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## 1 . Introduction

The purpose of this current study is to summarize and review the extant literature of rating agreement of job performance. Since the degree of congruence between employees' and their supervisors' ratings of job performance has meaningful implications for individuals and organizations outcomes, numerous researchers have examined its features and antecedents. Specifically, previous research shows that subordinates' ratings of their performance often show little agreement with assessments provided by their supervisor (Conway & Huffcutt, 1997 ; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988 ; Korsgaard, Meglino, & Lester, 2004). And a number of factors for such disagreement have been identified, such as rating errors derived from leniency and self-enhancement bias, organizational positions and observational opportunities (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997 ; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988).

Although the rapid growth in theory and empirical research undoubtedly has been expanding our understanding of rating agreement, it also has produced some unresolved issues. Firstly, there is a lack of consensus about the dimensionality of employee job performance in despite of the growing interest in the various forms of performance concepts in Human Resource Management literature. As Mersman and

Donaldson (2000) noted, much of the research on rating agreement has mainly focused on task performance, defined by job descriptions and formally rewarded, rather than on contextual performance. Contextual performance consists of non-job-specific and discretionary behaviors such as cooperating with coworkers and maintaining good working relationships, that are labeled citizenship behaviors by Organ (1988), who defined organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as individual behavior that is discretionary and in the aggregate promotes organizational effectiveness. Therefore, it is necessary to understand whether and how rating agreement of contextual performance differs from task performance as well as their implications for organization.

Related to the above, what have not been fully examined are the situational predictors of rating agreement. Given that the service sector in the economy has been steadily increasing in Japan and other nations, it is important to investigate what situational factors influence rating agreement in the service setting. In general, service providers interact with clients and customers on behalf of their organizations. For example, care workers at nursing home typically have deep and expressive interactions with clients. In this case, relational job characteristics such as perceived social worth might be associated with disagreement between employees' and supervisor' ratings.

The structure of the article is as follows. I will first briefly review the arguments about self-other rating agreement itself and why employees' ratings often differ from their supervisors' ratings and what the implications of these differences are for individuals and organizational outcomes based on the work of Atwater and Yammarino (1997), Yammarino and Atwater (1997) and others (e. g., Mersman & Donaldson, 2000). In addition, based on an expanded understanding of the employee job performance constructs, potential avenues for theoretical and empirical research are discussed.

## **2 . Self-other rating agreement**

### **2.1 A model of self-other rating agreement**

A substantial body of research indicates that employees' ratings of their job performance often show little agreement with assessments provided by their supervisor (Conway & Huffcutt, 1997 ; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988 ; Korsgaard, Meglino, & Lester, 2004). For that reason, there has been much argument in the literature regarding the causes behind the low correlations between self-ratings and others ratings and its implications for organization. Atwater and Yammarino (1997) developed a comprehensive model of agreement on job performance ratings, which is a fundamental and well-known model in its area. Its model includes explanations of why self-ratings tend to differ from others' ratings.

In their model, employees self-assessments are compared to ratings from relevant others such as their peers or supervisors. They defined accurate ratings are self-ratings and other ratings that are in agreement, as determined by a direct comparison of the two. In other words, the agreement represents the degree to which employees see themselves as others see them. This definition does not mean that either self-ratings or other ratings are always true in case of agreement. Rather, it implies self-ratings and other ratings provide different perspectives on the same criteria including job performance. Based on the degree of self-other rating accuracy, they classified raters into four categories : over-estimators, under-estimators, in-agreement raters/good and in-agreement/poor raters. First, over-estimators are focal individuals whose self-ratings are significantly inflated above the ratings of relevant others. Second, under-estimators are focal individuals whose self-ratings are significantly deflated below the ratings of relevant others. Third, in-agreement/good raters are focal individuals whose self-ratings are high and similar to the ratings of relevant others. Fourth, in-agreement/poor raters

are focal individuals whose self-ratings are low and similar to the ratings of relevant others. They suggested that these four categories of raters would have different individual and organizational outcomes.

Table 1 Type of raters

Type	Ratings
Over-estimator	Greater than other ratings
Under-estimator	Less than other ratings
In-agreement/good	High self-ratings and similar to high other ratings
In-agreement/poor	Low self-ratings and similar to low other ratings

## 2.2 Outcomes of agreement on performance

In their model, Atwater and Yammarino (1997) posit that employees whose self-ratings agree with others' ratings as to their job performance are more likely to be linked to positive individual and organizational outcomes. In other words, individual and organizational outcomes are depending on the extent to which self-other ratings converge.

