

Research Article

A Reward System for Improving Teacher Performance in State Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High Schools) Jambi Province

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the reward system in improving the performance of educators at State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) in Jambi Province. The research focuses on the reward mechanism, its implementation, and the factors that determine its effectiveness in improving educator performance. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research locations include three madrasahs: MAN 1 Tanjung Jabung Barat, MAN 1 Kota Jambi, and MAN 1 Merangin. The results show that the implemented reward system includes financial rewards (such as incentives and allowances) and non-financial rewards (such as certificates, training, and job promotions). Rewards have been shown to play an important role in improving educator motivation, discipline, loyalty, and performance. However, the implementation of the reward system has not been optimal due to several obstacles, such as budget constraints, lack of transparency in assessments, and the incompatibility of the types of rewards with the needs of educators. On the other hand, madrasahs that implement the reward system appropriately and fairly show an increase in the quality of educator work, marked by increased participation, work performance, and professional responsibility. This study concludes that an effective reward system is one that has clear criteria, is transparent, and responsive to the needs of educators. Recommendations are directed to madrasah principals and the Ministry of Religious Affairs to build a strong culture of appreciation and allocate an adequate reward budget to improve the quality of education in madrasahs.

Keywords: Educational Management; Madrasahs; Motivation; Reward System; Teacher Performance.

1. Introduction

Teachers are the main pillar of the education system, playing a strategic role in shaping the character, knowledge, and skills of students. Amidst the dynamics of globalization and the development of information technology, challenges in education are increasingly complex. In this context, teachers serve not only as transmitters of material but also as facilitators, motivators, and guides, shaping a superior and competitive generation. The quality of education is largely determined by the quality of teachers. Competent, dedicated, and professional teachers are able to create a conducive and inspiring learning environment. They play a crucial role in designing adaptive learning, fostering student creativity, and instilling moral and national values. Therefore, improving the quality of education cannot be

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separated from systematic efforts to improve teacher quality and performance. The quality of education in State Islamic Senior High Schools (MAN) depends heavily on the active role and performance of teachers. However, in several MANs in Jambi Province, serious problems related to low teacher motivation and performance remain. This situation is a hindering factor in efforts to improve the overall quality of education within the madrasah environment.

Several indicators of low teacher motivation are a lack of initiative in developing learning methods, minimal involvement in professional development activities, and a low enthusiasm for classroom innovation. It is also not uncommon to find teachers who perform their teaching duties solely as administrative obligations, without demonstrating enthusiasm or dedication to the educational process.

Factors influencing low teacher motivation and performance include an unbalanced workload, lack of recognition for work performance, limited career development opportunities, and suboptimal incentive and reward systems. Furthermore, in some cases, an unsupportive work environment and weak school leadership also exacerbate this situation. One important factor influencing teacher motivation and performance is a structured and effective reward system. Unfortunately, in many State Islamic Senior High Schools (MAN), particularly in Jambi Province, the reward system for teachers is still not functioning optimally. Rewards tend to be incidental, non-standardized, and not based on clear and measurable performance indicators. The absence of a systematic reward system leads to inequities in the appreciation of high-achieving and dedicated teachers. Many teachers who have demonstrated high commitment and innovation in teaching and learning do not receive the recognition they deserve. This creates a sense of injustice, lowers morale, and weakens a productive work culture within the madrasah environment. Furthermore, rewards are often merely symbolic or ceremonial, with no real impact on teacher welfare or career advancement. The lack of financial incentives, achievement-based rewards, and the absence of consistent performance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms further exacerbate this situation. The lack of a structured reward system also weakens teachers' intrinsic motivation to continue developing and innovating. Without proper encouragement and recognition, many teachers feel that their work is not appreciated, so that their maximum potential cannot be optimally utilized in the educational process.

Teachers are a key element in the success of the educational process, and teacher morale significantly impacts the quality of learning in schools. Therefore, establishing a system capable of boosting motivation and improving teacher performance is an urgent need. One strategic effort that can be undertaken is to implement a structured and sustainable performance-based reward system. A performance-based reward system rewards teachers based on tangible work achievements, such as teaching quality, innovation in learning methods, attendance rates, participation in school activities, and positive impacts on student development. This system not only encourages teachers to perform optimally but also creates a healthy and professional competitive climate within the school environment.

