Performance appraisal
decision in Malaysian
public service

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Abstract This article explores raters' understanding on the decision-making process in the public service performance appraisal system (PAS) by looking at the cognitive processing models (CPM) steps involved. Presents the results of semi-structured cognitive mapping interviews undertaken with novice raters in the Malaysia public service (MPS) context. Interviews were conducted using cognitive mapping protocol. The resultant causal cognitive maps explored findings from CPM applied in appraisal decision making. Explains the performance appraisal process and theoretical framework for the CPM. From the research findings, it is clear that raters recognised the CPM steps in their performance appraisal practice. The study also identifies individual differences in novice raters’ CPM in terms of concepts and complexity. The findings are used to validate the CPM concepts suggested in related literature. Finally, the study discusses the implications of CPM in a broader context of performance appraisal decision-making process.