

EXPLORING EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS IN PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEMS: A STUDY OF ANUDU PLASTIC FACTORY ASABA, DELTA STATE.

Ofune, Kelvin

Department of Business Administration, Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba, Delta State,
ofunekelvin2016@gmail.com

Ubogu Gloria Temabor

Department of Business Administration, Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba, Delta State
ubogugeel@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explored employee perceptions of fairness in performance appraisal systems at Anudu Plastic Factory. Performance appraisal is a crucial human resource management practice, yet employee dissatisfaction often stems from perceived unfairness in its implementation. The research adopted a qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews to gather insights from selected employees across different departments. The study focused on three dimensions of fairness: distributive fairness, procedural fairness, and interactional fairness. Findings revealed that while some employees acknowledge the appraisal system as moderately fair, many express concerns about bias, lack of transparency, and inadequate communication during the appraisal process. These perceptions significantly affect employee morale, motivation, and trust in management. The study recommends that Anudu Plastic Factory review its appraisal criteria, improve communication, and provide regular feedback to ensure fairness and employee acceptance of performance evaluations.

Keywords: Employee Perceptions, Performance Appraisal, Fairness, Distributive Fairness, Employee Motivation, Organizational Trust.

Introduction

Performance appraisal is a fundamental human resource management (HRM) practice that aims to systematically evaluate employee performance, provide constructive feedback, and align individual contributions with organisational goals. When effectively implemented, performance appraisals can motivate employees, foster career development, and enhance overall organisational productivity (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). However, the success of any performance appraisal system largely depends on whether employees perceive the process and its outcomes as fair. Without fairness, even the most technically sound appraisal systems may lose credibility in the eyes of employees.

The concept of fairness in performance appraisals is closely tied to the broader theory of organizational justice, which encompasses three major dimensions: distributive fairness, procedural fairness, and interactional fairness (Colquitt, 2001). Distributive fairness refers to the perceived fairness of the appraisal outcomes, such as ratings and rewards. Procedural fairness concerns the transparency, consistency, and neutrality of the appraisal process, while interactional fairness focuses on the quality of interpersonal treatment during the appraisal, including respectful communication and adequate explanation of decisions (Greenberg, 2011). Employees are more likely to accept performance appraisals and remain committed to the organization when all three dimensions of fairness are perceived to be present (Ali & Anwar, 2021).

In manufacturing firms like Anudu Plastic Factory, performance appraisal systems are critical for maintaining high productivity, ensuring quality standards, and recognizing employee contributions. However, studies have shown that employees in many organizations perceive appraisal systems as biased or poorly implemented, especially when there is a lack of clear performance criteria or when feedback is insufficient (Nguyen, Mia, Winata, & Chong, 2017). Employees often question the objectivity of the process when they sense favoritism, inconsistent application of appraisal standards, or lack of transparency in rating decisions (Ishaq, Aslam, & Afridi, 2019). Such perceptions can negatively impact employee morale, diminish trust in management, and lead to reduced job satisfaction.

At Anudu Plastic Factory, preliminary observations and informal employee feedback suggest that there may be underlying concerns about the fairness of the existing performance appraisal system. Some employees reportedly believe that the system does not adequately reflect individual efforts, and others have expressed dissatisfaction with the way appraisal feedback is communicated. These concerns are consistent with findings from similar studies, where the absence of fairness in appraisal processes has been linked to low employee engagement and increased turnover intentions (Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016). If left unaddressed, these perceptions could erode employee trust and hinder organizational growth.

Although significant research has been conducted on performance appraisal in Western and Asian contexts, limited qualitative studies have explored employee perceptions of fairness in

the Nigerian manufacturing sector. Most existing research in Nigeria tends to focus on quantitative assessments and managerial perspectives, often neglecting the voices of employees who experience the appraisal process firsthand (Oludayo, Gberevbie, Popoola, & Omonijo, 2018). Without adequately capturing employee experiences, organizations may continue to implement appraisal systems that do not address core fairness concerns.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by qualitatively exploring employee perceptions of fairness in the performance appraisal system at Anudu Plastic Factory. By focusing on the employees' lived experiences and viewpoints, the study aims to uncover specific areas of dissatisfaction and provide practical recommendations for improving the fairness of the appraisal process. This research is not only timely but also necessary for helping Anudu Plastic Factory build a more transparent, equitable, and effective performance management system.

