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Master's Thesis of Public Administration

**The Impact of Appraisal Objectivity on
Individual Performance:
A Case of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam**

**객관적 성과평가가 개인 성과에 미치는 영향:
베트남 외교부 사례를 중심으로**

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Abstract

The Impact of Appraisal Objectivity on Individual Performance:

A Case of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam

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The study aimed to explore whether or not objective performance appraisal affected the performance of public sector employees by using data gathered from public servants in various departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The objectivity of performance appraisal consisted of three main factors, which are goal setting, consistency of performance criteria and fairness of the appraisal process. Therefore, this research also intended to investigate the impact of three components of objective performance appraisal on public servants' performance.

The major findings of the study revealed that all three factors "Goal setting", "Consistency of performance measures" and "Fairness of performance appraisal" were observed to have significant and positive effects on the performance of public officials. Furthermore, the overall

objectivity of performance appraisal also presented a significant and positive relationship with individual performance.

Drawing from the findings of the study, it was recommended that performance appraisal objectivity played a vital role in the work performance of individuals in the public sector. In order to enhance public officials' performance, the performance evaluation process should be more objective.

Keywords: Performance Appraisal, Objective Performance Appraisal, Individual Performance.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Performance appraisal process in the Vietnamese Civil Service system

In recent years, management tools and techniques from private sector have been incorporated deeply into public organizations. One of which is the adoption of performance appraisal system. Like performance of a company that produces a good or a service can be evaluated, a governmental organization can also be appraised based on its function. Employees' performance can influence the efficiency and effectiveness of a governmental organisation. Individual performance is a fundamental topic in organizational psychology that academics have continuously explained and expanded the concept of performance (Campbell, 1990; Koopmans et al, 2013). Therefore, performance appraisals have become increasingly important in determining individual performance in the public sector.

There have been a number of research and studies (Daley, 1993; Ghorpade, et al., 1995; Pettijohn, et al., 1999; Mayer and Davis, 1999; Guthrie, 2001; Kuvaas, 2008; Omusebe et al, 2013) proving that effective performance appraisals produce numerous crucial work results, for instance, increasing employee's productivity, commitment, trust, and job satisfaction. Academics have stressed that there is "a strong relationship between performance appraisal systems that have been adopted as means

of implementing pay-for-performance schemes and the productivity incentives that these systems provide” (Daley, 1993). Furthermore, Pettijohn, et al. (1999) reached a conclusion that “properly conducted performance appraisals can have positive impacts on performance”.

Although there are numerous factors that can affect performance of civil servants, this study only stresses on the objectivity of performance appraisal process that consists of three main factors, namely goal setting, consistency of performance measures and fairness of the appraisal system, especially in the Viet Nam Civil Service.

In any organization, employees need to perform well to produce better goods and services and to achieve organizational goals. The main concern of managing a public organization is how to make bureaucrats reach their full capability. Effective public service delivery largely relies on the performance of public servants, however, in developing countries, the public sector often suffers from low worker productivity. The governments encounter many issues regarding recruitment of the right candidates for the job, and after the selection, how to make them perform well on the job.

In the case of Viet Nam, labour productivity in 2017 was among the lowest in Asia despite demonstrating growth. Average labour productivity in Viet Nam grew by 36 per cent from VND38.64 million (\$1,660) per worker in 2006 to VND60.73 million (\$2,600) in 2017, according to the

2018 Vietnam Annual Economic Report. However, according to researchers from the Vietnam Institute for Economic and Policy, this level is still low compared to Japan, South Korea, China, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Cambodia. The General Statistics Office of Viet Nam stated “Labour productivity in Viet Nam is only 1/18th of Singapore, 1/16th of Malaysia and 1/3rd of Thailand and China”.

In Viet Nam, performance appraisal system has been developed since 1998 to measure performance of public officials. The Ordinance of Cadre and Civil Servants, which was promulgated in 1998, revised in 2000 and 2003 as well as the Law on Public Officials and Civil Servants, which came into effect in January 2010, created a foundation for performance appraisal in the public sector.

The 2013 Decree of Government on civil servant is the most recent document that regulates the evaluation process for Vietnamese civil servants. According to the Decree, performance appraisal must be conducted once a year at the end of the year. There are four steps in the process: (1) Self-evaluation; (2) Supervisor feedback; (3) Agency meeting; (4) Final decision. Officials can be ranked excellent/ completing/ completing with limited capacity/ incompetent. The final decision is based on head of department’s decision. The decision to classify one as excellent official depends on voting of department’s members. Therefore, the

decision might not be made based on the candidate's competency but on his or her popularity.

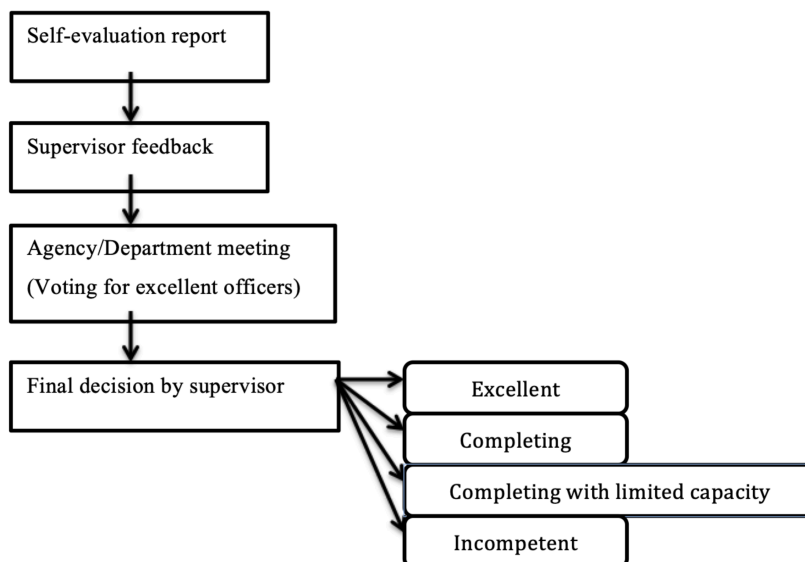


Figure 1.1: Performance appraisal for Vietnamese civil servants

Getting the staff appraisal system right and making it effective in measuring actual performance is a vital step. Nevertheless, effective staff appraisal sometimes depends on the subjectivity of individuals. Subjective feedback and evaluation can demotivate competent individuals to perform well because they may feel their efforts are not valued. Therefore, this research is going to focus on the influence of the objectivity of the performance appraisal system on performance of public officials.

1.2 Context of the Study

The study will be analysed based on the context of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Viet Nam because the MOFA has its own uniqueness

in terms of structure and job characteristics. The MOFA does not only operate its headquarter in Viet Nam but also manages 75 diplomatic missions overseas. The role of diplomacy has increasingly gained importance in government policy agenda in recent years because Viet Nam is rapidly integrating itself to the world both bilaterally and multilaterally while at the same time, trying to protect its territorial sovereignty. Furthermore, Viet Nam is in the process of integrating in multilateral forum to gain supports internationally to protect the country's territorial sovereignty over the dispute in the South China Sea. Therefore, diplomacy and foreign affairs have become extremely vital to the country in its current developmental stage. Consequently, public officials of MOFA need to acquire better skills, knowledge and competences in order to meet the requirements of demanding tasks. MOFA's officials should be able to perform better in order to achieve the organizational as well as national goals.

Furthermore, MOFA's officers have a unique work nature, as they need to apply for assignment in foreign countries throughout their working life. The assigned locations can be a country with the best working and living conditions or one with extremely difficult and dangerous conditions. Officers have to adapt to different cultures and living standards very often. Not having been posted to any overseas missions may reduce the chance of getting promoted. More importantly, performance appraisal is crucial in the overseas assignment process of MOFA's officials. One's performance is accumulated over the years, which in turn can affect the decision on

which country he/she will be allocated. Countries are classified into 5 categories in assignment process as followed:

Rank 1: developed countries with best working and living conditions;

Rank 2: countries with good working and living conditions;

Rank 3: countries with average working and living conditions;

Rank 4: countries with difficult working and living conditions;

Rank 5: countries with extremely difficult and dangerous working and living conditions.

If one has achieved excellent performance, he or she has more chance to be selected to go to Rank 1 country. Therefore, getting performance appraisal right is extremely important. However, some would argue that the current system faces some flaws as the civil service system of Viet Nam is still at an early development stage. It is not yet integrated fully with other subsystems such as human resource management; also, there is not enough support from these subsystems. Additionally, there have been concerns over the objectivity of performance appraisal process because decisions are mainly made by supervisors, thus, it can encounter subjective grading. In addition, performance appraisal criteria may be too vague to be fully understood and evaluated, thus, goals may be too ambiguous and not actionable, which make the appraisal process less accurate and less effective. This may lead to employee's dissatisfaction and affect their performance.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The fundamental aim of this research is to find individual perception on how the performance appraisal process can have an influence on individual performance, especially whether or not objective performance appraisal affect performance of civil servants in the context of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam.

In specific, the objectives of the research are as followed:

- (1) To build a conceptual framework of how the performance of individual employee in Viet Nam civil service is affected by the current performance appraisal system;
- (2) To examine the conceptual framework and its application in the Vietnamese public sector context;
- (3) To reach a conclusion on potential policy recommendations to enhance civil servants' performance from improving the current performance appraisal system.

