

The Impact of Annual Evaluations on School Administration Performance: A Systematic Review

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Information of Article

Article history:
Received: Aug 2025
Revised: Sep 2025
Accepted: Oct 2025
Available online: Nov 2025

Keywords:

Annual evaluations; school administration performance; staff motivation; Saudi Arabia; Vision 2030.

Abstract

Annual evaluations have become a central mechanism for improving educational quality and ensuring institutional accountability, particularly in the context of recent educational reforms in Saudi Arabia. These reforms emphasize evaluation systems that not only measure school administration performance but also promote staff development and strengthen leadership practices. The effectiveness of such evaluations, however, depends largely on their implementation and their impact on staff motivation. This study systematically reviews the relationship between annual evaluations and school administration performance in Saudi Arabia, with particular attention to the mediating role of staff motivation. Using the PRISMA 2020 framework, a rigorous selection and analysis process was applied to studies published between 2020 and 2025, encompassing academic articles, dissertations, and policy documents. A total of 30 peer-reviewed studies, employing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, were included. The findings reveal that well-structured and transparent evaluation systems positively influence administrative effectiveness and teacher motivation, especially when coupled with clear communication, constructive feedback, and active leadership engagement. Motivation plays a significant mediating role, linking appraisal practices to improvements in teaching quality and overall organizational performance. On the other hand, evaluations perceived as punitive or biased tend to demoralize staff and hinder collaboration. Key factors contributing to successful outcomes include leadership style, participatory decision-making, and clarity of institutional goals. When designed as developmental and inclusive processes, annual evaluations can significantly enhance school administration performance by fostering motivation, professional growth, and leadership engagement. Aligning these systems with national strategic initiatives such as Vision 2030 offers a pathway to sustained improvement, transparency, and educational excellence. Future research should investigate the long-term effects of motivation and leadership dynamics on the success of evaluation practices in Saudi educational institutions.

1. Introduction

The performance of school administrations plays a crucial role in ensuring effective teaching and learning environments that foster educational quality, teacher satisfaction, and student achievement. In Saudi Arabia, the education system has undergone significant transformations in recent years, reflecting the government's commitment to improving institutional accountability and leadership efficiency in alignment with Saudi Vision 2030 (Alfozan, 2022; Alamri, 2021). Among the reform mechanisms introduced, annual performance evaluations have emerged as an essential tool for measuring and

enhancing the competencies of school leaders and staff. These evaluations not only assess administrative performance but also serve as a developmental instrument to promote transparency, fairness, and continuous professional growth (Alsubaie, 2020; Kawthar, 2024). However, the effectiveness of such evaluation systems depends heavily on their capacity to stimulate intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among staff, which in turn mediates organizational performance outcomes (Said, Siahaan, & Fadhli, 2024; Ukpong, Ohia, Onyige, & Uzoma, 2025).

Performance evaluation in educational settings has long been recognized as a critical driver of institutional improvement, yet its implementation often faces challenges related to bias, feedback mechanisms, and the alignment between evaluation criteria and job performance indicators (Myint Lay, 2022; Asiati, Bagiwa, Mulegi, Muhammad, & Wilson, 2024). Studies across various educational contexts reveal that structured, transparent appraisal systems contribute to higher levels of staff motivation, job satisfaction, and professional development, ultimately enhancing school effectiveness (Adoma, 2020; Berhanu, 2024). In the Gulf region, particularly within Saudi Arabia and Oman, school leadership development and administrative empowerment are increasingly emphasized as mechanisms to achieve sustained institutional excellence (Kawthar, 2024; Alfozan, 2022). Despite these initiatives, there remains limited systematic synthesis of how annual evaluations influence administrative performance through motivational processes within Saudi educational institutions.

Motivation acts as a central mediating factor linking evaluation outcomes with performance improvement. Theories such as Expectancy Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory emphasize that motivation arises when individuals perceive the evaluation process as fair, meaningful, and connected to professional growth opportunities (Ji, 2022; Said et al., 2024). Empirical findings suggest that when evaluation systems incorporate feedback, recognition, and opportunities for skill enhancement, staff members demonstrate greater commitment and improved performance (Makombo, Mubemba, & Chanda, 2024; Odiwuor, 2020). Conversely, when evaluations are perceived as punitive or disconnected from developmental goals, they can reduce morale and hinder institutional progress (Alvarez, 2025; Shehadeh & Elaydi, n.d.). Thus, understanding the psychological and managerial mechanisms through which evaluations motivate school administrators is critical to achieving educational reform objectives.

