

A Review of Reducing Bias and Improving Feedback Through Organisational Psychology

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Abstract

Feedback is essential for both personal and organisational performance; however, cognitive and structural biases consistently compromise its accuracy, acceptance, and developmental efficacy. This article integrates empirical and theoretical insights from organisational psychology to analyse the functioning of bias within feedback processes—encompassing source, message, recipient, and context—and to explore how evidence-based interventions can alleviate these distortions. Utilising dual-process theories of judgement, social identity theory, and attribution models, I contend that bias is not simply a noise to be eradicated but a systematic pattern emerging from cognitive efficiency and social dynamics. To effectively debias, you need to use strategies at different levels. These include individual reflective practices, structured feedback systems (like behaviourally anchored rating scales and 360-degree systems), and changes in the culture of the organization that make it safer and more focused on learning. The article critically assesses methodological constraints in current bias-reduction research.

Keywords: *cognitive bias, debiasing, feedback intervention, organisational psychology, performance feedback*

1. Introduction

Giving and getting performance feedback is one of the most common and important ways that people interact with each other in organisations. Feedback, whether through annual evaluations or daily coaching sessions, focuses attention, alters self-perception, affects motivation, and ultimately dictates career paths. But years of research in industrial-organizational psychology, behavioural economics, and management science have come to a scary conclusion: feedback is always biased.

Bias in feedback encompasses not only explicit discrimination but also intentional favouritism. Instead, it shows up in subtle cognitive shortcuts like halo effects, recency bias, similarity-attraction biases, and attribution errors, as well as in the way rating systems [1] and feedback norms are set up. These biases have a bigger effect on people from under-represented groups, make power imbalances in hierarchies worse, and make it harder for feedback to help people do better. For organisations dedicated to equity, talent development, and evidence-based management, mitigating feedback bias is both a moral obligation and a strategic imperative.

Organisational psychology [2] provides a distinctive integrative perspective for this challenge. Organisational psychology looks at feedback as a dynamic system that is part of cognitive, social, and structural contexts. This is different from narrower approaches that see bias as an

individual flaw or a statistical artefact. It offers validated constructs (e.g., psychological safety, feedback orientation, implicit person theories), established theoretical frameworks (e.g., social identity theory, attribution theory, dual-process models), and an expanding evidence base for interventions—from succinct pre-feedback reflection exercises to restructured performance management systems.

This article aims to achieve three objectives. First, to systematically delineate the sources and mechanisms of bias in organisational feedback, utilising peer-reviewed empirical studies and theoretical syntheses. Second, to critically assess the efficacy of interventions informed by organisational psychology aimed at mitigating bias and enhancing feedback quality. Third, to find gaps in the literature that have been there for a long time and suggest a strict research plan for the next ten years. Organisational researchers, HR professionals, and managers who want both clear ideas and useful advice are the target audience.

A note about the scope: Feedback happens in a lot of different areas, like school, the clinic, and sports. This article is only about performance feedback in the workplace, such as feedback from supervisors to subordinates, feedback from peers, and feedback from multiple sources (360-degree feedback). I use the word "bias" to mean a systematic, non-random departure from accurate or fair judgement. This includes, but is not limited to, demographic bias, cognitive heuristics, and motivational distortions.

2. How Bias Enters Feedback

To understand how to reduce bias, you first need to know how to create bias. Organisational psychology provides various complementary theoretical frameworks, each elucidating distinct avenues for distortion.

2.1 Dual-Process Theory and Cognitive Heuristics

Dual-process models [3] separate processing into two systems: System 1, which is fast, automatic, and associative, and System 2, which is slow, thoughtful, and based on rules. Feedback episodes, particularly within busy, time-constrained organisational environments, predominantly elicit System 1 judgements. The person giving feedback must quickly put together different observations into a single evaluation. This is a job that calls for several well-known heuristics:

- (a) Halo effect [4] -- A general impression of a subordinate (for example, she is a strong performer) affects ratings on specific dimensions, making them less distinct.
- (b) Recency bias [5] -- The most recent performance events have a bigger effect on the evaluation than earlier successes or failures, which fade from memory.
- (c) The availability heuristic -- People are more likely to remember memorable events, like a single public mistake, than routine good performance, which can affect their judgements.
- (d) Similarity-attraction bias -- Rater's rate subordinates higher if they think they are like themselves in terms of their background, values, or way of communicating.

