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(IJEPC)**www.ijepe.com**TEACHER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEMS:
CATALYSTS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**Rosnani Jusoh^{1*}, Zhao Shuo², Eisya Eirika Mohd Bakri³¹ Department of Science and Technical Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, MalaysiaEmail: rj@upm.edu.my² Department of Science and Technical Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, MalaysiaEmail: gs71005@student.upm.edu.my³ Department of Science and Technical Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, MalaysiaEmail: eisyausamah@gmail.com

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DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.1060047**This work is licensed under** [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)**Abstract:**

This paper examines teacher performance evaluation systems as strategic mechanisms for fostering professional development and advancing school improvement. In the context of global educational reform, teacher evaluation has evolved from a traditional supervisory tool into a developmental approach that enhances teacher growth and institutional effectiveness. Adopting a conceptual research method, the study systematically reviews domestic and international literature through the lens of educational management theories, motivation theories, and continuous professional development models. The review highlights the positive roles of evaluation in improving teaching quality, motivating teachers, and informing education policy. Findings suggest that a scientific and well-designed evaluation system can optimize teacher resource allocation, strengthen professional awareness, and raise the overall management capacity of schools. To enrich the analysis, three classical performance management theories—Management by Objectives (MBO), Expectancy Theory (Vroom), and Equity Theory (Adams)—are introduced to demonstrate their practical value in shaping teacher evaluation practices. Furthermore, the paper compares widely used evaluation methods in education, including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), 360-degree feedback, Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS), and MBO. Through the analysis of real-world cases, the study identifies persistent challenges, such as poorly designed indicators, weak alignment between evaluation and incentives,

lack of fairness, and insufficient feedback mechanisms. In response, it proposes optimization strategies that include differentiated goal setting, effective incentive structures, enhanced transparency, and improved feedback and data utilization. These strategies aim to better support teacher professional development and improve the overall quality of education.

Keywords:

Teacher Performance Evaluation, Professional Development, Educational Management and Performance Management Theories.

Introduction

Teachers play a central role in the educational process. Their performance not only shapes student learning outcomes but also influences the overall quality and reputation of schools. With the ongoing wave of educational reform, school leaders are increasingly focused on developing fair and scientific approaches to evaluating teacher performance. An effective evaluation system should not only assess performance but also promote professional growth and sustain teacher motivation.

Problem Statement

Despite this need, many schools continue to rely on simple and rigid evaluation models that emphasize numerical indicators while overlooking the value of the teaching process. Moreover, performance evaluations are often disconnected from meaningful incentives, reducing teachers' willingness to engage actively in the process.

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of this paper are;

1. to identify challenges in teacher performance evaluation
2. to identify positive impact on teachers' professional growth and school development
3. to identify strategies for optimizing teacher performance evaluation

Literature Review

Teacher performance evaluation serves as a critical catalyst for professional development and school improvement. Its design, grounded in theory, models, and prior studies, not only affects teachers' growth but also shapes students' learning outcomes and overall school quality.

Management by Objectives (MBO)

Proposed by Peter Drucker, MBO emphasizes the collaborative setting of clear, measurable goals between employees and supervisors. These goals serve as the foundation for performance evaluation. In education, MBO fosters teacher responsibility and accountability by aligning individual objectives with institutional priorities. However, its success depends heavily on effective communication and realistic goal-setting, without which it may become overly formalistic.

Expectancy Theory (Vroom)

Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory highlights that employee effort depends on the perceived value of outcomes and the belief that effort will lead to performance. Applied to teacher

evaluation, this theory underscores the need for evaluation systems that align motivation with outcomes, ensuring both fairness and the effectiveness of incentives.

Equity Theory (Adams)

John Stacey Adams' Equity Theory focuses on fairness in the evaluation process. Teachers compare their inputs (time, effort, skills) with the rewards they receive (pay, promotions, recognition). Perceived inequities may lead to decreased motivation and dissatisfaction. Thus, transparent and balanced evaluation practices are essential to maintaining morale and engagement.

Together, these theories reinforce that performance evaluation systems must integrate clear goals (MBO), meaningful incentives (Expectancy Theory), and fairness (Equity Theory) to be both effective and sustainable.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

KPI-based evaluations emphasize quantitative metrics, such as research output, teaching scores, and service contributions. While this approach facilitates measurable outcomes and is easily linked to promotions or bonuses, it risks prioritizing research over teaching and reducing education to numerical targets. For example, a university that weighted evaluation as “70% teaching, 20% research, and 10% service” saw improved management efficiency but also teacher dissatisfaction over perceived imbalance in workload recognition.

360-Degree Performance Feedback

This method gathers feedback from students, parents, colleagues, and administrators to provide a multi-perspective evaluation. It is particularly effective in primary and secondary schools where home-school collaboration is vital. However, subjectivity in feedback—especially from students and parents—can compromise reliability. A case in Beijing showed that while 360-degree feedback promoted school-community partnership, it also raised concerns over bias and emotional influence in student evaluations.

Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS)

BARS evaluates teachers based on observable teaching behaviors, such as “frequency of classroom interaction” or “quality of responses to student questions.” Its strength lies in providing concrete and actionable feedback to improve classroom practice. However, BARS requires substantial professional input to develop valid indicators and tends to focus narrowly on classroom teaching, overlooking broader responsibilities like research or service.

Management by Objectives (MBO) in Practice

Applied in universities, MBO involves teachers and administrators jointly setting annual teaching and research goals, followed by periodic reviews. While it effectively aligns institutional and personal development plans, its implementation demands strong managerial support and consistent monitoring to avoid superficial compliance.

Evidence from Previous Studies

Research consistently highlights both the potential and challenges of teacher performance evaluation. Stronge (2010) emphasized its role in professional growth and school effectiveness, while Danielson (2007) cautioned against overly rigid and data-driven approaches that neglect

the complexities of teaching. The OECD (2019) further noted that evaluation results often fail to translate into meaningful rewards, reducing teacher motivation and trust in the system.

Three principles emerge as central to effective teacher evaluation:

1. **Goal-setting:** Locke and Latham's (2002) Goal Setting Theory shows that specific, challenging goals enhance performance. Teacher evaluation should therefore guide educators toward measurable and meaningful objectives.
2. **Motivation:** Firestone (2014) distinguished between external motivation (e.g., financial incentives) and internal motivation (e.g., autonomy, self-efficacy). Over-reliance on external incentives risks narrowing teaching practices, whereas internal motivation fosters sustainable professional growth.
3. **Fairness:** Adams' (1965) Equity Theory stresses that perceptions of fairness influence satisfaction and performance. Inequitable systems risk disengagement and lower instructional quality.

In terms of practical application, Fogoroş (2016) identified classroom observations, student evaluations, teaching outcomes, and peer reviews as common methods. While each has value, poorly designed tools risk producing inaccurate or biased results.

Methodology

This study is conceptual in nature and therefore does not involve empirical data collection. Instead, it adopts the following methodological approaches: literature review and comparative analysis, theoretical integration, model construction, and case comparison. These approaches enable a comprehensive synthesis of existing knowledge, the development of conceptual frameworks, and the illustration of practical applications through selected cases.

Finding

Challenges in Teacher Performance Evaluation

Although performance evaluation plays a crucial role in improving educational quality and supporting teacher development, many educational institutions encounter significant challenges in its implementation. These issues affect both the fairness and the effectiveness of evaluation systems. The following are some of the most common problems:

Imbalanced Indicator Design

In universities, primary, and secondary schools, evaluation indicators often emphasize quantifiable outputs such as the number of research projects, published papers, or student competition awards. This overemphasis on quantity neglects essential aspects of teaching, including emotional investment, classroom interaction, and actual learning outcomes. As a result, a bias toward "research over teaching" emerges. In higher education, many teachers reduce their classroom engagement to meet research requirements, thereby weakening the educational function of teaching.

Ignoring Teacher Diversity

Many schools apply uniform scoring systems that fail to reflect teachers' varying stages of professional development or distinct job responsibilities. For example, young teachers are often evaluated using the same criteria as senior teachers, despite differences in experience,

resources, and teaching capabilities. This “homogeneous evaluation” model undermines fairness and can weaken teachers’ motivation and professional confidence.

Weak Link Between Assessment and Incentives

Effective performance evaluations should be closely tied to incentives such as salary adjustments, promotions, and professional development opportunities. In practice, however, many schools treat evaluations as routine exercises, with little connection to teachers’ actual benefits. As a result, teacher participation is low, and the system loses its guiding and motivational function.

Questionable Validity of Student Evaluations

Student evaluations, widely used in schools and universities, are often influenced by non-teaching factors such as a teacher’s popularity, subject characteristics, or leniency in grading. Students may give favorable ratings for lighter workloads or easier exams rather than teaching quality. This undermines the representativeness and reliability of student evaluation data, making it an unstable basis for teacher performance appraisal.

Importance of Teacher Performance Evaluation

Teacher performance evaluation is not merely a tool for measuring effectiveness; it is also a strategic mechanism for fostering professional growth and advancing school development. A well-designed system:

Supports Professional Growth: by setting clear goals, offering constructive feedback, and providing tailored training opportunities.

Enhances Motivation: through fair recognition, transparent processes, and meaningful incentives.

Improves School Development: by enabling better resource allocation, strengthening collaboration, and fostering a learning-oriented school culture.

Positive Impact on Teachers’ Professional Growth

Clarifying Growth Paths

Scientific evaluation systems help teachers identify strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to plan professional development, enhance classroom interaction, and deepen subject expertise.

