

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM AND  
EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN  
PALESTINE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfilment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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December 2023

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The Performance Appraisal System (PAS) plays a key role in the overall success of an organization. An appropriate PAS has the potential to increase employee satisfaction at work. When employees are satisfied with the PAS they tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. This study aims to demonstrate the level of practices and the characteristics of the Performance Appraisal System, characterize the level of employee satisfaction in the workplace, and understand the relationship between the PAS and employee's Job Satisfaction in Palestine's Higher Education Institutions. This research will have a significant impact on advocating to the Ministry of Higher Education to encourage all higher education institutions to develop a uniquely tailored appraisal performance model that meets their specific needs. Also, the study is expected to contribute to the development of higher education institutions by paving the way for improved services to students and society at large. Furthermore, the study identified several key factors that contribute to a successful appraisal system in the Palestinian context.

The study involved 370 employees selected through convenience sampling in Palestinian higher education institutions. Employing a quantitative approach, the research utilized descriptive statistics, non-parametric tests, and multiple linear regression for analysis. The data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between Performance Appraisal System (PAS) traits—precisely, clarity, trust, two-way communication, and fairness—and employee job satisfaction. Clarity, trust, and fairness positively correlated with job satisfaction, whereas two-

way communication showed a statistically significant negative relationship. Additionally, the study identified substantial gender-based disparities in job satisfaction among the participants.

***Keywords:***

Human Resources, Palestine, Higher Education, Performance Appraisal, Appraisal System, Evaluation, Job Satisfaction.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am profoundly grateful to my esteemed supervisor, Dr. John Lipinski, whose invaluable guidance, unwavering support, and scholarly expertise have profoundly shaped the outcome of this doctoral journey. His mentorship has been pivotal in the development of this work.

My sincere appreciation extends to my esteemed committee members, Dr. Joseph Rosendale and Dr. Stephen Shiring, for their insightful feedback, constructive criticism, and unwavering dedication to upholding the quality of my research.

I hold deep gratitude for my late dad and late mom, whose unwavering belief in education and continual support continue to guide me even in their absence. Your investment in my education remains the cornerstone of my success.

To my beloved husband and sons, your unwavering patience, understanding, and love have served as my pillars of strength throughout this challenging yet rewarding process. Your sacrifices and encouragement have been the driving force behind my unwavering dedication. I am indebted to my family for their enduring support and encouragement, serving as a constant source of motivation. I am grateful for the love and understanding that you have provided every step of the way. Special gratitude is extended to my sisters, brothers, and my beloved mother-in-law.

Finally, to my friends, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support, understanding, and encouragement throughout the highs and lows of this academic pursuit. Your presence has made this journey all the more memorable and fulfilling.

Thank you all for your unwavering support.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving globalized world, the intersection of job satisfaction and effective performance appraisal systems (PAS) remains a pivotal concern for businesses and institutions. For Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), this concern becomes even more significant as they bear the responsibility of shaping the future workforce and intellectual growth. Within this context, the current dissertation delves deep into the intricate relationship between Performance Appraisal (PA) and job satisfaction of the employees within Palestinian HEIs, particularly in the unique socio-cultural environment of Palestinian HEIs. Through a meticulous exploration of literature, the author identifies an evident gap in research regarding the correlation between PAS characteristics - namely Clarity, Fairness, Two-way communication, Trust in supervisor - and Employee job satisfaction within the Palestinian academic sector. By highlighting the potential implications for policy-making, institutional growth, and societal benefit, this chapter not only underlines the importance of understanding this relationship but also sets the stage for rigorous empirical examination in the subsequent sections.

Therefore, in this chapter, the author embarks on a comprehensive exploration of a critical issue within the chosen field. The author begins by providing the background of the study, shedding light on the context and history that has led to this research endeavor. After establishing the underpinnings, a clear problem statement is presented, articulating the specific challenge or gap in knowledge that motivates this investigation. This is complemented by an establishment of research objectives, research questions, and hypotheses, outlining the direction and purpose of the inquiry. The author then navigates through the nature and significance of the study, demonstrating its potential contributions and relevance to both academia and practice.

Moreover, while trying to underscore the tangible impact of this investigation, insights into the research justification are provided, emphasizing its importance in addressing real-world issues in the Palestinian academic sector. Recognizing the importance of reflexivity in academic research, the author acknowledges the limitations and delimitations that frame the boundaries of the research, ensuring transparency and clarity in the research approach.

### **Background of the Study**

Competent and efficient companies employ a wide array of critical human resource practices to support the effectiveness of their operations. These practices encompass Performance Appraisals (PA) and addressing job satisfaction. Although performance appraisals and job satisfaction are all intertwined, oddly, there is lack of relevant research and/or studies on the relationship, particularly in the context of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Palestine. PA, the assessment of an employee's job performance by their supervisor, are a procedure observed in most organizations (Cappelli & Conyon, 2018). PA are identified as a systematic and periodic process that impartially evaluates an employee's level of performance and rates their potential to improve performance in the future (Flipppo, 1984).

According to Guruprasad et al (2016), Performance Appraisal Systems (PAS) are a crucial management tool for the higher education sector as well, helping to improve the standard of teaching and research, while fostering a skilled and satisfied academic staff. Higher educational institutions use PAS in their faculties in order to ensure that the faculty meets the required performance standards in order to deliver the highest quality in academic work.

Managers and business owners understand that fostering employee satisfaction is one of the main principles that is necessary to run a successful business as successful business cannot perform without dedicated and satisfied employees. When job satisfaction is limited, turnover

will increase, and productivity will thus decrease. In another sense, job satisfaction is defined as an employee's practical orientation towards their work (Saari & Judge, 2004). In any work setting, job satisfaction plays a fundamental role (Franek & Vecera, 2008); therefore, it is imperative for a sustainable and prosperous organization and is attained by understanding the job performance framework and its effect on employees.

Implementing a PAS may be one method to achieve staff satisfaction, primarily if it is linked to salary increases. Cappelli and Conyon's (2018) findings from their case study provide confirmation that PAS include informative features and exhibit direct influence on several aspects of employee outcomes. These dimensions encompass employee bonuses, merit pay, employee promotions, and decisions related to departing the organization (Cappelli & Conyon, 2018). The increasing importance of PAS can be attributed to the fact that it seems impossible for managers to run any business efficiently without knowing how their staff members are carrying out their assigned duties along with their satisfaction. While the benefits of a well-implemented PAS are recognized for improving Human Resource Management (HRM), there still exists confusion regarding the dimensions, implementation, and management of the appraisal system. It is certain that if the appraisal system is not performed properly, it can lose its significance and fail to provide the intended benefits to both organizations and employees.

### **Problem Statement**

In this research, the author represents four of the characteristics or traits of the PAS: list the four traits. These characteristics are utilized to achieve job satisfaction based on actual measurement indicators that define the concept of job satisfaction. In addition, this research studied the relationship between appraisal system with the four selected characteristics (Clarity, Fairness, Two-way communication, Trust in supervisor) and job satisfaction in the Palestinian

context. The focus will be on HEI, including universities, which offer wide range of academic programs, university colleges that are usually specialized in specific professional or vocational areas, and community colleges that typically focus on shorter-term programs and workforce training. Furthermore, the study explores the level of implementation of appraisal systems in organizations and the gravity with which the system is implemented by both organizations and employees. It is evident that the system's application has serious consequences on the level of employee job satisfaction. However, there is a lack of adequate research on this topic within the context of Palestinian HEI.

This study is also expected to contribute to the development of HEIs by providing actionable insights that empowers the organization to re-evaluate and refine its appraisal system, creating a work environment where employees experience higher job satisfaction, productivity, and overall engagement. The level of improvement for an employee's job satisfaction may lead to improve the quality of services provided for students and society at-large. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in Palestine must be aware of the importance of implementing an effective and subjective appraisal system in the HEI. A comprehensive strategy must be developed to encourage the education sector to apply an effective appraisal system. This strategy should be directly aligned with the objectives of the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education, specifically with the Fifth Strategic Goal: “ (MOEHE, 2023)It also focuses on having an efficient and transparent appraisal system with highly efficient institutional and human resources that ensures the highest levels of transparency, accountability, and satisfaction. It is expected that this research will play a significant role in convincing MOHE to impose or encourage all education institutions to develop an effective appraisal performance model uniquely fit to meet their needs.

Finally, the study may help other researchers build and develop their own studies by benefiting from the diverse experiences of the developed countries in this field.

### **Research Objectives**

Within the context of HEIs in Palestine, where the motivation and well-being of the workforce are of utmost importance, this study aims to explore the relation between job performance and job satisfaction as its two main constructs. The followings are the main objectives of the research:

1. To determine the level of practices of the PAS and its characteristics (Clarity, Two-way communication, Fairness and Trust) in Palestinian Higher Education Institutions.
2. To define the level of employee's Job Satisfaction in Palestinian Higher Education Institutions.
3. To define the relationship between PAS and employee's Job satisfaction in Palestinian HEI, related sub-objectives of this objective as follow:
  - To determine the relationship between clarity as a characteristic of PAS and employee's Job Satisfaction in Palestinian HEI  
To examine the relationship between trust as a characteristic of performance appraisal system and employee's Job Satisfaction in Palestinian HEI.
  - To investigate the relationship between fairness as a characteristic of performance appraisal system and employee's Job Satisfaction in Palestinian higher education institutions.
  - To define the relationship between two-way communication as a characteristic of PAS and employee's Job Satisfaction in Palestinian HEI.

## **Research Questions and Hypothesis**

Since this study aims to relate and compare selected characteristics of appraisal systems and the levels of employee job satisfaction, the following research questions were placed for this research:

- What is the level of practices of the PAS and its characteristics (Clarity, Two-way communication, Fairness and Trust) in Palestinian HEI?
- What is the level of employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian higher education institutions?
- What is the relationship between performance appraisal and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEI? Related sub-questions of this question as follow:
  - What is the relationship between trust as a characteristic of PAS and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEI?
  - What is the relationship between fairness as a characteristic of PAS and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEI?
  - What is the relationship between clarity as a characteristic of PAS and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEI?
  - What is the relationship between two-way communication as a characteristic of PAS and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEI?

In the pursuit of understanding the relationship between performance appraisal and job satisfaction in HEIs in Palestine, it is essential to develop informed hypotheses that guide the study explorations. By formulating and testing hypotheses, we seek to unveil new insights and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this field. In this regard, the following hypotheses have been formulated and will be rigorously examined in the subsequent sections:



- H1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the overall PAS's traits (Clarity, Two-way communication, Trust, and Fairness) and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs. Related sub- hypotheses of this hypothesis are as follow:
  - H1a: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between trust and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs.
  - H1b: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between fairness and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs.
  - H1c: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between clarity and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs.
  - H1d: There is statistically significant positive relationship between two-way communication and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs.
- H2: There are statistically significant disparities in job satisfaction levels across several demographic characteristics, including gender, age, educational level, administrative level, and monthly income in Palestinian HEIs.

### **Nature and Significance of the Study**

Higher education institutions can significantly benefit from the results of this study to address increasing employee job satisfaction, since this study has identified the factors influencing job satisfaction, institutions can now evaluate their internal procedures with a focus on these identified factors. Subsequently, they can develop strategies to strengthen these factors within their organization. Also, the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research can benefit from this study to assist institutions in implementing effective performance appraisals. This study is also essential for the community at-large as it is expected to contribute to improving levels of job satisfaction for employees working in HEIs. As the education sector is

a vital sector of society, the study will lead to better services delivered to students and the community. In addition, this study will be useful to other researchers when conducting their own research studies in this field.

### **Study Justification**

For any institution to compete, succeed, and sustain themselves, they need to have employees that are satisfied with their jobs. While various forms of job satisfaction studies have been previously conducted, research studies have seldom been conducted that correlate to job satisfaction and PAS in Palestine. The author discovered that there is a void in studies conducted in this regard, and there is relatively little research conducted on factors that influence job satisfaction among employees of HEIs.

Furthermore, the outcomes of this study hold the potential for HEIs to utilize the insights to refine and elevate their current appraisal systems. Additionally, it is anticipated that the Ministry of Higher Education will demonstrate increased interest in collaborating with the institutions to prioritize the appraisal system as a focal means of reaching employee`s satisfaction. This emphasis has the potential to lead to an enhancement in the services offered by HEIs, and subsequently will have a positive impact on both students and the entire community as well.

### **Limitation and Delimitation**

#### **Limitation**

- A questionnaire as the primary method to collect information has some limitations; it defines respondents' attitudes and perception, though it fails to capture actual behaviors. Also, participants might not be able to express complex thoughts or experiences adequately within the constraints of multiple-choice or Likert-scale questions.

- Quantitative research will not allow participants to provide rich contextual information and understand PAS's actual relation with job satisfaction as qualitative would do.