These heuristics function automatically and predominantly beyond the rater's consciousness.

Performance ratings are not direct reflections of objective performance but are reconstructions based on the rater's cognitive schemas. Debiasing cannot depend exclusively on exhortations to “be fair” but must reconstruct the cognitive environment.

2.2 Social Identity and Ingroup Favouritism

Social identity theory [6] asserts that individuals obtain a portion of their self-concept from their affiliations with groups (e.g., gender, race, department, professional role). Feedback providers implicitly classify subordinates as either ingroup or outgroup members, resulting in systematic biases.

(a) Favouritism for the ingroup -- more positive ratings, more forgiving reasons for failure, and more support for ingroup members.

(b) Outgroup homogeneity -- Members of an outgroup are seen as more alike (and therefore less unique), which makes stereotypes stronger.

Meta-analytic evidence substantiates the influence of demographic similarity on performance ratings, although effect sizes differ based on context and rater training. More nuanced research demonstrates that social identity biases [7] are influenced by organisational factors, including diversity climate and accountability structures [8].

2.3 Attribution Theory and Explanatory Patterns

Attribution theory [9] examines how individuals rationalise the causes of behaviour, a fundamental process in feedback mechanisms. Feedback is inherently attributional; when a subordinate either succeeds or fails, the provider implicitly determines whether the cause was internal (ability, effort) or external (task difficulty, luck), as well as whether it was stable or unstable, and controllable or uncontrollable.

The fundamental attribution error [10]—the propensity to excessively ascribe others' behaviour to dispositional factors while underestimating situational constraints—has direct ramifications for feedback. A supervisor who sees a missed deadline might think it was because the employee was lazy (internal and stable) and give them critical feedback that focuses on effort, ignoring other possible reasons (like unclear instructions or too much work). On the other hand, attributional biases can work the other way for people in the same group, leading them to make self-serving attributions that protect the subordinate's reputation.

Attributional patterns are not solely cognitive; they are also communicative. The framing of feedback (e.g., “You were unfocused” versus “The task requirements shifted”) implicitly conveys causal attributions that influence the recipient’s self-perception and subsequent motivation [11].

2.4 Motivational and Political Biases

Lastly, not all bias is unintentional. Organisational psychology identifies motivational and strategic biases wherein feedback prioritises the rater's interests over accuracy. Supervisors might intentionally give higher ratings to avoid conflict, keep things peaceful, or help their favourite employees get promotions. Alternatively, they may lower ratings to explain how

resources are used, scare people into doing better, or follow forced-distribution systems [12]. These "political" biases are hard to change with cognitive debiasing techniques because they make sense to the person who rates them. To deal with them, feedback consequences need to be changed structurally (for example, by separating ratings from single decisions and making raters more responsible).

2.5 Limitations of Current Theoretical Integration

Even though these frameworks are very detailed, literature does not have a single model that shows when each type of bias is most common. For instance, do similarity-attraction biases exert greater influence in informal daily feedback compared to formal annual evaluations? Do motivational biases supersede cognitive biases [13] in conditions of heightened accountability? Such boundary conditions are still not well defined, which makes it harder for us to plan targeted interventions.

3. Methodology

This review adhered to a systematic search protocol to guarantee transparency and reproducibility, although it remains a narrative synthesis (refer to limitations below). The author utilised three electronic databases: PsycINFO (EBSCO), Web of Science (Core Collection), and Google Scholar. The search terms were developed iteratively from key papers and included combinations of: ("performance feedback" OR "performance appraisal" OR "performance rating" OR "360-degree feedback") AND ("bias" OR "cognitive bias" OR "halo effect" OR "recency bias" OR "similarity bias" OR "attribution error" OR "demographic bias" OR "gender bias" OR "racial bias") AND ("debiasing" OR "intervention" OR "training" OR "calibration" OR "structured rating" OR "BARS" OR "SBI" OR "psychological safety"). The search was confined to peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters published from 1990 to 2023; seminal works predating this period were incorporated through citation chaining.

