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Beyond Accountability: How KPI -Based Teacher Performance Evaluation Connects Work Culture, Professional Learning, and Innovative Behavior in Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT: Teacher performance evaluations are widely used to strengthen accountability and professional development, yet international research remains limited in explaining how Key Performance Indicator (KPI)-based evaluations are linked to the development of teachers' work culture and innovative behavior, particularly in the context of elementary schools. This study aims to explore how KPI-based teacher performance evaluations are designed and implemented, how they relate to the development of teachers' work culture, and through what mechanisms and contextual conditions they are linked to teachers' innovative behaviors. The study employed a single qualitative case study embedded in two elementary school units within the Darul Hikam educational environment in Bandung. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with six informants, observations, and documentation, and were subsequently analyzed thematically using ATLAS.ti 9. The results indicate that KPI implementation is characterized by an accountability structure involving indicators, evidence collection, monitoring, and feedback. Their developmental functions relate to professional learning, collaboration, and leadership support, while time constraints, workload, and strategic compliance are conditions that can limit this process. The study concludes that KPIs are more meaningful as a development mechanism when accountability is linked to professional learning and the improvement of teaching practices.

Keywords: elementary schools, KPI-based teacher performance evaluation, innovative teacher behavior, performance management, professional learning, work culture.

ABSTRAK: *Penilaian kinerja guru banyak digunakan untuk memperkuat akuntabilitas dan pengembangan profesional, namun penelitian internasional masih terbatas dalam menjelaskan bagaimana penilaian berbasis* Key Performance Indicator (KPI) *terhubung dengan perkembangan budaya kerja dan perilaku inovatif guru, khususnya pada konteks sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi bagaimana penilaian kinerja guru berbasis KPI dirancang dan diimplementasikan, bagaimana keterkaitannya dengan perkembangan budaya kerja guru, serta melalui mekanisme dan kondisi kontekstual apa keterkaitannya dengan perilaku inovatif guru. Penelitian menggunakan studi kasus kualitatif tunggal terembed pada dua unit sekolah dasar dalam lingkungan pendidikan Darul Hikam Bandung. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap enam informan, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik dengan bantuan ATLAS.ti 9. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa implementasi KPI ditandai oleh struktur akuntabilitas melalui indikator, pengumpulan bukti, monitoring, dan umpan balik. Fungsi pengembangannya berkaitan dengan pembelajaran profesional, kolaborasi, dan dukungan kepemimpinan, sementara keterbatasan waktu, beban kerja, dan kepatuhan strategis menjadi kondisi yang dapat membatasi proses tersebut. Penelitian*

menyimpulkan bahwa KPI lebih bermakna sebagai mekanisme pengembangan ketika akuntabilitas terhubung dengan pembelajaran profesional dan perbaikan praktik.

***Kata kunci**: budaya kerja, manajemen kinerja, pembelajaran profesional, penilaian kinerja guru berbasis KPI, perilaku inovatif guru, sekolah dasar.*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the most decisive factor in the quality of education in the field; therefore, their performance evaluations should not be limited to a single evaluation score but should instead reflect a variety of dimensions of competence and professional practice simultaneously. Ye et al. (2021) demonstrate that teacher competencies encompass planning, implementation, evaluation of learning, and professional development, not a single aspect. However, a ten-year review of teacher evaluation research by Wei et al. (2023) revealed an imbalance in focus, instructional support and technological knowledge dominated the studies, while professional responsibility and support for teachers were relatively sidelined. This imbalance calls for the design of teacher performance evaluations that truly take into account the complexity of the job and the competencies being assessed; thus, appraisals should be understood not merely as a measurement of outcomes, but as part of performance management that generates information for teachers' professional development.

A similar need for more structured indicators also arises at the preschool level. Mamat et al. (2023) demonstrate that Key Performance Indicators can map various dimensions of preschool education quality, teacher quality, the learning environment, learning materials, and the educational process, while also revealing achievement gaps when compared to actual conditions. In other words, indicators not only describe achievements but also highlight areas in need of improvement, particularly when linked to organizational goals and individual performance, as demonstrated by Safonov et al. (2022) through the use of KPIs in staff performance management. Hristov & Chirico (2019) add that KPIs translate an organization's strategic goals into measurable metrics, thus, KPIs in education have the potential to bridge organizational goals, performance expectations, and teachers' professional practices simultaneously.

However, the mere existence of indicators does not guarantee the effectiveness of an evaluation system. Fantozzi et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of coherence between the performance measurement system and the operational activities being measured, without it, indicators lose their meaning. This issue becomes even more complex in teacher appraisal because a teacher's work is multidimensional and dynamic. Hyder & Farooq (2022) emphasize the importance of multidimensional indicators, while Mashhadlou & Izadpanah (2021) indicates that teacher performance evaluations must take into account the specific characteristics of this profession. Lay (2022) highlights the clarity of objectives, standards, and appraisal instruments, whereas Mayger & Provinzano (2022) point out that the legitimacy of a teacher evaluation framework depends on stakeholder engagement. Thus, the issue of KPI-based teacher performance appraisal is not merely about the presence or absence of indicators, but rather

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how they are designed, communicated, implemented, and utilized in teachers' daily practice.