Willingness to participate limitation:

- Linguistic or cultural limitation: when the research involves respondents from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds then translating and adapting a questionnaire can introduce errors in interpretation or meaning, affecting the validity of the data. To address the presence of Palestinian and foreign employees within the Palestinian HEIs, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic and edited by a skilled and professional translator. Afterward, the HR departments distributed it in both English and Arabic languages, aiming to mitigate this limitation.
- Ensuring the validity and reliability of the questionnaire could be considered as a limitation. Hence, to alleviate the potential for measurement errors, the questionnaire underwent a pilot phase and incorporated well-established measurement scales.
- Limitations of generalizability accompanied by convenience sampling as questionnaires depend on the sample the researchers are able to reach, this sample might not be fully representative of the research target population. This research's sample size and contextually relevant sample, coupled with the consistent higher education setting in Palestine, supports the findings and enables meaningful and relevant conclusions within the specific research context.

### **Delimitation**

- The research tested the appropriateness of only four characteristics of the appraisal system. When narrowing the focus of the scope, the research can delve deeply into each one, allowing for a more thorough analysis, interpretation, and comparison of results. While the

findings may not be fully representative, they can still offer insights that contribute to a broader understanding.

- The study targets employees who have been with the institution for over a year, aiming to attain a meaningful assessment of the appraisal system's efficacy, and its impact on employee job satisfaction. A query regarding the tenure was incorporated into the questionnaire; if respondents select the choice indicating a tenure of less than a year, their survey responses will be excluded.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

Within the framework of organizational behavior and human resource management, certain elements, such as employee motivation, job satisfaction, and performance evaluation, become paramount. This chapter embarks on a meticulous exploration of diverse theories and empirical data pertinent to these domains. In this chapter, the author extracts essential theories and principles that reinforce this research project by providing a comprehensive framework. This robust theoretical framework represents the foundation of the study and delineates a structured arrangement of concepts, variables, and relationships. It does not only define the scope but also imparts structure to the investigation. Additionally, key assumptions guiding the research are clearly identified to set the boundaries and expectations that shape the methodology. Together, these elements support the research's theoretical and conceptual foundations. More particularly, this study emphasizes the importance of knowledge as an invaluable organizational asset. It touches upon established paradigms, such as Maslow's structured hierarchy and Adams' equity theory, emphasizing perceived organizational fairness, which will be tackled in detail in the following sections.

#### **Theoretical Literature**

The Human Resource (HR) concept is mainly concerned with shaping relationships between employees and management. The HR department plays a paramount role in ensuring the recruitment of the needed skilled employees. A functioning and efficient HR department use Human Resource Management (HRM) to enhance the organization's personnel by deploying good leadership skills in the recruitment, training, and management of employees, while maintaining solid relations with

them; all this leads to improving employee productivity by matching employees with jobs that best fit their skills and training to ensure they perform the best they could as they go along with their jobs.

HR departments play a crucial role in overseeing the efficient management of work, effort, and commitment throughout the design, production, and distribution phases of a business's products. Human Resource Management (HRM) is a strategic methodology focused on optimizing organizational performance by effectively managing personnel, thereby enabling the company to achieve a competitive advantage in its market. Therefore, HRM strategies allow companies to change and adapt to their competitive environment by harmonizing policies and practices for HRM. These policies and procedures address selection and recruitment, training of human capital in the company, and developing the incentives systems (Dabić, 2011).

An HR department can enhance the organization's personnel performance by deploying five critical standard practices related to employee behavioral management: a reward system, career management, recruitment, training, and performance appraisal. When done correctly, these five suggested essential standard practices can achieve fairness within the organization, thus creating an ethical climate that can influence employee behavior (Angonga, 2019). Furthermore, in Armstrong's (2009) Handbook of HRM, a range of essential HRM activities were outlined, among them, performance appraisal management was highlighted as a significant task (Padhi, 2010).

### **Definition of Appraisal System**

Performance appraisals, interchangeably termed “performance review”, “performance evaluation”, “annual evaluation”, or “employee appraisal”, are an effective human resource tool that can help justify decisions as to which employees should be promoted, demoted, rewarded, or in some cases dismissed. Consequently, PAS emerges as a critical function that supervisors or

HR managers can leverage to assess employee performance, Performance appraisals, have become a critical function in the modern workplace. They offer a structured framework for evaluating employee performance, providing a comprehensive view of an individual's contributions to the organization. By assessing strengths, weaknesses, and overall performance, appraisals guide informed decision-making that influences an employee's career path. Beyond administrative tasks, they serve as dynamic tools for optimizing talent, fostering growth, and aligning employees with the organization's objectives. This benefits both the organization and employees, promoting a culture of continuous development and improvement.

While PAS is acknowledged as one way forward in establishing more efficient HR management, confusion still exists as to what an appraisal system should consist of and how it is implemented and managed. While nine out of ten companies use evaluation scores as a baseline in the reward process for employees, many institutions still lack the necessary confidence in this technique mainly due to the ambiguities (Eweinstein, 2016). There is one definite in the appraisal system that is, if it is not performed properly and effectively, it can lose the significance and benefits it offers both to organizations and employees.

The ever-growing emphasis on performance appraisals can be attributed to the fact that it seems impossible for supervisors to effectively manage any organization without adequate information as to how employees are performing and implementing their expected responsibilities; such information is often necessary for critical management functions including upholding control of current operations and future planning, as well as making decisions regarding training and development, recognition, compensation, and promotions (Taddese, 2020).

The purpose behind performance appraisals is to improve the individual employee's performance, thereby improving the organization they are affiliated with (Mullins, 2002). Performance appraisals are also a mechanism that managers can utilize to objectively evaluate the performance of employees. When PAS is effectively implemented, managers can help guide their staff on the path to institutions' advancement. In the process of conducting a PAS, a manager can realize and respond to problems earlier and more efficiently, helping to address and alleviate any challenges. It is not only an essential tool for human resource managers to help guide the development of their employees, but organizations can also use performance appraisals to reward their employees in the form of bonuses, promotions, and pay increases (Mathew & Johnson, 2015).

Appraisals can be conducted at any given time, but it has become a practice for most organizations to conduct them annually, semi-annually, or quarterly. According to Selden et al. (2001) more than 90% of prominent organizations utilize PASs and more than 75% of them are scheduled on an annual basis. However, the specific system of assessing employees depends on the type of organization. For example, General Electric does not conduct appraisals on an annual basis; instead, they have designed a procedure to receive continuous and rapid feedback similarly, Netflix has not been able to evaluate its personnel according to its own annual objectives due to frequent changes (Eweinstein, 2016).

There are multiple benefits to implementing a PAS. The system can serve as an important career development tool for both managers and employees alike as it is a continuous process of recognizing, measuring, and developing individual performance (Mathew & Johnson, 2015). Institutions use performance appraisals for a wide variety of purposes, and some suggest



that these purposes often conflict. These conflicts may prevent the PAP from reaching its full potential, as individuals can sometimes negatively react to a performance evaluation.

A PAS that is human resource-focused is an effective mechanism for supervisors to better understand the challenges their employees face and create an opportunity to help mitigate these challenges. It also allows them to better ascertain their strengths and weaknesses. Beyond that, a PAS can help employees understand their positive contributions to the work environment and can be a tool to encourage them to accept and acquire new responsibilities based on the needs of the institution. It is also an effective instrument in planning for effective utilization of employee talent (Jabeen, 1997).

Four different characteristics of appraisal system will be highlighted in this study to have an effective appraisal system which lead to more job satisfaction among employees. They are as follows: trust in supervisor during the PAP, clarity of PAP, level of two-way communication between supervisor and employee during the process, and fairness of the PAP.

### ***Trust in Supervisor***

Trust plays a pivotal role in establishing a positive work environment and fostering collaboration and productivity. Trust in one's supervisor is fundamental for an effective workplace relationship, influencing employee engagement and satisfaction. In the context of the appraisal system, where employee performance and contributions are evaluated, trust in supervisors becomes a vital characteristic that can significantly influence employee perceptions and overall job satisfaction.

Trust has undergone many assessments in numerous research studies, emerging as a crucial instrument for long-term management success. As it has been found that trust has a positive effect on organizational effectiveness and performance, positively impacting

organizational loyalty, organizational commitment, and knowledge sharing (Colquitt et al., 2007). On the other hand, when the employee does not trust the organization and its leadership, it frequently results in counterproductive work behavior as a way to express their dissatisfaction. This could include delay, intentional mistakes, decreased productivity, or even absenteeism. In essence, increasing and maintaining trust among employees has become a central focus for managers and leaders across all industries and various domains.

According to Social Cognitive Theory, employees who have a higher level of trust in their supervisor are more likely to respond positively to their PAS and its processes. Employees who have a poor relationship or trust with their supervisor; are more likely to react negatively to the system (Mulvaney, 2019).

Research conducted by Ngari and Ndirangu (2014) indicates that employee's satisfaction from the PAS is closely related to the trust in supervisor. When employees have confidence in their supervisors, they hold positive and optimistic beliefs regarding the intentions of their supervisors. The extent to which employees have trust in their superiors is associated with their job satisfaction and work performance. Employees who believe their superior is competent and informed about their work assignments are more likely to describe their performance review experience favorably and to trust their supervisor. Furthermore, when there is trust, employees have a positive outlook on the boss's intentions and believe management will act in their best interests. Cho and Lee (2012) discovered that employees who had a higher level of trust in their supervisor performed much better in work units.

### ***Clarity of Appraisal System***

Clarity in the appraisal system is a fundamental concept that underpins the effectiveness and fairness of performance evaluations within organizations. It affects the transparency,

comprehensibility, and consistency of the PAP, criteria, and feedback provided to employees. In essence, a clear appraisal system ensures that both employees and management have a shared understanding of performance expectations, assessment methods, and the consequences of the evaluation.

Performance appraisals includes processes or concepts that addresses the employees' motivation to perform well. On one hand, when employees have a better understanding of what their managers expect from them, what improvements are required, and how they monitor and measure their performance, they can train themselves to perform better (Bilal et al., 2014). On the other hand, when an employee does not understand how their work performance is measured, they will not be motivated to initiate the improvement process. Therefore, the clarity of PAS can motivate an employee to improve and develop.

Clarity in performance evaluations demonstrates how informed employees are on the purpose and objective of performance reviews. This will involve being precise and transparent about the performance appraisal process and its role in determining an employee's future within the organization (Brown et al., 2010). When employees gain a clear and defined understanding of their job goals, any pre-set challenges and career development solutions can be addressed to help advance their careers, and they will be motivated and more satisfied with the appraisal process. Ultimately, the purpose of an appraisal is to encourage and inspire employees (Mathew & Johnson, 2015). Evans and McShane (1988) argued that employee reactions to appraisal system tend to be more positive when the appraisal results are based upon established and agreed-upon goals. Evidently, goal setting and the use of standard criteria for measuring goal achievement strengthen the employee's perception of the objectivity of the appraisal results. As a result, the more the objectives of the appraisal are pre-determined, job description is clear, the

work objectives are well-defined, and the employees understand what their managers expect of them, the clarity of PAP increases, subsequently enhancing its effectiveness.

### ***Effective two-way Communication Between Employee and Supervisor***

Effective two-way communication between the supervisor and the employee during the PAP is a keystone of a well-functioning PAS. Researchers investigated the impact of communication levels on employee attitudes and behaviors, highlighting the need to recognize and assess changes in behavior and related factors. This underscores the critical role of open and constructive communication in enhancing employee engagement, performance, and overall organizational success.

A study by Brown et al. (2010) aimed to determine whether supervisor-subordinate communication affects employee work satisfaction. Brown's research highlights that effective communication between employees and supervisors serves as a central pillar for the effective operation of an institutions, and it revealed that the degree of communication between employees and their managers is very important, which gives an employee the chance to voice his or her viewpoint and validates their membership in the company. When supervisors and their employees engage in two-way communication regarding expectations and how employees' contributions measure up, most of the significant performance issues may be avoided or resolved (Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022). Such a communication facilitates a mutual exchange of perspectives, awareness, and expectations, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of performance areas for growth. Employees could voice their concerns, provide context for their performance. Simultaneously, supervisors can offer constructive feedback. As Lussier & Achua (2015) mentioned, the main goal of performance appraisal is to create a constructive dialogue

between managers and their subordinates regarding how each individual is performing within the organization.

Effective communication within an organization offers employees the opportunity to exert a degree of control over their own work processes. It provides them with a platform to express their thoughts, feel valued, and solidify their sense of belonging to the organization. Internal communication, when leveraged strategically, serves as a powerful tool to influence and shape the attitudes and behaviors of employees.