1.4 Research contribution and significance of the Study

A lot of the researches that have been conducted on performance in the context of public sector have put emphasis on developing models of organizational performance (Downs and Larkey, 1986; Carter, et al., 1992; Moore, 1995). However, there are not a lot of studies focused on individual performance model, especially in the public sector. Moreover,

the issue of finding the correct determinants of performance evaluation has challenged many organisations.

Based on the gap in the literature, the conceptual framework for this study is developed in order to discover how the objectivity of the performance appraisal influences public official's performance in Viet Nam. This particular research question has never been explored before. Most of previous studies tended to focus on employee satisfaction of performance appraisal system, not on how performance appraisal process could have an impact on individual performance.

The majority of published research on performance appraisal has been carried in the context of Western countries such as US, Canada... Whereas, this specific question has not been researched appropriately in the Asian context specifically in perspective of Viet Nam. Compared to the Asian context, these developed countries have different organisational culture, working environment as well as employee behaviours. This research, as a result, may be regarded as an opportunity to verify and generalise the findings of individual performance carried out in western countries to a non-western context. Therefore, the study can contribute significantly to current literature.

1.5 Structure of the study

The study is divided into five main chapters, which are:

Chapter 1 covers the overview of the research including the rationale behind the study, the objective and aim of the study, and its contribution to the current literature.

Chapter 2 presents a review of theoretical literature and precedent studies on the topic of performance management, performance appraisal and issues regarding objective and subjective performance appraisal.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodology of the research regarding population and sampling, data collection techniques, data analysis methods and rationale behind the choice of the research methodology.

Chapter 4 emphasizes the research findings along with discussion over the analysed results.

Chapter 5 concludes the findings and introduces possible recommendations for improving the performance of public officials through enhancing the effectiveness of the current performance appraisal system.

Chapter 2. Literature review

This chapter introduces theoretical literature relating to the topic of the research that is performance management, performance appraisal and individual performance. It also presents in more details on theories of objective performance appraisal and its components.

2.1 Performance and performance management

2.1.1 Definition of performance

Performance is a construct that is multi-dimensional, the measurement of which varies depending on a number of factors (Bates & Holton, 1995). Van Dooren et al. (2010) conceptualizes performance as the quality of performed actions and its impact. Shields (2007) stresses the three factors that shape performance, namely inputs, throughputs and outputs. Brumback (1988) defines performance as both results and behaviours in which the latter comes from the performer and convert performance from an abstract concept into action.

2.1.2 Linkage between performance and performance management

Performance management is defined as “continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization” (Aguinis, 2005). Dooren (2010) sees performance

management as a form of management that includes performance information to make decisions. While Jackson, Schuler and Werner (2009) described performance management system as a procedure that is undertaken in order to measure, assess and affect employees' behaviours and results of their performance. Hence, performance management consists of the elements from goal-setting to feedback, including setting a strategic goals, creating standards of performance, measuring actual performance, making comparison between performance and standards, rewarding or punishing and giving feedbacks (Im, 2017). Therefore, performance appraisal can be seen as a segment of performance management.

2.2 Performance appraisal

2.2.1 Definition of performance appraisal

Galin (1979) defines performance appraisal as “a comparison between the expectations of an employee and his actual behaviour on the job. The bigger the gap between expectations and behaviour, the lower will be the evaluation, unless behaviour is much more than expected”.

There are various methods to measure performance. Generally, performance data can be grouped into two distinct types, which are objective or non-judgemental measures and subjective or judgemental measures (Landy and Farr, 1983). Even though judgemental or subjective measures have been more popular (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995),

objective performance measures have become an increasingly useful measurement of performance for manual and routinized jobs since the 1940s (Rothe, 1951) and over the last 30 years, this method has received renewed attention (Lawler, 1986, 1995). Both measures of performance have also been used in various researches regarding the determinants of public sector organisations' performance (Brewer, 2004; Pandey and Moynihan, 2006).

2.2.2 Objectivity of performance appraisal

Objective measures are generally viewed as “the optimum indicators of public sector performance because they are believed to reflect the ‘real’ world accurately and minimize discretion” (Meier and Brudney, 2002). Thus, these measures must be unbiased, detached and independent from the unit of analysis. Objectivity is based on the assumption that the reality provides a foundation to make accurate judgments that are not based on the background and characteristics of individual perceivers (Bellotti, 1992). Objective performance evaluation is “an objective measure exists as a quantity in and of itself; in contrast, subjective measurements are based on attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions” (Woods, 2012). Therefore, the statistical result of objective performance measures will always be constant and not dependent on the evaluators, whilst “the correctness of a subjective assessment cannot be determined by a third party” (Bol, 2008).

Because individual job performance is a multi dimensional and complicated construct that may not be precisely shown by subjective

evaluations, thus, it is necessary to rely on a variety of objective performance measures for the following reasons.

Firstly, some researches have shown how effective objective performance indicators were to lead employee's behaviour, where role expectations were clearly stated (Lawler, 1986; Lawler, et al., 1995). Therefore, employees tend to understand the pay and performance linkage when there are objective measures of individual performance (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Organisations can then use their compensation systems to encourage employee to behave in a way that leads to the achievement of organisational targets. This would further facilitate the evaluation of the linkage between commitment and performance, because employees who are more committed to the organisation can find it easier to identify and strive for organisational goals.

Furthermore, objective performance measures prevent supervisory biases both intentional and unintentional that may take place during the performance evaluation process. Therefore, organisations can promote the quality of pay-for-performance links through controlling the impact of biases.

While objectivity is considered to be a determinant of scientific status, subjectivity undermines any scientific pursuit (Hebb, 1974) because it poses a threat for psychological science. Wertheimer (1959, p.56) defended that it is due to the fact that "subjectivity experience is fallible,

imperfect, subject to illusion and unique that it is seen to threaten validity, objectivity and scientific status". Breuer et al (2013) studied about possible misrepresentation in subjective performance appraisals and realised that subjective performance tended to be more biased when supervisor and subordinates were close in terms of proximity. Nevertheless, when objective performance measures may not be an available option, subjective performance measures can be a sufficient substitute (Dollinger and Golden 1992; Delaney and Huselid 1996). In addition, Murphy (2008) argued that objective performance appraisal could undermine performance because it was likely to skew performance management and reward systems toward the countable.

Kunz (2015) pointed out that more research on the relationship between the objectivity of performance evaluation and motivation, as well as the influence of this relationship on employee performance could contribute to the effectiveness of performance evaluation.

Galin (1979) also stated that an appraisal method could be seen objective if it achieves three requirements: (1) it should be valid and measure what it is supposed to measure, which means goals should be clearly defined; (2) it should be reliable, which indicates that the same criteria should be used to measure performance each time; and (3) it should be fair, evaluation needs to be based more on actual job-related behaviour rather than interpersonal relations. Thus, appraising performance without using human judgement should remove unfairness and biases.

Therefore the research is going to focus 3 aspects of objectivity: (1) clear goal setting; (2) consistency of performance measures and (3) performance appraisal should be fair.

(1) Goals should be clearly defined:

Goal-setting:

A goal is an object or aim of an action to achieve a particular standard of proficiency within a specific period (Locke & Latham, 2002). Goals are seen as the mechanism by which values lead to an action (Latham & Pinder, 2005) and influence the action by affecting the duration, intensity, and direction of action (Appelbaum & Hare, 1996). Goal setting theory is the most common topic to study and it is also one of the dominant theories regarding work motivation (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003), and has been well established as a motivation theory in organization practices (Locke & Latham, 1990). Additionally, goal setting theory asserts that challenging and specific goals improve employee performance (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002), which has been supported by numerous empirical studies (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999; Locke & Latham, 2002). Although Locke and Latham (1990) have noted that “little can be concluded about the effects of goals on intrinsic motivation”, many studies have researched about the influence of goal setting on performance, based on motivation theory.

It has been proposed that challenging and specific goals lead to better performance, which in turn increases rewards, satisfaction, and commitment to the organization (Locke & Latham, 1990). However, the

effect of goal setting has been moderated by factors such as goal commitment, task complexity, and feedback (Locke & Latham, 2002). Locke and Latham (1990) describe the conditions under which goal setting is effective for improving performance.

The goal-performance relationship can also be explained by expectancy and social cognitive theories. According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977), a specific difficult goal generates negative discrepancies regarding skills that need to be mastered; depending on anticipatory approximation of what is needed for goal achievement, effort and resources are mobilized; if the goal is met, employees with high self-efficacy set a more difficult goal because that leads to new motivating discrepancies to be mastered (Latham & Pinder, 2005). It should be considered, however, that some scholars debate that this explanation for goal setting theory appears to go against Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory. Expectancy theory emphasises that motivation is a multiplicative function of three constructs that are instrumentality, expectancy, and valence. This theory suggests that difficult goals should be negatively related to performance because it takes more efforts to achieve difficult goals compared to easier goals, thus, expectancy of goal attainment would supposedly be negatively related to performance. Rasch and Tosi's (1992) research found support for expectancy theory and the negative effect of goal difficulty on performance, it also suggests that goal difficulty will enhance effort. This indicates that there is general support for the contention that difficult goals produce a high level of performance

(Bandura, 1977; Locke & Latham, 2002), and that the goal difficulty-performance relationship may be explained by either/both of these two competing theories of motivation.

