

CAN YOU TRY THIS MODEL?

INTRODUCING AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR TEACHER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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Abstract: The school principal's role as an instructional leader has sustained to revolutionize since the last four decades. The understanding of the complexity and ambiguity of the role has developed and the focus shifted from management and supervision to instructional leadership. This study, however, was undertaken to uncover perceptions of Omani principals concerning their view and practice of teacher performance evaluation and challenges that affect teacher performance evaluation in Oman. This study aims to explore the school principals' practices in carrying out the performance evaluation of teachers in selected Omani schools. Data reported in this study were gathered from three schools located in Southeast region in the Sultanate of Oman. Selection of participants is critical in qualitative research; therefore, the researcher used purposeful sampling to identify the three instructional leaders whose total experience was not less than 3 years in the same school that involved in school performance evaluation system. The sample was selected from those schools where a school level doorkeeper accepts to take place in the study. Semi-structure interview approach is used as the prime source of data, direct observations and document analysis. Interviews were recorded and transcribed literally and translated from Arabic to English. Transcripts were iteratively read and coded, then analyzed using the constant-comparative method. Codes were grouped into 8 units: (a) the conception of teacher's performance evaluation, (b) goal setting process, (c) monitoring teacher performance, (d) feedback on teacher's performance, (e) professional development, (f) Favored teachers (g) the principal's motivation (h) summative evaluation. Once unitized and coded, explanation were then entered into the database for analysis. The study, however, came up with implications for practice and theory. Recommendations were taken directly from participants and the researcher added his recommendations based on the research findings and the need to improve teacher performance evaluation in Oman school.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, performance evaluation, professional development, teacher performance evaluation

I. INTRODUCTION

The public school development movement has gained strong consideration in Oman for the past two decades. This movement has caused the construction and the sustainability of development structures for almost every area of the Oman public school educational system. Some of these areas incorporate: (a) student achievement, (b) teacher in-service training programs, (c) special program development such as Special Education, (d) school performance evaluation systems, and (e) principal leadership. Of course, these are only some of the areas which have been influenced by the development movement in the Sultanate of Oman [7]. As a result of the development movement, which has placed great stress upon almost every single factor that impacts student academic performance, researchers have become increasingly interested in the school principal's practices and instructional leadership skills which researchers have found to have both a direct and indirect positive impact upon student academic achievement [62].

Ruffin [61] in her recent study of instructional leadership found that principals perceive themselves to be the instructional leader of their school; the role has been found to be important, complex and multifaceted. In addition, Ruffin [61] found that principals perceive themselves implementing their roles as instructional leaders through provision of professional development; monitoring instruction; and building relationships.

While it is generally accepted that teachers exert great influence over the enhancement of student learning [24], [72], the role that school leaders play in shaping system capacity for successful teaching and learning is often underappreciated [28], [34], [53]. For the

most part, principals affect instruction indirectly, through practices such as resource acquisition and allocation, supporting and encouraging staff, enforcing rules for student conduct, or taking personal interest in the professional development process [10], [58]. However, principals can also affect teaching practice directly through teacher supervision and appraisal. Appraisal is a formal means for school leaders to communicate organizational goals, conceptions of teaching, standards, and values to teachers [71]. In the broad theoretical framework, principals' instructional leadership is defined as all those events which principals carry out as part of their duties including routine managerial tasks and which have a measurable effect upon student learning. One such task includes the performance appraisal of teachers [62].

Indeed, the development movement has had significant implications in performance appraisal systems for teachers. According to Ramirez [62] policy-makers, state education officials, university professors, researchers, and experts have all recognized the need and the significance of creating and utilizing comprehensive teacher appraisal systems as mechanisms for the improvement of teaching and learning.

The Ministry of Education in Oman in its Sixth Five Year Plan (2001-2005) specified several developmental aims; one of those aims was developing the assessment and evaluation system [44].

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education in 2002 offered the Public Schools' implementation of the School Performance Evaluation (SPE) as one example of a recent adoption of a comprehensive school evaluation system adapted from OFSTED, UK to improve both teaching and learning in the public educational system in Oman [45].

As a result of the development movement, which has had significant implications for all those factors that ultimately impact student achievement such as principal instructional leadership behaviors and performance appraisal systems for teachers, a need has emerged for more specific research studies into the leadership practices of principals and the integration of performance appraisal systems. Currently, research is broad and general regarding school evaluation systems. Thus, there is a need for more focused research regarding the implementation of school performance appraisal in Oman in general and performance appraisal of teachers in particular.

I. ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN THE TEACHER EVALUATION

Historically, the principal has a supervisory role in the formal teacher evaluation process [1], [17]. In the yearly formal evaluation process, the principal typically engages in one or two classroom observations per teacher, provides feedback to the teacher in the form of a conference, and completes an evaluation document for the teacher's file [17]. The principal's evaluation is not formed by solicited teacher input into the instrument's document or its outcome [1]. The principal's traditional role in teacher evaluations occasionally is referred to as inspectorial [18]. In many cases, the principal's primary role is to assess teacher quality, make judgments regarding teacher performance to legal agencies, and manage public opinion related to the perceived quality of classroom instruction. Little trust exists in this model between the teacher and principal since the principal acts in a judging/evaluative role [35]. In effect, it is a behaviorist approach where the principal acts and the teacher responds.

The principal has to play a significant role in motivating teachers in order to facilitate the effective functioning of the school as an organization. Indeed, the key role of the principal is to lead the staff and shaping an environment in which teachers can do their work best [46]. The teacher needs the full support of the management to be motivated [48]. The principal has the responsibility to practice effective instructional leadership as this contributes to high teacher morale. Furthermore, by understanding the roots of motivation, leaders can create positive motivation and elicit effective teaching from all their staff [19]. Consistent with this view, Smith (1994) points out that knowledge about various theories of motivation and their constructive application assists the principals in their management tasks and thus contributes positively to motivating personnel.

