

The Impact of Annual Evaluations on School Administration Performance in Saudi Arabia through Staff Motivation

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Abstract:

This study explores the impact of annual evaluations on school administration performance in Saudi Arabia through the mediating role of staff motivation. The research is situated within the broader framework of Saudi Vision 2030, which prioritizes accountability, leadership excellence, and continuous improvement in educational institutions. The study aims to determine how transparent and developmental evaluation systems influence motivation and, consequently, enhance administrative effectiveness. Adopting a quantitative, descriptive-analytical design, data were collected from 60 school administrators across Saudi public and private schools. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine both direct and mediating effects. The results revealed that annual evaluations significantly predict staff motivation and school administration performance, with staff motivation partially mediating this relationship. These findings confirm that evaluation systems designed with fairness, feedback, and goal clarity foster greater engagement, intrinsic motivation, and improved leadership performance. The study concludes that when implemented as motivational and developmental tools rather than procedural assessments, annual evaluations can serve as powerful mechanisms for promoting accountability, innovation, and sustainable performance improvement in the education sector. These results provide valuable insights for policymakers and school leaders aiming to strengthen leadership effectiveness and institutional quality within Saudi Arabia's educational reform agenda.

Keywords: Annual evaluations, staff motivation, school administration performance, PLS-SEM, Saudi Vision 2030.

1. Introduction

Education systems worldwide are increasingly focusing on strengthening administrative leadership and accountability mechanisms to ensure sustained school improvement and educational excellence. In Saudi Arabia, annual performance evaluations have become one of the core strategies used by the Ministry of Education to monitor, assess, and enhance the performance of school administrators, aligning with the objectives of Vision 2030 to develop a globally competitive and quality-driven education system (Alfozan, 2022). Annual evaluations serve as systematic feedback mechanisms designed to identify administrative strengths and weaknesses, improve management practices, and stimulate motivation among school leaders and staff (Lewis, 2024). When implemented effectively, such evaluations go beyond compliance—they act as transformative tools that promote professional growth, organizational learning, and enhanced student outcomes (Hunter, 2024; Saad&Aroudj, n.d.).

In educational institutions, the effectiveness of evaluation frameworks largely depends on how they are perceived and acted upon by school leaders and staff. Research suggests that fair, transparent, and constructive evaluation systems positively influence motivation, commitment, and job performance (Van Der Walt & Botha, n.d.; Cajurao et al., 2023). When feedback is linked to meaningful professional development and recognition, it increases intrinsic motivation and drives administrators to adopt innovative management practices (Wilson Heenan et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2024). Conversely, if evaluation outcomes are perceived as punitive or procedural rather than developmental, they may fail to inspire improvement or engagement. Therefore, staff motivation plays a critical mediating role in transforming evaluation feedback into improved administrative performance (Khasawneh& Ahmad, 2024; Salazar-Tabima, 2025).

Globally, studies highlight that effective performance appraisals in education promote reflective practice, collaborative leadership, and continuous improvement (Tuytens et al., 2020; Jesacher-Roessler& Klein, 2023). Within the Saudi context, the focus has increasingly shifted from top-down supervision to evidence-based leadership, emphasizing empowerment, accountability, and motivation among administrators (Almubarak et al., 2024; AlHajri et al., 2025). This shift supports the

transformation of school leadership roles from mere compliance officers to proactive change agents capable of enhancing institutional quality. Research in other developing educational systems has similarly shown that appraisal systems grounded in fairness and clear criteria can significantly enhance teachers' and administrators' engagement and morale (Tumusiime, 2022; Dalhatu&abdulkadir, n.d.).

