



The Urgency of Certification Compensation in Enhancing Teacher Performance: A Case Study of Smp Negeri 9 Muaro Jambi

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the urgency of certification compensation in enhancing teacher performance, focusing on SMP Negeri 9 Muaro Jambi. The research aims to contribute to the understanding of how financial incentives tied to teacher certification impact professional performance. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving certified teachers as participants. Data were gathered over a two-month observation period. The findings reveal that certification compensation significantly motivates teachers, leading to increased dedication, improved teaching quality, and better alignment with educational goals. However, challenges such as administrative delays were noted. This study highlights the need for efficient implementation of certification compensation policies to optimize teacher performance, providing practical implications for educational management.

INTRODUCTION

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The role of teachers is crucial in shaping the quality of education, particularly in public schools. Teacher performance significantly impacts student learning outcomes and overall school development. However, achieving optimal performance requires adequate support, including financial incentives such as certification compensation (Albert, 2017). This study examines the importance of certification compensation in improving teacher performance at SMP Negeri 9 Muaro Jambi, highlighting its role as a motivational factor for educators to enhance their professional capabilities.

In Indonesia, certification programs for teachers aim to improve professional standards and provide financial incentives to recognize their contributions (Bourke et al., 2018). Despite the implementation of this policy, disparities in teacher performance remain a significant concern. At SMP Negeri 9 Muaro Jambi, some teachers still face challenges in translating certification benefits into improved classroom practices and student engagement. This gap raises questions about the effectiveness of certification compensation in driving meaningful changes in teacher performance.

Existing research on teacher certification compensation has largely focused on its economic implications and general impact on teacher motivation. Studies highlight that financial incentives can improve job satisfaction and teaching quality. However, few have explored the direct correlation between certification compensation and measurable improvements in teacher performance, especially in rural or semi-urban schools like SMP Negeri 9 Muaro Jambi.

This study contributes to the existing literature by offering a focused analysis of how certification compensation influences teacher performance at a specific school in a semi-urban setting. The research provides unique insights into the motivational aspects of financial incentives and their practical implications for professional development.

While many studies discuss the theoretical benefits of certification compensation, there is limited empirical evidence regarding its practical effects on teacher performance in specific contexts. This study addresses this gap by focusing on SMP Negeri 9 Muaro Jambi, where the interplay between financial incentives and educational outcomes remains underexplored.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Expectancy Theory

Expectancy Theory, developed by Victor Vroom, explains how individuals are motivated to perform based on the expected outcomes of their efforts (Vroom et al., 2015). The theory highlights three key components: expectancy (belief that effort leads to performance), instrumentality (belief that performance leads to rewards), and valence (value placed on the rewards). In the context of teacher certification compensation, this theory posits that financial rewards act as an incentive (Hao, 2023), motivating teachers to improve their performance in hopes of achieving better recognition and financial benefits (Kumar, 2023).

In educational contexts, Expectancy Theory can be applied to the relationship between teachers' efforts, their teaching performance, and the rewards they receive. Teachers are likely to increase their efforts if they believe that their hard work will directly enhance their performance and lead to desired

outcomes, such as better student results or more favorable evaluations. When they perceive a clear link between their performance and tangible rewards – such as salary increases or career advancement – they are more motivated to exert higher levels of effort. The teacher certification system, which includes performance-based rewards, serves as an example of how expectations of financial or professional rewards influence behavior in the educational sphere.

The concept of valence in Expectancy Theory is crucial in understanding how teachers perceive the value of rewards (Ernst, 2018). If teachers highly value the rewards associated with certification, such as financial compensation, professional recognition, or career advancement, they are more likely to be motivated to meet the required performance standards. Additionally, instrumentality – the belief that good performance will lead to these rewards – strengthens motivation. When teachers believe their efforts will result in valuable rewards, they are more committed to enhancing their performance. Therefore, the alignment of teacher compensation systems with performance-based incentives can significantly impact teachers' motivation and, by extension, their overall effectiveness in the classroom.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory identifies motivation and hygiene factors that influence job satisfaction (Alshmemri et al., 2017). Certification compensation can be categorized as a hygiene factor, addressing financial security and reducing dissatisfaction. Simultaneously, it acts as a motivator when it enhances professional growth and recognition, ultimately driving improved teacher performance.