By allowing employees to have a say in their own appraisals, it not only fosters a sense of empowerment but also significantly enhances the perceived fairness of the Performance Appraisal Process (PAP). This perception of fairness is pivotal in ensuring that employees view the appraisal system as a legitimate and constructive method for evaluating their contributions to the organization. When employees feel their voices are heard and their opinions matter, they are more likely to embrace the appraisal process as a meaningful and just tool for measuring their performance. This, in turn, cultivates a culture of trust and mutual respect within the organization. A result of research conducted by Ndirangu and Ngari (2014), found that:

“Communication provides employees with the chance of exercising a level of process control. It provides an employee with the chance to express his or her opinion is appreciated in it and certifies his or her belongings in the organization. The objective of internal communication is to change the attitudes and behaviors of employees. It gives employees a voice in their own appraisals thus enhances the perceived fairness of the PAP, which, in turn, increases the likelihood that employees will accept the appraisal system as a legitimate and constructive means of gauging their performance contributions.” p. 104

According to Khalilzadeh (2020), the PAS is responsible for evaluating employee skills, achievements, and growth. Allowing institutions to utilize this system will help them improve the performance of employees and provide an opportunity to give them proper feedback on their performance. Performance evaluations are a An invaluable procedure involves providing human resources with constructive feedback to enhance their performance and rectify business conduct. Hence, the PAS can serve various functions, including: the merit or demerit point to determine employee salary increases, promotions, terminations, training opportunities and career development. (Von, 2015) Effective communication is essential in an organization as employees work interdependently to support the daily operations. Indeed, communication is essential in conveying feedback in the event of conducting performance appraisal. An effective communication is in which it can transmit meaningful messages that encourages mutual understanding among the parties who involved in the process. (Mishra, 2013)Therefore, the effective PAP which lead to have more satisfied employees is when there is a two-way communication between the supervisor and the employees during and after the appraisal process, thus they can express their opinion and get the right feedback to enhance their work, change how they behave in the workplace, and add to their expertise by correcting their behavior in the workplace.

### ***Fairness of Appraisal system***

The fairness of an appraisal system is principal in fostering a positive environment within the institutions. A fair appraisal system confirms that all employees are evaluated based on reliable and transparent measures, free from biases or discrimination. Fair systems provide employees with a sense of equity, trust, and a faith that their contributions are fairly recognized and rewarded. Fairness in PAS also enhances employee motivation and job satisfaction.

It has been argued that employee acceptance of appraisal results depends partially upon their belief that characteristics of the PAS are consistent with fair process (Greenberg, 1986). Such belief regards fairness may influence employee motivation, turnover and commitment (DeMarco & Nigro, 1983), thus may influence employees' satisfaction.

According to the interpretation provided by Frazier et al. (2010) regarding the social exchange theory, they posit that when employees perceive fairness in appraisal, their level of trust in both the organization and their leaders is likely to increase; this increased trust has significant implications for employee satisfaction. Employees who trust their organization and leaders are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. They feel a sense of security and confidence in their workplace. Research has been conducted on numerous forms of performance appraisals, including psychometric issues, the attribute of evaluator and evaluatee, cognitive processes, rater training, and appraisal fairness (Boswell & Boudreau, 2001). If the employee is satisfied with performance appraisal through a positive perception of fairness, it is likely they will be more intrinsically motivated and self-determined to improve (Selvarajan, et al., 2018, p.144).

To earn employee commitment, managers must ensure that employees feel that there is a sense of organizational justice at the workplace. Organizational justice encompasses the adherence to fair procedures and processes, ensuring that employees view their leaders as impartial, sincere, and possessing clear logic or rationale for their workplace decisions (Dessler, 1999). For example, when promotions are based on merit and transparent criteria, employees are more likely to regard the organization as just and fair. When completed in a fair and impartial manner, performance appraisals can contribute to improving employee satisfaction.

The quality of the relationship between the supervisor and the employee increases when interactions between the two parties are conducted fairly and with dignity. Employees need to be treated properly with fairness, respect, and professionalism throughout the PAP since it is believed that this will have an impact on how well the entire process produces results (Fortin, 2008).

### **Definition of Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction can be defined as an attitude and mindset that individuals have regarding their jobs. This mindset is the result of the employees' perception of their work and to what extent they feel there is a fit between the respective individual and the organization. Job satisfaction is an individual's particular attitude towards their work as well as a favorable emotion related to their work and careers (Bradley et al., 2004). Armstrong describes job satisfaction as attitudes and emotions employees project towards their jobs, also it is the employees' sentiment towards their job and their level of satisfaction (Armstrong, 2006). Job satisfaction can be understood as a favorable emotional response arising from one's evaluation of their job experiences. It represents a contented emotional state brought about when someone perceives their job as fulfilling important values, provided these values align with their needs, as mentioned by Locke in 1976. In essence, job satisfaction is the positive feeling of contentment that individuals have regarding their work.

The degree to which rewards match expectations plays a crucial role in deciding if a job is seen as fulfilling. Therefore, work satisfaction is a complex interplay of various psychological responses to one's job that are influenced by cognitive, emotional, and behavioral elements (Al-Baidhani & Alsaqqaf, 2022).



In this relation, job satisfaction is considered as a reflection of employees' positive or negative sentiments about various facets of their job. It is influenced by the level of happiness they gain from elements such as compensation, managerial support, advancement opportunities, the working atmosphere, organizational culture, coworkers, and the nature of their tasks. Moreover, it also covers the employees' views on the company's performance, its policies, and the general human resource strategies (Arifin & Matriadi, 2022).

Job satisfaction is essential in the education sector as teachers are among the most influential individuals in society and their main professional objective is to provide services to meet the needs of young learners and society (Bogapova, 2018). It can be categorized as the degree to which individuals feel positively about their job. It is an emotional response to the physical and social conditions of the workplace (Ivancevich et al., 1997; Pool, 1997). Although it is negatively linked to emotional fatigue, studies show that work satisfaction is linked to constructive, positive, and supportive labor relations (Baeriswyl et al., 2016).

In summary, job satisfaction is the result of employees' attitude that is held towards their work. These attitudes may be related to relevant employment factors such as salaries, job security, the job environment, nature of work, opportunities for promotion, prompt elimination of grievances, opportunities to participate in the decision-making process, and enjoyment of fringe benefits (Arokiasamy et al., 2013).

### **The Relationship between the Performance Appraisal and Job Satisfaction**

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a growing curiosity in employee responses to performance appraisal systems. Alhuja et al., (2018) pointed out that employees

typically exhibit four primary responses to the PAS. One such reaction is job satisfaction, which tends to be higher when appraisals are utilized for developmental reasons. The four main benefits of an effective PAS are: heightened employee performance, increased motivation, reduced staff attrition, and a sense of fairness among employees (Ahuja et al., 2018).

In this relation, several studies have underscored the connection between PA and job satisfaction. Darehzereshki (2013) found a direct link between employee outcomes, like job satisfaction, and satisfaction with performance appraisals. Al-Baidhani and Alsaqqaf (2022) indicated that there is a robust and notably positive association between job satisfaction and PA. In addition, Jarrar (2023), focusing on Palestinian service organizations, supported the positive tie between High-Performance Work Practices (HPWPs), which encompass performance appraisals and outcomes at both the employee and organizational levels, such as job satisfaction. Jarrar's (2023) study also emphasized the documented positive impact of human resource management functions and practices on organizational behaviors and broader company results, which pinpoints a need for deeper exploration of their operational mechanisms and optimal practices in diverse settings.

In the same vein, Agyare et al. (2016) looked into how performance reviews affected loyalty and job happiness. Their research used correlations and regression analysis to show that the evaluation approach had a favorable and significant impact on work satisfaction. This connection is made by tying performance reviews to career advancement, giving staff members constructive criticism for their work and making sure they understand their jobs.

An increasing number of studies suggest that organizations ought to meticulously design and consistently execute performance evaluation methods. Furthermore, these evaluations should be viewed as instruments for efficiency enhancement of job satisfaction and productivity, rather

than mere metrics for gauging performance (Mathew & Johnson, 2015; Prasad, 2015). They are, in fact, powerful instruments for improving efficiency, enhancing job satisfaction, and boosting overall productivity within the workplace. This shift in perspective acknowledges that performance evaluations are not merely a one-time assessment but an ongoing process that can have a profound impact on the work environment. When executed thoughtfully and with a focus on continuous improvement, these evaluations contribute to a positive feedback loop that fosters job satisfaction and, in turn, bolsters productivity.

According to Nair's (2010) definition of satisfaction, a person's attitude towards evaluating their work environment is a key factor in determining their level of satisfaction. Therefore, job satisfaction is not just about feelings; it also includes a person's evaluation of and understanding of the value of their own work.

In conclusion, there is a clear connection between the characteristics of performance reviews and how satisfied employees are with their jobs. When a company educates its employees about its goals and missions, these qualities become more obvious. The goals of an organization serve as the embodiment of its mission, to which each employee is expected to demonstrate commitment and carry out specific job duties. Consequently, the features of performance evaluations should evidently reflect their efficacy in realizing the organization's vision and in ensuring employee job satisfaction.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

### **Expectancy Theory**

Among the most widely accepted and practical definitions of motivation was the definition offered by Victor Vroom (as cited in Pranav & Bagga, 2014). According to his hypothesis, if employees are confident that their actions will result in a positive performance

review, they will be more driven to put forth additional effort, which can also result in organizational benefits. Four key principles form the foundation of the Vroom's Expectancy Theory. First, it suggests that people who join organizations do so with particular expectations shaped by their needs, motivations, and prior experiences. These expectations have a significant impact on how people respond to the organization. The second principle holds that behavior is determined by conscious choices, suggesting that people have the power to choose actions based on expectations. Thirdly, this theory acknowledges that people seek out a variety of benefits from their employers, including competitive salaries, stable employment, and chances for career advancement, as well as intellectual challenges. Finally, the fourth principle emphasizes that people will choose from the available options in a way that best enhances their personal gains, this comprehensive theory recognizes that individuals are driven by a multifaceted set of motivations, seeking a balance between financial security, career opportunities, intellectual stimulation, and personal growth as they make choices that align with their individual objectives and aspirations. (Lunenburg, 2011).

The expectancy element of the theory suggests that employees will be motivated to improve their performance in the context of performance evaluations if they believe their efforts will result in a more favorable review. This viewpoint also includes the idea that a positive evaluation will pave the way for desired outcomes, such as pay increases, job advancements, recognition, or other incentives. The theory emphasizes the value of open communication regarding the connections between performance, evaluations, and incentives within the framework of appraisals. This clarity is essential for motivating and engaging workers in an effective manner.

## **Research-Based View Theory**

The Research-Based View (RBV) is a paradigm that focuses on corporate tactics to help gain a competitive advantage. RBV was theorized in the 1980s due to research conducted by scholars including Prahalad, Spender, and Birger. Companies compete based on internal skills, rather than the specific services or products they make, or their marketing environment. On the other hand, Prahalad (year) contends that RBV places greater emphasis on a firm's core strengths, resource commitment, and organizational learning (Spender, 2015). The crucial point lies in evaluating the expertise of employees and the relevance of their proficiency for both current and future organizational requisites. Notably, it is necessary to not solely take into consideration the company's objectives but acknowledge the requirements and concerns of employees as pivotal stakeholders.

## **Ethical Theory**

Ethical theories offer a guiding structure for discerning morally acceptable from unacceptable actions. They hold relevance in many organizational facets, including the Performance Appraisal System (PAS), as they help consolidate and elucidate the moral expectations within organizations. Ethical theories are regarded as moral principles that a company must uphold to ensure that all employees act in an ethical and moral manner. Kantianism and utilitarianism are two examples of ethical theories that emphasize the idea of conducting excellent and ethical acts to serve the best interests of all parties (Spender, 2015).

The ethical principles and core values of an organization should be reflected in the ethical framework that supports its appraisal system. This guarantees that assessments are carried out in a fair, transparent, and respectful manner. Furthermore, rather than being used unethically, such as for biased preferences or discrimination, the outcomes of appraisals should be used for

constructive purposes, such as supporting employee development and advancing organizational improvement.

### **Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder theory is directly related to organizational management strategies, business ethics, and how they impact various entities such as creditors, the community, suppliers, and employees. According to this theory, corporations must be accountable to all stakeholders (Spender, 2015). This theory stresses that, when making decisions, organizations should consider the interests of all of their stakeholders rather than just concentrating on their shareholders. Stakeholders include both individuals and groups that have an influence on or are affected by an organization's actions and decisions. This viewpoint holds that organizations have obligations to a wider range of stakeholders than just shareholders, such as employees, customers, suppliers, and the local community.

According to stakeholder theory, PAS should take a comprehensive approach that goes beyond just financial metrics. The welfare of the workforce, the effectiveness of interactions with clients and suppliers, and the overall impact on the community should all be taken into account. In a nutshell, organizations can support ethical behavior and foster sustainability in their operational practices by aligning an appraisal system with the principles of stakeholder theory.

### **Knowledge-based Theory (KBV)**

Knowledge-based theory asserts that knowledge is of critical importance and serves as a strategic resource available to any organization. Due to the social complexity of resources, the theory suggests that these resources cannot be easily replicated, and, as a result, they can significantly improve the performance of corporations (Spender, 2015). Based on this theory, the focus on knowledge management is on the methods by which organizations produce, receive,

hold onto, and use knowledge to gain a competitive edge. The theory emphasizes the importance of knowledge management in improving an organization's efficiency, adaptability, and innovative skills by recognizing it as a priceless organizational resource.

The knowledge-based theory emphasizes the knowledge's crucial strategic role in organizational settings. This theory can be used to shape an efficient appraisal system that will support knowledge management goals. To gain a competitive edge, such an appraisal system would place a high priority on the discovery, development, and capitalization of knowledge resources. Additionally, it can encourage staff members to actively contribute to knowledge sharing and make a commitment to lifelong learning, strengthening the organization's knowledge-centric competencies.