They posit that more negative outcomes result when self-ratings are significantly higher than the ratings from others. Specifically, over-estimators who rate themselves higher than others do may tend to misdiagnose their strengths and weaknesses, which leads to adversely job-relevant decisions or attitudes such as low self-esteem and low job satisfaction. Additionally, over-estimator might not try to improve their job performance and capability because they believe their level of performance is already high. Moreover, if misjudgment in self-ratings on job performance exists, the situation is ripe for the development of conflict at work, which is derived from the lack of necessary information to perform a better job.

Likewise, under-estimator, whose self-ratings are below the ratings of others,

might also misdiagnose their strengths and weaknesses. In turn, these inaccurate self-evaluations can affect adversely job-relevant decisions. Under-estimator might be seen as modest, however, their low aspirations and low self-esteem may reduce their potential in organizations because they will not pursue opportunities for which they are qualified.

Thus, their model posits that in-agreement raters will generally have positive individual and organizational outcomes, whereas over-estimators and under-estimators can inhibit the accomplishment of individual and organizational effectiveness. Based on the above argument, they concluded that more accurate insight into an individual's own behavior, characteristics, perceptions, and so forth, based on the congruence of self-other ratings, can be related to individual and organizational outcomes. These findings suggest that there is an overall positive correlation between the degree of agreement and performance, as self-ratings relative to others' increase, individual and organizational outcomes increase. Hence, it is crucial to examine the causes behind rating agreement.

### **2.3 Factors of agreement on job performance**

Although the degree of agreement between self and other ratings of job performance has been shown to have meaningful implications for individuals and organizations, a substantial body of empirical research indicated that employees' ratings of their own performance often show little agreement with assessments provided by their supervisor (e. g., Conway & Huffcutt, 1997 ; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988 ; Korsgaard et al., 2004). Especially, research indicated that employees tend to overrate their job performance relative to their supervisors (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988 ; Heidemeier & Moser, 2009).

There has been much argument in the literature regarding the causes behind the low correlations between self-ratings and ratings made by others. For instance,

according to Harris and Schaubroeck (1988), the low correlations between raters are caused by mainly three factors; egocentric bias, differences in organizational level, and observational opportunities. Firstly, egocentric bias results from the high self-assurance. Thus, raters usually attribute good performance to their own behaviors and poor performance to environmental factors. Secondly, raters at different organization levels might have different perceptions of what constitutes effective job performance at work or they may weight performance dimensions differently. This implies that raters at different positions may disagree on the ratings of specific performance dimensions. Lastly, raters may have different opportunities to observe subordinates' behavior and that differing observational opportunities may account for disagreement of performance.

On the other hand, Atwater and Yammarino (1997) suggest five categories of antecedents of self-other rating agreement as Figure 1 shows.

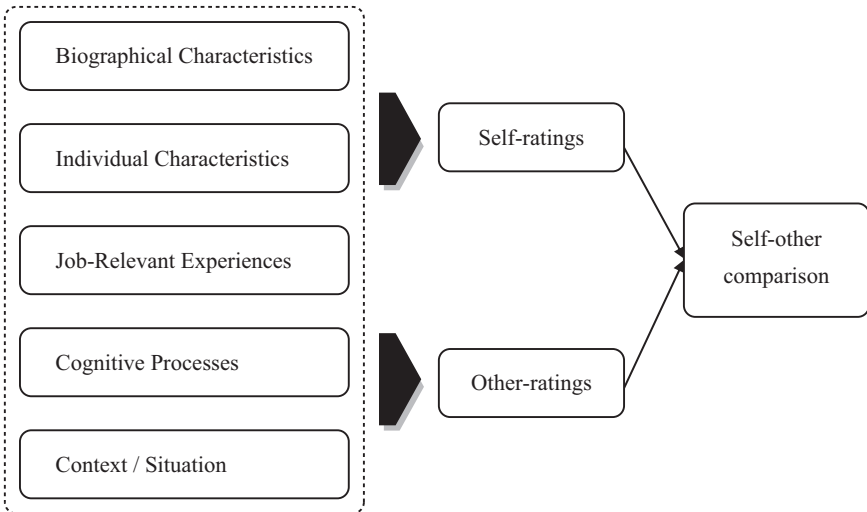


Figure 1 Self-other rating agreement process

In this model, Biographical characteristics, that influence self-other rating accuracy, include many factors such as age, sex, education level, tenure in the job or with the organization and organizational position. With regard to these characteristics, males and older employees tend to over-rate their performance such as leadership capabilities, abilities relative to other raters (Fleenor et al., 2010). And a number of studies have demonstrated that leaders as compared to non-leaders are more capable of rating themselves similarly to others' ratings of them. This over-rating contributes to greater discrepancies between self and others' ratings.

