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Daria Ekshmidt BA MA

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Abstract

In recent years, performance evaluation practices have been significantly influenced by changes in work arrangements, the use of digital technologies and the increasing importance of accurate and transparent evaluation processes. This study examines the key determinants of perceived procedural fairness in performance evaluations among employees in Austria. Using a quantitative research approach based on gathered survey data, several statistical tests were conducted, including correlation analysis, independent samples t-tests and multiple regression analysis, to examine the relationships between the study variables. The findings of the study indicate that perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluations is mostly shaped by employees' perceptions of evaluation accuracy and the clarity of performance metrics. In contrast, the use of automated evaluation tools does not have a significant effect on fairness perceptions when other factors are taken into account. Furthermore, the findings show that hybrid work arrangements lead to slightly lower perceptions of fairness, while no significant differences were found between fully remote and in-office employees. Overall, the findings underline that improving the clarity and accuracy of performance evaluation processes is central to enhancing employees' perceptions of procedural fairness. Overall, the findings suggest that employees' perceptions of procedural fairness can be strengthened by ensuring that evaluation processes are accurate and that performance criteria are clearly defined. Accordingly, organizations should focus on developing transparent and consistent evaluation systems to improve perceived fairness.

Key words: Procedural fairness, evaluation accuracy, performance metrics clarity, work arrangements, automated evaluation systems, performance evaluation.

In den letzten Jahren wurden Praktiken der Leistungsbeurteilung maßgeblich durch Veränderungen in den Arbeitsformen, den Einsatz digitaler Technologien sowie die zunehmende Bedeutung präziser und transparenter Bewertungsprozesse beeinflusst. Diese Studie untersucht die zentralen Determinanten der wahrgenommenen prozeduralen Fairness von Leistungsbeurteilungen unter Beschäftigten in Österreich. Auf Grundlage eines quantitativen Forschungsansatzes und erhobener Umfragedaten wurden mehrere statistische Verfahren angewandt, darunter Korrelationsanalyse, t-Test für unabhängige Stichproben sowie multiple Regressionsanalyse, um die Zusammenhänge zwischen den untersuchten Variablen zu analysieren. Die Ergebnisse der Studie zeigen, dass die wahrgenommene prozedurale Fairness von Leistungsbeurteilungen maßgeblich durch die Wahrnehmung der Bewertungsgenauigkeit sowie die Klarheit der Leistungskriterien durch die Beschäftigten geprägt wird. Im Gegensatz dazu hat der Einsatz automatisierter Bewertungsinstrumente keinen signifikanten Einfluss auf die Fairnesswahrnehmung, sofern andere Faktoren berücksichtigt werden. Darüber hinaus weisen die Ergebnisse darauf hin, dass hybride Arbeitsformen mit einer leicht geringeren Wahrnehmung von Fairness einhergehen, während keine signifikanten Unterschiede zwischen remote arbeitenden und im Büro tätigen Beschäftigten festgestellt werden konnten. Insgesamt unterstreichen die Ergebnisse, dass die Verbesserung der Klarheit und Genauigkeit von Leistungsbeurteilungsprozessen zentral für die Förderung der wahrgenommenen prozeduralen Fairness ist. Insgesamt legen die Ergebnisse nahe, dass die Wahrnehmung prozeduraler Fairness bei Beschäftigten gestärkt werden kann, indem sichergestellt wird, dass Bewertungsprozesse präzise sind und Leistungskriterien klar definiert werden. Dementsprechend sollten Organisationen den Fokus auf die Entwicklung transparenter und konsistenter Bewertungssysteme legen, um die wahrgenommene Fairness zu erhöhen.

Introduction and Literature Review

Employee performance evaluation is one of the most prevalent management practices, with over 90 percent of large organizations and 75 percent of state employment systems requiring some form of annual performance evaluation (Seldon, Ingraham & Jacobson, 2001). This widespread implementation underscores the belief among managers and human resource professionals that performance evaluations are critical tools for effective human resource management and performance enhancement (Longenecker & Goff, 1992).

Performance evaluation, which aims to identify, reward, and discipline employees based on their performance, is a key human resource practice in achieving organizational goals and objectives. Additionally, it benefits in the implementation of initiatives and procedures that are essential for the healthy resource management. To orient and guide human capital in the desired directions, this practice is essential (Delery and Doty, 1996; Takeuchi et al., 2007).

The rationale behind this practice is multifaceted. Performance evaluations provide structured feedback, helping employees understand their strengths and areas for improvement. They also facilitate goal alignment, ensuring that individual objectives are in sync with the organization's strategic goals. Additionally, evaluations can serve as a motivational tool, encouraging employees to strive for better performance through recognition and constructive feedback.

Furthermore, performance evaluations are instrumental in identifying training and development needs, succession planning, and making informed decisions regarding promotions, compensations, and terminations. In essence, the performance evaluation process is a cornerstone of comprehensive human resource management, aimed at fostering a culture of continuous improvement and high performance within organizations.

Performance evaluation, also known as performance evaluation, refers to the procedures and techniques used by organizations to evaluate employee performance. Usually, this procedure entails performance evaluation and feedback (DeNisi and Pritchard, 2006). Improving performance of employees is the key focus of performance evaluations in organizations.

Recent research has shifted focus from studies on rater accuracy and psychometric measures to examining employee reactions to performance evaluations as indicators of system satisfaction and efficacy. Employee perception of fairness in performance evaluations has emerged as a significant factor in their acceptance and

satisfaction with the process. Despite its widespread implementation, formal performance evaluation practices continue to face considerable scrutiny and criticism.

To address these concerns, researchers and practitioners have made various adjustments to evaluation criteria, rating instruments, and evaluation procedures, aiming to enhance both the accuracy and perceived fairness of the process (Banks & Murphy, 1985). These modifications include developing more transparent criteria, incorporating 360-degree feedback, and utilizing technology to standardize and streamline the evaluation process. However, despite the significant attention and resources dedicated to refining performance evaluations, dissatisfaction remains prevalent. Employees often view these systems as inaccurate and unfair (Church, 1985).

This ongoing challenge highlights the complexity of creating a performance evaluation system that is both effective and perceived as equitable by all employees. It underscores the need for continuous improvement and adaptation to meet the evolving expectations of the workforce. Additionally, it suggests that merely adjusting the technical aspects of performance evaluation may not be sufficient. Organizations must also consider the broader context of organizational culture, communication, and trust-building efforts to improve overall perceptions of fairness and effectiveness in performance evaluations.

According to researches, performance evaluations usually serve three major objectives. The first objective serves the developmental purposes such as determining assignments and transfers, recognizing employee strengths and weaknesses, identifying needs, providing feedback and suggestions (Erez, 1977; Kluger and DeNisi, 1996; DeNisi and Pritchard, 2006; Murphy and Cleveland, 1991; Locke and Latham, 2002). The other objective serves the purpose of evaluation and includes performance evaluation, promotion and demotion decisions, rewarding individual achievement, wage management, and hiring decisions (Cleveland et al., 1989; Landy and Farr, 1980; Raynes, Gerhart, & Parks, 2005). And the third purpose of performance evaluations is to increase awareness among employees that they are being evaluated, which can improve productivity and co-operation within the company (Bateson et al., 2006; Haley and Fessler, 2005; Keller and Pfattheicher, 2011): just being aware that one is being watched or assessed improves performance and encourages more cooperative behavior, as articulated in the phrase "what gets measured gets done" (Bateson et al., 2006; Haley and Fessler, 2005; Keller and Pfattheicher, 2011).

Widespread frustration and dissatisfaction with performance evaluations have prompted researchers and practitioners in both the private and public sectors to critically evaluate the effectiveness of these systems. The literature suggests that numerous factors must be considered in this evaluation, particularly employee attitudes towards variables such as perceptions of fairness. Bretz, Milkovich, and Read (1992) emphasize that

the perceived fairness of performance reviews and evaluation systems is the most critical issue organizations face. Their findings indicate that most employees view their performance evaluation systems as neither accurate nor fair.

Skarlicki and Folger (1997) further argue that the evaluation process can become a significant source of dissatisfaction when employees believe the system is biased, political, or irrelevant. This belief can undermine trust in the organization, leading to decreased morale, reduced productivity, and higher turnover rates. The challenge lies in developing and implementing performance evaluation systems that are transparent, objective, and relevant to employees' roles and contributions.

Moreover, the negative perceptions surrounding performance evaluations can have a ripple effect, impacting not only individual employee satisfaction but also the overall organizational climate. When employees feel that their performance is not assessed fairly, it can result in disengagement, lack of motivation, and a decline in overall performance.

Although assessments are a helpful tool for managers and organization itself, they can also cause issues or lead to challenges that can reduce employees' efficacy and have a detrimental effect on workers' attitudes, responses, behaviors, and quality of performance (Walsh, 2003; Whitener, 2001; Kuvaas, 2007). The ones giving feedback have to be aware of how staff members are feeling about their evaluations since they may react either positively or negatively. To accurately reflect actual performance, an evaluation mechanism needs to be rigorous and precise in order to be perceived by employees as fair (Suliman, 2007). If workers believe they are being treated fairly in the evaluation process, they are more likely to respond favorably to their job duties and the evaluation or feedback would more likely lead to positive impacts (Moorman, 1991; Cook and Crossman, 2004). Furthermore, employees' reaction or perceptions of the evaluation process have a big influence on how satisfied they are with their jobs overall (Sabeen, Mehboob & Muhammad, 2008).

The perceived fairness of performance evaluation, so the feeling of how fairly the employees are being treated also but not only in relation to other employees, is an important external factor that affects employee motivation. () Moreover, an organization's effectiveness largely depends on its human resource management, particularly employee performance evaluation and on how these evaluations are perceived. Influencing employees' positive or negative view of the organization, the performance of fairness towards the evaluation they receive is the most important aspect of managing an organization's human resource system that affects the entire organization.

Employee motivation, involvement and performance are impacted by their opinions about the objectives, outcomes and further applications of the evaluation results. The **purpose** of this study is to explore employee

perceptions of fairness of performance evaluation and to identify factors influencing perception of fairness among population of Austria.

Research indicates that perceptions of fairness in performance evaluations arise from three key considerations: the fairness of the outcomes received (outcome fairness), the procedures used to determine those outcomes (procedural fairness), and the manner in which these decision-making procedures were implemented and communicated (interpersonal fairness) (Smither, 1998). This understanding of fairness components is deeply rooted in the research and literature on organizational fairness.

Organizational fairness has been extensively studied by researchers aiming to understand fairness within workplace environments. Organizational fairness theory has been applied to various organizational systems and provides a robust theoretical framework to explore the intricacies of performance evaluations more comprehensively. Organizational fairness is defined as the study of fairness at work (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001), and researchers in this field generally agree that fairness can be categorized into three primary types:

1. **Distributive Fairness:** This form of fairness focuses on the perceived fairness of the outcomes of a particular decision. In the context of performance evaluation, distributive fairness concerns whether employees believe that the results of their evaluations (such as raises, promotions or recognition) are fair and just.
2. **Procedural Fairness:** Procedural fairness is concerned with the fairness of the processes that lead to outcomes. This includes the transparency of the evaluation process, consistency in applying evaluation criteria, and opportunities for employees to voice their concerns. Procedural fairness plays a crucial role in ensuring that employees perceive the evaluation process as fair and unbiased.
3. **Interactional Fairness:** Interactional fairness, defined by Bies and Moag (1986), focuses on the fairness of the interpersonal treatment individuals receive from authority figures during the implementation of organizational processes and the distribution of outcomes. It encompasses the quality of communication, respect, and courtesy extended to employees during the evaluation process. Interactional fairness has been considered both as an interpersonal aspect of procedural fairness and as a distinct construct alongside procedural and distributive fairness (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).

Greenberg (1993) emphasized the importance of considering the social determinants of fairness, which were not adequately recognized by the prevailing focus on the structural aspects of outcomes and procedures. This perspective highlights the need to incorporate the social and relational context into evaluations of fairness,

underscoring the significance of how employees are treated and communicated with throughout the evaluation process.

His proposed model of organizational fairness consists of systematic, configural, informational and interpersonal aspects of fairness. Whereas the configural refers to structural-distributive fairness perceptions, the systematic refers to structural-procedural fairness. The social view of performance evaluation is encompassed by the informational and interpersonal aspects.