### **Maslow's Theory**

The appeal of Maslow's need hierarchy theory comes from the idea that human motives are based on classifying basic needs in a hierarchy and a theory of human motivation that relates these needs to general behavior (Uysal, 2017). Maslow proposed that basic needs are structured in a hierarchy of prepotency and probability of appearance as a theory of motives or needs. The hierarchy of needs is similar to the following (in the ascending order of prepotency): physiological conditions, safety needs, sense of belonging or the need for love, the need for esteem, and the need for self-actualization (Wahba & Bridwell, 2017).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs explains the various motivational needs that employees have at different stages. The appraisal system can be made to better meet these needs, especially the more important ones like recognition, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The appraisal framework can satisfy these innate needs, increase motivation, and improve employee welfare and performance when it is skillfully implemented. It is important to understand that everyone

has different needs, though. A standardized, uniform approach might not be able to meet the particular requirements of each employee. On the other hand, personalizing the Performance Appraisal Process (PAP) to reflect individual preferences and objectives can therefore prove to be a useful tactic for organizations.

### **Adam's Equity Theory**

Adam's Equity theory is a prominent framework in the field of organizational psychology. It posits that people's motivation and job satisfaction are strongly influenced by their perception of fairness in the workplace. According to the theory, employees compare the ratio of their inputs to outputs with their peers. Therefore, individuals are motivated and satisfied when they perceive that the rewards which they obtain for their contribution are fair and equitable with what their colleagues receive (Lu-Ming & Chia-Lin, 2014). Institutions that aim to increase the feeling of fairness and equity in the workplace are more likely to enhance and improve overall job satisfaction, motivation, and performance.

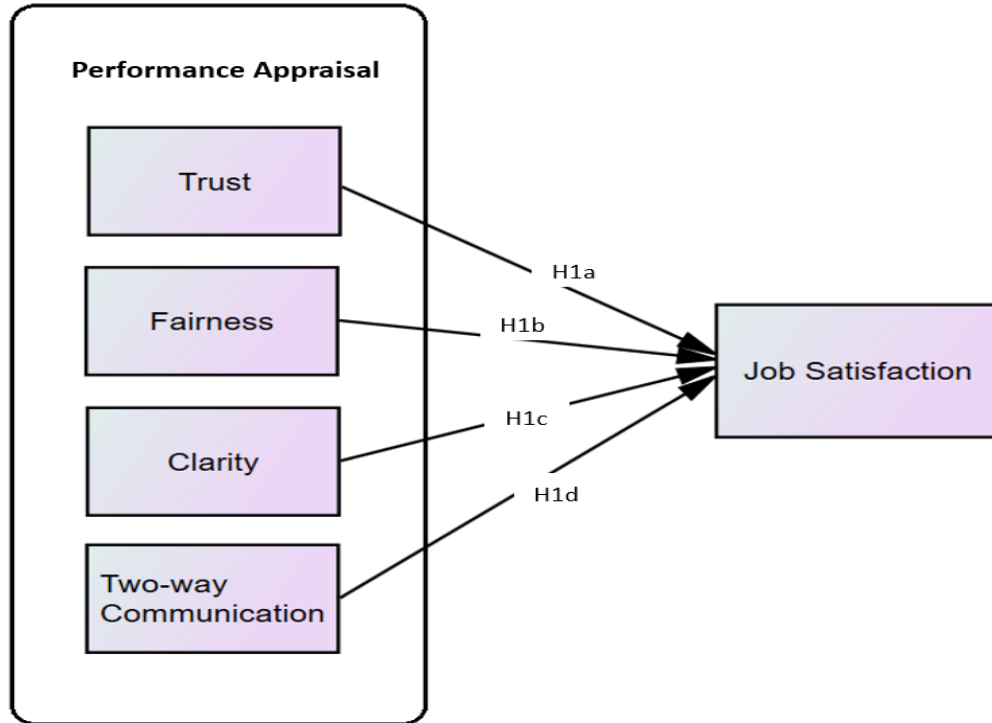
### **Conceptual Framework**

Finally, this conceptual framework sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the factors that underpin an effective PAS. The study carefully selected four critical traits; clarity (C), two-way communication (TC), trust (T), and fairness (F), based on a thorough literature review to design a strong PAS. This system was purposefully chosen as the independent variable, with job satisfaction as the dependent variable. The research sought to investigate how the PAS affects employee job satisfaction by considering these characteristics, as it underlines the importance of these characteristics in shaping employees' overall job satisfaction.



**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework for the Relation Between PAS and JS*



*Note.* This figure illustrates the conceptual framework that guides the study, including the relationships between the variables.

### **Assumptions**

The current study was based on the following assumptions:

- The author assumes that participants fully understand the questions and will answer honestly, considerately, and accurately.
- Top management would make use of the recommendations of the research report.
- The author assumes that the instrument of the study is valid and measures the desired outcome.

- Top management is committed and aware of the importance of implementing performance appraisal effectively.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology used to examine the link between appraisal systems and their inherent traits concerning employee job satisfaction in Palestinian Higher Education Institutions. The study employs a cross-sectional quantitative design, with data processed using the SPSS Statistics software for empirical accuracy. The focus is on both primary and secondary datasets, ensuring a comprehensive sample of both administrative and academic staff within the Palestinian HEIs. The research utilizes a detailed questionnaire to delve into the relationship between key Performance Appraisal System (PAS) attributes—clarity, two-way communication, trust, and fairness—and job satisfaction. The questionnaire includes 38 questions. This chapter encompasses everything from data gathering to analysis, adhering to stringent scientific and ethical standards, ensuring the research's reliability and significance in the broader discourse on performance appraisal systems in Palestinian academia. This chapter is structured starting with the research approach, then detailing the target population and sample, followed by data collection methods and instruments, and concludes with data analysis techniques and the insights obtained.

#### **Research Approach**

The study attempted to afford an accurate description of what appraisal systems are and afterwards analyzed the role of appraisal systems and their relation to employee job satisfaction. Furthermore, it examined four selected crucial key traits related to the appraisal system, the methods employed, and their consequences on job satisfaction.

## **Research Design**

This study employed a cross-sectional quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between the traits of appraisal systems and employees job satisfaction. The data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics software (version 26; IBM Corp, 2019). Descriptive statistics, non-parametric tests such as Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests and Multiple Linear Regression were performed in the analysis. The study utilized a self-administered questionnaire via Google Form to collect data on the perceptions of the employees in Palestinian HEIs who have been working in HEIs for at least one year.

## **Population and Sample**

A population refers to the collection of entities upon which the author intends to form assessments. These entities may encompass clusters of individuals, consumers, businesses, or goods (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011). The research population includes all administrative and academic staff that have worked in HEIs for at least one year. This prerequisite will ensure that they have undergone an evaluation process at least once during their tenure. There are 17,477 higher education employees in Palestine, as per the statistics from Palestinian MOHE and Scientific Research (Ministry of Higher Education [MOHE], 2022).

In accordance to the sampling technique, a self-selected online convenience sampling, which is a type of nonprobability sampling where participants are selected based on their availability, accessibility, and willingness to participate (Bethlehem & Biffignandi, 2012), was adopted in this study. An email invitation with a Google Form link was sent to all HEIs in Palestine through the Human Resources offices in each institution, and 413 completed questionnaires were received with an over coverage of 43 employees who have worked in HEIs for less than one year, known through a prerequisite question. Eventually, the sample consisted of

370 valid responses of higher education employees in Palestine who have been working in HEIs for at least one year.

### **Data Collection**

Secondary data for this research was obtained through desk survey of books, magazines, scientific studies, and other references related to the subject matter. The author also collected data from the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Primary data collected by the author using structured cross-sectional questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was sent to the sample population via email to the HR department in HEIs to be forwarded to their employees. Each employee received a cover sheet outlining the intent of the analysis, the rights of the participants, and the name and contact number of the author to follow-up on regarding results. Additionally, face validity was assessed by distributing the questionnaire to a pilot group of non-experts. This group evaluated the questionnaire's clarity, comprehensibility, and appropriateness to ensure it is easily understandable to a broader audience.

### **Research Instrument**

A comprehensive questionnaire was used in this study to investigate the relationship between PAS traits (clarity, two-way communication, trust, and fairness) and job satisfaction among employees in Palestinian HEIs. The study incorporated the valuable insights provided by Dechev (2010) and Tekeste (2017) regarding the underlying constructs and individual items comprising them. By adapting and applying their established frameworks to the unique context of Palestinian HEIs, and following rigorous assessments of reliability and validity, the questionnaire aimed to shed light on the subtle interactions between the PAS and employees' job satisfaction.

The questionnaire also contained demographic information such as gender, age, educational level, administrative level, and monthly income to investigate the potential variations in job satisfaction levels among employees with different demographic profiles. Major constructs of the study and the individual items comprising them are displayed in table 1 as follows:

**Table 1**

*Study Measurement Scales*

The Construct	Items' code	Items' description
Performance Appraisal		
Clarity	q1.1	I have clear job description
	q1.2	The recruitment process is very clear in my institution
	q1.3	My performance would be periodically evaluated
	q1.4	Performance appraisal management can help people understand the organization's strategic priorities
	q1.5	I clearly understand the purpose of performance appraisal
Two-way Communication	q2.1	The PAP in this institution often results in specification of new goals
	q2.2	My manager discusses regularly my job performance with me
	q2.3	I clearly understand my manager's comments and opinions during the feedback
	q2.4	My manager recognizes me when I do a good job
Trust	q3.1	I have confidence and trust in my immediate supervisor regarding reporting to his/her supervisor
	q3.2	My manager plays a significant role in my career development
	q3.3	My manager is highly capable as manager
	q3.4	My manager has reasonable expectations from my work

Fairness	q3.5	My manager is well informed about my work
	q3.6	Performance appraisal makes me better understand what should be doing
	q3.7	PAP helps manager to manage people better
	q3.8	PAP encourages co-operation & team spirit
	q4.1	My last performance rating was free from bias
	q4.2	I am satisfied from the relationship with my manager
	q4.3	My job is fulfilling my needs
	q4.4	My manager gives me fair feedback
	q4.5	Performance appraisal in my organization is fair
	q4.6	Performance appraisal reflects objectively my performance
Job Satisfaction	q4.7	Performance appraisal influences positively individual performance
	q5.1	It feels like family at work
	q5.2	I think that I could easily become attached to another institution as I am to mine
	q5.3	I feel proud to work for my organization
	q5.4	I receive adequate training and information about the performance appraisal cycle before it starts
	q5.5	I rank my organization higher compared to other employers
	q5.6	I would recommend my organization to all my friends
	q5.7	The salary is adequate reflection of my performance

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### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was performed utilizing SPSS Statistics software (version 26; IBM Corp, 2019). Descriptive statistics, specifically frequency analysis, were employed to characterize the

demographic and socioeconomic attributes of the study sample, which comprised 370 employees from HEIs in Palestine (Blaikie, 2003).

The study constructs, performance appraisal, encompassing clarity, two-way communication, trust, and fairness, as well as job satisfaction, were each composed of a group of individual ordinal-level variables. These variables within each construct were combined using arithmetic mean calculations to generate composite scores, thereby facilitating analysis and interpretation (Bandalos & Finney, 2001). Subsequently, each construct was subjected to descriptive analysis, reporting measures such as means, standard deviations, and relative importance.

An initial assessment of the normality of the derived dependent variable, job satisfaction, was conducted utilizing both analytical (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests; Field, 2018) and graphical (Q-Q plot) methods. Owing to the outcomes of these normality checks, non-parametric tests were adopted to ascertain if significant disparities in job satisfaction levels existed across demographic characteristics (Mann-Whitney U test for gender, Kruskal-Wallis test for age, educational level, administrative level, and monthly income; Field, 2018).

Following these analyses, the relationships between job satisfaction and the four characteristics of the PAS (clarity, two-way communication, trust, and fairness) were explored via Multiple Regression Analysis. This procedure was initiated after confirming the assumptions of linearity, homogeneity of variances, normality of residuals, absence of multicollinearity, and lack of autocorrelation. According to the  $R^2$  goodness-of-fit measure, these four traits of performance appraisal accounted for 62.6% of the variance in job satisfaction (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). A significance level of 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) was employed to determine statistical significance.



For the validation of the instrument, content and face validity were assessed. The adapted questionnaire was evaluated for its clarity, appropriateness, and coverage of the constructs by assessing content Cross-Cultural and face validity. The questionnaire was expertly translated into Arabic to improve data accuracy by enabling respondents to use their preferred language, ensuring better understanding of questions and more accurate answers.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study rigorously upheld ethical standards during and post data collection. Following ethical guidelines, the questionnaire was crafted to ensure participants did not have to disclose their names, affiliations, or any identifiable characteristics, promoting open and genuine responses while safeguarding their anonymity. An explicit informed consent letter was provided to participants before completing the questionnaire detailing the research's purpose, their rights, and the researcher's contact details for any follow-up questions. This document also reaffirmed the commitment to handle their inputs with anonymity, guaranteeing utmost confidentiality.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, an empirical evaluation was conducted regarding the reliability and validity of the research instrument, utilizing the SPSS software version 26 for in-depth statistical analysis. The study draws upon a rigorously selected cohort comprising 370 Palestinian higher education personnel with a minimum tenure of one year in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and central tendency metrics, provide an exhaustive characterization of the sample. Furthermore, the chapter delves into inferential statistical methodologies, employing non-parametric tests for mean comparisons and regression analysis to discern the correlation between appraisal systems and employee job satisfaction. The outcomes, in light of extant literature, offer a comprehensive understanding of the ramifications of appraisal systems within the Palestinian higher education sector.

