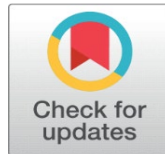


AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS' SATISFACTION WITH THE PERSONNEL APPRAISAL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

The high volumes of change in the higher education sector have seen the personnel appraisal systems rise to the forefront to measure the performance of the faculty and as a means of accountability, quality and institutional effectiveness. Such systems are however highly reliant on how the faculty perceives fairness, transparency and quality of feedbacks to be effective. The aim of the research is to assess the level of satisfaction of university teachers to personnel appraisal systems and gauge the influence of the perception of fairness and quality of feedback on the level of satisfaction. A descriptive, analytical and quantitative study design was adhered to. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 5 points Likert scale to collect data on 100 university teachers (Assistant and Associate Professors). Reliability was checked using Cronbachs Alpha (0.82). Data analysis was done using the descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, t-tests. The outcomes indicate that the faculty members are fairly satisfied (Mean = 3.2). When it comes to analyzing the correlation, it can be stated that it is true that fairness and satisfaction exhibit a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.68$), followed by feedback quality ($r = 0.55$), and transparency ($r = 0.45$). Regression analysis reveals that fairness ($\beta = 0.45$), feedback quality ($\beta = 0.30$) and transparency ($\beta = 0.22$) are best predictors. In addition, the level of satisfaction among Associate Professors was significantly higher as compared to the Assistant Professors. The study finds that there is a possibility of enhancing teacher satisfaction and overall effectiveness of the appraisal system in higher education through greater fairness, transparency and feedback.

Keywords: Equity, Feedback Quality, Higher Education, System Appraisal Personnel, Satisfaction of Teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

The modern academic environment is experiencing a surge of change that is propelled by globalization, technology development and growing expectations of accountability and quality assurance in higher education institutions (Rehman, 2025). Universities have ceased to be regarded as mere knowledge dissemination institutions but are now seen as performance oriented institutions that are supposed to portray quantifiable results in teaching, research and social interactions. Against this changing environment, the personnel appraisal systems have become one of the most important tools of assessing and improving the performance of the faculty. These systems are intended to make systematic evaluation of various aspects of academic duties such as instructional performance, research performance,

administrative performance, and professional development activities. Appraisal systems are intended to promote the culture of excellence, efficiency and continuous improvement by ensuring that individual performance is aligned to the institutional goals (Johnsrud and Rosser 2002).

Across the world, universities have formalized organized evaluation systems like Annual Performance Appraisal Reports (APAR), Academic Performance Indicators (API) and performance-based reward systems. The objectives of these tools are to guarantee objectivity, standardization and transparency in performance evaluation (Broadbent, 2007). In addition, they are administrative like promotion, tenure increment, salary increment and academic achievement recognition. Nevertheless, other than their administrative value, appraisal systems are also developmental because they enable the faculty members to receive feedback, the areas to improve, as well as motivate them to develop professionally. As such, the success of such systems is not only to do with the way in which they are designed but also to do with the way in which they are implemented and the way they are viewed by the stakeholders involved (Blackmore, 2009).

A perception of the faculty members about the fairness, transparency, and usefulness of the appraisal systems is one of the most important factors affecting the success of the appraisal systems. A number of factors such as the clarity of evaluation criteria, the consistency of their implementation, objectivity of the people performing the evaluation and the relevance of performance indicators to the actual academic work shape faculty perception (Colquitt et al., 2001). The educators will be more willing to accept the results of the evaluation and to make constructive use of the feedback when they believe that the appraisal system is fair and transparent. Quite the contrary, when appraisal systems are viewed as discriminatory, untransparent, or too strict, they may cause dissatisfaction, resistance, and decreased involvement of the faculty members (DeNisi and Smith 2014).

In higher education, one of the critical elements of organizational effectiveness is teacher satisfaction. Faculty who are satisfied are more likely to be more motivated, committed and productive thus leading to better student achievement and institutional success (Gibbs, 2010). Intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as recognition, professional autonomy, work environment and evaluation practices affect satisfaction. Among them, appraisal systems are of great importance since they have a direct influence on the career development, professional identity, and perceived organizational support. An effective appraisal system can serve as a motivational instrument by rewarding performance and giving constructive feedback, and a poorly-constructed appraisal system can cause stress, dissatisfaction, and disengagement (Cropanzano et al., 2007).