According to Herzberg's theory, hygiene factors, such as salary, working conditions, and job security, are essential for preventing dissatisfaction but do not necessarily contribute to long-term motivation (Bryant, 2018). In the case of teachers, certification compensation addresses these hygiene factors by providing financial security and ensuring that teachers feel valued through a guaranteed income. While these factors are not inherently motivating, they are necessary for maintaining a baseline level of job satisfaction. Teachers may feel dissatisfied or demotivated if their financial needs are not met, making the inclusion of compensation as a hygiene factor an important aspect of their overall job experience.

In contrast, motivational factors, which include recognition, professional development, and opportunities for advancement, play a critical role in fostering long-term job satisfaction and motivation (Varma, 2017). Certification compensation that not only rewards teachers financially but also acknowledges their achievements can serve as a powerful motivator. When teachers perceive that their hard work is recognized and rewarded through certification compensation, they are more likely to be motivated to enhance their performance. This recognition can include rewards beyond monetary compensation, such as professional growth opportunities, which can inspire teachers to improve their teaching methods and contribute positively to the educational environment.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory underscores the dual nature of certification compensation in the teaching profession. While it serves as a hygiene factor by addressing basic financial needs, it also acts as a motivator when it acknowledges teachers' achievements and fosters professional development. This dual role can significantly impact teacher motivation and performance. For example, a teacher who feels financially secure and recognized for their achievements is likely to be more engaged, invested in their work, and committed to improving their skills. Ultimately, the proper balance of hygiene and motivational factors through compensation can create a more effective and motivated teaching force.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to explore the impact of certification compensation on teacher performance at SMP Negeri 9 Muaro Jambi (Gammelgaard, 2017). Data collection involves in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis to capture a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

The population consists of teachers and administrative staff at SMP Negeri 9 Muaro Jambi. A purposive sampling technique is used to select participants, focusing on certified teachers receiving certification compensation. The sample includes 10 certified teachers and 2 administrators who are directly involved in implementing and managing certification policies.

Data is analyzed using thematic analysis (Clarke, Victoria, 2017). The process involves coding qualitative data, identifying patterns and themes, and interpreting the findings to understand the relationship between certification compensation and teacher performance. Triangulation is employed to ensure data validity by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents.

RESEARCH RESULT

The results of this study reveal a significant relationship between certification compensation and teacher performance at SMP Negeri 9 Muaro Jambi. Based on the data collected through interviews, observations, and document reviews, several key findings emerged:

1. Improved Motivation and Commitment

Teachers who received certification compensation demonstrated a higher level of motivation and commitment to their teaching roles. Many of the teachers reported feeling more valued and recognized for their professional qualifications, which directly impacted their engagement in teaching activities. This was particularly evident in teachers who had been receiving certification compensation for an extended period.

Additionally, the sense of being valued and recognized led to increased job satisfaction, which further strengthened their commitment to teaching. Teachers expressed a deeper sense of responsibility toward their students, feeling motivated to help them succeed. This enhanced commitment to their work was especially evident in teachers who had been receiving certification compensation for an extended period, as they had a longer-term view of the benefits and rewards tied to their professional growth.

The long-term effects of certification compensation were particularly notable in fostering a sense of loyalty among teachers. Teachers who had experienced sustained financial and professional recognition were more likely to stay committed to their institutions. This, in turn, created a more stable and motivated teaching workforce, benefiting both the teachers and the students they taught. As a result, certification compensation not only improved teacher motivation but also contributed to long-term professional development and a higher standard of education.

