

The Practice of Teachers' Performance Appraisal and Its Impact on Teachers' Job Motivation in Secondary Schools of Awi Zone, Amhara Regional State

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between teachers' performance appraisal practices and teachers' job motivation in secondary schools of Awi Zone, Amhara Regional State. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 160 teachers through structured questionnaires. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job motivation ($r = 0.712$, $p < .01$). Performance appraisal practices were found to predict approximately 50.7% of the variance in teachers' job motivation, indicating that the quality of appraisal systems substantially influences teacher motivation. Furthermore, significant differences in teachers' job motivation were observed based on demographic characteristics including teaching experience, educational qualification, and current work position. The study identified major challenges including inadequate feedback mechanisms, lack of pre-planned appraisal processes, insufficient appraiser competence, and weak linkage between appraisal results and professional development opportunities. The findings underscore the need for systematic, transparent, and motivation-oriented performance appraisal systems in secondary schools. Recommendations are provided for educational administrators and policymakers to enhance the effectiveness of teacher performance appraisal systems.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The success and sustainability of organizations worldwide are inextricably linked to the effectiveness of their human resources. Educational institutions, like corporate entities, depend on the quality, commitment, and performance of their personnel to achieve their objectives. In this context, performance appraisal has emerged as a critical human resource management function that serves both evaluative and developmental purposes. Scholars have long recognized that systematic performance evaluation, when properly implemented, can enhance organizational productivity while simultaneously fostering employee growth and motivation (Jackson et al., 2009; Foot & Hook, 1999).

The strategic importance of performance management lies in its capacity to align individual employee efforts with broader organizational goals. Foot and Hook (1999) conceptualize performance management as a comprehensive process designed to improve performance at the individual, team, and organizational levels, with line managers playing a central role in its execution. Within this framework, performance appraisal functions as the primary mechanism through which employee contributions are assessed, developmental feedback is provided, and strategies for performance enhancement are formulated.

Performance appraisal occupies a unique position in human resource management due to its dual nature. As noted by Jackson et al. (2009), appraisal systems simultaneously serve administrative purposes—informing decisions about compensation, promotion, and retention—and developmental purposes—guiding professional growth and skill enhancement. This dual functionality makes

performance appraisal particularly relevant in educational settings, where teacher effectiveness directly impacts student learning outcomes.

Jackson et al. (2009) describe employee performance appraisal as a structured process combining written documentation and oral communication through which management evaluates employee job performance and provides constructive feedback. This process includes specific steps to improve or redirect activities as needed. Similarly, Foot and Hook (1999) emphasize that appraisal involves judging individual performance, communicating feedback about that performance, and systematically motivating employees to work more effectively and efficiently. This conceptualization underscores the motivational dimension of performance appraisal, suggesting that well-designed systems can serve as powerful catalysts for employee development and organizational commitment.

The utility of performance appraisal extends beyond the immediate evaluation event. Documented appraisal results provide the foundation for multiple organizational decisions, including salary adjustments, promotions, recognition programs, training initiatives, and strategic planning that aligns individual and institutional objectives (Foot & Hook, 1999). Furthermore, effective appraisal systems enable staff members to enhance their professional competence through targeted feedback and development planning. In the educational context, teacher performance appraisal serves purposes that extend well beyond simple evaluation. Monyatsi (2003) observes that teacher appraisal represents one of several strategies for integrating teachers into the school community and fostering their professional identity. Bartlett (2000) emphasizes that appraisal helps harness the unique talents of teachers and coordinates their activities toward achieving institutional objectives through efficient and effective means. When properly structured, the appraisal process ensures teacher competence and conscientiousness while supporting professional development and accountability.

Bartlett (2000) further argues that for teacher performance appraisal to be effective, it should be treated as an ongoing cooperative intervention between the supervisor and supervisee—a shared responsibility rather than a periodic event conducted once a year. This perspective emphasizes the process-oriented nature of effective appraisal, highlighting the importance of continuous dialogue, mutual understanding, and collaborative goal-setting.

The effectiveness of performance appraisal systems carries significant organizational implications. Jackson et al. (2009) note that appraisal systems must provide consistent, reliable, and valid information that can withstand scrutiny, including legal challenges. The techniques employed should measure performance accurately and provide information relevant to job-related activities. Standardization in forms, procedures, administration, and ratings is essential, as appraisal decisions affect all employees. The techniques should also be practically viable to administer, feasible to implement, and economical in terms of cost. Moreover, appraisal systems should comply with relevant legal provisions, and appraisal interviews should permit both parties to learn about performance gaps and prepare for future improvement. Managers, therefore, should clearly communicate their performance expectations to subordinates well in advance of the appraisal period (Jackson et al., 2009).

Several key elements contribute to effective appraisal systems. Employees should receive adequate feedback on their performance, and individuals who conduct performance appraisals should possess the necessary skills and have preplanned activities. Above all, the appraisal system should be linked with organizational strategic goals and facilitate effective communication among staff members (Jackson et al., 2009). The design and development of an effective teacher appraisal system requires attention not only to issues surrounding definitions and measurements of effective teaching but also to the organizational systems within which these models are implemented.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Notwithstanding the established theoretical importance of performance appraisal, a considerable gap persists between the ideals of appraisal theory and the realities of appraisal practice in many educational contexts. This disconnect has been documented across various national settings, suggesting that the challenges facing teacher performance appraisal represent a global phenomenon. Brown (2006) observed that organizations worldwide frequently encounter difficulties with performance appraisal processes, which often prove uncomfortable for both evaluators and those being evaluated. These difficulties typically stem from deficiencies in the design and implementation of appraisal systems rather than from resistance to evaluation itself.

The theory-practice gap is particularly evident in educational settings across the African continent. Research conducted by Monyatsi et al. (2006) in Botswana's secondary schools revealed that many teachers lack a clear understanding of the purposes and practices of the teacher appraisal process. This misunderstanding was attributed to inadequate orientation and training, as well as insufficient periodic review of the teacher appraisal system to keep it aligned with changes in the education system. These findings indicate that the challenges confronting teacher performance appraisal in Ethiopia are part of a broader phenomenon affecting educational systems across Africa, necessitating context-specific solutions.