The academic work in the context of higher education presents another dimension of pressure on performance appraisal. Academic professions unlike most other professions entail a mix of teaching, research, and service each having its own evaluation criteria and performance indicators. An example of such aspects is teaching effectiveness which can be hard to measure and may not be sufficiently measured by student evaluations alone (Hicks et al., 2015). On the same note, the most common metrics of research productivity are publications and citations, which might not represent the best or the most significant scholarly work. Administrative work and work within the community are also a part of academic work, frequently being underrated in appraisal systems. The imbalance may result in the skewed emphasis on measurable results compromising the holism in academic performance.

Feedback quality is another critical aspect of appraisal systems. Feedback acts as a mediator between assessment and enhancement so that the members of the faculty can know what their strong points are and what they need to improve. Feedback must be effective and timely, specific, constructive and actionable (Ilgen et al., 1979). Many institutions, however, have weak or no feedback mechanisms, which restricts the developmental potential of the appraisal systems. Members of the faculty usually complain about generic or slow feedback that cannot offer any valuable feedback on how to improve. Such inefficient feedback not only decreases the level of satisfaction but it also decreases the believability of the appraisal process (Rehman, 2025).

In creating the faculty perceptions of appraisal systems, transparency is also vital. Clear communication of evaluation criteria, processes and outcomes results in transparent systems, which have less ambiguity and engender trust. Absence of transparency, however, may cause feelings of favoritism, inconsistency and prejudice. In most instances, faculty members have not been well informed about the process of their performance evaluation or promotions and rewards. Such obscurity may generate confusion and discontent, eventually influencing morale and commitment to an organization (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Another important determinant of the effectiveness of the appraisal system is fairness, which is usually described in the context of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. Distributive fairness is the perceived equity of the

results, procedural fairness is associated with the fairness of the evaluation process, and interactional fairness is a quality of the treatment of others in the process of appraisals. Faculty members would feel more inclined to accept evaluation results and to remain determined to organizational objectives when they think that appraisal systems are just in these dimensions (Blackmore, 2009). On the other hand, the perception of unfairness may cause negative attitudes, lack of motivation and withdrawal behaviors.

Although appraisal systems have been widely adopted in higher education, there are a number of challenges. Some of the problems that have been pointed out through studies include over-reliance on quantitative measures, insensitivity to context, bureaucratic entanglements and poor sensitivity of disciplinary differences (Hagedorn, 2000). As an example, publication standards can unequally impact faculty in fields where research output is less common or where it has less frequent forms. Likewise, teaching-intensive jobs might not be appropriately rewarded within the research-based systems. These restrictions put some serious questions on the validity and fairness of current appraisal systems.

In addition, differences in academic rank and experience can also be a factor in faculty perception of appraisal systems. Assistant Professors are more likely to view appraisal systems as a way to grow and develop, but they might also feel more pressure and uncertainty, as they are in the beginning of their careers (Gupta and Sharma 2016). On the other hand, the Associate Professors might be subjected to other expectations and experiences which will affect their level of satisfaction. These differences are important to understand how to design appraisal systems to address the various needs of the faculty members (Colquitt et al., 2001).

The Indian higher education scenario is no exception to this trend, with the introduction of appraisal systems like API scores by the regulatory bodies that have played a major role in influencing the faculty evaluation practices. Although these systems have helped in standardization and accountability, they have also been criticized to promote a culture of publish or perish and do not focus on the qualitative nature of teaching and research. In addition, institutional differences, regional variations, and resource limitations also make the appraisal systems implementation more complex, especially in the developing regions (Greenberg, 1986).

With these complexities, there is an increased demand to conduct empirical studies to analyze faculty satisfaction with appraisal systems, and also to determine the most significant factors that affect their perceptions. The perception of fairness, transparency, and quality of feedback by faculty members can be a useful source of information to enhance the appraisal practices. This kind of research is especially relevant in regional settings where there has been less research done and where institutional issues might vary as compared to the more developed fields.

The study is thus relevant in filling these gaps by examining the level of satisfaction of university teachers with the personnel appraisal systems. The study will offer a thorough insight on the factors that drive satisfaction by concentrating on such critical dimensions as fairness, transparency, and the quality of feedbacks. The results are likely to add to the body of literature on human resource management and organizational behavior in higher education, as well as provide some practical implications to policymakers and institutional leaders.

Finally, the success of appraisal systems is based on their capacity to balance accountability and development, standardization and flexibility, and quantitative and qualitative information. When institutions manage to establish fair, transparent, and conducive appraisal systems, there are more chances of a motivated and committed faculty, which will positively impact on the overall performance of the institution. This research paper aims at contributing towards this goal by offering evidence-based suggestions to how appraisal can be enhanced in the higher education field.