Steyn [63] argues that effective principals are able to create an ethos that generates motivated and successful teachers and stimulated and inspired learners in an effective school setting. There is thus a relationship between teacher motivation and the execution of the principal's instructional leadership responsibilities. The principal can influence teacher motivation by concentrating his or her leadership on two aspects, namely, the bureaucratic and structural aspects and the informal aspects respectively [38]. By means of the instructional leadership task, he or she can influence the organizational culture of the school by emphasizing academic aspects such as staff development programs, involving teachers in decision making, providing resources, supervision and

provision of instructional time. Leaders may also inspire motivation in teachers through their own behavior at schools. According to Barnett and McCormick [11], inspirational motivation occurs when leaders motivate and inspire teachers, who are followers, by providing meaning to and challenges in their work, for example, by giving inspirational talks, communicating their vision and acting in ways that inspire enthusiasm.

II. CHALLENGES IN PRINCIPAL'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Although throughout this chapter, several examples have been offered to demonstrate the significant and positive roles that principals play in the effective implementation and utility of the new comprehensive teacher evaluation systems, numerous problematic areas exist regarding the principal's role in the successful implementation of evaluation systems. For example, in a study conducted in California and subsequently replicated in the state of Arizona, Painter [56] found that the top two barriers perceived by principals as the most significant to effective implementation of teacher evaluation are teacher unions and the amount of time needed to complete the process. These same principals blamed union representatives more than the actual negotiated teacher contracts for their failure to effectively carry out the teacher evaluation process [56].

In addition to teacher unions and the lack of time to effectively implement teacher evaluation systems, researchers also cite the desire by school principals to avoid conflict as a significant barrier towards implementation. According to Bridges (1992), the desire by principals to avoid interpersonal conflict is caused by both personal and situational factors [56; p. 253]. Further, she states that the most significant factor that leads to ineffective implementation is the personal factor to avoid conflict and unpleasantness. She states that conflict is unavoidable due to the fact that it is a by-product of criticism that accompanies the performance appraisal of teachers [56]. Consequently, principals can indirectly cause the ineffective implementation of teacher evaluation systems due to their desire to avoid criticizing teachers through their appraisals of teachers' performance.

Other problems with effective implementation are cited in the literature. According to Painter [56], these problems mainly relate to structural aspects of effective implementation. Tucker [65], found that other barriers included lack of time and support for the building administrator, personality characteristics of the evaluator, and lack of financial support for all phases of the process.

Finally, also cited in the literature as a significant barrier towards effective implementation of teacher evaluation systems is the lack of principal preparation through staff development and training to effectively evaluate teachers through comprehensive teacher evaluation systems. Two studies cite the lack of administrator training and weak university preparation programs as two significant barriers towards effective implementation. A group of Rand researchers noted that the knowledge and skill of the evaluators is crucial to good evaluation. Yet Poston and Manatt [54] found administrator competency in evaluation to be "moderate at best" [56;p. 254].

Furthermore, Hunter [36] affirms that "principals still have not had the opportunity to learn how to either supervise (help) or evaluate a teacher: an indictment of our universities, many of whom still do an inadequate job of preparing principals for either professional responsibility." (p. 275).

In the context of education in Oman, many studies have showed the need of the school principals to cope with the current challenges and to be updated with the temporary educational trends. According to Alkharusi (2004) the performance management can enhance the role of the principal to know the key components of performance management and evaluation. Since it was granted to assist the principal of the school and teachers to increase productivity and improve performance and satisfaction Al-farei & Al-hanai (2004) have identified two main stimulus to increase the performance of employees at the school: the types of stimulation of stimulus material, moral and procedure as well as methods of motivation as a proxy of power and involvement of teachers in decision-making and others. Cotton [20] has stated that the task of conflict management is essential for the school principal in Oman to be recognized to acquire the skill of the conflict among the staff at the school and find appropriate methods to remedy them.

III. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Employee performance appraisal, whereby a superior evaluates the work performance of subordinates, is one of the most common management tool utilized in organizations in the United States [67]. The widespread use of performance appraisal can be attributed to the belief by many human resource professionals that performance appraisal is a critically needed tool for effective human resource management and performance improvement [39]. The assumption appears to be that an effectively designed, implemented, and administered performance appraisal system can provide the organization, the

superior (i.e., school principal), and the employee (i.e., teachers) with a plethora of benefits [21].

Despite its widespread use, or perhaps because of it, the practice of formal performance appraisal continues to come under considerable scrutiny and criticism. However, teacher performance appraisal is a common, often essential practice in schools. The traditional programs and practices of teacher evaluation are based on limited or competing conceptions of teaching [25], and are often characterized by inaccuracy, lack of support (Peterson, 1995) and insufficient training [42]. Traditional teacher evaluation practices tend to preserve the loose coupling between administration and instructional practices, consequently limiting the ability of principals to foster improvements in teaching and learning [60], [68], [69]. Rather than being used as tools for instructional leadership, traditional evaluation programs are often seen as mechanical and treated by both teachers and principals as an administrative burden. Teacher assessment has frequently been used to weed out the poorest performing teachers rather than to hold all teachers accountable or to improve the performance of all teachers [25] Haney, Madaus, & Kreitzer, 1987). Because of these traditional limits on scope and efficacy, teacher evaluation has had a limited impact on teacher performance and learning [59], [23].