For a performance appraisal system to be effective, it must be appropriately tailored to the organization in which it operates. Organizations need to assess the suitability of performance appraisal systems for their workforce before implementing a system that meets their specific needs (Skarlicki & Folger, 2007). The primary purpose of an appraisal system is to identify those who cannot or would not perform their job duties effectively. This purpose must be communicated to all involved parties, and appropriate support and training should be provided, especially to managers conducting such sessions with their staff (Shaw, Delery, Jenkins, & Gupta, 2008). Best practices in appraisal involve two-way discussions that focus on employee self-assessment and goal-setting for improvement. Organizations should ensure that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are well communicated to and clarified with staff, and that appropriate benchmarks are in place against which staff are assessed. Data collected from appraisals should be used to track the success of recruitment and induction practices.

In Ethiopian secondary schools, including those in Awi Zone of Amhara Regional State, the practice of teacher performance appraisal appears problematic. Research by Endale (2015) and Asegedech (2019)

identified numerous deficiencies, including the use of inappropriate and irrelevant content, the absence of valid and reliable performance appraisal criteria, the lack of pre- and post-appraisal meetings, ineffective use of classroom observation, the absence of feedback and discussion, and appraisers' lack of necessary skills and expertise. These findings point to systemic challenges that undermine the effectiveness of appraisal systems in supporting teacher development and motivation.

Preliminary observations and existing literature indicate that in Ethiopian secondary schools, the appraisal process is often not pre-planned, appraisal results are rarely used for professional development, there is limited practice of providing feedback after appraisal has been conducted, and the appraisal system is not formally structured and linked to school strategic goals. These deficiencies likely undermine the motivational potential of performance appraisal systems. Research has shown that teacher performance appraisal systems and teacher motivation are significantly related (Berhanu, 2024). Berhanu (2024) found that when performance appraisals are conducted with transparency, equity, and a commitment to supporting teacher improvement, they increase teachers' job performance. The relationship between teacher performance appraisal and teacher job motivation is generally positive and interdependent. A well-designed performance appraisal system can increase teachers' motivation, while a poorly implemented appraisal system can diminish motivation.

Therefore, this study sought to assess the current practice of teacher performance appraisal and its impact on teachers' job motivation in secondary schools of Awi Zone. The researchers were motivated by the observed discrepancies between expected and actual appraisal practices and the potential consequences of these discrepancies for teacher motivation and ultimately for student learning outcomes.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to address the research problem, the following basic questions were raised:

- To what extent are appraisal systems and their criteria designed in accordance with school strategic goals, programs, and teachers' daily activities?
- Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher performance appraisal practice and teachers' job motivation?
- What are the major challenges facing the teacher performance appraisal system in the study area?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

General Objective:

The overall objective of this study was to assess the current practice of teacher performance appraisal and its impact on teachers' job motivation in secondary schools of Awi Zone.

Specific Objectives:

Specifically, this research was aimed to:

- Assess the current practice of teacher performance appraisal in secondary schools of Awi Zone;
- Analyze whether there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher performance appraisal and teachers' job motivation; and
- Identify major existing challenges which secondary schools face in practicing teacher performance appraisal in schools of the study area.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a descriptive and correlational approach. The descriptive approach was used to assess the current practice of teacher performance appraisal and identify major challenges facing the system. The correlational approach was employed to examine the relationship between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job motivation, as well as to determine whether performance appraisal practices predict teachers' job motivation. This design was appropriate for addressing the research questions and testing the formulated hypotheses.

2.2 Study Population and Sampling

The study targeted teachers in secondary schools of Awi Zone, Amhara Regional State. Quantitative data were collected from 160 subject teachers using rating scores on a questionnaire. The respondent teachers for the questionnaire were selected using a random sampling technique. The participants were taken from ten schools through a simple random method using a lottery system to select the sample schools. Closed-ended questionnaires with a total of 54 items were administered to the 160 teacher respondents.

2.3 Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire with 54 closed-ended items was administered to teachers. The instrument measured three main dimensions: Performance appraisal practices (11 items): These items assessed the extent to which appraisal systems are designed and implemented in accordance with strategic goals and daily activities. Teachers' job motivation (10 items): These items assessed teachers' motivation levels in relation to appraisal practices. Challenges in performance appraisal (6 items): These items assessed the major challenges facing the implementation of performance appraisal systems. Demographic information: Items on sex, teaching experience, educational qualification, and current work position.

Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Partially Agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Prior to the main data collection process, the instrument was subjected to pilot testing and expert validation to ensure content validity, reliability, and contextual

appropriateness. The pilot testing was conducted with a small sample of teachers not included in the main study to identify any ambiguities or problems with the questionnaire items.

2.4 Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The analysis included: Descriptive Statistics: Means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were computed to describe each variable under performance appraisal system, teachers' job motivation, and the challenges facing the system. Mean scores were interpreted using the following criteria: The interpretation of mean scores followed a five-tier scale, where averages from 1.00 to 1.80 indicated very low levels, 1.81 to 2.60 indicated low, 2.61 to 3.40 indicated low-moderate, 3.41 to 4.20 indicated moderate, and 4.21 to 5.00 indicated high levels of agreement or perception. To examine the relationship between the core variables, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed, with correlation values interpreted as very weak (0.00–0.19), weak (0.20–0.39), moderate (0.40–0.59), strong (0.60–0.79), or very strong (0.80–1.00). This analysis specifically assessed the association between performance appraisal practices (the independent variable) and teachers' job motivation (the dependent variable), providing a foundation for determining whether better appraisal practices are statistically linked to higher motivation levels among secondary school teachers in the study area.

Regression Analysis: Simple linear regression analysis was used to examine whether performance appraisal practices predict teachers' job motivation. The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicated the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable.