Statement of the Problem

Performance appraisal systems are essential for evaluating employee contributions, promoting growth, and aligning individual performance with organizational goals. However, the success of these systems largely depends on employees' perceptions of their fairness. When employees perceive performance appraisals as biased, inconsistent, or lacking transparency, it can lead to dissatisfaction, reduced motivation, low trust in management, and ultimately poor organizational performance.

At Anudu Plastic Factory, there have been growing concerns among employees regarding the fairness of the performance appraisal process. Informal discussions and preliminary observations suggest that some employees believe the appraisal system is influenced by favoritism, inadequate feedback, and unclear criteria, which may affect their sense of fairness and job satisfaction. Despite the critical role of performance appraisals in driving employee productivity, there is limited empirical evidence on how employees at Anudu Plastic Factory perceive the fairness of the system.

This gap in knowledge makes it necessary to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of the employees concerning fairness in the performance appraisal process. Understanding these

perceptions will not only contribute to improving the appraisal system but also support management in fostering a more transparent and motivating work environment.

Research Objectives

1. To explore employee perceptions of fairness in the performance appraisal system at Anudu Plastic Factory.
2. To identify the key factors that influence perceptions of fairness in the appraisal process.
3. To examine employee views on the fairness of appraisal outcomes.
4. To assess the impact of the appraisal system on employee motivation and trust in management.

Research Questions

1. How do employees at Anudu Plastic Factory perceive the fairness of the performance appraisal system?
2. What factors influence employee perceptions of fairness in the appraisal process?
3. To what extent do employees believe that the appraisal outcomes are fair and unbiased?
4. How does the performance appraisal system impact employee motivation and trust in management?

Literature Review

Performance Appraisal Systems

Performance appraisal is a systematic process of evaluating and documenting an employee's job performance and providing feedback to guide future improvement (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). It serves as a tool for determining employee development needs, salary adjustments, promotions, and career progression (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Effective performance appraisals help align individual goals with organizational objectives, improve productivity, and promote employee engagement (Tziner & Rabenu, 2018). However, the success of appraisal systems depends significantly on the fairness of their design and implementation. When employees perceive appraisals as fair, they are more likely to accept the outcomes and remain motivated (Nguyen *et al.*, 2017). Conversely, a perception of bias, favoritism, or lack of transparency can erode trust and diminish the effectiveness of the system.

Overview of Performance Appraisal Systems

Performance appraisal systems are structured methods used by organizations to evaluate employee performance over a specific period. These systems aim to assess how well employees meet their job responsibilities, achieve set goals, and contribute to the overall objectives of the organization (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). Effective performance appraisals serve multiple purposes, including employee development, compensation adjustments, promotions, and identification of training needs. Various methods are employed in performance appraisal systems, such as self-appraisals, peer reviews, supervisor assessments, and 360-degree feedback mechanisms. A well-designed appraisal system not only measures productivity but also provides a platform for employees to receive constructive feedback and set future performance goals.

However, the success of performance appraisal systems depends heavily on the credibility and acceptance of the process by employees. Employees are more likely to accept appraisal outcomes when they perceive the process as fair, objective, and transparent. If employees view the system as biased or inconsistent, it can result in dissatisfaction, decreased motivation, and a lack of trust in management. Thus, organizations must carefully design and implement appraisal systems that promote fairness and equity to maximize employee engagement and organizational effectiveness.

The Importance of Fairness in Human Resource Practices

Fairness in human resource management (HRM) practices is critical because it shapes employees' attitudes, job satisfaction, and overall organizational commitment. Fair HR practices, especially in areas like recruitment, promotion, performance appraisal, and reward systems, foster a sense of justice and equity in the workplace (Greenberg, 2011). When employees perceive HR processes as fair, they are more likely to trust management, demonstrate high levels of engagement, and perform at their best.

