



## A Comparative Study of Teachers' Performance Evaluation Methods in Australia, Finland, Iran and USA

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 24 Jan 2022 Revised: 21 June 2022 Accepted: 18 Nov 2022 Online: 10 Feb 2023</p>	<p>The aim of present research was a comparative study of teachers' performance evaluation methods in Australia, Finland, Iran and USA. In this qualitative comparatively study, the strategy of country selection and level of analysis were "different social systems, different educational outputs" and macro (countries) respectively. The findings reveal that in all the selected countries, teachers' performance evaluation methods are done for the two purposes of accountability and professional development. Also, the findings indicated that in Finland and Iran, results of performance evaluation do not have a great impact on the employment status of teachers, while in Australia, the purpose of evaluation is to issue teaching certificates and continuous career improvement or to fire teachers who cannot or do not willing to perform professionally. Another finding revealed that all the selected countries have similarities in the evaluation indicators - such as identifying and attention to the needs and individual differences of students, use of new technologies in the teaching-learning process, proper relationships with colleagues, and professional participation. Of course, indicators such as emphasis on having excellent thought power (in USA), adherence to Islamic, moral and religious values (in Iran) and awareness of various dimensions of the teaching profession - social, philosophical, psychological, sociological &amp; historical foundations of education (in Finland) are more important in the process of evaluating teachers' performance. Findings also showed that all the selected countries are similar in using various methods of teachers' evaluation performance - such as direct observation of the teacher, feedback from peers, principal, parents &amp; self-evaluation. However, consultative and formative evaluation methods in Finland and lack of use of academic record of students and learners' performance in Iran are among differences of these two countries with others.</p>
<p><b>KEYWORDS</b></p> <p>Bereday Model Comparative Study Teacher Evaluation Teacher Performance</p>	

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## **1. Introduction**

Teacher evaluation is a process through which their professional quality is judged. The performance of the teacher in the classroom and its effect on the students is the core of this process (Borg, 2018). Research literature shows that evaluation of teachers' performance has attracted the attention of many educational researchers and policymakers nowadays. Although these policies differ in nature and procedures, different methods for evaluating teacher performance have been implemented around the world (OECD, 2020). The main evolution of educational policies includes more efforts to make teachers accountable for their performance and effects on students and schools (Youngs, & Grissom, 2016). Today, teacher performance evaluation is done by school principals for various purposes such as making decisions about continued employment, providing feedback for professional development planning, and strengthening the quality of teaching (Hallinger, Heck & Murphy, 2014). For this reason, in the new teacher evaluation systems, the role of managers - as educational leaders - has been expanded (Abdo, Mathews & Ross, 2017). By examining the actual responsibility of the employee (what the teacher is supposed to do) and determining job standards, school principals can help teachers evaluation performance process and improve it (Stronge & Tucker, 2017). Also, the results of teacher performance evaluation can be used to issue a license to enter the teaching profession, a powerful tool for teacher learning and a mean for improving education (Pecheone & Chung, 2006).

Some countries, such as Portugal, Poland, and Spain, even publish partial results of evaluations in a way that increases the pressure on teachers by turning their performance into measurable and comparable data (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). In fact, accurate assessment of teacher performance has the potential to dramatically improve the quality of education. At present, most educational systems prefer to leave full responsibility for this assessment to school principals, while in Europe, central governments are insisting on supporting an increased role for local education departments (Bradford & Braaten, 2018). However, there is little evidence on the ability of school principals and local authorities to develop teachers' professional development through the assessment process (Kraft and Gilmour, 2016).

Also, the evaluation of teachers in different countries is done with two important goals. First, teachers' accountability and defense of their performance; Second, providing opportunities to develop professional competencies (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016; Looney, 2011). An overview of assessment goals in different countries by the University of Michigan in 2016 indicated that Australia, Chile, Egypt, Finland, France, Mexico, New Zealand and the United States are looking for methods to develop teachers through formative assessments. Also, in these countries, final

evaluations are used to help decide on the continuation or termination of teachers' service (Abdelaziz et al., 2016).