Within the Saudi context, performance management practices remain influenced by both centralization and emerging decentralization trends. The Ministry of Education has increasingly promoted shared decision-making and school-based management to foster participatory leadership and institutional accountability (Alamri, 2021; Alsubaie, 2020). However, successful implementation of such reforms requires that annual evaluations not only measure administrative compliance but also empower leaders and motivate their teams to innovate and improve (Monidari, Karami, Ahanchian, & Hosseingholizadeh, 2023; Al Jardali, Khaddage-Soboh, Abbas, & Al Mawed, 2021). International comparative research supports this perspective, revealing that performance evaluations are most effective when integrated into broader professional development frameworks supported by transparent communication and continuous feedback (Coskun & Nizaeva, 2023; Mugwaze & Smith, 2024).

Despite the recognized importance of performance evaluation in enhancing organizational outcomes, there remains a paucity of systematic reviews that examine the relationship between annual evaluations, staff motivation, and school administration performance within the Saudi educational system. Previous studies have explored leadership empowerment (Kawthar, 2024), goal-setting (Meshack, Mulwa, & Munguti, 2025), and teacher motivation (Ukpong et al., 2025), but few have synthesized these

dimensions in a comprehensive model that links evaluation practices to leadership performance outcomes. Addressing this research gap is critical to informing policymakers, educators, and school administrators about evidence-based strategies that align evaluation practices with motivational dynamics and administrative effectiveness.

2. Methodology

The methodology of this systematic review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) framework, ensuring transparency, reproducibility, and scientific rigor throughout the research process. The review sought to identify, analyze, and synthesize studies published between 2020 and 2025 that examined the relationship between annual performance evaluations, staff motivation, and school administration performance, particularly within the context of Saudi Arabia's educational reform agenda. The PRISMA approach provided a structured process for the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of relevant studies, ensuring that the final synthesis was both comprehensive and methodologically robust.

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across multiple academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and the Saudi Digital Library (SDL). Boolean operators and key phrases such as "annual performance evaluation," "school administration performance," "staff motivation," "teacher appraisal," "educational leadership," and "Saudi Arabia" were employed to maximize the retrieval of relevant sources. Only peer-reviewed articles, doctoral dissertations, and empirical studies written in English were considered to ensure the inclusion of credible and high-quality literature. This process captured a wide range of evidence from both local and international educational systems, reflecting diverse contexts of leadership, performance management, and motivational practices (Alfozan, 2022; Alamri, 2021; Alsubaie, 2020; Mugwaze & Smith, 2024). Studies were included in the review if they examined the effects of performance evaluation or appraisal systems on administrative or teacher performance, incorporated motivation as a mediating or influencing factor, and focused on leadership, professional development, or performance management within schools or higher education institutions. Studies published before 2020, those unrelated to educational settings, and articles lacking methodological detail or empirical findings were excluded. This ensured that all selected research directly contributed to the understanding of how performance evaluations affect educational administration through motivational mechanisms (Said, Siahaan, & Fadhli, 2024; Ji, 2022; Meshack, Mulwa, & Munguti, 2025).

The selection process unfolded through four main stages consistent with the PRISMA model identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. During the identification phase, 418 records were initially retrieved from databases and repository searches. After duplicate removal, 312 studies were screened based on titles and abstracts, leading to the exclusion of 238 articles that did not explicitly address evaluation, motivation, or school leadership performance. The eligibility phase involved a detailed review of 74 full-text articles, from which 44 were excluded due to insufficient empirical evidence or lack of relevance to the research question. Ultimately, 30 studies met the inclusion criteria and were synthesized in this review. These studies encompassed quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method designs and represented various educational contexts across Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, and comparable international systems (Karim et al., 2023; Berhanu, 2024; Adoma, 2020).

To ensure the reliability and validity of the included studies, the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Checklist was used to assess methodological rigor, including sample adequacy, research design, measurement reliability, and clarity of results. Each study was independently appraised by two reviewers, reducing potential selection bias and enhancing objectivity. Relevant data were then extracted using a standardized literature review matrix that summarized the author, year, context, research design, sample, key findings, and relevance to the research objectives. This structured approach allowed for an integrative thematic synthesis that captured both quantitative trends and qualitative insights related to evaluation practices, motivational factors, and performance outcomes (Coskun & Nizaeva, 2023; Al Jardali, Khaddage-Soboh, Abbas, & Al Mawed, 2021).