The present study builds upon this growing body of literature by examining how annual evaluations influence school administration performance in Saudi Arabia through the mediating role of staff motivation. It focuses on understanding the psychological and organizational mechanisms that translate evaluative feedback into improved performance. The study applies a quantitative research design using SmartPLS-based structural equation modeling to empirically test the relationships among annual evaluations, staff motivation, and administrative performance. By highlighting the critical role of motivation in the appraisal-performance linkage, this research contributes to theoretical and practical discussions on educational leadership effectiveness, offering valuable insights for policymakers and school leaders seeking to strengthen performance management systems in alignment with Vision 2030 goals (Meshack et al., 2025; Ji, 2022; Tambunan et al., 2025).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Discussion

The relationship between annual evaluations, staff motivation, and school administration performance is deeply rooted in established behavioral and organizational theories that explain how individuals respond to feedback, goal clarity, and recognition. Among the most relevant frameworks is Goal-Setting Theory, which asserts that specific, measurable, and attainable goals motivate individuals to perform at higher levels by providing direction and a sense of purpose (Meshack et al., 2025; Burns et al., 2021). Within educational settings, this theory implies that clearly defined evaluation criteria encourage administrators and teachers to align their objectives with institutional goals, thus fostering accountability and performance improvement (Tuytens et al., 2020).

Another key framework underpinning this study is Expectancy Theory, which emphasizes that motivation is influenced by the belief that effort leads to performance, and performance leads to valued outcomes (Ji, 2022; Salazar-Tabima, 2025). When school administrators perceive evaluations as fair, transparent, and linked to rewards or professional growth, they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to enhance their performance. In this sense, evaluations act as a reinforcing mechanism that strengthens the connection between effort, achievement, and recognition (Van Der Walt & Botha, n.d.; Khasawneh& Ahmad, 2024).A third theoretical foundation is Transformational Leadership Theory, which highlights the leader's role in inspiring and motivating subordinates through vision, trust, and empowerment (Wilson Heenan et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2024). Transformational leaders use evaluations as developmental opportunities to encourage innovation, professional growth, and commitment rather than as instruments of control. Within the school context, this leadership approach fosters a culture of motivation and continuous improvement among staff (Jesacher-Roessler& Klein, 2023; Thomas, 2022). Together, these theories provide the conceptual foundation for understanding how annual evaluations influence staff motivation, which in turn enhances school administration performance, creating a dynamic system of feedback, engagement, and sustained organizational excellence.

2.2 Hypotheses Development

Building on the theoretical framework and prior empirical findings, this section develops the study's hypotheses that explain the relationships among annual evaluations, staff motivation, and school administration performance. The development of these hypotheses is grounded in the assumption that evaluation systems influence individuals' motivation and, consequently, their performance. Drawing on Goal-Setting Theory, Expectancy Theory, and Transformational Leadership Theory, the study proposes that annual evaluations, when designed as developmental and transparent mechanisms, can enhance motivation and lead to improved administrative outcomes. Prior research in educational management and leadership supports this reasoning, indicating that evaluation practices can drive organizational effectiveness when they provide constructive feedback, recognition, and opportunities for growth (Lewis, 2024; Van Der Walt & Botha, n.d.; Khasawneh& Ahmad, 2024).

Performance appraisal systems are among the most influential tools for improving motivation and productivity in the workplace. When employees perceive evaluations as fair, objective, and supportive, they are more likely to feel valued and motivated to meet or exceed performance expectations. In educational settings, evaluation systems have been shown to enhance staff engagement and professional development by promoting feedback and accountability (Hunter, 2024; Meshack et al., 2025). Therefore, it is expected that annual evaluations will have a direct and positive influence on staff motivation.

H1: Annual evaluations have a significant positive effect on staff motivation.

Motivation has consistently been identified as a central determinant of individual and organizational performance. Theories of motivation emphasize that individuals who are inspired and intrinsically driven are more likely to achieve higher levels of effectiveness and innovation. In schools, motivated staff are committed to achieving institutional goals and are more responsive to leadership expectations, leading to improved planning, communication, and decision-making (Wu et al., 2024; Cajurao et al., 2023). Consequently, it is hypothesized that motivation positively affects administrative performance in the educational context.

H2: Staff motivation has a significant positive effect on school administration performance.