(a) Inclusion criteria -- (i) empirical study or theoretical synthesis centred on bias in organisational performance feedback; (ii) sample derived from actual or simulated work organisations (excluding purely educational or clinical environments unless explicitly generalised); (iii) published in English.

(b) Exclusion criteria -- (i) single-case studies with $n < 5$; (ii) unpublished dissertations or conference abstracts lacking full text; (iii) studies in which feedback was not the primary dependent variable.

After removing duplicates, the first search found 1,247 records. 892 records were removed during the title and abstract screening. After reading all 355 articles, 187 of them were chosen as sources. We got 43 more sources by using backward citation chaining (also called "snowballing") from the articles we already had. This brought the total number of sources to 230. There are 124 empirical articles (including 18 meta-analyses) and 106 theoretical or review articles.

The author performed single-reviewer screening, which poses a risk of selection bias. There was no formal risk-of-bias assessment (like ROBINS-I) done because the review is more of a

story than a system. Grey literature (preprints, organisational reports) was excluded, potentially omitting null results. A forthcoming systematic review employing dual screening and pre-registration (PROSPERO) is advised.

4. Prevalence and Consequences of Bias

Decades of empirical research have measured the frequency and influence of feedback bias. This section summarises the most important results, focusing on meta-analyses and field studies with large samples.

4.1 Demographic Bias in Performance Ratings

A substantial body of literature evidence systematic disparities in performance ratings linked to race, gender, age, and other demographic categories, frequently privileging majority or higher-status groups. Meta-analysis of 61 studies, revealing that White raters assigned significantly lower ratings to Black and Hispanic ratees in comparison to White ratees, even when objective performance measures were standardised. The effects of gender are more complicated: women usually get slightly higher overall ratings, which is bad for men. However, the qualitative feedback is different: women get more vague comments about their personalities (needs to be more confident) and fewer specific suggestions for how to improve their work.

It is important to note that bias is not the same at all levels of an organization. Rating biases frequently amplify for under-represented groups in leadership roles, indicative of role incongruity [14]. Women leaders were rated lower than men leaders who did the same job, especially in roles that were seen as masculine.

4.2 The Feedback Gap

Bias is not only shown in numbers, but also in the content of feedback. Women received considerably more critical feedback (blunt, abrasive) and less constructive development advice compared to men with equivalent performance metrics [15]. Likewise, feedback for racial minority employees [16] included more references to personality (attitude) and fewer to task-specific competencies.

These qualitative differences are significant as they influence subsequent performance evaluations and career paths. Bohnet [17] said, "The most harmful feedback is not the low score but the vague, untethered criticism that gives no way to move forward" (p.87).

4.3 Consequences of Biased Feedback

The effects flow through both personal and organisational outcomes:

- (a) Employee demotivation and disengagement -- Perceived unfairness diminishes receptiveness to feedback [18] and subsequent enhancement of performance.
- (b) Turnover and representation -- Biased feedback systems disproportionately exclude under-represented groups. Meta-analytic evidence associates perceived rating bias with diminished job satisfaction and heightened turnover intentions, particularly among minority employees.
- (c) Reinforcement of stereotype threat -- When feedback reinforces negative stereotypes (e.g.,

for women in STEM), it can hinder performance via stereotype threat mechanisms [19], establishing a detrimental cycle.

(d) Loss of organisational performance -- Biased feedback skews decisions about promotions, investments in talent development [20], and returns on performance management, which costs a lot of money.

4.4 Methodological Limitations in Existing Studies

Critical evaluation necessitates recognising methodological deficiencies. Most of the research on feedback bias utilises laboratory vignette methodologies in which participants evaluate fictitious employees. These studies are internally valid, but they don't have the emotional stakes, relationship histories, and accountability pressures that real organisations do. Field studies utilising authentic performance data are infrequent and frequently encounter endogeneity issues; the observed discrepancies in ratings may partially indicate actual performance variations that are inadequately quantified.