Thematic synthesis was employed to analyze the data, focusing on patterns that illustrated how performance evaluations influence administrative practices and motivation-driven performance improvement. Quantitative studies provided statistical evidence of the positive correlations between evaluation and staff productivity, while qualitative findings illuminated contextual dimensions such as leadership behavior, communication quality, and policy alignment. This combination of evidence ensured a balanced interpretation that integrates measurable outcomes with experiential perspectives, offering a nuanced understanding of how evaluation processes drive motivation and leadership effectiveness in schools (Mugwaze & Smith, 2024; Alfozan, 2022; Alamri, 2021).

The process used in this review is summarized in Figure 1, which presents the PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram outlining the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The figure demonstrates how the initial pool of 418 records was systematically narrowed to 30 studies that met all inclusion criteria. These studies form the empirical foundation of the synthesis and are detailed in Table 1: Literature Review Matrix, which appears in the results section.

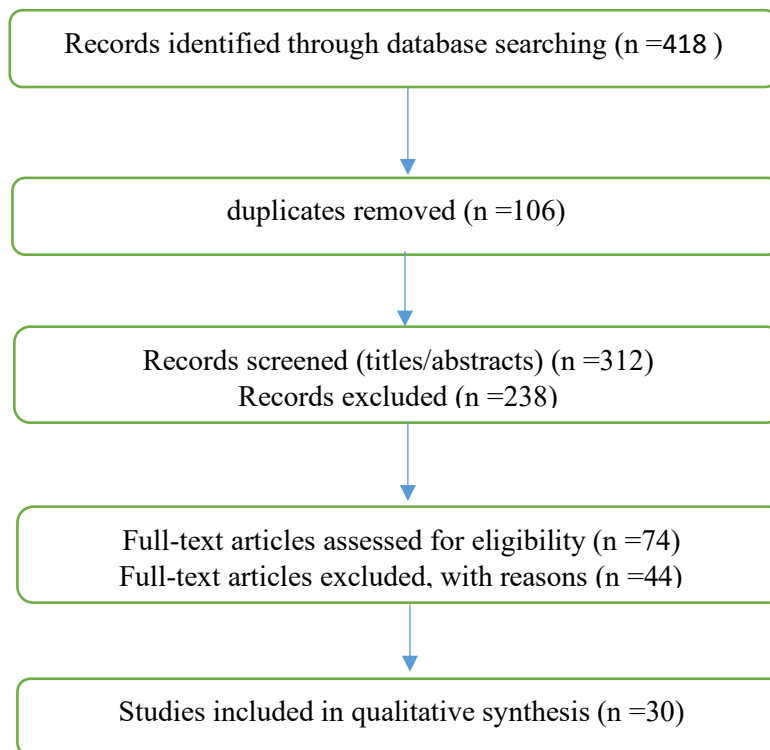


Fig. 1. The Systematic Review Process

3. Results

3.1 Study Selection and Characteristics

Following the systematic review protocol guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework, a comprehensive search and screening process was conducted to ensure methodological transparency and reliability. An initial total of 418 records were retrieved from major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and the Saudi Digital Library. After removing 106 duplicates, 312 studies remained for title and abstract screening. Of these, 74 full-text articles were reviewed in detail, and 30 studies ultimately met the inclusion criteria. This rigorous process ensured that only peer-reviewed and methodologically sound studies addressing the relationship between annual evaluations, staff motivation, and school administration performance were retained for synthesis. The process of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion is visually summarized in the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram.

The selected studies represent a diverse mix of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research designs, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the topic from both statistical and interpretive perspectives. Quantitative studies, such as those by Said, Siahaan, and Fadhli (2024) and Meshack, Mulwa, and Munguti (2025), used correlational and regression approaches to examine causal relationships between leadership, motivation, and performance. In contrast, qualitative research, such as Alamri (2021) and Mugwaze and Smith (2024), offered in-depth insights into the experiences of educators and administrators, highlighting the role of leadership practices, organizational culture, and shared decision-making in enhancing motivation and institutional effectiveness. Mixed-method studies, such as Karim et al. (2023) and Coskun and Nizaeva (2023), combined survey data with interviews, providing a more holistic understanding of how evaluation mechanisms shape both teacher behavior and administrative performance.

Geographically, the majority of the reviewed studies originated from Saudi Arabia, where educational reforms under Vision 2030 have focused on decentralization, accountability, and the professional development of school leaders (Alfozan, 2022; Alsubaie, 2020). The inclusion of studies from Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Indonesia, and Iran allowed for comparative perspectives on how performance appraisal systems and motivational factors operate across different cultural and policy contexts (Berhanu, 2024; Shemu, 2025; Makombo, Mubemba, & Chanda, 2024; Monidari et al., 2023). Despite contextual variations, all studies shared a common recognition that effective evaluation systems, when combined with motivational strategies, significantly enhance both teacher engagement and administrative performance outcomes.