ANOVA and t-tests: One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences in teachers' job motivation based on demographic characteristics with more than two categories (teaching experience, educational qualification, and current position). Independent samples t-test was used to examine differences based on sex (two categories). Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test were conducted for significant ANOVA results to identify which specific groups differed significantly.

2.5 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data collection instrument, content validity was established through expert review, whereby five specialists in educational management and research methodology assessed the relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness of each questionnaire item. Based on their feedback, modifications including rewording ambiguous items, deleting redundant questions, and adding items were made to enhance validity. Reliability was assessed through pilot testing with 30 teachers not included in the main study, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to determine internal consistency for each scale. The results showed good reliability across all scales: performance appraisal practices ($\alpha = 0.85$), teachers' job motivation ($\alpha = 0.82$), and challenges in performance appraisal ($\alpha = 0.79$). These alpha values exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, confirming good internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire items.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout the research process. Permission was obtained from the relevant educational authorities in Awi Zone. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. They were also assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. Anonymity was maintained by not requiring participants to provide their names or other identifying information.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Teacher Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	112	70.00%
	Female	48	30.00%
Teaching Experience	0–2 years	12	7.50%
	3–5 years	28	17.50%
	6–8 years	24	15.00%
	9–12 years	32	20.00%
	13–16 years	36	22.50%
	17 + years	28	17.50%
Educational Qualification	Diploma	8	5.00%
	First Degree	128	80.00%
	Second Degree	24	15.00%
Current Position	Teacher	120	75.00%
	Department Head	20	12.50%
	Unit Leader	12	7.50%
	Deputy Principal	4	2.50%
	Principal	4	2.50%

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were male (70%), while females constituted 30% of the sample. This gender distribution reflects the broader pattern in Ethiopian secondary education where

male teachers outnumber female teachers. The teaching experience distribution shows that the largest group (22.5%) had 13–16 years of experience, followed by those with 9–12 years (20%). Only 7.5% of teachers had 0–2 years of experience, indicating that most teachers in the study area have substantial teaching experience. Regarding educational qualification, the vast majority (80%) held a first degree, while 15% held a second degree, and only 5% held a diploma. In terms of current position, 75% were classroom teachers, 12.5% were department heads, 7.5% were unit leaders, and 5% were in deputy principal or principal positions.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics of Performance Appraisal Practices

To address the first research question regarding the extent to which appraisal systems and their criteria are designed in accordance with school strategic goals, programs, and teachers' daily activities, descriptive statistics were computed. Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations for items related to performance appraisal practices.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Performance Appraisal Practices

Item	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
My performance rating is based on how well I am doing	160	3.65	1.12	Moderate
I am satisfied with the way the appraisal system is used to evaluate my performance	160	3.42	1.28	Moderate
There are set standards for my job	160	3.78	1.05	Moderate
Employee performance is easy to measure	160	3.55	1.18	Moderate
The most recent ratings I received are based on many activities I am responsible for	160	3.83	0.98	Moderate
My performance is above average	160	3.62	1.15	Moderate
I clearly understand the purpose of performance appraisal process	160	3.71	1.08	Moderate
Performance appraisal identifies performance problems to improve productivity and motivation	160	3.68	1.22	Moderate
Performance appraisal process encourages co-operation	160	3.45	1.31	Moderate
The performance appraisal system has helped improve job performance	160	3.58	1.24	Moderate
I am satisfied with the way the appraisal system is used to set my performance goals	160	3.5	1.26	Moderate
Overall Mean	160	3.62		Moderate

The results indicate moderate levels of performance appraisal practices across all items, with an overall mean of 3.62 on a 5-point scale. The highest mean was for "The most recent ratings I received are based on many activities I am responsible for" (M = 3.83, SD = 0.98), suggesting that teachers perceive their ratings to be based on multiple activities rather than a single criterion. The lowest mean was for "I am satisfied with the way the appraisal system is used to evaluate my performance" (M = 3.42, SD = 1.28), indicating relatively lower satisfaction with the appraisal system. This suggests that while some elements of performance appraisal exist, significant improvements are needed to meet established standards.

The standard deviations ranging from 0.98 to 1.31 indicate considerable variability in teacher responses, suggesting that experiences with the appraisal system vary significantly across schools and individuals. The moderate level suggests that the appraisal system is neither fully functional nor entirely dysfunctional, but rather exists in a state that requires substantial improvement.

3.3 Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Job Motivation

To understand the level of teachers' job motivation, descriptive statistics were computed for items related to motivation. Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations for items measuring teachers' job motivation.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Job Motivation

Item	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Managers know enough to appraise me	160	3.55	1.2	Moderate
Managers set targets more clearly	160	3.68	1.05	Moderate
The evaluator helps me understand what I need to do to improve my performance	160	3.52	1.28	Moderate
My manager discusses regularly my job performance with me	160	3.32	1.35	Low-Moderate
My work colleagues recognize me when I do a good job	160	3.78	1.02	Moderate
My manager recognizes me when I do a good job	160	3.82	1.08	Moderate
My manager plays a significant role in my career development	160	3.44	1.32	Moderate
My manager gives me fair feedback	160	3.6	1.25	Moderate
My manager/supervisor is highly capable as manager	160	3.65	1.18	Moderate
My manager/supervisor has reasonable expectations from my work	160	3.7	1.1	Moderate
Overall Mean	160	3.61		Moderate

These results indicate moderate motivation levels among teachers, with an overall mean of 3.61 on a 5-point scale. The highest mean was for "My manager recognizes me when I do a good job" (M = 3.82, SD = 1.08), suggesting that recognition from managers is relatively higher compared to other motivational factors. The lowest mean was for "My manager discusses regularly my job performance with me" (M = 3.32, SD = 1.35), indicating that regular performance discussions are relatively infrequent. This finding suggests that while teachers receive some recognition for their work, there is insufficient regular dialogue about performance, which is a critical component of effective appraisal systems.

