

An Investigation of the Current Teacher Performance Evaluation System at Riyadh Public Schools, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Educational evaluation is a foundation for the education system reforms.

Besides its ability to recognize and work to enhance the system's strengths, it also helps to detect flaws and inadequacies, subsequently striving to address them and preventing such flaws and inadequacies from occurring in the future. Equally, teacher performance evaluation is an essential requirement in meaningful educational performance. It is the feedback mechanism that underpins improving the performance of individuals and groups, designing educational programs and initiatives, as well as monitoring and validating the processes therein. The system of teacher performance evaluation is primarily aimed at developing teacher performance by delivering effective and meaningful feedback. In many cases, teachers feel anxious and distrustful as a result of the ineffective use of the performance evaluation system. Consequently, a substantial amount of research has been conducted in the study of teacher performance evaluation systems. The purpose of conducting this research is to primarily identify the suitability of the current performance evaluation system to develop teachers' professional growth, besides identifying teachers' needs and supporting them professionally within a Saudi Arabian education system. In addition, this study examines the importance of providing feedback.

Since the launch of the 2030 official education policy, the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education has declared that human resources are key among the most imperative factors for the success of any institution. From this standpoint, the teacher is supposed to be the first nucleus of this principle. Therefore, there must be a performance evaluation system for teachers to ensure the continuation of professional development. Currently, teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are evaluated by principals using pre-defined and long-established evaluation criteria. However, with officially sanctioned educational reforms and developments taking place in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, this system may not be compatible with teachers' needs and the educational outputs from Saudi Arabian schools. The

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current study utilizes a mixed-methods research design. A combination of quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) was used to investigate the connections between the system of evaluating the performance of teachers in particular (feedback) and its impact on teachers' practical development and professional efficiency. The first stage involved the questionnaire that was designed to investigate teachers' opinions about the current performance evaluation system and its relationship to their professional development in order to ensure their continued progress. The second stage involved interviews, which were firstly conducted with Officials and Supervisors in the Ministry of Education to help acquire a deeper and richer insight into official policies, and to clarify different issues related to the first section (questionnaires). The third stage was the principals' semi-structured interviews, which were conducted among eight principals in the Riyadh Education Department. These covered all aspects related to the current teacher performance evaluation system.

Finally, it will be shown how some significant challenges come up as a result of the current teacher performance evaluation process that applies criteria and models that do not consider the scientific, cultural and research changes taking place in this century, particularly from the teachers' and principals' perspective.

Keywords: Education, Evaluation, Feedback, teaching.