In addition to design, the implementation and use of appraisal results are equally critical to the function of appraisal. Wei et al. (2023) note that teacher evaluation encompasses a variety of approaches, including providing information to support the development of teachers' practices. Wamimbi & Bisaso (2021) highlight the importance of appraisal practices, while Makumi & Mwania (2021) position performance feedback as a central element, both emphasize that appraisal serves a broad purpose only when its results are used as the basis for communication, feedback, and follow-up, rather than merely as a record. Conversely, appraisal systems are prone to problems when teachers lack understanding of the indicators or view evaluation as a mere administrative requirement. Shaulska et al. (2021) identify such issues, understanding of indicators, communication, the complexity of evaluation, and organizational responses, while Holloway & Lewis (2022) emphasize that the use of teacher accountability data must be considered in conjunction with organizational practices and data governance. Thus, the effectiveness of KPI-based appraisals depends on the quality of the indicators as well as the implementation process and the use of performance information following the measurement.

This issue leads to the next question: how does the appraisal system intertwine with teachers' work culture? Formal policies and indicators do not automatically become organizational culture, their influence is only felt through routines, interactions, leadership, and learning that develop within the work environment. Suyitno (2024) demonstrates that a principal's leadership is more meaningful for teacher motivation when it is embedded in the school culture rather than through one-way instructions, while Hiba (2023) links a principal's leadership to teacher commitment through communication and the work environment. Feedback can serve as a mechanism linking accountability structures to tangible changes in practice, as demonstrated by Makumi & Mwania (2021) and Wamimbi & Bisaso (2021). Thus, KPIs are best understood as formal structures that provide expectations and performance metrics, while work culture evolves from how those structures are translated into routines and professional interactions.

This connection becomes even more important when teacher appraisal is linked to professional learning and innovative teacher behavior. Sodiya & Hajiyeva (2022) emphasize the importance of school-led professional development, while Roca-Campos et al. (2021) demonstrate that dialogic development activities foster reflection, collaboration, and changes in practice, Wachyu et al. (2026) highlight the role of Professional Learning Communities in fostering teacher professionalism amid organizational change. The literature on teacher innovation agrees that innovation is not merely a matter of individual character but also depends on organizational conditions that create space for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and professional autonomy. Büyükgöze et al. (2022) link distributed leadership to collective teacher innovativeness, Lin (2022) highlights teacher autonomy and professional collaboration, while Arslan et al. (2025) trace the path from learning-

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centered leadership and knowledge sharing to innovative teacher practices. All three point in the same direction: teacher innovation is more accurately understood as the result of professional learning and organizational conditions, rather than a direct consequence of the existence of performance indicators.

Nevertheless, the existing literature remains divided between studies on KPIs/performance management and those on teacher professionalism/innovation. Research on KPIs focuses on indicator design, alignment, accountability, measurement, and the use of performance information (Hristov & Chirico, 2019; Safonov et al., 2022; Shaulska et al., 2021; Wei et al., 2023), while research on teacher appraisal addresses evaluation, feedback, leadership, and professional development. Research on innovative teacher behavior emphasizes leadership, autonomy, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and professional learning (Büyükgöze et al., 2022; Lin, 2022;Arslan et al., 2025; Ninković & Florić, 2024). What remains largely unanswered is how the KPI system translates into a process that links accountability, work culture, professional learning, and innovative teacher behavior, including the conditions that strengthen or limit it, such as leadership support, autonomy, time, workload, resources, and professional development opportunities. The relevant question is no longer "whether KPIs are related to innovation," but rather through what mechanisms and conditions that relationship develops into a performance development process.

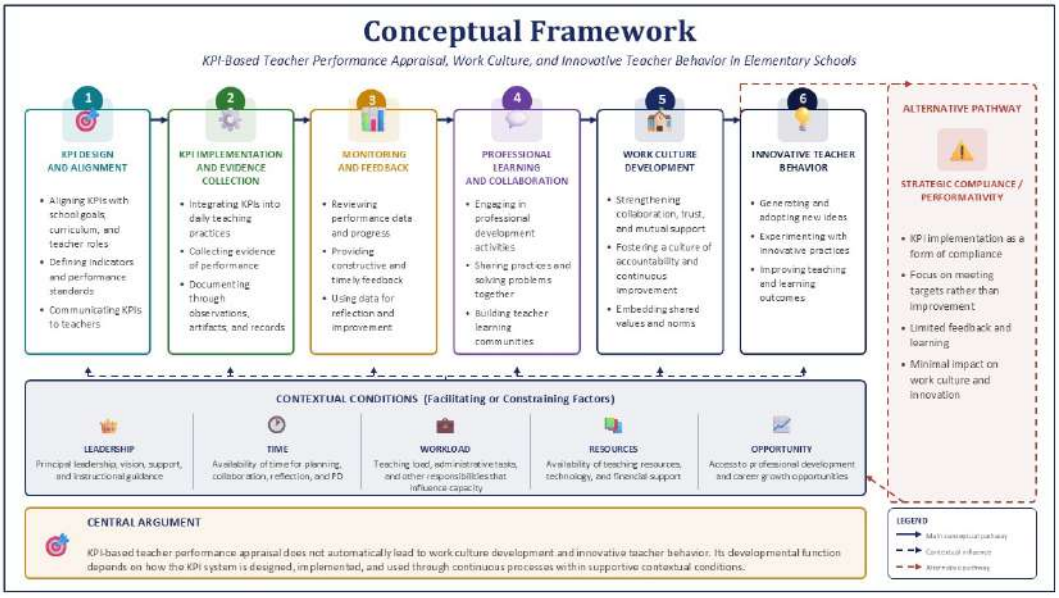


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of KPI-Based Teacher Performance Appraisal, Work Culture, and Innovative Teacher Behavior