The file drawer problem (not publishing null results) probably also makes effect sizes look bigger than they are. A recent registered replication report [21] did not replicate several established bias-of-feedback findings, indicating that certain effects may be smaller or more context-dependent than the existing literature indicates. The field needs more open data and studies that are pre-registered.

4.5 Contradictory Evidence and Boundary Conditions

A comprehensive review of feedback bias must recognise a concerning meta-analytic result: feedback interventions do not enhance performance in over one-third of instances and may even diminish performance. Their significant meta-analysis of 607 effect sizes demonstrated that feedback sign (positive versus negative) interacts with task characteristics and recipient self-efficacy to yield diverse outcomes. Specifically, negative feedback enhances performance in individuals with high self-efficacy while detracting from performance in those with low self-efficacy—this finding has direct implications for bias reduction. If bias leads to unequal distribution of negative feedback among specific demographic groups (e.g., women receiving more personality-focused criticism), then even impartial delivery of that feedback may prove counterproductive.

Recent research has improved these boundary conditions. People are more likely to accept feedback if they think it is accurate, the source is credible, and they believe they can change (a growth mindset). This suggests that bias reduction interventions concentrating exclusively on the feedback content (e.g., enhancing specificity) without considering the recipient's mindset or the source's credibility may yield limited efficacy. Feedback interventions [22] directed at the self, rather than at the task, are consistently associated with negative effects on performance. Feedback that attacks the person (you are unfocused) instead of the task (the report missed three key sections) makes two problems worse: it is unfair and it does not work.

Interventions that mitigate bias without simultaneously enhancing feedback's task-focus or considering recipient self-efficacy [23] may not succeed in improving performance.

Consequently, forthcoming debiasing initiatives must be assessed not solely on fairness criteria but also on performance results.

5. Interventions from Organisational Psychology

What can organisations do to lessen bias and get better feedback? Organisational psychology provides interventions at three levels: individual (focused on the rater), structural (focused on the process design), and cultural (focused on the normative environment). The best methods use all three together.

5.1 Debiasing the Rater

5.1.1 Deliberative Reflection and Accountability

Interventions that transition raters from System 1 to System 2 processing exhibit potential. Raters anticipating the need to justify their evaluations to a legitimate, informed audience—without prior knowledge of the audience's opinions, yielded less biased and more nuanced ratings [24]. Short reflection prompts before giving a rating, like List three specific performance incidents from the review period before giving a rating, help lessen the effects of recency and halo.

But accountability is not a cure-all. When raters expect to explain their ratings to someone who has strong opinions, they may change their ratings to match those opinions instead of trying to be accurate. This is a type of anticipatory conformity. Accountability structures that work must not depend on the audience and focus on accuracy.

5.1.2 Perspective-Taking and Counter-Stereotypic Imagining

Teaching raters to see things from the subordinate's point of view lowers attributional bias. Taking someone else's point of view (like thinking about the target's problems and experiences) made people less likely to use stereotypes when judging someone's work, especially when the person was from a different group. Likewise, counter-stereotype training (producing instances of counter-stereotypic behaviour) [25] exhibits modest yet replicable effects in diminishing implicit bias [26]. These effects diminish over weeks in the absence of booster sessions, indicating that singular training is inadequate.

5.1.3 Structured Feedback Frameworks

Structured rating formats are the most effective individual-level intervention. Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) necessitate that evaluators align observed behaviours with designated anchor statements, thereby diminishing dependence on vague overall impressions. Situation-Behaviour-Impact (SBI) frameworks [27] instruct raters to distinguish between observations and interpretations. In situation, you did behaviour, and the impact was consequence. Field studies indicate that SBI training diminishes defensive responses and enhances feedback specificity. We do not possess randomised controlled trials that evaluate SBI's bias-reduction efficacy in comparison to more straightforward checklists.

