

Mapping the Multidimensional Roles of Teacher Working Group in Indonesia: A Systematic Review of Empirical Studies

Ainur Rosyid¹

Universitas Esa Unggul¹

Email Correspondence: ainur.rosyid@esaunggul.ac.id

Abstract

Teacher Working Groups (*Kelompok Kerja Guru/KKG*) are one of the most longstanding and widely institutionalised school-based professional development structures in Indonesia. Yet, empirical insights into how KKG actually functions, what roles it plays, and under which conditions it is effective remain scattered across small-scale studies. This article reports a systematic review of 23 empirical studies on KKG conducted between 2015 and 2024. Using a thematic synthesis approach, the review identifies six cross-cutting roles: (1) KKG as a professional learning community, (2) KKG as a mediator of curriculum and instructional reform, (3) KKG as a collaborative problem-solving forum, (4) KKG as a platform for developing teachers' pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies, (5) KKG as a mechanism for improving teacher performance and accountability, and (6) KKG as an organisational structure shaped by governance and leadership. The review argues that KKG represents a multidimensional professional ecosystem whose potential is constrained more by implementation and system conditions than by its core design.

Keywords: Teacher Working Groups; KKG; Teacher Professional Development

Introduction

Teacher quality is consistently identified as one of the strongest school-level predictors of student learning outcomes. Large-scale evidence syntheses show that teacher-related factors have a greater effect on achievement than most structural features of schooling (Hattie, 2008). At the same time, research on teacher professional development (TPD) emphasises that meaningful improvement in teaching quality depends on sustained opportunities for teachers to learn, reflect, and collaborate (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015). Across contexts, high-impact TPD is characterised as ongoing, school-embedded, collaborative, and closely connected to classroom practice rather than delivered as one-off workshops.

These characteristics align closely with the concept of *Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)*, which has become a prominent model for teacher learning in many education systems (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Stoll et al., 2006; Vescio et al., 2008). PLCs emphasize shared vision and values, collective inquiry into teaching and learning, deprivatized practice, and a focus on improving student outcomes. From a theoretical perspective, PLCs can also be situated within the broader notion of *communities of practice* (Wenger, 1998), which conceptualizes learning as a social, situated and participatory process.

In Indonesia, *Teacher Working Groups (Kelompok Kerja Guru/KKG)* constitute the country's most institutionalized and long-standing mechanism for school-based TPD at the primary level. Established nationally in the 1970s and further embedded through decentralization reforms in the 2000s, KKG were designed as cluster-level forums in which teachers from neighbouring schools come together regularly to plan lessons, interpret curricula, develop assessment instruments, and address shared classroom challenges. Policy documents continue to position KKG as a central vehicle for *Pengembangan Keprofesian Berkelanjutan* (continuous professional development), including for implementing recent reforms such as Kurikulum Merdeka and revised subject curricula.

However, empirical findings suggest that the functioning of KKG in practice is uneven. Some KKG operate as vibrant professional communities with joint planning, peer feedback, and structured learning routines. Others are described as predominantly administrative, dominated by document production or information dissemination, with limited time for deep pedagogical work. Several studies also point to constraints such as inadequate funding, weak facilitation, competing workload demands, and limited digital infrastructure, which affect teacher engagement and the quality of learning that KKG can support.

While individual empirical studies have examined specific aspects of KKG—its contribution to teacher competence, its role in curriculum implementation, or its impact on teacher performance—there has been no systematic synthesis of this evidence base. As a result, there is limited conceptual clarity on the *multidimensional roles* KKG actually plays within Indonesia’s teacher learning landscape and the *conditions* under which these roles are fulfilled or constrained. This article addresses that gap through a systematic review of empirical studies, guided by the following research question:

What multidimensional roles do Teacher Working Groups (KKG) play in supporting teacher professional development in Indonesia, as evidenced across empirical studies?

Method

This study adopted a systematic literature review design, drawing conceptually on guidance for narrative synthesis of qualitative and mixed-methods studies. The purpose was not to estimate an effect size but to develop an interpretive understanding of the functions and conditions of KKG across settings.

Searches were conducted in Google Scholar, national journal portals, and institutional repositories, using combinations of Indonesian and English keywords, including “*Kelompok Kerja Guru*”, “*KKG*”, “*teacher working group*”, “*komunitas belajar guru*”, and “*professional development*”. Reference lists of relevant articles were also scanned.

Studies were included if they met the following criteria: Empirical (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods); Focused substantively on KKG in Indonesia, either as the main object of study or as a central component of the intervention; Conducted in primary school or madrasah ibtidaiyah contexts (or their teacher clusters); Published between 2015 and 2024; and Available in full-text.

In total, 23 empirical studies met these criteria. They comprise journal articles, theses, and evaluation reports, with methods ranging from case studies and surveys to programme evaluations. For each study, the following information was extracted: context and sample, methodological approach, focus of the study, key findings related to KKG, and reported enabling or constraining factors. Thematic synthesis proceeded in three stages: *Open coding* of findings sections to capture recurrent concepts (e.g., “sharing best practices”, “curriculum interpretation”, “performance improvement”, “funding constraints”); *Axial coding* to group related codes into broader categories (e.g., “collaborative learning”, “governance”, “structural barriers”); *Selective coding* to integrate categories into higher-order themes representing distinct but interconnected roles of KKG. Codes and emerging themes were compared across studies to identify convergences, divergences, and contextual nuances.