To ensure effective evaluation, the use of several methods is suggested. These methods are as follow: a) Interview with the teacher, b) Observation of class, c) Students opinions, d) Opinion of parents, e) Academic progress of learners, f) Self-evaluation, g) Opinion of teacher's colleagues, h) Portfolio and; i) Teacher scientific works (Stronge & Tucker, 2017). Using one evaluation method - such as classroom observations or student grades - and ignore other methods is one of the weaknesses of teacher performance evaluation systems (Sheppard, 2013; Youngs, & Grissom, 2016). Also, insufficient knowledge of managers to evaluate the learning environment, classroom climate and teaching methods are other weaknesses of teacher performance evaluation methods (Basco-Galangco, 2015). Danielson & McGreal (2000) believe that teacher evaluation systems have six major weaknesses namely old and limited criteria; lack of common understanding of quality teaching; inaccuracy in evaluation; Top- down opinion of managers to evaluation; lack of distinguishing between experienced and novice teachers evaluation methods and lack of expertise of managers in evaluation. School principal's evaluation of teachers may be associated with intra-personal tensions - through ranking and making negative decisions about job abilities - and adversely affect the continuity of service and livelihood of teachers (Derrington & Campbell, 2013). In fact, the subjective nature of assessments through rare and poor classroom observations and personal assessments of principals has increased the enthusiasm of educational policy makers for assessment based on student scores.

Findings of Reddy et al. (2017) showed that teachers value a participatory assessment process with constructive and clear feedback that they can use to make specific changes in their teaching practices. In systems that emphasize accountability, teacher evaluation may include incentives such as performance-based advancement, salary increases, bonus payments, or punishments such as job loss (Looney, 2011). Nowadays, in many countries, teachers' salaries are determined by attention to students' performance. This method is known as the "value added" model and is based on the assumption that objective measurement of student performance is the best way to measure the performance of teachers and schools. Today, this model is increasingly used to evaluate teachers' performance as well as reward or punish them (Murphy, 2012 & Aslantas, 2020).

However, there are two major challenges for evaluating teachers through students' performance: First, how to identify appropriate measures of student progress and second, how to use these measures to make inferences about the teacher's impact on student learning (Gagnon,

Hall & Marion, 2016). Therefore, focusing solely on students' test scores and using them to judge the effectiveness of teachers' performance or the quality of schools is inappropriate (Sahlberg, 2011). Also, due to the fact that students' progress scores are subject to different tests that are designed and scored by teachers, they cannot be used as a reliable measure to evaluate teacher's performance. In fact, due to the need for a common test for comparison, only the scores obtained from coordinated tests or tests designed by researchers can be used to accurately measure the academic progress of students (Kabiri, 2019). Also, while teacher performance evaluation is useful for increasing her/his professional growth and student learning, it is a complex process and there is no perfect criterion for it (Aslantas, 2020). Therefore, different evaluation systems usually consist of several criteria - including teaching observations and student performance - which reflect the teacher's influence. Many criticisms of these systems have not necessarily come from the methods, but from the way they are used (Kathleen & Dustin, 2020).

Another challenge of the teacher evaluation system is that although it has been used to strengthen the education system, in most cases this system (or program) has turned into a mechanical and meaningless exercise because the school administrators do not have comprehensive knowledge about it. In this context, they do not receive effective training for teacher evaluation (Zhang & Ng, 2015; Maharaj, 2014). In a brief summary, the purpose of the teacher performance evaluation system includes the following: providing constructive individual feedback to teachers, directing professional development programs, providing effective evidence, ending the employment of incompetent people, and creating unity - instead of division - between teachers and administrators and a collective effort to improve student learning (Smylie, 2014; Stronge & Tucker, 2017).

## **2. Research Background**

The research of Rigi, Ghaderi, & Salimi (2016) about use of video data (observation of recorded teaching) compared to other methods of teacher evaluation showed that this method is useful but somewhat artificial from the point of view of teachers. During the Corona pandemic in Iran, the use of video data in the teaching evaluation of students/teachers became very popular. Nakhai (2015) showed that teachers consider the manager's personal opinion as the most important weakness of the present performance evaluation system. Also, they do not consider the current system of evaluation to be efficient in improving the level of teacher performance, optimizing the determination of the payment system, identifying talented teachers and promoting or demoting and firing them, as well as identifying educational needs (Hadadian, Binesh, & Norouzi 2013). Ebrahimi Nayini (2019) examined the level of achievement of the goals of the teacher performance

evaluation system from view of public schools' principals and revealed that the performance evaluation of teachers has had a significant relationship with increasing the quality of education, establishing a system of encouragement and punishment, providing feedback to teachers, guidance of teachers and identifying talents through establishing a meritocracy system. Also, the current performance evaluation system in Iran does not have favorable conditions and needs more efficient methods.