For the public sector, Jung (2014) stated two statements regarding public agency goal ambiguity: (1) public institutions have higher goal ambiguity than private enterprises; and (2) organizational goal ambiguity negatively influences public organizations and their employees. Goal ambiguity has also been investigated with outcome variables such as job satisfaction, work motivation, public service motivation, red tape, and organizational performance (Jung, 2014).

Goal setting is effective because it helps individuals to focus and prioritise. Moreover, setting goals can help allocate resources sufficiently to achieve the goals. The core of goal setting is the development of objective performance standards. This is not an easy job that requires extensive training (Burke, 1977). Standards should take into account the conditions and situation under which goals are to be achieved. The results should be specific, quantifiable and achievable.

Several public administration scholars studying work motivation have used goal theory in studies of public sector organizations. For instance, Wright (2001) introduced a model of work motivation for the public sector, focusing on distinctive characteristics of public institutions and civil servants, emphasizing such variables as goal commitment, goal content, and procedural constraints.

(2) Consistency of measures of performance:

Wisner and Fawcett (1991) propose a process for developing a performance measurement system that includes assuring consistency among performance criteria. For a measure to be meaningful, it must be consistent and repeatable. In terms of measures from human observers, consistency across the sample of observers as well as consistency within observers are both necessary (Muckler & Seven, 1992). The fact that different observers may use different scales to measure the same job prevents any probability of achieving the reliability of performance appraisal (Galini, 1979). Changing performance criteria overtime may demotivate employees to strive for high performance.

Performance measures should portrait the core values of organisational performance (Gunasekaran et al., 2004). Some academics reached a consensus on the fundamental characteristics of good performance measures. They should be consistent and have the same meaning over time with clear objectives (Globerson, 1985, Fortuin, 1988, Neely et al., 1996, Neely et al., 1997, Coyle et al., 2002). Lacking well-defined and consistent criteria when evaluating individual and organisational performance might pose several difficulties in managing the organisation and improving employees' performance (Globerson, 1985). Therefore, it is crucial to achieve consistency of performance measurement in order to improve individual performance.

(3) Performance appraisal should be fair and unbiased:

Bias and unfairness in performance evaluation is problematic because if employees are aware of the unfairness, they might be less motivated, hence, provide less effort in the future (Moers, 2005). Employees who feel they have been treated unfairly may quit, resulting in more turnover costs and losing human resources for the organization. Regarding to workers' incentives, bias can cause confusion in distinguishing genuinely good performers from the favourites. Bias and unfairness reduce 'morale', leading to lower performance (Prendergast & Topel, 1993). Moreover, employees are willing to work harder and show higher levels of performance when they think that they are being fairly treated (Köse, 2014).

In this research, organizational justice theory (Greenberg, 1987) will be used to show employee perceptions of fairness in the workplace. Fairness consists of three different dimensions: procedural, interactive, and distributive justice (Cohen, Charash & Spector, 2001).

Many scholars have found that procedural, distributive, and interactive justices are related to individual, team and organizational outcomes (Biswas, Varma, & Ramaswami, 2013; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Poon, 2012; Williams et al., 2016). Wang et al. (2010) recommended that organizational justice could play a role to improve the employees' work performance.

Distributive justice refers to perceptions regarding fairness of outcomes or allocation of resources (Korsgaard & Roberson, 2016), while procedural

justice shows perceptions of processes used to make decisions that lead to these outcomes. The third construct - interactive justice is related to the interpersonal treatment individuals are given during the implementation of procedures.

Employees' sensitivity relating to distributive justice reflects the degree to which they see their organization to rate their contribution and look after them. (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman and Taylor 2000). The relationship between distributive justice and performance comes from Adams equity theory (1965), which shows that individuals might change either quantity or quality of their efforts in order to ensure equity if they experience an unjust input/output ratio. If the ratios seem to be unequal, the person who has lower will have a sense of dissatisfaction. As a result, this negatively affects individual incentives to perform better in order to gain a feeling of equity (Garland, 1973). Some studies have put emphasis on distributive justice as the strongest predictor of job performance (e.g., Greenberg, 1982; Khan, Mukhtar, Khan, and Abdullah, 2010).

Procedural justice is related to employees' perceptions in terms of the fairness of the formal processes undertaken to allocate rewards and benefits at work (Thibaut and Walker 1975). The fairness of managerial policies and actions, particularly human resources practices, create the foundation of employees' perceptions of procedural justice (Kuvaas 2008), which forms their perception of the various individual, team or organizational results (Brockner 2002). Employees who perceive that their

organizational decision-making and other related procedures are non-discriminatory, fair and just will be stimulated to act in accordance with the desire and demands of the organisation (Bies, 2005). Previous study has positively linked procedural justice and employee performance (e.g., Aryee, Chen, and Budhwar, 2004). A number of researches have even stated that the best predictor of performance was procedural justice (Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott, and Livingston, 2009).

2.3 Employee's performance

Most personnel management scholars (Latham and Wexley, 1994; Randell, 1994; Bernardin, et al., 1995) and other organisational academics (Waldman, 1994; Longenecker and Fink, 1999; Koopmans et. al, 2013) have supported that individual performance is crucial in obtaining organisational effectiveness. On the other hand, the majority of the research on public sector's performance focused more on developing organisational models of performance. This has been done either inductively and empirically (Carter, et al., 1992) or more normatively (Moore, 1995). Various studies have also stressed on the complicated levers affecting performance in individual organisations (Behn, 2001; Norman, 2003). Nevertheless, not many studies have been carried out to measure individual performance in the context of the public sector.

Organizations need employees with high performance in order to achieve organizational goals and obtain competitive advantage (Frese, 2002).

Employees with high level of performance have greater chances than those that have low level of performance in leading an organisation (Vanscotter, 2000). Malos (1998) concluded that fair appraisal should be based on on-the-job behaviours, not personalities of persons. Without fairness, the performance appraisal system may negatively impact employees and make them feel frustrated (Gilliland and Langdon, 1998).

2.3.1 Theories on how to measure individual performance

Task and Contextual performance (Borman, Motowidlo, 1993) conceptualised employee's performance with two dimensions: task performance describes expected behaviours on the job by formal authority of the organisation while contextual performance is related to employee's behaviour affected by context and culture of the organisation. This concept was later expanded to 3 constructs: task performance, dedication and interpersonal facilitation in which dedication and interpersonal facilitation belong to contextual performance (Conway, 1996).

Three fundamental assumptions are connected with the differences between task and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Motowidlo & Schmit, 1999): (1) Activities of task performance differ between jobs whilst activities of contextual performance are relatively similar across jobs; (2) task performance is related to capability and one's ability, while contextual performance is linked to one's personality and motivation; (3) task performance is more defined and constitutes in-role

behaviour, whereas contextual performance is more discretionary and extra-role.

2.4 Previous studies

There have been numerous studies and researches on performance appraisal. Recently, there has also been an increase in the number of research on performance appraisal both in developed and developing countries. However, there have not been previous studies regarding the effect of the objectivity of performance appraisal on the performance of public officials in the Vietnamese context.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methods used in this study. It includes the description of the research framework, population and sample selection, data collection and analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Framework

This research is going to answer the general question of “Does objectivity of performance appraisal affect individual performance of public officials in Viet Nam Civil Service?” and “Which components of the objectivity of performance appraisal influence individual performance in the Vietnamese Civil Service ?”

This study analysed data that was collected from a random sample of civil servants in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Viet Nam. The sample was chosen with simple random sampling from the employee list of Personnel Department of the MOFA of Viet Nam. Data was collected by survey questionnaires, which was conducted in English. This survey tested the relationship between objectivity of performance appraisal and individual performance of public servants in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam.

As mentioned in chapter 2, the objectivity of performance appraisal is consisted of three factors which are goal setting, consistency of measures and fairness of Performance Appraisal. Individual performance in the Viet Nam Civil Service is categorised into four grades, namely “Excellent”,

“Completing”, “Completing with limited capacity”, and “Incompetent”. The research aims to explore if there is a relationship between objectivity of performance appraisal as well as its components and individual performance. Figure 3.1 presented the general conceptual framework of the study in more details.

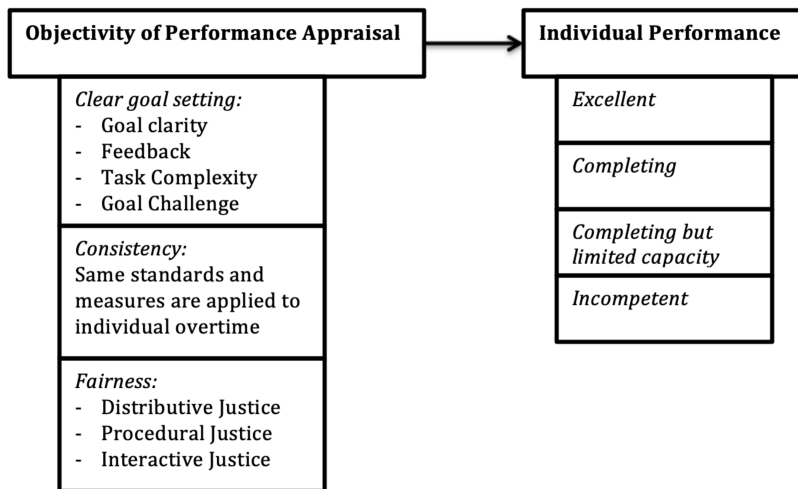


Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

3.1.1 Independent Variable

Objectivity of Performance Appraisal consists of

a. Goal setting (GS)

Items and scales used in this study to measure goal-setting factor were based on previous researches and studies carried out by Locke and Latham (2002), Bandura (1977) and Vroom (1994). Goal setting was measured with 14 items in a format of five-point Likert scale (Babbie, 2015) from strongly disagree [1] to strongly agree [5].

b. Consistency (CO)

The items and scales applied in this study to measure consistency of performance appraisal were modified from research done by Langan-Fox, Bell, McDonald, and Morizzi (1996) and Galin (1979). Consistency factor was measured by 3 items in a five-point Likert scale response format.

c. Fairness (FA)

10 items to measure the fairness factor of performance appraisal were taken and modified from research conducted by Greenberg (1987) and Wang et al. (2010). A five-point Likert scale response format was used to measure this variable.

