productivity, and three independent variables: appraisal accuracy, appraisal relevance, and appraisal fairness. Before the main questionnaire was distributed, a pilot study was conducted to assess the reliability of the measurement scales. The pilot study results showed Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.967 for employee productivity, 0.942 for appraisal accuracy, 0.923 for appraisal relevance, and 0.928 for appraisal fairness. These values demonstrated high internal consistency, indicating that the measurement scales were reliable and that no items needed to be removed.

Following the pilot study, normality and reliability analyses were conducted using the main study data, and the results for all constructs are presented in Table 1. According to Pallant (2001), Cronbach's Alpha values below 0.6 indicate low reliability, values between 0.6 and 0.8 indicate moderate reliability, while values of 0.9 and above indicate high reliability. Normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis, with values between −2 and +2 for skewness and between −7 and +7 for kurtosis considered acceptable indicators of normality (Nawang & Shukri, 2024).

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Table 1: Results of Normality and Reliability Tests

Variables	Items	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's Alpha
Appraisal accuracy	C1. I am evaluated based on accurate and reliable performance data. C2. I am given appraisal ratings that accurately reflect my actual work performance. C3. I am assessed using clearly defined performance criteria. C4. I am evaluated by appraisers who have sufficient knowledge of my job responsibilities. C5. I am assessed using objective performance measures. C6. I am subject to appraisal decisions that are based on relevant evidence and documentation. C7. I am evaluated in a manner that minimizes personal bias. C8. I am rarely affected by errors in the performance appraisal process. C9. My appraisal rating accurately represents my job performance.	-0.712	-0.919	0.945
Appraisal relevance	D1. I am evaluated using appraisal criteria that align with my job duties. D2. I am assessed based on performance indicators that are relevant to my job position. D3. I am evaluated with emphasis on key work outcomes. D4. I am evaluated based on measures that assess skills required for my job. D5. I am assessed using performance indicators that are updated when my job roles change. D6. I am evaluated using appraisal criteria that support organizational objectives. D7. I am assessed through an appraisal system that reflects current work demands. D8. The appraisal criteria used are relevant to my job roles.	-0.589	-1.077	0.960

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Appraisal Fairness	E1. I am evaluated through a performance appraisal process that is fair. E2. I am evaluated equally with other employees. E3. I am assessed using performance standards that are applied consistently. E4. I am evaluated in a manner that is not influenced by personal relationships. E5. I am given the opportunity to express my views during the appraisal process. E6. I am subject to appraisal decisions that are transparent. E7. I am provided with feedback in a respectful manner. E8. I am allowed to request appeals or clarifications regarding appraisal decisions. E9. I am given appraisal outcomes that are properly justified. E10. The overall performance appraisal is fair.	-0.553	-1.348	0.942

Table 1 shows the normality and reliability test results of all variables, which are suitable to analyse using Pearson correlation and multiple regression. The results demonstrate that the data are slightly negatively skewed with a skewness value of -0.712 and a kurtosis value of -0.919 within the acceptable range of normal distribution. The Cronbach's alpha reliability is 0.945, which also indicates good internal consistency reliability for this construct.

Likewise, the skewness value for appraisal relevance is -0.589, and the kurtosis value is -1.077, both of which are within the normal range, indicating that the data are approximately normally distributed. The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.960 shows very high reliability, displaying high consistency among the measurement items. The skewness is -0.553 and the kurtosis is -1.348, indicating acceptable normality with no serious violations of distributional assumptions for appraisal fairness. Furthermore, the Cronbach's alpha is 0.942, which indicates a very good degree of consistency in the measurement scale. In general, all constructs are in an acceptable range of normality and high reliability, which means that the data obtained is appropriate and strong in further inferential analysis.