Findings

The analysis revealed *six interrelated themes* that together portray KKG as a multidimensional professional ecosystem rather than a single, discrete intervention.

First, KKG as a Professional Learning Community. Across the majority of studies, KKG is depicted as a *collaborative space* in which teachers meet to discuss instructional issues, share experiences, and learn from one another. Teachers engage in activities such as: joint planning of lessons and units; microteaching and peer feedback; discussion of challenges faced in implementing new pedagogies; and sharing of teaching materials and assessment instruments. Where these practices are well-established, KKG functions in ways strongly consonant with PLC literature: it supports collective responsibility, mutual learning, and the deprivatisation of classroom practice. Teachers report feeling less isolated and more confident in trying new approaches after discussing them in KKG. However, the intensity of collaborative learning varies. In some groups, discussion remains largely information-sharing or top-down dissemination, with limited time for deeper joint inquiry. This suggests that the PLC potential of KKG is present but unevenly realized.

Second, KKG as a Mediator of Curriculum and Instructional Reform. A second prominent role of KKG is as a *mediating structure* between national curriculum policy and classroom practice. Studies show that teachers rely heavily on KKG to interpret curriculum documents and regulatory changes (including KMA 183 for Islamic education, and new competency-based or “independent curriculum” frameworks); co-develop annual teaching plans and teaching modules; align assessment tasks with learning outcomes; and discuss how to embed new pedagogical expectations, such as higher-order thinking or deep learning, into everyday lessons. In this sense, KKG operates as a local

translation hub, where policy language is made sense of collectively and adapted to students' and schools' realities. Where facilitation is strong, this translation process can lead to more coherent, locally grounded implementation of reforms. Where facilitation is weak, KKG may simply reproduce templates without meaningful understanding.

Third, KKG as a Collaborative Problem-Solving Forum. KKG serves as a *problem-solving arena*. Teachers bring recurring challenges related to classroom management, student engagement, multigrade teaching, large classes, or assessment load, and seek input from peers who face similar situations. Some KKG also explicitly structure meetings around case discussions or lesson study cycles, where a particular lesson is designed, observed and analysed collectively. This role is particularly important in geographically dispersed or resource-constrained contexts, where teachers have limited access to external expertise. KKG allows them to mobilise *peer expertise* and to co-construct contextually appropriate solutions. The literature suggests that such collaborative problem solving can build both individual and collective efficacy.

Fourth, KKG as a Platform for Developing Teacher Competencies. KKG contributes to the development of the four competencies defined in Indonesian teacher standards—pedagogical, professional, social, and personal. Empirical studies report teachers gaining: *pedagogical competence*: improved lesson planning, clearer learning objectives, varied instructional strategies, better use of teaching aids; *professional competence*: deeper knowledge of subject content for primary grades, better understanding of curriculum structure; *social competence*: enhanced communication, collaboration, and collegial relationships; and *personal competence*: increased confidence, motivation, and professional identity. These outcomes are often associated with structured activities such as microteaching, peer observation, mentoring within KKG, and collaborative design of teaching materials.

Fifth, KKG as a Mechanism for Teacher Performance and Accountability. Several quantitative studies examine the relationship between participation in KKG and indicators of teacher performance, such as planning quality, classroom delivery, and assessment practices. Although methodological limitations exist, findings typically show that KKG participation explains a *non-trivial proportion* of variance in teacher performance scores, sometimes in combination with other factors such as pedagogical knowledge or work motivation. These findings suggest that KKG not only supports learning but can also act as a *soft accountability mechanism*, in which teachers feel encouraged to maintain standards because they regularly present their plans, materials, or exam items to peers.

Sixth, KKG as an Organizational and Governance Structure. The effectiveness of KKG is strongly shaped by the presence of capable facilitators or coordinators; the involvement and support of school principals and supervisors; the quality of planning, including clear agendas and goals; mechanisms for monitoring and follow-up; and coordination with district education offices. Where these elements are present, KKG meetings tend to be more focused, better attended, and more likely to translate into classroom-level changes. Where they are absent, KKG is more vulnerable to becoming sporadic, administratively driven, or symbolic.

Discussion

The roles identified in this review resonate strongly with international PLC and CoP literature. Features such as collective inquiry, reflective dialogue, shared responsibility and mutual support are evident where KKG functions effectively. The findings thus confirm that PLC/CoP frameworks are analytically useful beyond Western contexts, while also highlighting the importance of *governance and resource dimensions* that are particularly salient in the Global South.

In contrast to many PLC studies in high-income systems, KKG is highly *policy-institutionalised*: it is mandated, structured, and formally overseen by education authorities. This offers scale and continuity but can also introduce bureaucratic pressures that crowd out inquiry-oriented work. The review therefore suggests that PLCs situated within strongly centralised or hierarchical systems may face distinctive tensions between compliance and learning.