Individual Characteristics in their model included are factors such as intelligence, achievement status, analytic ability, cognitive complexity, memory, locus of control, and interpersonal orientation. They expected that those with higher levels of intelligence, greater cognitive complexity, and better memories to store and process more information and to do so with greater accuracy.

Past experiences and job feedback at work can also influence ratings of self and others. They proposed that previous success or failure experiences at work that provide accurate information regarding abilities and performance lead to more accurate self-ratings. Fleenor et al., (2010) insists that when raters receive feedback over time, their self-ratings become more congruent with ratings from others. These past research findings highlight how important is information-flow at work for self-other agreement.

Cognitive processes that affect ratings agreement divided into two general categories : schemas, beliefs, expectations and uses of information, feedback. One of the most widely researched effects of cognitive processing on ratings concerns schemes that make employees implicit theories. In terms of this perspective, they proposed that behavior or experiences attributed to internal causes will affect future self-ratings, and behavior or experiences attributed to external causes will not affect future self-ratings. Lastly, contextual factors such as information environment,

political influence can influence rating agreement. For example, comparative information, which is how others are doing, can help diminishing inflated self-ratings.

Research has demonstrated that there are a variety of factors influence on self-ratings agreement between employees and their supervisors. These ideas have applied in management field so far. For example, one of the management tools is multi-source ratings, also referred to as 360-degree feedback, in order to enhance accuracy of performance ratings. These managerial approaches refer to the use of ratings from several raters on different traits or behaviors relevant to performance (Conway, 1998) and have been used for many areas including performance appraisals and development programs.

Even though the growth of self-other agreement research findings into management domains, it also has produced some unresolved issues. In the next section, I will discuss theoretical and empirical issues in need of future research.

### **3 . Future research directions**

In the following section, I will attempt to identify some important areas for future research. Briefly, these directions involve the following areas: (a) conceptual issues regarding of job performance constructs; (b) antecedents of agreement of job performance; (c) outcomes of agreement of job performance.

#### **3.1 Conceptual issues regarding of job performance constructs**

While studies in rating agreement typically use task performance as the measure on which rating agreement is assessed, the notion of contextual performance is important to fully describe the criterion domain of job performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). The extent of rater agreement using measures of contextual performance has not been adequately addressed in its research area with the

exception of Mersman and Donaldson (2000). Contextual performance consists of non-job-specific and discretionary behaviors such as cooperating with coworkers and maintaining good working relationships, that are labeled citizenship behaviors by Organ (1988), who defined organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as individual behavior that is discretionary and in the aggregate promotes organizational effectiveness.

The concept of contextual performance has recently attracted considerable research attention partly because of changes in the nature of organizations such as team-base work (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). In addition, economic trends such as growing area of service work and knowledge work put pressure on some elements of job performance in the contemporary workplace. In deed one of the largest and fastest growing sectors in the economy is in industries that provide services (Colquitt, LePine and Wesson, 2015). As in other advanced countries, the share of service sector in the economy has been increasing in Japan. In the service sector, employees' work is defined mainly in terms of relationships with clients and customers (Cascio, 1995). In general, service providers interact with clients and customers on behalf of their organizations. For example, care workers at nursing home and retail sales employees typically have deep and expressive interactions with clients and customers. Such a service work contexts place a greater emphasis on high levels of contextual performance. Due to fluctuating service demands, contextual performance such as cooperating with coworkers and showing dedication in front of their customers plays an important role for enhancing customer satisfaction in its sector.

The increase in service work above mentioned has a number of implications for future research in rating agreement. As mentioned above, contextual performance is discretionary and improvised behaviors compared to task performance, which in turn reduce the opportunities to observe subordinates' these behaviors for

supervisors. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the degree of agreement between subordinate-ratings and supervisor ratings of contextual performance would be lower compared to when of task performance as shown Table 2.

Table 2 Type of job performance

	Task performance	Contextual performance
Features	Job-specific	non-job-specific
	compulsorily	discretionary
	organized	improvised
Observation opportunities	higher	lower
The degree of agreement	higher	lower

3. 2 Other antecedents of rating agreement

Although biographical, individual characteristics, job-Relevant Experiences, cognitive processes and situational variables have received a considerable amount of attention in the literature, job characteristics variables have not fully examined. To date, only a few studies (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988) have investigated the effects of job characteristics on rating agreement. Harris and Schaubroeck (1988) showed that self-supervisor and self-peer rating correlations were lower for managerial / professional employees than for blue-collar / service employees and no true variance existed for the former category. They speculate that egocentric bias is more likely to occur in ambiguous contexts such as managerial / professional jobs than in well-defined jobs such as blue-collar / service. In addition, we need to examine an even broader range of job characteristics when taking into account the theoretical development in job design research area.