5.2 Designing Bias-Resistant Feedback Systems

5.2.1 360-Degree and Multi-Source Feedback

Collecting feedback from different people (like your boss, coworkers, and yourself) reduces the bias of each individual rater through the wisdom of crowd's effect [28]. Meta-analyses indicate that 360-degree feedback exhibits a stronger correlation with objective performance metrics compared to single-source ratings, while aggregated ratings reveal diminished demographic disparities [29]. However, multi-source systems are not free from bias. If all the raters have similar demographic traits or belong to the same organisational subculture, there will still be systematic bias (i.e., correlated error). Also, to avoid retaliation, 360 feedback needs to be handled carefully to protect people's privacy.

5.2.2 Calibration Committees and Statistical Adjustment

Calibration committees are groups of managers who look at ratings and make changes together. They help reduce idiosyncratic rater bias by talking about performance evidence in a structured way. Studies indicate that calibration diminishes between-rater variance by 30-50% and mitigates demographic bias, especially when committees comprise diverse members and adhere to formal evidence-presentation protocols [30]. One problem with calibration is that it can make political bias worse if the group's dominant voices sway the group. Nominal group techniques, which include silent ranking followed by moderated discussion, lower this risk.

Statistical bias adjustment methods, such as residualizing ratings for known rater severity or leniency, are prevalent in research yet infrequently adopted within organisations due to their complexity and perceived lack of transparency. Many organisations resist statistical corrections because they see them as masking rather than correcting bias, even when evidence favours adjustment.

5.2.3 Anonymous and Non-Social Feedback Channels

Peer feedback [31] is especially likely to be affected by social and political biases. Anonymous digital feedback platforms, like real-time micro-feedback tools, lower biases based on identity and raise the number of times people give constructive criticism. However, they also raise the chance of getting negative feedback that is not backed up (cowardice bias) and lower the chances for conversation. Companies that use anonymous systems usually follow up with named, developmental follow-ups.

5.3 Cultural-Level: Psychological Safety and Feedback Orientation

When the culture of the organization punishes critical feedback or reinforces status hierarchies, structural and individual interventions don't work as well. Two cultural ideas are very important.

5.3.1 Psychological Safety

Psychological safety [32] (the conviction that one will not face punishment or humiliation for voicing opinions) functions reciprocally in feedback: psychologically safe environments promote raters to deliver honest, specific feedback (mitigating motivational bias) and foster recipients to embrace it without defensiveness (diminishing the rejection of developmental

feedback). Edmondson's empirical research indicates that team psychological safety serves as a mediator in the relationship between structural interventions and the quality of feedback.

5.3.2 Feedback Orientation

Feedback orientation is how open people are to feedback, including how much they think it is useful, how responsible they feel for using it, and how little it costs them socially. Organisations can foster a feedback-oriented culture by having senior leaders who actively seek and respond to feedback serve as role models, and by providing training that frames feedback as a developmental tool rather than a means of evaluation. Feedback-oriented climates cut down on defensive reactions to bad feedback by 40% and boost performance improvement after that.

5.4 Summary of Intervention Effectiveness

Some interventions consistently lessen certain biases in certain situations. Organisational field studies provide the most compelling evidence for calibration committees and structured rating formats. Perspective-taking training demonstrates modest yet significant effects in laboratory environments, accompanied by scarce long-term field data. Psychological safety interventions are essential facilitators yet inadequate in isolation. Nonetheless, three significant qualifications must be articulated clearly.

360-degree feedback needs help to be put into place. Meta-analyses validate that multi-source feedback exhibits a stronger correlation with objective performance compared to single-source ratings. However, field studies indicate that 360-degree systems frequently do not enhance performance without organised follow-up measures such as goal setting, coaching, and action planning. In addition, poorly executed 360 feedback can exacerbate bias instead of mitigating it, particularly when raters conspire or when feedback is employed punitively. The earlier support for multi-source feedback in the manuscript should be taken to mean that it depends on support from the organization.