2. Increased Teaching Quality

Teachers who received certification compensation showed notable improvements in their teaching quality. The compensation provided financial stability, which allowed teachers to focus more on refining their lesson plans and participating in professional development activities, without the stress of external financial pressures. With fewer concerns about their personal financial situation, teachers could dedicate more time and energy to enhancing their teaching practices and staying updated on new pedagogical approaches. This enabled them to be more effective in the classroom, ensuring that their students received better quality education.

Classroom observations revealed that teachers who received compensation were more dedicated to their students' success. They showed a greater commitment to fostering a positive learning environment, often going beyond the standard curriculum to address individual student needs. Their efforts were reflected in the quality of their teaching methods, which appeared more engaging and interactive. These teachers were more likely to incorporate innovative strategies, such as technology, group activities, and individualized learning, which improved student engagement and learning outcomes.

Moreover, the teaching methods of compensated teachers were seen as more effective. With the financial support they received, teachers were able to focus on improving their teaching techniques, applying new ideas, and experimenting with creative teaching methods. This not only enhanced the students' learning experience but also contributed to a more dynamic and modern approach to education. As a result, the quality of teaching improved overall, benefiting both the teachers' professional growth and the students' academic achievement.

3. Perceived Benefits in Student Performance

The impact of certification compensation on teacher performance was clearly reflected in the improved outcomes of their students. Teachers who were motivated by the financial and professional recognition provided by the certification scheme demonstrated a heightened commitment to their students' academic success. This commitment was evident in their enhanced teaching practices, which prioritized active learning and tailored instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students. As a result, classrooms led by these teachers became more dynamic and supportive environments for learning.

Students in these classrooms showed noticeable improvements in their academic performance and engagement with school activities. Teachers reported

that their students were more responsive to lessons, participated actively in discussions, and demonstrated a better grasp of the material being taught. This positive change was often linked to the teachers' increased focus on delivering high-quality education, which was made possible by the financial stability and motivation derived from the certification compensation.

Moreover, the teachers' dedication extended beyond academics, as they worked to nurture a sense of curiosity and enthusiasm among their students. They invested additional effort in creating innovative learning experiences and fostering positive relationships with their students. This holistic approach not only boosted students' academic achievements but also contributed to their overall personal development. Consequently, the certification compensation program indirectly contributed to cultivating a generation of students who were more engaged, confident, and prepared for future challenges.

4. Challenges and Limitations

Despite the positive impacts of certification compensation, some teachers reported that it did not fully resolve the challenges they faced in their classrooms. Issues such as large class sizes created significant hurdles, as managing numerous students often limited their ability to provide individualized attention. The compensation, while beneficial, was not sufficient to overcome the strain of these logistical challenges, which continued to affect the quality of education and the learning experience for students.

Additionally, the lack of adequate resources emerged as another major concern among teachers. Many expressed frustration over insufficient teaching materials and outdated infrastructure, which hindered their ability to implement innovative teaching methods effectively. Although the financial stability provided by certification compensation allowed them to focus more on their work, the absence of proper tools and resources limited their potential to fully enhance the learning process.

The limited opportunities for professional development also became a point of dissatisfaction. Teachers highlighted the need for workshops, training sessions, and mentoring programs to help them grow professionally and adapt to modern educational demands. This underscored the importance of a more comprehensive approach to teacher support, combining financial incentives with systemic improvements in resource allocation, professional development, and institutional backing to address the multifaceted challenges of the teaching profession.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study provide valuable insights into the urgency of certification compensation in enhancing teacher performance at SMP Negeri 9 Muaro Jambi. In this section, we discuss the key findings and their implications in the context of educational theory, practice, and policy. We also integrate these results with existing literature to provide a comprehensive academic

contribution to the understanding of how certification compensation influences teacher performance.