The framework in Figure 1 confirms that KPI-based teacher performance appraisal is a performance management process that does not automatically foster a work culture or innovative behavior. The process begins with KPI design and alignment, continues through implementation and evidence collection, monitoring and feedback, and professional learning and collaboration, and only then relates to work culture and innovative teacher behavior. Leadership support,

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time, workload, resources, and opportunity are contextual conditions that accelerate or hinder this process, while strategic compliance/performativity is accommodated as an alternative pathway when KPI implementation is more oriented toward formal targets than toward changes in practice. This framework deliberately does not assume a linear causal relationship, it serves as a guide for exploring the processes and conditions within case studies, while distinguishing between the fulfillment of indicators, incremental improvements in practice, and substantive innovative behavior, interpreting the relationship between the evaluation system, work culture, and teacher innovation as a mediated and conditional process.

Building on this framework, this study explores the implementation of KPI-based teacher performance appraisal in elementary schools in Bandung and its relationship to the development of work culture and innovative teacher behavior. Its contribution lies not in the assumption that KPIs automatically improve performance or foster innovation, but rather in explaining the processes that enable the KPI system to function as a mechanism for performance development. Conceptually, this study integrates the perspectives of performance management with work culture, professional learning, and innovative teacher behavior,topics that have typically been studied separately. Empirically, this study offers a contextual understanding of the interactions among indicators, evidence, monitoring, feedback, leadership, professional learning, and working conditions in school practices, including the possibility of ambivalent findings such as strategic compliance when KPI targets are prioritized over changes in practice. Based on this, the study addresses three research questions: (RQ1) How is KPI-based teacher performance appraisal designed and implemented in Bandung elementary schools?; (RQ2) How does KPI-based teacher performance appraisal relate to the development of teachers' work culture?; and (RQ3) Through what mechanisms and contextual conditions does KPI-based teacher performance appraisal relate to teachers' innovative behavior? These three questions proceed sequentially—from the implementation of the system, to the development of work culture, to the mechanisms and conditions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a single embedded case study design (Yin, 2018) to examine the implementation of a teacher performance evaluation system based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and its relationship to teachers' work culture and innovative behavior. The case study is limited to the KPI system within the Darul Hikam Education Council in Bandung, with Darul Hikam Elementary School in Bandung and Darul Hikam 2 Elementary School in Rancaekek serving as the two organizational units included in this single case. Both schools were selected because they implement the same KPI system under the same organization; the research is not intended to compare the two, but rather to understand how a single KPI system is implemented in both units.

There were six participants, two school principals and four teachers, one principal and two teachers per school, selected purposefully based on their direct

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involvement in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, or experience with the KPI system. School principals were selected for their role in managing the system; teachers were selected because they had firsthand experience with the application of KPIs in their work. Variations in length of service, areas of responsibility, and duties were considered to ensure a diversity of perspectives. Prospective informants were contacted via WhatsApp, accompanied by a letter of request for an interview from the faculty, all six informants were considered rich sources of information because they represented both managerial perspectives and teachers' direct experiences, making them well-suited to answer the three research questions.

Data were collected from April through June 2026 through semi-structured interviews, observations, and a review of documents. Six interview sessions (each lasting 40–60 minutes, conducted in Indonesian) were recorded with the informants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Observations focused on KPI implementation practices, including HR fingerprinting and monthly meetings. Documentation included school policies, performance evaluation instruments and reports, meeting minutes, attendance data, the HR e-Report Card, and the school's official social media archives, which served as supporting and contextual data rather than a substitute for field observations.

The credibility and transparency of the findings are ensured through an audit trail designed to follow a systematic process: beginning with the collection of raw data, continuing through coding, categorization, and theme identification, and culminating in conceptual interpretation to answer the three research questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Miles et al., 2014), The entire qualitative analysis process was supported by ATLAS.ti 9 software, which was used methodologically to organize the data, manage and track emerging codes, and visualize the structural relationships among categories (Friese, 2014).

The validity of the findings was strengthened through three steps: source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from the school principal and teachers, while method triangulation examined the consistency among data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was conducted verbally with key informants. The researchers confirmed their initial interpretations and gave the informants an opportunity to clarify them. These findings were then considered alongside observational data and documentation before the themes were finalized.

The researcher served as a school principal at another unit within the Darul Hikam Education Council, holding no position at either of the two units under study, a circumstance that provided contextual insight while also potentially influencing data interpretation. Reflexivity was maintained by separating the researcher's professional assumptions from empirical evidence and by double-checking interpretations of transcripts, observations, documentation, and peer-review results. The research was conducted based on a request from the faculty and permission from the school; informants participated voluntarily, their

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identities were anonymized in the presentation of results, and recordings and transcripts were managed on a restricted basis for research purposes only.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Figure 2 illustrates the thematic structure derived from the analysis of interviews, observations, and documentation. This network indicates that KPI-based teacher performance evaluation is not perceived as a standalone assessment mechanism, but rather as part of a broader process involving work routines, professional learning, leadership support, and innovative practices. The network also illustrates a tension between the development process and strategic compliance, which is further explored in depth across the three research themes.