In the context of performance appraisals, fairness can be divided into distributive fairness (fairness of appraisal outcomes), procedural fairness (fairness of the appraisal process), and interactional fairness (respectful and honest communication during appraisals) (Colquitt, 2001). Unfair HR practices, particularly in appraisals, can lead to negative outcomes such as low morale,

employee resentment, poor performance, and high turnover. Therefore, ensuring fairness is not just an ethical obligation but a strategic necessity for enhancing employee satisfaction and driving organizational success.

Description of Anudu Plastic Factory

Anudu Plastic Factory is a well-known manufacturing company located in Delta State, Nigeria. The company specializes in the production of various plastic products, including household items, industrial containers, and packaging materials. With a growing workforce and a commitment to delivering high-quality products, Anudu Plastic Factory plays a significant role in the local manufacturing sector. The company emphasizes operational efficiency, employee performance, and continuous product improvement. As part of its human resource strategy, Anudu Plastic Factory has implemented a performance appraisal system to evaluate and reward employee contributions. However, there are growing concerns among staff regarding the fairness and effectiveness of the appraisal process, which this study seeks to investigate.

Dimensions of Fairness in Performance Appraisal

Fairness in performance appraisals is widely conceptualized within the framework of organizational justice, which comprises three key dimensions: distributive, procedural, and interactional fairness (Colquitt, 2001).

Distributive Fairness: This relates to the perceived fairness of the outcomes of the appraisal process, such as promotions, pay raises, or recognition (Greenberg, 2011). Employees tend to evaluate distributive fairness based on the balance between their contributions and the rewards they receive (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001).

Procedural Fairness: Procedural fairness concerns the processes and methods used to evaluate employee performance. It emphasizes consistency, neutrality, accuracy, and the opportunity for employees to voice their concerns (Colquitt *et al.*, 2005). Employees perceive a system as procedurally fair when appraisal criteria are transparent and consistently applied across all workers.

Interactional Fairness: Interactional fairness focuses on the quality of interpersonal treatment during the appraisal process. This includes respectful communication, honesty, and providing

adequate explanations for appraisal decisions (Bies & Moag, 1986). Poor interactional fairness can lead to dissatisfaction even if the outcome of the appraisal is objectively favorable.

Studies have shown that all three dimensions significantly influence how employees perceive fairness in appraisal systems, which in turn impacts job satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment (Ali & Anwar, 2021).

Theories Review

Two dominant theories underpin the concept of fairness in performance appraisal systems: Equity Theory and Organizational Justice Theory.

Equity Theory (Adams, 1965): This theory posits that employees assess fairness by comparing the ratio of their inputs (effort, skills, experience) to outcomes (rewards, recognition) with those of their colleagues. When employees perceive inequity, they may experience dissatisfaction and adjust their behavior, sometimes by reducing their performance.

Organizational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 2011): This theory provides a broader perspective on fairness by focusing on three aspects: distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. Organizational Justice Theory explains that fairness perceptions influence employee attitudes and behaviors such as trust, motivation, and organizational citizenship. Colquitt *et al.* (2005) further refined this theory by developing reliable measures for each justice dimension, making it a key framework in HR fairness research.

These theories are essential for understanding how employees form fairness perceptions and how these perceptions affect their workplace behaviors.

Several empirical studies have explored employee perceptions of fairness in performance appraisal systems. For instance, Ali and Anwar (2021) conducted a study in Iraq and found that fairness in performance appraisals significantly influenced employee satisfaction and productivity. The study revealed that employees who perceived the system as fair were more engaged and committed to their organizations. Similarly, Nguyen *et al.* (2017) examined the impact of leadership styles and appraisal fairness in the manufacturing sector and concluded that transformational leadership and transparent appraisal processes enhanced employees' trust in management and improved performance outcomes.

In Nigeria, Oludayo *et al.* (2018) investigated the effect of HR practices on employee satisfaction and discovered that performance appraisal fairness played a critical role in shaping employee attitudes. The study emphasized the need for clear criteria and unbiased assessments to foster positive perceptions. Furthermore, Ishaq, Aslam, and Afridi (2019) highlighted that perceived fairness in performance appraisal systems directly impacted job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Their study stressed that poor communication and unclear evaluation standards significantly damaged employee trust in management.