Prior research on the implementation of this type of standards-based teacher evaluation system has examined the initial perceptions of teacher and administrator acceptance [27], [50], the nature of feedback, enabling conditions and fairness perceptions [37] and the relationship of these evaluation systems to student achievement [30]. Other findings also indicate a lack of readiness on the part of the principals to fully embrace a fully participative and developmental approach to appraisal [12].

Although, there is a lack of performance appraisal research in Oman, there are some related studies that show the need for conducting research in performance appraisal system, either in designing or implementing the system. The assessment done by the team of Omani and US investigators in 2005 on three secondary schools in Muscat showed that the Omani secondary school system needs to upgrade the management capacity of principals and administrators. In the school visited, administrators and heads expressed a strong desire for change. They asked for help to deal with many management challenges they were facing. Among these problems were a lack of proper training for the school principals, pressure from work overload, and the

shortage of administrative staff. These problems were having a direct impact on the life of the school and the quality of the principal's supervision of the teaching and learning process [23].

Al Qubtan (2006) has evaluated school principals' practices in General Education. She found that the practices related to teachers' performance appraisal were not performed well, especially the usage of appraisal instruments such as interviews and questionnaires. She attributed that to the lack of school principals' skills in implementing those instruments and the insufficient training they have received. She also found that the school principals' practices in teacher development were not satisfactory. She also attributed that to the focus of school principals on administrative tasks rather than other tasks and practices.

Al-Zamili et al. [5] in their latest study about the evaluation of the school performance development system have interviewed six school principals in three zones in Oman. The most important finding that study revealed was that although the school performance appraisal system helped them to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of teachers' performance, they still faced some difficulties in terms of implementing the system. These difficulties were: Technical difficulties, such as the lack of specialists in performance appraisal; financial difficulties and administrative difficulties.

However, research in performance appraisal suggests that little is known about leadership practices of principals in the school appraisal system [62]. In addition to that, principal voices at all school levels have not been part of the dialogues to create, implement, and use sound school performance appraisal systems as a basis for practice to improve teaching and learning [62].

Therefore, this study will raise certain questions that have not been raised in the Omani school context regarding the implementation of performance appraisal of teachers. It is hoped that the results of the present study will provide the educational authority and the practitioners in Oman with a deeper understanding of the problems associated with teachers' evaluation by school principals.

IV. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore school principals' practices in carrying out the performance appraisal of teachers in Omani Basic Education schools (Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Post Basic Education) in AL-Sharkiyah South Zone. The

focus is on instructional leadership practices that serve to develop teachers' performance and teaching and learning through teacher evaluation system in Oman.

Specifically, the study focuses on the following objectives:

- 1- To explore the school principals' views concerning their roles in implementing Teachers' performance appraisal.
- 2- To explore the school principals' practices in the performance appraisal of teachers.
- 3- To identify the teachers' views regarding how their principals are practicing the teachers' performance appraisal.
- 4- To identify the similarities and differences in practices between Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Post basic Education school principals regarding the performance appraisal system for teachers in AL-Sharkiyah South Zone schools in Oman.

V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided this study:

- 1- What are the school principals' views concerning their roles in implementing teachers' performance appraisal in AL-Sharkiyah South Zone schools in Oman?
- 2- How do the school principals practice the performance appraisal of teachers in Al-Sharkiyah South Zone schools in Oman?
- 3- What are the teachers' views regarding how their principals are practicing the teachers' performance appraisal?
- 4- What are the similarities and differences in practices between Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Post basic Education school principals regarding the performance appraisal system for teachers?

VI. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was guided by a qualitative research design. Primarily, the researcher has elected to utilize the qualitative research paradigm because of its powerful ability to deal with and explain the unique phenomenon under study.

According to Creswell [22, p. 53], the naturalist (the researcher) elects qualitative methods over quantitative (although not exclusively) because they are best studied for research problems in which the researcher does not know the variables and needs to explore; because the literature might yield little information about the phenomenon of study, and the researcher needs to learn more from participants through exploration. However, a case study is a suitable design when the researcher is interested in process [51], and in this study the process of performance appraisal. Research using qualitative

case studies can be a powerful method to focus on one particular instance of educational experience and attempt to gain professional and theoretical insights from the documentation of that case, such as a principal's behaviors and practices [29].

Data reported in this study were gathered from three basic education schools located in a southeast region of Oman. The sample was chosen from those schools where a school-level gatekeeper allowed access to the school administration and the other staff in the school, (n=3). The schools are implementing the Basic Education System, and therefore enjoy certain facilities and have sufficient administrative staff. The schools that are presently implementing the School Performance Appraisal System and teacher's performance appraisal is an integral part of that system. The schools have been practicing teacher's performance appraisal for at least three years. The principal of each school had tenure of at least three years as principal of the school. Moreover, adequate training regarding School Performance Appraisal had been given to the school staff including administrative staff as well.

The study used the collection of interview data from the Cycle1, Cycle2, Cycle3 school principals and the teachers who volunteered to provide their perceptions on the school principal practices regarding teacher's performance evaluation. Using an interview protocol that addressed the prior themes of assistance and monitoring, the purpose of the interviews was to elicit information regarding the individual basic education school's induction process and the role of the principal in the process. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim and translated from Arabic to English. Transcripts were iteratively read and coded, then analyzed using the constant-comparative method. Codes were grouped into 8 units: (a) the conception of teacher's performance, (b) goal setting process, (c) monitoring the instruction, (d) feedback given to the teachers, (e) professional development, (f) favored teachers, (g) summative evaluation and (h) summative evaluation. Once unitized and coded, comments were then entered into the database for analysis.