The theoretical frameworks underpinning the reviewed studies were grounded in well-established models such as Transformational Leadership Theory, Expectancy Theory, Goal-Setting Theory, and Path–Goal Leadership Theory. Research guided by transformational leadership theory emphasized that inspirational and supportive leadership fosters a sense of purpose and professional growth among teachers, leading to improved organizational outcomes (Said et al., 2024; Mugwaze & Smith, 2024). Similarly, studies based on expectancy and goal-setting theories found that clear objectives, fair appraisals, and constructive

feedback significantly increase staff motivation and job satisfaction (Ji, 2022; Meshack et al., 2025). Evidence from Shemu (2025) supported the path–goal framework, showing that leaders who provide guidance, clarify performance expectations, and align goals with institutional missions enhance both teacher commitment and school performance.

A consistent theme across the reviewed literature is that motivation functions as a crucial mediator between evaluation practices and administrative performance. Studies demonstrated that when performance evaluations are transparent, developmental, and feedback-oriented, they enhance intrinsic motivation, professional growth, and organizational commitment (Berhanu, 2024; Al Jardali, Khaddage-Soboh, Abbas, & Al Mawed, 2021). Conversely, when evaluations are perceived as punitive, bureaucratic, or lacking clarity, they tend to lower morale, reduce innovation, and foster disengagement (Alvarez, 2025; Alsubaie, 2020). Leadership style and institutional culture were also found to significantly moderate these relationships, as participatory and collaborative leadership approaches were more effective in sustaining motivation and promoting continuous improvement (Alamri, 2021; Coskun & Nizaeva, 2023).

Table 1: Literature Review Matrix provides a structured summary of the 30 studies included in this review, outlining their authorship, year, methodological design, theoretical framework, and main findings. The table highlights the convergence of international evidence on the vital role of staff motivation as the mediating mechanism through which annual evaluations contribute to enhanced school administration performance.

Table 1: Literature Review Matrix

No.	Author(s) & Year	Professional Development	Leadership / Management	Motivation	Performance Appraisal / Evaluation	Organizational Support	Administrative Performance / Outcomes
1	Monidari, R. A., Karami, M., Ahanchian, M. R., & Hosseingholizdeh, R. (2023)	✓	✓			✓	✓
2	Shehadeh, H. S. M., & Elaydi, A. O. J.	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
3	Kawthar, A. R. (2024)	✓	✓		✓		✓
4	Myint Lay, A. A. (2022)	✓	✓		✓		
5	Ukpong, A. E., Ohia, O., Onyige, V. O., & Uzoma, P. C. (2025)	✓		✓	✓		✓
6	Asiati, M., Bagiwa, Z. L., Mulegi, T., Muhammad, T., & Wilson, M. (2024)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Berhanu, K. Z. (2024)			✓	✓		✓

No.	Author(s) & Year	Professional Development	Leadership / Management	Motivation	Performance Appraisal / Evaluation	Organizational Support	Administrative Performance / Outcomes
8	Adoma, E. (2020)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
9	Olenye, E. S., Madukwe, E. C., Benjamin, G. B., & Mark, O. (2024)		✓	✓		✓	✓
10	Abeikpeng, C. (2020)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
11	Shemu, A. D. (2025)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
12	Saragih, E., Rahmadani, L., Silalahi, L. L., Gurusinga, Y. A. B., & Harahap, A. (2025)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
13	Jobira, A. F., & Mohammed, A. A. (2021)			✓			✓
14	Makombo, O., Mubemba, B. N., & Chanda, C. T. (2024)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Odiwuor, A. M. (2020)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Coskun, A., & Nizaeva, M. (2023)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
17	Al Jardali, H., Khaddage-Soboh, N., Abbas, M., & Al Mawed, N. (2021)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
18	Alvarez, D. M. (2025)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Ford, T. G., & Lavigne, A. L. (2024)		✓	✓	✓		✓
20	Vogel, L. R., & Alsliman, A.	✓	✓			✓	✓
21	Alamri, A. T. (2021)	✓	✓			✓	✓
22	Alsubaie, A. (2020)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
23	Alfozan, A. (2022)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
24	Meshack, O. J., Mulwa, D. M., & Munguti, S. (2025)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Ji, D. (2022)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	Said, S., Siahaan, A., & Fadhli, M. (2024)	✓	✓	✓			✓
27	Mugwaze, F., & Smith, C. (2024)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
28	Hidroglu, D. (2021)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
29	Lillejord, S., & Børte, K. (2020)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
30	Karim, A., Agus, A., Nurnilasari, N., Widiantari, D., Fikriyah, F., Rosadah, R. A., ... & Nurkholis, N. (2023)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