1.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the level of satisfaction among university teachers regarding personnel appraisal systems.
- To examine the influence of perceived fairness and feedback quality on teacher satisfaction.

1.2. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- H₁: Perceived fairness of the appraisal system has a significant positive effect on teacher satisfaction.
- H₂: Feedback quality significantly influences the level of teacher satisfaction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. STUDIES ON JOB SATISFACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The idea of job satisfaction has been widely researched within the fields of organizational and educational research, with job satisfaction being identified as a positive emotional state that is a consequence of the assessment of workplace or working experiences (Locke, 1976). Teaching autonomy, research opportunities, institutional support, recognition, and work environment are intrinsic and extrinsic factors known to improve job satisfaction in higher education (Spector, 1997; Oshagbemi, 2000). There is empirical evidence that faculty members indicate greater satisfaction when there is a greater autonomy of the profession and when institutional policies are supportive of career growth and academic freedom. Indicatively, Oshagbemi (2000) established that academic rank, experience, and intrinsic motivators like achievement and recognition are important factors in job satisfaction among university teachers.

2.2. PERSONNEL APPRAISAL SYSTEM RESEARCH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

University personnel appraisal systems have developed into formal structures to review faculty performance on the aspect of teaching, research and service. They also serve to evaluate previous performance but also to develop further and to coordinate individual input with institutional goals (Aguinis, 2013; Armstrong, 2014). Normally, most appraisal systems have various dimensions like teaching effectiveness, research production, administration, and involvement in community. Nevertheless, the success of such depends considerably on design, clarity and implementation. In the article by DeNisi and Murphy (2017), it was emphasized that despite the fact that appraisal systems have continued to improve, the problems of subjectivity and consistency still exist. Brown, Hyatt, and Benson (2010) also noted that communication process, participation and fairness in administration play a significant role in how employees perceive appraisal systems.

2.3. TEACHER SATISFACTION AND TEACHER APPRAISAL SYSTEMS STUDIES

An emerging literature highlights the connection between teacher satisfaction and teacher appraisal systems, which implies that faculty views rest on equity, openness, explicitness of evaluation standards, and the effectiveness of feedback. Colquitt et al. (2013) proved that the attitude and satisfaction of employees are greatly dependent on organizational justice and especially procedural and distributive fairness. Scholarly, Erdogan (2002) established that the perceptions of fairness in performance appraisal are directly connected with the acceptance of the results of the evaluation, and the general satisfaction. DeNisi and Pritchard (2006) contended that appraisal systems are best suited when they offer developmental and constructive feedback but not the evaluative judgments. Conversely, Murphy (2020) and Daley (2017) stated that biased or over bureaucratic appraisal systems, as well as those that heavily emphasize quantitative measures, may have a detrimental impact on faculty morale and motivation.

2.4. RESEARCH ON FACTORS AFFECTING SATISFACTION WITH APPRAISAL SYSTEMS

2.4.1. FAIRNESS

Fairness has always been a pivotal factor that has led to satisfaction with appraisal systems. Workers want appraisals that are objective, fair and consistent. Colquitt et al. (2013) highlighted that perceptions of procedural fairness are a major boost to satisfaction and commitment to the organization.

2.4.2. TRANSPARENCY

Openness in appraisal activities entails effective communication of evaluation criteria, processes and results. Brown et al. (2010) discovered that transparency enhances trust in the appraisal systems and also enhances employee acceptance of the appraisal outcome.

2.4.3. FEEDBACK MECHANISM

Feedback is important in enhancing employee performance and satisfaction. Aguinis (2013) noted that effective feedback is timely and constructive and helps employees understand where they need improvement and increases their commitment to the organization.

2.4.4. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

The applicability and understandability of performance indicators has a great influence on the level of satisfaction. In academic work environments, where the qualitative contribution of the teaching performance or research impact cannot be easily measured, ambiguous or inflexible criteria may decrease satisfaction. According to Judge et al. (2001), satisfaction is greatly determined by the perception employees have about the fit between their efforts and evaluation criteria.