VII. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The researcher was inspired by the quote of Wiersma regarding the validity and reliability in research. He stated "Absolute reliability and validity are impossible to attain in any research study, regardless of type [70; p. 263]. Taking Wiersma's statement into account, one can realize that in social science research, especially qualitative case studies it is not easy for the researcher to assure high level of

reliability or validity. However, as a novice researcher in qualitative case study the researcher tried his best to employ as many strategies as he could to ensure an acceptable level of validity and reliability. Prolonged engagement was achieved by spending an average of four months at school sites, starting on 15 February 2009, and ending in early June 2009. The researcher was visiting the schools every week either twice or thrice based on the time arrangement that suited every school. Triangulation was used to ensure that the phenomenon under study is accurately identified and described. The rationale of using triangulation, as noted by Maxwell [47], is to reduce the risk that the conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific source or method, and allows the researcher to gain a broader and more secure understanding of the issues that are investigated.

The researcher conducted open-ended interviews and audio recordings of participants who agreed to be tape-recorded and took notes for those who preferred not to be recorded. Observations were conducted and recorded in text forms. Documents relevant to performance evaluation of teachers were collected and analyzed. Throughout the study, peer debriefing was used as an ongoing credibility check. Colleagues with previous experience as school and Zone office administrators and senior doctoral students were asked to review the findings as they emerged. In this study, transferability was supported by thick descriptions that the researcher generated from the data gathering at the school sites [43]. Transferability was enhanced by the investigation of different sites including Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Post Basic Education schools. To ensure dependability, the researcher employed triangulation. The strategies include interviewing, observing, analyzing, coding and categorizing. In addition, all the raw data were identified by school code and participants; anonymity was preserved by using a special coding system.

VIII. FINDINGS

A. Cycle 1 School

1) In carrying out the teacher's performance evaluation at the Cycle 1 school level, the principal used the class observation as a main tool of monitoring and evaluating the teacher's performance.

2) Data revealed that to improve instruction at the Cycle 1 school level, the principal provided the teacher with only 15 minutes feedback due to the time limitation of the teachers.

3) Findings of the study also revealed that to make the feedback discussions meaningful at the Cycle 1 school level, the principal involved the senior teachers in the conversation due to the shared goals and similarities between the senior teachers and their teachers in their subject.

4) According to the findings, the principal of Cycle 1 school revealed that she encountered difficulties of goals overlapping when formulating the school goals in the school plan preparation.

B. Cycle 2 School

5) Findings of the study revealed that to measure the achievement of the school goals at the Cycle 2 school level, the principal used indicators for each goal to assure that the goal is fulfilled through certain percentage.

6) For the aim of achieving the school goals, findings of the study revealed that the principal at the Cycle 2 School encountered the difficulty of having less support from teachers and community members to achieve the school goals.

7) Data revealed that to monitor the teacher's performance at the Cycle 2 school, the principal used the new way of monitoring the performance of the teacher in the class by focusing on a few areas of the teacher's performance rather than following all the items in the class observation form.

8) According to the research findings, the principal in Cycle 2 level monitored the teachers' performance based on the needs of each teacher. The better the teacher's performance the less the teacher visited his classes.

9) Data also revealed that the principal at Cycle 2 school did not provide feedback on the teacher's performance for excellent teachers, especially for the teachers in different major with the principal.

10) At the Cycle 2 school, the study revealed that the principal used diplomacy rather than criticism in giving feedback to the teacher after class observation as he believed that the criticism might destroy the teacher's morale or the teacher might not accept the feedback.

C. Post Basic Education

11) Data revealed that to evaluate the teacher's performance, the principal at the Post Basic Education school monitored the performance of the teacher outside the classroom as well as inside the classroom. For monitoring the teacher's performance outside the class the principal focused on the teacher's involvement in administrative work, the teacher's relationships with his workmates and superiors, the completion of his records, and the teacher's discipline.

12) According to the findings of the study, to deliver feedback on the teacher's performance at the Post Basic Education level, the principal determined the length of feedback discussion based on the success of the teacher's performance.

13) Findings of the study revealed that to avoid disagreement during the feedback discussion between the principal and his teachers at the Post Basic Education school, the principal filled up the class observation form after the feedback discussion was completed and getting the teacher's agreement on whatever was discussed regarding the teacher's performance.

14) Data revealed that to evaluate the teachers equally at the Post Basic Education school, the principal did not believe in having favored teachers without any practical reason. He stressed on objectivity as a criterion to evaluate his teachers' performance.

15) At the Post Basic Education school, the study revealed that the principal involved the students in evaluating the teacher's performance secretly which help him to obtain a clear picture about the teacher's behaviors and performance from a primary source such as students.

D. Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 School

16) Findings across study sites revealed that the principal at Cycle 1 and 2 schools were motivated in carrying out the teacher's performance evaluation as they benefit from such a system. In the Cycle 1 School, the principal was motivated by the advantages of the teacher's performance evaluation. The principal at Cycle 2 school made it obvious that his level of motivation was high in evaluating his teachers' performance since the process is flexible and teachers are accepting the situation of their performance evaluation.

E. Cycle 1, Cycle 2 and Post Basic Education schools

17) Data revealed that the principals at the Cycle 1, Cycle 2 and Post Basic Education schools perceived the teacher's performance evaluation as an important tool that helps them to improve their teachers' performance as well as the students' and the school performance.

18) Similar findings across research sites (Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Post Basic Education) revealed that the principals were setting the school goals through the school plan. At the beginning of the academic year at each of the schools, the principals used a formalized plan for setting and sharing their expectations with regard to the evaluation system.

19) Data revealed that the three principals were using the standard class observation as a tool for monitoring their teachers' performance as required by the Ministry of Education.

20) Based on the cross-case analysis, the data showed that each of three principals used feedback discussion on the teacher's performance after the class observations. The principals used the feedback to improve the teacher's performance by identifying the strengths and weakness that they observed in the class.