3.1.2 Dependent Variable

Performance of individual civil servant

Performance of public servants in this study is based on primary data of the previous year's performance grade of individual. Performance grades include (1) Incompetent, (2) Completing with limited capacity, (3) Completing, and (4) Excellent.

3.1.3 Demographic variable

The study also includes demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, and job position in the model. These variables are utilised as control variables in the regression model to be analysed for descriptive purposes.

3.2 Hypotheses

Landy and Farr (1983) classified performance measurement as either objective or subjective. The former type of measures is put into objective and the latter type into subjective groups. Subjectivity depends on the individual judgments, and it is based on biases and cognitive limitations endemic to individual judgment and decision-making processes (Bol, 2008). According to Oberg (1981), performance appraisal demands too much from supervisors. It often needs at least periodic supervisor's judgment of subordinate's performance. A new supervisor can hardly know about each of his/her numerous subordinates is doing. Consequently, standard and rating are likely to vary often, widely, and unfairly. Subjectivity also limits the effectiveness of the appraisal programs. Baker, Jensen & Murphy (1988) states that subjective performance evaluations reduce effectiveness of incentives and productivity, thus, undermining employee performance.

There have been number of debates within scholars and academics such as Kelly & Swindell (2002) and Carter, et al. (1992) on which type of evaluation is better – subjective or objective and it has yet to reach a conclusion.

The most complex part of the performance appraisal process is to precisely and objectively evaluate the individual performance (Bond and Fox, 2007:5). Therefore, having an objective performance appraisal is important.

Hypothesis 1: The objectivity of performance appraisal has positive effect on the performance of public officials.

Objective measures are collected and developed by people who are not dependent on the subject under observation (Adcroft & Willis, 2008). Proponents have agreed on the performance evaluation's intention as to "isolate decisions about allocation of resources from political pressures by providing objective and undisputed data" (Halachmi, 2004). The majority of performance evaluators have assumed that objectivity can be achieved if goals and objectives are clearly defined (Gooden & McCreary, 2001, or Nicholson-Crotty, Theobald, & Nicholson-Crotty, 2006).

Measuring the performance includes the evaluation of the core and fundamental tasks completed and the achievements of the employee in a specified time frame in comparison with the goals set at the start of the period (Rudman, 2003:4). Motivated employees are those who work towards the clearly defined goals and put on efforts to achieve those goals (McShane & Von Glinow 2003). Furthermore, goalsetting theories suggest that challenging and specific goals boost employee's performance (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002).

Hypothesis 1a: Clear goal setting has positive effect on the performance of public officials.

Wisner and Fawcett (1991) propose a process for developing a performance measurement system that includes assuring consistency among performance criteria. The fact that different evaluators may use

different scales to assess the same job prevents any probability of achieving the reliability of performance appraisal (Galini, 1979). Changing performance criteria overtime may demotivate employees to strive for high performance. Therefore, consistency of performance measurement is important.

Hypothesis 1b: Consistency of performance measure has positive effect on performance of public officials.

Bias and unfairness in performance evaluation is problematic because if employees are aware of the bias, they are more likely to be less motivated, hence, become less productive in the future (Moers, 2005). Employees who feel they have been treated unfairly may quit, resulting in higher turnover costs, leading to a loss of human resources for the organization. Regarding to workers' incentives, bias complicates the process to differentiate people who show good performance from favouritism. Bias and unfairness reduce 'morale', leading to lower performance (Prendergast & Topel, 1993). Most importantly, employees are willing to work harder and become more productive when they perceive that they are being fairly treated (Köse, 2014).

Hypothesis 1c: Fairness of performance appraisal has positive effect on the performance of public officials.

For summary, the conceptualization, scale item and item sources of all variables is listed in table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 Summary of variables

	Theories	Author
Objectivity	<p>An appraisal method can be seen objective if it achieves three requirements:</p> <p>(1) PA should be valid and measure what it is supposed to measure, which means goals should be clearly defined;</p> <p>(2) PA should be reliable, which indicates that the same criteria should be used to measure performance each time;</p> <p>(3) PA should be fair in which evaluation should be based more on actual job-related behaviour rather than interpersonal relations.</p>	Galin (1979)
Goal-setting	<p>A goal refers to the object or aim of an action to attain a specific standard of proficiency within a specified time limit.</p> <p>Four principles of goal setting are goal clarity, task complexity, feedback and goal challenge.</p>	Locke & Latham (2002)
	<p><i>Social cognitive theory:</i></p> <p>People with high self-efficacy aim for an even more complex goal because that produces new motivating discrepancies to be mastered.</p>	Bandura (1977)
	<p><i>Expectancy theory:</i></p> <p>Difficult goals should be negatively related to performance</p>	Vroom (1994)
Consistency	<p>Inconsistent evaluators prevent any possibility of obtaining reliability of performance appraisal, thus, the same</p>	Galin (1979);

	performance measures should be used overtime. Lacking well-defined and consistent criteria when evaluating individual and organisational performance might pose several difficulties in managing the organisation and improving employees' performance.	Globerson , (1985)
<i>Fairness</i>	Organizational justice theory: distributive procedural and interactional justice. Employee perceptions of fairness in the workplace.	Greenberg (1987)
	Organizational justice can help improve the employees' work performance.	Wang et al. (2010)

3.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis

3.3.1 Data Collection

The research uses primary data collected through self-administered questionnaire. Due to a large population, survey method was employed to collect data from officers and heads of division of twenty departments and diplomatic missions overseas in MOFA of Viet Nam.

The study concentrated on the quantitative data collected through survey questionnaire to demonstrate a picture of the effectiveness of performance appraisal in Viet Nam civil service and to explore what factors of this process can affect performance of employees.

3.3.2 Population and Sample

The population of civil service personnel employed in this study were civil servants in position of officers to head of divisions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam. The total number of civil servants of MOFA was 1500 (from 20 departments and diplomatic missions overseas), which was the population of this study.

Due to the large size of the human resource, the sample for this survey was opted by systemic sampling technique. The list of civil employees who are working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam created the sampling frame for this research. A sample of 150 officers (10% of the population) was chosen for the questionnaires. However, only 120 self-administered questionnaires were conducted for the study, presenting 80% response rate. 30 respondents failed to complete the survey. Systemic sampling technique determined the neutrality and representativeness of the sample chosen for the study.

3.3.3 Data Analysis

A survey questionnaire was distributed through online questionnaire form (Google Doc) to the respondents. Data were collected through responses of participants. After the data collection process, the data were checked, edited, coded and analysed with Microsoft Excel and SPSS software program. Microsoft Excel helped to rearrange and edit data whilst SPSS played a critical role in statistically analyse the data in terms of multiple

regression analysis, comparisons amongst groups. The results that are produced from this process will be the answer to the research question.

Chapter 4. Data Analysis and Results

This chapter will emphasise on analysing the data collected by quantitative method using excel and SPSS program. The results of the analysis are used to answer the research question, which is the main objective of this study.

4.1 Measurement purification: Pilot study

4.1.1 Methodology

Conducting pilot studies is a necessary step of most studies. The aim of undertaking a pilot study is to test the feasibility of a method that may be used in a larger scale study.

The pilot test was carried out with a sample of 30 participants selected from 10 different departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Viet Nam. An online survey questionnaire was distributed to these respondents. The response rate was 100%. Demographic characteristics of participants in the pilot study are shown in more details in Table 4.1. In terms of gender, 50% of respondents were male and 50% were female. All respondents were at the age between 20 to 49 years. The major age group was between 30 and 39 years of age (63.3%). In relations to ranking, most of the respondents were officers (93.3%) and only two respondents were heads of division (6.7%). Out of 30 respondents, 40% completed a Bachelor's Degree whilst 60% acquired a Master's Degree.

Table 4.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents for pilot study

Demographic	Category	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	15	50%
	Female	15	50%
Age	20-29	9	30%
	30-39	19	63.3%
	40-49	2	6.7%
Department	State Protocol Department	3	10%
	Europe Department	3	10%
	South East Asia – South Asia and South Pacific Department	3	10%
	North East Asia Department	3	10%
	Middle East – Africa Department	3	10%
	Americas Department	3	10%
	Consular Department	3	10%

	Multilateral Economics Cooperation Department	3	10%
	UNESCO Department	3	10%
	Law and International Treaty Department	3	10%
Position	Officer	28	93.3%
	Head of Division	2	6.7%
Education	Bachelor's Degree	12	40%
	Master's Degree	18	60%
Performance	Completing with limited capacity	4	13.3%
	Completing	16	53.4%
	Excellent	10	33.3%

The data generated from the pilot test was analysed by SPSS program. Prior to the analysis, the researcher coded all items from the survey questionnaire. Numerous tests such as descriptive studies to find the mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficients and reliability test using Cronbach's alpha were undertaken for the purpose of data analysis for the pilot study. This process helped to check the questionnaire, understand

participants and estimate the time for data collection and analysis (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

4.1.2 Reliability Test

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal reliability of a study. After running SPSS program to check Cronbach's alpha value for the pilot study, the results were ranging from 0.84 to 0.97 (Table 4.2). Hinton, McMurray & Brownlow (2004) stated that a Cronbach's alpha that equals to or is greater than 0.90 is excellent, between 0.90 and 0.70 is good, between 0.70 and 0.50 is moderate, and below 0.50 is low. According to the results, there were two constructs that had excellent scores and one construct with good score. The pilot study result also showed that there were no constructs that have Cronbach's alpha below 0.50, therefore, all the items in the questionnaire can be used in the larger scale research and reliability of the construct has been proven.