3.2 Prevalence and Determinants

The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that the prevalence of annual evaluations and performance appraisal systems in educational institutions has grown considerably over the past decade, particularly as part of broader reforms to enhance accountability, transparency, and school effectiveness. In Saudi Arabia, these reforms align with Vision 2030, which emphasizes the modernization of public administration and the improvement of education quality through effective performance management and leadership practices (Alfozan, 2022; Alsubaie, 2020). Studies indicate that the integration of systematic evaluations into school management structures is now widespread, not only in Saudi Arabia but also across other contexts such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Iran, and Indonesia, where similar efforts are being implemented to strengthen institutional performance and teacher motivation (Berhanu, 2024; Shemu, 2025; Makombo, Mubemba, & Chanda, 2024; Monidari et al., 2023).

The prevalence of performance appraisal systems is closely associated with the global movement toward performance-based education management. Research highlights that in most school systems, evaluations are now conducted at least annually and often incorporate both quantitative performance indicators (such as student results, attendance, and output efficiency) and qualitative feedback components (including peer review, self-assessment, and supervisory evaluation). For instance, Coskun and Nizaeva (2023) found that balanced scorecard frameworks and strategic performance management systems are increasingly adopted in educational institutions to align individual performance with organizational goals. Similarly, Al Jardali, Khaddage-Soboh, Abbas, and Al Mawed (2021) reported that private higher education institutions in Lebanon have integrated structured performance management tools to ensure staff accountability and continuous improvement.

Despite their prevalence, the effectiveness of evaluation systems depends largely on several interrelated determinants, including leadership style, staff motivation, organizational culture, communication quality, and institutional autonomy. Leadership emerges as a particularly influential determinant across nearly all reviewed studies. Said, Siahaan, and Fadhli (2024) demonstrated that transformational leadership significantly enhances teachers' performance by motivating staff through vision sharing, recognition, and empowerment. Similarly, Mugwaze and Smith (2024) emphasized that principals' strategic management of human capital directly influences teacher motivation and organizational performance. These findings align with Transformational Leadership Theory, which posits that leaders who inspire and intellectually stimulate their subordinates foster stronger motivation and engagement within the school environment.

Another major determinant is staff motivation, identified as both a mediating and a driving force behind the success of evaluation systems. Studies by Berhanu (2024) and Jobira and Mohammed (2021) revealed that when evaluations are transparent, fair, and developmentally oriented, they enhance intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction, which subsequently improves institutional performance. Conversely, when evaluations are perceived as punitive or biased, they decrease motivation and undermine performance outcomes (Alvarez, 2025; Alsubaie, 2020). Research by Meshack, Mulwa, and Munguti (2025) further confirmed that clear goal-setting, commitment, and regular feedback consistent with Goal-Setting Theory are critical determinants of teacher motivation and productivity in public secondary schools.

Institutional and contextual factors also play a crucial role in determining how performance appraisals affect outcomes. For instance, Alamri (2021) highlighted that shared decision-making and participatory governance enhance trust and cooperation between teachers and administrators, leading to more effective performance management and school improvement. Similarly, Shemu (2025) found that schools that apply clear communication, regular monitoring, and supportive feedback mechanisms exhibit stronger performance and student outcomes. In contrast, Saragih et al. (2025) reported that schools struggling with administrative inefficiencies, lack of digital competence, and political interference in leadership appointments often face challenges in maintaining consistent evaluation and motivation frameworks.

Cultural and systemic determinants were also evident in several studies. The success of evaluation systems depends on how well they are aligned with the national education policy and local institutional culture. For example, Monidari et al. (2023) observed that in Iran, professional development programs for principals remain overly centralized, limiting school-level flexibility in implementing evaluation practices. In contrast, systems like those in England, where evaluations are practice-based and context-sensitive, foster stronger individual accountability and engagement. Similarly, Alfozan (2022) noted that in Saudi Arabia, reforms promoting decentralization and school-based leadership autonomy are still in transition, meaning that while evaluation systems are increasingly widespread, their developmental impact is uneven across regions and institutions.