#### **Reliability of Scale**

Reliability indicates the degree to which the measurement of concept is consistent and dependable. When researchers employ the same scale to gauge a concept multiple times, they commonly use Cronbach's alpha (a statistic ranging from zero to 1) to assess the scale's reliability. Cronbach's alpha is based upon the internal consistency of the items forming the measure (Biemer et al., 2009). Thus, high value of Cronbach's alpha shows good scale reliability with threshold of 0.70 (Peters, 2014). As shown in table 2 of Reliability analysis, all values of Cronbach's alpha are between 0.793 to 0.96, which indicates high levels of reliability for the scale.

**Table 2***Reliability Analysis- Internal Consistency Criteria*

Constructs	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Clarity	5	0.793
Two-way communication	4	0.88
Trust	8	0.908
Fairness	7	0.914
Performance Appraisal	24	0.96
Job Satisfaction	7	0.807

**Validity of the Scale**

Content and face validity were both assessed. The content and Cross-cultural validity of the adapted questionnaire, which is derived from validated instruments used in prior studies (Dechev, 2010; Tekeste, 2017), was evaluated for its clarity, appropriateness, and coverage of the construct after translating it into Arabic by a panel of experts in the fields of human resources and also higher education institutions. Their feedback prompted a slight modification in the questionnaire to capture its various dimensions more comprehensively, thereby enhancing its content validity.

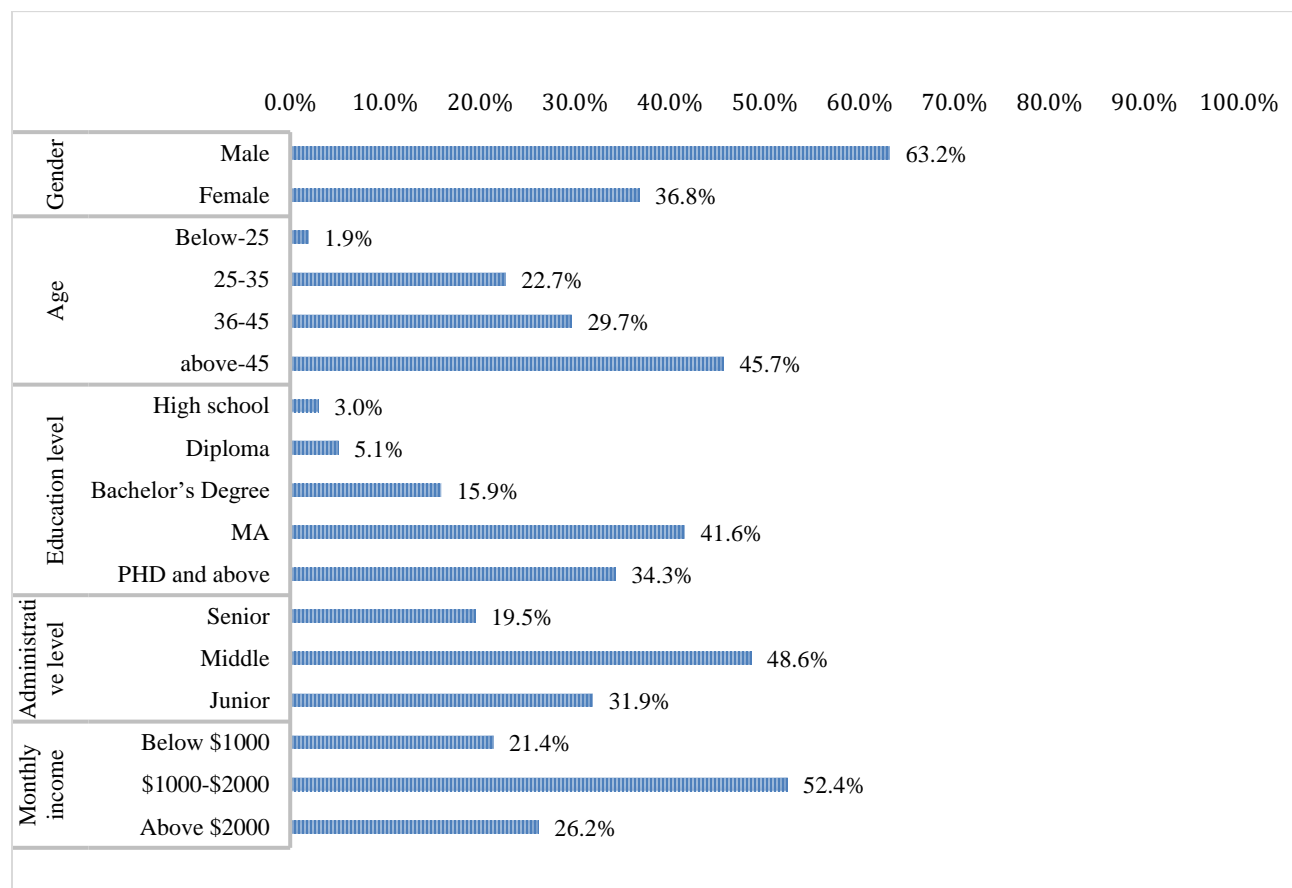
**Descriptive Analysis****Profile of Respondents**

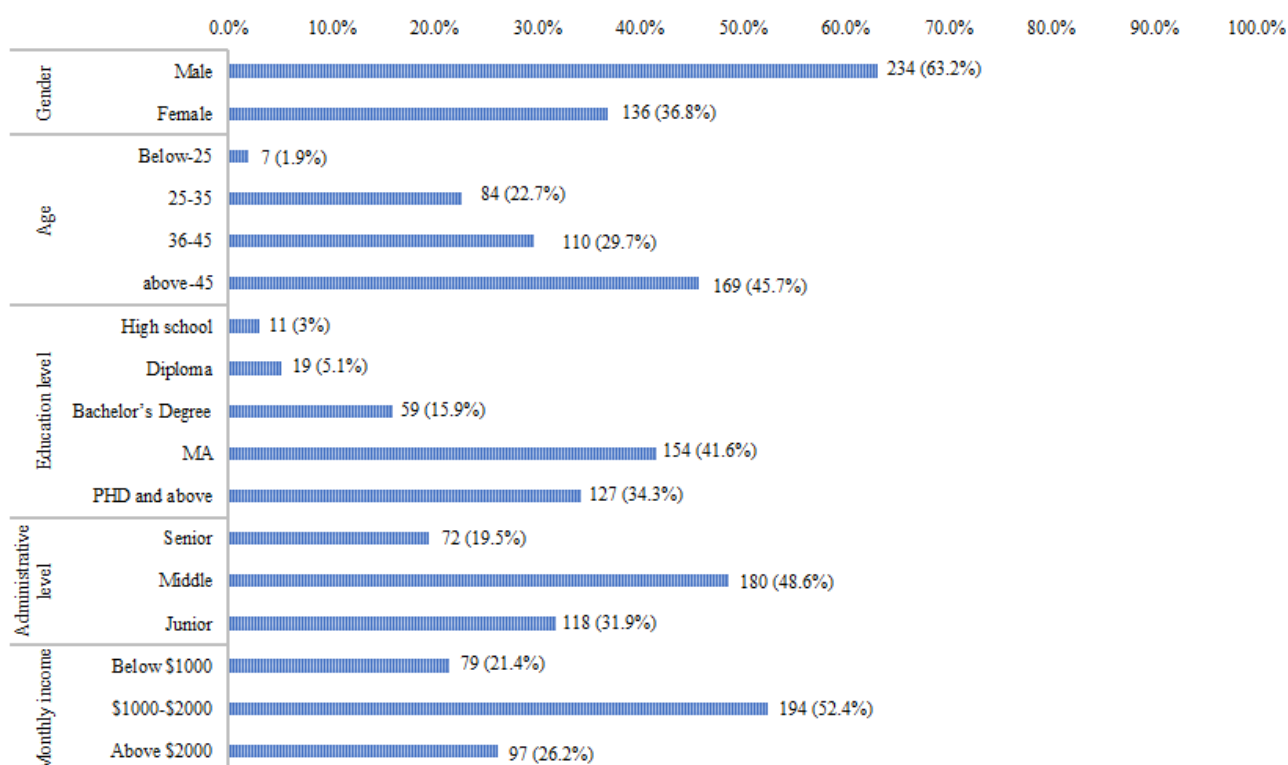
The following section includes a detailed profile of the study respondents who took part in this study, offering vital demographic and socioeconomic information that is essential for comprehending the research findings and generating relevant inferences. Figure 2 shows that the sample of the study consisted of 234 males (63.2%), while females accounted for 136 (36.8%).

In terms of age, 169 (45.7%) of the respondents were above 45 years old. The educational level of the respondents demonstrated a significant proportion of participants with advanced degrees; as the majority of respondents were distributed between those holding a master's degree, with 154 individuals (41.6%), and those with a Ph.D., comprising 127 respondents (34.3%). In addition, 180 (48.6%) of the respondents were in the middle positions (head of division, department manager), and 118 (31.9%) were in junior positions (receptionists, registrars, etc...). Besides that, more than half of the respondents 194 (52.4%) earn \$1000-2000 USD monthly.

**Figure 2**

*Frequency Analysis of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*





According to respondents' perceptions about performance appraisal. Table 3 shows that 252 (68.1%) of them believe positive performance appraisal should indeed be linked to salary increase. Furthermore, 279 (75.4%) believe that positive performance appraisal has a notable impact on employee promotion. In addition, 216 (58.4%) of them think that implementing the performance appraisal is linked to the profitability of the organization.

**Table 3***Respondents' Perceptions About Performance Appraisal*

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you think that positive performance appraisal should lead to increase the salary	NO	118	31.9
	YES	252	68.1
Do you think that positive performance appraisal influences employee promotion	NO	91	24.6
	YES	279	75.4
Do you think that implementing the performance appraisal is linked to the profitability of the organization?	NO	154	41.6
	YES	216	58.4

**Descriptive Statistics of the Main Study Constructs**

This section entails a descriptive analysis of the main study constructs; Performance Appraisal, which is the higher-order component of clarity, two-way communication, trust and fairness, as well as, job satisfaction, presenting the results in terms of arithmetic means, standard deviations and the relative importance. To facilitate interpretation, the author re-scaled the means of five-point Likert scale ratings into three categories: low, medium, and high level of importance. This reclassification enables a more comprehensive understanding of the data, as outlined below:

$$\text{Class length} = (\text{higher value} - \text{lower value}) / \text{number of levels}$$

$$\text{Class length} = (5 - 1) / 3 = 1.33.$$

Thus, the average of each construct is classified as follows:

- ✓ From 1 – 2.33, indicating a low level of importance.
- ✓ From 2.34 - 3.66, indicating a medium level of importance.
- ✓ From 3.67 - 5, indicating a strong and high level of importance.

The following results will answer that posed questions in chapter one, which concerns the level of practices of the PASs and its traits (trust, fairness, clarity and two-way communication) and the level of employees' Job Satisfaction in Palestinian Higher Education Institutions.

**Table 4**

*Summary of Constructs' Scores and Importance Levels (N= 370)*

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Importance</b>
Clarity	3.93	0.80	high
Two-way communication	3.55	1.02	medium
Trust	3.82	0.86	high
Fairness	3.70	0.94	high
Performance Appraisal	3.75	0.81	high
Job Satisfaction	3.66	0.78	medium

*Note.* Table 4 presents the findings related to Performance Appraisal and Job Satisfaction.

Respondents reported a mean score of 3.75 (SD = 0.81) for Performance Appraisal, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the Performance Appraisal Process (PAP) PAP. According to Performance Appraisal traits, respondents reported a mean score of 3.93 (SD = 0.80) for clarity, indicating a high level of clarity in the evaluated aspect. As for two-way communication, the mean score was 3.55 (SD = 1.02), suggesting a medium level of communication effectiveness. In terms of trust, respondents reported a mean score of 3.82 (SD = 0.86), indicating a high level of trust in the evaluated context. For fairness, respondents reported a mean score of 3.70 (SD = 0.94), signifying a high level of perceived fairness. Job Satisfaction received a mean score of 3.66 (SD = 0.78), reflecting a medium level of job satisfaction among the respondents.

## **Descriptive Statistics of the Individual Items Comprising the Main Study Constructs**

Regarding the individual items comprising the main study constructs, table 5 provides an overview of the respondents' perceptions of performance appraisal across its different traits, as well as, their perceptions of job satisfaction. It presents the frequency and percentage distribution of their items' responses.