The process of assigning the evaluator's measurement settings, gathering data, and appeals seeking is all part of the systematic or structural procedural aspect. This is relevant to evaluation, and it is based on the procedural fairness theory developed by Leventhal (1980) with regard to evaluation procedures. Opinions about the processes are evaluated based on the consistency of accuracy, favorability, and representation of the employee's interests (Ibeogu and Ozturen, 2014).

The second is configurative or structural distributive, which relates to normativity derived from evaluation ratings in terms of fairness, external influences and managerial decisions (Leventhal, 1980; Walsh, 2003).

The third aspect is social procedural or informational, and it concerns the way appraisers interact with appraisees. This refers to the degree of sensitivity or respect that evaluators have for reviews. It demonstrates perspectives on equity that result from standards, clear expectations, evaluators' reactions, and the validity of judgments (Walsh, 2003). The fourth, interpersonal or social distributive, has to do with how evaluation administrators treat their staff members (Thurston, 2001; Walsh, 2003). According to some, this is a part of interactional fairness, which focuses on how staff members feel about how their administrators treat them (Bies, Shapiro & Cummings, 1988; Walsh, 2003).

The fourth, interpersonal or social distributive, deals with the treatment of employees with supervisors or managers (Thurston, 2001; Walsh, 2003). It is thought to be a component of interactional fairness, which is related to the feelings employees have about the way they are treated by managers (Bies, Shapiro & Cummings, 1988; Walsh, 2003). Employees are mainly affected by the sensitivity of evaluators and managers in the workplace, especially when evaluations are accurate and they develop interest to the outputs of the evaluation (Greenberg, 1993; Walsh, 2003).

The concepts of procedural and distributive fairness are well-established in the study of organizational fairness. As mentioned, procedural fairness pertains to the perceived fairness of the processes used to make decisions, while distributive fairness relates to the perceived fairness of the outcomes of those decisions. These concepts have garnered broad acceptance and are foundational to understanding fairness in

organizational settings. However, there is no consensus among researchers whether to incorporate social, interactional, or interpersonal dimensions of fairness into a widely accepted organizational fairness model.

Despite its potential to provide deeper insights, Greenberg's four-factor model will not be implemented in this research. The decision to exclude this model is based on the specific focus of this study, which aims to concentrate on the well-established concept of procedural fairness. By narrowing the scope, this research intends to provide a more focused examination of this particular aspect of organizational fairness and its direct impact on employee perceptions of fairness in performance evaluations.

Procedural fairness has consistently been shown to be a fundamental element in shaping employees' trust in organizational practices and acceptance of performance evaluations. Given that this study seeks to examine the underlying factors that most directly influence perceptions of fairness, focusing specifically on procedural fairness allows for a more detailed analysis of its components and clarification of which of these components are key. This narrowed focus will facilitate a clearer understanding of how procedural fairness alone, as opposed to a broader framework, influences employee attitudes and reactions to performance evaluations. By doing so, the research aims to yield actionable insights that can be readily applied to enhance fairness perceptions in organizational evaluation systems without the additional complexity introduced by a multi-factor model.

Other researchers implement the model where the concept of organizational fairness has been divided into only three primary types: distributive fairness, procedural fairness and interactional fairness (Warokka et al., 2012; Getnet et al., 2014). Here distributive fairness refers to assessments of the fairness of decisions or allocations, and the primary concern is whether the decisions made are fair and equal. The judgment about the fairness of process elements is called procedural fairness, with the main focus on the fairness of the processes that lead to the outcome. And the third type is interactive fairness that refers to the judgments about the fairness of interpersonal interactions. This type is frequently interpreted as an interpersonal component of procedural fairness in literature (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Getnet, 2014; Zwiach, 2021).

The Adams Equity Theory is one of the theories that explains why workers' perceptions of justice or fairness are so crucial. This theory clarifies the method by which a worker assesses the equity of management decision-making. According to this theory, individuals evaluate how fairly they are treated in comparison to how others who occupy similar positions within the organization. They assess each employee's contributions to the organization and their compensation. The inputs of employees include things like performance, effort, time, knowledge, skills, education, and cognitive resources. Reward systems, social rights, leave policies, tasks, responsibilities and development facilities are examples of organizational outcomes include. When

people give similar inputs and receive similar results, Adams claims that employees view this as fair. Any perceived or actual unfairness has a negative impact on workers' motivation and output (Kalay, 2016; Zwiech, 2021).

The researchers do not draw a definitive conclusion, instead suggesting that employees' perceptions of fairness may arise from an interplay of various types of fairness, or that one or more of these types may play a more significant role than the others. For this research, I will focus specifically on the structural-procedural aspect of fairness. While I will not directly assess the procedures by which employee data is collected prior to the evaluation, the emphasis will be on the perceived accuracy and fairness of the evaluation itself. This includes examining how well employees understand the procedural elements involved in their performance evaluation and whether they are aware of the factors on which they are being assessed.

Research Question: What are the key determinants of perceived procedural fairness in performance evaluations among employees in Austria, and how do the use of automated tools for performance evaluation, and remote work arrangements influence this perception?

There is limited research that specifically explores the relationship between the perception of evaluation accuracy and the perception of its fairness within the context of structural-procedural fairness. Additionally, there is a lack of studies focused on the perceived fairness of performance evaluations within Austria or specifically Austrian organizations. Existing researches tend to focus more on the other aspects of evaluation fairness and the perceived fairness in relation to wage and individual reward systems.

This research aims to address this gap by providing insights into the unique cultural and organizational context of Austria, offering valuable data that can contribute to both academic understanding and practical applications in Austrian workplaces.

Procedural fairness is a foundational element in how employees perceive the fairness of performance evaluations, emphasizing transparency, consistency, and the integrity of the methods used to assess performance. When employees believe that they are involved in the evaluation process, particularly through opportunities to voice their perspectives, they are more likely to perceive the outcomes as fair and trustworthy (Weick, 1995). Such engagement fosters a sense of procedural fairness that serves as both a psychological and social motivator, promoting positive attitudes toward the evaluation process (Brockner, 2002).

The perception of procedural fairness significantly influences employee reactions to performance evaluations and compensation decisions. Fair evaluation procedures contribute to feelings of respect and

acknowledgment, which can positively impact motivation, shape behavior, and ultimately enhance employee performance (Kelly et al., 2015). Studies suggest that when employees view performance evaluation procedures as fair, they are more committed to organizational objectives and experience higher levels of job satisfaction (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001).

In management accounting literature, researchers often contrast subjective performance evaluations with objective performance evaluations to assess their fairness. Each method has unique benefits and limitations. Subjective performance evaluations rely on supervisors' discretion, allowing them to incorporate qualitative factors like behavior, attitude, and individual skills (Cugueró-Escofet and Rosanas, 2017). This qualitative approach is vital in informal management control systems, where procedural fairness is closely linked to the supervisors' ability to tailor evaluations to specific contexts. This flexibility enhances procedural fairness by acknowledging contributions and qualities that may not be easily quantifiable (Gibbs et al., 2004; Kunz, 2015; Luft et al., 2016).

In contrast, objective performance evaluations are based on quantifiable financial and non-financial metrics tied to clearly defined targets, aiming to provide a transparent and reliable assessment framework (Hartmann and Slapničar, 2009; Hartman et al., 2010). These standardized criteria help employees understand performance expectations, which can positively impact perceptions of procedural fairness (Ahn et al., 2010). Research by Hartmann and Slapničar (2009) illustrates that structured performance metrics and reward systems foster procedural fairness by reducing bias and improving the consistency and accuracy of evaluations.

However, objective evaluations are not without shortcomings. Studies indicate that quantitative measures may fail to capture all facets of managerial performance and are often influenced by factors beyond employees' control, which can compromise the accuracy of evaluations (Feltham and Xie, 1994; Gibbs et al., 2004; Bol, 2008). In uncertain environments, reaching objective targets can be more challenging due to uncontrollable factors, leading employees to perceive the evaluation process as unfair (Diekmann et al., 2004; Bol, 2008; Merchant, 1987). For instance, Giraud et al. (2008) found that when external circumstances negatively affect employee outcomes, employees are more likely to question the fairness of the evaluation process.

To mitigate the limitations of objective evaluations, scholars recommend integrating subjective criteria alongside objective measures. Combining these approaches allows supervisors to account for non-quantifiable contributions, including effort and adaptability, especially in unpredictable environments (Bol,

2008; Woods, 2012; Kunz, 2015). For example, Höpfe and Moers (2011) found that as environmental unpredictability rises, incorporating subjective judgment in evaluations becomes crucial to maintaining fairness, particularly in assessing executive bonuses. Cugueró-Escofet and Rosanas (2013) argue that formal control systems cannot anticipate all uncertainties, highlighting the importance of subjective flexibility to adapt to specific situations. Subjective evaluations thus help address fairness issues arising from the rigid application of formal control systems in uncertain contexts (Cugueró-Escofet and Rosanas, 2017).

Lau and Moser (2008) suggest that non-financial performance metrics, while more flexible and subjective, are often perceived as fairer because they capture a broader range of employee contributions. These measures are more understandable for employees, as they directly reflect individual achievements within the organization. Though Hartman et al. (2010) expected subjective evaluations to be strongly associated with perceived fairness, their findings were inconclusive, illustrating the complexities in aligning subjective assessments with procedural fairness.

Despite the advantages, subjective evaluations also present risks and potential negative outcomes. Because subjective assessments rely on supervisors' personal judgments, they can lead to biases that distort the accuracy of performance evaluations (Moers, 2005; Bol, 2011; Bol and Smith, 2011). Supervisors may manipulate evaluations, intentionally or unintentionally, to reflect personal preferences or biases, thus compromising fairness (Ahn et al., 2010; Golman and Bhatia, 2012).

An additional issue with subjective evaluations is the potential for favoritism, where supervisors use their discretion to reward certain employees based on personal preferences rather than merit (Prendergast and Topel, 1996; Ittner et al., 2003; Moers, 2005; Du et al., 2012; Bol et al., 2016). When employees perceive favoritism in evaluations, they may view the entire process as unfair, undermining procedural fairness and fostering dissatisfaction. Luft et al. (2016) emphasize that, in environments characterized by causal ambiguity, subjective evaluations may result in increased costs due to coordination issues and unexpected outcomes. Such discrepancies can harm perceptions of fairness, particularly if employees feel their performance has been misinterpreted or undervalued.

Procedural fairness plays a critical role in shaping employees' perceptions of performance evaluations, significantly influencing their attitudes and behaviors within an organization. Understanding why individuals care about fairness can be approached through two primary models: the instrumental model and the relational model. The instrumental model is grounded in Social Exchange Theory, which posits that organizations function as arenas for social transactions that establish reciprocal obligations (Cropanzano and

Rupp, 2008). In this context, employees engage with their supervisors and peers with the expectation of receiving favorable outcomes in return for their contributions. Therefore, perceptions of fairness become vital indicators of the predictability and favorability of the outcomes employees can anticipate from their interactions within the organization.

Conversely, the relational model emphasizes individuals' sensitivity to their acceptance and value within their social groups. Employees are acutely aware of the processes through which they are treated, as these procedures provide insights into their status within the organization and the legitimacy of authority figures (Lind and Tyler, 1988; Tyler and Lind, 1992). This perspective highlights that fairness is not merely a transactional concern, it is also about belonging and recognition within the organizational context.

Building upon the relational model, Uncertainty Management Theory (Lind and Van den Bos, 2002) highlights that uncertainty magnifies individuals' focus on fairness. In environments characterized by ambiguity, employees rely on available fairness information to navigate their social exchanges and evaluate the risks associated with their engagements. For instance, when subordinates harbor doubts about their supervisors' trustworthiness, they scrutinize the fairness of performance evaluations to gauge the potential outcomes of their efforts. In essence, the fairness of performance evaluations serves as a substitute for their uncertainty, helping them to make informed decisions about their level of commitment and engagement (Langevin & Mendoza, 2021).

Performance evaluations are multifaceted, encompassing both formal and informal elements (Cugueró-Escofet and Rosanas, 2013). The formal components refer to the established rules and procedures set by the organization prior to the evaluation process, such as the performance criteria used to assess employees. In contrast, informal components pertain to how these rules are interpreted and applied by supervisors, particularly regarding the degree of subjectivity involved in evaluations. The interplay between these formal and informal components is crucial, as it influences employees' perceptions of fairness.

Employees enter into a social exchange when they commit to working for an organization and consenting to performance evaluations. They expect certain outcomes, such as promotions or salary increases, in return for their efforts. Consequently, their perceptions of the fairness of both the formal and informal components of performance evaluations are influenced by their desire to understand the favorability of these outcomes (instrumental perspective) as well as how they are valued by the organization and their supervisors (relational perspective). This dual sensitivity to fairness is particularly pronounced in contexts characterized by

managerial uncertainty, where clarity in procedural fairness becomes essential for employees seeking to navigate their organizational landscape effectively (Langevin & Mendoza, 2021).