21) Findings of the study also revealed that to develop the teacher's performance at the Cycle 1, Cycle 2 and Post Basic Education schools, there were three ways of professional development. The professional development for teachers can be through workshops and training sessions by the central education agencies, in-house training and two-day professional development at the end of each semester. The principals' role was mainly for in-house training where he or she can conduct a workshop or discuss the professional development issues through the school meetings.

22) Data also revealed that favoritism was practiced at Cycle 1, Cycle 2 and Post Basic Education schools. The criteria of favored teachers are slightly different at the three levels, but the teachers were still grouped into favored and non favored teachers.

23) Comparable findings across cases at Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Post Basic Education schools revealed that the principals used the summative evaluation form to evaluate the teacher's performance at the end of the academic year as a requirement by the Ministry of Education despite the fact that each principal has his own way of filling up the form in terms of sources of information that they rely on and the people involved in the completion of the form.

IX. DISCUSSION

The conclusions of this study are drawn from the constructs of the research questions, namely how principals at the Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Post Basic Education levels use the performance evaluation system for teachers in Al-sharqiah South schools in Oman. Each conclusion is supported by an elaboration of the findings.

A. Conception of Performance Evaluation

The study found that three of the principals believed in the necessity of performance evaluation of teachers as a tool that helps them in measuring the quality of teaching and improving the teacher's academic performance. These findings are aligned with the

finding of Youngs [74] who provides evidence that the differences in beginning teachers' experiences seemed related to variations in the principals' professional backgrounds; their beliefs and actions regarding leadership, induction, and teacher evaluation; and their responses to district and state policy. An example taken from the interview data collected from Principal C during this study illustrates Youngs's assertion. The principal C stated "From my point of view, I can say that Teacher's Performance Evaluation is to identify the teacher's academic level and his professional performance in the classroom. This is the main point. To me, evaluating teacher's technical and administrative performance is what I understand by Teacher's Performance Evaluation".

The findings of the present study support Blaauw's [12] findings that there is a common understanding among the principals interviewed that teacher evaluation should be used to assess individual teacher performance and that it should also be developmental. Principal B pointed out that understanding by stating "When I visit a teacher I do that honestly...it is not may aim to find deficiencies, my aim is to develop teachers' performance".

Al-Zamili, Al-Sulimani, Al-A'Ani, Al-Shamsi, Al-Kyumi, Al-Kyumi, & Al-Abri [5] in their latest study about the evaluation of school performance development system have interviewed six school principals in three zones in Oman. Their most important finding was that the teacher performance evaluation helped the principals to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of teachers' performance. This understanding is consistent with the understanding of all three principals interviewed in this study regarding teacher performance evaluation.

To sum up, it seemed to be that the principals involved in the current study have a positive conception and understanding about teacher performance evaluation due to introduction of the school performance evaluation system that their schools have implemented for more than three years in each site.

B. Goal Setting

Based on the findings of this study principals were setting goals regarding the school work in general within the school plan, but have no special plan or goals regarding teacher's performance evaluation. This result is different from the findings by Ramirez [62] where the principals in his study used effective communication by setting clear goals regarding the annual teacher evaluation activities in the school. The findings of the current study in goal setting relatively expand the findings of Blasé and Blasé [8] that successful principals keep teachers informed of current trends and new teaching practices out in

"the field" through effective communication. Principal A for instance said "first of all at the end of the academic year...on May I have meeting with teachers, senior teachers, coordinator, social worker, principal assistant and me, we ask for teachers' opinions by handing out a copy of the plan form for each as a preparation".

The model of instructional leadership conceptualized by Alig-Mielcarek [6] combines the similarities among the three instructional leadership models, as well as, integrating Locke and Latham's Goal-Setting Theory [40], [41] as an underlying theoretical foundation. The instructional leadership framework used in his study has three highly correlated dimensions, one of which was defining and communicating goals. Principal B provided an example of defining the school goals by having indicators for every goal to be measured. He stated "If you noticed in the school plan...there are indicators beside each goal- we call them success indicators-...the plan starts with goals, success indicators, reasons of putting the goal, procedures, the needed support, and so on".

The findings of the present study support Al-qubtan's [4] assertion that the school principals in Oman still need future planning skills such as staff development planning, the contribution to school curriculum, financial resources planning, and school needs planning.

However, the contradictions appear in two school sites regarding the goal setting process. While the principals stated that they share the goal setting with their staff, the assistant principals in those two sites disagreed with that finding. For example, the assistant principal in school A stated "The principal herself was setting the goals". In case of assistant principal B, he replied "I don't know" when asked how the school goals were set.

From the teachers' point of views, the teachers' involvement in the goal setting process through the school plan preparation was lower than 40% in all school sites. It was 39% in school A, 27% in school B, and 29% in school C. These findings are inconsistent with Harrington's [32] whose findings showed that the teacher involvement with this process was valid, exciting, motivating and renewing, their self-reflection resulted in improved instruction, teachers talked about the importance of their input into the professional performance appraisal plan and the important feedback they extracted from participating in this activity, and they felt they had become better teachers and were more satisfied with their work and the positive effect it was having on student performance.

In conclusion, it appears that the principals involved some teachers in preparing the school plan due to their relationship with the teacher, so whoever had a good relationship with the principal, he or she would take part in the school plan preparation as well as other activities in the school such as involvement in administrative work.

Moreover, some teachers interviewed in this study were not interested in setting goals or participating in the school plan preparation as they perceived it to be an administrative issue causing work overload. This finding is consistent with that of Brown and Benson [14], that the participation in setting performance objectives is associated with increased levels of work overload.