The standard deviations ranging from 1.02 to 1.35 indicate considerable variability in motivation levels across teachers, suggesting that some teachers experience significantly higher or lower motivation than others. The low-moderate mean for regular performance discussions (3.32) indicates that this is a particular area of concern that may contribute to lower overall motivation levels.

3.4 Challenges in Performance Appraisal

To identify the major challenges facing the teacher performance appraisal system, descriptive statistics were computed for items measuring challenges. Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations for items related to challenges in performance appraisal.

Table 4
Major Challenges in Performance Appraisal

Challenge Item	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
My ratings are based on reasonable expectations from my work	160	3.58	1.22	Moderate
The ratings adequately reflect my performance	160	3.45	1.3	Moderate
My evaluator recognizes me when I do a good job	160	3.68	1.15	Moderate
I am satisfied with my relationship with manager/supervisor	160	3.72	1.08	Moderate
Performance appraisal reflects objectively my performance	160	3.35	1.38	Low-Moderate
I receive erroneous feedback on my performance	160	3.28	1.42	Low-Moderate

The lower mean scores for "Performance appraisal reflects objectively my performance" (M = 3.35, SD = 1.38) and "I receive erroneous feedback on my performance" (M = 3.28, SD = 1.42) indicate significant challenges in appraisal objectivity and feedback accuracy. These findings suggest that teachers perceive the appraisal process as lacking objectivity and that feedback provided may not be accurate. The standard deviations for these items (1.38 and 1.42) indicate considerable variability in teacher experiences, with some teachers experiencing these challenges more acutely than others.

The item with the highest mean was "I am satisfied with my relationship with manager/supervisor" (M = 3.72, SD = 1.08), suggesting that interpersonal relationships with supervisors are relatively positive, even though the appraisal system itself is perceived as having limitations. This finding indicates that the challenges in performance appraisal may be more related to systemic and procedural issues rather than interpersonal relationships.

3.5 Relationship Between Performance Appraisal and Job Motivation

To address the second research question regarding whether there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher performance appraisal practice and teachers' job motivation, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. Table 5 presents the correlation results.

Table 5 Pearson Correlation Between Performance Appraisal and Job Motivation		
Variable	1	2
Performance Appraisal Practices (1)	1	
Teachers' Job Motivation (2)	0.712**	1
**Note: p < .01		

The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.712 indicates a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job motivation ($r = 0.712$, $p < .01$). This suggests that improvements in performance appraisal practices are associated with higher levels of job motivation. The magnitude of the correlation indicates that approximately 50.7% (r^2) of the variance in job motivation is shared with performance appraisal practices.

The statistical significance of the correlation ($p < .01$) allows us to reject the first null hypothesis (H_{01}) that there is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' performance appraisal practices and teachers' job motivation. The strength of the correlation (0.712) indicates that the relationship is substantial, suggesting that appraisal practices are an important factor influencing teacher motivation.

3.6 Regression Analysis

To address the second research question more comprehensively and to test the second hypothesis (H_{02}), simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether performance appraisal practices predict teachers' job motivation. Table 6 presents the regression analysis results.

Table 6
Regression Analysis Summary

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
(Constant)	0.852	0.168		5.07	0
Performance Appraisal Practices	0.643	0.052	0.712	12.37	0
$R^2 = 0.507$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.502$, $F(1,158) = 153.0$, $p < .001$					

The regression model was statistically significant ($F = 153.0$, $p < .001$), with performance appraisal practices accounting for 50.7% of the variance in teachers' job motivation ($R^2 = 0.507$). The adjusted R^2 value of 0.502 indicates that the model would explain approximately 50.2% of the variance in the population. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.712$) confirms that performance appraisal practices significantly predict job motivation. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.643$) indicates that for each one-unit increase in performance appraisal practices, teachers' job motivation increases by 0.643 units.

The regression equation can be expressed as: Teachers' Job Motivation = $0.852 + 0.643(\text{Performance Appraisal Practices})$. The high F-value (153.0) and the corresponding p-value ($p < .001$) indicate that the regression model is statistically significant and provides a good fit for the data. These findings allow us to reject the second null hypothesis (H_{02}) that teachers' performance appraisal practices do not significantly predict or affect teachers' job motivation. The regression results strongly support the conclusion that performance appraisal practices are a significant predictor of teachers' job motivation.

3.7 Demographic Differences in Job Motivation

To address the third research question and test the third hypothesis (H_{03}) regarding whether there are statistically significant differences in teachers' job motivation based on demographic characteristics, ANOVA and independent samples t-tests were conducted. Table 7 presents the results.

Table 7
ANOVA Results for Job Motivation by Demographic Characteristics

Variable	F-value	df	p-value
Teaching Experience	5.34	5,154	0
Educational Qualification	3.87	2,157	0.023
Sex	1.42	1,158	0.235
Current Position	4.56	4,155	0.002

As shown in Table 7, significant differences in job motivation were found based on teaching experience, educational qualification, and current position. However, no significant difference was found based on sex. The F-values and p-values indicate varying levels of significance, with teaching experience showing

the strongest effect ($F = 5.34, p = .000$), followed by current position ($F = 4.56, p = .002$) and educational qualification ($F = 3.87, p = .023$).

Table 8
Post Hoc Comparisons for Teaching Experience

Experience Group	Mean Difference	p-value
0–2 vs. 13–16 years	-0.78	0.008
0–2 vs. 17 + years	-0.92	0.003
3–5 vs. 13–16 years	-0.56	0.045
3–5 vs. 17 + years	-0.7	0.018
6–8 vs. 13–16 years	-0.42	0.127
6–8 vs. 17 + years	-0.56	0.051
9–12 vs. 13–16 years	-0.28	0.342
9–12 vs. 17 + years	-0.42	0.098

The post hoc comparisons for teaching experience (Table 8) reveal that teachers with 13–16 years and 17 + years of experience reported significantly higher job motivation than those with 0–2 years of experience (mean differences of -0.78 and - 0.92, respectively). Similarly, teachers with 17 + years of experience reported higher motivation than those with 3–5 years of experience (mean difference = -0.70, $p = .018$). Teachers with 13–16 years of experience also reported higher motivation than those with 3–5 years of experience (mean difference = -0.56, $p = .045$). These findings suggest that more experienced teachers tend to have higher levels of job motivation compared to less experienced teachers. The non-significant differences between middle experience groups (6–8 years and 9–12 years) and the most experienced groups suggest that motivation increases progressively with experience.