Table 4.2 Revised Cronbach's alpha value for pilot study

Construct	Cronbach's alpha for pilot study
Goal setting	0.977
Consistency	0.885
Fairness	0.919
Objectivity	0.978

4.1.3 Pearson's Correlation Analysis

Using SPSS program, the Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted and produced a result proving that there were several significant positive correlation between dependent and independent variables. A correlation coefficient value that is higher than 0.6 represents a strong association whilst a correlation coefficient value between 0.4 and 0.6 shows a moderate association. If the value is less than 0.4, there is a weak association between variables.

Derived from table 4.3, there was a strong positive correlation between individual performance (Per) and goal setting (GS) with $r=0.743$; and between individual performance and fairness of performance appraisal (F) in which $r=0.762$. There was a moderate positive correlation between individual performance and consistency of performance measures (CS) where $r=0.489$. Last but not least, between performance and objectivity of performance appraisal (OB), there was also a strong and positive correlation at $r=0.740$.

Table 4.3 Correlation table for pilot study

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

	Mean	STD	Per	GS	CS	F	OB
Per	3.20	0.664	1				
GS	4.04	0.812	0.743** <0.0001	1			
CS	3.94	0.967	0.489** <0.0001	0.845** <0.0001	1		
F	3.84	0.821	0.762** <0.0001	0.939** <0.0001	0.812** <0.0001	1	
OB	3.94	0.867	0.740** <0.001	0.989** <0.0001	0.880** <0.0001	0.974** <0.0001	1

4.2 Main study findings

4.2.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 4.4 summarised the demographic characteristics of all participants of the main research, namely, gender, age, duration of service, department, ranking, education level and latest performance grade. Out of 130 respondents who completed the online survey questionnaires, 63 were male (48.5%) and 67 were female (51.5%). Demographic profiles also indicated that 66 respondents (50.8%) were aged between 30 and 39 years, 53 respondents (40.8%) were aged between 20 and 29 years and the rest (8.5%) were between 40 and 49 years of age. The majority of respondents have served the service for 5 to 10 years (40.8%), and the group of participants that has less than 5 years of experience also accounted for a large share of the responses (36.9%). Respondents were selected from 20 departments and overseas representative missions, which have been listed in table 4.4. 121 out of 130 respondents were officers, which accounted for 93.1% while only 9 out of 130 respondents were heads of division. Level of education included 60 respondents with Bachelor's degree (46.2%), 68 respondents with Master's degree and higher (52.3%) and only 2 respondents with Diploma (1.5%). The table also indicated latest performance grade of participants, in which 81 respondents achieved the completing grade (62.3%); 41 respondents were graded excellent (31.5%), and only 8 respondents were completing with limited capacity (6.2%).

**Table 4.4 Demographic profiles of respondents for the main study
(n=130)**

Demographic	Category	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	63	48.5%
	Female	67	51.5%
Age	20-29	53	40.8%
	30-39	66	50.8%
	40-49	11	8.5%
Duration of service	<5	48	36.9%
	5-10	53	40.8%
	11-15	22	16.9%
	16-20	7	5.4%
Department	State Protocol Department	4	3.1%
	Europe Department	22	16.9%
	South East Asia – South Asia and South Pacific Department	9	6.9%
	North East Asia Department	7	5.4%

Middle East – Africa Department	5	3.8%
Americas Department	7	5.4%
Consular Department	6	4.6%
Multilateral Economics Cooperation Department	7	5.4%
UNESCO Department	7	5.4%
Law and International Treaty Department	6	4.6%
Economic Affairs Department	5	3.8%
National Border Committee	4	3.1%
National Interpretation and Translation Centre	3	2.3%
Personnel and Organization Department	3	2.3%
Ho Chi Minh's	4	3.1%

	Department for External relations		
	Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam	5	3.8%
	International Organizations Department	7	5.4%
	Press and Information Department	3	2.3%
	ASEAN Department	5	3.8%
	Overseas Representative Missions	11	8.5%
Position	Officer	121	93.1%
	Head of Division	9	6.9%
Education	Diploma	2	1.5%
	Bachelor's Degree	60	46.2%
	Master's Degree	68	52.3%
Performance	Completing with limited capacity	8	6.2%
	Completing	81	62.3%

	Excellent	41	31.5%
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4.2.2 Statistics

Summary of responses from the questionnaire

The responses of the whole questionnaire consisted of 28 Linkert- scale questions as presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Results of responses for Linkert-scale item

Note: No=number of observation, STD=standard deviation, SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neither Agree nor Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree.

Questions	No	Mean	STD	Percentage				
				SD	D	N	A	SA
8. My performance goals were specific and clearly stated	130	3.97	0.797	0	6.2	14.6	55.4	23.8
9. I understood exactly what I was supposed to do on my job	130	4.12	0.850	1.5	5.4	5.4	55.4	32.3
10. Having clear goals motivated me to perform better	130	4.32	0.737	0	2.3	9.2	43.1	45.4
11. If I had more than one goal to	130	4.10	0.843	0	6.9	10	49.2	33.8

accomplish, I knew exactly which ones were more important and which were less important								
12. I was given consistent feedback throughout the year	130	3.80	0.875	0	9.2	22.3	47.7	20.8
13. My supervisor provided constructive feedback	130	3.89	0.883	0	9.2	16.9	49.2	24.6
14. My supervisor provided actionable feedback	130	3.88	0.886	0.8	7.7	17.7	50	23.8
15. The appraisal feedback I received was relevant to what I do at work	130	3.97	0.844	0	7.7	13.8	52.3	26.2
16. In general, I believe that the appraisal feedback I received from my supervisor was useful	130	3.93	0.950	1.5	7.7	16.2	45.4	29.2
17. The appraisal feedback I received allowed me to improve my job performance	130	3.96	0.910	0.8	7.7	15.4	46.9	29.2
18. The goals I had on this	130	3.85	0.830	1.5	3.1	24.6	50.8	20

job were challenging								
19. The goals I had on this job were achievable	130	3.95	0.796	0.8	3.8	17.7	54.6	23.1
20. Challenging goals motivated me to perform better	130	4.08	0.753	0	1.5	20	47.7	30.8
21. Specific goals motivated me to perform better	130	4.28	0.659	0	0.8	9.2	51.5	38.5
22. Performance standards were applied consistently across employees	130	3.64	1.064	3.1	13.3	20.8	40.8	21.5
23. The same criteria were used to measure my performance every year	130	3.75	1.057	1.5	15.4	15.4	41.5	26.2
24. Consistent performance measures motivated me to perform better	130	4.05	0.843	0.8	4.6	14.6	49.2	30.8
25. The appraisal criteria in which I was evaluated were fair	130	3.81	0.924	0	13.1	14.6	50.8	21.5
26. The performance criteria used in the appraisal form	130	3.96	0.914	0.8	11.5	22.3	48.5	16.9

measured my real performance								
27. The criteria used in the current appraisal system motivated me to perform better	130	3.68	0.966	1.5	11.5	23.8	43.8	19.2
28. I believe I was rated fairly on last year's performance appraisal	130	4.02	0.919	0	10	10.8	46.2	33.1
29. If I could rate my last year performance, I would still rate myself the same as my latest performance grade	130	4.15	0.729	0	3.1	16.9	47.7	32.3
30. I was fairly rewarded/compensated considering my responsibility	130	3.82	0.922	2.3	6.9	18.5	51.5	20.8
31. I believe that only employees who had good interpersonal relations got promoted	130	2.68	0.898	3.1	9.2	51.5	25.4	10.8
32. I believe my supervisor understood my job well enough to rate me accurately	130	3.93	0.882	0	8.5	16.9	47.7	26.9

33. I believe that employees who performed well on the job got promoted	130	3.84	0.905	0.8	7.7	22.3	45.4	23.8
34. Performance evaluation was based more on actual job-related behaviour than interpersonal relations	130	3.74	0.903	0	10	26.9	42.3	20.8
35. Fair performance appraisal motivated me to perform better	130	4.32	0.707	0	0.8	11.5	42.3	45.4

The mean of individual item of the questionnaire ranged from 2.68 (question 31) to 4.32 (question 11 and 35), which showed that most of the respondents “Agree” with the statements in the survey apart from question 31. According to the correlation analysis, all three dependent variables are significantly associated with performance. From the descriptive statistics, items related to the clarity of goal setting (question 10, 11, 12 and 22), the importance of challenging goals (question 21), and perception on fairness of last year performance appraisal (question 29) were agreed by the majority of respondents. Most respondents also agreed that performance evaluation was based more on actual job-related behaviour than interpersonal relations (question 34) and disagreed on the statement that

only employees who had good interpersonal relations got promoted (question 31). 80% of respondents agreed that they would still rate themselves with the same grade as last year evaluation (question 29). The items concerning goal setting and fairness of performance appraisal obtained relatively low standard deviations (less than 1), which showed that there was a consensus among respondents in relation to these two constructs. However, items concerning the consistency of performance measures had higher standard deviations (question 22 & 23 with std. higher than 1), which showed that there was more variety of answers among respondents.