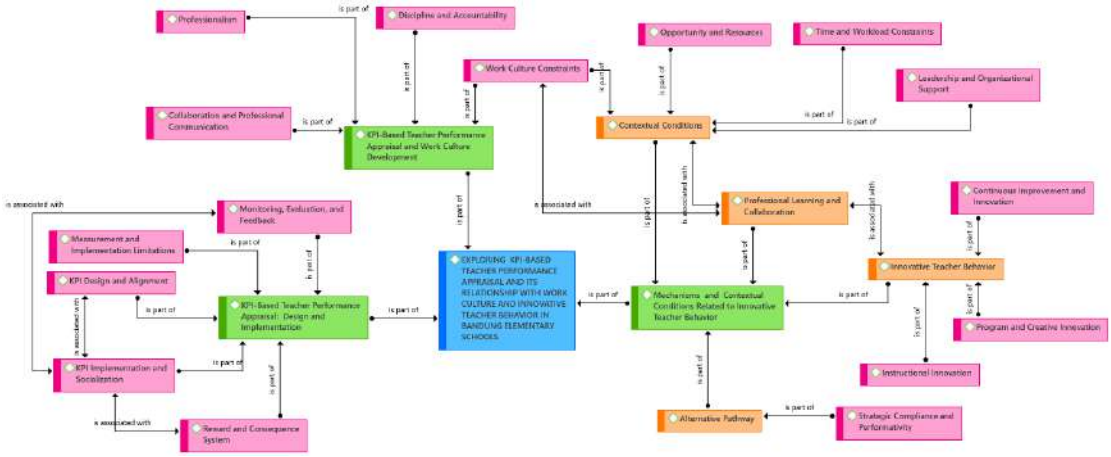


Figure 2. Thematic Network of KPI-Based Teacher Performance Appraisal, Work Culture, and Innovative Teacher Behavior

KPI-Based Teacher Performance Appraisal: Design and Implementation

The first finding shows that the informants understand the KPI system as an evaluation system that contains structured teacher performance indicators, and that this system is integrated into the HR e-report card. P5 explained, "Indeed, in this e-report there are KPIs that every teacher must be able to achieve. These relate to supervision, in-service training (IHT), and professional development; and at Darul Hikam, there are also social aspects, social evaluations which are also components that are indeed part of the assessment in this e-report." (Interview with P5, May 19, 2026). P6 added further details regarding the competencies being measured: "We know that there are four areas for measuring teacher performance: professionalism, pedagogy, personality, and social skills. These four competencies are measured through a set of more detailed indicators." (Interview with P6, May 20, 2026).

Regarding the system's rollout, P5 explained that the process is tiered, moving from the education council to school administrators, and only then to teachers: "When teachers had to fill out this e-report, there was indeed a prior briefing from the Darul Hikam Education Council to the administrators, and then the administrative team was responsible for briefing the teachers." (Interview with P5, May 19, 2026). From the teachers' perspective, this orientation also

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included an explanation of the rationale behind and methods for applying KPIs in their daily work. P2 stated, “There was an orientation session at the beginning. Then we were also introduced to the reasons why KPIs are necessary. And we teachers came to understand them and were able to apply them as time went on.” (Interview with P2, May 13, 2026). P1 highlighted alignment in administrative aspects: “As for some administrative tasks, they’re already in line, for example, teaching modules and such are things a teacher is already required to have.” (Interview with P1, May 13, 2026). Meanwhile, P3 considered the professional indicators to be the easiest to understand because they are directly related to teaching competencies: “The ones that are easier to understand are definitely the professional indicators because they focus specifically on what it means to be a teacher in terms of their education, competencies, and other professional areas.” (Interview with P3, May 19, 2026).



Figure 3. Socialization of Teacher Performance Assessment Targets

During the implementation phase, teachers collect performance evidence and document it. P2 explained, “We look for information related to each specific KPI [...] Then, secondly, [...] we document it and manage the records.” (Interview with P2, May 13, 2026). P6 added that supporting documents are stored in each teacher’s folder, while P1 reported that the current system allows documents to be uploaded gradually and online, with an initial review by school officials. Monitoring takes place through administrative reviews, monthly meetings, supervision, and periodic evaluations. P5 explained the mechanism using the PDCA cycle: “The PDCA cycle involves monthly evaluations, [...] related to learning

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targets, such as Quran recitation targets and Tahsin targets; we evaluate them every month [...] to see how much has been achieved, and then [...] we assess what the obstacles are." (Interview with P5, May 19, 2026), P1 also mentioned a similar pattern. Observation data confirmed that leadership meetings and work meetings are used to socialize the system, communicate targets, and evaluate teacher performance.