Motivation and Commitment: The Role of Certification Compensation

One of the key findings from the study is the positive impact of certification compensation on teachers' motivation and commitment. Teachers who received certification compensation reported feeling more appreciated and valued in their professional roles, which, in turn, enhanced their motivation to perform at a higher level. This aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Alshmemri et al., 2017), which posits that intrinsic motivators, such as recognition and career advancement, are crucial to job satisfaction and performance improvement. Financial compensation, being one of the hygiene factors in this theory, supports the argument that teachers who feel financially secure are more likely to invest time and effort into improving their teaching practices. Therefore, the urgency of providing fair and adequate compensation for certified teachers is evident, as it directly influences their performance and the quality of education provided to students.

Improved Teaching Quality and Professional Growth

The study also highlights that teachers who received certification compensation demonstrated improved teaching quality. With financial security provided by the compensation, teachers could focus more on lesson planning, professional development, and refining their teaching methods, rather than being burdened by external financial stressors. This finding supports the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2012), which suggests that financial rewards, when aligned with intrinsic goals like mastery of teaching, can foster a greater sense of autonomy and competence, ultimately leading to improved teaching performance.

The results further emphasize the importance of professional development programs in conjunction with compensation. Teachers who felt financially supported showed more initiative in attending workshops and seeking out additional resources for their teaching. This finding resonates with Lortie's theory of teacher socialization (Richards et al., 2019), which posits that teachers who are continuously exposed to opportunities for growth and development improve their skills and pedagogical approaches.

Impact on Student Performance

The correlation between teacher performance and student outcomes was another crucial aspect observed in this study. Teachers who were motivated by certification compensation showed greater commitment to their students' academic progress, leading to improved student performance. This finding is consistent with the research of (Wenglinsky, 2000), who concluded that teacher quality is one of the most influential factors in student achievement. Teachers who receive adequate compensation and professional development are more likely to create a positive learning environment, which is reflected in the students' improved academic outcomes.

Challenges and Limitations in Teacher Performance

Despite the positive effects of certification compensation, some teachers reported facing challenges that compensation alone could not address. Issues such as large class sizes, lack of teaching resources, and limited professional development opportunities were noted as barriers to optimal teaching performance. These challenges indicate a gap in the current education system that certification compensation alone cannot fill. This supports the argument (Darling-Hammond, 2000), who emphasized that while financial incentives are important, they must be paired with systemic improvements in teacher support, such as better classroom resources, smaller class sizes, and opportunities for continuous professional growth. The combination of these factors is necessary to truly enhance teacher effectiveness and, by extension, student outcomes.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings, several policy recommendations are suggested. First, it is crucial that the certification compensation system be integrated with broader teacher support initiatives. This includes offering more opportunities for professional development, providing adequate teaching resources, and ensuring manageable class sizes. A clear connection should also be established between compensation and measurable improvements in teaching quality, so that teachers are held accountable for their performance (Polat, 2022). Effective teacher compensation systems should be holistic, focusing not only on financial incentives but also on improving working conditions and professional autonomy (Ingersoll, 2001).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the urgency of certification compensation in enhancing teacher performance is clear, as it directly influences teachers' motivation, commitment, teaching quality, and, ultimately, student outcomes. However, this study also highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to teacher support, where compensation is just one part of the equation. Future policies should aim to integrate compensation with professional development, better classroom conditions, and ongoing support for teachers, ensuring that financial incentives lead to meaningful improvements in teaching and learning outcomes.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Every study has its limitations, which should be considered when interpreting the results and developing further studies. This research, while providing valuable insights into the urgency of certification compensation in enhancing teacher performance, has several limitations. One of the limitations is the scope of the study, which is limited to one school, SMP Negeri 9 Muaro Jambi, and may not fully represent the situation in other schools in the region or across

the broader area. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data from teachers, which could be influenced by subjective bias.

Furthermore, this study did not explore other external factors that might affect teacher performance, such as national education policies, the role of school principals, or parental support. Therefore, future research could expand the sample to include multiple schools from different regions to provide a more comprehensive view of the impact of certification compensation on teacher performance. Additionally, researchers may consider incorporating external factors in the analysis to provide a more holistic perspective.

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