Table 9
Post Hoc Comparisons for Educational Qualification

Qualification Groups	Mean Difference	p-value
Diploma vs. First Degree	-0.45	0.038
Diploma vs. Second Degree	-0.78	0.005
First Degree vs. Second Degree	-0.33	0.087

The post hoc comparisons for educational qualification (Table 9) show that teachers with a second degree reported significantly higher job motivation than those with a diploma (mean difference = -0.78, $p = .005$). Teachers with a first degree also reported higher motivation than those with a diploma (mean difference = -0.45, $p = .038$). However, the difference between first degree and second degree holders was not statistically significant (mean difference = -0.33, $p = .087$), although the trend suggests that

higher education is associated with higher motivation. This indicates that having at least a first degree is associated with higher motivation, with additional benefits from a second degree that are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 10
Post Hoc Comparisons for Current Position

Department Head	+ 0.34*			
Unit Leader	0.28	0.06		
Deputy Principal	+ 0.72**	0.38	0.44	
Principal	+ 0.85**	+ 0.51*	+ 0.57*	0.13
**Note: *p < .05, p < .01				

The post hoc comparisons for current position (Table 10) reveal that principals and deputy principals reported significantly higher job motivation than teachers (mean differences of + 0.85 and + 0.72, respectively; $p < .01$). Principals also reported significantly higher motivation than department heads (mean difference = + 0.51, $p < .05$) and unit leaders (mean difference = + 0.57, $p < .05$). Department heads reported higher motivation than teachers (mean difference = + 0.34, $p < .05$). However, differences between deputy principals and department heads (0.38, $p > .05$), deputy principals and unit leaders (0.44, $p > .05$), and principals and deputy principals (0.13, $p > .05$) were not statistically significant. These findings suggest that teachers in leadership positions tend to have higher levels of job motivation compared to classroom teachers, with a general pattern of increasing motivation with higher leadership positions.

The significant differences found for teaching experience, educational qualification, and current position allow us to reject the third null hypothesis (H_{03}) that there is no statistically significant difference in teachers' job motivation based on demographic characteristics. However, the non-significant difference based on sex ($t = 1.42$, $p = .235$) indicates that male and female teachers experience similar levels of motivation, suggesting that appraisal practices affect both groups comparably.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Current Practice of Teacher Performance Appraisal

The quantitative findings indicate that teacher performance appraisal practices in Awi Zone secondary schools are at a moderate level (overall mean = 3.62 on a 5-point scale). This suggests that while some elements of performance appraisal exist, significant improvements are needed to meet established standards. The item with the highest mean was "The most recent ratings I received are based on many activities I am responsible for" ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.98$), indicating that teachers perceive their ratings to be based on multiple activities rather than a single criterion. This is a positive finding as it suggests that the

appraisal system considers multiple aspects of teacher performance rather than focusing on a single dimension.

Conversely, the item with the lowest mean was "I am satisfied with the way the appraisal system is used to evaluate my performance" ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.28$), indicating relatively lower satisfaction with the appraisal system. This finding suggests that despite having multiple criteria, teachers are not satisfied with how these criteria are applied or how the overall appraisal system operates. The standard deviations ranging from 0.98 to 1.31 indicate considerable variability in teacher responses, suggesting that experiences with the appraisal system vary significantly across schools and individuals. This variability may reflect differences in implementation quality across schools, differences in appraiser competence, or differences in teacher perceptions.

The moderate level of performance appraisal practices suggests that the appraisal system is neither fully functional nor entirely dysfunctional, but rather exists in a state that requires substantial improvement. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that the implementation of human resource management practices in Ethiopian secondary schools remains below the expected institutional standard (Endale, 2015; Asegedeche, 2019). The moderate level suggests that while some elements of performance appraisal exist, significant improvements are needed in areas such as planning, feedback, objectivity, and linkage to professional development.

4.2 Level of Teachers' Job Motivation

The findings indicate moderate motivation levels among teachers, with an overall mean of 3.61 on a 5-point scale. The highest mean was for "My manager recognizes me when I do a good job" ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.08$), suggesting that recognition from managers is relatively higher compared to other motivational factors. This is an encouraging finding as it indicates that managers are providing at least some recognition to teachers for their work. Recognition is a key motivational factor, and its presence at a moderate level may help sustain teacher motivation despite other challenges.

The lowest mean was for "My manager discusses regularly my job performance with me" ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.35$), indicating that regular performance discussions are relatively infrequent. This finding suggests that while teachers receive some recognition for their work, there is insufficient regular dialogue about performance, which is a critical component of effective appraisal systems. Regular performance discussions provide opportunities for feedback, goal-setting, and professional development planning. The absence of such discussions may limit teachers' understanding of their performance and areas for improvement.

The standard deviations ranging from 1.02 to 1.35 indicate considerable variability in motivation levels across teachers, suggesting that some teachers experience significantly higher or lower motivation than others. This variability may be explained by differences in individual factors, differences in the quality of supervision, or differences in how appraisal systems are implemented across schools. The low-

moderate mean for regular performance discussions (3.32) indicates that this is a particular area of concern that may contribute to lower overall motivation levels.

4.3 Challenges in Performance Appraisal

The quantitative findings identified several significant challenges facing teacher performance appraisal in the study area. The most significant challenges were:

Objectivity Concerns: The low mean for "Performance appraisal reflects objectively my performance" ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.38$) indicates that teachers perceive the appraisal process as lacking objectivity. This suggests that appraisals may be influenced by subjective factors rather than being based on objective performance criteria. This challenge is particularly concerning because perceived objectivity is crucial for appraisal acceptance and motivation. When teachers perceive the appraisal as subjective, they may question its fairness and legitimacy, reducing its motivational potential.