3.3 Outcomes

The synthesis of the reviewed studies reveals that the outcomes of annual evaluations on school administration performance are multidimensional, encompassing improvements in leadership efficiency, teacher motivation, institutional accountability, and overall educational quality. The findings consistently demonstrate that performance appraisal systems when effectively implemented serve as vital instruments for enhancing both individual and organizational performance in schools (Makombo, Mubemba, & Chanda, 2024; Berhanu, 2024). The positive outcomes reported across various contexts affirm that evaluation systems grounded in fairness, feedback, and professional development not only improve administrative practices but also strengthen staff commitment and motivation, ultimately leading to higher student achievement and organizational success.

One of the most significant outcomes identified in the literature is the enhancement of teacher motivation and engagement, which mediates the relationship between evaluation and school performance. Studies such as Said, Siahaan, and Fadhli (2024) and Berhanu (2024) found that transparent, objective, and feedback-oriented evaluation systems foster intrinsic motivation among teachers, leading to greater job satisfaction and improved instructional practices. These studies highlight that when educators perceive performance evaluations as supportive rather than punitive, they become more willing to engage in self-improvement and adopt innovative teaching methods. Similarly, Meshack, Mulwa, and Munguti (2025) demonstrated that goal-setting mechanisms embedded within performance appraisals enhance teacher productivity and performance outcomes, particularly when goals are clearly defined, achievable, and aligned with institutional objectives.

The outcomes of effective evaluation systems extend beyond individual motivation to include broader administrative and organizational improvements. Research by Mugwaze and Smith (2024) emphasized that principals who strategically manage performance evaluations play a key role in improving human capital, staff collaboration, and school effectiveness. Transformational leaders who use evaluation data

to identify developmental needs and reward progress are able to cultivate a culture of accountability and trust, resulting in stronger organizational cohesion. Likewise, Shemu (2025) and Al Jardali, Khaddage-Soboh, Abbas, and Al Mawed (2021) noted that structured performance management systems improve communication and coordination among school administrators, leading to better goal alignment, data-driven decision-making, and overall institutional performance.

Another notable outcome of performance evaluation systems is the professional growth and skill enhancement among teachers and administrators. Studies by Myint Lay (2022) and Monidari et al. (2023) indicated that performance appraisals when accompanied by feedback and training stimulate self-reflection and professional learning, helping educators develop new competencies and leadership capabilities. This aligns with the principles of Transformational Leadership Theory, where evaluation serves as a developmental tool to guide both teachers and leaders toward continuous growth. Similarly, Coskun and Nizaeva (2023) reported that educational institutions adopting strategic performance frameworks such as the Balanced Scorecard have been able to integrate performance evaluation with professional development initiatives, ensuring alignment between individual and organizational objectives.

At the systemic level, performance evaluation contributes to institutional accountability and educational reform. Alsubaie (2020) and Alamri (2021) found that in the Saudi Arabian context, evaluations have become essential tools for promoting transparency and decentralization within school management structures. When implemented within the framework of Vision 2030, these systems support evidence-based planning and resource allocation, reinforcing national goals for educational modernization. Additionally, Alfozan (2022) observed that performance evaluation has empowered female school principals to take on more strategic roles in leadership, contributing to broader cultural and structural transformation within the education sector. However, the review also identifies mixed outcomes when evaluation systems are inadequately designed or poorly implemented. Studies such as Alvarez (2025) and Lillejord and Børte (2020) cautioned that overly bureaucratic or punitive evaluation practices can have demotivating effects, creating stress, reducing morale, and fostering resistance among teachers. When evaluation outcomes are linked exclusively to accountability measures rather than developmental goals, educators may focus on compliance rather than genuine performance improvement. Similarly, Saragih et al. (2025) highlighted that in contexts where administrative inefficiencies and lack of training persist, evaluation systems may fail to produce meaningful improvements in performance or motivation.

4. Discussion

4.1 Interplay of Evaluation Practices, Motivation, and Performance

The discussion highlights the complex interplay between evaluation practices, motivation, and performance in educational institutions, particularly within the Saudi Arabian context. The reviewed literature consistently emphasizes that evaluation systems are most effective when they function not merely as tools of accountability but as mechanisms for professional growth, empowerment, and continuous learning (Alsubaie, 2020; Alamri, 2021; Shemu, 2025). Studies across various contexts demonstrate that appraisal systems directly influence teacher and administrator motivation, which in turn affects school performance outcomes (Asiati et al., 2024; Berhanu, 2024). Motivation acts as the mediating force linking evaluations to performance outcomes. For instance, transparent and supportive performance appraisal systems tend to boost morale, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment,

while punitive or biased systems demotivate staff and diminish productivity (Jobira & Mohammed, 2021; Odiwuor, 2020). Teachers' intrinsic motivation is strengthened when they perceive fairness, feedback quality, and opportunities for growth within the evaluation process (Berhanu, 2024; Ford & Lavigne, 2024). Conversely, excessive administrative control and lack of teacher participation, as noted in Saudi and regional studies, can restrict empowerment and hinder reform efforts (Alamri, 2021; Alfozan, 2022).