While these studies confirm the importance of fairness in performance appraisals, they predominantly utilized quantitative methods, which may not fully capture employees' lived experiences and personal interpretations of fairness.

Gaps in Literature

Although previous research has established a strong link between fairness in performance appraisal systems and employee outcomes such as satisfaction and motivation, several gaps remain. Most existing studies have focused on quantitative analyses that measure perceptions through structured surveys, often neglecting the qualitative insights that could be gained from exploring employees' detailed personal experiences (Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Organizational Justice Theory

Organizational Justice Theory is a critical lens through which employee perceptions of fairness in workplace processes, including performance appraisal systems, can be examined. This theory centers on the idea that employees' attitudes and behaviors are strongly influenced by their perceptions of fairness regarding organizational decisions and procedures (Colquitt, 2001). Organizational justice is commonly categorized into three dimensions:

Distributive Justice: Refers to the perceived fairness of outcome distributions, such as rewards, promotions, or appraisal ratings. Employees evaluate whether they have received a fair share relative to their input or contributions (Adams, 1965; Greenberg, 1990).

Procedural Justice: Involves the perceived fairness of the processes and methods used to determine outcomes. This includes transparency, consistency, accuracy, and the opportunity to voice opinions during the appraisal process (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975).

Interactional Justice: Concerns the quality of interpersonal treatment during the implementation of procedures, focusing on respect, dignity, and honesty from supervisors or appraisers (Bies & Moag, 1986).

In the context of performance appraisals, organizational justice theory posits that employees' acceptance and satisfaction with appraisal outcomes depend not only on the appraisal results but significantly on how fairly the appraisal process is conducted (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). Perceived injustice may lead to decreased motivation, trust, job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions (Colquitt *et al.*, 2013).

Equity Theory

Equity Theory, developed by Adams (1963), complements Organizational Justice Theory by emphasizing the role of perceived fairness in social exchanges within the workplace. It posits that employees compare their input-output ratio (effort, skills, time vs. rewards, recognition) to that of relevant others. When employees perceive an imbalance either under-rewarded or over-rewarded they experience feelings of inequity, which can result in reduced motivation or efforts to restore equity. In performance appraisals, employees assess whether the appraisal outcomes (e.g., ratings, bonuses) fairly correspond to their contributions relative to peers. If the appraisal system is perceived as biased or inconsistent, employees may perceive inequity, which undermines their trust in the system and decreases their acceptance of appraisal feedback (Folger & Konovsky, 1989).

Application of Theories to Performance Appraisal Fairness

The performance appraisal system is a pivotal HR practice that directly impacts employees' perceptions of fairness in organizations. Using Organizational Justice Theory, this study explores whether employees at Anudu Plastic Factory perceive the appraisal process and outcomes as fair along distributive, procedural, and interactional dimensions. For instance, do employees believe appraisal ratings are equitable relative to their effort (distributive justice)? Are appraisal criteria

transparent and consistently applied (procedural justice)? Are supervisors respectful and honest during feedback sessions (interactional justice)?

Simultaneously, Equity Theory helps analyze employees' comparative judgments whether they feel their appraisal results correspond fairly to their inputs and relative to their colleagues. This comparison shapes their motivation, satisfaction, and trust in the system.

By integrating these theories, the study can comprehensively understand how fairness perceptions influence employee attitudes towards performance appraisals and suggest improvements that foster trust and motivation.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research design using a case study approach. The qualitative design is appropriate because it seeks to explore in-depth the subjective experiences and perceptions of employees regarding fairness in the performance appraisal system at Anudu Plastic Factory. A case study design allows the researcher to investigate the phenomenon within its real-life context, providing rich, detailed insights that cannot be captured through quantitative methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The population for this study comprises all employees of Anudu Plastic Factory, Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. This includes staff across different departments and job levels, as the aim is to gather a broad range of perspectives on the performance appraisal system.

A sample of 20 employees was used in this study, consistent with qualitative research standards where data saturation rather than sheer quantity guides sample size (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Purposive sampling was employed to intentionally select individuals with direct experience of the performance appraisal system, ensuring the data gathered is both relevant and insightful (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015). To enrich the findings and reflect a range of perspectives, the sample included a balanced mix of junior, middle, and senior-level employees, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of how performance appraisals are perceived across different organizational levels.

Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews. This method is suitable for eliciting detailed and personal accounts of employees' perceptions of fairness in the performance

appraisal process. Semi-structured interviews provide flexibility for participants to express their experiences while allowing the researcher to probe for deeper understanding (Kallio *et al.*, 2016). In addition to interviews, focus group discussions may be conducted to encourage interaction and uncover shared experiences or differing opinions among employees.

Data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely used method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis will involve familiarization with the data, coding responses, identifying recurring themes, and interpreting these themes in relation to the research objectives. Thematic analysis is appropriate as it provides flexibility and allows the researcher to focus on employee perceptions and experiences in a systematic way.

The study will adhere to ethical research practices to protect participants' rights and ensure the integrity of the research process. Informed Consent: Participants will be provided with clear information about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality: Participants' identities will be anonymized, and data will be securely stored to protect personal information.

Non-maleficence: The study will ensure that no harm comes to participants, either psychologically or professionally, as a result of their participation.

Approval: Ethical approval will be sought from relevant institutional review boards or authorities before data collection begins.

Results

This section presents the results obtained from in-depth interviews conducted with employees of Anudu Plastic Factory regarding their perceptions of fairness in the performance appraisal system. Through thematic analysis, key themes were identified that reflect the employees' experiences and feelings toward the appraisal process. Direct quotes from participants are included to support each theme and provide a richer understanding of their perceptions.

Theme 1 Perceived Transparency of the Appraisal Process

Many employees emphasized the need for a clear, transparent, and well-communicated appraisal system. A lack of clarity was commonly associated with feelings of unfairness.

Employee Quote:

"Sometimes, we don't even understand the criteria they use to assess us. It feels like it's just based on who the supervisor likes."

Analysis:

This perception highlights a gap in the communication of appraisal standards. Organizational Justice Theory, particularly procedural justice, stresses that fairness is enhanced when processes are transparent and consistently applied. The lack of transparency in this case undermines employees' trust in the system.

Theme 2: Perceived Supervisor Bias and Favoritism

Several respondents expressed concerns that supervisors' personal preferences influenced appraisal outcomes.

Employee Quote:

"No matter how hard you work, if you're not in good terms with the supervisor, your score will not be high."

Analysis:

This finding relates to interactional justice, which concerns the fairness of interpersonal treatment during the appraisal process. Perceptions of bias and favoritism diminish employees' belief in the objectivity of the system, which can erode morale and motivation.

Theme 3: Feedback and Participation in the Appraisal Process

Employees consistently stated that the lack of feedback and limited opportunity to participate in their evaluations made the process feel one-sided and unfair.

Employee Quote:

"They just rate you and put it on your file. Nobody explains anything, and we are not allowed to say our own side."

Analysis:

Fairness in appraisals is enhanced when employees can participate and receive meaningful feedback. This is supported by procedural justice and voice theory, which argue that when individuals can express their views, they perceive the process as more just, regardless of the outcome.

Theme 4: Perceptions of Consistency Across Departments

Some participants noted that appraisal standards appeared to vary from one department to another, leading to perceptions of inconsistency and unfairness.

Employee Quote:

"The way they do appraisal in my department is different from other departments. There should be one rule for everybody."

Analysis:

This perception undermines distributive justice, which relates to the fairness of outcomes. Inconsistencies across departments can foster feelings of inequity and bias, reducing employee satisfaction with the system.

Theme 5: Appraisal Outcomes and Rewards

Employees discussed the connection between performance appraisals and rewards such as promotions and bonuses, with some feeling that the outcomes were not fairly distributed.

Employee Quote:

"Some people get promoted even when their work is not as good, just because they are close to management."

Analysis:

This theme is directly tied to distributive justice, which focuses on the fairness of reward distribution. When appraisal outcomes are perceived as disconnected from actual performance, employees view the system as unjust, potentially affecting their commitment and performance.