With fair and transparent rewards, teachers will feel appreciated for their contributions. This directly increases intrinsic motivation, strengthens loyalty to the institution, and fosters a sense of pride in their profession. Motivated teachers will be more enthusiastic about teaching, more open to training and self-development, and better prepared to face the challenges of the ever-evolving world of education. In the State Islamic Senior High School (MAN), particularly in Jambi Province, the implementation of a performance-based reward system can be a solution to the low teacher morale and productivity, a common problem. This system will encourage a more positive change in work culture, where teachers not only work to fulfill their obligations, but also to gain recognition for their dedication and achievements. Jambi Province has unique geographic and cultural characteristics, which directly and indirectly influence the region's education management system. Geographically, Jambi is divided into urban and rural areas, with several areas still considered remote and difficult to reach. This situation presents unique challenges in the distribution of educational resources, equitable distribution of teaching staff, and the oversight and implementation of education policies at the educational unit level.

Limited accessibility in some areas results in disparities in educational facilities, teaching quality, and the affordability of professional development programs for teachers. Schools, including State Islamic Senior High Schools (MAN), located in remote areas often suffer from a shortage of qualified teaching staff, limited educational technology, and minimal training. This also impacts the effectiveness of education management and the achievement of expected quality standards. Culturally, the people of Jambi are known for their strong local wisdom, such as the spirit of mutual cooperation, kinship, and respect for community and

religious leaders. In the educational context, these values are a strength in creating harmonious relationships between schools, teachers, students, and the community. However, on the other hand, a culture that places a high value on social status and seniority can sometimes hinder the implementation of a performance-based management system, especially if not effectively socialized. Furthermore, the religious identity of the Jambi community also significantly influences educational practices in madrasas. While the Islamic values they uphold can serve as a moral foundation for student character formation, they also require educational management that is sensitive to local religious and customary values.

2. Method

The method used in the study with a qualitative-descriptive approach, as samples in the study of school principals, teachers as educational staff and educational staff at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Jambi City, Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Batang Hari and Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Tanjung Jabung Barat Jambi Province data collection using interviews, observation and documentation, where the number of samples is 20 people In analyzing the data using qualitative data analysis, with the Miles and Huberman model.

3. Results and Discussion

4.1. Reward system mechanism at Jambi Province State Islamic Senior High School

The reward system in State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri or MAN) across Jambi Province plays a critical role in shaping teacher motivation and performance. However, in practice, the existing reward mechanisms are still relatively limited, unstructured, and often lack alignment with performance-based indicators. Currently, most MANs in Jambi Province apply reward systems that are informal and not institutionalized. Rewards are generally given in the form of verbal recognition, certificates of appreciation, or symbolic awards during annual school events, where based on the results of interviews with several school/madrasah principals and several education staff While these forms of recognition are valuable, they are not consistently implemented, nor are they supported by clear criteria or regular performance evaluations. As a result, many teachers feel that their efforts and achievements are not adequately acknowledged or rewarded. In addition, the reward system is often not linked directly to measurable teaching performance indicators such as student academic outcomes, innovation in teaching methods, attendance records, participation in school development programs, or contributions to extracurricular activities. This lack of a structured and merit-based system leads to a sense of stagnation and demotivation among educators, particularly those who strive to go beyond basic expectations. These results are in accordance with research, Zihan Chen. They can attract students' interests, foster good learning habits, establish a positive learning atmosphere,

and increase students' motivation. However, students may also develop reward addiction, increasing sensitivity to punishment, and decreasing intrinsic motivation. If teachers aim to maximize the advantages of reward systems, avoiding deficiencies and keep merits is an efficient way. There is also a gap in financial incentives or career advancement opportunities tied to teacher performance. Many teachers at MANs in Jambi Province express concerns about the absence of a clear pathway for professional growth, which diminishes their motivation to pursue excellence or engage in continuous professional development. To address these challenges, there is a growing need to design and implement a structured reward system that is transparent, fair, and based on measurable performance indicators. Such a system should include both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, ranging from recognition and certificates to financial incentives, promotion opportunities, and professional development support. In addition, it should be integrated into the overall teacher performance management framework at the institutional level. Implementing an effective reward system mechanism in MANs across Jambi Province can serve as a catalyst for improving teacher morale, enhancing instructional quality, and ultimately raising the overall standard of education within the madrasah system.