Feedback Accuracy: The low mean for "I receive erroneous feedback on my performance" ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.42$) indicates that teachers perceive feedback as inaccurate or potentially misleading. This challenge prevents teachers from understanding their actual performance and areas requiring improvement. When feedback is perceived as inaccurate, teachers cannot use it for professional development, and the appraisal system fails to fulfill its developmental purpose.

Satisfaction with Evaluation: The finding that "I am satisfied with the way the appraisal system is used to evaluate my performance" had a relatively low mean ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.28$) indicates that overall satisfaction with the appraisal system is limited. This suggests that multiple aspects of the appraisal system need improvement to enhance teacher satisfaction.

The variability in responses (SD ranging from 1.08 to 1.42) indicates that teachers' experiences with these challenges vary considerably, suggesting that some schools may be performing better than others in addressing these issues. This variability also suggests that improvements in appraisal systems are possible and that best practices from better-performing schools could be shared with others.

4.4 Relationship Between Performance Appraisal and Job Motivation

The strong positive correlation ($r = 0.712$, $p < .01$) between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job motivation confirms that effective appraisal systems are associated with higher motivation levels. This finding is consistent with existing literature showing that performance appraisal can serve as a motivational tool (Jackson et al., 2009; Foot & Hook, 1999). The magnitude of the correlation ($r = 0.712$) indicates a strong relationship, suggesting that the quality of appraisal practices substantially influences teacher motivation.

The strength of the correlation (0.712) places this relationship in the "strong" category according to commonly used interpretation guidelines. This indicates that the relationship is not merely statistical

significant but also practically meaningful. The positive direction of the correlation confirms that as appraisal practices improve, teacher motivation increases, and conversely, when appraisal practices are poor, motivation tends to be lower.

The regression analysis revealed that performance appraisal practices explain 50.7% of the variance in teachers' job motivation ($R^2 = 0.507$), indicating that appraisal quality substantially influences how motivated teachers feel about their work. This high percentage of explained variance suggests that performance appraisal practices are among the most important organizational factors influencing teacher motivation. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.712$) confirms that performance appraisal practices are a strong predictor of job motivation. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.643$) indicates that for each one-unit increase in the quality of appraisal practices, job motivation increases by 0.643 units.

These findings support the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study:

Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964): When appraisal practices are clear and consistent, teachers understand the link between their performance and outcomes. This understanding strengthens the expectancy-instrumentality-valence chain, enhancing motivation.

Goal-Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990): Effective appraisal provides the feedback necessary for goal achievement. When teachers receive regular, constructive feedback, they can set appropriate goals and work toward them, increasing their motivation.

Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1966): Fair appraisal serves as both a hygiene factor (preventing dissatisfaction through fair treatment) and a motivator (providing recognition and growth opportunities). When teachers perceive appraisal as fair and developmental, it serves as a motivator.

4.5 Demographic Differences in Job Motivation

Significant differences in teachers' job motivation were observed across several demographic characteristics, providing important insights into how various factors influence teacher motivation in the study area.

Teachers with greater teaching experience reported significantly higher levels of job motivation compared to their less experienced counterparts. Post hoc comparisons revealed that teachers with 13–16 years and 17+ years of experience demonstrated significantly higher job motivation than those with 0–2 years of experience. Similarly, teachers with 17+ years of experience reported higher motivation than those with 3–5 years of experience. This pattern suggests that motivation tends to increase progressively with teaching experience. Several factors may explain this relationship, including greater career satisfaction that develops over time, higher professional competence and confidence, better coping mechanisms for workplace challenges, increased recognition and respect from colleagues and administrators, and the achievement of professional milestones and career progression.

Higher educational qualifications were associated with higher levels of job motivation among teachers. Teachers holding a second degree reported significantly higher job motivation than those with a diploma qualification. Similarly, teachers with a first degree demonstrated higher motivation levels compared to diploma holders. However, the difference in motivation between first degree and second degree holders was not statistically significant, although the trend indicated that advanced education is associated with increased motivation. This finding may reflect the greater career opportunities available to those with advanced degrees, intellectual stimulation from advanced education, higher subject knowledge and pedagogical skills leading to more positive classroom experiences, greater recognition and respect from colleagues, and a better understanding of educational theories and practices.

A clear hierarchical pattern emerged regarding current position and job motivation. Principals and deputy principals reported significantly higher motivation than classroom teachers. Principals demonstrated significantly higher motivation than teachers, department heads, and unit leaders. Deputy principals also showed significantly higher motivation than teachers, while department heads reported higher motivation than classroom teachers. This pattern suggests that leadership positions are associated with higher motivation, likely due to greater autonomy in decision-making, increased responsibility and authority, higher recognition and status, more opportunities for professional growth, greater involvement in school planning and policy development, and a more meaningful work experience with a stronger sense of purpose.

No significant difference in job motivation was found based on sex, indicating that male and female teachers experience similar levels of motivation. This finding suggests that appraisal practices affect both groups comparably and that the appraisal system does not systematically disadvantage one gender group. This is an encouraging finding for workplace equity and suggests that gender is not a barrier to motivation in this context.

4.6 Implications of Findings

The findings of this study have several important implications:

For Educational Administrators

The moderate level of performance appraisal practices indicates a need for systematic improvement in appraisal systems. Administrators should prioritize developing structured, objective, and transparent appraisal processes.

The strong relationship between appraisal practices and motivation suggests that improving appraisal systems can be an effective strategy for enhancing teacher motivation. Administrators should view investment in appraisal systems as an investment in teacher motivation and ultimately in student learning outcomes.

The identified challenges in objectivity, feedback, and satisfaction highlight specific areas where improvement efforts should focus. Addressing these challenges could have substantial benefits for

teacher motivation.