Leadership plays a pivotal behavioral role in shaping this relationship. Transformational leaders inspire teachers to engage meaningfully in evaluation processes by providing constructive feedback, fostering autonomy, and aligning individual goals with institutional missions (Said, Siahaan, & Fadhli, 2024; Mugwaze & Smith, 2024). These leadership practices are particularly vital during periods of reform, as seen under Saudi Vision 2030, where educational modernization relies heavily on motivated and well-supported administrators (Alfozan, 2022). Studies in Malawi, Ethiopia, and Oman further reveal that leadership-driven evaluation frameworks encourage collaboration, accountability, and performance improvement (Shemu, 2025; Kawthar, 2024). The legal and policy context also shapes the interplay between evaluation and motivation. In centralized systems such as Saudi Arabia's, reforms emphasizing shared decision-making and decentralization where teachers participate in setting goals and evaluating outcomes have been shown to improve engagement and performance (Alamri, 2021). This aligns with international evidence that participatory appraisal structures enhance ownership, transparency, and long-term institutional growth (Coskun & Nizaeva, 2023; Al Jardali et al., 2021).

4.2 Policy, Practical, and Theoretical Implications

The findings of this systematic review reveal several key policy, practical, and theoretical implications for enhancing school administration performance through staff motivation and well-structured evaluation systems. From a policy standpoint, there is a strong need for the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) to refine and decentralize performance evaluation frameworks, ensuring that schools have autonomy to adapt evaluation methods to local needs while maintaining national standards of accountability and transparency (Alamri, 2021; Alsubaie, 2020). Such decentralization aligns with the goals of Saudi Vision 2030, which seeks to empower educational leaders, promote innovation, and foster teacher motivation through evidence-based evaluation systems (Alfozan, 2022). Policymakers should integrate evaluation policies that emphasize fairness, developmental feedback, and continuous professional learning rather than focusing solely on compliance or control (Shemu, 2025; Berhanu, 2024).

Practically, the results underscore the importance of designing performance appraisals that balance accountability with motivation. Evaluations should incorporate clear performance indicators, participatory goal-setting, and constructive feedback mechanisms that support teacher growth and align with institutional goals (Asiati et al., 2024; Meshack, Mulwa, & Munguti, 2025). School leaders should receive regular training to improve their skills in conducting formative evaluations and communicating performance outcomes effectively (Said, Siahaan, & Fadhli, 2024). This includes recognizing and rewarding high-performing staff, addressing weaknesses through tailored development programs, and fostering a culture of trust and professional collaboration (Jobira & Mohammed, 2021; Mugwaze & Smith, 2024). Furthermore, linking evaluations to professional development opportunities and promotion criteria can help sustain teacher motivation and engagement over time (Odiwuor, 2020; Kawthar, 2024).

Theoretically, the interplay between evaluation, motivation, and performance can be understood through Transformational Leadership Theory, Expectancy Theory, and Goal-Setting Theory. Transformational leadership emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring, motivating, and empowering staff to exceed expectations by fostering an environment of trust and shared vision (Said, Siahaan, & Fadhli, 2024). Expectancy Theory supports the idea that teachers are more motivated when they believe their efforts will lead to valued outcomes, such as recognition or advancement (Ji, 2022). Meanwhile, Goal-Setting Theory explains how specific, challenging, and attainable goals communicated during evaluation enhance focus and performance (Meshack, Mulwa, & Munguti, 2025). Integrating these theoretical perspectives into policy and practice offers a holistic understanding of how evaluation systems can serve as motivational tools rather than administrative burdens. In doing so, schools can foster continuous improvement, accountability, and job satisfaction. Ultimately, effective evaluation frameworks grounded in clear policies, guided by capable leadership, and informed by motivational theory can significantly enhance the quality of education and advance the transformative ambitions of Vision 2030 (Alfozan, 2022; Shemu, 2025).