Pearson's Correlations

Table 4.6 demonstrated the correlations between all of the variables. It can be concluded that there were significant statistical evidence to prove that the independent variable and its components have associations with the dependent variable. However, the levels of correlation are different among them. For instance, there were moderate correlations between goal setting factor and performance ($r=0.563$, $p<0.01$) and between fairness of performance appraisal and performance ($r=0.594$, $p<0.01$). However, there was weak correlation between consistency of performance measures and performance (0.356 , $p<0.01$). The correlation between Objectivity of Performance appraisal and Individual Performance was also moderate with $r=0.580$ ($p<0.01$).

Table 4.6 Mean, Standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficients (n=130)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

	Mean	STD	Per	GS	CS	F	OB
Per	3.25	0.561	1				
GS	4.95	0.860	0.563** <0.0001	1			
CS	3.70	1.061	0.356** <0.0001	0.871** <0.0001	1		
F	3.77	0.888	0.594** <0.0001	0.942** <0.0001	0.844** <0.0001	1	
OB	4.14	0.936	0.580** <0.0001	0.971** <0.0001	0.786** <0.0001	0.937** <0.0001	1

Reliability test - Cronbach's alpha

As mentioned before, Cronbach's alpha is an important measurement of internal reliability of the scale. By using SPSS software, Cronbach's alpha for three constructs of the main study was high. For items that belong to goal setting, Cronbach's alpha was 0.953; for fairness of performance appraisal, Cronbach's alpha was 0.903. These two figures represented excellent reliability. In terms of consistency of performance appraisal, Cronbach's alpha of 0.831 showed high reliability. Overall, the results indicated that the constructs of the study are reliable.

Table 4.7 Cronbach's alpha for the main study

Construct	Cronbach's alpha for main study
Goal setting	0.952
Consistency	0.851
Fairness	0.885
Objectivity	0.809

4.2.3 Group comparison

The model used for the statistical analysis included control variables. In order to find the impact of control variables on the dependent variable, this section is going to examine this in more details. Further analysis provides a more thorough view on the factors that influence individual performance through objective performance appraisal.

Gender comparison

Gender is a factor that is more likely to affect individual performance as a control variable. In terms of gender, the study was balanced between male and female. Comparison between these two groups of respondents was made in order to find if there was any effect caused by gender on the latest individual performance grade. The table 4.10 indicates the details of the t-test conducted for gender-based performance. The means of individual performance of male and female were 3.29 and 3.22, respectively. The difference in mean values was not statistically significant as the p-value

equalled to 0.53 which was higher than α (0.05 at 95% confidence level). Therefore, there was no difference in individual performance between male and female.

Table 4.8 Comparison of individual performance based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	95% CL Mean	
Male	63	3.29	0.607	3.13	3.44
Female	67	3.22	0.517	3.10	3.35
Diff (1-2)		-0.07		-0.13	0.26
Method	Variances	DF	T Value	Pr> t	
Independent samples test	Equal	128	0.62	0.53	

The result contrasted the findings of Linz (2003), Bengtson et al. (1978) and Smedley & Whitten (2006) who believed that gender had an impact on work performance.

Position comparison

This section is going to make a comparison between differences in individual performance based on their current position/ranking. Out of 130 respondents, only 9 respondents (7% of the sample size) were heads division while the rest were officers (93% of the sample size). Despite the vast difference in terms of position, the mean scores of performance level of the two groups were similar (3.25 for officer and 3.33 for head of

division). The table 4.11 provides more information on the t-test computed to compare between positions.

Table 4.9 Comparison of individual performance based on position

Position	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	95% CL	
Officer	121	3.25	0.567	3.15	3.33
Head of Division	9	3.33	0.500	2.95	3.72
Diff (1-2)		-0.08		-0.47	0.30
Method	Variances	DF	T Value	Pr> t	
Independent samples test	Equal	128	-0.44	0.66	

The p-value produced was 0.66 which was higher than α (0.05 at 95% confidence level). Hence, it indicated that there was no statistical significance to claim that the mean scores of these groups were different. There was no difference in individual performance between supervisors and subordinates. The result of the analysis was in contrast to Linz (2003), Bengtson et al. (1978) and Smedley & Whitten (2006) who believed that position could have an influence on work performance. Additionally, the outcome did not support the view of Kolz et al. (1998) who claimed that experienced people had better work performance due to their indepth knowledge on the tasks need to be done.

Education level comparison

Another factor that may influence individual performance is the level of education. Most of respondents acquired Bachelor's Degree and higher, only two respondents had Diploma's Degree. This section is going to make a comparison between two groups which are respondents with Bachelor's Degree and those with Master's Degree and higher in order to examine whether there is a difference in individual performance in terms of level of education.

Table 4.10 Comparison of individual performance based on education level

Education level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	95% Mean	CL
Bachelor's Degree	60	3.17	0.557	3.02	3.31
Master's Degree and higher	68	3.34	0.563	3.20	3.47
Diff (1-2)		-0.17		-0.37	0.25
Method	Variances	DF	T Value	Pr> t	
Independent samples test	Equal	126	-1.73	0.086	

According to table 4.12, the mean values of performance between these two groups are not much different (3.17 for Bachelor's Degree and 3.34 for Master's Degree and higher). It can be seen that the p-value was 0.086 that was greater than α (0.05 at 95% confidence level). Thus, there was no statistically significant evidence to conclude that the mean scores of these

groups were different. In other words, there was no difference between those with Bachelor's Degree and those with Master's Degree and higher in terms of individual performance. The outcome produced was not in line with the opinion of Linz (2003), Bengtson et al. (1978) and Smedley & Whitten (2006) who claimed that education had an impact on work performance.

Age comparison

Age can also be a factor that contributes to the difference performance. Therefore, t-test was carried out to find out if there is any difference between individual performance of different age groups. 119 out of 130 participants of the study were mainly in the two age groups: 54 respondents were in their 20s and 65 respondents were in their 30s. Therefore, the comparison below was made only between these two age groups.

Table 4.11 Comparison of individual performance based on age

Age	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	95% Mean	CL
20-29	54	3.17	0.505	3.03	3.30
30-39	65	3.29	0.605	3.14	3.44
Diff (1-2)		-0.17		-0.33	0.08
Method	Variances	DF	T Value	Pr> t	
Independent samples test	Not Equal	117	-1.23	0.22	

From the table above, the mean scores of the two groups had not much difference with the mean value of 3.17 for the 20-29 year old group and the mean value of 3.29 for the 30-39 year old group. An independent samples test was conducted to find out if there was any difference in terms of performance level between these age groups. The result showed that the p-value was 0.23 which was higher than α (0.05 at 95% confidence level). Therefore, there was no statistically significant evidence to claim that the mean scores of these groups were different. Hence, there was no difference in relation to individual performance between people in different age groups. This result was not aligned with the work of Czaja et al. (1995) who believed that age had a significant and positive relationship with individual work performance.

4.2.4 Hypotheses testing

This section provided results of hypotheses testing. The four hypotheses presented in Chapter 3 were tested to find if there was a relationship between independent variables including Objectivity and its components which were Goal setting, Consistency of performance criteria, Fairness of performance appraisal and the dependent variable, which is individual performance. Furthermore, the effect of control variables (Gender, Age, Position and Level of Education) was also examined by multiple regression analysis.

The researcher tested the relationship between each of the independent variable and the dependent variable, given that the four control variables

(Gender, Age, Position and Level of Education) were taken into account in multiple regression analysis. Four separate multiple regressions were designed and performed.

Table 4.8 demonstrates the results from SPSS software of four above mentioned multiple regression models. In order to test Hypothesis 1, the model consisted of one independent variable – Objectivity of performance appraisal and the dependent variable. The Sig. in ANOVA was less than $0.0001 < \alpha$ (0.01 at 99% confidence level), thus, it was significant to predict the dependent variable - individual performance. R-square was equivalent to 0.375, which showed that Objectivity of performance appraisal accounted for 37.5% of the variance in Individual Performance, after taking into account the effect of control variables. From this regression analysis, in terms of independent variable Objectivity of performance appraisal, Sig. equaled to 0.000 which was less than α (0.05 at 95% confidence level), therefore, it can be concluded that Objectivity of performance appraisal has a significant and positive contribution by 0.595 to Individual Performance.

The other three regression analysis were obtained to examine the relationship between each component of the independent variable (Goal setting, Consistency of performance measures and Fairness of performance appraisal) and the dependent variable.

In order to test the relationship between Goal setting factor and Individual Performance, the model included the component Goal setting, the

dependent variable and four control variables. The Sig. in ANOVA was less than $0.0001 < \alpha$ (0.01 at 99% confidence level), thus, it was significant to predict Individual Performance. R-square equalled to 0.360, which showed that Goal setting accounted for 36% of the variance in Individual Performance, after taking into account the effect of control variables. From the statistical analysis, the p-value equaled to 0.000 which was less than α (0.05 at 95% confidence level), hence, it can be demonstrated that Goal setting has a significant and positive contribution by 0.580 to the dependent variable.