According to performance appraisal traits, the majority of respondents indicated agreement with statements related to clarity, a significant percentage (48.6%) of respondents strongly agreed that they have a clear job description and 35.7% agreed on that. When it came to the recruitment process's clarity in their institution, 30.3% strongly agreed and 41.4% agreed. On periodic evaluations of performance, 33.2% strongly agreed, accompanied by 40.0% who agreed. According to helping people understand the organization's strategic priorities, 24.3% voiced strong agreement, and 44.1% agreed. Lastly, 35.7% and 43.2% strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that they understand the purpose of performance appraisal.

For the two-way communication trait, 18.9% of respondents strongly agreed that the PAP often results in the specification of new goals, with an agreement of 39.2%. The regularity of discussions about job performance with managers received strong agreement from 18.9% and agreement from 35.7%. Clear understanding of managers' feedback comments was 23.0% strongly agreed and agreed upon by 41.9%. As well as, 30.0% strongly agreed that their managers recognize them for a good job and 39.7% agreed.

Under the trust trait, 29.5% of respondents strongly agreed and 38.9% agreed that they have confidence and trust in their immediate supervisor. When asked about a manager's role in career development, 24.6% expressed strong agreement and 34.6% agreed. Evaluating their managers' capabilities, 30.8% strongly agreed that their manager is highly capable, and 36.5%



agreed. According to reasonable expectations from work, 24.3% strongly agreed that their managers have reasonable expectations and 41.4% agreed. About 36.8% strongly agreed that their manager is well-informed about their work with 40.3% who agreed. For the aspect of performance appraisal help in understanding job roles better, 30.8% strongly agreed and 42.7% agreed. Helping in better management by managers was strongly agreed upon by 34.1%, and agreed upon by 46.8%. Lastly, its role in encouraging cooperation and team spirit was strongly agreed by 32.2% and agreed by 39.2%.

In terms of the fairness trait, 30.3% and 34.3% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their last performance rating was free from bias. The satisfaction in their relationship with their managers was strongly agreed by 40.5% and agreed by 37.8%. As for job fulfillment, 26.2% strongly agreed that their job is fulfilling their needs, complemented by 38.6% who agreed. Fair feedback from managers was strongly agreed by 21.4% and agreed upon by 37.3%. The fairness of the PAP was confirmed by 21.6% who strongly agreed and 33.2% who agreed. Reflecting performance objectively through appraisals was acknowledged by 22.7% who strongly agreed on it, and 38.4% who agreed. Lastly, the positive influence of performance appraisal on individual performance was strongly agreed upon by 34.6%, and agreed by 42.4%.

Lastly, regarding job satisfaction, 39.5% and 33.8% strongly agreed and agreed, respectively that they feel like family at work. Only 15.9% strongly agreed that they could easily attach to another institution as compared to theirs, while 34.1% agreed. A significant percentage of 49.5% strongly agreed that they feel proud to work for their organization and 34.9% agreed. In terms of training and information regarding the performance appraisal cycle were strongly agreed by 11.9%, with 34.3% in agreement. Furthermore, when asked to rank their organization, 35.7% strongly agreed that theirs was superior, with 33% in agreement. Looking to

recommendations, 39.2% of respondents strongly agreed and 35.1% agreed that they would recommend their organization to friends. Finally, the reflection of their performance in relation to their salary was strongly agreed by a relatively smaller percentage 15.4% and agreed by 28.9%.

**Table 5**

*Respondents' Perception of Performance Appraisal and Job Satisfaction: Frequency and Percentage Distribution*

Performance Appraisal Traits						
The Item N (%)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	
Clarity						
I have clear job description	180 (48.6)	132 (35.7)	20 (5.4)	19 (5.1)	19 (5.1)	
The recruitment process is very clear in my institution	112 (30.3)	153 (41.4)	50 (13.5)	32 (8.6)	23 (6.2)	
My performance would be periodically evaluated	123 (33.2)	148 (40.0)	60 (16.2)	28 (7.6)	11 (3.0)	
Performance appraisal						
management can help people understand the organization's strategic priorities	90 (24.3)	163 (44.1)	67 (18.1)	33 (8.9)	17 (4.6)	
I clearly understand the purpose of performance appraisal	132 (35.7)	160 (43.2)	35 (9.5)	27 (7.3)	16 (4.3)	
Communication						
The PAP in this institution often results in specification of new goals	70 (18.9)	145 (39.2)	63 (17.0)	61 (16.5)	31 (8.4)	

The Item N (%)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
My manager discusses regularly my job performance with me	70 (18.9)	132 (35.7)	63 (17.0)	70 (18.9)	35 (9.5)
I clearly understand my manager's comments and opinions during the feedback	85 (23.0)	155 (41.9)	63 (17.0)	45 (12.2)	22 (5.9)
My manager recognizes me when I do a good job	111 (30.0)	147 (39.7)	52 (14.1)	36 (9.7)	24 (6.5)
Trust					
I have confidence and trust in my immediate supervisor regarding reporting to his/her supervisor	109 (29.5)	144 (38.9)	67 (18.1)	30 (8.1)	20 (5.4)
My manager plays a significant role in my career development	91 (24.6)	128 (34.6)	75 (20.3)	42 (11.4)	34 (9.2)
My manager is highly capable as manager	114 (30.8)	135 (36.5)	57 (15.4)	39 (10.5)	25 (6.8)
My manager has reasonable expectations from my work	90 (24.3)	153 (41.4)	75 (20.3)	30 (8.1)	22 (5.9)
My manager is well-informed about my work	136 (36.8)	149 (40.3)	51 (13.8)	23 (6.2)	11 (3.0)
Performance appraisal makes me better understand what should be doing	114 (30.8)	158 (42.7)	51 (13.8)	30 (8.1)	17 (4.6)
PAP helps manager to manage people better	126 (34.1)	173 (46.8)	32 (8.6)	30 (8.1)	9 (2.4)
PAP encourages co-operation & team spirit	119 (32.2)	145 (39.2)	54 (14.6)	35 (9.5)	17 (4.6)

The Item N (%)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
Fairness					
My last performance rating was free from bias	112 (30.3)	127 (34.3)	75 (20.3)	27 (7.3)	29 (7.8)
I am satisfied from the relationship with my manager	150 (40.5)	140 (37.8)	42 (11.4)	23 (6.2)	15 (4.1)
My job is fulfilling my needs	97 (26.2)	143 (38.6)	66 (17.8)	39 (10.5)	25 (6.8)
My manager gives me fair feedback	79 (21.4)	138 (37.3)	68 (18.4)	58 (15.7)	27 (7.3)
Performance appraisal in my organization is fair	80 (21.6)	123 (33.2)	80 (21.6)	54 (14.6)	33 (8.9)
Performance appraisal reflects objectively my performance	84 (22.7)	142 (38.4)	74 (20.0)	45 (12.2)	25 (6.8)
Performance appraisal influences positively individual performance	128 (34.6)	157 (42.4)	46 (12.4)	26 (7.0)	13 (3.5)
Job Satisfaction					
It feels like family at work	146 (39.5)	125 (33.8)	58 (15.7)	25 (6.8)	16 (4.3)
I think that I could easily become attached to another institution as I am to mine	59 (15.9)	126 (34.1)	74 (20.0)	70 (18.9)	41 (11.1)
I feel proud to work for my organization	183 (49.5)	129 (34.9)	31 (8.4)	21 (5.7)	6 (1.6)
I receive adequate training and information about the performance appraisal cycle before it starts	44 (11.9)	127 (34.3)	87 (23.5)	67 (18.1)	45 (12.2)
I rank my organization higher compared to other employers	132 (35.7)	122 (33.0)	75 (20.3)	26 (7.0)	15 (4.1)

The Item N (%)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
I would recommend my organization to all my friends	145 (39.2)	130 (35.1)	55 (14.9)	24 (6.5)	16 (4.3)
The salary is adequate reflection of my performance	57 (15.4)	107 (28.9)	77 (20.8)	74 (20.0)	55 (14.9)

## **Job Satisfaction and its Determinants: Exploring Demographics and Performance**

### **Appraisal Traits**

Job satisfaction is an important part of employee well-being and organizational success, influencing productivity, staff retention, and overall job performance. Understanding the elements that lead to job satisfaction is critical for institutions seeking to build a good and friendly work environment.

In the upcoming sections, the author aimed to investigate potential disparities in job satisfaction levels across several demographic characteristics, including gender, age, educational level, administrative level, and monthly income, in the next section of the study. The investigation employed non-parametric statistical tests, specifically the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis test, to compare job satisfaction scores among different categories within each demographic variable. These tests were chosen due to their suitability for comparing job satisfaction scores across different categories within each demographic variable.

In addition to the demographic analysis, a comprehensive multivariate analysis was conducted to delve deeper into the relationship between Performance Appraisal traits and Job Satisfaction in the Palestinian context. This approach allowed for the estimation of the individual

impact of each trait of Performance Appraisal, on Job Satisfaction while simultaneously controlling for the potential effects of other traits.

It is worth noting that the individual ordinal-level variables within each trait (e.g., clarity, two-way communication, trust, fairness and job satisfaction) were combined using the arithmetic mean to derive the composite scores to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the analysis.

### **Analyzing Job Satisfaction Across Demographic Characteristics**

A Mann-Whitney U test was used to see if there were gender disparities in job satisfaction. Table 5 reveals that the test was statistically significant ( $U = 11915.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Males ( $n = 234$ ) had a higher mean rank ( $M = 202.58$ ) of job satisfaction than females ( $n = 136$ ,  $M = 156.11$ ). This implies that males in this sample reported higher levels of job satisfaction than females.

Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to determine whether there are significant disparities in job satisfaction based on the remaining demographic variables. The results in table 5 show that there were no significant disparities detected among different categories within each one; age (Kruskal-Wallis H test,  $\chi^2(3) = 1.18$ ,  $p = .758$ ), Education level (Kruskal-Wallis H test,  $\chi^2(4) = 3.46$ ,  $p = .484$ ), Administrative level (Kruskal-Wallis H test,  $\chi^2(2) = 3.23$ ,  $p = .199$ ), and Monthly income (Kruskal-Wallis H test,  $\chi^2(2) = 1.31$ ,  $p = .519$ ). As a result, H2 was supported partially only regarding gender, which stated that there are statistically significant disparities in job satisfaction levels across several demographic characteristics, including gender, age, educational level, administrative level, and monthly income in Palestinian HEIs.

**Table 6***Disparities in JS Levels Across Several Demographic Characteristics*

Variable	Categories	N (%)	Mean Rank	Test Statistic* (P-value)
Gender	Male	234 (63.2)	202.58	11915.5 (.000)
	Female	136 (36.8)	156.11	
Age (df=3)	Below-25	7 (1.9)	195.36	1.18 (.758)
	25-35	84 (22.7)	176.79	
	36-45	110 (29.7)	182.74	
	above-45	169 (45.7)	191.22	
	High school	11 (3)	230.55	
Education level (df=4)	Diploma	19 (5.1)	208.71	3.46 (.484)
	Bachelor's Degree	59 (15.9)	175.03	
	MA	154 (41.6)	183.94	
	PhD and above	127 (34.3)	184.89	
	Senior (Deans, vice deans)	72 (19.5)	203.79	
Administrative level (df=2)	Middle (head of division, department manager)	180 (48.6)	184.97	3.23 (.199)
	Junior (receptionists, registrars etc...)	118 (31.9)	175.15	
Monthly income (df=2)	Below \$1000	79 (21.4)	195.63	1.31 (.519)
	\$1000-\$2000	194 (52.4)	185.57	
	Above \$2000	97 (26.2)	177.10	

*Note.* \*For both Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H tests.

### **Multivariate Analysis of JS and the Key Aspects of PA (Multiple Regression Analysis)**

Regression analysis is a statistical technique that allows one to assess the relationship between one dependent variable (DV) and several independent variables (IVs) (Tabachnick &

Fidell, 2019). Regression analysis was conducted to determine the impact of Performance Appraisal on the Job Satisfaction in the Palestinian context as a further analysis to estimate the impact of each predictor (each trait of Performance Appraisal) on the job satisfaction, while controlling for the effects of other traits.

Evaluation of the assumptions of the multiple linear regression, which is a critical step in ensuring the reliability and validity of the analysis. Following is a breakdown of the assessment's assumptions:

- **Linearity:** The examination of the Loess Curve, which represents the scatterplot of the standardized predicted value of Job Satisfaction against the standardized residuals, suggests that the relationship appears approximately linear around zero, which can assume that the linearity assumption is met, implying that the model captures the linear associations between the predictor variables (performance appraisal traits) and the outcome variable (job satisfaction).
- **Homogeneity of variances:** The scatterplot of the standardized predicted value of Job Satisfaction against the standardized residuals showed no pattern. This assumes that the homoscedasticity assumption is met (Field, 2018).
- **Normality of Residuals:** Normal probability plot, which compares the observed cumulative distribution function (CDF) of the standardized residual to the expected CDF of the normal distribution (Field, 2018), showed that the residuals are approximately normally distributed as the data points followed a straight line that is close to the diagonal reference line.