KPI-Based Teacher Performance Appraisal and Work Culture Development

In the second theme, the data revealed a number of work behaviors that emerged from the informants' experiences implementing the KPI system. One of the most prominent was the teachers' perception that the implementation of KPIs was directly linked to improved discipline. P1 attributed this to the digital attendance system: "Because the attendance data is uploaded to the foundation's website, ma'am. So, it can no longer be manipulated. So, it really motivates us to arrive early." (Interview with P1, May 13, 2026). P2 felt a similar impact on punctuality and setting a good example: "What I've noticed at this school is the emphasis on punctuality. We're more disciplined in every aspect. Also, when it comes to collecting things you know, Ma'am. Administratively, things are more on time too. It's like that. It sets a good example for the students." (Interview with P2, May 13, 2026).

P5 added that the evaluation does not stop at academic aspects but also addresses the teachers' moral and social dimensions: "So, in addition to academic supervision, which is probably similar to other schools, we also conduct evaluations related to a culture of moral integrity and academic excellence among our teachers, regarding their religious practices, their social interactions, their communication with colleagues and parents, as well as their communication on social media and their professional development efforts to enhance their teaching skills and so on." (Interview with P5, May 19, 2026), emphasizing that the KPI system is designed to be multidimensional, in line with the four competencies under the first theme.

The evaluation and follow-up process is an important part of the work culture. P5 described the process: "I share the results of the supervision, [...] what needs to be improved, and then there's usually a follow-up [...] whether you need to conduct a lesson study or receive administrative support." (Interview with P5, May 19, 2026); P4 adds that this feedback is cyclical between semesters (Interview with P4, May 19, 2026). These two quotes illustrate a two-way feedback loop: administrators share findings, teachers follow up, and this process is perceived positively, as P3 also noted.

Regarding professional development, P2 highlighted various activities provided by the school to help teachers meet their KPI targets: "The school's approach to building, developing, and helping its teachers or human resources to exceed or achieve these KPI targets. There are communities or activities such as IHT, as well as ongoing training programs that can enhance their professionalism." (Interview with P2, May 13, 2026). P5 added that forums such as MGMP serve as spaces for teachers to share experiences: "But there are good things that you can

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share with one another, right? In thematic MGMPs, like the Quran MGMP, you can exchange information and tips and tricks." (Interview with P5, May 19, 2026).



Figure 4. Collaborative Activities and Teacher Learning Communities

Behind this positive picture, The data also reflects working conditions related to time constraints, administrative burdens, and the difficulty of meeting certain indicators. P1 highlighted the limited scope for extracurricular activities due to a heavy workload: "So, our limitations stem from the fact that with such a heavy workload, the opportunities for extracurricular activities are very, very limited." (Interview with P1, May 13, 2026). P3 and P4 also mentioned something similar: out-of-school activities are an indicator that is difficult to meet because teachers' work hours extend into the afternoon. P5 described how this burden is felt in daily practice: "So sometimes the complaint is really about balancing time between teaching, handling administrative tasks, not to mention when there are student issues or parent complaints." (Interview with P5, May 19, 2026).

In response, teachers developed time-management strategies, broke down tasks into smaller steps, created timelines, personal calendars, and reminders from their supervisors. P3 emphasized the importance of collaborative support for teachers with limited technological skills: "Let's facilitate this together. "There is also mentoring for teachers who may need [...] assistance due to potential limitations in their technological knowledge." (Interview with P3, May 19, 2026).

Mechanisms and Contextual Conditions Related to Innovative Teacher Behavior

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The data shows that teachers' professional development takes place through various channels, IHT, MGMP/KKG, coaching, mentoring, lesson study, webinars, and training. P5 explains that the results of supervision can be followed up through lesson study, administrative mentoring, coaching, or the development of teaching methods. P2 describes how teacher working groups serve as spaces for sharing experiences and finding solutions together: "With these teacher working groups, we can share our individual experiences during instruction, as well as the challenges we face, whether from students, teaching methods, or assessment, and eventually we'll have discussions and come up with solutions." (Interview with P2, May 13, 2026). P4 added that findings from one class have the potential to be applied more broadly to other subjects or teachers: "School administrators will certainly be informed of the findings that lead to improvements for everyone, because it's possible that, based on a sample, similar issues might also occur in other subjects or among other teachers." (Interview with P4, May 19, 2026).



Figure 5. Teacher Professional Development Activities

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In terms of time management, school administrators provide periodic reminders and set aside specific time for joint administrative tasks. P3 explained that the frequency of reminders increases as the deadline approaches: “Reminders are definitely sent. Usually, for a deadline, one month in advance, we’ll send weekly reminders. Especially once we’re in the final week, reminders might come as often as every two days or even daily.” (Interview with P3, May 19, 2026). P1 described the dedicated time set aside each week: “So, every Friday from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM, we gather to handle administrative tasks. And that can be every two weeks or every month, depending on the targets that need to be met by Friday. For example, if there’s a training session, we do that first.” (Interview with P1, May 13, 2026). P5 added that the in-service training (IHT) and workshops provided by the school also serve as evidence of teachers’ KPI achievements, and observation data confirm that the implementation of this IHT serves as a tangible form of support for enhancing teachers’ competencies.