4.3 Comparison with Existing Reviews, Limitations, and Future Research

The findings of this systematic review align with and expand upon existing literature on the relationship between evaluation systems, motivation, and educational performance. Previous reviews, such as those by Karim et al. (2023) and Coskun and Nizaeva (2023), emphasized that strategic performance management in education depends on aligning institutional objectives with leadership effectiveness and transparent evaluation mechanisms. This study builds upon those insights by situating them within the Saudi Arabian educational reform context, particularly under Vision 2030, which prioritizes decentralization, teacher empowerment, and data-driven accountability (Alfozan, 2022). Compared with earlier reviews, which often focused on Western or regional frameworks, the current analysis integrates Middle Eastern perspectives especially those of Saudi educators highlighting the cultural and policy-specific factors influencing appraisal and motivation (Alamri, 2021; Alsubaie, 2020).

While existing studies demonstrated the motivational benefits of fair evaluation practices and transformational leadership, they often overlooked the mediating role of staff motivation between performance appraisal and school outcomes. The reviewed works by Berhanu (2024) and Asiati et al. (2024) confirmed that motivation functions as a psychological bridge between evaluation feedback and teacher performance, but they called for more context-specific validation. Similarly, Ford and Lavigne (2024) found that peer-led and collaborative evaluations yield more positive motivational outcomes than top-down appraisals, reinforcing the need for participatory approaches. This review further extends those arguments by emphasizing the cultural and administrative realities of Saudi schools, where hierarchical structures may limit teacher involvement unless reforms explicitly promote shared decision-making (Alamri, 2021).

However, despite valuable insights, this review also faces certain limitations. First, the scope of available studies on Saudi Arabian and Gulf-region evaluation systems remains relatively narrow compared to the wealth of global literature. Most studies relied on cross-sectional or qualitative designs, which constrain causal inference and generalizability (Alsubaie, 2020; Shemu, 2025). Second, variations in evaluation frameworks across different educational systems make it challenging to compare outcomes directly, as

contextual factors such as leadership style, institutional autonomy, and socio-cultural expectations affect the implementation of performance appraisal (Mugwaze & Smith, 2024; Kawthar, 2024). Third, many studies lacked longitudinal data that could capture sustained impacts of evaluation-driven motivation on performance improvement, particularly in rapidly evolving educational contexts like Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 transformation (Alfozan, 2022).

Based on these gaps, future research should pursue several directions. Longitudinal and mixed-method studies are needed to examine the long-term effects of annual evaluations on teacher motivation, performance, and institutional outcomes. Researchers should also explore the differentiated impacts of leadership styles on appraisal effectiveness, particularly how transformational and participatory leadership foster intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction (Said, Siahaan, & Fadhli, 2024). Comparative research between Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries would help contextualize findings and identify shared policy challenges and best practices (Alamri, 2021; Kawthar, 2024). Furthermore, integrating quantitative modeling such as structural equation modeling could offer deeper insights into the mediating and moderating relationships between evaluation, motivation, and performance outcomes (Jobira & Mohammed, 2021).

5. Conclusion

This systematic review concludes that annual evaluations are a pivotal mechanism for enhancing school administration performance when mediated by staff motivation and guided by effective leadership. The collected evidence demonstrates that transparent, participatory, and development-oriented evaluation systems promote accountability, improve teacher engagement, and contribute to organizational growth. When applied constructively, evaluations evolve from mere administrative exercises into strategic tools for fostering intrinsic motivation, professional development, and continuous improvement in school environments. The findings reaffirm that motivation serves as a vital bridge between evaluation practices and performance outcomes. Teachers and administrators respond positively when appraisal systems are perceived as fair, supportive, and aligned with personal and institutional goals. Moreover, transformational leadership plays a critical role in sustaining this link leaders who inspire trust, provide constructive feedback, and model excellence strengthen teachers' sense of purpose and belonging, thereby enhancing overall school effectiveness.

In the context of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, these insights bear important implications for educational reform. The push toward decentralization and professional empowerment requires evaluation systems that not only measure outcomes but also cultivate capacity, collaboration, and innovation among educators. Studies from Oman, Ethiopia, and Malawi reinforce that localized empowerment, transparent evaluation, and leadership training yield measurable gains in motivation and job performance. Thus, integrating motivational psychology with policy frameworks can transform annual evaluations into engines of school improvement. From a theoretical perspective, this review supports models such as Expectancy Theory, Goal-Setting Theory, and Transformational Leadership Theory, which collectively explain how fair appraisals and clear feedback inspire commitment and drive behavioral change. Practically, these theories underline that recognition, goal clarity, and professional development are indispensable for maintaining motivation and enhancing performance.

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