This leads to the conclusion that to achieve higher levels of perceived procedural fairness, it is essential to address both instrumental and relational concerns within the performance evaluation process. By doing so, organizations can foster a greater sense of trust and engagement among employees. This approach can result in enhanced motivation, increased job satisfaction, and improved overall performance.

Furthermore, while the performance evaluation process may appear straightforward in theory, practical implementation frequently faces a variety of challenges. As Virtanen and Stenvall (2010, p. 235) emphasize, the practical implementation of performance evaluations rarely aligns with the simplicity described in conceptual frameworks. A variety of issues have the potential to complicate the process, as noted by Foot and Hook (2011) and Dessler (2010), who identify numerous factors that hinder the efficient execution of performance evaluations.

A notable challenge concerns ambiguity, which can manifest in two primary ways. Firstly, evaluation metrics themselves may be too vague, leaving room for varying interpretations. For instance, the term "good" might be interpreted by supervisors in different ways. To address this challenge, Dessler (2010, 207–208) proposes the implementation of evaluation systems that provide explicit definitions for each trait and offer detailed guidelines for evaluation. Secondly, ambiguity can arise when an organization fails to explicitly articulate the purpose of the evaluation system. If the system is designed to serve too many objectives simultaneously, it can lead to confusion and inefficiency (Foot and Hook, 2011, 262). To mitigate these challenges, it is crucial for organizations to concentrate on formulating evaluation systems with explicit and precise objectives.

The process of evaluating the performance of employees fairly and accurately presents a separate set of challenges. Dessler (2010, 207–208) identifies three common issues: the halo effect, central tendency, and leniency or strictness bias. The halo effect, initially identified by Wells (1907) and Webb (1915), refers to a type of "error" that arises during the performance process (Jacobs and Kozlowski, 1985). It is characterized by a pronounced tendency to assign either a high (positive) or low (negative) rating based on an overall impression rather than specific criteria (Thorndike, 1920). The halo effect is also defined as the phenomenon in which an evaluation of one trait influences the ratings of other traits. For example, an unfriendly employee might be rated low in unrelated areas, such as productivity, simply due to their personality. Several researchers have explored the nature and impact of the halo effect. Jacobs and Kozlowski (1985) described it as a widespread phenomenon, particularly prevalent in performance evaluations. Murphy and Jako (1989) defined the halo effect as an assessor's inability to distinguish between specific attributes of the individuals

being evaluated. Similarly, Bernardin and Beatty (1984) argued that the primary cause of the halo effect is an evaluator's overall impression of the person being assessed, which leads to the neglect of specific attribute evaluations. Bowditch and Buono (2001) emphasized the need for vigilance regarding the halo effect, as it can disrupt the performance evaluation process by being influenced by certain inherent characteristics of the individual.

Central tendency is defined as the tendency of supervisors to rate all employees as average, avoiding extremes in their assessments. It has been observed that certain raters exhibit reluctance to assign particularly high or low ratings to subordinates. Raters may be averse to exercising excessive strictness by assigning exceptionally low ratings, as this could be perceived as unreasonable. Additionally, raters may hold the belief that no employee deserves the highest rating (Lunenburg, 2012). The phenomenon can be explained by two main factors: a lack of comprehensive knowledge about the employees in question and an inclination to play it safe (Olabode, I. T., Adebayo, Abayomi, & Adegoroye, 2013). Consequently, this attitude often results in the majority of individuals receiving ratings that fall within the average range.

Moreover, leniency and strictness bias refer to the consistent over- or under-rating of employees. These biases, known as "strictness" and "leniency," occur when raters consistently assign ratings either lower or higher than a subordinate's actual performance. For example, a strict rater consistently evaluates a subordinate below their actual merits, which can hinder the professional growth and well-being of high-performing employees. On the other hand, a lenient rater overestimates a subordinate's performance, which can create unrealistic expectations and hinder the development of employees. The extent of such bias can be mitigated by using absolute standards and results-oriented approaches in performance evaluations (Gürbüz & Dikmenli, 2007; Lunenburg, 2012). To counteract these biases, Dessler (2010, 207–208) proposes the implementation of ranking systems, which require supervisors to differentiate between high- and low-performing employees.

To ensure the integrity of the evaluation process, supervisors must maintain a neutral perspective, disregarding the influence of personal bias. It is essential to eliminate bias from the evaluation process, meaning factors such as age, gender, race (Dessler, 2010, 207–208), or personality traits (Foot and Hook, 2011, 262) should not affect the evaluation. Supervisors must focus exclusively on job-related aspects to ensure fairness and accuracy, disregarding personal attributes that are irrelevant to professional performance.

A further critical aspect to consider is that evaluation discussions should not serve as a platform for disciplinary actions. Instead, these meetings should serve as opportunities to both encourage and motivate

employees. Disciplinary issues should be addressed promptly at the time they occur, rather than being postponed until the annual performance evaluation discussion months later (Foot and Hook, 2011, 265).

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize the necessity of transparency in both discussions and evaluations. It is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that no information is retained from employees during the evaluation process. Employees must be provided with a comprehensive understanding of all judgments and feedback to facilitate their comprehension of the areas requiring improvement (ibid., 264). The primary objective of these evaluations is to promote employee performance, and to achieve this outcome, clear and open communication is paramount.

The interplay between performance evaluations and compensation can also create challenges. According to Foot and Hook (2011, 262), the connection between evaluations and compensation can potentially hinder open dialogue concerning areas for enhancement, as employees might be afraid that acknowledging weaknesses could have a negative impact on their financial rewards. To address this challenge, organizations may consider a strategy of separating performance evaluation discussions from salary-related conversations. This approach ensures that the primary focus of performance evaluations remains on areas for improvement and enhances the effectiveness of the evaluation process.

Additionally, supervisors' attitudes and insufficient training can compromise the effectiveness of the evaluation process. Some supervisors may regard evaluations as a mere administrative task, unrelated to the business cycle (Foot and Hook, 2011, 267). Furthermore, some supervisors may experience discomfort or challenges in providing feedback. Addressing these issues is imperative, and proper training for supervisors is essential. Through adequate preparation, supervisors can approach performance evaluation processes more effectively, ensuring that they serve their intended and underlying purpose.

The attitude of employees towards the performance evaluation system has been described by different theories, such as the equity theory (Hair et al., 2014), the expectancy theory (Gold et al., 2001), and the feedback intervention theory (Sheehan, 2014). According to the equity theory, the performance evaluation system generates a constructive attitude if employees judge the performance evaluation results as fair. The overall perception of employees tends to be positive towards distributive, interpersonal, and procedural fairness in performance evaluation. The expectancy theory states that the motivation behind a rater conducting an effective and accurate performance evaluation of an employee is dependent on the manager's expectations. A correct, fair, and timely performance evaluation will result in performance improvement. Expectancy theory applied to performance evaluation focuses on the present performance of an employee and on motivation to enhance his/her performance. In this context, knowing the performance evaluation process enables employees to better assess their abilities for performing their tasks, leading to a better

performance evaluation outcome (Galanaki et al., 2019; Mozgovoy et al., 2018). The feedback intervention theory consists of providing the employee with feedback on the gap between his expected and actual performance to motivate him/her to improve their performance.

In light of these theoretical perspectives, the next section of this thesis will focus on the development of the hypotheses, exploring the relationship between structural-procedural fairness in performance evaluations and employee outcomes. Each hypothesis will be presented with a clear justification grounded in the existing literature.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Several studies have been conducted either as cross-cultural research or as research focused on performance evaluations within a single country. For example, a cross-cultural study of German and French companies by Bacouel-Jentjens and Brandl (2015) highlights cultural influences on performance evaluation. However, as previously mentioned, there is a lack of research on this topic specifically conducted in Austria or among Austrian companies. Nonetheless, studies from other European countries illustrate that country-specific variations exist. The unique environment in which Austrian subsidiaries operate can influence performance evaluations, offering valuable insights that differ from those found in other contexts.

The majority of existing studies demonstrate that culture-specific settings significantly impact various aspects of performance management and the perception of performance evaluations (Bacouel-Jentjens & Brandl, 2015; Lindholm, 2000). Consequently, assuming the transferability of performance evaluation mechanisms across countries is not feasible. The perception of performance evaluations among employees from different national backgrounds cannot be considered universally similar due to the influence of cultural, institutional, and legal factors.

Cultural, institutional, and legal considerations shape how employees from different nations perceive performance assessments. The literature emphasizes that contextual factors such as national culture and institutional frameworks play a crucial role in shaping performance management approaches and the perception of evaluations. This makes them difficult to transfer from one country or culture to another (Lindholm, 2000; Festing et al., 2012). These factors not only influence how employees interpret and respond to performance evaluations but also contribute to variations in evaluation processes across different national settings.

Among the cultural dimensions affecting employees' perceptions of performance evaluations are individualism/collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance (Bacouel-Jentjens & Brandl, 2015). Employees in individualistic cultures, for example, may view performance evaluations as opportunities to highlight personal achievements and advance their professional growth. In contrast, employees in collectivist cultures may feel uncomfortable with individual evaluations, as they prioritize group cohesion and collective success (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). Similarly, employees in low power distance cultures may expect transparent and participatory evaluation processes, whereas those in high power distance cultures may readily accept hierarchical evaluation structures without question (Hofstede, 2001).

Institutional elements, including legal and educational frameworks, also shape perceptions of performance evaluations. In countries with strong labor laws, employees may perceive performance evaluations as structured and regulated processes, while in nations with weaker institutional frameworks, evaluations may be viewed with skepticism or as a means of managerial control (Festing et al., 2012). Additionally, national education systems influence employee expectations regarding feedback and professional development. Some cultures place a higher value on formal qualifications, whereas others emphasize continuous learning and skill enhancement throughout a career (Claus & Hand, 2009).

These variations highlight the importance of considering country-specific factors when implementing performance evaluation mechanisms. The interplay between cultural norms, institutional regulations, and legal structures suggests that perception of performance evaluation cannot be assumed to be similar from country to country and from culture to culture. This underscores the necessity of country-specific research to capture the unique dynamics of performance evaluation systems in Austria, ensuring that theoretical assumptions align with practical realities.

Taken into account the abovementioned information and listed challenges, and considering the lack of existing research on this topic conducted in Austria, with Austrian populations or within Austrian companies, this study includes the following assumption to investigate the overall perception of accuracy and procedural fairness among Austrian employees regarding performance evaluations.

Hypothesis 1: The perception of procedural accuracy of the performance evaluation system among Austrian employees is positively related to their perception of fairness in these evaluations.

Building on the framework of Selvarajan and Cloninger (2012), who examined the relationship between the perception of performance evaluation and satisfaction with it, this research assumes that if employees perceive their performance evaluations as accurate, their satisfaction with these evaluations will increase.

Consequently, accurate evaluations are more likely to be viewed as fair, as employees tend to perceive trustworthy assessments as just and equitable. A well-structured, transparent, and credible evaluation process fosters trust, which enhances perceptions of fairness and acceptance of the evaluation outcomes. Furthermore, the fairness perception is likely to be reinforced when employees not only trust the accuracy of their evaluations but also feel that these assessments align with clear, predefined criteria and are applied consistently across the organization.

Investigating the influence of procedural fairness on the perceived fairness of performance evaluations within the Austrian context could yield unique insights for several reasons. Austria has a distinctive cultural framework characterized by a strong emphasis on structured systems, procedural rigor, and a high degree of uncertainty avoidance. Additionally, Austrian workplace norms often highlight formal procedures and hierarchical structures. The interaction between cultural, regulatory, and organizational factors likely shapes employees' perceptions of fairness in performance evaluations. Given this interplay, Austrian employees may exhibit heightened sensitivity to the fairness of structural and procedural aspects in performance assessments. This suggests that procedural transparency, consistency, and justification of evaluation criteria may play a crucial role in shaping Austrian employees' acceptance of performance evaluations, thereby influencing their overall work engagement and organizational commitment. This interconnection is relevant and crucial for all four hypotheses explored in this research, as it provides a deeper understanding of how country-specific elements impact performance evaluation of employees in Austria.

Moreover, several significant changes and shifts in the workplace environment have been incorporated into this study due to their potential impact on the perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluations among employees in Austria.