2.5. RESEARCH GAP

Although there is a plethora of research on job satisfaction and job performance appraisal, a significant gap in research on university teachers, specifically in developing countries, exists. The existing literature is heavily focused on the corporate or public sector settings, with little consideration given to the specifics of academic work and evaluation systems. In addition, comparative studies between the ranks of the academia like the Assistant Professors and the Associate professors are quite few. This absence of targeted empirical data identifies the necessity of additional studies that investigate the contentment of faculty members with appraisal systems, considering institutional and contextual differences. The current research seeks to fill this gap by offering the empirical evidence on the predictors of teacher satisfaction in the higher education.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study includes:

1) Independent Variables:

- Fairness
- Transparency
- Feedback quality
- Performance criteria

2) Dependent Variable:

- Teacher satisfaction

3) Control Variables:

- Age
- Gender
- Experience
- Designation

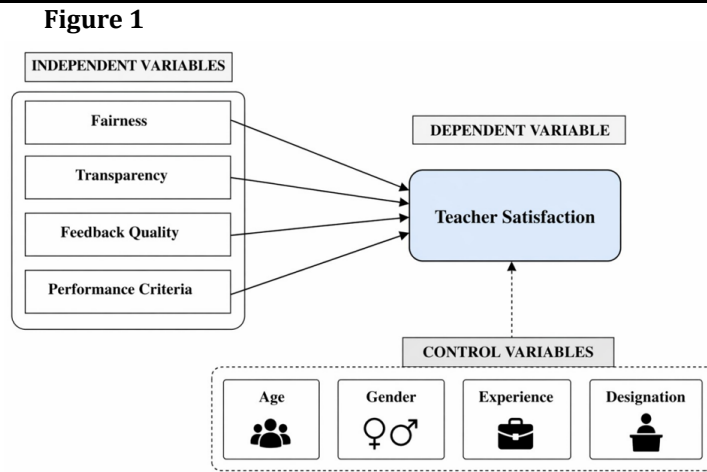


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research design is quantitative, descriptive, and analytical research to explore the satisfaction of university teachers with the personnel appraisal system. The sample will consist of 100 university professors (Assistant and Associate) who will be picked through a stratified sampling method to guarantee they will represent both categories adequately. It was found that a study of primary data was conducted using a structured questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale, and secondary data was conducted with the help of relevant journals, books, and academic reports. The tool has been created in a way that it comprises three significant parts: demographic data of the interviewees, the impressions about the appraisal system, and the general level of satisfaction. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which gave a Cronbachs Alpha of 0.82, which results in high internal consistency whereas the content validation was done by experts. Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, using such measures as mean and standard deviation, correlation analysis, regression analysis and t-tests to analyse the relationship and differences between variables.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The population characteristics of respondents are well balanced and significant representation of the faculty members of two main academic ranks. Most of the participants (60%), were Assistant Professors, and 40% were Associate Professors. This distribution indicates that both the early and mid-career faculty members were well represented, thus enabling the study to encompass a variety of perspectives in the academic hierarchy. The marginally greater number of Assistant Professors could also be a sign of greater involvement or accessibility of junior faculty in giving feedback on appraisal systems, which are frequently more instrumental to their career advancement. Regarding the years of teaching experience, respondents had a range of between 2 and 20 years. This broad range is especially notable, as it included the voices of relatively new members of the profession, and more seasoned educators. Less experienced faculty can be more concerned with aspects of the appraisal system like clarity, fairness, and guidance, whereas long time faculty can be more concerned with aspects like transparency, consistency, and career impact.

Table 1

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 100)			
Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Designation	Assistant Professor	60	60%
	Associate Professor	40	40%
Teaching Experience	2-5 years	25	25%
	6-10 years	30	30%
	11-15 years	20	20%