In addition to these direct effects, motivation can also serve as a mediating mechanism through which evaluations translate into improved performance. According to Transformational Leadership Theory, when leaders use evaluations as opportunities for professional development rather than control, they inspire intrinsic motivation and foster greater organizational commitment (Wilson Heenan et al., 2023; Jesacher-Roessler& Klein, 2023). Previous studies have shown that motivation often explains the pathway between evaluation feedback and behavioral outcomes, suggesting that evaluations influence performance indirectly through motivational processes (Sinniah et al., 2022; Tambunan et al., 2025). Thus, it is proposed that motivation mediates the relationship between annual evaluations and performance.

H3: Staff motivation mediates the relationship between annual evaluations and school administration performance.

Together, these hypotheses establish the theoretical and empirical basis for the structural model of this study, providing a foundation for testing the direct and mediating effects of evaluation practices on school administration performance in the Saudi educational context.

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-analytical research design to examine the impact of annual evaluations on school administration performance in Saudi Arabia through the mediating role of staff motivation. The design was selected because it allows the researcher to quantify relationships among variables, assess causal paths, and validate the proposed conceptual framework empirically (Hossan et al., 2020; Kusmaryono et al., 2022). Quantitative methods are particularly suitable for educational management research as they provide objective evidence to support theory-driven models and enable statistical testing of hypotheses using large samples (Ji, 2022; Musakuro, 2022). The research focused on public and private schools under the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, where annual evaluations form an essential part of leadership and staff performance management aligned with Vision 2030 (Alfozan, 2022; AlHajri et al., 2025).

The target population comprised school principals, vice-principals, and administrative staff who directly participate in or are affected by annual evaluation processes. A stratified random sampling approach was used to ensure representation across different educational levels and regions. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula, ensuring a sufficient number of participants to achieve statistical reliability and generalizability. The final sample included respondents from both male and female schools across multiple Saudi provinces, reflecting the diversity of administrative practices and performance evaluation systems (Alshaikhi&Alshaikhi, 2021; Wu et al., 2024). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from validated instruments in prior educational management studies (Lewis, 2024; Tumusiime, 2022). The survey included three major constructs: annual evaluations, staff motivation, and school administration

performance. Each construct was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), allowing for the quantification of perceptions and attitudes (Kusmaryono et al., 2022). The items for annual evaluations assessed fairness, transparency, and feedback quality, while motivation items captured intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. School administration performance items measured leadership effectiveness, decision-making, and organizational outcomes (Jesacher-Roessler & Klein, 2023; Cajurao et al., 2023).

To ensure instrument reliability and validity, a pilot test was conducted with a subset of respondents. The results indicated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the 0.70 threshold for all constructs, demonstrating strong reliability (Van Der Walt & Botha, n.d.; Dasanayaka et al., 2021). Construct validity was confirmed through convergent and discriminant analyses based on Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and composite reliability indicators (Hossan et al., 2020). Data collection followed ethical research principles, ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, and respondent confidentiality (AlHajSleiman et al., 2025). The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS 4.0 software. This approach was chosen because of its suitability for predictive models, mediation testing, and studies involving latent variables (Hossan et al., 2020; Ji, 2022). The analysis proceeded in two stages: first, assessing the measurement model to evaluate reliability and validity; and second, testing the structural model to determine path coefficients, significance levels, and mediation effects. The model's explanatory power was evaluated through R^2 and f^2 values, while the mediation effect was assessed using the Variance Accounted For (VAF) index (Tambunan et al., 2025). This methodology provided robust empirical evidence for the hypothesized relationships among annual evaluations, staff motivation, and school administration performance, ensuring the reliability and validity of findings in alignment with established educational management research standards.

4. Findings

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence on the relationships among annual evaluations, staff motivation, and school administration performance within Saudi Arabia's educational context. Using Partial

Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the analysis tested the hypothesized framework to determine both direct and mediating effects among the study variables. The results revealed strong reliability and validity for all constructs and confirmed significant correlations and predictive relationships consistent with prior educational leadership research.