With the advancement of technology, researchers have proposed that using automated performance evaluation tools for giving and receiving feedback will streamline performance management activities, making the process more continuous and flexible. The rapid development of computer technologies and the introduction of artificial intelligence have disrupted traditional human resource management practices. High-tech advancements are increasingly offering alternative solutions to tasks that were once exclusively performed by human evaluators (Vrontis et al., 2021).

Automated performance systems are believed to enhance goal-setting efficiency and improve the overall effectiveness of performance management. Since performance evaluations and personal feedback can often cause stress, anxiety, and discomfort among employees, some companies view automated performance

evaluation tools as a viable alternative (Vrontis et al., 2021). Some of the key benefits of these technologies include: 1. The ability to provide frequent feedback. 2. Tracking employee achievements and progress toward goals. 3. Analyzing employee needs and expectations. 4. Generating reports and analytics. 5. Identifying top and low performers based on objective data. 6. Facilitating well-informed decision-making.

Gomes et al. (2018) contributed to understanding technology's impact on performance evaluations by exploring both the challenges and opportunities of implementing technology-driven evaluation systems. Their study emphasized the importance of striking a balance between automation and human involvement. By integrating technological tools and systems, organizations can improve the accuracy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the evaluation process. Technology also enables real-time feedback, continuous performance tracking, and data-driven decision-making. However, Gomes et al. (2018) also highlighted ethical concerns, including potential biases in algorithmic evaluations, data privacy risks, and the need for equilibrium between automated systems and human oversight.

Additionally, Gomes et al. (2018) suggested that technology has the potential to enhance the accuracy and objectivity of performance evaluations by minimizing biases and subjectivity during the evaluation process. Automated data collection and analysis potentially allow for a more impartial assessment of employee performance. Santos et al. (2019) further emphasized that technology facilitates real-time feedback, enabling timely interventions and performance improvement. Continuous feedback mechanisms promote employee development and ongoing enhancement of work performance.

Another study by Al-Riyami et al. (2017) examined technology-enabled performance evaluation systems, which integrate software tools and platforms into the evaluation process. These systems facilitate data collection, analysis, and real-time feedback, enabling continuous performance monitoring. The study proposed that implementing technology in performance evaluation systems can enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction. Transparent and automated processes, along with access to performance data, foster a sense of involvement and empowerment among employees.

However, employee resistance to change remains a significant challenge in implementing performance evaluation software and tools. Existing research has shown that employees may be hesitant to adopt performance evaluation tools, due to a fear that they are going to replace the human aspect of performance management (Liu et al., 2021). Moreover, transparency in the performance management process is crucial to ensuring employees understand evaluation criteria and how their performance is assessed. This, in turn, enhances trust and accountability in the evaluation process (Serrano-Cinca et al., 2019).

Automated systems of performance evaluations provide a centralized platform for feedback and coaching, enabling managers to track employee progress and offer timely guidance and support (Cummings & Worley, 2018). Data-driven insights help organizations make strategic decisions regarding talent management, training, and employee development (Wang et al., 2019). Performance management software also aligns employee performance with organizational objectives by offering a structured framework for setting performance goals (Kale et al., 2021).

The automation of performance management processes reduces the time and effort required for manual evaluations. This approach is believed to improve both the efficiency and accuracy of performance management systems (Jena & Sethi, 2021; Chen et al., 2018). A standardized evaluation of employee performance process can potentially minimize bias and ensure that all employees are assessed based on the same criteria, this in turn should contribute to perceived procedural fairness in evaluations. Furthermore, automation in evaluations can lead to the assessments being systematically aligned with predefined organizational standards, reducing inconsistencies that might arise from human evaluators.

The adoption of automated performance evaluation tools has surged by approximately 70% in the past five years, significantly transforming workplaces. This shift automates tasks previously performed by humans, including machine-based evaluation processes (Chowdhury et al., 2022). However, as already mentioned, this technological shift also influences employee perceptions. Whether individuals view machine-generated feedback as an opportunity or a threat affects their overall perception of the fairness and effectiveness of these new systems. Employees' acceptance of automated evaluations will largely depend on how well organizations address concerns related to transparency, bias, and human oversight, ensuring that technological advancements enhance rather than undermine fairness in performance assessments.

Transparency in the performance management process ensures that employees clearly understand the evaluation criteria and how their performance is assessed, what fosters trust and accountability within the system (Serrano-Cinca et al., 2019). Moreover, the integration of data analytics into performance evaluation allows organizations to make informed, data-driven decisions regarding talent management, training, and employee development. By leveraging analytics, companies can identify high-performing employees, pinpoint areas for improvement, and discover new growth opportunities (Wang et al., 2019). Additionally, performance management software can potentially help align individual performance with organizational objectives by providing a structured framework for setting and tracking performance goals (Kale et al., 2021).

Automated performance evaluation tools streamline performance management processes, reducing the time and effort required for manual assessments. This technological advancement is expected to enhance both the efficiency and accuracy of performance management systems (Jena & Sethi, 2021). Consequently, a standardized evaluation process can ensure objectivity, eliminating biases and guaranteeing that employees are assessed based on consistent criteria (Chen et al., 2018).

The adoption of automated performance evaluation tools has surged by approximately 70% in the past five years, significantly transforming workplace dynamics. These tools automate tasks traditionally performed by human evaluators, incorporating machine-based programs for performance assessments (Chowdhury et al., 2022). However, this shift also raises concerns regarding whether employees perceive machine-generated feedback as an opportunity for improvement or a potential threat. The overall perception of such technology depends on whether its benefits, such as accuracy, efficiency and fairness, outweigh its potential drawbacks.

Existing research on performance evaluations conducted through automated systems primarily examines how integrating computer-based tools and artificial intelligence influences feedback delivery and the evolution of performance management. However, the impact of these technologies remains a subject of debate. While some researchers argue that automation enhances accuracy and efficiency, others contend that it may negatively affect employees' perceptions of procedural fairness.

On one hand, critics highlight that automated performance evaluation systems can be rigid and inflexible, strictly adhering to predetermined criteria without accounting for the dynamic nature of work and the unique circumstances of individual employees (Teodorescu et al., 2021). Additionally, AI-based tools may struggle to capture nuanced aspects of an employee's contributions, such as collaboration, creativity, and interpersonal skills—elements that human evaluators are better equipped to assess (Qin et al., 2023). Furthermore, if the criteria for AI-driven evaluations are not transparently communicated to employees, it may lead to skepticism and a diminished perception of procedural fairness (Nyathani, 2023). This lack of adaptability and transparency can contribute to employees feeling that the evaluation process is unjust.

On the other hand, proponents argue that technology-enabled performance evaluation systems offer several advantages. One key benefit is the potential for increased efficiency, as these tools can optimize the evaluation process by providing continuous performance tracking and timely feedback, allowing employees to make real-time improvements (Alrashedi & Abbod, 2021). Moreover, these systems leverage data analytics and algorithms to generate objective and data-driven evaluations, reducing the likelihood of human bias (Riecken, 2022).

From a structural and procedural standpoint, automated tools can enhance perceptions of fairness by ensuring that evaluation criteria are applied consistently across all employees. Based on this perspective, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: The usage of automated performance evaluation tools in the performance evaluation process has a positive influence on the perceived procedural fairness of these evaluations.

Another significant shift in the worldwide workplace environment, including Austria, that has occurred recently is the more frequent implementation of home office and remote working arrangements. This transition has had profound implications on how performance evaluations are conducted and perceived.

It is crucial to establish a clear definition of remote work. In this research, remote work refers to employees performing their job duties from a location other than the employer's main office. These locations may include an employee's home, a co-working space, a private office, or any other non-traditional workplace setting. The widespread adoption of remote work in Europe gained momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic, marking the first time it became a mainstream practice. Prior to the pandemic, managers were generally hesitant to permit work-from-home (WFH) arrangements and other flexible work models (Lal et al., 2021). However, the necessity for health and safety led many organizations to rapidly transition from a traditional face-to-face work environment to fully remote operation and since then has become increasingly popular because it offers benefits for both employers and employees (Navisha & Raghuvanshi, 2024).

Trust plays a critical role in remote work settings. Remote workers' perceived activity, timely responses and keeping deliverables on the schedule are vital to this trust development (Henttonen and Blomqvist 2005; Crisp & Jarvenpaa, 2013; Makarius & Larson, 2017). Due to the lack of direct oversight and less possibility to know what the other people are doing at that moment, virtual teams and remote personnel rely on trust to handle their tasks (Yakovleva et al., 2010).

Findings by Sewell and Taskin (2015) suggest that while employees reported a high degree of confidence in their line managers, they continued to feel more supervision. Furthermore, these results underline the way in which the lack of a physical head office can lead to problems of mistrust and greater control on workers (Richardson & Mckenna, 2014).

The prevailing sentiment among managers was worrying about tracking what employees are doing at any given time. The global remote working movement driven by the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that such concerns are not as weighty as they were thought to be (Pechan, 2021). Nevertheless, organizations and

managers still tend to favor being able to see people working long hours and putting in office face time (Lal et al., 2021).

Despite studies indicating that remote employees are more productive and happier than their in-office counterparts (Nield, 2016), even though remote workers are not physically present and actively involved in the office. Like any other work arrangement, in a remote work environment, performance evaluation presents several unique challenges that organizations must navigate effectively to ensure the accurate evaluation of employee performance. One major challenge is the lack of direct observation, which can impact objective performance assessment. In traditional office settings, supervisors can witness employees' work habits and behaviors firsthand, whereas remote work limits this visibility, making evaluations more difficult (Navisha & Raghuvanshi, 2024; Saurombe et al., 2022).

When employees work remotely, the perception of the procedural fairness of their performance evaluation may be distorted because employees may think that the managers or the ones who are one level up the hierarchy, may not assess them fairly enough, since they might find it challenging to accurately assess the time and effort employees invest in their tasks, and because the evaluation criteria might not have been clearly articulated (Khan & Raghuvanshi, 2024; Nutakor, 2019). The limited interaction between remote employees and their supervisors can contribute to perceptions of unfairness, as workers might feel their contributions are overlooked, not fully recognized or understood.

One key aspect of remote work that is important is how employee performance evaluations are conducted compared to traditional onsite evaluations. Several studies suggest that there is a significant bias present in remote vs. onsite evaluations. According to a survey conducted by Harvard Business Review, 64% of employees feel that they are more likely to receive negative feedback in a remote evaluation setting compared to onsite evaluations. This statistic highlights the challenges that remote work poses in terms of fair and unbiased performance assessments.

Moreover, a study published by Stanford University revealed that remote employees are 50% less likely to receive a promotion compared to their onsite counterparts. This disparity underscores the impact that bias can have on career progression for remote workers. Additionally, research from Gallup found that 34% of remote employees feel that their contributions are not as recognized or valued in a virtual setting, leading to decreased job satisfaction and engagement. These findings shed light on the importance of addressing bias in remote evaluations to ensure equitable treatment and opportunities for all employees, regardless of their work location (Jones, 2024).

Some of the strategies to address bias and other challenges in remote performance evaluations in order to ensure that the employees have a feeling of getting fair performance evaluations and equal opportunities could include setting clear goals and objectives in order to clearly define performance expectations and give employees a sense of direction and motivation, in order to make sure they understand what is required of them. Also, engaging in one-in-one check-ins and providing regular feedback could also improve the sense of perceived fairness and transparency of employees. Moreover, tracking progress through task updating in programs with a remote access for managers could be a great alternative to constant managers calls and surveillance of the employee, and will be beneficial to both parties as it could help in both measuring individual performance and acknowledging employee accomplishments.

Overall, while performance evaluation in a remote work environment presents unique challenges, organizations can overcome these hurdles by implementing tailored strategies that prioritize communication, transparency, and accountability. By adapting performance evaluation practices to the remote work context, organizations can effectively evaluate and support employee performance, driving organizational success in the evolving landscape of remote work (Saurombe et al., 2022).

Moreover, a transparent and well-defined system of performance metrics is essential for reducing perceptions of unfairness in performance evaluation processes. Employees must clearly understand how their performance is assessed in order to develop confidence in the evaluation system and to perceive the evaluation outcomes as fair.

A study by Deloitte (2019) reports that 28% of organizations award performance rewards based on team metrics, which can disadvantage remote workers who feel disconnected from their teams. This raises an important question: Do fully and partially remote employees in Austria perceive their performance evaluations as less fair compared to in-office employees? Based on these considerations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Employees working in remote or hybrid arrangements perceive performance evaluation systems as less fair compared to those working fully in-office.