Figure 6. Utilization of Technology in Learning Innovation

From the perspective of teaching practices, the interview data revealed several forms of innovation developed by teachers. P1 described the use of video media and interactive games: “So I created them, one of my teaching tools involves a lot of videos. In addition, there are interactive games related to learning.” (Interview with P1, May 13, 2026). In science lessons, P1 also applies the STEM/STEAM approach by giving students problems to solve through discussion and the use of technology. Furthermore, the School Fun Fest and My Own Project activities provide a platform for students to showcase their projects and work. P5 described the practice of peer-to-peer knowledge sharing among teachers, where teachers who excel in a particular skill serve as mentors for their colleagues: “And we strive to make that happen as we did recently through knowledge sharing because there are teachers who are already skilled at creating

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videos, you know, more polished ones. So they'll become tutors for their fellow teachers." (Interview with P5, May 19, 2026). P1 also explained an annual event that encourages cross-departmental innovation: "Actually, every year, for now we're challenged to participate in the DHIA, the Darul Hikam Innovation Award, more or less. It involves the teachers. So, for now, they're selected by the school, and later they'll join with participants from other units to create innovative breakthroughs in learning." (Interview with P1, May 13, 2026). P2 concluded this discussion by emphasizing the importance of hands-on activities for elementary school students: "Especially for elementary school kids, it's all about hands-on activities. Because they'll remember those experiences even after they move up to the next grade. That's what motivates me." (Interview with P2, May 13, 2026).

On the other hand, the data reveal that KPI targets are met strategically, in line with the tension between "development" and "compliance" within the conceptual framework. P3 revealed that certain indicators, particularly those related to activities outside core duties and performance-based bonuses, can be "manipulated" as teachers strive to meet targets. P1 added that some teachers select activities based on the number of e-report card points, while P5 noted that teachers receiving performance-based bonuses are motivated to raise their e-report card grades. These findings are important to interpret in conjunction with the description of substantive innovation above, both emerge from the same KPI system but lead to two distinct orientations.

Discussion

RQ1: How is KPI-based teacher performance appraisal designed and implemented in Bandung elementary schools?

The findings of RQ1 confirm that KPI-based teacher performance appraisal is not a single instrument, but rather a performance management system that encompasses the establishment of indicators, dissemination, evidence, monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up. KPIs are cascaded from MPDH policies to school leaders, and then to teachers. P6 explained that the indicators cover professionalism, pedagogy, personality, and social skills, with some targets set at the institutional level and others at the individual level (Interview with P6, May 20, 2026). This cascading model aligns with Hristov & Chirico (2019) and Safonov et al. (2022), who position KPIs as a tool for aligning organizational goals with individual performance, Fantozzi et al. (2022) add that the effectiveness of measurement depends on the coherence of indicators with operational activities, while Mamat et al. (2023) demonstrate the use of KPIs to identify dimensions and gaps in educational quality. The KPI design in this case requires both vertical alignment with organizational goals and horizontal alignment with teachers' actual work.

Teachers' acceptance of KPIs evolves through outreach, mentoring, and hands-on experience. P2 reported that KPIs initially felt unfamiliar but gradually provided a more measurable direction for performance. P3 added that outreach helped with understanding, while P4 identified the periodic collection of evidence as a challenge in implementation. This pattern aligns with the literature on the importance of multidimensional indicators, the alignment with the characteristics

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of teachers' work, stakeholder engagement, and the clarity of appraisal objectives and standards (Hyder & Farooq, 2022; Mashhadlou & Izadpanah, 2021; Mayger & Provinzano, 2022; Lay, 2022). The legitimacy of the system, therefore, does not end with the establishment of indicators but continues to evolve through teachers' understanding and experience.

Implementation is supported by evidence collection, monitoring, and digital documentation (P6, P5), in line with Wamimbi & Bisaso (2021) and Faisal et al. (2025) regarding web-based KPI systems. P5 reported that teachers initially felt burdened by data entry and documentation, although these complaints subsided as they became more familiar with the process, consistent with Salmin & Nihuka (2024) and Waldan (2024) regarding the challenges and pressures of KPI implementation; other literature confirms that time, resources, data governance, and organizational readiness also play a role (Holloway & Lewis, 2022; Nkoma & Shoshore, 2021; Khan et al., 2022).

Significance of RQ1: The effectiveness of KPIs is not determined solely by the existence of indicators, but rather by how they are aligned, communicated, documented, monitored, and utilized. In this context, KPIs are best understood as an "enacted performance management system" gaining their meaning through the process of implementation, not merely through their existence on paper. A system becomes functional when the indicators are relevant, understood by users, supported by an evidence-based infrastructure, and followed up on consistently; conversely, excessive documentation risks shifting the focus from professional development to administrative compliance. These findings confirm that the design and implementation of KPIs are interdependent processes; therefore, the success of KPIs should not be judged solely by the achievement of targets, but by their use as a basis for performance evaluation and improvement.

RQ2: How does KPI-based teacher performance appraisal relate to the development of teachers' work culture?

The relationship between KPIs and work culture is indirect, mediated through work routines, discipline, accountability, professionalism, communication, and collaboration. P1 and P2 reported that time targets and an integrated attendance system improved discipline and work regularity, indicating that repeatedly monitored indicators can translate organizational expectations into routines. However, KPIs do not automatically become work culture, as culture grows through the repetition of behaviors and professional interactions, in line with Suyitno (2024) on the importance of support, collaboration, and mutually respectful relationships. Here, KPIs are more accurately understood as a formal accountability structure that provides an initial framework for professional habits, rather than a direct cause of culture.