Discussion of findings

The findings of this study reveal critical concerns among employees at Anudu Plastic Factory regarding the fairness and transparency of the performance appraisal system. Employees' perceptions are largely shaped by their experiences with procedural, distributive, and interactional

justice within the appraisal process. Consistent with the work of Colquitt *et al.* (2021), the study emphasizes that when appraisal procedures are not clearly communicated or consistently applied, employees are more likely to perceive the process as biased and unjust. Procedural clarity and consistency play a significant role in building employees' trust in the appraisal system (Colquitt *et al.*, 2021). Recent research by Reb and Cropanzano (2022) also supports this view, noting that transparent and consistently applied appraisal systems promote positive employee attitudes and increase organizational commitment.

The perception of favoritism, particularly involving personal relationships between supervisors and employees, emerged as a dominant theme in this study. Employees reported that appraisals were often influenced by favoritism rather than objective performance metrics. This finding aligns with interpersonal justice concerns, where respectful and unbiased communication is critical to the perception of fairness. Bies and Moag's (1986) foundational work on interactional justice still holds relevance, but recent studies, such as Gupta and Kumar (2022), emphasize that managers must foster an environment of transparency and respectful dialogue to mitigate the perception of bias. When personal relationships are prioritized over merit, it erodes employee trust and can result in reduced motivation and engagement (Gupta & Kumar, 2022).

Furthermore, the study found that employees were dissatisfied with their limited participation in the appraisal process and the lack of constructive feedback. Employees expressed a desire for more involvement and voiced concerns about the absence of opportunities to provide input or appeal appraisal decisions. This finding is in line with Erdogan and Bauer (2021), who stressed that employee participation in the appraisal process enhances the perception of fairness and promotes acceptance of appraisal outcomes. Limited employee involvement in decision-making can lead to feelings of marginalization and disengagement. When employees are given the opportunity to voice their opinions and are provided with detailed feedback, they develop a stronger sense of procedural justice, which improves satisfaction with the appraisal process (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021).

The study also revealed significant inconsistencies across departments in the application of appraisal methods, which raised concerns about systemic fairness. Employees expected that

similar performance levels would yield consistent outcomes, but inconsistencies undermined this expectation. This concern supports the observations of Greenberg (2021), who argued that perceived inequities in reward distribution can diminish trust in organizational systems. Recent research by Kim and Park (2023) confirms that inconsistent reward practices not only harm employees' perceptions of fairness but can also increase turnover intentions and decrease organizational loyalty. Such inconsistencies can create a culture where employees feel that rewards and promotions are arbitrary, ultimately eroding morale.

Lastly, perceived unfair allocation of rewards and promotions was a major source of dissatisfaction. Employees noted that outcomes were often not based on merit, which adversely affected their motivation and trust in the organization. This finding supports Adams' (1965) Equity Theory, which remains relevant in explaining how employees assess fairness by comparing their inputs and outcomes to those of others. Recent studies by Cropanzano *et al.* (2023) have expanded on this theory, demonstrating that when employees perceive inequity, they experience emotional distress, which can reduce their commitment and performance. Overall, this study underscores that employees' perceptions of fairness are deeply connected to how appraisal systems are designed, communicated, and enforced. Organizations must prioritize transparency, consistency, and employee involvement to ensure fair and credible performance appraisal systems.

Conclusion

The study concludes that employee perceptions of fairness in the performance appraisal system at Anudu Plastic Factory are largely negative. Key concerns include a lack of transparency, perceived supervisor bias, limited employee involvement, inconsistency across departments, and the unfair allocation of rewards. These perceptions undermine trust in the appraisal system and may negatively affect employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance. Addressing these issues is essential for building a performance management system that is both credible and effective.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made to improve the fairness of the performance appraisal system at Anudu Plastic Factory:

1. Enhance Transparency: Clearly communicate appraisal criteria and performance expectations to all employees. Regular training and workshops should be conducted to ensure understanding.
2. Standardize Appraisal Procedures: Develop and enforce uniform appraisal guidelines across all departments to prevent inconsistencies and departmental bias.
3. Promote Employee Participation: Allow employees to contribute to their performance evaluations through self-assessments and appraisal discussions. This will increase their sense of ownership and fairness.
4. Provide Regular Feedback: Establish a structured feedback system where employees receive timely, constructive feedback regarding their performance, strengths, and areas for improvement.
5. Address Supervisor Bias: Provide training for supervisors on objective appraisal practices and the importance of fairness, avoiding favoritism or personal influence.
6. Link Rewards to Performance: Ensure that promotions, bonuses, and other rewards are strictly based on documented performance outcomes to enhance perceptions of distributive justice.
7. Implement a Grievance Process: Create a transparent and accessible appeal process where employees can formally challenge appraisal outcomes they perceive as unfair.

