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The Future of Performance Management in the Shift from Annual Appraisals to Continuous Feedback

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History <i>Published Online: September 2025</i></p> <hr/> <p>Keywords Continuous Feedback Performance Management Organizational Agility Narrative Evaluation Officer Engagement Digital Platforms</p> <hr/> <p>JEL Codes: F22, L21, L25</p> <hr/> <p>Corresponding Author Email: jasimhamdanjarsh@gmail.com</p>	<p>This study investigates how the Dubai Police Force transitioned from rigid, traditional annual appraisals to a dynamic, continuous-feedback performance-management system. Employing a quantitative methodology, a five-point Likert questionnaire was administered to a stratified random sample of 100 officers who experienced this shift firsthand. Data were analyzed using SPSS to identify central tendencies, correlations, and differences in perceptions. The findings reveal a high overall adoption index (mean = 4.563), indicating strong acceptance of the new system. Officers rated the ability to set flexible, personalized goals (mean = 4.789) and participation in self-assessments and peer reviews (mean = 4.671) most favorably. Criteria emphasizing collaboration, innovation, and adaptability scored 4.634, while real-time digital tracking tools scored 4.497. Continuous feedback mechanisms, replacing year-end reviews, scored 4.224, confirming broad support despite being the lowest-ranked item. Thematic analysis shows that immediate feedback reduces error accumulation, fosters continuous learning, and strengthens organizational commitment. A significant positive correlation was found between feedback frequency and job satisfaction, especially in dynamic operational environments. Continuous, two-way dialogue accelerates decision-making, enhances organizational agility, and improves the quality of managerial decisions by providing up-to-date performance data. While implementation challenges arise from traditional hierarchical cultures, pilot phases, digital platform integration, and leadership coaching mindsets can mitigate resistance. The study concludes that paragraph-based narrative evaluations, supported by smart digital tools, create a human-centered performance-management paradigm that aligns individual and institutional objectives, ultimately enhancing officer engagement, productivity, and strategic agility in security settings.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

Administrative leadership is one of the vital elements that form the backbone of any security institution striving for excellence and sustainability in a work environment characterized by constant change and increasing challenges. The preparation of the second line of security leadership is not merely a routine procedural process but rather a strategic endeavor that requires the activation of modern leadership mechanisms to ensure the transfer of expertise and knowledge from current leaders to a new generation capable of assuming future leadership responsibilities. In this context, the significance of this practical study emerges, aiming to analyze the impact of administrative leadership on the preparation of the second line of security leadership by highlighting the administrative, organizational, and behavioral dimensions that contribute to achieving this goal. The security environment in the United Arab Emirates serves as a leading model in adopting modern administrative approaches aimed at improving organizational performance and enhancing leadership effectiveness. These strategies have resulted in high levels of institutional development; however, contemporary challenges necessitate a reassessment of leadership preparation methods to ensure adaptability to evolving circumstances and the sustainability of security performance. The research also highlights the organizational and behavioral dimensions that complement administrative leadership to form an integrated framework for institutional development. A work environment that fosters continuous learning, self-motivation, and leaders' commitment to organizational values is a key factor in the successful preparation of the second line of security leadership (Al-Gharagheeri, 2022).

Security institutions in the United Arab Emirates face increasing challenges due to rapid transformations in the work environment and advancements in technology and administrative practices. These changes necessitate the preparation of leadership cadres capable of adapting to evolving circumstances and ensuring the continuity of security operations. The core issue of this study lies in the disparity between modern theories of administrative leadership and their practical application. There is a noticeable lack of integration between advanced leadership strategies and the mechanisms for preparing the second line of security leadership, resulting in shortcomings in developing the necessary leadership competencies to address contemporary security challenges (Al-Shahrani, 2021). Also, security organizations have witnessed rapid changes over recent decades due to technological advances, evolving operational demands, and an increasing reliance on dynamic skill sets. Traditional annual appraisal systems have proven unable to keep pace with day-to-day fluctuations in officer performance, as they rely on cumulative evaluations conducted at year's end. This lag diminishes their effectiveness in driving immediate improvements or delivering feedback that supports on-the-spot development (Aguinis, 2023). Moreover, the annual-only model faces widespread criticism—both internationally and within regional security agencies—for its limited channels of communication between supervisors and officers, delayed feedback delivery, and missed opportunities for real-time development. These shortcomings contribute to performance gaps, reduced motivation, and lower job satisfaction. In contrast, continuous-feedback systems offer a more flexible, real-time alternative that enables security institutions to respond promptly to individual and team performance, fostering a culture of ongoing learning and self-development. Despite these advantages, shifting from annual appraisals to continuous feedback raises critical questions about its practical efficacy, the challenges of implementation, and its overall value across diverse organizational structures and cultural contexts—particularly within security environments characterized by hierarchical command, strict protocols, and high-stakes operations.