The 3rd regression analysis consisted of Consistency of performance measures, Individual Performance and four control variables. This analysis was undertaken to test the relationship between the second component of the independent variable with the dependent variable. The Sig. in ANOVA was less than $0.0001 < \alpha$ (0.01 at 99% confidence level), thus, it was statistically significant to predict the dependent variable. R-square was 0.162, which indicated that Consistency of performance measures accounted for 16.2% of the variance in the dependent variable after including control variables in the model. The p-value equaled to 0.000 which was less than α (0.05 at 95% confidence level), thus, this component of the independent variable has a significant and positive contribution by 0.359 to Individual Performance.

The last regression analysis was carried out to explore whether or not there was a relationship between the last component of the independent

variable - Fairness of performance appraisal and Individual Performance with the effect of control variables. The Sig. in ANOVA was less than $0.0001 < \alpha$ (0.01 at 99% confidence level), thus, it was statistically significant to predict the dependent variable. R-square was 0.348, which indicated that this factor accounted for 34.8% of the variance in the dependent variable, after including control variables in the model. The result of the analysis showed that it also had a significant and positive contribution by 0.593 to Individual Performance at the p-value of 0.000, which was less than α of 0.05 with confidence level 95%.

The table below summarised the four above-mentioned regression analysis used to test the hypotheses using multiple regression analysis for the independent variables and its four components with the effect of four control variables.

Table 4.12 Summary of regression analysis

Model	Independent Variables & Control Variables	Coefficients Std. Error	Std. Coeff. Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0.418		1.668	0.098
	Objectivity	0.003	0.595	8.153	0.000
	Gender	0.083	-0.049	-0.660	0.510
	Age	0.072	-0.012	-0.151	0.880
	Education	0.080	0.208	2.764	0.007
	Position	0.167	-0.021	-0.273	0.786
2	(Constant)	0.410		2.239	0.027
	Goal Setting	0.005	0.580	7.877	0.000
	Gender	0.084	-0.060	-0.807	0.421
	Age	0.073	0.002	0.022	0.983
	Education	0.080	0.194	2.552	0.012
	Position	0.169	-0.043	-0.555	0.580
3	(Constant)	0.433		4.404	0.000
	Consistency	0.024	0.359	4.263	0.000
	Gender	0.096	-0.031	-0.360	0.719
	Age	0.084	0.041	0.440	0.661
	Education	0.092	0.116	1.913	0.058
	Position	0.194	-0.013	-0.153	0.879
4	(Constant)	0.431		1.239	0.218
	Fairness	0.007	0.593	8.132	0.000
	Gender	0.083	-0.024	-0.326	0.745
	Age	0.072	0.004	-0.046	0.964
	Education	0.080	0.220	2.907	0.004
	Position	0.169	0.002	0.023	0.982

Hypothesis 1a: Clear Goal setting has positive effect on the performance of public officials.

The regression analysis produced a result that indicated a positive and significant relationship between clear goal setting and individual performance. After taking into account the effects of control variables, the p-value 0.0000 and Beta was 0.580. The outcome of the analysis was in line with the finding of Locke & Latham (1990, 2002), which stated that

clear goal setting improved employee performance. Hence, hypothesis 1a “Clear goal setting has positive effect on the performance of public officials” was supported by the statistical findings.

Hypothesis 1b: Consistency of performance measure has positive effect on performance of public officials.

The results of the statistical analysis demonstrated that there was a significant relationship between consistency of performance measure and individual performance. The P-value was 0.000 with the Beta coefficient of 0.359. Therefore, the result supported the research by Galin (1979) that changing performance criteria overtime might demotivate employees to strive for high performance. Hence, the second hypothesis is supported.

Hypothesis 1c: Fairness of performance appraisal has positive effect on the performance of public officials.

Fairness of performance appraisal was conjectured to exhibit positive and significant effect on the individual performance. The outcome of the statistical analysis showed that there was a positive and significant influence between fairness of performance appraisal and individual performance after adding control variables to the regression. The p-value was 0.000 with Beta equalled to 0.563. This result validated the finding of Moers (2005) that unfairness in performance evaluation is problematic because if subordinates become aware of the bias, they might portrait lower performance in the future.

Hypothesis 1: The Objectivity of performance appraisal has positive effect on the performance of public officials.

The regression analysis presented an outcome that showed a positive and significant relationship between the Objectivity of performance appraisal and Individual Performance. With the effects of control variables, the outcome indicated that the p-value equalled 0.0000 and Beta was 0.583. This result proved that the theory presented by Kunz (2015) that objective performance appraisal influence employee performance and it was in line with the finding by Baker, Jensen & Murphy (1988) who stated that subjective performance evaluations reduced effectiveness of incentives and productivity, thus, undermining employee performance. Hence, hypothesis 1 “The objectivity of performance appraisal has positive effect on the performance of public officials.” was supported by the statistical findings.

Table 4.13 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Results
H1a: Clear goal setting has positive effect on the performance of public officials.	Supported
H1b: Consistency of performance measure has positive effect on performance of public officials.	Supported
H1c: Fairness of performance appraisal has positive effect on the performance of public officials.	Supported
H1: The objectivity of performance appraisal has positive effect on the performance of public officials.	Supported

4.3 Summary

This chapter demonstrated the findings of the statistical analysis of the study. The objective of the analysis is to answer the research question and to test the presented hypotheses. In order to do so, the researcher employed the pilot study and quantitative method through survey questionnaires to 130 respondents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam.

The pilot study was carried out to test the data collection and analysis methods through checking the questionnaires, pretesting the statistical analysis as well as examining the validity and reliability of the method.

The core purpose of the main study is to examine whether or not there is a relationship between Objective performance appraisal and Individual Performance. This relationships were tested with the effect of control variables. The result confirmed that the independent variable and its three components which were Goal setting, Consistency of performance measures and Fairness of performance appraisal had significant and positive relationships with the dependent variable - Individual Performance. Additionally, the T-test was performed for the purpose of examining the impact of demographic variables such as gender, age, education level and position on Individual Performance. As a result, the tests showed no significant impact of control variables on the dependent variable.

Chapter 5. Recommendation and Conclusion

The conclusion of the research is presented in this chapter. Key findings of the study are summarised and recommendations for how to use the current performance appraisal to improve individual performance are presented in this chapter.

5.1 Discussion of main findings and Recommendation

This section presents the discussion of main findings from the quantitative study as well as introduces recommendations that are useful to enhance individual performance through improving the current performance appraisal system in Viet Nam civil service.

The results of data analysis demonstrated that the independent variable – Objectivity of Performance appraisal and its three components, which were Goal setting, Consistency of performance measures as well as Fairness of performance appraisal had significant and positive relationships with Individual Performance of public officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam. As performance evaluation is an important process in human resource management, it can be improved further to be more effective in boosting employees' performance in the current system.

5.1.1 Goal setting

In relation to goal setting, the descriptive statistics section included 14 items for this factor with mean values ranging from 3.80 to 4.28, which showed that most respondents answered “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”. Furthermore, the regression analysis presented a significant and positive relationship between clear Goal setting and Performance of employees.

More than 85% of respondents “Agreed” and “Strongly Agreed” with the statement “Having clear goals motivated me to perform better” and “Specific goals motivated me to perform better”, which showed that goal clarity and specificity were important to individual performance. Therefore, employees should be given and instructed with clear goals at the beginning of each year.

Additionally, the analysis presented that most respondents highly valued feedbacks from supervisors on how they were working towards achieving the goals. 76.1% of respondents “Agreed” and “Strongly Agreed” with the statement that “The appraisal feedback I received allowed me to improve my job performance”. Hence, the current system should emphasize more on giving feedbacks throughout the year from supervisors to subordinates as only 68.5% of respondents confirmed that they were given consistent feedback throughout the year. Whereas there were 31.5% of respondents thought that the feedback was not consistently given to them. This may have a relation with the subjective performance appraisal as each supervisor has a different approach to feedbacks.

Another interesting aspect of goal setting that was clearly demonstrated by the analysis was goal challenge. 70.5% of participants thought, “The goals I had on this job were challenging” and 78.5% of respondents agreed that challenging goals motivated them to perform better. This can be explained by the job nature of the Foreign Service as the tasks can vary depending on situation. Therefore, this should be taken into consideration when setting goals for individuals.

5.1.2 Consistency of performance measures

According to the survey’s results, the majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the items related to Consistency of performance measures (mean values of 3.64 ~ 4.05). Out of three items in the consistency section, the highest mean value of 4.05 was for the item “Consistent performance measures motivated me to perform better”, and the lowest mean value of 3.64 belonged to “Performance standards were applied consistently across employees”. 63% of participants agreed and strongly agreed with this statement. The result signals that employees actually perceive consistency of performance measures as an important factor to their performance. Additionally, nearly 70% of respondents either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that the same criteria were used to measure their performance every year. On the other hand, 16% of respondents still felt that the current measures were not consistent.

After performing the regression analysis, the outcome showed a significant and positive relationship between consistent performance

measures and individual performance. One possible explanation for this may be linked to the criteria set in the 2008 Civil Servants Law. Civil servants are evaluated based on four principles including morality, responsibility, discipline and achievement. These principles are standardized, thus, the evaluation measures are the same for all civil servants.