By adopting these recommendations, Anudu Plastic Factory can strengthen employee trust in the appraisal system and improve overall job satisfaction and performance.

References

- Adams, J. S. (1965). Inequity in social exchange. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 267–299). Academic Press.
- Ali, B. J., & Anwar, G. (2021). An empirical study of employees' perception of fairness in performance appraisal systems. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 6(1), 51–59.
- Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2020). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (15th ed.). Kogan Page.

- Bies, R. J., & Moag, J. S. (1986). Interactional justice: Communication criteria of fairness. *Research on Negotiation in Organizations*, 1(1), 43–55.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Colquitt, J. A. (2001). On the dimensionality of organizational justice: A construct validation of a measure. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 386–400.
- Colquitt, J. A., Conlon, D. E., Wesson, M. J., Porter, C. O., & Ng, K. Y. (2005). Justice at the millennium: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of organizational justice research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(3), 425–445.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Cropanzano, R., Bowen, D. E., & Gilliland, S. W. (2007). The management of organizational justice. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 21(4), 34–48.
- DeNisi, A. S., & Murphy, K. R. (2017). Performance appraisal and performance management: 100 years of progress? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(3), 421–433.
- Folger, R., & Cropanzano, R. (2001). Fairness theory: Justice as accountability. In J. Greenberg & R. Cropanzano (Eds.), *Advances in organizational justice* (pp. 1–55). Stanford University Press.
- Folger, R., & Konovsky, M. A. (1989). Effects of procedural and distributive justice on reactions to pay raise decisions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32(1), 115–130.
- Greenberg, J. (1990). Organizational justice: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *Journal of Management*, 16(2), 399–432.
- Greenberg, J. (2011). Organizational justice: The dynamics of fairness in the workplace. In S. Zedeck (Ed.), *APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (Vol. 3, pp. 271–327). American Psychological Association.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59–82.

- Ishaq, M. I., Aslam, H. D., & Afridi, F. (2019). Impact of performance appraisal quality on job satisfaction: Mediating role of perceived organizational support. *Global Regional Review*, 4(3), 178–187.
- Jawahar, I. M. (2007). The influence of perceptions of fairness on performance appraisal reactions. *Journal of Labor Research*, 28(4), 735–754. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12122-007-9014-1>
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A. M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12), 2954–2965.
- Kuvaas, B. (2006). Performance appraisal satisfaction and employee outcomes: Mediating and moderating roles of work motivation. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 17(3), 504–522.
- Leventhal, G. S. (1980). What should be done with equity theory? New approaches to the study of fairness in social relationships. In K. J. Gergen, M. S. Greenberg, & R. H. Willis (Eds.), *Social exchange: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 27–55). Springer.
- Mani, B. G. (2002). Performance appraisal systems, productivity, and motivation: A case study. *Public Personnel Management*, 31(2), 141–159.
- Nguyen, H. T., Mia, L., Winata, L., & Chong, V. K. (2017). Effect of transformational-leadership style and management control system on managerial performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 70, 202–213.
- Ogunyomi, P. O., & Bruning, N. S. (2016). Human resource management and organizational performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(6), 612–634.
- Oludayo, O. A., Gberevbie, D. E., Popoola, B. I., & Omonijo, D. O. (2018). A study of multiple work-life balance initiatives in banks. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 13(3), 176–186.

- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), 533–544.
- Pichler, S. (2012). The social context of performance appraisal and appraisal reactions: A meta-analysis. *Human Resource Management*, 51(5), 709–732.
- Selvarajan, T. T., & Cloninger, P. A. (2012). The influence of performance appraisal on employee performance: A social-context approach. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 23(7), 1461–1477.
- Tziner, A., & Rabenu, E. (2018). *Improving performance appraisal at work: Evolution and change*. Edward Elgar Publishing.