Findings

Demographic Profiles

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in the study. The demographic information includes gender, age, marital status, educational level,

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employment grade, length of service, employment status, monthly income range, and frequency of performance evaluations. The analysis was conducted to provide an overview of the respondents' backgrounds and to ensure that the sample adequately represents the target population.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Profile		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	49	38.6
	Female	78	61.4
Age	Below 30 years old	7	5.5
	30 – 39 years old	54	42.5
	40 – 49 years old	46	36.2
	50 – 59 years old	20	15.7
	60 years old	0	0
Marital Status	Single	19	15.0
	Married	108	85.0
	Divorced/Widowed	0	0
Highest Educational Level	SPM/STPM	30	23.6
	Diploma	70	55.1
	Bachelor's Degree	22	17.3
	Master's Degree	5	3.9
	PhD	0	0
Grade	N1	36	28.3
	N2	18	14.2
	N3	15	11.8
	N4	13	10.2
	N5	14	11.0
	N6	9	7.1
	N7	9	7.1
	N8	6	4.7
	N9	4	3.1
	N10	3	2.4
Length of Service in Public Sector	Less than 5 years	16	12.6
	5 – 10 years	44	34.6
	11 – 15 years	40	31.5
	16 – 20 years	15	11.8
	More than 20 years	12	9.4
Employment Status	Permanent	126	99.2
	Temporary	1	0.8
	Contract	0	0
Monthly Income Range	Below RM2,000	12	9.4
	RM2,001 – RM4,000	56	44.1
	RM4,001 – RM6,000	32	25.2

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	RM6,001 – RM8,000	17	13.4
	RM8,001 and above	10	7.9
How often do you receive performance evaluations?	Annually	127	100.0
	Twice a year	0	0
	Quarterly	0	0

As shown in Table 2, most respondents were female (n = 78, 61.4%), while male respondents accounted for 38.6% (n = 49). Most respondents were aged between 30 and 39 years (n = 54, 42.5%), followed by those aged 40 to 49 years (n = 46, 36.2%). Regarding marital status, most (n = 108, 85.0%) were married. As far as Education was concerned, the most common qualification was the Diploma (n = 70, 55.1%) followed by the bachelor's degree (n = 22, 17.3%). The highest number of respondents were in the N1 grade (n = 36, 28.3%) for employment grade. The majority of respondents worked for 5-10 years in the public sector (n = 44, 34.6%) and were permanent employees (n = 126, 99.2%). Additionally, the highest number of respondents of the sample were those who have monthly income between RM2,001 and RM4,000 (n = 56, 44.1%). All respondents indicated that they received performance evaluations annually (n = 127, 100.0%).

Mean Analysis

Mean analysis was conducted to determine the level of employee productivity among respondents. The interpretation of the mean scores was based on three categories: low (1.00–3.00), moderate (3.01–4.00), and high (4.01–5.00). Table 3 below presents the descriptive statistics of employee productivity.

Table 3: Employee Productivity

Items	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Level
B1. I am able to complete my assigned tasks within the specified time frame.	4.35	0.839	3	5	High
B2. I utilize my working hou effectively to accomplish n responsibilities.	4.35	0.839	3	5	High
B3. I consistently achieve the performance targets set for my job.	4.35	0.839	3	5	High
B4. I am able to manage my workload efficiently.	4.35	0.839	3	5	High
B5. I consistently produce work of high quality.	4.46	0.784	3	5	High
B6. I remain productive even when working under pressure.	4.35	0.839	3	5	High
B7. I am satisfied with my overall level of work productivity.	4.73	0.541	3	5	High

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Note: 1.00-3.00, low; 3.01-4.00, medium; 4.01-5.00, high.

As presented in Table 3, all items measuring employee productivity recorded high mean scores, indicating a high level of productivity among the respondents. The highest mean score was recorded for the item "I am satisfied with my overall level of work productivity" (M = 4.73, SD = 0.541), suggesting that respondents were highly satisfied with their overall work performance. This was followed by the item "I consistently produce work of high quality" (M = 4.46, SD = 0.784). Meanwhile, the items related to completing assigned tasks within the specified time frame, utilizing working hours effectively, achieving performance targets, managing workload efficiently, and remaining productive under pressure each recorded a mean score of 4.35. Overall, employee productivity was found to be at a high level, with an overall mean score of 4.42, indicating that respondents generally perceived themselves as productive employees.

Pearson Correlation

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the independent variables (appraisal accuracy, appraisal relevance, and appraisal fairness) and the dependent variable (employee productivity). According to Cohen (1988), correlation coefficients ranging from 0.50 to 1.00 indicate a strong relationship between variables. Table 4 presents the correlation analysis between performance appraisal dimensions and employee productivity.