Hence, in order to improve employee's performance, supervisors should continue to apply these measures and criteria consistently across subordinates overtime.

5.1.3 Fairness of performance appraisal

From the survey questionnaires, 11 items were related fairness of performance appraisal, which obtained mean values from 2.68 to 4.32. The result of the statistical analysis also showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between this factor and Individual Performance.

With the highest mean score of 4.32, the research found that Fairness of performance appraisal played an important role in employee performance with 87.7% of respondents agreed that fair performance appraisal motivated them to perform better. However, improvements can be made, as there were still more than 10% of respondents who did not agree that they were rated fairly on the latest evaluation. Relating to individual perception of the fairness of performance appraisal process, around 70% of respondents believed that "Performance evaluation was based more on

actual job-related behaviour than interpersonal relations” and “Employees who performed well on the job got promoted”. Around 30% of respondents perceived otherwise that “Only employees who had good interpersonal relations got promoted”. This item had the mean score of 2.68, more than 50% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement while only 12% disagreed. This can be linked to lack of comprehensiveness in terms of performance criteria used in the appraisal process of Viet Nam Civil Service. Many still feel that this process is still subjective and based more on personal relationships.

In terms of the procedure of performance appraisal, the criteria used to evaluate employees should be modified. There was still dissatisfaction among respondents towards the current criteria (more than 12% of respondents were not satisfied with the fairness and the accuracy of currently used criteria).

Therefore, a more comprehensive and thorough system of criteria to evaluate civil servants is necessary to improve the performance appraisal system. Criteria should be designed in a way that are more fitted and suitable for each position. A more decentralised approach for designing criteria is more preferable in the Vietnamese context as each Ministry or local authority has its own unique job characteristics and functions. Central government should only improve the current legislative framework that gives more power to individual public entities to develop their own specific standards for their respective departments. However,

this approach may encounter certain drawbacks such as the inconsistency of performance measures across different institutions that may give rise to more dissatisfaction among civil servants. Therefore, there should be required standards of criteria across the system first.

5.2 Conclusion

Improving civil servants performance has always been a crucial part of personnel management in the public sector because it has direct and significant influence on the effectiveness and efficiency of public organizations as a whole. Evaluating performance of individual is therefore becoming increasingly important as an objective and comprehensive appraisal process can boost employee motivation and productivity (Kunz, 2005).

The research intended to examine the relationship between different aspects of objective performance appraisal and individual performance of civil servants in Viet Nam. The study also introduced recommendations on how to improve the current system to enhance employee performance.

The outcome of the quantitative analysis produced by the research answered the research question, in which it revealed that clear, specific and challenging Goal setting had a significant relationship with civil servants' performance. Furthermore, Fair performance appraisal played a crucial in influencing employee performance. The study also found a significant relationship between Consistency of performance measure and individual performance. Therefore, all three factors of objective

performance appraisal (Galini, 1977) had significant and positive relationship with individual performance. Last but not least, the finding presented that Objectivity of performance appraisal showed a positive and significant relationship with Individual Performance.

The major findings of this study expected to contribute to public human resource management functions and practices in the public sector, not only in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, but across different Ministries of central government as well as local governments.

5.3 Limitations of the research

The main limitation of this study was due to online questionnaires as the researcher could not be able to meet respondents in person. Another drawback of the research was the number of participants in the survey questionnaire. Even though the targeted number of respondents was 150 (10% of the population), the researcher could only collect 130 responses, which accounted for 8.7% of the population. This may have an effect on the statistical validity of the findings. Future studies should be carried out with a larger sample size to increase the generalizability of the research.

The research may face the issue of external validity. The sample may not reflect the whole population and the research may not be able to be generalized.

The research may also face statistical validity issue in which the findings in one population may not be able to be generalized to another population.

Additionally, the chosen Ministry for the research is Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has unique characteristics and a distinct structure in comparison to other counterparts, therefore, external validity may be affected. For future research purposes, studies should be conducted in other Ministries and local governments in Viet Nam as well to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Nonetheless, conducting a research may be time consuming, costly and may involve a lot of efforts to conduct an in-depth and high quality research.

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APPENDIX

SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLICADMINISTRATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

This survey questionnaire is part of the on-going research on "Individual perception of the effect of the objectivity of performance appraisal on the performance of public officials ". The survey aimed to discover how performance appraisal process could have an impact on the performance of public sector employees. Please, be assured that confidentiality of your response is highly guaranteed and used only for academic purposes. Name or any form of identity on this survey is not required.

1=Strongly Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Neither Agree nor Disagree	4=Agree	5=Strongly Agree
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Demographic information

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
2. What is your current age?
 - a. 20-29
 - b. 30-39
 - c. 40-49
 - d. 50-59
 - e. 60 and over
3. How many years have you worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam?
 - a. <5
 - b. 5-10
 - c. 11-15
 - d. 16-20
 - e. 21-25
 - f. Over 26
4. What level of education have you completed?

- a. High School
 - b. Diploma
 - c. Bachelor's Degree
 - d. Master's Degree
 - e. PhD or higher
5. What was your last performance rating grade?
- a. Incompetent
 - b. Completing with limited capacity
 - c. Completing
 - d. Excellent
6. Which department were you working at when you had your last year performance evaluation?
- a. Europe Department
 - b. South East Asia - South Asia - South Pacific Department
 - c. North East Asia Department
 - d. Americas Department
 - e. Middle East - Africa Department
 - f. International Organizations Department
 - g. UNESCO Department
 - h. Economic Affairs Department
 - i. Multilateral Economic Cooperation Department
 - j. State Protocol Department
 - k. Consular Department
 - l. Law and International Treaties Department
 - m. Ho Chi Minh City's Department for External Relations
 - n. Personnel and Organization Department
 - o. National Interpretation and Translation Center
 - p. Press and Information Department
 - q. National Border Committee
 - r. Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam (DAV)
 - s. Overseas Representative Missions of Viet Nam
 - t. ASEAN Department
7. What is your position?
- a. Officer
 - b. Head of Division
 - c. Deputy Director of Department
 - d. Director General of Department

Goal Setting		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8.	My performance goals were specific and clearly stated	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I understood	1	2	3	4	5

	exactly what I was supposed to do on my job					
10.	Having clear goals motivated me to perform better	1	2	3	4	5
11.	If I had more than one goal to accomplish, I knew exactly which ones were more important and which were less important	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I was given consistent feedback throughout the year	1	2	3	4	5
13.	My supervisor provided constructive feedback	1	2	3	4	5
14.	My supervisor provided actionable feedback	1	2	3	4	5
15.	The appraisal feedback I received was relevant to what I do at work	1	2	3	4	5
16.	In general, I believe that the appraisal feedback I received from my	1	2	3	4	5

	supervisor was useful					
17.	The appraisal feedback I received allowed me to improve my job performance	1	2	3	4	5
18.	The goals I had on this job were challenging	1	2	3	4	5
19.	The goals I had on this job were achievable	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Challenging goals motivated me to perform better	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Specific goals motivated me to perform better	1	2	3	4	5

Consistency		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
22.	Performance standards were applied consistently across employees	1	2	3	4	5
23.	The same criteria were used to measure my performance every year	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Consistent performance measures	1	2	3	4	5

	motivated me to perform better					
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Fairness		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
25.	The appraisal criteria in which I was evaluated were fair	1	2	3	4	5
26.	The performance criteria used in the appraisal form measured my real performance	1	2	3	4	5
27.	The criteria used in the current appraisal system motivated me to perform better	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I believe I was rated fairly on last year's performance appraisal	1	2	3	4	5
29.	If I could rate my last year performance, I would still rate myself the same as my latest performance grade	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I was fairly rewarded/compensated	1	2	3	4	5

	considering my responsibility					
31.	I believe that only employees who had good interpersonal relations got promoted	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I believe my supervisor understood my job well enough to rate me accurately	1	2	3	4	5
33.	I believe that employees who performed well on the job got promoted	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Performance evaluation was based more on actual job-related behaviour than interpersonal relations	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Fair performance appraisal motivated me to perform better	1	2	3	4	5

객관적 성과평가가 개인 성과에 미치는 영향: 베트남 외교부 사례를 중심으로

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글로벌행정전공

본 연구는 외교부 공무원들로부터 수집된 자료를 활용해 객관적 성과 평가가 공공 부문 직원들의 실적에 영향을 미쳤는지 여부를 조사하기 위한 것이다. 성과 평가의 객관성은 목표 설정, 성과 기준의 일관성, 평가 과정의 공정성 등 세 가지 주요 요소로 구성된다. 따라서 본 연구는 객관적 성과 평가의 3가지 요소가 공무원의 성과에 미치는 영향을 조사한다.

연구결과, "목표 설정", "성과 측정의 일관성", "성과 평가의 공정성"의 3가지 요인 모두 공무원 성과에 긍정적인 영향을 미치며 그 결과가 유의미한 것으로 관찰되었다. 더욱이 성과평가의 전반적인 객관성도 개인 성과와 유의미하고 긍정적인 관계를 나타냈다. 연구 결과를 토대로, 공공 부문 개인의 업무 수행에 있어 성과 평가 객관성이 중요한 역할을 한다는 결론을 도출했다. 공무원의 성과를 높이려면 객관적인 성과 평가가 선행되어야 한다.

주제어: 성과평가, 객관적 성과평가, 개인 성과
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