The effects of implicit bias training diminish over time and may not translate into behavioural changes. Counter-stereotype training can quickly lower implicit race bias, but implicit bias interventions have very small effects on actual behaviour and that these effects wear off within weeks. Changes in implicit measures are possible, but those changes do not reliably translate into changes in explicit bias or behaviour. Consequently, this article does not endorse standalone implicit bias training as a debiasing approach. Instead, this kind of training should be seen as a small part of structural changes, like calibration committees or behaviourally anchored rating scales [33].

Literature has a problem with publication bias (positive results are more likely to be published) and a lack of comparative effectiveness trials (which combination of interventions works best in which situation?). The field urgently requires registered reports and independent replication.

6. Critical Gaps and Future Research Directions

Even though there has been a lot of progress, the science of reducing feedback bias still has some big holes that future research needs to fill.

6.1 The Feedback Recipient's Role

Most interventions focus on the rater (the source of bias), but they don't pay much attention to the recipient's agency. Recipients can enhance feedback quality by soliciting specific behavioural information, posing clarifying enquiries, and regulating their defensive responses. But strategies that the recipient starts are not evenly spread out. Employees who have more social power or know more about feedback norms can get better feedback, which can make equity gaps bigger without meaning to.

Employees actively pursue feedback to mitigate uncertainty; however, the frequency and approach to feedback-seeking are contingent upon perceived costs and benefits. Subsequent research delineated five feedback-seeking strategies: inquiry (direct questioning), monitoring (observing others), indirect (implying), supervisory (formal evaluation), and third-party (colleagues). People from lower-power groups may avoid direct questions because they think it will cost them more socially (for example, they will be seen as incompetent or pushy). This idea points to a new way to get rid of bias: teach people not only to ask for feedback, but also to do so using structured, low-cost scripts. For instance, what exact thing did you see that made you give that rating? Can you give me one example of a behaviour that shows what you mean by 'needs more proactivity'?

These scripts convert vague, personality-centric feedback into behavioural, actionable data. Initial experimental findings indicate that recipient-side prompts enhance the specificity of subsequent feedback from supervisors. Nonetheless, no field study has investigated whether these effects vary by demographic group or endure over time.

6.2 The Dynamics of Repeated Feedback

Almost all studies look at just one feedback episode. Feedback is a process that happens repeatedly. Previous feedback affects trust, how fair it seems, and how likely someone is to ask for feedback in the future. Longitudinal designs, such as experience sampling across multiple feedback cycles, would determine if initial bias reduction is sustained or undermined by subsequent interactions, and whether recipients acclimatise to biased systems.

6.3 Technology and Algorithmic Feedback

Automated feedback systems, such as natural language processing of sales calls or software commits, promise unbiased evaluation; however, preliminary evidence indicates that algorithmic bias mirrors historical human biases embedded in training data [34]. Computer science and organisational psychology need to work together on algorithmic debiasing, which is the process of checking and changing automated feedback to make it fair. The addition of algorithmic feedback also changes how people give and get feedback from each other in ways that are not yet known. Does automated feedback lower the quality of human feedback by taking its place? Or does it make room in your brain for developmental conversations?

6.4 Under-Explored Moderators and Boundary Conditions

The literature seldom delineates the circumstances under which interventions fail. For instance: (a) Rater motivation -- Cognitive debiasing might work for raters who are motivated, but not

for those who are not.

(b) Level of performance -- Bias may work differently for high and low performers (for example, high performers are hurt more by unclear negative feedback).

(c) Task interdependence -- Attributional biases may be more pronounced in highly interdependent teams due to ambiguous outcomes.

Subsequent research ought to methodically evaluate these moderators through factorial field experiments.

6.5 Field Experiments and Pre-Registration

The best way to figure out what causes something is to do a randomised controlled trial (RCT) that is part of real feedback cycles in an organization. There aren't many of them because of problems with logistics and a lack of interest from organisations. One recent exception is randomly assigned supervisors to structured rating training or a control group in a large retail chain, resulting in a 24% reduction in racial rating disparities maintained over 12 months. We need more studies like this right away, and they need to be pre-registered to cut down on publication bias. Funding organisations, such as the National Science Foundation and I/O psychology foundations, should give these designs top priority.