C. Monitoring Teacher Performance

The findings of this study support the findings of Ramirez [62] which revealed that principals monitor the instructional program by consistently conducting walk-through observations of teachers' classroom performance. In Alig-Mielcarek's [6] model one of the three highly correlated instructional leadership dimensions is monitoring the teaching and learning process. An example taken from the interview data collected from Principal A during this study illustrates Ramirez's and Alig-Mielcarek's assertion. Principal A stated "observing teacher in the class...through lesson plans, something like that, and instructional tools that teacher use...the main criteria is class observation".

However, findings also revealed division in teachers' opinions regarding monitoring of their performance by the principal. Some of them stated that the principal's experience is still not up to the required level, others were complaining about the simple issues that the principal was focusing on while avoiding the basics of the teaching process. These findings are aligned with Pansiri's [57] finding which reveals that school management teams lack interpersonal skills necessary for classroom supervision. An example is given by one of the senior teachers in school A, who stated "The principal does not have a lot of experience in basic education, even when she visited me in the class she evaluated me as a teacher and as a senior teacher at the same time...she does class observations but she is not accurate, she does not discuss with students...so how she is going to know their level of achievement".

Al Qubtan (2006) has evaluated school principals' practices in Oman. She found that the practices related to teachers' performance evaluation were not performed well, especially the usage of evaluation instruments such as interviews and questionnaires.

These findings are relatively consistent with the findings of the current study.

To this end, principals in all three sites seemed to face difficulties in monitoring teacher performance effectively due to some barriers. These barriers include lack of training, lack of support from the educational authority, not enough time, as well as multifaceted roles and responsibilities. These findings parallel that of Tucker [65], who found that other barriers included lack of time and support for the building administrator, personality characteristics of the evaluator, and lack of financial support for all phases of the evaluation process. In addition, Ruffin [61] found that principals most often described their need for more time to spend in classrooms monitoring instruction and meeting with staff to discuss, plan and conduct professional development related to instruction.

D. Feedback on teachers' performance

The findings of this study showed that each of three principals used feedback discussion on the teacher's performance after the class observations. The principals used the feedback to improve the teacher's performance by identifying the strengths and weakness that they observed in the class. These findings affirm other studies' assertions that new teachers who had regular guidance and classroom feedback, more appropriate and manageable working assignments, sufficient teaching resources, and a stable and orderly school environment reported significant levels of satisfaction and success during their first year of teaching [15], [49], [64]. Similarly, this study's findings are consistent with previous research that inferred capable principals used feedback, modeling, guidance, and praise to help promote teacher reflection and success [64], [66], [73]. The findings confirmed other recent studies that have addressed new teachers' concerns. Novice teachers expressed dissatisfaction if principals did not provide feedback, guidance, and personal encouragement [16], [49], [64], [75]. An example was provided by Teacher 3 in School C; he stated that "after two day of the class observation I reminded him myself to have feedback on the observation. The discussion was in his office. The feedback started about my weaknesses which he mentioned on my performance such as talking fast when I explain to the students, also the usage of slang rather standard Arabic, and not giving chance to students to answer my questions. The feedback was about 7 minutes only". Providing feedback on teacher's performance is essential for enhancing teacher's morale and productivity as suggested by Blasé and Blasé [9] who stated that in successful

conferences, supervisors tended to provide nonthreatening opportunities for teachers to talk and explore their work. This resulted in interactions that more closely approximated the ideal of the collaborative, nonevaluative, and reflective conference. Teachers who participated in such conferences reported increased self-esteem and respect for their supervisors.

E. Professional Development

The findings in the current study showed that the principals' role was mainly for in-house training where he or she can conduct a workshop or discuss the professional development issues through the school meetings. Principals in all three sites demonstrated a minimal role in teacher professional development as they transfer some instructions through the school meetings or conducting some workshops that focus on administrative issues rather than teaching and learning. These findings are consistent with Ruffin's [61] who found that participants in the study did not link professional development to changing instruction or student outcomes -- only improving it. Analysis of Ruffin's data also showed that participants did not link professional development to building leadership capacity in others or enhancing the leadership capacity in recognized leaders.

On the other hand, the findings of the present study were not in line with Printy's [55] results which suggest that both principals and department chairpersons are instrumental in shaping opportunities for teachers to learn in communities of practice. Likewise, Ramirez's [62] findings reported that using teacher performance evaluation systems to plan and set each of the school's staff development and training calendars is an effective instructional leadership practice by school administrators. Furthermore, Ramirez stated that successful school leaders take the time to listen to individual teacher requests for staff development and training needs to create successful schools and to maintain a successful learning community.

F. Summative Evaluation

The findings in this study revealed that the principals in all three schools used the annual evaluation form to evaluate the teacher's performance at the end of the academic year as a requirement by the Ministry of Education despite the fact that each principal has his own way of filling up the form in term of sources of information that they rely on and the people involved in the completion of the form. These finding are consistent with Ramirez [62] who suggested that to improve the school climate and indirectly impact

student academic achievement, it is essential for principals to adopt multi-year teacher evaluation processes for successful teachers. It is important for administrators to focus their efforts in regard to sound teacher evaluation by developing criteria for teachers who have demonstrated records of success documented through the evaluation system used by school districts.

However, the system in Oman does not allow the teachers to know their annual performance results; therefore, the teacher will not take part in the summative evaluation process, except formal senior teachers who can take part in the summative evaluation of their teachers but not for themselves. As a result, teachers are not satisfied with the process of summative evaluation as they are unable to know their level of performance except from the comments that they receive when observed in the class throughout the year by the senior teachers, supervisors and principals. An example was given by one of the senior teachers in School B when he was asked about his participation in the summative evaluation process. He stated "I do not know anything regarding summative evaluation, as a senior teacher I have not been asked about my teachers' performance neither by the principal nor the principal assistant, I did not participate in filling up the summative evaluation form". These findings are inconsistent with Ramirez's [62] suggestion that in order to create high performing learning environments, it is essential for principals to share the formative and summative functions of the appraisal system with teachers.