16-20 years 25 25%

Figure 2

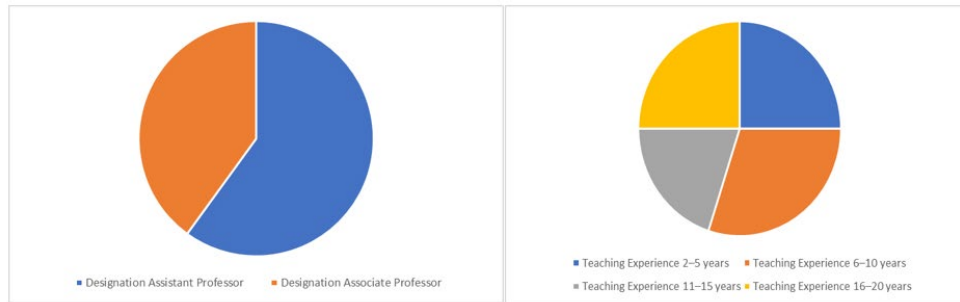


Figure 2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

5.2. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Descriptive analysis reveals that the general level of satisfaction of university teachers with the system of personnel appraisal is average as shown by a mean score of 3.2 in a 5-point Likert scale. This observation indicates that the members of the faculty are neither very satisfied nor entirely dissatisfied, and the suggestion is that they have a system that works reasonably, but is not effective in a number of areas that are very vital. The mediocre score indicates that there are specific areas where it should be improved to increase its credibility and acceptance among teachers. Looking at particular dimensions, fairness was rated as moderate as well, which presupposes that the certain levels of objectivity are rather observed, but the concerns about the objectivity of judgments remain. Transparency was rated relatively lower, between low and moderate, and this means that respondents feel unclear with regard to evaluation criteria, procedures and decision making processes. In addition, feedback mechanisms turned out to be one of the most important areas of concern, with relatively lower scores. This implies that teachers might not be getting a timely, constructive, and actionable feedback, which is critical to boosting their professional growth, performance, and, generally, satisfaction with the appraisal system.

Table 2

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables		
Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Fairness	3.3	0.72
Transparency	2.95	0.68
Feedback Quality	2.8	0.75
Overall Satisfaction	3.2	0.7

Figure 3



Figure 3 Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

5.3. CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The correlation analysis shows that there is a strong and significant correlation between major dimensions of the appraisal system and the overall faculty satisfaction. Perceived fairness and satisfaction were found to be strongly related ($r = 0.68$) meaning that, the greater the perceived fairness, the greater the satisfaction was among university teachers. This indicates that faculty members who have the perception that the appraisal process is fair, fair and grounded on objective grounds would tend to have trust in the system and would react favorably to the system. This strong correlation underscores that fairness could be an important factor that defines positive attitudes toward performance evaluation practices. Moreover, the quality of feedback had a moderate positive relationship with satisfaction ($r = 0.55$). This means that although effective and constructive feedback plays an important role towards enhancing the level of satisfaction, the impact that it has is not as strong as fairness. However, timely, specific, and developmental feedback is still a crucial element, as it will assist faculty in becoming aware of their performance, areas to develop, and in accordance with the requirements of the institution.

Table 3

Table 3 Correlation Matrix				
Variables	Fairness	Transparency	Feedback	Satisfaction
Fairness	1			
Transparency	0.52	1		
Feedback Quality	0.48	0.5	1	
Satisfaction	0.68**	0.45**	0.55**	1

Figure 4

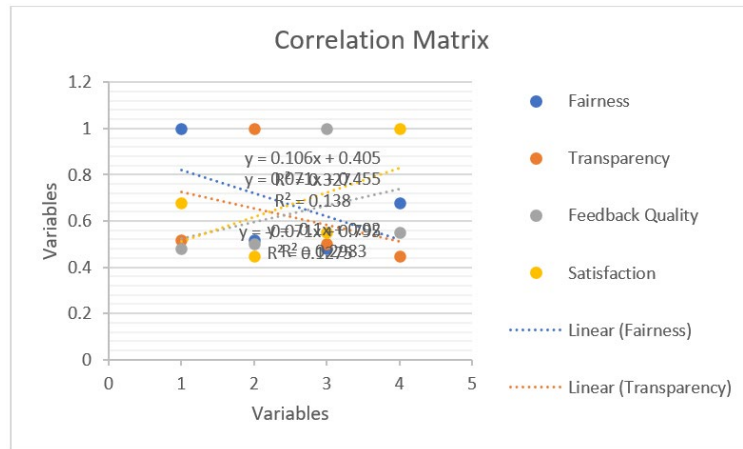


Figure 4 Correlation Matrix

5.4. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The regression analysis gives a more in-depth understanding of the relative effects of various factors on the satisfaction of teachers as it determines fairness as the most important predictor, then the quality of feedback, and the quality of transparency. This shows that of all the variables which have been studied, fairness has the most effective influence on how the faculty members perceive and react to the personnel appraisal system. In practice, the overall satisfaction with the system rises significantly when teachers think that the evaluations are done in an impartial, consistent, and on clear and objective grounds. Even though the quality of feedback and transparency were also identified as statistically significant predictors, their impact is not as strong as that of fairness. This implies that constructive feedbacks and effective communication of evaluation processes, though important, might not be sufficient to counter-balance perceived biases or lack of consistency in the system. The results highlight that fairness is the basis of successful appraisal system which determines trust and acceptance among the faculty members. Hence, working on

making the process more objective, less subjective, and treating individuals equally when it comes to gradings are most likely to produce the greatest changes in the overall teacher satisfaction.