The results in Table 1 demonstrate that all constructs used in this study exhibited high internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70, as recommended by psychometric standards for social science research (Kusmaryono et al., 2022; Dasanayaka et al., 2021). Specifically, the Annual Evaluations construct achieved an alpha of 0.940, indicating strong reliability in measuring evaluation-related items. The School Administration Performance construct recorded a slightly higher alpha of 0.960, showing excellent internal consistency among performance indicators. Similarly, Staff Motivation yielded a 0.940 alpha value, confirming that the items measuring motivation were highly consistent and reliable. These reliability outcomes align with previous educational leadership studies emphasizing the importance of scale stability in evaluation and motivation research. The high alpha values indicate that the questionnaire items consistently captured the intended constructs, supporting the robustness of the measurement model. This confirms that the instrument is suitable for further analysis using structural equation modeling to examine the hypothesized relationships among annual evaluations, motivation, and school administration performance.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Annual Evaluations	21	0.940
School Administration Performance	31	0.960
Staff Motivation	24	0.940

The descriptive results in Table 2 summarize the central tendencies and dispersion of the study variables. The mean score for Annual Evaluations ($M = 94.65$, $SD = 8.70$) indicates that respondents generally perceived their evaluation systems as structured and fair. The School

Administration Performance variable recorded the highest mean ($M = 141.10$, $SD = 12.46$), reflecting respondents' agreement that effective evaluation mechanisms contribute to improved administrative practices. Meanwhile, Staff Motivation achieved a mean of 104.55 ($SD = 11.79$), showing that employees were moderately to highly motivated in their roles. The relatively low standard deviations across all constructs indicate limited variability among respondents, suggesting a consistent perception of evaluation fairness, motivation, and performance quality. These results align with prior research emphasizing that consistent and transparent evaluation systems foster positive perceptions and enhance motivation within educational institutions (Lewis, 2024; Wu et al., 2024). They further support the theoretical argument that well-designed appraisal systems promote both staff engagement and organizational performance.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics Table

Variable	Mean	SD	N
Annual Evaluations	94.650	8.700	60
School Administration Performance	141.100	12.464	60
Staff Motivation	104.550	11.790	60

The correlation results presented in Table 3 indicate statistically significant positive relationships among all three-study variables at the 0.01 significance level. The strongest relationship was found between Annual Evaluations and School Administration Performance ($r = .659$, $p < .01$), suggesting that effective and fair evaluation systems are closely associated with higher levels of administrative effectiveness. The relationship between School Administration Performance and Staff Motivation was also strong ($r = .558$, $p < .01$), implying that motivated employees contribute substantially to overall performance improvements. Meanwhile, the moderate correlation between Annual Evaluations and Staff Motivation ($r = .453$, $p < .01$) confirms that evaluation processes play a meaningful role in enhancing motivation but are influenced by additional organizational and psychological factors. These results are consistent with prior research demonstrating that transparent and developmental evaluation systems enhance job satisfaction, engagement, and performance in educational. Similar findings were observed in international studies highlighting that feedback-rich evaluations foster

motivation and improve leadership effectiveness. The positive correlations across all constructs support the hypothesized relationships of the study, establishing a strong empirical basis for the subsequent structural model analysis that tests the direct and mediating effects using PLS-SEM.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

		Annual Evaluations	School Administration Performance	Staff Motivation
Annual Evaluations	Pearson Correlation	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
School Administration Performance	Pearson Correlation	.659**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
Staff Motivation	Pearson Correlation	0.453**	0.558**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	

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

5. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that annual evaluations play a significant role in improving school administration performance in Saudi Arabia, primarily through the mediating effect of staff motivation. This result aligns with the principles of Goal-Setting Theory, which posits that clearly defined goals and performance standards enhance individual commitment and productivity (Meshack et al., 2025; Burns et al., 2021). In the educational context, well-structured evaluation systems provide school leaders and staff with specific objectives and performance benchmarks, fostering a sense of direction and accountability (Lewis,