Although some principals do not support the policy of keeping the summative evaluation secret, they have no authority to reveal any kind of summative evaluation results. This finding is not consistent with Halverson and Clifford (2006) who found that the design of the policy required teacher evaluators to address the tensions between summative and formative evaluation implicit in the program design. The principal in their study relied heavily on her discretion to determine which features of the teacher evaluation policy would be emphasized with different teachers. The case also provided insight into how the principal reconciled the demands of evaluation with ongoing instructional and personnel demands.

G. Favored Teachers

The findings of this study also revealed that the principals in all sites were practicing favoritism. The criteria of favored teachers varied in each school and the teachers were still grouped into favored and non favored teachers. Teachers

expressed dissatisfaction with “unstable” treatment by the principals; “favored” teachers are rewarded whereas others are ignored, and “leniency” was shown to the preferred teacher. According to the teachers, rewards were given based on the teacher’s involvement in administrative work rather than on good teaching.

These findings support those by and Blasé’s [9] who revealed that all teachers interviewed in their study attributed the practice of favoritism to their principals. According to their findings, favoritism refers to “inequitable” treatment of faculty; “select” individuals are rewarded whereas others are punished or neglected. Some examples of rewards to favored teachers include being assigned better students and classrooms, receiving positive evaluations, receiving support for advancement, being placed on “good” committees and receiving public recognition. An example from this study was provided by one of the senior teachers in School C, who stated “some teachers are closer to him due to their activities. Racism is another issue. Teachers from the same tribe or place with the principal got special treatment. He supports them silently. The closer teachers are handsome, have a good shape, which really affects the other teachers’ performance. For example, a teacher rewarded on the Ministry level although he has no distinguished work, while we have better teachers. Another teacher rewarded on the Zone level though there are other teachers deserve to be rewarded”.

Another clear example regarding favoritism was demonstrated by the principal of School B who admitted that he has favored teachers. He commented: “anyhow as a principal of course I have to rely on certain group of teachers...this group is willing to work and needs an opportunity... there are some lousy people who say that the principal has close teachers...why not all of them be the principal’s group”.

This practice however, is not consistent with Zimmerman’s [76] suggestions that resistance in schools should not result in principals perceiving a division of faculty members into the “good guys” and the “bad guys.” Moreover, principals should remember that although change resisters, like thunder clouds, may make leaders uncomfortable, they are not always bad. Many teachers, because of their experiences and frames of reference, have legitimate reasons for resisting change. Therefore, it behooves educational leaders to work with teachers in respectful ways to address their concerns before launching into change initiatives.

H. Principal’s Motivation

Findings of the study revealed that the principal at Cycle 1 and 2 were expressing their motivation in carrying out the teacher’s performance evaluation as they get benefit from such a system, while the principal in Post Basic Education did not show whether he was motivated or not in evaluating his teachers’ performance. The findings of this study are consistent with Hansson and Andersen’s [33] who found that achievement motivation among Swedish principals was the dominant profile which means the principals’ motivation is basically in achieving results. On the other hand the findings of the current study are inconsistent with other findings of Hansson and Andersen’s [33] in terms of power motivation regarding the will to influence others and work through others appears to be the most effective profile. An example is provided by the principal in School A when asked about her motives in carrying out teachers performance evaluation. She stated: “Evaluate the performance of the teacher system provided the opportunity to conduct special workshops for female teachers who keep bringing up ideas and leading discussions with the senior teachers. In addition to that, in-house or resident supervisor is a great idea which helps a lot in developing the teachers’ performance”.

Contradictions appear in the findings between the principals and teachers’ views regarding the level of principals’ motivation. While principals claimed that they are motivated in the process of teacher evaluation, the teachers were against that. An example was given by one of the senior teachers in school A who stated “Frankly speaking she is doing that as a routine she has been asked to do, not with a high motivation, just as filling up the form and that’s it, and this affect teachers’ performance evaluation”. These findings affirm Hansson and Andersen’s [33] findings which revealed that 14% of the principals investigated had no distinct motivation profile.

However, the principals motivation seemed to be very complicated issue, therefore, the researcher was concerned about the motivation as perceived by the participants rather than other standard measures. To this end, there is no doubt that the more the principal is motivated the better his or her performance will be. This assumption is supported by research in leadership and motivation. Research on managers (formal leaders) in different settings suggest that motivation is one of the important factors for managerial effectiveness (Bass, 1990). McClelland [52] has performed extensive research into the relationship between motivation related behavior in managers and organizational effectiveness. He claims

that every individual has, to varying degrees, a need for achievement, power, and affiliation.

X. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings of this study have implications for principals in their instructional leadership role at the three schools that took place in the study. Generally, in using teacher performance evaluation as a basis for developing teacher's performance and instruction in Omani schools, viewing performance evaluation as an important tool, setting goals through school plan preparation, monitoring teachers' performance, providing feedback on teachers' performance, demonstrating professional development, evaluating the teachers' performance annually and showing some kind of motivation in carrying out the process of teacher evaluation was found to be essential to success of the principals. The principal's conceptions and understanding regarding performance evaluation should be enhanced and widened to increase the efficiency and the effectiveness of teacher's performance evaluation.