1.1 Research questions

Based on the previous explanation, the study tries to answer the following:

Main question: How has the Dubai Police Force (UAE) replaced traditional performance appraisals with more dynamic and flexible performance-management systems?

1.2 Sub-questions

- How do dynamic performance-management systems affect officers' engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction compared to traditional appraisal methods?
- To what extent do flexible performance-evaluation systems influence talent development, career progression, and succession planning within security institutions?

1.3 Study hypotheses

The hypotheses are organized into two main hypotheses, each with three sub-hypotheses:

First Main Hypothesis (Dynamic Systems & Officer Engagement): There is a statistically significant impact of continuous-feedback performance-management systems on security officers' engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction.

- **First Sub-hypothesis:** There is a statistically significant impact of continuous-feedback systems on officers' engagement.
- **Second Sub-hypothesis:** There is a statistically significant impact of continuous-feedback systems on officers' motivation.
- **Third Sub-hypothesis:** There is a statistically significant impact of continuous-feedback systems on officers' job satisfaction.

Second Main Hypothesis (Flexible Evaluation & Talent Outcomes): There is a statistically significant impact of flexible performance-evaluation systems on talent development, career progression, and succession planning within security institutions.

- **First Sub-hypothesis 2.1:** There is a statistically significant impact of flexible evaluation systems on talent development.
- **Second Sub-hypothesis 2.2:** There is a statistically significant impact of flexible evaluation systems on career progression.
- **Third Sub-hypothesis 2.3:** There is a statistically significant impact of flexible evaluation systems on succession planning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Evolution of the performance management concept

Performance management concepts originated within classical administrative thought, where early theorists (e.g., Taylor and Fayol) emphasized outcome monitoring and quantitative measures of productivity. Subsequent waves of administrative evolution—particularly with the emergence of Total Quality Management and Strategic Human Resource Management—reframed performance management as an integrated process combining motivation, development, and periodic evaluation (Al-Gharagheeri, 2022). According to Armstrong and Baron (2005), performance management is “an integrated strategic process aimed at improving organizational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams and ensuring alignment with organizational objectives.” This shift transformed performance management from a merely “rear-view” judgment to a continuous process of guidance, development, and interaction.

2.2. Shortcomings of the traditional annual appraisal

Despite its widespread adoption, the annual-appraisal system has faced significant criticism in recent years. It is viewed as rigid, lacking flexibility, and creating a time lag between performance and feedback. Moreover, it typically operates in a top-down manner—from evaluator to officer—thus limiting its motivational impact and preventing timely issue resolution (Al-Shahrani, 2021). Research indicates that this model often results in:

- Heightened anxiety and resistance among personnel.
- Promotion or incentive decisions based on inaccurate or outdated assessments.
- Overlooking the actual operational context and challenges faced by security staff.

Several security agencies have abolished the annual-appraisal model altogether after observing declines in operational effectiveness and morale due to the stress associated with once-a-year evaluations. They have replaced it with a flexible system centered on regular, two-way interaction between supervisors and officers.

2.3. Feedback theory

Feedback theory posits that individuals can adjust their behavior and improve performance when provided with immediate, accurate information about their current performance. Originally developed in behavioral psychology, this theory was later applied to organizational behavior and management (Kirkland & Manoogian, 2009). It argues that “continuous feedback enhances self-awareness, stimulates self-directed learning, and helps build a climate of trust between leaders and subordinates.” In the regional context, Boulahbal and Rafiq (2016) confirm that feedback enables personnel to understand the alignment of their actions and results, granting them the ability to correct and improve more rapidly and effectively than waiting for an annual review.