Table 4: Correlation Analyses

		Employee Productivity
Appraisal accuracy	Pearson Correlation	0.911
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	127
Appraisal relevance	Pearson Correlation	0.908
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	127
Appraisal Fairness	Pearson Correlation	0.935
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	127

As presented in Table 4, all independent variables were found to have positive and statistically significant relationships with employee productivity. Among the variables, appraisal fairness demonstrated the strongest positive relationship with employee productivity ($r = 0.935$, $p < .001$), followed by appraisal accuracy ($r = 0.911$, $p < .001$) and appraisal relevance ($r = 0.908$, $p < .001$). The findings indicate that higher levels of appraisal accuracy, appraisal relevance, and appraisal fairness are associated with higher levels of employee productivity. Furthermore, all correlation coefficients exceeded 0.90, indicating very strong positive relationships between the variables. Therefore, all proposed hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) were supported.

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Multiple Regression

Multiple regression analysis was performed to determine how the three independent variables were related to employee productivity when considered simultaneously (Hoyt, 2006). This statistical technique also allows the contribution of each predictor to the variation in the dependent variable to be assessed (Sun, 2023). Before interpreting the regression results, multicollinearity among the predictors was examined because excessive intercorrelations between independent variables may affect the stability of regression estimates (Etaga, 2021). The diagnostic results showed VIF values between 3.938 and 5.193 and tolerance values between 0.193 and 0.254. Based on these values, multicollinearity was not regarded as a serious issue in the present model. The regression results for appraisal accuracy, appraisal relevance, and appraisal fairness in relation to employee productivity are reported in Table 5.

Table 5: Regression Analysis

	Beta (*β*)	**Sig. (*p*)**	**Tolerance**	**VIF**
Appraisal accuracy	0.353	0.001	0.254	3.938
Appraisal relevance	0.227	0.001	0.196	5.108
Appraisal Fairness	0.440	0.001	0.193	5.193
R^2	0.939			
Adjusted R^2	0.938			
F Change	634.825			
Sig.	0.001			

The regression results presented in Table 5 indicate that the three appraisal dimensions collectively accounted for 93.9% of the variation in employee productivity ($R^2 = .939$; Adjusted $R^2 = .938$). Although this indicates a substantial proportion of explained variance, the unusually high R^2 warrants careful interpretation. Such a result may be partly attributable to the strong relationships observed among appraisal accuracy, appraisal relevance, appraisal fairness, and employee productivity. The multicollinearity assessment produced tolerance values between .193 and .254, while the VIF values ranged from 3.938 to 5.193. These diagnostic values did not indicate a severe multicollinearity problem. However, because all variables were measured through self-reported responses collected within the same questionnaire and were strongly correlated, potential construct overlaps and common-method variance should be considered when interpreting the regression findings.

Discussion

The findings revealed strong and statistically significant relationships between all three dimensions of performance appraisal and employee productivity. The correlation coefficients ranged from .908 to .935, indicating that employees who perceived the appraisal system as more accurate, relevant, and fair also tended to report higher levels of productivity. Rather than viewing performance appraisal merely as an administrative exercise, these results suggest that employees' perceptions of how they are assessed may be closely connected to their workplace outcomes. This finding is consistent with evidence from the Malaysian public sector showing that positive performance appraisal practices are associated with organisational justice and improved work performance (Pauzi & Baba Rahim, 2023). More broadly, effective

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performance management practices can provide employees with clearer expectations and feedback that support individual performance (Aguinis, 2019; Noe et al., 2021).

Among the three appraisal dimensions, appraisal fairness recorded the strongest relationship with employee productivity ($r = .935$, $p < .001$) and made the largest contribution in the regression model ($\beta = .440$, $p < .001$). This finding provides empirical support for the relevance of Organizational Justice Theory in explaining employees' responses to performance appraisal. The theory proposes that employees evaluate not only the outcomes they receive but also the procedures and interpersonal treatment involved in organizational decisions (Greenberg, 1987, 1990; Colquitt et al., 2001). In a performance appraisal context, employees may therefore respond more positively when evaluation procedures are perceived as consistent, impartial, and transparent. Recent empirical evidence similarly demonstrates that performance appraisal justice is positively associated with employee job performance through mechanisms such as work engagement and organizational identification (Lyu et al., 2023). Research within a Malaysian government agency has also demonstrated the importance of organisational justice in connecting appraisal practices with work-related outcomes (Pauzi & Baba Rahim, 2023). Thus, the present finding reinforces the importance of fairness as an integral element of an appraisal system rather than simply an outcome of the evaluation process.