- Multicollinearity: Values of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for all traits (predictors) showed that there is no multicollinearity problem, as they are all below the threshold of 10 (Field, 2018). As shown in table 8.
- Autocorrelation (independence of the residuals): The Durbin-Watson tests, which examines whether the adjacent residuals are correlated, yielded a test statistic of 1.24, which is between 1 and 3. This result showed that there is no cause for concern (Field, 2018).

In conclusion, the assessment of these assumptions indicates that the multiple linear regression model is typically valid and that its outputs can be reliable.

Table 6 shows that the traits of PAS; clarity, two-way communication, trust, and fairness, statistically significantly predicted job satisfaction, as indicated by the statistical analysis ( $F(4, 365) = 152.65, p < .000$ ). This outcome provides strong support for Hypothesis 1 (H1), which stated that there is statistically significant positive relationship between the overall PAS's traits (clarity, two-way communication& feedback, trust, and fairness) and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs. Additionally, the model accounted for 62.6% of the variance in job satisfaction ( $R^2 = .626$ ), as shown in table 7.

**Table 7**

*Overall Model Significance*

Test statistics	P-value
$F(4, 365) = 152.65$	.000 <sup>b</sup>

Note: a. Dependent Variable: job satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Fairness, Clarity, two-way communication, Trust

**Table 8**

*Model Summary: Explained Variance and Fit Statistic*

R Square	Durbin-Watson
0.626	1.274

*Note.* Predictors: (Constant), Fairness, Clarity, two-way communication, Trust.

Dependent Variable: job satisfaction

Table 8 demonstrates the significance of Regression Coefficients; Performance Appraisal's traits individually with their respective relationships with job satisfaction.

Firstly, the trait of trust showed a statistically significant positive relationship with job satisfaction ( $b = 0.319$ ,  $p < .001$ ), meaning that as trust increases by one unit, job satisfaction would increase by 0.319 units, keeping all other traits constant. As a result, H1a was supported, which stated that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between trust and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs.

Secondly, fairness exhibited the strongest positive relationship with job satisfaction ( $b = 0.393$ ,  $p < .001$ ), implying that as fairness increases by one unit, job satisfaction would increase by 0.393 units, keeping all other traits constant. That lead to supporting H1b, which states that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between fairness and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs.

Moreover, clarity was found to have a statistically significant positive relationship with job satisfaction ( $b = 0.175$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that as the clarity increases by one unit, job satisfaction would increase by 0.175 units, keeping all other traits constant. So, H1c was

supported, which stated that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between clarity and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs.

Conversely, two-way communication was found to have a statistically significant negative relationship with job satisfaction ( $b = -0.122$ ,  $p = .010$ ), suggesting that higher levels of two-way communication are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction, adjusting for all other traits. Resulted in not supporting H1d, which stated that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between two-way communication and employee's job satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs.

The observed negative relationship between two-way communication and job satisfaction in the multiple regression analysis, despite a potential positive bivariate correlation, is statistically possible because we are looking at the association between job satisfaction and two-way communication while adjusting for the impacts of other predictors (the three Performance Appraisal traits of clarity, trust, and fairness).

Increased two-way communication may result in decreasing job satisfaction, which can be explained by the nature and quality of the two-way communication. For example, if two-way communication is regular yet unclear, it may lead to uncertainty or misunderstanding regarding job roles, expectations, or performance feedback. Likewise, if employees believe two-way communication to be untrustworthy or unfair, they may get frustrated or disillusioned.

In summary, this analysis of the impact of Performance Appraisal individual traits provides valuable guidance for institutions seeking to optimize their performance appraisal systems and enhance employee well-being in Palestinian HEIs.

**Table 9***Regression Coefficients<sup>a</sup>: Performance Appraisal's traits on Job Satisfaction*

Model	B	Std. Error	P-value	VIF
(Constant)	0.729	0.135	.000	
Clarity	0.175	0.044	.000	1.977
Two-way communication	- 0.122	0.047	.010	3.711
Trust	0.319	0.058	.000	4.09
Fairness	0.393	0.055	.000	4.234

*Note.* a. Dependent Variable: job satisfaction

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION

This chapter initially provides a brief overview of the study, detailing its objectives, methodology, and data analysis, focusing on the link between PASs and employee satisfaction in Palestinian HEIs. It then highlights key findings, emphasizing the role of the main PASs aspects; trust, fairness, clarity, and two-way communication in influencing employees' job perceptions. The chapter concludes by addressing the study's limitations and offers insights for further research and recommendations to improve PAPs.

#### **Summary**

Experienced institutions employ a series of human resource practices to support effective and successful operations; one of those practices is implementing performance appraisals, as they play a crucial role in the organization's overall success. An appropriate PAS could increase the satisfaction of employees at work. Employees who are satisfied with the PAP will be satisfied with their jobs. While the benefits of a well-implemented PAS are recognized for improving human resource management, there still exists confusion regarding the significant traits that should accompany the PAP. It is inevitable that if the appraisal system is not performed correctly, it can lose its significance and fail to provide the intended benefits to both organizations and employees. Hence, this research aimed to assist institutions, particularly HEIs in Palestine, in implementing an effective appraisal system by investigating the relationship between PAS and employee job satisfaction. A comprehensive questionnaire was developed to understand and assess the relationship between the variables, drawing from previous studies by Dechev (2010) and Tekeste (2017) and adapted to suit the unique context of Palestinian higher

education. The questionnaire was the primary research instrument to explore the subtle interactions between the PAS and employees' job satisfaction.

The research approach involved accurately describing appraisal systems and analyzing their role in employee job satisfaction. Four crucial traits of the appraisal system were selected (clarity, two-way communication, trust, and fairness) for examination, along with their consequences on job satisfaction.

Descriptive, analytical, and correlation techniques were employed using a cross-sectional design. The study population included all Palestinian higher education employees working in Palestinian HEIs for at least one year, totaling 17,477 employees. A self-selected online convenience sampling method was adopted, and 413 completed questionnaires were received. After filtering respondents who had worked for less than a year, the final valid sample consisted of 370 responses. Data collection also involved secondary data obtained through desk surveys of relevant literature. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS Statistics software, focusing on descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The questionnaire's reliability was established through Cronbach's alpha, and content and face validity were also assessed.

The results section provided a comprehensive profile of the study respondents, detailing their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Job satisfaction was explored across various demographic characteristics using non-parametric tests, revealing significant disparities based on gender but not on other variables.

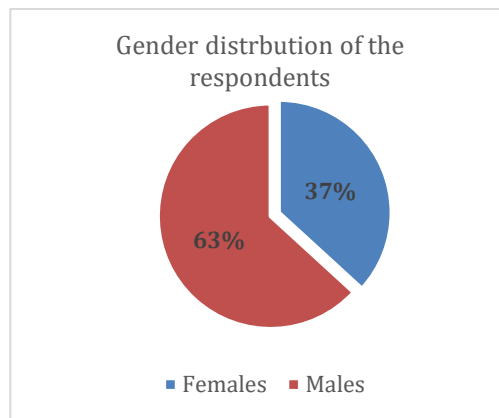
### **Discussion of Main Findings**

The demographic composition of the study's respondents significantly impacts the understanding of performance appraisal and job satisfaction in Palestinian Higher Education

Institutions (HEIs). Three hundred seventy participants participated in this study, with 63.2% males and 36.8% females. This gender distribution invites a closer examination of whether gender-related disparities influence the perceptions of performance appraisal and job satisfaction. Research in various contexts has shown that gender can significantly impact employee perceptions of various workplace factors, including appraisal processes.

**Figure 3**

*Gender Distribution of the Respondents*



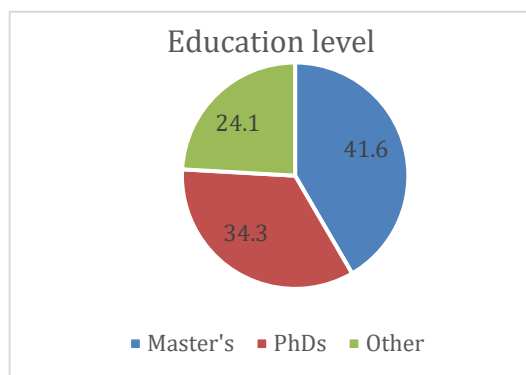
Moreover, the age distribution among the respondents revealed that 45.7% were above 45. This age group might bring extensive professional experience, potentially influencing their views on performance appraisal. Younger participants, on the other hand, may have different expectations and interpretations of the appraisal process. These age-related variations could offer valuable insights into the evolving landscape of performance appraisal in Palestinian HEIs.

Additionally, the study uncovered a noteworthy educational composition, with 41.6% holding master's degrees and 34.3% possessing Ph.D. qualifications. This highly educated sample can bring a depth of knowledge and critical thinking to their performance appraisal

assessments. Educational attainment often correlates with job expectations and career aspirations, making assessing whether advanced degrees impact these perceptions is crucial.

**Figure 4**

*Educational Level*



Administrative hierarchy emerged as another critical demographic factor, with 48.6% of respondents holding middle-level positions while 31.9% occupied junior roles. The distribution of jobs within organizations can profoundly influence how individuals experience performance appraisal. Those in senior roles may have more significant responsibilities and greater influence over appraisal processes, potentially affecting their perceptions compared to junior staff members. Furthermore, the explored monthly income levels revealed that most respondents (52.4%) earned between \$1000 and \$2000 monthly. Income levels can influence job satisfaction considerably, with financial stability playing a vital role in an employee's overall contentment.

This data provides essential context for interpreting the findings, as income-related factors may intersect with performance appraisal and job satisfaction. The research uncovered valuable insights into how respondents perceive performance appraisal within the context of Palestinian HEIs. Notably, a substantial majority (68.1%) of participants believed that positive



performance appraisal should be linked to salary increases. This underscores the prevalent expectation among employees that their performance should directly correlate with financial rewards, reflecting the critical role performance appraisal plays in compensation strategies.

Moreover, 75.4% of respondents believed that positive performance appraisal significantly contributes to employee promotions. This perception highlights the pivotal function of performance appraisal in shaping career progression and professional growth within Palestinian HEIs. Employees often view appraisals as an opportunity to showcase their skills and secure advancement opportunities.

Additionally, 58.4% of participants believed implementing performance appraisal is linked to the organization's profitability. This perception underscores the broader organizational implications of effective performance appraisal systems. Employees recognize that well-structured and well-executed assessments can contribute to organizational success, aligning their individual goals with the institution's goals.

This study provides a comprehensive summary of key performance appraisal and job satisfaction constructs. Notably, clarity within the appraisal process emerged as a prominent factor, with respondents reporting high transparency regarding job descriptions and recruitment. Clarity is vital in ensuring employees understand their roles and how their performance aligns with organizational objectives. However, two-way communication within the appraisal process received a medium-level rating. This suggests room for improvement in fostering effective communication channels between employees and managers. Open and transparent communication is essential for conveying feedback, setting expectations, and addressing concerns, all of which are integral to a successful appraisal process.

Regarding trust, participants expressed high confidence in their immediate supervisors. Trust is a cornerstone of effective performance appraisal, as employees must believe that the process is fair and unbiased. The high level of trust reported indicates a positive foundation for the appraisal system.

Fairness was another fundamental construct, with participants perceiving a high level of fairness in the performance appraisal process. This finding underscores the importance of equity and impartiality in employee evaluations, as perceptions of fairness can significantly impact job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Respondents reported high satisfaction with the performance appraisal process, while job satisfaction was rated at a medium level. These findings imply that while performance appraisal processes are generally viewed positively, other factors beyond the appraisal system influence overall job satisfaction levels among employees in Palestinian HEIs.

The analysis delved into disparities in job satisfaction across various demographic variables. One striking finding was the significant gender-based difference in job satisfaction, with males reporting higher levels of job satisfaction than females. This gender-based variation in job satisfaction raises essential questions about factors contributing to this gap. Further research may be warranted to explore the specific aspects of performance appraisal and workplace dynamics that impact job satisfaction differently for male and female employees.

However, it is worth noting that no significant disparities were identified based on age, education level, administrative level, or monthly income. These findings suggest that, aside from gender, these demographic factors may not strongly predict job satisfaction among employees in Palestinian HEIs.

Multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to better comprehend the relationships between performance appraisal traits and job satisfaction. This statistical technique allowed us to assess the impact of each performance appraisal trait while controlling for the influence of other characteristics.

The analysis revealed trust, fairness, and clarity had statistically significant positive relationships with job satisfaction. Specifically, as trust, fairness, and transparency in performance appraisal increased, job satisfaction also increased. These findings validate the hypothesis that these appraisal traits and job satisfaction have a positive relationship.

Interestingly, two-way communication exhibited a statistically significant negative relationship with job satisfaction. This result indicates that higher levels of two-way communication were associated with lower job satisfaction, even after accounting for other factors. This unexpected finding prompts a closer examination of the communication dynamics within organizations. It suggests that merely increasing communication may not enhance job satisfaction; instead, the quality and content of communication may play a more significant role.