This hypothesis is particularly relevant because many organizations are still in the process of adapting their performance evaluation systems to effectively assess remote and hybrid employees. While the shift to remote work has been accelerated by external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, not all companies have fully developed or standardized evaluation frameworks that account for the challenges of performance evaluation of employees working remotely. The lack of clearly defined performance metrics, reduced visibility of employee contributions, and potential biases in assessment methods can lead to a perception of unfairness

among remote employees. Consequently, understanding how employees perceive procedural fairness in performance evaluations and identifying the role that clear evaluation criteria play in shaping these perceptions, is crucial for organizations aiming to foster a more equitable and transparent evaluation process in the evolving workplace landscape.

At the same time, previous research and theoretical discussions suggest that the clarity of evaluation criteria plays a crucial role in shaping employees' perceptions of fairness in organizational procedures. When employees clearly understand how their performance is measured and what standards are applied in the evaluation process, they are more likely to perceive the system as transparent and consistent. Conversely, unclear or poorly communicated evaluation criteria may create uncertainty and increase the likelihood that employees perceive the evaluation process as subjective or biased.

Therefore, it is also important to examine whether the clarity of performance metrics contributes to higher perceptions of fairness in performance evaluation systems. Based on this, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 4: The clarity of performance metrics is positively related to the perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluations.

Together, these hypotheses aim to explore how different work arrangements and the clarity of evaluation criteria influence employees' perceptions of fairness in performance evaluation systems, particularly in the context of increasingly flexible and remote forms of work.

Research Design and Research Approach

To objectively measure and analyze the perceptions of procedural fairness in performance evaluations among Austrian employees, a quantitative research design will be applied in this study. A quantitative approach is particularly suitable as it enables systematic data collection, allows to conduct a statistical analysis, and facilitates the identification of patterns and trends in employees' perceptions of performance evaluation fairness.

The study will employ a structured online survey as the primary data collection method. Online surveys are cost-effective, time-efficient, and accessible to a geographically dispersed population, ensuring a broader and more diverse sample. Additionally, they allow respondents to participate anonymously, which may encourage more honest and unbiased responses.

The target population consists of employees in Austria aged 18 to 45, based on three main reasons: workforce representation, remote work adaptation and technological savviness. First of all, this age range encompasses a significant portion of the active workforce, covering early-career to mid-career professionals, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive perspective on performance evaluation fairness. Secondly, the majority of the individuals within this demographic have actively experienced remote and hybrid work models, making them well-suited to provide insights into how these arrangements affect perceptions of fairness and accuracy in performance evaluations. Moreover, employees in this age group are generally more familiar with modern digital performance evaluation tools and technologies, increasing the likelihood that they have encountered such systems firsthand and can provide informed feedback.

To ensure the collected data is quantifiable and suitable for statistical analysis, a structured questionnaire will be developed and distributed using platforms like Google Forms or SurveyMonkey. The survey will contain both closed-ended questions to capture specific employee experiences and perceptions in a standardized format as well as Likert scale questions (ranging from 1 to 10) to measure key variables. Based on the mentioned hypotheses, the survey includes questions to measure indicators pertaining to: perceptions of fairness in performance evaluations, clarity of evaluation parameters and criteria, perceived accuracy of remote vs. in-office evaluations, trust in managers and organizational transparency in performance assessment, as well as employee demographic and work-related information (e.g., job role, industry, years of experience, work arrangement).

The Likert scale format will allow for a more nuanced understanding of employees' attitudes and enable statistical techniques such as mean comparison, correlation analysis and regression modeling.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the research, a pilot test will be conducted before full deployment, in order to check for clarity and question effectiveness. Feedback from pilot participants will be used to refine wording and structure if and where necessary. Moreover, in order to prevent response bias, will be taken such measures as ensuring anonymity and using balanced phrasing to avoid leading questions.

The selection of this demographic ensures a broad representation of employees who have encountered both remote and hybrid working models. A non-random sampling technique will be used, with participants invited via online platforms, social media, and professional networks. The sample size will aim to reach at least 150-200 participants to ensure that the results are statistically significant and reliable.

By employing a rigorous quantitative research design with a structured and statistically robust survey, this study aims to provide empirical insights into how employees in Austria perceive procedural fairness in performance evaluations, particularly in the context of remote and hybrid work arrangements. Among other,

the findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of potential disparities in evaluation experiences and to develop more transparent, fair, and effective performance assessment frameworks.

To test the proposed hypotheses, several statistical tests were conducted. First, descriptive statistics were calculated to provide an overview of the sample characteristics and the distribution of the main study variables. Then different statistical tests were selected depending on each hypothesis. For Hypothesis 1, Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between perceived evaluation accuracy and perceived procedural fairness. For Hypothesis 2, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare procedural fairness perceptions between employees working in organizations with and without automated evaluation tools. And finally, a multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the combined effects of evaluation accuracy, automation presence, work arrangements and clarity of performance metrics on perceived procedural fairness, while controlling for demographic variables.

Hypothesis	Dependent Variable (DV)	Independent Variable (IV)	Control Variables
H1: The perception of accuracy of the performance evaluation system among Austrian employees is positively related to their perception of procedural fairness in these evaluations.	Perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluation	Perceived accuracy of performance evaluation	Gender, age, work experience
H2: The usage of automated performance evaluation tools in the performance evaluation process has a positive influence on the perceived procedural fairness of these evaluations.	Perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluation	Presence of automated evaluation tools (Yes/No)	Gender, age, work experience
H3: Employees working in remote or hybrid arrangements perceive performance evaluation systems as less fair compared to those working fully in-office.	Perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluation	Work arrangement (Remote, Hybrid, reference category: In-office)	Gender, age, work experience
H4: The clarity of performance metrics is positively related to the perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluations.	Perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluation	Clarity of performance metrics	Gender, age, work experience

Figure 1. Variables and Hypothesis Testing

Data Preparation and Coding

In total 165 respondents participated in the online survey conducted between 22.06.2025, and 02.11.2025. To gather data, an online survey creator Microsoft Forms was used.

As mentioned in the previous section, the data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of Likert-scale questions as well as demographic questions measuring perceptions of fairness, accuracy, automation and remote work evaluation processes. For the data analysis, the statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics (version 30) was used.

Before importing the data into SPSS, the original Excel file with respondent's answers were cleaned and prepared. All non-essential columns such as start time, completion time, timestamps, and email fields were removed to retain only the variables relevant to the analysis.

In SPSS, the Variable View was carefully structured to ensure consistency and accuracy of the dataset. Each column from the survey was assigned a clear and concise variable name, corresponding label, and an appropriate measurement scale.

For categorical questions (e.g., gender, age group, work arrangement), value labels were defined to represent each response option numerically. For example, gender was coded as 1 = Male, 2 = Female, 3 = Other, 4 = Prefer not to say. Similarly, Likert-scale questions were coded from 1 to 5, where lower values represent lower levels of agreement or fairness, and higher values represent stronger agreement or perceived fairness.

A new binary variable, `auto_presence`, was created to facilitate group comparisons for Hypothesis 2. Based on responses to the question "To what extent are automated performance evaluation tools used in your organization?", answers 1–2 ("Not at all used" or "Rarely used") were coded as 0 = No automation, while 3–5 ("Sometimes used", "Frequently used", "Fully integrated") were coded as 1 = Automation used.

All remaining Likert-scale variables were retained in their original 5-point format to keep variability and allow performing correlation and regression analyses. This preparation ensured that all variables were properly defined and ready for the following descriptive statistics and statistical analyses.

Descriptive Statistics

Figure 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the main continuous variables used in this study, including perceptions of performance evaluation accuracy, fairness, effort reflection, automation, and remote evaluation aspects. All variables were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated the lowest level of agreement and 5 indicated the highest.

The mean results, which varied from 2,65 to 3,33, indicate that respondents' opinions of the performance evaluation procedure were generally moderately positive but not strongly favorable overall.

The highest mean scores received were for perceived accuracy of performance evaluation ($M = 3,33$, $SD = 1,03$) and fairness of performance evaluation system ($M = 3,32$, $SD = 1,08$), showing that employees typically evaluated evaluation systems as somewhat accurate and fair.

The perception that evaluations reflect employee effort was somewhat lower ($M = 3,22$, $SD = 1,07$).

The extent to which evaluations capture job nuances had the lowest mean ($M = 2,81$, $SD = 1,05$), indicating potential for improvement in how evaluations take particular job aspects into account.

Regarding automation related variables, there was little confidence in automated assessment systems because trust in automated tools ($M = 2,65$, $SD = 1,09$) and procedural fairness of automated tools ($M = 2,95$, $SD = 1,05$) are below the midpoint. Similarly, automation's believed capacity to reduce bias has received a modest score ($M = 3,05$, $SD = 1,04$).

Regarding remote work aspects, fairness for remote employees ($M = 3,14$, $SD = 0,96$) and clarity of remote job criteria ($M = 3,01$, $SD = 1,11$) remained around the middle, demonstrating that procedural fairness evaluations for remote assessments are mixed. Adaptation of evaluation systems to remote work ($M = 2,87$, $SD = 1,05$) and trust in procedural fairness of remote evaluations ($M = 2,95$, $SD = 1,11$) were reflected in the somewhat below-average evaluations what reflects employees' doubts regarding the procedural fairness and transparency of remote performance assessments.

Overall, the descriptive data imply that while respondents generally see their performance evaluations as relatively fair and accurate, confidence in automation and procedural fairness in remote settings remains lower.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
eval_accuracy	165	1	5	3,33	1,026
eval_fair_in_org	165	1	5	3,32	1,076
effort_reflect	165	1	5	3,22	1,073
nuance_capture	165	1	5	2,81	1,053
auto_trust	165	1	5	2,65	1,091
auto_fair	165	1	5	2,95	1,052
auto_bias_reduce	165	1	5	3,05	1,041

remote_fair	165	1	5	3,14	,956
office_fair	165	1	5	3,24	,968
adaptation_remote	165	1	5	2,87	1,045
clarity_criteria_remote	165	1	5	3,01	1,113
criteria_remote_clear	165	1	5	3,03	1,062
trust_remote_eval	165	1	5	2,95	1,109
Valid N (listwise)	165				

Figure 2. Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Variables

The distribution of respondents by gender, age group, work experience, work arrangement, and reported use of automated performance evaluation systems is shown in Figure 3.

As seen from Figure 3, a total of 165 people participated in the survey. Among them, 63% identified themselves as female, 34,5% as male, while 1,8% identified as “other” and 0,6% preferred not to say.

About 53% of participants are between the ages of 25 and 34, followed by 30% under the age of 25, 14% between the ages of 35 and 44, and a smaller number of participants (2,5%) between the ages of 45 and 54.

In terms of professional experience, most respondents had 1-3 years of work experience (43,6%), followed by 4–6 years (26,1%), and more than 10 years (11,5%). Only 10,9% of participants reported less than one year of work experience.

Regarding work arrangements, 55,8% of respondents worked fully in-office, 31,5% worked fully remotely, and 12,7% reported a hybrid arrangement (partially remote).

When asked about automation in performance evaluation, 53,3% of respondents indicated that automated performance evaluation tools are used in their organizations, while 46,7% reported that no such tools are used.

Descriptive statistics, such as skewness and kurtosis, were analyzed for all continuous variables in order to determine whether the data distribution was normal. The skewness values ranged from –0,76 to +0,17 and the kurtosis values ranged from –0,87 to +0,68, indicating no severe deviations from normality.

Given that all values are within the commonly accepted range of –1 to +1, the data is considered being normally distributed.

Therefore, parametric tests such as correlation analysis, t-test and regression analysis are considered suitable for subsequent hypothesis testing.

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	57	34,5	34,5	34,5
	2	104	63,0	63,0	97,6
	3	3	1,8	1,8	99,4
	4	1	,6	,6	100,0
	Total	165	100,0	100,0	

Age_group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	49	29,7	30,1	30,1
	2	87	52,7	53,4	83,4
	3	23	13,9	14,1	97,5
	4	4	2,4	2,5	100,0
	Total	163	98,8	100,0	
Missing	System	2	1,2		
Total		165	100,0		

Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	18	10,9	10,9	10,9
	2	72	43,6	43,6	54,5
	3	43	26,1	26,1	80,6
	4	13	7,9	7,9	88,5

	5	19	11,5	11,5	100,0
	Total	165	100,0	100,0	

Work_arrangement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	52	31,5	31,5	31,5
	2	21	12,7	12,7	44,2
	3	92	55,8	55,8	100,0
	Total	165	100,0	100,0	

automation presence 1-No, 2-Yes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	77	46,7	46,7	46,7
	2,00	88	53,3	53,3	100,0
	Total	165	100,0	100,0	

Figure 3. Frequency Distribution for Demographic and Work-Related Variables

Statistical Analysis and Results

Following the descriptive analysis, the next step in the research process involves addressing the study's hypotheses.