Table 4

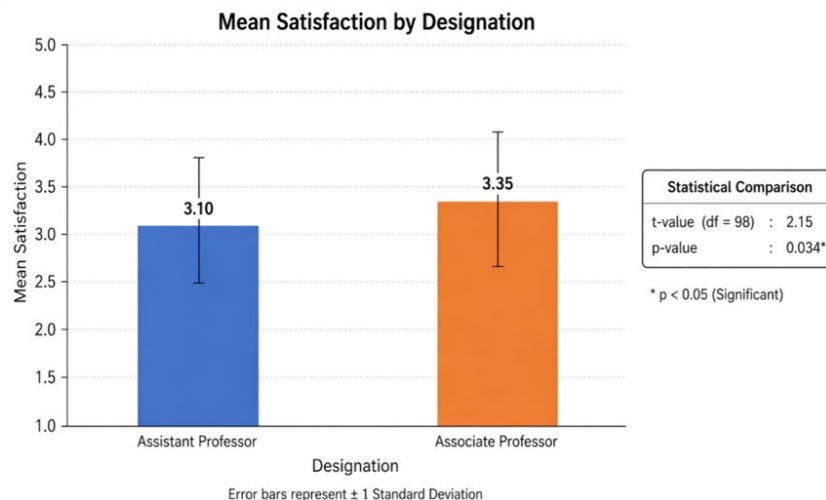
Table 4 Regression Analysis (Dependent Variable: Satisfaction)				
Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	Standard Error	t-value	Significance (p-value)
Fairness	0.45	0.08	5.62	0.000**
Feedback Quality	0.3	0.07	4.28	0.001**
Transparency	0.22	0.09	2.44	0.016*

5.5. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The comparative research on Assistant and Associate Professor shows that there is a significant difference in the extent of satisfaction with personnel appraisal system with the Associate Professor reporting a little more satisfaction. This difference can be attributed to a number of factors. Associate Professors generally have more teaching and administrative experience and this can help them in their knowledge on evaluation processes and criteria. They may also have more positive views about the system due to longer working experience at the institution that may cause them to be more familiar with the appraisal norms and expectations. Conversely, Assistant Professors are relatively new in their career, and might feel more uncertain or see inconsistencies in the appraisal process. They tend to rely more on the results of appraisal to secure a career growth, promotion and job security and this makes them more sensitive to the perceived weaknesses of the system. Notably, the statistical significance of the difference in the level of satisfaction was established and the significance of academic designation in forming the perceptions of the appraisal practices was proved. This observation highlights the importance of institutions to implement more accommodating and transparent strategies that are responsive to early-career faculty, whereby Assistant Professors feel fairly rated, well-advised, and professionally nurtured in the appraisal system.

Table 5

Table 5 Comparison of Satisfaction by Designation (t-test)				
Designation	Mean Satisfaction	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Assistant Professor	3.1	0.68		
Associate Professor	3.35	0.72	2.15	0.034*

Figure 5**Figure 5** Comparison of Satisfaction by Designation

6. CONCLUSION

The present study finds that university teachers are quite content with the personnel appraisal system, which implies that the system is not inappropriate; it only requires a lot of improvement to be more efficient and acceptable. The findings suggest that fairness is the most significant factor that affects teacher satisfaction, followed by the quality of feedback, and transparency. Once the appraisal systems are perceived to be objective, unbiased and used in a uniform way, the faculty members will respond positively. It is also discovered that there is an issue of feedback mechanism that is still of concern as most of the respondents reported that they were not able to receive feedback in time, constructive feedback, and actionable feedback. Similarly, the absence of transparency in the assessment criteria and decision-making processes contribute to uncertainty and distrust in the decision taken by the faculty members. The comparative analysis also reveals that the perceptions are also determined by experience and knowledge of institutional systems, which means that the perceptions of the Association professors are also more comparable than the perceptions of the Assistant professors. Overall, the paper shows the significance of the appraisal system to strike a balance between accountability and the developmental support. The improvement of fairness, communication, and feedback is recommended to allow companies to build higher levels of satisfaction. This way, universities will be able to support the motivation of the faculty, professional growth and ultimately improve institutional performance and scholastic excellence.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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