### **Conclusion**

The findings offer an in-depth understanding of how employees within Palestinian higher education institutions view performance appraisal and its consequential effects on their job contentment. The descriptive statistics showed that there's a predominant satisfaction concerning the Performance Appraisal Process (PAP) and overall satisfaction with their roles. Delving deeper, the regression analysis revealed that specific attributes of the appraisal process, namely trust, fairness, and clarity, have a particularly strong positive correlation with job satisfaction. Intriguingly, the analysis unearthed an unexpected pattern with two-way communication. Contrary to conventional beliefs, two-way communication was found to have a

negative relationship with job satisfaction when other variables were held constant. This pivotal finding underscores the need for organizations to rethink and perhaps recalibrate their communication strategies, ensuring they are both practical and efficient. It's not just about promoting communication; it's about doing it right to ensure optimal employee satisfaction.

The research unearthed a notable discrepancy in job satisfaction based on gender. Specifically, male employees exhibited a more pronounced sense of contentment in their roles than their female counterparts. This stark contrast in job satisfaction levels between the genders is a significant observation. Yet, when delving into other demographic variables - be it age, level of education attained, administrative roles within the institution, or even monthly earnings - no significant variations stood out in the satisfaction levels. Given the prominence of the gender disparity, it becomes imperative for institutions, especially within the Palestinian HEIs, to implement targeted strategies. Such interventions should aim to understand and subsequently address female employees' unique challenges and concerns, ensuring a more inclusive and satisfactory work environment for all.

The research findings provide a compelling narrative that delves deep into the perspectives of employees within Palestinian higher education institutions, shedding light on their perceptions of performance appraisal and the far-reaching consequences it carries within this unique context.

Within the backdrop of the Palestinian higher education landscape, where institutions grapple with multifaceted challenges arising from political, economic, and social factors, the study explores the intricate web of beliefs and sentiments held by academic and administrative staff regarding performance appraisal.

The study reveals that for many employees, performance appraisal transcends the mere evaluation of their professional contributions; it reflects their commitment to the enduring pursuit of knowledge in a region marked by adversity. Participants express a profound connection between their role within higher education and the larger mission of preserving and advancing Palestinian culture, identity, and resilience. As unveiled through their narratives, performance appraisal becomes a lens through which they perceive their contributions to this noble cause.

In the narratives these employees share, a nuanced tapestry of emotions unfolds. They speak of the anticipation and apprehension that precede the appraisal process, where personal and professional identities are laid bare for scrutiny. This moment, they convey, is pivotal, for it is not just about numbers and metrics but about validation, acknowledgment, and recognition of their tireless efforts to impart knowledge and uplift their communities.

The findings also unveil the intricate interplay between performance appraisal and job satisfaction. As employees describe their experiences, it becomes evident that satisfaction transcends the boundaries of a mere job. It becomes an indicator of their alignment with the institutional mission, a measure of their contributions to the resilience of their society, and a reflection of their personal growth and development. Yet, the narratives are challenging. Employees voice concerns about the fairness and transparency of the appraisal process, echoing the broader societal complexities within which these institutions operate. Questions of equity and justice emerge, underscoring the need for performance appraisal systems that navigate these turbulent waters with utmost sensitivity.

In summary, the research findings offer a captivating narrative that unveils the intricacies of performance appraisal within Palestinian higher education institutions. It is a story of dedication, resilience, and the pursuit of knowledge against a challenging and ever-evolving

landscape. These narratives serve as a beacon, illuminating the path towards enhancing performance appraisal systems that not only evaluate but empower, that not only assess but inspire, and that not only gauge job satisfaction but contribute to a larger, enduring mission of educational excellence in a region that prizes knowledge as a beacon of hope.

### **Limitations**

Using a questionnaire as the primary data collection technique inherently has certain limitations. Primarily, while it effectively delineates the respondents' attitudes and perceptions, it often misses accurately capturing their actual behaviors. Moreover, the very nature of such structured tools can sometimes constrict participants, inhibiting them from conveying complex thoughts or detailed experiences, especially when bound by the confines of multiple-choice or Likert-scale options. Another limitation stems from the reliance on quantitative research. Such an approach may deprive the study of more affluent, more contextual information that participants could provide, making it challenging to deeply comprehend the fundamental connection between PAS and job satisfaction, a depth that a mixed-method approach, including qualitative research, might offer.

Additionally, participants' "willingness to participate" can affect the results. In this sense, a pivotal limitation would center around linguistic and cultural barriers. That is when research encompasses a diverse pool of respondents, translating and adapting tools like questionnaires can inadvertently introduce interpretation errors, potentially compromising data validity. Addressing the diverse workforce within Palestinian HEIs, including both Palestinian and international employees, the study took measures to mitigate this such that the questionnaire was expertly translated into Arabic and subsequently distributed in both Arabic and English by the HR departments.

The integrity of the questionnaire itself poses potential challenges as well. Assuring its validity and reliability is paramount, and acknowledging this, the study introduced a pilot phase for the questionnaire, grounding it in tried and tested measurement scales. Lastly, the shadow of generalizability concerns should be considered, especially from convenience sampling. While the very essence of such sampling means the collected sample may not wholly represent the larger population, this study's sizable and contextually suitable sample, compared against the environment of the consistent higher education landscape in Palestine, does lend weight to its findings, enabling conclusions that are both pertinent and resonant within the established research environment.

### **Recommendations**

In light of the extensive research conducted throughout the dissertation, recommendations are formulated for honing and augmenting the gaps and challenges in the appraisal system, which in turn helps improve employee satisfaction. By integrating these recommendations, organizations and higher education institutions (HEIs) can develop a holistic approach to enhancing job satisfaction through performance appraisal systems. This approach promotes fairness, transparency, trust, and effective communication while addressing gender disparities and supporting employee growth and development. The following section details these recommendations to provide a comprehensive guide for optimizing performance appraisal practices and fostering a more satisfied and motivated workforce.

#### *1. Enhancing Performance Appraisal Traits*

Organizations should prioritize enhancing performance appraisal traits within their appraisal processes, including clarity, Trust, fairness, and effective communication. These traits

substantially impact job satisfaction and contribute significantly to a more motivated and content workforce.

## *2. Addressing Gender Disparities*

Addressing gender disparities in job satisfaction is imperative. Organizations should proactively investigate and take measures to rectify such inequality. Implementing strategies that promote gender equality and eliminate gender bias in the workplace can improve employee job satisfaction.

## *3. Improving Two-Way Communication*

Recognizing the negative correlation between two-way communication and job satisfaction, organizations should strongly emphasize improving the quality and transparency of communication. Encouraging regular feedback and open dialogues can create a more positive work environment and effectively address employee concerns.

## *4. Ensuring Fairness*

Ensuring fairness within the structure of the appraisal system is fundamental. When employees believe evaluations are conducted reliably, transparently, and without bias or discrimination, it significantly enhances job satisfaction.

## *5. Fostering Trust*

Fostering trust in the performance appraisal system (PAS) is paramount. Trust in supervisors' intentions encourages a more optimistic view among employees, leading to increased productivity, engagement, and overall satisfaction.



#### *6. Providing Clear Expectations*

Providing clear expectations in performance appraisals is essential. Organizations should ensure employees understand expectations, goals, and the evaluation process, reducing confusion and contributing to a positive employee experience.

#### *7. Investing in Professional Development*

Investing in professional development opportunities aligned with the PAS can enhance employee skills and demonstrate a commitment to their growth. Tailoring training to address skill deficiencies and capitalize on strengths based on appraisal results maximizes the value of these opportunities.

#### *8. Continuous Evaluation and Feedback*

Regularly seeking employee feedback contributes to the ongoing improvement of the PAS and helps maintain job satisfaction. Employees should have opportunities to express concerns and provide valuable input to the organization.

#### *9. Continuous Monitoring of PAS*

Continuous monitoring of the PAS is crucial. Organizations should regularly assess the system's effectiveness in enhancing employee performance and addressing skill deficits identified.

#### *10. Delegating Control Over the PAP*

Delegating appropriate levels of control over the Performance Appraisal Process (PAP) to employees fosters a perception of fairness and responsibility. Encouraging training opportunities aligned with organizational objectives is essential for job satisfaction and efficient task execution.

## **Future Research**

In conclusion, exploring the relationship between the PAS and employee job satisfaction, this section discusses potential avenues for further investigation within the scope of this dissertation. These research directions represent a valuable opportunity to comprehend better the complex relationship between performance appraisal systems and employee job satisfaction. These avenues for future research hold the potential to provide actionable insights for organizations and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

1. Mixed-methods research: integrating qualitative research with the quantitative one by implementing in-depth interviews to explore employees' perceptions, experiences, and narratives can uncover the nuanced insights that resulted from the quantitative analysis. It is important to employ mixed method approaches collecting qualitative and quantitative from the different stakeholders.
2. Future research endeavors could expand upon the findings of this dissertation by examining institutions beyond those included in this study. Comparative analyses involving a broader range of organizations can shed light on the generalizability of the conclusions drawn here. Such research can provide insightful information about the nuances of how PAS impacts job satisfaction across diverse settings. Understanding the extent to which these relationships hold in various organizational contexts can provide actionable guidance for a broader range of stakeholders.
3. Given the cross-sectional nature of our study, conducting longitudinal research emerges as a promising avenue. Longitudinal studies can provide a deeper understanding of how changes in the assessment system influence job satisfaction over time. This approach

allows for the tracking of dynamic shifts and the identification of temporal patterns in the relationship. By examining the evolution of employee perceptions and job satisfaction in response to PAS modifications, researchers can uncover insights critical for managing long-term organizational performance.

4. Future research could incorporate a more extensive array of components related to the measurement of the appraisal system. A more comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes can be achieved by evaluating the multifaceted aspects and their associations with job satisfaction. This comprehensive perspective can reveal how different elements influence job satisfaction and in what capacity. An in-depth examination of these components can help organizations tailor their PAS to align with specific job satisfaction objectives.
5. Exploring moderating factors, such as locus of control, availability of training and development opportunities, job tenure, and responsibilities, that influence the relationship between job satisfaction and performance appraisal can be a valuable direction for applied research. Employing multiple moderator analyses can identify contextual factors that influence this relationship. Institutions can then optimize their PAP by understanding how these contextual elements impact the overall dynamics. This applied research approach can yield actionable insights for organizations seeking to enhance employee satisfaction and performance.
6. Investigate how cultural factors influence the perception of PAS and its impact on job satisfaction. This could involve cross-cultural studies to determine whether the relationships observed in your research hold in different cultural contexts. Understanding

cultural nuances can provide organizations operating in diverse global markets with guidance on tailoring their PAS to different cultural expectations and norms.

7. Explore the role of technology in performance appraisal systems. Investigate how integrating digital tools, such as AI-driven assessments or remote monitoring, affects employee perceptions and job satisfaction. The rapidly evolving digital landscape presents new opportunities and challenges for PAS, and research in this area can inform organizations on how to harness technology for improved employee satisfaction.
8. Study the effectiveness of training programs for managers in implementing and conducting performance appraisals. Evaluate how well-trained managers impact employee job satisfaction compared to those without such training. Effective managerial practices are crucial in ensuring the successful implementation of PAS, and research can guide organizations in developing effective training programs.
9. Examine how the design of job roles and responsibilities interacts with the effectiveness of performance appraisal systems. Determine whether job design modifications can enhance the relationship between PAS and job satisfaction. A holistic approach to job design that considers PAS alignment can optimize individual and organizational outcomes.
10. Investigate the potential impact of PAS on employee well-being and mental health. Assess whether certain aspects of the appraisal process, such as feedback delivery or goal setting, can positively or negatively affect employee mental health. Understanding the psychological implications of PAS can help organizations design appraisal processes that prioritize employee well-being.
11. Explore how giving employees a voice in the performance appraisal, such as self-assessment or peer feedback, influences their satisfaction. Investigate participatory models

of performance appraisal and their impact on job satisfaction. Empowering employees with a sense of agency in the appraisal process can improve job satisfaction and engagement.

12. Analyze how different generations (e.g., Baby Boomers, Millennials, Gen Z) perceive and respond to performance appraisal systems. Investigate whether generational differences affect the relationship between PAS and job satisfaction. Recognizing generational variations can help organizations tailor their PAS to the preferences and expectations of different age groups within the workforce.
13. With the rise of remote work, assess how virtual performance appraisal systems impact job satisfaction compared to traditional in-person methods. Explore the challenges and opportunities of remote performance appraisals. Remote work presents unique considerations for PAS, and research in this area can guide organizations in adapting their appraisal processes to remote work environments.
14. Examine how performance appraisal systems can be integrated with employee development programs. Investigate whether PAS that emphasizes skill development and career progression have a more positive impact on job satisfaction. A strategic alignment between PAS and employee development can create a more satisfied and skilled workforce.
15. Explore how performance appraisal systems can be aligned with sustainability goals and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Determine whether eco-friendly performance goals or ethical considerations in appraisals impact job satisfaction. Integrating sustainability into PAS can promote values-driven organizational cultures and increase employee satisfaction.

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## Appendix A

### List of Acronyms

HEI: Higher Education Institutions.

HR: Human Resources.

HRM: Human Resources Management.

MOHE: Ministry of Higher Education.

PA: Performance appraisal.

PAP: Performance Appraisal Process.

PAS: Performance Appraisal System.