The first hypothesis examines the relationship between employees' perceptions of the accuracy of the performance evaluation system and their perceived procedural fairness of the evaluation process:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The perception of accuracy of the performance evaluation system among Austrian employees is positively related to their perception of procedural fairness in these evaluations.

The aim of this analysis is to find out whether employees who believe that performance evaluations are more accurate also believe that they are fairer.

Both variables are regarded as scale variables suitable for parametric testing since they are measured on continuous 5-point Likert scales that range from 1 ("Very inaccurate / Very unfair") to 5 ("Very accurate / Very fair"). The following two variables were included in the analysis:

Perceived accuracy of performance evaluation, variable name: eval_accuracy

Perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluation, variable name: eval_fair_in_org

To test this hypothesis, a Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted. It was considered that Pearson's correlation is appropriate in this case since both variables are continuous and normally distributed (as shown by skewness and kurtosis values within the range of -1 to $+1$) and the relationship under investigation is expected to be linear. The analysis aims to identify whether a statistically significant positive correlation exists between these two variables.

The Figure 4 below illustrates the results of the Pearson's correlation test:

		eval_accuracy	eval_fair_in_org
eval_accuracy	Pearson Correlation	1	,670**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001
	N	165	165
eval_fair_in_org	Pearson Correlation	,670**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	
	N	165	165

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

Figure 4. Pearson Correlation between Perceived Accuracy and Procedural Fairness of Performance Evaluations

The results of the correlation analysis showed a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between the two variables, $r(163) = 0,670$, $p < 0,001$. This correlation coefficient of ,670 suggests that when employees perceive their performance evaluations to be more accurate, their perception of procedural fairness of the evaluation process also increases. In other words, employees who believe that performance evaluations accurately reflect their actual work performance are considerably more likely to perceive those

evaluations as fair. Other way around, if evaluations are viewed as inaccurate or inconsistent with employees' work performance, perceptions of procedural fairness tend to decrease.

To provide a more comprehensive understanding of Hypothesis 1, additional correlations were computed between perceived procedural fairness (eval_fair_in_org) and other dimensions of perceived accuracy, including perceived reflection of effort (effort_reflect) and the extent to which the evaluation captures job nuances (nuance_capture).

		eval_accuracy	eval_fair_in_org	effort_reflect	nuance_capture
eval_accuracy	Pearson Correlation	1	,670**	,558**	,500**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	165	165	165	165
eval_fair_in_org	Pearson Correlation	,670**	1	,529**	,550**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001
	N	165	165	165	165
effort_reflect	Pearson Correlation	,558**	,529**	1	,568**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	165	165	165	165
nuance_capture	Pearson Correlation	,500**	,550**	,568**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	
	N	165	165	165	165

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

Figure 5. Pearson Correlations of Perceived Accuracy and Procedural Fairness Variables

As seen from the Figure 5, the additional indicators of perceived accuracy were also positively associated with procedural fairness.

The correlation between `effort_reflect` and `fairness` was $r(163) = 0,529$, $p < 0,001$, while `nuance_capture` correlated with `fairness` at $r(163) = 0,550$, $p < 0,001$. These findings demonstrate that workers' perceptions of procedural fairness considerably increase when they believe their effort and job complexity are sufficiently recognized in performance evaluations.

Additionally, we see from the presented results that all accuracy-related variables are positively correlated with each other, with correlation coefficients ranging from $r = 0,500$ to $r = 0,568$ ($p < 0,001$). This indicates that employees who rate one aspect of evaluation accuracy highly are likely to rate other aspects highly as well. Such consistency strengthens the internal coherence of the concept of perceived accuracy of evaluation.

Perceptions of procedural fairness are significantly influenced by the accuracy of performance evaluations, as demonstrated by the strong and positive correlations between evaluation accuracy and procedural fairness.

As a result, employees' perception that the evaluations fairly represent their contributions and the challenging aspects of their jobs seems to be strongly associated with their faith in the procedural fairness of evaluation systems. These findings offer empirical support for Hypothesis 1, illustrating that employees' perceptions of procedural fairness in Austria are significantly influenced by the perceived accuracy of performance evaluations.

The analysis's next phase looks at how employees' perceptions of procedural fairness are affected by automated performance evaluation technologies. While the first hypothesis examined the relationship between two continuous perceptions (accuracy and fairness), the second hypothesis focuses on possible group differences based on whether or not automation is employed in the performance evaluation process:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The usage of automated performance evaluation tools in the performance evaluation process has a positive influence on the perceived procedural fairness of these evaluations.

The purpose of this hypothesis is to determine whether employees in companies that use automated tools for performance reviews consider these procedures are more fair than those in companies that do not, so without automation.

Respondents were split into two groups according to their survey answers in order to test this hypothesis:

Group 1: does not use any automation (coded as 1 in the dataset)

Group 2: automation was employed (marked as 2 in the dataset).

Perceived procedural fairness of the performance evaluation system (`eval_fair_in_org`) is the dependent variable for this analysis. It is measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher values indicating a higher degree

of perceived fairness. The presence of automated evaluation tools (auto_presence), a categorical variable with two values (Yes/No), is the independent variable.

In order to compare the mean fairness perceptions between the two independent groups, an Independent Samples t-test was employed, which will help to indicate whether differences between these two groups are meaningful or random. Since it allows for assessing whether the difference in perceived procedural fairness between employees in automated versus non-automated systems is statistically significant, this test is considered as suitable. Moreover, as that the dependent variable is continuous and normally distributed, and the groups are independent of each other, the t-test meets the necessary requirements for valid comparison.

The analysis's findings are presented below in Figures 6-8, including group means, standard deviations and the statistical significance of the difference of the two employee groups' perceptions of procedural fairness, those whose organizations do not use automated evaluation tools (auto_presence = 1, N = 77) and those whose organizations do use automated tools (auto_presence = 2, N = 88).

automation presence 1-No, 2-Yes		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
eval_fair_in_org	1,00	77	3,14	1,132	,129
	2,00	88	3,48	1,005	,107

Figure 6. Group Means for Perceived Procedural Fairness by Automation Presence

As Figure 6 illustrates, employee perceptions of procedural fairness were greater within employees who work with automated evaluation systems (M = 3,48, SD = 1,005) than for those who work without them (M = 3,14, SD = 1,132). This difference suggests that automation tools may be associated with a more favorable perception of procedural fairness in performance evaluations.

Presented in the Figure 7 results of the Levene's test for equality of variances aims to examine whether the two groups compared have equal variances, so in other words, whether the variability of responses within each group is similar. The null hypothesis (H0) of the Levene's test states that the population variances of the two groups are equal.

In this study, the test result was not significant with p = 0,226. Because the p-value was greater than 0,05, the null hypothesis of equal variances could not be rejected, what means that both groups had comparable

variability. Therefore, it can be concluded that both groups had comparable or similar levels of variance in their perceived procedural fairness scores, allowing the use of the “Equal variances assumed” results for the independent samples t-test.

						Significance				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
eval_fair_in_org	Equal variances assumed	1,478	,226	-2,010	163	,023	,046	-,334	,166	-,663	-,006
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,994	153,306	,024	,048	-,334	,168	-,666	-,003

Figure 7. Lavene’s Test for Equality of Variances and Independent Samples t-Test Results

Then the independent samples t-test was used to evaluate whether the mean perceived procedural fairness scores differed significantly between employees whose organizations use automated performance evaluation tools and those that do not.

The null hypothesis of the t-test assumes that there is no significant difference in the mean procedural fairness perception between the two groups, meaning that any observed difference in means is due to random variation rather than a real effect of automation. Other way around, the alternative hypothesis or H1 proposes that a significant difference exists, implying that the use of automated evaluation tools has an effect on perceived procedural fairness.

The results of the independent samples t-test showed a statistically significant difference in the mean perceived procedural fairness scores between the two groups, $t = -2,010$, $p = 0,046$ (two-tailed), where a t-value of -2,010 indicates that the group means differ by over two standard errors, and “two-tailed” means that the test considered both possible directions of difference (whether automation could increase or decrease procedural fairness of performance evaluation), what ensures a more objective assessment.

The p-value of 0,046 indicates that, assuming the null hypothesis is true (that there is no real difference in perceived procedural fairness between the two groups), there is only a 4,6% probability of observing a difference as large as, or larger than, the one found in the data. Because this probability falls below the conventional threshold of 0,05, the result is considered statistically significant.

In addition to this, the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference between the two groups ranged from -0,663 to -0,006, which does not include zero. In practical terms, it means that we can be 95% confident that the true difference in procedural fairness perceptions between employees in organizations with and without automated evaluation tools lies between -0,663 and -0,006 points, it indicated small but positive true difference in the population, what further supports the conclusion that the difference in perceived procedural fairness is statistically significant and suggests that employees in organizations with automated evaluation systems consistently perceive the process as fairer than those without automation.

Thus, the null hypothesis can be rejected, what provides evidence that the difference in perceived procedural fairness between the two groups is unlikely to have occurred by chance. This finding suggests that employees in organizations which implement automated performance evaluation tools perceive the evaluation process as significantly fairer than those in organizations without such tools.

Moreover, to evaluate the degree of impact and practical importance of the observed difference in procedural fairness perceptions, several effect size measures were also calculated and the results are presented in Figure 8.

First of all, according to Cohen's criteria (1988), with effect size $d=0,2$ - small, $d=0,5$ - medium, $d\geq 0,8$ – large was found to be 0,314, which according to Cohen represents a small to medium effect size. This means that, employees of organizations that use automated performance evaluation tools tend to rate procedural fairness on average higher than without automation.

While being modest, this effect can be considered significant in organizational research where attitudes and perceptions are influenced by various contextual and psychological factors. Every improvement in perceived procedural fairness can have a cumulative positive effect on employee trust, motivation, and acceptance of assessment systems.

In addition to Cohen's d , two additional measures were computed to verify the consistency of the observed effect: Hedges' correction and Glass's delta. Both serve as alternative estimates of effect size and are used to account for potential sources of bias in Cohen's d , where Hedges' correction adjusts for small sample bias and Glass's delta uses the standard deviation of the control group.

Hedges' correction is being applied to produce a more unbiased estimate of the true population effect size. The fact that Hedges' correction is identical to Cohen's $d = -0,31$ shows that sample size bias is insignificant and that the observed effect can be considered statistically stable. In other words, the difference in perceptions of procedural fairness between the two groups is not the result of random sampling fluctuations, but reflects a genuine, persistent effect within the population.

As for the Glass delta results, they are practically identical to Cohen's d and Hedges' correction results (-0,33), indicating that the differences in variability between the two groups are minimal and do not significantly affect the strength of the observed effect. Such consistency among all three indicators further strengthens confidence in the reliability of the result.

Overall, all three indicators show that the observed difference in the perception of procedural fairness between the two groups is modest but statistically significant, what confirms that automation has a measurable and reproducible positive impact on employees' perception of fairness.

				95% Confidence Interval	
		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	Lower	Upper
eval_fair_in_org	Cohen's d	1,066	-,314	-,621	-,005
	Hedges' correction	1,071	-,312	-,618	-,005
	Glass's delta	1,005	-,333	-,641	-,022

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Figure 8. Effect Sizes for Differences in Perceived Procedural Fairness Between Automated and Non-Automated Evaluation Groups

After establishing that perceived evaluation accuracy is positively related to procedural fairness perceptions (Hypothesis 1) and that usage of automation tools contributes to higher perceived procedural fairness (Hypothesis 2), on the next step of the analysis I would like to focus on broader examination of the factors influencing perceived procedural fairness in performance evaluation systems to assess the combined effects of several variables. For this purpose, a multiple regression analysis was conducted.