Challenging the way teachers are evaluated in USA, Warring (2015) claims that the use of student value-added scores in teacher evaluation has a negative effect on good teachers in bad schools and a positive effect on bad teachers in good schools. He also stated that a fair assessment should be done with the participation of the principal and the teacher and based on professional teaching standards, use multifaceted evidence - instead of emphasizing the students' grades - and include useful feedback for the teacher's professional development. Since the characteristics of students and the environment in which they are located affect their academic progress, in order to use the value-added method, they must deal with at least fifty students and only one teacher in a period of three years. Kraft, & Gilmour, (2016) showed that from the point of view of school administrators, giving low ratings to teachers can have the opposite effect because it causes them to be demotivated. It also makes teachers less receptive to feedback and can reduce the quality of teaching. For this reason, administrators give them higher ratings in the evaluation of teachers. Clinton & Dawson (2018) do not consider the current practice of teacher evaluation in Australia to be appropriate and believe that this system is mainly an exercise in performance management as opposed to a process that promotes an evaluative mindset and continuous improvement related to student learning outcomes. While Australia has a standardized framework for teacher performance evaluation, it lacks tools to make reliable decisions about teacher quality. Creating an evaluative mindset in teachers along with the development of appropriate tools and evidence can transfer the control of improving the quality of performance to the teachers themselves. Flores & Derrington (2018) regarding the two goals of accountability and professional development in the teacher evaluation system in several different countries found that many tensions arise from that whether the school principal can act as an evaluator & hiring decisions and at the same time help teachers find professional development?

In India , Bambawale, Hughes & Lightfoot (2018) revealed that in public schools, three evaluation methods - classroom observations, self-evaluation, and measuring student learning outcomes - are more prevalent, although with the participation of non-governmental organizations ( NGOs) , others methods—such as peer assessment, teacher portfolios, and professional

conversations—are also used. Derrington & Campbell (2018) conclude that mandating a rigorous evaluation policy does not necessarily guarantee teacher effectiveness and may complicate principals' educational leadership. They consider the key elements of an effective assessment system to be a unique program tailored to the context of each school. The focus of such an approach is on effectiveness rather than on rigid compliance with a particular policy that may hinder the realization of student academic achievement.

According to Hazi (2019) multiple methods of teacher evaluation in USA are classroom observation, student growth criteria - such as student growth percentiles and value-added models - ; survey of students and learning objectives. He criticizes growth percentiles and the value-added model because of their lack of reliability and transparency and because they cannot provide useful data to improve students' learning. He also points out that although in the early 18th century, the results of students' tests were used to determine the value and salary of teachers, but in the 20th century, to evaluate the performance of teachers, classroom observation was prevailed and recently classroom and student test scores are two measures used in most states of the country.

In USA, Derrington & Martinez (2019) show that according to teachers, principals provide the most useful feedback based on their classroom observations, but the personal opinion of the principal makes the evaluation process unscientific and has a negative effect on principal-teacher relationships. Meanwhile, peer evaluation does not affect the relationship between teachers. Jones and Bergin (2019) also consider one of the worrisome features of teacher performance evaluation by principals during classroom observations in different countries, providing higher or lower ratings for all teachers, and they introduce it as "systematic flexibility of principals". Their findings also show that principals may pursue multiple goals during classroom observations. These goals are: (1) accurate rating and feedback to teachers, (2) keeping teachers open to growth-promoting feedback; (3) supporting teachers' morale and strengthening positive relationships, (4) avoiding difficult conversations, (5) judicious management of limited time; and (6) maintaining self-efficacy as an educational leader (Jones, Bergin, & Murphy, 2022). In his research Hazi (2022) has mentioned new tools and technologies that can be used in teacher evaluation. The most important of these tools are: distant supervision; rubrics, on-line platforms and telepresence robots. Marey et al (2020) in their research by re-conceptualizing the evaluation of teachers have presented a desirable model in which the role of managers has changed from fault finders to catalysts of teachers' professional growth. In this model, performance measurement is removed and the probes own missions take its place. Therefore, teacher evaluations are conducted for the purpose of peer education, self-directed professional development, peer coaching & mentoring, and portfolio

evaluation. Considering the shortcomings of the current evaluation systems, a comparative study of teacher performance evaluation methods in countries is necessary. In this regard, the general goal of the current research is to compare teacher performance evaluation systems in Iran, Finland, Australia and USA. The research questions are:

- What are the similarities and differences between goals of teacher performance evaluation in Iran, USA, Australia and Finland?
- What are the similarities and differences between teachers' performance evaluation indicators in Iran, USA, Australia and Finland?
- What are the similarities and differences between the selected countries regarding performance evaluation methods?

### **3. Research Method**

The current research is a comparative and case-oriented study. The method of data collection was documentary through the review and analysis of valid national documents, articles and books. Two methods of George Bereday and John Stuart Mill were used to analyze the data. The level of observation was macro (countries) and the strategy of country's selection was "different social systems, different educational outputs". According to this strategy, the educational system of these countries have the most differences from each other in terms of social systems and educational structure, content , programs , activities, as well as outputs (Madandar Arani & Kakia, 2018). In this base, USA, Australia and Finland were selected for comparison with Iran due to having an advanced educational system, innovations and best methods of teachers' performance evaluation.

### **4. Findings**

#### *A) Description and Interpretation Stages*

At this stage, the status of the educational system of Iran, USA, Australia and Finland and the evaluation system of teachers' performance is described according to the components of goals, indicators and resources.

#### *Australia*

Australia's education system is decentralized, but in order to face the complexities of globalization, there is an agreement on a set of abilities at the national level through the development of a national curriculum. Of course, this agreement does not conflict with the full authority and responsibility that the states have (Reid, 2005). In this country, there are no fixed standards for entering the teaching profession, although the "Teacher Qualification Standards



Framework" is used to train teachers. Teacher training is carried out by private universities and colleges over a 4-year period, and states have different rules and regulations for teacher training and professional qualification certificates (Aras, 2018). Teacher evaluation is aimed at obtaining teaching certification within the state or district and continuous professional improvement of teaching staff and timely dismissal of teachers who cannot or do not want to improve their performance. Also, in order to ensure the achievement of standards, more emphasis is placed on the expected results of teacher training (Parker, 2016).

The federal government provides recommendations for teacher performance management and professional development through the "Teacher Professional Standards Framework". The Australian Professional Teaching Standards for teachers include "what teachers should know and be able to do". Professional teaching standards are divided into three distinct areas of professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement (Clinton and Dawson, 2018). The evaluation of teachers and their job classification based on these standards is done in four levels namely graduate, skilled, highly successful and advanced (Parker, 2016; Savage & Lingard, 2018; Elliott, 2015). This national framework also specifies that teachers' performance and behavior should be observed in classrooms by a principal, mentor, or other evaluator, although classroom observation is often criticized as an unreliable and biased method (Clinton & Dawson, 2018). At the individual level, the outputs from teacher evaluation are mainly used for teacher certification, the process through which teachers are able to find work in Australian schools. Also, evaluation indicators include the ability to identify how students learn; master the content of the lesson and how to teach it; plan and implement for effective teaching and learning; create and maintain a supportive and safe learning environment; provide feedback and report on knowledge learning; Students participation in learning and professional participation with colleagues, parents and society. The realization of these indicators is determined through the methods of observing the classroom, examining the academic results of students, surveying students, colleagues, principals, parents, and teacher self-evaluation.

### *Finland*

The education system in Finland is decentralized, but all departments and academic courses operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Aurén, 2017). The general framework of the curriculum is prepared by the "National Agency of Finnish Education", although with an emphasis on school-based curriculum planning, schools are allowed to use their own innovations. In this approach, there is a close relationship between the curriculum at the school,



local and national levels (OECD, 2020). In Finland, education is a fundamental right for all citizens, and therefore the main goal of education policies is to guarantee equal and free educational opportunities for everybody. Finnish society has a very positive attitude towards high quality education - as one of the main assets in international competition (Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi, 2006). In this regard, one of the main foundations of mutual trust in the Finnish education system is the professional accountability of teachers. The results of teacher evaluations in Finland - unlike in many countries - are used for continuous positive reinforcement and personal development of teachers, rather than reprimands and dismissals.