Providing Development Resources

Evaluation outcomes can guide schools in offering tailored resources, such as training programs, teaching workshops, or research opportunities.

Encouraging Reflection and Improvement

Regular evaluation prompts teachers to reflect on practice, adjust strategies, and improve instructional quality.

Case Example: A city introduced data-driven teaching diagnostics and one-on-one coaching for novice teachers. Within two years, average teaching ability scores improved by 20%.

Stimulating Internal Motivation

Enhancing Professional Identity: Transparent evaluations recognize effort and achievements, strengthening teachers' sense of belonging and long-term commitment.

Linking to Incentives: When tied to promotions, salary increments, and awards, evaluation outcomes significantly boost enthusiasm and innovation.

Case Example: A leading high school launched an "Outstanding Teacher Growth Program," linking career advancement to evaluations. This not only increased teachers' motivation but also enhanced team stability.

Positive Impact on School Development

Optimizing Resource Allocation

Performance data supports effective deployment of teachers across subjects and grades, ensuring efficient use of human resources.

Raising Overall Teaching Quality

As individual teachers grow, collective teaching quality improves, enhancing the school's reputation.

Fostering a Learning-Oriented Culture

Evaluation promotes collaboration, peer learning, and knowledge-sharing, creating a culture of continuous improvement.

Case Example: A regional "performance + training" model increased inter-school collaboration by 42% within one year, significantly improving teaching quality across the district.

Strategies for Optimizing Teacher Performance Evaluation

Designing Balanced Indicators

Evaluation systems should balance quality and quantity by integrating multiple dimensions of performance. Drawing on Management by Objectives (MBO), schools can jointly set clear, measurable, and role-specific goals. For example, universities may increase teaching weightage alongside research outputs, while schools may emphasize classroom practice, student feedback, and parent-school communication. Differentiated goals—such as basic teaching improvement for novice teachers or subject leadership for senior staff—ensure fairness and relevance.

Linking Evaluation with Incentives

Based on Vroom's Expectancy Theory, evaluations should be connected to tangible incentives, including salary adjustments, promotions, and training opportunities. For instance, a middle school in Zhejiang linked teacher evaluations to access to advanced training programs and monthly performance bonuses, effectively motivating teachers to engage in classroom innovation and subject research.

Strengthening Transparency and Participation

Adams' Equity Theory emphasizes the importance of fairness perception. Evaluation systems must therefore be transparent, open to appeal, and adapted to teachers' roles and career stages. Schools should involve teachers in designing and revising standards, and communicate results clearly through regular briefings.

Case Example: A university in Shenzhen adopted a "hierarchical assessment + public appeal" mechanism, categorizing teachers into teaching, research, and comprehensive tracks. This allowed for differentiated weightings and the opportunity for appeals, improving trust in the system's fairness.

Improving Feedback and Data Validity

To reduce subjectivity in student evaluations, schools should use triangulated data sources, including classroom observations, teaching logs, and peer reviews. Students should also be trained to provide constructive, fair feedback. In addition, schools can strengthen peer mentoring and personalized improvement plans to ensure evaluations translate into professional growth.

Conclusion

An effective performance evaluation system is essential for advancing high-quality education. Beyond serving as a human resource management tool, a scientific evaluation framework functions as a catalyst for teacher growth, motivation, and improved instructional outcomes. This paper applied three core theories—Management by Objectives (MBO), Expectancy Theory, and Equity Theory—to demonstrate that meaningful evaluations must consider what teachers do, how they do it, and whether the process is fair. By examining four practical methods (KPI, 360-degree feedback, BARS, and MBO), the study also identified persistent challenges, including an overemphasis on research output, standardized "one-size-fits-all" criteria, weak incentive structures, and unreliable student feedback.

Teacher performance evaluation has a direct and positive influence on both teacher development and school improvement. A well-designed system helps teachers clarify professional goals, identify growth areas, and access tailored support such as training and professional development. At the same time, when linked to promotions, salaries, and recognition, evaluations strengthen teachers' sense of achievement, motivation, and long-term commitment. For schools, such systems enhance the allocation of teaching resources, raise overall educational quality, and foster a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.

To optimize evaluation practices, this paper proposes four strategies: (1) establish clear and differentiated goals that reflect teachers' roles and career stages; (2) connect evaluation results to meaningful incentives such as promotion, salary, and training opportunities; (3) enhance transparency and teacher participation to ensure fairness and acceptance; and (4) strengthen multi-source feedback mechanisms and emphasize continuous evaluation rather than solely end results.

In conclusion, performance evaluation should be a tool for empowerment rather than restriction. A teacher-centered and student-focused evaluation approach can support professional growth, inspire innovation, and ultimately contribute to building a stronger and more effective education system.

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