In this model, perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluation served as the dependent variable. The independent variables included evaluation accuracy, the presence of automated evaluation tools, different work arrangements as remote work and hybrid work and clarity of performance metrics. Additionally, age, gender and years of work experience were included as control variables in order to look at the potential demographic influences on employees' procedural fairness perceptions.

		fair_org	eval_accuracy	automation presence 1- No, 2-Yes	remote_d	hybrid_d	clarity	age_group	gender	experience
Pearson Correlation	fair_org	1,000	,666	,156	,057	-,124	,317	-,145	-,051	-,106
	eval_accuracy	,666	1,000	,060	,016	-,017	,185	-,132	,036	-,185
	automation presence 1-No, 2-Yes	,156	,060	1,000	-,003	,013	,253	-,042	-,002	-,130
	remote_d	,057	,016	-,003	1,000	-,427	,144	-,068	-,117	,096
	hybrid_d	-,124	-,017	,013	-,427	1,000	-,012	,067	,118	,085
	clarity	,317	,185	,253	,144	-,012	1,000	-,097	,037	,043
	age_group	-,145	-,132	-,042	-,068	,067	-,097	1,000	-,026	,631
	gender	-,051	,036	-,002	-,117	,118	,037	-,026	1,000	-,073
	experience	-,106	-,185	-,130	,096	,085	,043	,631	-,073	1,000
Sig. (1-tailed)	fair_org	.	<,001	,023	,236	,058	<,001	,033	,260	,089
	eval_accuracy	,000	.	,224	,418	,417	,009	,047	,325	,009
	automation presence 1-No, 2-Yes	,023	,224	.	,485	,436	,001	,296	,489	,049
	remote_d	,236	,418	,485	.	,000	,034	,196	,069	,111
	hybrid_d	,058	,417	,436	,000	.	,438	,198	,066	,140
	clarity	,000	,009	,001	,034	,438	.	,109	,319	,292
	age_group	,033	,047	,296	,196	,198	,109	.	,373	,000
	gender	,260	,325	,489	,069	,066	,319	,373	.	,178
	experience	,089	,009	,049	,111	,140	,292	,000	,178	.

Figure 9. Correlation Matrix for the Variables

Before conducting regression analysis, Pearson's correlation analysis was performed to study the relationships between the main variables of the study. This step allows for an initial investigation of the relationships between variables.

The results show that the perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluation strongly and positively correlates with the accuracy of evaluation ($r = 0,666$, $p < 0,001$). This is the strongest relationship observed in the data set. The result shows that employees who believe that their performance evaluation accurately reflects their work performance are significantly more likely to perceive the evaluation system as fair.

The clarity of performance indicators also shows a moderate positive correlation with perceived procedural fairness ($r = 0,317$, $p < 0,001$). This indicates that employees who find the evaluation criteria clearer and have a better understanding of performance-related expectations tend to perceive the evaluation system as more fair. Although the strength of this correlation is moderate, it highlights the importance of transparency and clear communication in performance evaluation processes.

The correlation between the presence of automation in the evaluation process and the perception of procedural fairness is relatively weak but statistically significant ($r = 0,156$, $p = 0,023$). This suggests that employees working in organizations that use automated performance evaluation tools tend to rate fairness slightly higher than employees in organizations that do not have such systems. However, the relatively small size of this correlation shows that automation alone can play only a limited role in shaping perceptions of procedural fairness.

On the contrary, correlation between the procedural fairness and different work organizations is weak and statistically insignificant. The correlation between perceived procedural fairness and fully remote work is positive but very small ($r = 0,057$), which indicates a very low level of significant connection between these variables. Similarly, the correlation between procedural fairness and hybrid work is slightly negative ($r = -0,124$), suggesting that employees working in a hybrid mode may report a slightly lower perception of fairness compared to other forms of work organization, although this relationship is weak and statistically insignificant ($p = 0,058$).

Correlations between independent variables provide a more deeper understanding. For example, clarity of performance metrics correlates positively with the presence of automation ($r = 0,253$, $p = 0,001$), which suggests that organizations using automated evaluation systems may also tend to have clearer performance evaluation criteria. Moreover, the accuracy of the evaluation also demonstrates a small but significant positive correlation with clarity ($r = 0,185$, $p = 0,009$), indicating that employees who better understand performance criteria may also perceive the evaluation process as more accurate.

Among the control variables, age group shows a moderate positive correlation with experience ($r = 0,631$, $p < 0,001$), which is to be expected, as older employees tend to gain more work experience over time. Other relationships related to demographic variables are weak and insignificant.

The results shown in the Figure 10 that the multiple correlation coefficient (R) is 0,715, which reflects the strength of the overall relationship between the observed values of perceived procedural fairness and the values predicted by the regression model. A value of R indicates a strong relationship between the variables included in the model and the dependent variable. This means that the set of explanatory variables allows us to predict employees' perceptions of procedural fairness with a high degree of reliability. The R^2 coefficient is 0,511, which means that approximately 51,1% of the model of the perception of procedural fairness in performance evaluations is explained by the included independent variables.

The adjusted R^2 value which takes into account the number of variables included in the regression, is 0,486, indicating that even after considering the number of predictors, the model still explains approximately 48,6% of the variation in perceived procedural fairness. The difference between R^2 (0,511) and the adjusted R^2 (0,486) is relatively small, showing that the included variables make a significant contribution to the model's explanatory power.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,715 ^a	,511	,486	,767

a. Predictors: (Constant), experience, clarity, gender, hybrid_d, eval_accuracy, automation presence 1-No, 2-Yes, remote_d, age_group

Figure 10. Model Summary of Regression Analysis

The standard error of the estimate which reflects the average difference between the observed values of perceived fairness and the values predicted by the regression model is 0,767. Taking into account that the dependent variable is measured on a five-point scale, a standard error of less than one indicates that the model's predictions are quite accurate and that the predicted procedural fairness ratings do not deviate significantly from the actual responses provided by participants.

An ANOVA table presented in Figure 11 shows whether the set of variables included in the model provides a statistically significant explanation of the variance of the dependent variable.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	94,787	8	11,848	20,134	<,001 ^b
	Residual	90,624	154	,588		
	Total	185,411	162			

a. Dependent Variable: fair_org

b. Predictors: (Constant), experience, clarity, gender, hybrid_d, eval_accuracy, automation presence 1-No, 2-Yes, remote_d, age_group

Figure 11. ANOVA Results of the Regression Model

The results of the ANOVA allow us to compare the proportion of variance explained by the regression model with the variance that remains unexplained. The sum of squares for the regression (SS=94,787) represents the part of the variance in perceived procedural fairness that is explained by the variables included in the model. In contrast, the sum of squares of the residual variance (SS=90,624) represents the variance that is not explained by the model and is attributed to other factors not included in the analysis or to random

fluctuations in the data. The regression mean square (11,848) reflects the average explained variance per predictor while the residual mean square (0,588) represents the average unexplained variance remaining in the model.

Also the statistically significant p-value ($p < 0,001$) shows that the regression model explains the data significantly better than a model with no predictors and this suggests that the independent variables together play an important role in explaining employees' perceptions of procedural fairness.

The Figure 12 below presents coefficients which indicate direction, strength and statistical significance of the relationship between each independent variable and perceived procedural fairness in performance evaluations.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	,780	,407		1,919	,057	-,023	1,584
	eval_accuracy	,661	,061	,634	10,832	<,001	,540	,781
	automation presence 1-No, 2-Yes	,176	,127	,082	1,388	,167	-,074	,425
	remote_d	-,178	,206	-,056	-,863	,389	-,584	,229
	hybrid_d	-,277	,136	-,129	-2,040	,043	-,546	-,009
	clarity	,168	,059	,176	2,878	,005	,053	,284
	age_group	-,132	,110	-,090	-1,198	,233	-,349	,086
	gender	-,133	,114	-,067	-1,176	,242	-,358	,091
	experience	,079	,074	,083	1,068	,287	-,067	,226

a. Dependent Variable: fair_org

Figure 12. Multiple Regression Coefficients

The results show that perceived procedural fairness has the strongest positive relationship with perceived accuracy. The unstandardized coefficient (B) indicates that a one-unit increase in perceived accuracy is associated with an increase in perceived procedural fairness of 0,661 units. The standard error (SE = 0,061) reflects the uncertainty of the estimated coefficient and compared to the size of the regression coefficient (B = 0,661), the standard error is relatively small what indicates that the estimate of the effect is precise. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0,634$) indicates the relative importance of this variable compared to other variables in the model and confirms that perceived accuracy of evaluation is the most influential variable.

The standard error (SE = 0,061) indicates the level of uncertainty in the estimated coefficient and this relatively small value of the standard error compared to the coefficient suggests that the estimate is precise and that the relationship between evaluation accuracy and perceived procedural fairness is measured with a high degree of reliability. Also large t-value of 10,832 indicates that the relationship between evaluation

accuracy and perceived procedural fairness is statistically strong. The 95% confidence interval for the coefficient ranges from 0,540 to 0,781. Because this interval does not include 0, it provides further evidence that the relationship between evaluation accuracy and perceived procedural fairness is statistically significant and positive. This result indicates that employees who believe their performance evaluations accurately reflect their actual work performance are much more likely to perceive the evaluation system as fair.

The presence of automated evaluation tools also does not demonstrate a statistically significant relationship with perceived procedural fairness ($B = 0,176$, $\beta = 0,082$, $p = 0,167$). Although the coefficient is positive, suggesting that employees in organizations which are using automated performance evaluation tools tend to report higher fairness perceptions, the relationship is not statistically significant, the use of automated systems in performance evaluations doesn't have a significant impact on employees' perception of fairness, when other factors included in the model are taken into account. In other words, the presence of automation tools alone doesn't appear to be a key determinant of procedural fairness perceptions. While automated systems are often introduced with the expectation that they will reduce bias and increase objectivity, employees may evaluate fairness primarily based on how transparent, understandable and accurate the evaluation process appears to them and it is possible to suggest that employees' perceptions of procedural fairness depend more strongly on how the evaluation process is designed and communicated, rather than on whether technological tools are used in the evaluation process.

With regard to work arrangements, the results indicate that hybrid work has a statistically significant negative relationship with perceived procedural fairness when compared to employees working fully in-office ($B = -0,277$, $p = 0,043$). The negative coefficient indicates that employees working in hybrid arrangements tend to report lower perceptions of fairness in performance evaluation systems than those working in the office. More precise, the coefficient B suggests that being in a hybrid work arrangement is associated with a decrease of approximately 0,277 units in perceived procedural fairness while holding all other variables in the model. The statistically significant p -value ($p = 0,043$) indicates that this relationship is unlikely to be due to random variation in the data. A possible explanation is that hybrid work arrangements may create additional challenges for monitoring performance and communication between employees and supervisors or managers. And as a result, hybrid employees may perceive the evaluation process as less transparent or less consistent, which could negatively influence their perceptions of procedural fairness.

Interestingly that while hybrid work demonstrates a significant negative relationship, fully remote work does not have a statistically significant relationship with perceived procedural fairness ($B = -0,178$, $p = 0,389$). This suggests that employees working entirely remotely don't significantly differ from in-office employees in their perceptions of procedural fairness of performance evaluation systems. A possible explanation here is that the

organizations may have developed more structured and standardized processes for evaluating fully remote employees than hybrid ones, which may create greater uncertainty when evaluating performance since employees work both remotely and in the office.

Other important variable in this model is the clarity of performance criteria. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0,168$) indicates that a one-unit increase in the clarity of performance criteria is associated with a 0,168-unit increase in perceived fairness while all other variables in the model remain constant. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0,176$) reflects the relative importance of this predictor compared to other variables in the model and shows that the clarity of performance indicators is a second most influential variable having a positive effect on the perception of procedural fairness. The standard error of the coefficient ($SE = 0,059$) shows the level of uncertainty associated with the estimated effect, and the relatively small standard error compared to the coefficient value B suggests that the estimated relationship between clarity and perceived procedural fairness is precise. The statistically significant p -value ($p = 0,005$) indicates that this relationship is unlikely to be due to random fluctuations in the data. Also the 95% confidence interval ranges from 0,053 to 0,284 and doesn't include 0, it further supports the conclusion that the clarity of performance criteria has a significant positive impact on the perception of fairness. This way, greater clarity in evaluation criteria is linked to a higher level of perceived procedural fairness among employees.

Finally, the control variables included in the model – age, gender and years of work experience – do not show a statistically significant relationship with the perception of procedural fairness. These results indicate that demographic characteristics do not play a significant role in shaping employees' perceptions of the procedural fairness of performance evaluation systems within this study sample. This suggests that perceptions of fairness appear to be influenced mostly by organizational and procedural factors rather than by individual demographic differences among employees.