This country has one of the best educational systems at the international level. One of the reasons for this success is the quality of teachers' pre-service and in-service training (Aurén, 2017). Teaching is a very popular profession among high school graduates and entry into teacher training centers is very competitive. Based on this, every year only 10% of applicants are accepted in teacher education centers. The increase in the number of applicants for teaching and the emphasis on accountability has made teacher evaluation a necessity (Sahlberg, 2011; OECD, 2020). The successful revision of national education in Finland was accompanied by reforms in the teacher evaluation process. Finnish educational reform, unlike the United States, has shifted from a highly centralized system to a local one, allowing for extensive teacher training and flexibility in national standards for curriculum design based on teacher discretion. Instead of being standardized, these assessments are individualized according to the needs of each teacher.

In Finland all teachers must have a master's degree and pass professional evaluations before teaching. Teachers must follow professional norms and ethics to perform their duties responsibly. In this country, there are no formal requirements and national guidelines for teacher evaluation, but municipalities are responsible for creating a local framework for teacher evaluation in cooperation with the teachers' union. The evaluation of teachers in this country is done with the aim of identifying the professional needs of teachers and in order to guide and develop their professional activities through the creation of learning associations for teachers and administrators. Also, teacher performance evaluation requirements and processes are determined by local education authorities and school principals, although the results do not affect teachers' salary and employment contract status (Sahlberg, 2011).

Evaluation is an opportunity for professional growth and empowerment of teachers because school effectiveness is more important than teacher effectiveness (OECD, 2020; Tarhan et al., 2019). In this process, teachers are subjected to reflective self-evaluation and group evaluation by colleagues while administrators help them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers'

evaluation indicators include: mastery of subject knowledge, having research skills (including skills needed for critical thinking and research-based knowledge), skills to create and evaluate ideas related to teaching and learning in the classroom, skills interaction with colleagues, skills to work with different digital learning environments, awareness about learning and diversity among learners; knowledge of various subjects, knowledge of issues related to human rights and democracy, entrepreneurship, sustainable development and globalization; knowledge of various dimensions of teaching profession (including social, philosophical, psychological, sociological and historical foundations of education) and also knowledge of school social relations. In Finland, teachers are not evaluated based on students' academic progress and standardized test scores, but their performance may be indirectly evaluated through test scores in order to identify children who need additional instruction (Tarhan et al, 2019; Hanushek, 2009).

### *Iran*

Iran's educational system is centralized and student-teachers' selection based according to the rules and regulations of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science, Research & Technology. Also, student-teachers are selected to enter this job after participating in a national exam and confirming their general and specialized qualifications by the Ministry of Education. Those who are accepted to the teaching profession receive the necessary training during a period of 4 years in the Farhangian University and Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training University. Therefore, the minimum qualification for teaching in schools is a bachelor's degree. The general approach governing teacher training curricula is to create key competencies in teachers - such as competencies focused on subject knowledge, educational knowledge, and general knowledge (Musapour & Ahmadi, 2017). Evaluation of the performance of teachers in schools is done with the aim of recognizing their strengths and weaknesses by the school principal (Ministry of Education, 2019). In this process, no attention is usually paid to recognizing the needs and providing various fields of professional development of teachers, and the results of evaluations have no effect on the renewal of teachers' employment contracts.

Specific indicators of teachers' performance evaluation are: Use of lesson plans and presentation of materials in the teaching process; respecting the order for starting and ending the class and mastering the class administration with the participation of students; Identifying and paying attention to the needs and individual differences of learners; Using appropriate and effective methods to create and strengthen positive behavior in students; creating interest to religion and knowledge in students; assigning assignments or presenting research topics to the best of students'