4.2. Improving the work of teaching staff at the State Islamic Senior High School in Jambi Province

Improving the work performance of teaching staff at State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri or MAN) in Jambi Province is a critical step toward enhancing the overall quality of education within the region. Teachers are the backbone of the educational process, and their effectiveness directly influences student achievement, school performance,

and the broader goals of national education. However, several challenges continue to hinder the optimal performance of teaching staff in many MANs across Jambi. These include limited professional development opportunities, lack of structured performance evaluations, insufficient incentives, and, in some cases, inadequate working conditions. Moreover, geographical disparities particularly between urban and rural madrasahs often result in unequal access to training, resources, and support systems. This condition is the result of interviews with school/madrasa principals and this data is also supported by the results of documentation and observations at the research location. To improve the work of teaching staff, a multifaceted approach is needed. First, there must be a consistent investment in teacher training and capacity building, focusing on pedagogical skills, subject mastery, classroom management, and the integration of digital tools into teaching practices. Continuous professional development should be made accessible and relevant to the needs of teachers at both urban and rural MANs.

Second, there is a need to establish a transparent and accountable performance evaluation system. This system should be based on clear indicators such as teaching quality, student outcomes, innovation in instructional strategies, and contributions to school development. Regular feedback and mentoring should also be integrated into this system to support teachers' ongoing growth. Third, implementing a reward system linked to performance is essential. Recognizing and rewarding teachers for their dedication, creativity, and impact will not only improve morale but also encourage a culture of excellence and accountability. Both financial and non-financial rewards such as promotions, professional recognition, or opportunities for further study can play a vital role in motivating staff. Lastly, school leadership must foster a supportive and collaborative environment, where teachers feel valued, heard, and empowered to take initiative. This includes promoting open communication, participative decision-making, and a shared vision for continuous improvement. This is also in accordance with research results, the study indicate that increasing teacher involvement in decision-making processes, more effective communication, and support for professional development are key elements in building trust among teachers. At MAN 1 Pekanbaru, increasing teacher participation in decision-making and improving communication effectiveness are priorities. At MAN 1 Indragiri Hulu, a shift from an authoritative to a more inclusive leadership style is needed. Meanwhile, at MAN 1 Indragiri Hilir, there is a need for further improvements in communication and professional development support. The recommendation of this study is to adopt a participatory and communicative leadership approach to create a harmonious and trusting educational environment. In conclusion, improving the work of teaching staff at MANs in Jambi Province requires strategic planning, adequate resources, and a commitment to long-term educational reform. With the right support systems in place, teachers can perform at their best, thereby enhancing student learning outcomes and strengthening the overall quality of Islamic education in the region.

4.3. Reward system to improve the performance of teaching staff at the State Islamic Senior High School in Jambi Province

A well-designed reward system is one of the most effective tools for enhancing the performance of teaching staff. In the context of State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri or MAN) in Jambi Province, implementing a structured and fair reward system can significantly boost teacher motivation, professionalism, and commitment to educational excellence. Currently, many MANs in the province are still facing challenges in optimizing teacher performance due to the lack of systematic rewards and recognition mechanisms. Teachers often carry out their duties under difficult conditions, with limited acknowledgment for their efforts and achievements. This situation can lead to reduced morale, stagnation in professional growth, and ultimately, a decline in the quality of education delivered. based on findings in the field with the results of interviews, observations and documentation in the research field as follows,Introducing a performance-based reward system can serve as a catalyst for change. Such a system would evaluate teachers using clear and measurable indicators, including teaching quality, student academic progress, attendance, innovation in instructional methods, and participation in school development activities. Teachers who consistently demonstrate high performance and dedication would be eligible for various forms of rewards. These rewards could take both financial and non-financial forms. Financial incentives might include performance bonuses, allowances, or salary adjustments, while non-financial rewards could involve certificates of excellence, opportunities for professional development, priority in career advancement, or public recognition in school forums.

Importantly, the system should be transparent, objective, and consistently applied to all teaching staff to maintain trust and fairness. Moreover, the reward system should be integrated into the broader teacher performance management strategy. This includes regular performance appraisals, mentoring programs, and feedback mechanisms that support continuous improvement. When teachers feel their work is valued and their efforts are rewarded, they are more likely to be motivated, innovative, and committed to achieving educational goals. This statement is in accordance with research results, rewards in which the state played a prominent role in agitating for good wages and working condition for teachers. In addition, participants stated the drastic fall in federal allocation to the state which reduced by 60% as the reason for it. The study recommended that the government should allow principals, vice principals and experienced teachers direct the affairs and activities in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and TESCO, Ogun State. In conclusion, the implementation of a reward system in MANs throughout Jambi Province is not merely a matter of incentives, but a strategic approach to building a more effective, motivated, and professional teaching workforce. With a robust reward system in place, schools can create a positive work environment that drives performance and fosters a culture of excellence in Islamic education.