Feedback serves as a mechanism linking formal structures to the development of work culture, P4 and P3 illustrate how supervision outcomes, accompanied by notes on improvements, create opportunities for dialogue and insight. This underscores the distinction between KPIs as measurement tools versus KPIs as part of a broader performance management framework, appraisal

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results are more developmental when used for dialogue, reflection, and follow-up, in line with Makumi & Mwania (2021) and Wamimbi & Bisaso (2021). The value of KPIs for work culture depends on what the organization does after performance information is obtained.

The third mechanism is professional learning and collaboration, P2 describes KKG/MGMP as spaces for sharing experiences and solutions, in line with Wachyu et al. (2026) on learning communities. Leadership support through reminders, mentoring, feedback, and the allocation of time strengthens this process, consistent with research on the role of leadership in knowledge sharing and professional learning Arslan et al. (2025); (Hsieh et al., 2024; Ninković & Florić, 2024).

Nevertheless, the findings reveal a tension between accountability and workload, P5 and P4 reported difficulties managing their time and a backlog of work due to periodic evidence collection. This aligns with Parcerisa et al. (2022) on the tension between teacher autonomy and performance-based accountability, as well as Waldan (2024) on the potential pressures associated with the use of KPIs. The development of work culture in this case is ambivalent, KPIs can strengthen accountability, but they need to be balanced with feedback, professional support, collaboration, and sufficient time. Answer to RQ2: institutionalized expectations, professional routines, feedback, collaborative learning, and professional internalization, with workload and compliance orientation as limiting conditions.

RQ3: Through what mechanisms and contextual conditions does KPI-based teacher performance appraisal relate to teachers' innovative behavior?

The findings for RQ3 indicate that the relationship between KPI-based teacher performance appraisal and innovative teacher behavior is indirect and highly dependent on the mechanisms and conditions of its implementation. Teachers do not automatically become innovative simply because KPI indicators exist, innovation emerges when appraisal results are linked to feedback, professional learning, collaboration, leadership support, autonomy, and opportunities to experiment. Field findings documented a number of innovative practices, the use of videos and digital media, interactive games, STEM/STEAM approaches, hands-on activities, creative projects, and participation in the Darul Hikam Innovation Awards (DHIA). P1 described the use of videos and interactive games, while P2 emphasized the importance of hands-on activities in learning (Interview with P1 and P2, May 13, 2026). However, the data does not show that these practices are a direct consequence of the KPIs. Therefore, in this case, the KPIs are better understood as potential developmental triggers, while the emergence of innovation actually depends on conditions that enable teachers to use performance information to learn, experiment, and improve their practices..

The core mechanism is evident in the interconnectedness of monitoring, feedback, professional learning, and collaboration. KPIs make performance targets and areas more visible, monitoring and feedback then provide information on aspects that need improvement. This information is subsequently addressed through IHT, KKG/MGMP, coaching, lesson study, and mentoring. P2 explained

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that teacher working groups serve as spaces for sharing experiences, discussing student challenges, teaching methods, and assessments, while also seeking solutions together (Interview with P2, May 13, 2026). This pattern aligns with Arslan et al. (2025) on the relationship between learning-centered leadership, knowledge sharing, and innovative teaching, as well as Ninković & Florić (2024) on the role of professional learning and collaboration in teaching practice. The findings are also consistent with Büyükgöze et al. (2022), Lin (2022), Hsieh et al. (2024), and Prenger et al. (2022), who all emphasize the importance of autonomy, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and conditions that support innovation. Thus, the developmental appraisal function only emerges when performance information is truly translated into a process of learning, sharing, and trying new practices, rather than remaining merely as an assessment record.

Leadership support serves as a factor that strengthens this process. In this case, leaders provide reminders, feedback, and guidance; allocate time for administrative tasks; and link the results of supervision to lesson study, coaching, and professional development. Hsieh et al. (2024) highlight the relevance of teacher autonomy and teacher innovation in the relationship between leadership and teaching practices, while Arslan et al. (2025) emphasize the role of knowledge sharing in supporting innovative teachingLi & Zhu (2022) also demonstrate the temporal relationship between leadership, job autonomy, and work stress with teaching innovation, whereas Bellibaş et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of the quality of the principal–teacher relationship for teacher innovativeness. In this study, leadership support is not positioned as a direct cause of innovation but rather as a contextual condition that enables appraisal results to be translated into learning, collaboration, and experimentation. Thus, the relationship between KPIs and innovation is highly dependent on an organizational environment that provides both support and space for teachers to respond to their own appraisal results.

The findings also revealed negative/ambivalent cases in the form of strategic compliance. Several informants described how certain indicators could be met strategically by taking into account KPI points, activity scores, or e-report card achievements. This situation underscores that meeting indicators is not always synonymous with actual changes in professional practice. In this context, teachers' responses to KPIs can be categorized into three types: compliance, when indicators are met primarily to satisfy system requirements; incremental improvement, when feedback is used to refine existing practices; and substantive innovation, when teachers genuinely attempt or develop new approaches to teaching. This distinction is crucial to ensure that KPI achievement is not automatically treated as direct evidence of innovation. This finding aligns with Waldan (2024)'s observations regarding the potential for a target-oriented approach in the use of KPIs. Thus, KPIs can elicit vastly different responses, depending on how the indicators are interpreted and applied in daily professional practice.