ability and controlling and supervising their performance; supervision and control of students' health; Identifying students with symptoms related to social harm and occurrence of high-risk behaviors; Teaching self-care and health skills to prevent social harm to students; continuous evaluation of the teaching-learning process and the use of evaluation results to improve the quality of education; Appropriate use of grade registers and continuous reporting of students' academic and disciplinary status to inform the school principal , parents and cooperate and try to solve problems; Adhering to the principles of assessment in conducting evaluations and designing exam questions and complying with regulations in correcting exam papers; Registering grades and delivering them to the school management on time and handling students' objections on time; Participation and cooperation in organizing festivals, competitions, scientific, educational and extracurricular activities. The general indicators of teacher performance evaluation are as follow: responsibility, entrepreneurship and innovation, teamwork, individual professional development (number of hours of in-service training), use of appropriate technologies; providing constructive suggestions and documenting experiences; Effective participation in educational and administrative meetings, compliance with discipline and administrative regulations, appropriate behavior with colleagues and parents, and compliance with the rules and regulations of citizen rights; evaluation of these indicators is done through methods such as classroom observation by the principal, teacher self-evaluation, and the opinions of students, colleagues, and parents (Ministry of Education, 2019).

### *USA*

Education in the United States is highly decentralized in public, private, and home schools. Curricula vary from district to district, and different schools offer classes focusing on different subjects, which vary in quality. While the federal government is not directly responsible for education, it does play a vital role in several ways. The direct responsibility for educational policy at the federal level is the Minister of Education, but state governments set educational standards. In this country, evaluations are mainly carried out for administrative purposes - such as awarding and deciding on promotions - and its use for professional development purposes remains relatively limited (Kagama & Irungu, 2018). According to report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020), the United States spent more than any country in the world on education per each student. Therefore, in USA, teacher performance evaluation is mostly done with the aim of responding and increasing student learning (Winchester Public Schools Teacher Evaluation Handbook, 2012; Taylor and Tyler, 2012). Therefore, indicators such as students'

educational progress are very important in evaluating teachers' performance. Therefore, performance standards and teacher evaluation's criteria have been approved in 2011 and revised in 2015 and 2020 (Virginia Department of Education, 2021). Some states use their own standards for assessment, but most use standards derived from Danielson's teaching framework and their indicators - four dimensions of planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professionalism (Danielson, & McGreal, 2000).

Some of the evaluation indicators in this framework are as follow: Involving students in activities that require high-level thinking and applying functional skills in learning; mastering subject knowledge; creating a safe and positive learning environment; assessment of learning and for learning; determining level of academic progress of each student; professional ethics and communication with colleagues and parents; Effective use of a variety of strategies and instructional resources and technology to enhance student learning. In addition to classroom observation, the following evaluation methods are used: (a) A survey of teachers regarding their satisfaction and degree of competence in their job performance, (b) a survey of principals and vice-principals of schools regarding teachers' performance and (c) a survey from students' opinions. Also, in recent years, many states and districts across the United States have been using the Student Achievement Index to evaluate teachers' performance (Gagnon, Hall, and Marion 2016). In this way, data related to student tests, along with classroom observations, are given to computer scoring systems to rank teachers and calculate different salaries for them (Derrington & Martinez, 2019).

### *B) Juxtaposition and Comparison*

Q1: What are the similarities and differences between goals of teacher performance evaluation in Iran, USA, Australia and Finland?

The results of juxtaposition of data about teacher performance goals in selected countries and their similarities and differences are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of teachers' performance evaluation goals

Teachers' performance evaluation goals	Iran	Australia	USA	Finland
Optimizing learning and promoting students and improving the quality of education and teacher effectiveness	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recognizing the needs and providing a basis for the professional development of teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓
Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of teachers and using its results in administrative decisions	✓	✓	✓	×

According to the findings of Table 1, the common goal of teacher evaluation performance in all four countries is to provide a suitable context for the professional development of teachers and

the promotion of student learning. Also, in all countries - except Finland - the evaluation of teachers' performance is done with the aim of knowing the strengths and weaknesses of teachers and using the results in administrative decisions.

Q2: What are the similarities and differences between teachers' performance evaluation indicators in Iran, USA, Australia and Finland?