The demographic differences suggest that different groups of teachers may have different motivational needs. Administrators should consider targeted strategies for less experienced teachers, those with lower educational qualifications, and classroom teachers who report lower motivation.

For Educational Policy Makers

The variability in appraisal practices across schools suggests a need for standardized guidelines and monitoring mechanisms. Policy makers should develop comprehensive guidelines for teacher performance appraisal that emphasize objectivity, feedback, and professional development linkage.

The demographic differences suggest that policies addressing teacher motivation should consider experience, education, and position. Differentiated policies may be needed to address the specific needs of different teacher groups.

The strong predictive relationship between appraisal and motivation suggests that appraisal reform should be a policy priority. Improving appraisal systems could be a cost-effective way to enhance teacher motivation and ultimately educational quality.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions Based on Quantitative Findings

Based on the quantitative findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Current Practice of Teacher Performance Appraisal:

Teacher performance appraisal practices in Awi Zone secondary schools are at a moderate level (overall mean = 3.62), with significant room for improvement in satisfaction levels (M = 3.42), objectivity (M = 3.35), and feedback accuracy (M = 3.28). The moderate level suggests that while appraisal exists, it is not functioning optimally to support teacher development and motivation. The variability in responses indicates that some schools perform better than others, suggesting that improvement is possible and that best practices could be shared.

2. Level of Job Motivation:

Teachers demonstrate moderate motivation levels (overall mean = 3.61), with the lowest levels observed in regular performance discussions (M = 3.32). This suggests that the appraisal system is not fully leveraging its motivational potential. While teachers receive some recognition for their work, the infrequent performance discussions limit opportunities for feedback, goal-setting, and professional development planning.

3. Relationship with Motivation:

There is a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between performance appraisal practices and teachers' job motivation ($r = 0.712$, $p < .01$). Performance appraisal practices significantly predict teachers' job motivation, explaining 50.7% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.507$). This confirms that the quality of appraisal systems substantially influences teacher motivation. The regression model ($F = 153.0$, $p < .001$) is highly significant, indicating that performance appraisal practices are a robust predictor of job motivation.

4. Demographic Differences:

Significant differences in job motivation exist based on teaching experience ($F = 5.34$, $p = .000$), educational qualification ($F = 3.87$, $p = .023$), and current work position ($F = 4.56$, $p = .002$). More experienced teachers, those with higher education, and those in leadership positions reported higher motivation levels. No significant difference was found based on sex ($F = 1.42$, $p = .235$), indicating that male and female teachers experience similar levels of motivation.

5. Major Challenges:

Key challenges identified through quantitative analysis include inadequate objectivity in the appraisal process ($M = 3.35$), inaccurate feedback ($M = 3.28$), limited regular performance discussions ($M = 3.32$), and low satisfaction with the appraisal system ($M = 3.42$). These challenges prevent the appraisal system from fulfilling its motivational potential and suggest areas requiring immediate attention.

5.2 Recommendations Based on Quantitative Findings

Educational administrators should prioritize the development and implementation of objective performance criteria that are clearly communicated to all teachers. The current low mean score for "Performance appraisal reflects objectively my performance" ($M = 3.35$) indicates an urgent need for more objective appraisal processes. To achieve this, administrators should focus on developing clear, measurable performance indicators that leave little room for subjective interpretation. Training appraisers on objective evaluation techniques is essential to ensure consistency in how performance is assessed across different evaluators and schools. Additionally, using multiple sources of performance data—such as classroom observations, student achievement data, peer evaluations, and self-assessments—can provide a more comprehensive and balanced picture of teacher performance. Implementing standardized rating procedures will further enhance consistency and fairness, reducing the variability that currently exists across schools.

Improve Feedback Accuracy

Establishing mechanisms to ensure feedback is accurate and constructive is another critical priority for administrators. The low mean score for "I receive erroneous feedback on my performance" ($M = 3.28$) suggests that feedback quality is a significant concern requiring immediate attention. Administrators should invest in training appraisers on effective feedback techniques that emphasize specificity, constructiveness, and actionability. Implementing a structured feedback process that follows a

consistent framework can help ensure that all teachers receive meaningful and useful feedback. Using multiple sources of evidence for feedback strengthens its credibility and accuracy, while ensuring that feedback is specific, timely, and actionable enables teachers to translate feedback into concrete improvement strategies.

Increase Frequency of Performance Discussions

Administrators should implement regular performance discussions throughout the academic year to address the finding that "my manager discusses regularly my job performance with me" had the lowest mean score ($M = 3.32$). Increasing the frequency and quality of performance discussions could substantially enhance teacher motivation. Scheduling quarterly or monthly performance conversations creates regular opportunities for dialogue and support, moving beyond the traditional once-a-year appraisal meeting. Training managers on how to conduct effective performance discussions is essential to ensure these conversations are productive and meaningful. Creating a supportive environment for open dialogue encourages teachers to share their perspectives and concerns, while focusing discussions on both strengths and areas for improvement provides a balanced and constructive approach to performance conversations.

Address Demographic Differences: Administrators should develop targeted strategies to address the motivational needs of less experienced teachers, those with lower educational qualifications, and classroom teachers who reported lower motivation levels. The significant differences found across demographic groups suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective in addressing teacher motivation. Providing mentoring and support for less experienced teachers can help them navigate the challenges of the profession and develop professional competence. Offering professional development opportunities for all teachers ensures continuous growth and learning, while creating career progression pathways provides clear advancement opportunities that can enhance motivation. Recognizing and rewarding classroom teachers for their contributions—particularly those who may not hold leadership positions—ensures that all teachers feel valued and appreciated.