6.6 Cross-Cultural Limitations and Future Directions

The evidence examined in this article predominantly originates from Western, industrialised, low-power-distance contexts, chiefly the United States and Western Europe. Cross-cultural studies on performance feedback have delineated a minimum of three dimensions that potentially influence bias dynamics:

(a) Power distance [35] -- In cultures characterised by high power distance (e.g., Hong Kong, Malaysia, Mexico), subordinates seldom initiate feedback or challenge the judgements of their supervisors. This might stop both biased and accurate negative feedback, which could lead to a different bias profile. For example, ingroup favouritism based on alumni or family networks might be more common than the demographic biases that Western literature talks about.

(b) Face and harmony norms -- In East Asian cultures, giving direct critical feedback goes against face-saving norms [36]. Feedback is frequently conveyed indirectly or via intermediaries, potentially diminishing the prevalence of biased, personality-centric criticism while also decreasing the specificity of feedback.

(c) Attributional style -- Cross-cultural meta-analyses indicate that collectivist cultures exhibit a higher propensity for situational attributions, thereby demonstrating a reduced fundamental attribution error. This may mitigate specific attributional biases in feedback; however, it could also result in excessive leniency (justifying subpar performance).

It is imperative to conduct replication studies of the bias-reduction interventions outlined in Section 4 within non-Western contexts. It should not be assumed that existing single-country studies can be generalised. The author's organization, the Hong Kong Psychological Society, is in a good position to lead these kinds of efforts.

7. Practical Recommendations for Organisations

For practitioners, the evidence substantiates the ensuing evidence-based recommendations:

- (a) Use behaviourally anchored rating scales (BARS) or forced-choice formats [37] instead of rating scales that are not clear. Test the scale items on a small group of people to see how they work with different types of people.
- (b) Set up calibration committees with members from different backgrounds, formal presentations of evidence, and anonymous ratings before the meeting.
- (c) Give raters short, regular training sessions that focus on structured frameworks (like Situation-Behaviour-Impact) and taking other people's points of view, not just unconscious bias (which does not transfer well).
- (d) To create a psychologically safe environment, have senior leaders ask for critical feedback and respond with thanks instead of defending themselves.
- (e) Do not connect feedback to important decisions that only happen once (like a promotion). Give feedback all the time but keep developmental and evaluative conversations separate.
- (f) Use natural language processing to find demographic patterns in feedback content, not just numeric ratings, to check feedback systems on a regular basis.
- (g) Pay attention to the context of different cultures. In cultures with a high-power distance, anonymous upward feedback systems and externally facilitated calibration committees may work better than methods that rely on subordinates asking for feedback. Test interventions on a small scale in your area before expanding.

These suggestions need to be followed exactly; if they are not, people may think that the interventions are unfair.

8. Conclusion

Bias in organisational feedback is not a minor flaw but a fundamental characteristic of human cognition and social dynamics functioning within organisational constraints. Organisational psychology offers theoretical frameworks for diagnosing biases, empirical methodologies for quantifying them, and intervention strategies for mitigating them; however, considerable deficiencies persist, especially in long-term field studies and the integration with artificial intelligence.

The main point of this article is that to reduce bias, we need to work on three levels at the same time: redesigning how people make decisions, changing how feedback is given, and changing the rules of the organization. One intervention is not enough. The objective is not the eradication of bias (an unattainable aim considering cognitive and social realities) but rather the mitigation of bias to a level where feedback fulfils its developmental function more equitably and efficiently.

As companies spend increasingly on changing how they manage performance, they need to avoid easy fixes (like one-day unconscious bias training) and instead commit to redesigning

the whole system. The evidence is clear: if we use organisational psychology carefully, we can make feedback systems that are less biased and more helpful. Not doing anything costs more than just being inefficient; it also leads to the systematic underdevelopment of talent and the continuation of inequality.

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