For example, Hackman and Oldham (1980) have suggested that job characteristics such as task identity, task significance, and task autonomy have

significant influence on individual outcomes including experienced meaningfulness of work, work satisfaction and work performance. Moreover, contemporary research on relational job design has shown that giving employees the opportunity to meet the individuals who benefit from their efforts can greatly enhance their motivation and performance by heightening their perception of themselves as making a difference in other people's lives (Grant, 2007, 2008). For example, Grant (2007) identified that perceived social worth, the degree to which employees feel that their personal contributions are valued by others like clients and customers mediated the effects of task significance on job performance. When employees engage in behaviors directed at making prosocial differences, they are often able to make contributions to the lives of others, which makes them feel valuable to these beneficiaries. Hence, perceived social worth appears to increase employees' social status and self-esteem.

These studies described above indicate that relationship exists between job characteristics and rating agreement. With perceptions of social worth employees tend to realize that their actions have meaningful consequences for the welfare of other people. As a result, employees are likely to develop identities as competent and have stronger self-esteem. Thus, those who higher self-esteem, that is cultivated by perceived social worth, in turn, might exhibit greater disagreement of task performance as well as contextual performance.

Given that contextual performance has increasingly seen as important domain of job performance in a service work, role clarity may also be meaningful antecedents of rating agreement that worth investigating. Employees have to be flexible when serving customers in a service work contexts and therefore may experience role ambiguity as a consequence of lack of clarity on how to perform effectively. As a result, discrepancies between subordinate and supervisor ratings of job performance might appear when they have different interpretations regarding roles at work or

what kind of behaviors are more important for performance. Therefore, the issue of role clarity should concern in the service sector.

### 3.3 Outcomes of rating agreement

Future research also needs to more carefully examine whether and how the outcomes of agreement of task performance and contextual performance differ. For example, Previous research indicates that employees use impression management so that their superiors will see them as good organizational members who engage in high levels of organizational citizenship behaviors. In particular, Wayne and Ferris (1990) suggest that some employees could use impression management to create the impression that they are cooperative, helpful colleagues. Likewise, Bolino (1999) suggests that employees will tend to be seen as good organizational citizens when they use tactics of impression management such as behaviors aimed at making them appear hardworking. Thus, if employees who use such impression management tactics could not agree with their supervisor's evaluation of their performance, it might create greater tension than when of task performance. Unfortunately, very little is known about the consequences of rating disagreement in such a case.

It is also possible that agreement between employees' and their supervisor' ratings of contextual performance contribute to high work relationships, especially leader-member exchange (LMX). LMX is an organizational construct that represents a working relationship quality between an employee and their supervisor (Dienesch & Linden, 1986). The theory focuses on the leader-follower dyad, that is, the relationship between the leader and a specific subordinate and it proposes that each leader-subordinate dyad develops a unique relationship that stems from the unfolding interactions between them. Because it is reasonable to assume that healthy dyads occur when employees share similar interests and values with their

supervisors in terms of work issues, agreement in ratings also generate high LMX. Kim and Carlson (2016) showed recently that higher levels of agreement in service performance ratings between employees and supervisors is associated with higher levels of LMX. Future research should explore this possibility on task and contextual performance domains.

#### **4 . Conclusion**

Rating agreement has become an important organizational concept in the management literature and its research findings have applied in practical domains. However, this rapid growth in research and practice has resulted in the unresolved issues, including the need to better identify the conceptual difference between type of job performance, as well as their antecedents and consequences. In this paper, I addressed these issues, as well as identified meaningful avenues for future research. Firstly, as the domain of job performance is expanded to include contextual performance in the contemporary workplace, it will become an increasingly important question that whether and how rating agreement of contextual performance differ from task performance. In addition, it is also necessary to examine antecedents as they predict rating agreement or disagreement of contextual performance such as relational job characteristics and role clarity. Future research also needs to more carefully examine whether and how the outcomes of agreement on task performance ratings and contextual performance ratings differ. Moreover, I encouraged to examine the effect of task and contextual performance ratings agreement on the work relationship, especially LMX. This paper will help to progress in this area by highlighting several key issues that are in need of attention.

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