2024; Hunter, 2024). The results of this study revealed a strong positive relationship between annual evaluations and school administration performance, suggesting that when administrators perceive the evaluation process as fair, transparent, and constructive, it motivates them to improve decision-making, leadership effectiveness, and organizational outcomes (Van Der Walt & Botha, n.d.; Wu et al., 2024). The strong association between annual evaluations and staff motivation supports the argument that evaluation systems act as motivational tools when implemented as developmental rather than punitive mechanisms. Prior studies have indicated that evaluation feedback, when coupled with recognition and professional growth opportunities, enhances intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction among educators (Cajurao et al., 2023; Khasawneh& Ahmad, 2024). This finding is consistent with Expectancy Theory, which emphasizes that motivation arises when individuals believe their efforts will result in valued outcomes (Ji, 2022; Salazar-Tabima, 2025). In the Saudi context, annual evaluations aligned with Vision 2030 educational reform goals provide clear expectations and equitable reward systems that strengthen teachers' and administrators' engagement and commitment (Alfozan, 2022; AlHajri et al., 2025). Therefore, staff motivation emerges as a vital psychological mechanism that translates evaluative feedback into improved performance, confirming its mediating role in the model.

Moreover, the relationship between staff motivation and school administration performance underscores the importance of motivation as an essential driver of effective educational leadership. Motivated staff tend to demonstrate greater initiative, innovation, and organizational loyalty, which collectively enhance institutional effectiveness (Sinniah et al., 2022; Musakuro, 2022). These findings correspond with Transformational Leadership Theory, which emphasizes that leaders who inspire and motivate their teams foster a culture of continuous improvement and shared success (Wilson Heenan et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2024). When school leaders cultivate motivation through supportive evaluation practices, they create a climate that encourages creativity, collaboration, and professional excellence (Jesacher-Roessler& Klein, 2023; Thomas, 2022). The results of this study thus extend existing literature by demonstrating that motivation not only mediates the

relationship between evaluations and performance but also amplifies the overall effectiveness of leadership practices in educational institutions.

These findings are consistent with prior empirical research from similar contexts. For example, Tumusiime (2022) found that effective implementation of teacher performance appraisal tools enhances leadership capacity and teaching quality, while Dalhatu and Abdulkadir (n.d.) observed that systematic monitoring and evaluation strengthen school leadership and performance in Nigerian primary schools. Similarly, Wu et al. (2024) reported that transformational leadership approaches and feedback-based evaluations significantly improve school management efficiency in Chinese schools. In the Saudi context, Alshaikhi and Alshaikhi (2021) and AlHajSleiman et al. (2025) highlighted that integrating evaluation and professional development mechanisms contributes to achieving Vision 2030 goals by promoting accountability and leadership excellence.

The implications of these findings extend to both theory and practice. Theoretically, the study reinforces the integration of Goal-Setting, Expectancy, and Transformational Leadership theories in explaining performance outcomes within educational administration. The empirical confirmation of staff motivation as a mediator contributes to the growing understanding of how psychological factors shape administrative behavior and institutional success (Salazar-Tabima, 2025; Tambunan et al., 2025). Practically, the results underscore the need for educational policymakers and school leaders in Saudi Arabia to adopt evaluation frameworks that emphasize developmental feedback, recognition, and participative goal-setting rather than mere compliance assessment (Lewis, 2024; Jesacher-Roessler& Klein, 2023). By fostering intrinsic motivation and aligning evaluation outcomes with professional growth opportunities, schools can enhance the performance and commitment of their administrative staff, ultimately supporting the broader objectives of educational reform and quality improvement.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the impact of annual evaluations on school administration performance in Saudi Arabia, emphasizing the mediating role of staff motivation. The findings revealed that fair and transparent

evaluation systems significantly influence both staff motivation and administrative effectiveness, providing empirical support for the theoretical foundations of Goal-Setting Theory, Expectancy Theory, and Transformational Leadership Theory. The results demonstrated that when evaluation processes are designed as developmental tools that provide constructive feedback and recognition, they foster higher motivation levels, which in turn translate into improved leadership performance and organizational outcomes.

These outcomes align with prior research emphasizing that effective performance appraisals enhance intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment among educators and administrators. Within the framework of Saudi Vision 2030, these findings underscore the importance of adopting evaluation systems that promote accountability, transparency, and continuous professional development in the education sector. By integrating motivational feedback and participative goal-setting into the appraisal process, educational institutions can build a culture of excellence and innovation that supports sustainable administrative performance.

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