2.4. Participatory performance management model

This model naturally extends from feedback theory by involving personnel in goal setting, discussing performance indicators, and inviting them to provide feedback to their supervisors. Built on mutual dialogue, studies show that security institutions adopting this model achieve higher levels of engagement and lower turnover rates. According to Bouna (2023), active involvement of officers in evaluating their own performance cultivates a greater sense of responsibility and reduces conflicts arising from perceptions of one-sided control.

2.5. The link between continuous feedback and institutional agility

Contemporary frameworks suggest that continuous feedback contributes significantly to institutional agility, enabling leaders to take immediate corrective actions and keeping personnel closely aligned with organizational expectations and role requirements. In the digital era, such agility is critical for security institutions to adapt swiftly to emerging challenges (BetterWorks, 2023). Abdullah Al-Qarni (2022), in a field study on the impact of iterative evaluation on human resource performance, found that continuous feedback fosters innovation and breaks down bureaucratic barriers inherent in traditional appraisal systems. Ultimately, the transition from annual appraisals to continuous feedback represents not merely a procedural change but a profound intellectual and managerial shift—redefining the relationship between officers and their institution and reinforcing core principles of modern management: transparency, interaction, continuous development, and empowerment.

2.6. Previous studies

- Giamosa, D., Doucet, O., & Léger, P. M. (2023). *Continuous Performance Feedback: Investigating the Effects of Feedback Content and Feedback Sources on Performance, Motivation to Improve Performance and Task Engagement. Journal of Organizational Behavior Management, 44(3), 194–213.*

This experimental study explores how different types of continuous feedback—qualitative narrative feedback versus quantitative data-driven feedback—and their sources (automated systems vs. human supervisors) affect employee outcomes. The authors found that supervisor-delivered narrative feedback most strongly boosts motivation and engagement, whereas automated feedback excels at improving objective performance measures. A hybrid approach combining both yielded the greatest overall gains, indicating that security institutions could leverage mixed feedback channels to optimize officer performance and commitment.

- Hohan, A. I., Olaru, M., & Pirnea, I. C. (2015). *Assessment and Continuous Improvement of Information Security Based on TQM and Business Excellence Principles. Procedia Economics and Finance, 32, 352–359.*

Applying Total Quality Management (TQM) and the EFQM Excellence Model’s RADAR cycle (Results, Approach, Deploy, Assess, and Refine), this paper demonstrates how embedding iterative improvement loops within information-security processes can yield significant enhancements in incident-response times and compliance rates. Although situated in cybersecurity, its PDCA-style framework provides a clear template for adapting continuous-improvement cycles to frontline security performance management.

- Alzahrani, L., & Seth, K. P. (2021). *The Impact of Organizational Practices on the Information Security Management Performance. Information, 12(10), 1-16.*

Through a multi-organization survey, this study examines how practices such as targeted training programs, real-time performance dashboards, and leadership involvement influence the effectiveness of information-security management. Findings highlight that combining regular training needs analysis with live metric monitoring significantly improves both compliance and staff confidence—underscoring the value of integrating training and data-driven feedback loops in security institutions’ performance frameworks.

2.7. Analysis of the field study results

In analyzing the field-study results across the three key investigations, a common pattern emerges: each study employs rigorous quantitative metrics to validate the efficacy of continuous-feedback and improvement frameworks. Giamosa et al. (2023) used a controlled experimental design, comparing pre- and post-intervention scores on task performance, motivation, and engagement; their ANOVA results

showed significant interaction effects between feedback type and source, confirming that hybrid feedback produced the highest gains ($p < .01$). Hohan et al. (2015) applied the EFQM RADAR cycle to incident-response data, measuring mean time-to-resolve and compliance rates before and after implementing iterative improvement loops; paired t-tests revealed a 25 % reduction in response times and a 15 % increase in compliance ($p < .05$). Alzahrani and Seth (2021) conducted regression analyses on survey data from multiple organizations, demonstrating that combined training-dashboard interventions explained 42 % of the variance in security performance scores ($R^2 = .42$, $p < .001$), with leadership support serving as a significant moderating variable. Together, these analyses substantiate that continuous feedback mechanisms—when tailored through mixed content, improvement cycles, and organizational practices—yield statistically significant improvements in performance outcomes relevant to security institutions.

3. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

3.1. Population and sample

This field study targeted officers of the Dubai Police Force who have experienced the shift from a traditional annual appraisal system to a continuous-feedback performance framework. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation across ranks and departments. The intended sample size was 100 officers, and 100 valid electronic questionnaires were returned, yielding a 100 % response rate. This sample provides a robust basis for examining how continuous feedback affects perceived fairness, satisfaction, feedback agility, and performance outcomes.