Allocating specific goals regarding teacher evaluation process and procedures must be a priority for principals who want to improve the school instructional program. Principals should be obliged to have discussions at the beginning and at the end of academic year to develop targets, organize content regarding teacher evaluation policies, and then present new and existing teacher evaluation information to teachers. It is also important for principals to set clear and high expectations of teacher performance and follow through by measuring the teachers' performance through the instruments and procedures of teachers' performance evaluation system. In order to use teacher evaluation systems effectively, principals should carry out reliable assessments of the school instructional program by conducting practical class observations. Principals should develop annual plans to accomplish classroom visits on a scheduled daily time frame with all evaluators. Moreover, data collected during these daily visits need to be accumulated and analyzed to give a clear picture about the teacher's performance. It is imperative for the success of the teacher evaluation system for school principals to essentially view the teacher's performance evaluation as a process rather than a tool. Furthermore, the routine daily classroom observations also need to concentrate on the instructional leadership plan to implement consistent measures through the teacher evaluation system.

To provide feedback on teacher performance, the principal should monitor and provide feedback about the teaching and learning process. To achieve this, the

principal should be noticeable throughout the school, should have conversations with students and teachers about academics and progress toward goals, and should continuously visit classrooms to ensure alignment of instruction to the school's academic goals. The teachers' professional development activities in each of the schools as they relate to a teacher's evaluation must be planned as a main concern for improving instruction. Principals should review the staff development calendar of activities in order to develop teacher performance. In addition, principals should also use the summative evaluation forms as a part of the teacher's professional development and evaluation system for shaping individual and school staff development needs.

Principals must enhance and support teacher morale and reward effective teachers in order to maintain a successful learning environment for all students. One way they can achieve this goal is by linking the formative with summative evaluation of teachers' performance. It is also not ethical to divide teachers into groups of favored and not favored teachers. To avoid such distinction, the principal must be open with their staff, and should try to bridge the gap between high performing and poor performing teachers. Moreover, the personal relationship between the principal and the teachers should not influence the objectivity of teacher's performance evaluation. Even though the summative evaluation results are not revealed to teachers, the principal should find a way to give an overview of the quality of teacher's performance for every teacher in order to decrease the tension and improve their performance.

XI. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY

Leadership theories, such as trait, behavior, contingency, charismatic, and transformational, provide an overview of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership puts into practice many of these theories into an educational institution and organization. For instance, effective instructional leaders demonstrate behavior theory as they initiate structure through behaviors that develop and communicate shared goals with staff, students and society. Instructional leaders show concern for staff as they monitor and provide feedback on the teaching and learning programs, as well as working closely with staff when promoting staff professional development. In addition, instructional leaders own specific traits and behaviors, such as charisma, which can be practical in different situations and environments. The very real meaning of instructional leadership is to transform a school organization into an environment where teachers and students may achieve their full potential.

The current research furthers instructional leadership theory by combining instructional leadership theories and performance evaluation theories. This combination was guided by Brent's [13] model of interactive performance evaluation model and Alig Mielcarek's (2003) model of instructional leadership. The new instructional leadership framework consists of seven interactive dimensions: conception of teacher performance evaluation, setting clear goals, monitoring teacher's performance, providing feedback on the teaching and learning process, promoting teacher professional development, evaluating teacher performance annually and carrying out the process of teacher evaluation with acceptable level of motivation.

The findings in this research may express the dynamic between instructional leadership and performance evaluation that effect teachers' performance and student achievement at the three levels.

Another theoretical implication for instructional leadership may be an additional aspect that includes principal behaviors around the use of evaluation instruments and procedures due to the implementation of the teacher performance evaluation system. The standards movement has developed an atmosphere of development for all educators. Specifically, legislators, superintendents, and parents are requesting evidence to support the existence of effective leadership and instruction within the schools. The use of evaluation outcomes is important across all dimensions of instructional leadership.

Principals, however, need to structure school goals around data collected from the evaluation process, use data to provide feedback to teachers on the teaching and learning process, and use data to develop professional development plans for staff.

XII. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Research studies that are qualitative in nature are limited by the following: (a) qualitative research design, (b) researcher bias, (c) the selection of research sites, and (d) the criteria used to determine selected schools. In addition, case studies, such as this one, lack transferability as well as generalizability. According to Lincoln and Guba [43], the naturalistic approach to qualitative research will increase its transferability.

As a result, other researchers and consumers of this study can make judgments about its generalizability and application to another site. The goal of this research design is to provide rich descriptions about the roles and responsibilities of public school principals regarding the performance appraisal of

teachers in selected schools. Finally, researcher bias may occur in documenting the description, processing the data, gathering the data, and drawing conclusions.

XIII. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will contribute to the existing body of research in the field of performance appraisal of schools in context of school. In addition, the insights, explanations, and findings gained from this study will inform researchers regarding the means by which effective implementation of school performance evaluations achieve an impact on school.

However, expectations for the principal's role have undergone significant change in recent years. As a result there has recently been a growing interest in reexamining instructional leadership as it is implemented in today's schools. The researcher hopes to contribute new knowledge to the field regarding the implementation of performance appraisal of teachers in Omani schools by reexamining instructional leadership practices as understood by cycle 1, cycle 2 and Post Basic Education school principals.

Results from this study have the potential to provide useful information that can inform the reconceptualization and redesign of preparation programs for those aspiring to become principals. The results of this study may also provide new direction for ongoing professional development of current principals.

The present study contributes to existing knowledge by testing the possibility of implementing effective teacher's performance evaluation system in Omani education in general and in school levels in particular. To the writer's best knowledge, there has been no previous effort made to this end in the MOE. Thus the study findings will be a useful body of knowledge for educators in Oman and should lay a foundation for further research. Moreover, it presents a proposed model for implementing sound comprehensive performance evaluation with an explanation of its implementation framework.

Finally, the conclusions drawn from the study will provide greater insight regarding the staff development needs of those involved "in the field" in order to successfully implement sound comprehensive teachers' performance appraisal systems.

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