Comparison of Hypothesis Testing Results and Regression Analysis

After examining the individual hypotheses 1 and 2 using correlation analysis and an independent samples t -test, a multiple regression analysis was conducted in order to investigate the combined influence of several predictors on perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluation systems. Because regression analysis allows multiple variables to be analyzed simultaneously, it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence procedural fairness perceptions. For this reason, the results obtained from the initial tests of hypothesis 1 and 2 were compared with the results of the regression analysis in order to determine

whether the relationships identified earlier remained consistent when multiple variables were considered simultaneously.

Comparison of Hypothesis 1

The results of the regression analysis strongly confirm the findings obtained in the correlation analysis conducted for Hypothesis 1. The initial analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between perceived accuracy of performance evaluations and perceived procedural fairness of evaluation procedures. The correlation coefficient showed that employees who believed that performance evaluations accurately reflected their work results were significantly more likely to perceive the evaluation system as fair.

Regression analysis confirms this relationship and further demonstrates that perceived evaluation accuracy is the strongest predictor of perceived procedural fairness in the model. Even after taking into account factors such as the degree of automation, work organization, clarity of performance indicators and demographic variables, the accuracy of the evaluation remains highly significant and is the most powerful predictor of perceived procedural fairness in the regression model.

This consistency between the results of the correlation analysis and the regression model confirms the accuracy of the findings and highlights the key role of perceived accuracy in shaping employees' perceptions of procedural fairness. This result demonstrates that employees mainly evaluate the procedural fairness of performance evaluation systems based on how accurately the evaluation results reflect their actual contribution to the work.

Comparison of Hypothesis 2

When comparing the results of Hypothesis 2 with the data from the regression model, a different picture emerges. In the initial analysis, the t-test for independent samples revealed a statistically significant difference in the perception of procedural fairness between employees of organizations that use automated performance evaluation tools and employees of organizations that do not use such tools. Employees of organizations using automation reported, on average, a slightly higher level of perceived fairness.

However, when automation was included in the multiple regression model together with other variables, the relationship between automation and perceived procedural fairness was no longer statistically significant. This finding may suggest that this identified difference may be explained by other factors that were not taken into account in the earlier analysis.

A possible explanation may be that organizations that implement automated performance evaluation systems also tend to have clearer performance criteria or more structured evaluation processes. When variables such

as evaluation accuracy and the clarity of performance criteria are included in the model, the independent contribution of automation tools becomes smaller and statistically insignificant. This way, automation tools alone may not be capable of significantly improving perceptions of procedural fairness unless they are accompanied by clear evaluation criteria and reliable evaluation procedures.

Results of Hypothesis 3

The conducted regression analysis also provides a better understanding of the role that work arrangements play in shaping perceptions of fairness. The regression model shows that hybrid work arrangements are associated with lower levels of perceived procedural fairness compared to employees who work exclusively in the office. However, fully remote work does not show a statistically significant association with perceptions of procedural fairness. This suggests that employees working exclusively remotely do not differ significantly from office-based employees in how they evaluate the fairness of performance evaluation systems.

A possible explanation here is that organizations may have developed clearer evaluation procedures for fully remote employees, especially since remote work became more and more widespread in recent years. At the same time, hybrid work arrangements can create greater uncertainty as employees switch between working remotely and in the office. This mixed work arrangement can make it difficult for managers to consistently monitor and evaluate work of employees which could potentially lead to uncertainty regarding how performance is assessed. As a result, employees working in a hybrid work arrangement may perceive evaluation procedures as less transparent or less consistent, which could negatively impact their perception of fairness.

Results of Hypothesis 4

A further key finding of the regression analysis concerns the role of clarity in performance metrics. The results show that the clarity of evaluation criteria has a statistically significant positive correlation with perceived procedural fairness. This finding suggests that employees who clearly understand the criteria for evaluating their performance are more likely to perceive the evaluation system as fair and transparent. When performance standards are clearly communicated to employees, they know what criteria are used in the evaluation process and how their work is evaluated, they are more likely to perceive the evaluation process as fair.

Overall, the results show that organizational and procedural factors play a more important role in shaping perceptions of procedural fairness than technological or demographic factors. Although the initial analysis suggested that automation was associated with higher perceived procedural fairness, this relationship disappeared once other variables were taken into account in the regression model. In contrast, perceived

accuracy of evaluation remained a strong and statistically significant predictor of procedural fairness and together with the clarity of performance evaluation criteria represent the key factors influencing employees' perceptions of procedural fairness in performance evaluation systems.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore employee perceptions of performance evaluation fairness and to identify factors influencing perception of procedural fairness among population of Austria. In particular, the research focused on the role of perceived evaluation accuracy, the presence of automated performance evaluation tools, different work arrangements and the clarity of performance evaluation criteria. By combining correlation analysis, group comparison tests and multiple regression analysis, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence employees' perceptions of procedural fairness in performance evaluation processes.

Overall, the results demonstrate that organizational and procedural characteristics of performance evaluation systems play a significantly more important role in shaping perceptions of fairness than technological or demographic factors. In particular, perceived evaluation accuracy and the clarity of performance metrics showed to be as the most influential predictors of procedural fairness perceptions.

One of the most important findings of the study concerns the strong relationship between perceived evaluation of accuracy and perceived fairness. The results consistently showed that employees who believe that their performance evaluations accurately reflect their actual work performance are significantly more likely to perceive the evaluation system as fair. This relationship remained highly significant even when other variables were included in the regression model, confirming that perceived accuracy represents the most important determinant of procedural fairness perceptions in performance evaluation systems.

This finding is consistent with the idea that employees evaluate the fairness of organizational procedures based on whether these procedures are accurate, unbiased and consistently applied. When employees believe that performance evaluations correctly represent their work contributions, they are more likely to trust the evaluation system and perceive it as legitimate. On the contrary, when evaluation results seem mismatched with actual performance, employees may question the fairness of the entire evaluation process. Therefore, the results suggest that improving the accuracy of performance measurement may be one of the most effective ways for organizations to strengthen employees' perceptions of fairness.

Another important finding concerns the role of clarity in performance evaluation criteria. The results show that employees who clearly understand how their work is evaluated are more likely to perceive the evaluation system as fair. This finding is consistent with the arguments presented in the theoretical part of this study, which emphasize the importance of transparency and clearly defined evaluation criteria in shaping employees' perceptions of fairness. When employees clearly understand how their performance is assessed and what standards are used in the evaluation process, the procedures are more likely to be perceived as transparent and predictable. In such situations, employees may feel that the evaluation system operates in a more structured and consistent way. This way, clear performance criteria can reduce uncertainty regarding evaluation outcomes and strengthen employees' confidence in the fairness of the evaluation process.

In contrast to the strong effects of evaluation accuracy and clarity of performance metrics, the results of the study indicate that the presence of automated evaluation tools does not significantly influence employees' perceptions of procedural fairness when other variables are taken into account. Although the initial results suggested that employees in organizations using automated evaluation tools reported slightly higher fairness perceptions, this relationship disappeared once other predictors were included in the regression model.

This finding suggests that simply implementing automation tools may not be enough to improve employees' perception of the procedural fairness of performance evaluation systems. Although automated evaluation systems are often implemented with the hope of increasing objectivity and reducing bias, employees may assess procedural fairness mainly based on how the evaluation process is organized, implemented and communicated to them. In other words, the perceived procedural fairness of performance evaluations depends less on the automation tools used in the process and more on whether employees believe that the evaluation results accurately reflect their work and that the criteria used in the evaluation are clear and transparent.

Another interesting result concerns the role of work arrangements in shaping perceptions of fairness. The regression analysis revealed that employees working in hybrid arrangements tend to report slightly lower perceptions of fairness compared to employees working fully in-office. At the same time, fully remote work did not show a statistically significant relationship with perceived fairness.

One possible explanation for this finding is that hybrid work arrangements may create additional challenges for monitoring performance and communication between employees and managers. Because hybrid employees switch between remote and office environments, managers may have fewer opportunities to consistently observe their work performance. This may create uncertainty about how performance is evaluated and whether all employees are assessed according to the same standards. As a result, hybrid

employees may perceive the evaluation process as less transparent or less consistent, which could negatively influence their perceptions of procedural fairness.

On the contrary, organizations may have developed more structured evaluation procedures for fully remote employees, especially as remote work has become more and more common in recent years. In such cases, evaluation criteria and performance metrics may be more clearly defined in order to compensate for the lack of direct supervision. This could explain why fully remote employees do not significantly differ from in-office employees in their perceptions of fairness.

To sum up, the findings of this study suggest that employees' perceptions of procedural fairness in performance evaluation are shaped primarily by how accurately their performance is assessed and how clearly the evaluation criteria are communicated, rather than by automation solutions or demographic factors. When employees believe that performance evaluations accurately reflect their work and when evaluation criteria are clearly communicated, they are more likely to perceive the evaluation process as fair.

These findings have several practical implications for organizations that want to improve the perceived procedural fairness of their performance evaluation systems. First, organizations should prioritize the development of evaluation systems that accurately capture employees' work contributions and responsibilities. This may involve improving performance measurement methods, ensuring that evaluation criteria reflect the complexity of different job roles and providing managers with adequate training in performance assessment.

Second, organizations should focus on improving the transparency and communication of performance evaluation criteria. Clearly defined performance criteria, as well as regular feedback and open discussions about evaluation outcomes may help employees better understand how their performance is assessed. Such transparency can reduce uncertainty and strengthen employees' trust in the evaluation process.

At the same time, several limitations of the present study should also be acknowledged. The analysis focused primarily on organizational and procedural factors related to performance evaluation systems and did not include several additional variables that may influence fairness perceptions. For example, the quality of communication between managers and employees during the evaluation process. Previous research suggests that regular feedback, clear explanations of evaluation outcomes and opportunities for employees to discuss their performance may significantly make perceptions of procedural fairness better. Moreover, employees' trust in management and prior experiences with performance evaluation systems were not examined in this study. This factor may be important as well, because employees who have previously experienced unfair or unobjective evaluations may be more skeptical of evaluation procedures even when the system is objectively

designed to be fair. Also, the present study didn't examine the role of employee participation in the evaluation process. If to involve employees in performance discussions and feedback sessions may increase perceptions of procedural fairness by giving employees a greater sense of control and transparency in the evaluation process.

Appendix 1. Survey Questions

1. Perception of fairness in performance evaluation (Likert Scale 1-5)

How accurate do you feel your performance evaluation is compared to your actual work output?

(1 = Very inaccurate, 5 = Very accurate)

How fair do you feel the performance evaluation system is in your organization?

(1 = Very unfair, 5 = Very fair)

To what extent do you believe your performance evaluation reflects the effort you put into your work?

(1 = Not at all, 5 = Completely)

How well does the evaluation system capture the nuances of your job role and responsibilities?

(1 = Not at all, 5 = Extremely well)

2. Usage of automated performance evaluation tools in the performance evaluation process (Likert Scale 1-5)

To what extent are automated performance evaluation tools (e.g., software systems, performance tracking platforms) used in your organization?

(1 = Not at all used, 5 = Fully integrated into the evaluation process)

How much do you trust the automated tools used to evaluate your performance?

(1 = Do not trust at all, 5 = Trust completely)

To what extent do you feel that automated performance evaluation tools are fair in assessing your work?

(1 = Very unfair, 5 = Very fair)

To what extent do you believe automated performance evaluation tools can reduce bias in the evaluation process?

(1 = Not at all, 5 = Completely)

3. Perception of fairness of evaluation systems among employees working remotely (Likert Scale 1-5)

How fair do you feel the performance evaluation system is for remote employees in your organization?

(1 = Very unfair, 5 = Very fair)

How fair do you feel the performance evaluation system is for in-office employees in your organization?

(1 = Very unfair, 5 = Very fair)

To what extent do you believe that in-office employees are evaluated more fairly than remote employees?

(1 = Not at all, 5 = Very strongly)

To what extent do you feel the performance evaluation system is adapted to the remote work?

(1 = Not adapted at all, 5 = Fully adapted)

How well do you understand the criteria used to assess your performance in a remote work environment?

(1 = Not at all, 5 = Completely understand)

Do you feel that the evaluation criteria for remote work are clearly communicated by your organization?

(1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree)

How much do you trust that your remote work performance is evaluated fairly?

(1 = Do not trust at all, 5 = Trust completely)

4. Demographic information

Age:

- Under 25
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45–54
- 55 and above

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Years of experience: ____

- Less than 1 year
- 1–3 years
- 4–6 years
- 7–10 years
- More than 10 years

Type of work arrangement:

- Fully Remote
- Hybrid (partially remote)
- Fully In-Office

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