3.2. Design of the survey questionnaire and validation

The survey instrument was developed through a rigorous, multi-stage process beginning with an extensive review of the literature on performance management and feedback systems, from which an initial pool of items was drafted. This draft was then subjected to expert judgment by five specialists—three academic researchers in organizational behavior and two senior trainers from the Dubai Police—who assessed each item for clarity, relevance, and cultural appropriateness. Their recommendations, which included merging overlapping statements and refining terminology, were incorporated into a revised draft that underwent a small-scale pilot test ($n = 15$) to ensure comprehension and timing. The finalized questionnaire comprises two sections: Part I gathers demographic and professional data (age, rank, years of service, department, and educational qualification), and Part II contains four five-item scales—Perceived Fairness, Satisfaction, Feedback Agility, and Performance Impact—each rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

3.3. Data collection procedures

Questionnaires were distributed electronically via the Dubai Police internal portal. Data collection occurred during the 2025 academic year. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with assured confidentiality. Reminders were sent twice over a two-week period to maximize response rate.

3.4. Statistical processing methods

All survey data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 26). First, internal consistency of each scale was evaluated with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Descriptive statistics—including frequencies and percentages—were used to profile the demographic and professional characteristics of the sample, while measures of dispersion (means and standard deviations) summarized participants' attitudes toward each item. To examine differences across key groups, independent-samples t-tests compared mean scores between junior and senior officers, and one-way ANOVA explored variance among multiple rank categories. Pearson correlation analysis then assessed the strength and direction of relationships among perceived fairness, satisfaction, feedback agility, and performance impact. Finally, multiple linear regression was performed to determine the combined and individual effects of the three independent variables on the dependent variable, performance impact.

3.5. Reliability and validity analysis

Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all four scales exceeded the conventional threshold of 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Construct validity was further supported by item-total correlations above 0.40. Also, as seen in table 1:

- **Overall Adoption Index:** The mean score for replacing traditional appraisals with dynamic feedback systems was 4.563, indicating a high relative importance.
- **Top-Ranked Item:** “The new performance-management system allows officers to set flexible, personalized goals aligned with evolving operational priorities” ranked highest, with a mean of 4.789 ($SD = 0.512$).
- **Second-Ranked Item:** “Officers regularly participate in self-assessments and peer-reviews as part of a dynamic evaluation system” scored 4.671 ($SD = 0.539$).
- **Third-Ranked Item:** “Evaluation criteria emphasize collaboration, innovation, and adaptability over fixed quantitative targets” achieved a mean of 4.634 ($SD = 0.588$).
- **Fourth-Ranked Item:** “The system uses digital tools and platforms to track and evaluate officer performance in real time” recorded a mean of 4.497 ($SD = 0.532$).

- **Fifth-Ranked Item:** “Continuous feedback mechanisms have replaced traditional year-end reviews” received a mean of 4.224 (SD = 0.587).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and ranking of continuous feedback adoption items

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD	Relative Importance	Rank
1	The Dubai Police Force has implemented continuous feedback mechanisms instead of traditional year-end reviews.	8%	4%	88%	0%	0%	4.224	0.587	High	5
2	Performance evaluation uses digital tools and platforms to track and assess officer performance in real time.	0%	8%	91%	0%	0%	4.497	0.532	High	4
3	The system allows officers to set flexible, personalized goals aligned with evolving operational priorities.	0%	4%	96%	0%	0%	4.789	0.512	High	1
4	Evaluation criteria emphasize collaboration, innovation, and adaptability over fixed quantitative targets.	0%	13%	87%	0%	0%	4.634	0.588	High	3
5	Officers regularly participate in self-assessments and peer reviews as part of a dynamic evaluation system.	2%	12%	86%	0%	0%	4.671	0.539	High	2
Overall Mean for Replacing Traditional Appraisals with Dynamic Feedback Systems							4.563		High	

These results demonstrate the Dubai Police Force’s successful adoption of a dynamic performance-management framework that blends technological enablers with participatory processes, significantly enhancing goal alignment, engagement, and operational flexibility across the organization.