Enhance Appraiser Training: Comprehensive training for all appraisers is essential to improve their competence in conducting objective appraisals and providing accurate feedback. The low means for objectivity ($M = 3.35$) and feedback accuracy ($M = 3.28$) suggest that appraiser competence is a significant concern that undermines the effectiveness of appraisal systems. Developing a comprehensive training program on performance appraisal should cover all aspects of the appraisal process, from observation techniques to rating procedures to feedback delivery. Training appraisers on observation, rating, and feedback skills ensures they have the competencies needed to conduct fair and effective appraisals. Providing ongoing support and coaching for appraisers reinforces their learning and addresses challenges that arise in practice, while regularly evaluating and improving appraiser competence ensures continuous improvement in appraisal quality.

Link Appraisal to Professional Development: Administrators must ensure that appraisal results are systematically used to identify professional development needs and plan appropriate training programs.

The moderate levels of appraisal practices suggest that the developmental purpose of appraisal is not being fully realized in many schools. Analyzing appraisal data to identify training needs enables schools to design targeted professional development programs that address specific gaps and challenges. Developing individualized professional development plans for teachers based on appraisal results ensures that professional growth is personalized and relevant. Providing resources for professional development demonstrates institutional commitment to teacher growth, while evaluating the impact of professional development on performance ensures that training programs are effective and contributing to improved outcomes.

Recommendations for Educational Policy Makers

Develop Standardized Guidelines: Policy makers should create standardized teacher performance appraisal guidelines that emphasize objectivity, accuracy, and regular feedback. The variability in responses, with standard deviations ranging from 0.98 to 1.42, suggests that practices vary considerably across schools, indicating a clear need for standardization. These guidelines should specify minimum standards for appraisal practices to establish a baseline of quality across all schools. Outlining clear procedures for conducting appraisals ensures consistency in how appraisals are implemented, while providing templates for documentation standardizes record-keeping and reporting. Establishing timelines for appraisal activities creates accountability and ensures that appraisals are conducted in a timely and organized manner.

Monitor Implementation: Establishing monitoring mechanisms to ensure schools implement performance appraisal systems effectively is essential for accountability and improvement. The moderate levels of appraisal practices suggest that implementation is inconsistent across schools, and monitoring is needed to identify and address gaps. Conducting regular reviews of appraisal practices enables policy makers to assess compliance with guidelines and identify areas needing improvement. Collecting data on appraisal quality and outcomes provides evidence of system effectiveness and highlights successful practices. Providing feedback to schools on their appraisal practices supports continuous improvement, while identifying and disseminating best practices enables schools to learn from successful examples.

Allocate Resources: Policy makers should allocate sufficient resources for appraiser training and the development of valid appraisal instruments. The challenges identified in objectivity and feedback accuracy suggest that appraisers need better training and tools to conduct effective appraisals. Resources should be allocated for comprehensive training programs for appraisers that build their competence in all aspects of the appraisal process. Investment in the development of valid and reliable appraisal instruments ensures that appraisal tools measure what they are intended to measure and produce consistent results. Providing ongoing support and professional development for appraisers sustains improvement over time, while funding research on effective appraisal practices contributes to evidence-based policy development.

Integrate Appraisal in Teacher Development: Incorporating performance appraisal into teacher professional development policies ensures that appraisal results are systematically used for professional development planning. Developing policies that explicitly link appraisal to professional development creates a clear framework for using appraisal data to inform growth opportunities. Creating systems for tracking professional development needs and activities enables monitoring of how appraisal results translate into professional growth. Evaluating the effectiveness of professional development programs provides evidence of impact and informs program improvement. Encouraging a culture of continuous improvement within schools promotes the view that appraisal is not merely an evaluation exercise but a tool for ongoing professional growth and development.

Recommendations for Future Research

Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal research to examine changes in teacher motivation following improvements in performance appraisal systems would provide valuable evidence of the effectiveness of interventions. Such studies could track teachers over multiple years, measuring motivation levels before and after appraisal system improvements. This would help identify which specific changes have the greatest impact on motivation and provide evidence to guide policy and practice decisions.

Comparative Studies: Comparing performance appraisal practices across different regions of Ethiopia would help identify best practices that could be replicated elsewhere. Such studies could examine how contextual factors—such as regional policies, available resources, and cultural norms—influence appraisal practices and outcomes. Identifying successful approaches from better-performing regions could guide improvement efforts in other areas.

Multi-Level Analysis: Conducting multi-level analysis to examine how school-level factors influence the relationship between appraisal practices and teacher motivation would provide a more comprehensive understanding of appraisal effectiveness. Such studies could examine how principal leadership, school culture, resource availability, and other contextual factors moderate the relationship between appraisal practices and motivation. This would inform the development of contextually appropriate interventions.

Mixed-Methods Research: Conducting mixed-methods research to complement quantitative findings with qualitative insights would provide a deeper understanding of appraisal practices. Interviews and focus groups with teachers and administrators could reveal why appraisal practices vary across schools and how they can be improved. Qualitative data could also capture teacher experiences and perceptions in ways that quantitative data cannot, providing rich insights into appraisal processes.

Student Outcomes: Including student outcomes in research on teacher performance appraisal would provide evidence of the ultimate impact of appraisal systems on educational quality. Studies could examine whether improvements in appraisal practices lead to improved student achievement, engagement, and other outcomes. This would demonstrate the broader value of effective appraisal systems beyond teacher motivation.

Intervention Studies: Implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of specific interventions designed to improve appraisal practices would provide practical evidence of what works in specific contexts. Such studies could test different approaches to appraiser training, feedback mechanisms, and professional development linkage. This evidence could guide policy development and resource allocation decisions.

Declarations

Funding: Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest/Competing interests: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Ethics approval: This study was reviewed and approved by the Injibara University Research Ethics and Review Committee, Injibara University (IU/IRERC/1108/26). All methods were performed in accordance with the relevant guidelines and regulations of the Injibara University Research Ethics and Review Committee.

Consent to participate: Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. All participants were fully informed of the study's purpose and their rights, including the voluntary nature of their participation and their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. A comprehensive explanation of the research objectives, procedures, and the voluntary nature of involvement was provided before obtaining informed consent.

Consent for publication: Not applicable.

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Authors' contributions: All authors conceived, designed, analyzed, and wrote the manuscript.

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