Appraisal accuracy was also strongly associated with employee productivity ($r = .911$, $p < .001$) and remained a significant predictor when the three appraisal dimensions were considered simultaneously ($\beta = .353$, $p < .001$). Employees who believe that their ratings accurately represent their actual contributions may be more willing to accept appraisal outcomes because the evaluation is perceived as credible and reflective of their work. Conversely, inaccurate assessments may create doubts about the legitimacy of appraisal decisions and reduce employees' confidence in the evaluation process. Earlier performance appraisal research has emphasized the importance of credible and accurate assessment in influencing employee responses to performance feedback (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Fletcher, 2001). More recent evidence also suggests that employees' perceptions of appraisal accuracy are influenced by factors such as evaluator competence, clearly communicated performance standards, and opportunities to challenge evaluations considered inaccurate or unfair (Iqbal et al., 2021). Therefore, the present results suggest that ensuring appraisal ratings correspond with employees' actual performance may contribute to a more credible assessment process and more positive employee outcomes.

A similar pattern emerged for appraisal relevance, which was positively correlated with employee productivity ($r = .908$, $p < .001$) and remained statistically significant in the regression model ($\beta = .227$, $p < .001$). This indicates that productivity tends to be higher when employees perceive appraisal criteria as closely connected to their actual duties and responsibilities. Evaluation criteria that correspond with job requirements can help employees understand which aspects of their work are being assessed and what standards they are expected to achieve. Roberts (2003) emphasized that meaningful performance appraisal depends partly on the connection between appraisal practices and employees' work, while Cardy and Dobbins (1994) highlighted the importance of job-related criteria in performance evaluation. Evidence from public-sector employees further indicates that characteristics of performance goals are associated with employees' perceptions of appraisal fairness, reinforcing the importance of clearly defined and meaningful performance expectations within appraisal systems (Choi et al., 2022). In this respect, appraisal relevance may contribute to productivity by making the

evaluation process more understandable and directly applicable to employees' day-to-day responsibilities.

Taken together, the findings indicate that appraisal accuracy, relevance, and fairness are all significantly associated with employee productivity, although fairness made the largest contribution in the regression model. The results therefore support the application of Organizational Justice Theory to the performance appraisal context, particularly in explaining why employees' perceptions of equitable evaluation procedures and outcomes matter for work-related responses. This interpretation is also consistent with contemporary evidence showing that justice perceptions within performance appraisal are associated with job performance, engagement, satisfaction, and other employee outcomes (Lyu et al., 2023; Pauzi & Baba Rahim, 2023). Accordingly, organizations may benefit from designing appraisal practices that combine equitable treatment with credible assessment and job-related evaluation criteria. Such practices may strengthen employees' acceptance of the appraisal process while creating conditions that are more supportive of employee productivity.

Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between performance appraisal practices and employee productivity among civil servants at JPA. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between appraisal accuracy, appraisal relevance, appraisal fairness, and employee productivity, with appraisal fairness emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings indicate that positive perceptions of appraisal accuracy, relevance, and fairness are associated with higher levels of employee productivity. The study contributes to the literature on performance appraisal in the Malaysian public sector by highlighting the importance of accurate, relevant, and fair appraisal practices. Practically, managers and policymakers should strengthen these aspects of performance appraisal systems to support employee productivity. Nevertheless, this study was limited to civil servants at JPA and employed a cross-sectional research design, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other public sector organizations. The exceptionally high explanatory power of the regression model ($R^2 = .939$) should also be interpreted cautiously, as the use of self-reported data collected through a single questionnaire may introduce common-method variance or reflect conceptual overlap among the appraisal constructs. Future studies should therefore include larger and more diverse samples, employ longitudinal designs and multiple data sources, and conduct additional construct-validity assessments to verify the robustness of these relationships.

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