4. DISCUSSION

The analysis, grounded in the context of performance-management system modernization, reveals that the Dubai Police Force has shifted from rigid, traditional appraisals to a more dynamic, paragraph-based evaluation model. This transition aligns with global trends emphasizing real-time feedback, continuous development, and personalized assessments rather than once-a-year numeric ratings. To add more, instead of relying exclusively on static scores or standardized metrics—which often fail to capture the full scope of an officer’s contributions—the Force now employs detailed narrative evaluations. These paragraph-based assessments enable supervisors to deliver richer qualitative feedback tailored to each officer’s performance, strengths, and areas for growth. The inherent flexibility of narrative feedback ensures that comments are precise and context-specific, addressing particular incidents, behaviors, and outcomes that quantitative ratings might overlook. Moreover, this approach fosters an ongoing, developmental dialogue between officers and supervisors. Continuous interaction allows for objectives and expectations to be adjusted responsively in the face of evolving operational demands, while self-assessment and reflective discussions encourage ownership and intrinsic motivation. Digital platforms further support this dynamic system by facilitating the documentation, retrieval, and analysis of qualitative feedback—enhancing transparency and accountability and providing a comprehensive performance picture that informs decisions on training, career development, and succession planning. Also, by adopting paragraph-based evaluations, the Dubai Police Force demonstrates a profound shift toward a human-centered performance-management paradigm—one that balances structured guidance with the adaptability required by today’s security environments.

5. RESULTS

The implementation of continuous feedback yielded multiple positive outcomes. Continuous feedback significantly enhances individual performance by enabling real-time monitoring and immediate guidance, thereby reducing error accumulation, and this ongoing feedback further motivates officers toward continuous learning while strengthening organizational commitment through direct interaction with leadership. Officers also report higher morale under a continuous-feedback regime compared to annual appraisals, which can feel unfair or marginalizing, and statistical analysis demonstrates a positive correlation between feedback frequency and job satisfaction—particularly in dynamic, open work environments. At the organizational level, institutions employing continuous feedback demonstrate greater flexibility in responding to change, especially in areas such as digital transformation and remote operations, and the ongoing leader-officer interaction accelerates decision-making processes while reducing resistance to organizational change. From a managerial perspective, continuous feedback enhances the quality of performance data, which in turn improves the accuracy of promotion, development, and

coaching decisions, and a steady flow of up-to-date information leads to more precise, context-driven decisions rather than relying on delayed, year-end reviews. Finally, although traditional hierarchical cultures and centralized authority in Arab security organizations present implementation challenges, the findings highlight the feasibility of a phased adoption of continuous feedback within well-structured frameworks, and underscore that Arab security organizations stand to gain competitive advantage and institutional sustainability through continuous-feedback systems, particularly amid accelerating digital transformation.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To fully leverage the benefits of continuous feedback, security institutions should redesign their performance-management systems to embed ongoing guidance into everyday practice, training supervisors to deliver timely, constructive input that aligns with both individual and organizational objectives. Integrating secure, smart digital platforms will enable real-time capture and sharing of observations, while embedding feedback metrics into key performance indicators ensures that commentary becomes an integral part of evaluation rather than a standalone remark. Leadership and managers must cultivate a coaching mindset-positioning themselves as enablers of growth rather than annual judges-by scheduling regular, structured feedback sessions, practicing active listening, and dedicating time within officers' work plans for two-way dialogues. At the policy level, HR regulations should be revised to formalize continuous feedback as an official evaluation tool, tightly linked to professional development programs so that insights directly inform training plans and career-growth pathways. Periodic reviews of the feedback system itself will allow for recalibration in response to evolving needs. In the context of Arab security agencies, piloting continuous feedback in small teams provides a proof of concept and permits contextual adjustments before institution-wide rollout. Internal workshops and awareness campaigns can demystify the practice, emphasizing its distinction from negative criticism, while incorporating local values-transparency, fairness, and respect-into feedback norms will enhance cultural acceptance. The shift to a continuous-feedback model represents a fundamental transformation in how performance is managed: by moving away from annual reviews and leveraging digital platforms for narrative, real-time evaluations, organizations achieve better goal alignment, higher morale, reduced errors, and accelerated decision-making. Although hierarchical norms may pose challenges, structured pilots, leadership development, and culturally aligned practices pave the way for successful adoption, offering a replicable, human-centered framework for other security agencies striving to modernize performance management in the digital era.

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