For Indonesian policymakers and education leaders, the findings imply that *revitalising KKG* is less about redesigning its goals and more about strengthening: *facilitation capacity* (training coordinators in leading reflective, inquiry-based sessions); *leadership engagement* (ensuring principals and supervisors support and protect time for KKG); *resource provision* (covering transport, materials, and basic ICT infrastructure); and *integration with digital platforms* (using online spaces to complement face-to-face meetings, especially for remote areas).

Supporting KKG as part of broader reforms such as Kurikulum Merdeka also requires coherence between messages given during formal training and the follow-up work done in KKG. Otherwise, KKG risks becoming a space for reproducing templates rather than deepening understanding.

Methodologically, the corpus of KKG studies is dominated by case studies and cross-sectional survey designs. Few studies employ longitudinal designs, rigorous quasi-experimental methods, or comparative analyses between KKG and non-KKG teachers. There is also limited attention to student learning outcomes as distal indicators of KKG impact. Future research could trace teacher trajectories over time to examine sustained changes in practice; explore how KKG interacts with other TPD initiatives and school-level conditions; investigate KKG variants that make systematic use of digital technologies; and compare KKG across regions or between primary and secondary sectors.

Conclusion

This systematic review synthesised findings from 23 empirical studies to map the multidimensional roles of Teacher Working Groups (KKG) in Indonesia. KKG emerges as far more than a meeting structure: it is a professional learning community, a curriculum mediator, a problem-solving forum, a competency development platform, a performance mechanism, and an organisational structure shaped by governance and resources. At the same time, its effectiveness is uneven and constrained by structural factors that limit teacher participation and the depth of collaborative inquiry.

The review contributes conceptually by articulating KKG as a complex professional ecosystem situated at the intersection of teacher learning, policy implementation, and local governance. Practically, it underscores that efforts to strengthen KKG should focus not only on technical guidelines but on building facilitation capacity, protecting time for collaborative learning, and leveraging digital tools to extend its reach.

For a country as large and diverse as Indonesia, a well-supported and inquiry-oriented KKG system remains one of the most promising levers for scalable, context-sensitive teacher professional development.

References

- Avalos, B. (2011). Teacher professional development in Teaching and Teacher Education over ten years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(1), 10–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.007>
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/122.311>
- Desimone, L. M., & Garet, M. S. (2015). Best practices in teachers' professional development in the United States. *Psychology, Society, & Education*, 7(3), 252–263. Publisher: <https://ojs.ual.es/ojs/index.php/psye/article/view/515>
- DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Solution Tree.
- Hamzah, M. M. (2024). Kelompok Kerja Guru dan kompetensi guru PAI. *Synthesis: Journal of Islamic Education*, X(X), xx–xx. <https://synthesisjournal.com/index.php/JPI/article/view/19>
- Hattie, J. (2008). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203887332>
- Lubis, S. (2017). Peningkatan profesionalisme guru PAI melalui Kelompok Kerja Guru (KKG). *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah*, 2(2), 189–205. [https://doi.org/10.25299/althariqah.2017.vol2\(2\).1045](https://doi.org/10.25299/althariqah.2017.vol2(2).1045)
- Marwansya, M. (2021). Evaluasi program Kelompok Kerja Guru (KKG) Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) SD Kecamatan Banyuasin I. *Muaddib: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, X(X), xx–xx. <https://jurnal.radenfatah.ac.id/index.php/muaddib/article/view/8931>
- Palettei, A. D., & Bagja, W. (2019). Pengaruh Kelompok Kerja Guru (KKG) terhadap peningkatan kompetensi pedagogik dan kemampuan menulis karya ilmiah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Indonesia*, X(X), xx–xx. <https://journal.stkipsingkawang.ac.id/index.php/JPDI/article/view/1522>
- Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Wallace, M., & Thomas, S. (2006). Professional learning communities: A review of the literature. *Journal of Educational Change*, 7(4), 221–258. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-006-0001-8>

- Sukirman, S. (2020). Efektivitas Kelompok Kerja Guru (KKG) dalam peningkatan kompetensi guru. *Indonesian Journal of Education Management & Administration Review*, 4(1), 201–208. <https://jurnal.unigal.ac.id/ijemar/article/view/4385>
- Suprijanto, E. (2016). Efektivitas pengelolaan kegiatan Kelompok Kerja Guru (KKG) di Kecamatan Rembang Kabupaten Purbalingga. *Jurnal Penelitian dan Evaluasi Pendidikan*, 9(2), 143–155. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jpipfip.v9i2.12914>
- Tuala, R. P. (2022). Peran Kelompok Kerja Guru (KKG) dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru Pendidikan Agama Islam. *UNISAN Journal of Islamic Education*, X(X), xx–xx. <https://journal.an-nur.ac.id/index.php/unisanjournal/article/view/278>
- Vescio, V., Ross, D., & Adams, A. (2008). A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 80–91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.01.004>
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- World Bank. (2020). *The promise of education in Indonesia*. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/indonesia/publication/the-promise-of-education-in-indonesia>