The results of juxtaposition of data about indicators of teachers' academic performance in selected countries and their similarities and differences are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of teachers' performance evaluation indicators in selected countries

Teachers' performance evaluation indicators	Iran	Australia	USA	Finland
Identifying students individual needs and differences to solve their educational problems	✓	✓	✓	✓
Using educational aids and new technologies and digital environment in the teaching-learning process	✓	✓	✓	✓
Relationships and proper treatment with colleagues and professional partnership with them	✓	✓	✓	✓
Adherence to organizational culture and Islamic and moral values such as active participation in religious ceremonies and rituals	✓	×	×	×
Mastery and awareness of subject knowledge	×	✓	✓	✓
Involving students in the learning process	×	✓	✓	✓
Engaging students in activities that require excellent level of thinking and functional skills	×	×	✓	×
Knowledge of issues related to human rights and democracy, entrepreneurship, sustainable development and globalization.	×	×	×	✓
Innovation in providing educational programs	✓	✓	×	×

According to the findings of Table 2, all four selected countries in the evaluation indicators such as identifying students and attention to their individual needs and differences, using new technologies and digital environment in the teaching-learning process and proper relationships with colleagues and professional participation are similar. Also, the three countries of USA, Australia and Finland are similar in the index of teacher mastery over subject knowledge and involving students in learning. Iran in the index of adherence to organizational culture and Islamic values, such as active participation in religious ceremonies and rituals, and Finland in the index of awareness of issues related to human rights and democracy, entrepreneurship, sustainable development and globalization, and awareness about various aspects of the teaching profession and

USA in indicators of engaging students in matters that require high thinking and functional skills are different from other selected countries.

Q3: What are the similarities and differences between the selected countries regarding performance evaluation methods?

The results of comparing data about teachers' knowledge assessment methods reveal similarities and differences between selected countries (Table 3).

Table 3: Comparison of teacher performance evaluation methods in selected countries

Teachers' performance evaluation methods	Iran	Australia	USA	Finland
Direct observation of teacher teaching, teacher self-evaluation, opinion of the manager, colleagues and parents	✓	✓	✓	✓
Data related to academic performance and student learning	×	✓	✓	✓

According to the findings of Table 3, all four countries are similar in teacher evaluation methods such as direct observation of teacher teaching, student feedback, peer and principal feedback, parent feedback, and self-evaluation. Nevertheless, the use of the Iran educational system from data related to academic records and students' learning has made this country different from Australia and Finland.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this comparative study was examine of teacher performance evaluation methods in Iran, USA, Finland and Australia. The research literature showed that so far no study has been done on the comparison of teachers' performance evaluation methods in countries with advanced educational systems with the developing country of Iran. The first finding about teachers' performance evaluation goals revealed that in USA, Australia and Finland, the main goal of this system is the accountability of educational system and professional development of teachers, while in Iran; the main goal of teacher evaluation is the realization of organizational goals and decisions. In explaining this finding, it can be said that if performance evaluation results do not affect the job security of teachers, naturally, it will not be effective in creating motivation for professional growth. In this regard, in the Australian education system, the outputs of teachers' performance evaluation are used to provide teaching certificates and obtain standards of professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional participation. It is also used for timely dismissal of teachers who are unable or unwilling to improve themselves (Parker, 2016; Elliott, 2015).

Other finding of the research reveals that there is no similarity between Iran and selected countries in terms of compliance of standards and characteristics of effective teachers with global standards and local requirements. This can be seen in the current forms of teacher performance evaluation. In other words, teacher evaluation indicators - in the form of specific and general indicators - have little relation with effective teacher standards. Also, in general indicators, more attention has been paid to the implementation of administrative rules and teacher's executive duties. The results of this research are in line with the findings of Nazari et al. (2020) and Razavi et al (2022). Another finding indicated that unlike the selected countries, in Iran, the opinions of the school principal and her/his deputies, parents and students have a significant impact on the process of teachers' performance evaluation. This finding supports Nakhai's research (2015) which highlighted that applying the personal taste of the principal is very important in the evaluation of teachers. Also, while in USA, Australia, and Finland, the evaluation of academic progress and students' learning scores are common methods of evaluating teachers' performance, in Iran, these two criteria have received less attention from educational evaluators. According to the findings of the research, it is suggested to the Iranian educational planners and evaluators to consider the professional standards of the teaching profession of the selected countries for development of teacher performance evaluation system in Iran. The last suggestion is to use the results of educational progress of students to evaluate teachers' performance and hire or fire them.

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