In addition, time, workload, autonomy, opportunity, and resources act as constraints on the innovation process. Teachers must divide their time among

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instruction, administrative tasks, KPI documentation, student support, and communication with parents, thereby narrowing the space available for designing, experimenting, evaluating, and modifying their practices. Related research has also documented how expanding digital responsibilities and administrative demands can contribute to teachers' workload and affect their well-being (Hidayati et al., 2025). Li & Zhu (2022) underscore the importance of the relationship between work stress and job autonomy in teaching innovation. This finding reveals a kind of performance management paradox, a system intended to drive improvement actually has the potential to limit the capacity for improvement when administrative demands become too dominant. The answer to RQ3, in summary, is that KPIs are related to innovative teacher behavior through performance visibility, monitoring and feedback, professional learning, collaboration, and supported experimentation, with leadership support, autonomy, and opportunity serving as enabling conditions, and workload, time constraints, and strategic compliance acting as limiting conditions. This sequence represents a mechanism identified in the case study, not a linear causal relationship. The significance of this finding underscores one key point: KPIs merely provide an initial framework, true innovation emerges when organizations are able to transform appraisal information into learning, collaboration, and tangible opportunities for experimentation.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has six limitations. First, the six informants (two school principals, four teachers) provided contextual depth rather than statistical generalizations. Second, the study was conducted at two schools within the same MPDH Bandung district, so the mechanisms identified may differ in other institutional contexts. Third, the researcher's professional involvement in the studied setting could potentially influence data interpretation, though this was minimized through triangulation and member checking. Fourth, interviews introduce the possibility of self-report bias. Fifth, the cross-sectional design (April–June 2026) does not yet allow for longitudinal tracking. Sixth, the study did not use student learning outcomes data; therefore, the findings cannot conclude that KPIs improve learning outcomes or prove a causal relationship with teacher innovation.

Future research could employ a longitudinal design to observe the development of the relationship between KPIs, work culture, and innovative teacher behavior; test the transferability of these mechanisms across schools with different institutional, leadership, and accountability characteristics, and use a mixed-methods or quantitative approach to test this conceptual model, with leadership support, autonomy, workload, and time as facilitating or limiting conditions. An explicit distinction between strategic compliance, incremental improvement, and substantive innovative behavior remains necessary, given that achieving KPI targets does not always indicate substantive changes in practice. Integrating appraisal data with classroom observations and student learning outcomes will clarify the relationship between teacher innovation, the quality of instruction, and learning outcomes.

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CONCLUSION

This study shows that KPI-based teacher performance appraisal does not automatically lead to changes in work culture or innovative teacher behavior; rather, it functions as a performance management mechanism whose effectiveness depends heavily on the process and conditions of its implementation. KPIs provide a framework for accountability through indicators, targets, evidence, monitoring, evaluation, and feedback, which in turn can contribute to the development of work culture through discipline, professional routines, communication, and collaboration. Professional learning and leadership support are key mechanisms that enable appraisal results to be translated into improvements in teachers' practices and innovative behaviors. At the same time, findings regarding strategic compliance confirm that the achievement of indicators does not always represent substantive changes in practice. Thus, the primary contribution of this study to the field of Educational Management is to broaden the understanding of performance management by positioning KPIs as a developmental mechanism that links accountability, work culture, professional learning, and teacher innovation, rather than merely as a performance measurement tool. These findings underscore that the true value of developing KPIs lies in how the system is used to foster learning, reflection, collaboration, and improvements in practice.

In practical terms, this study shows that the implementation of KPIs must take into account the alignment of indicators with teachers' actual work, the quality of feedback, leadership support, opportunities for professional development, and the available time and resources. In the context of this study, KPIs are more likely to serve as a development mechanism when accountability is accompanied by professional support and genuine opportunities for teachers to improve and develop their practices. Although these findings stem from a specific institutional context and therefore need to be applied with caution to other school contexts, the mechanisms identified can serve as a foundation for developing a teacher performance management system that is more oriented toward learning and innovation. Future research could expand the testing of these mechanisms to different school contexts and over a longer time frame. Thus, this study confirms that the success of KPIs in education is not primarily determined by the number of indicators or the accuracy of target achievement, but rather by the system's ability to transform accountability into professional learning, work-culture development, and meaningful teacher innovation.

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Authors and Contributions

Yeti Nurhayati served as the principal investigator and was responsible for the conceptualization of the study, research design, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. Dian Hidayati and Sukirman served as academic advisors, contributing to the development of the research concept, providing methodological guidance, strengthening the theoretical framework, and conducting a critical review and revision of the manuscript. All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript to be published.

Declarations

This study was conducted with institutional approval from the participating schools. All informants provided consent to participate in the interviews and agreed to the recording process. The identities of the informants were kept confidential in the reporting of the research results. This study did not receive external funding. The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this study and the publication of this article. The research data are not publicly available because they contain interview information related to the participants and the research institution's context. Relevant data may be provided by the corresponding author upon reasonable request, while maintaining participant confidentiality.

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