4.4. Factors that determine the reward system in improving the performance of teaching staff at the State Islamic Senior High School in Jambi Province

The effectiveness of a reward system in enhancing the performance of teaching staff is highly dependent on several key factors. In the context of State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri or MAN) in Jambi Province, understanding and addressing these factors is essential to ensure that rewards serve as a genuine driver of motivation, professional growth, and overall educational quality. findings in the field, based on interviews with samples in the research and data supported by observations and documentation in the field as follows:

Performance-Based Criteria

One of the most critical factors is the establishment of clear, measurable, and fair performance indicators. These criteria should align with the goals of the madrasah and include aspects such as teaching effectiveness, student learning outcomes, innovation in instructional methods, attendance, classroom management, and contributions to extracurricular or community activities. A reward system that lacks transparent performance benchmarks may be perceived as subjective, reducing its impact and credibility.

Transparency and Fairness

Transparency in how rewards are determined and distributed is essential for building trust among teaching staff. The reward system must be seen as fair and impartial, with all teachers given equal opportunities to be recognized based on their merits. Any perception of favoritism or inconsistency can lead to dissatisfaction and demotivation rather than performance improvement.

Institutional Support and Leadership

Strong leadership and support from school management and education authorities play a vital role. School leaders must actively promote and implement the reward system, ensure consistent monitoring, and provide constructive feedback to teachers. The system must also be backed by institutional policies at the district or provincial level to ensure sustainability and legitimacy.

Types of Rewards

The selection of appropriate reward types both financial and non-financial is another important factor. While monetary rewards such as bonuses or allowances are often highly motivating, non-financial rewards like certificates of achievement, public recognition, career advancement opportunities, and access to professional development can be equally impactful, especially in a values-driven educational environment like Islamic schools.

5. Cultural and Contextual Relevance

The reward system must take into account the cultural and social context of Jambi Province. As a region with strong religious and local traditions, any incentive or recognition mechanism must align with the values of integrity, humility, and community service. Rewards that are culturally appropriate are more likely to be accepted and appreciated by teaching staff.

6. Sustainability and Consistency

A reward system must be sustainable over time, not just a one-time initiative. Teachers need to see consistency in how rewards are given to maintain their motivation and performance levels. A long-term, structured approach helps integrate the reward system into the school culture and makes it a meaningful part of teacher development.

The results of the data above are in accordance with the research results, was designed to have both open and close-ended items. The findings of the study revealed that, poor performance of teachers was due to lack of frequent in-service training, lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of incentives and motivation, and improper supervision. It is therefore, recommended that Ghana Education Service should improve upon its in-service training and development policy to be consistent with the needs of teachers. More so, periodic learning needs assessments should be conducted before training programmes are designed for teachers. Finally, the Teachers' Education Division of Ghana Education Service should be resourced to enable it organize more and regular in-service training programmes for teachers. Finally, teachers should be given the necessary motivation to boost their morale to give off their best performance and research results which reward factors can amplify teachers' satisfaction, drawing on previous research to explore the effects and correlations between rewards and job satisfaction. The study begins by emphasizing the significance of job satisfaction among teachers in educational institutions. It observes that when teachers receive rewards and recognition tailored to their individual needs and preferences, it can significantly enhance their overall job satisfaction

Based on the above description, by considering these factors, the reward system implemented at MAN throughout Jambi Province can function effectively as a motivational tool and improve performance. This will ultimately contribute to improving the quality of education and developing the character of students who excel academically and spiritually.

4. Conclusion

The research results show that the implemented reward system includes financial rewards (such as incentives and allowances) and non-financial rewards (such as certificates, training, and job promotions). Rewards have been shown to play a significant role in improving educator motivation, discipline, loyalty, and performance. However, the implementation of the reward system has not been optimal due to several obstacles, such as budget constraints, lack of transparency in assessments, and the inconsistency of the types of rewards with the needs of educators. On the other hand, madrasas that implement the reward system appropriately and fairly show an increase in the quality of educator work, marked by increased participation, work performance, and professional responsibility. This study concludes that an effective reward system is one that has clear criteria, is transparent, and responsive to the needs of educators. Recommendations are directed to madrasa principals and the Ministry of Religious Affairs to build a strong culture of appreciation and allocate an adequate reward budget to improve the quality of education in madrasas.

Author Contributions: A short paragraph specifying their individual contributions must be provided for research articles with several authors (**mandatory for more than 1 author**). The following statements should be used “Conceptualization: X.X. and Y.Y.; Methodology: X.X.; Software: X.X.; Validation: X.X., Y.Y. and Z.Z.; Formal analysis: X.X.; Investigation: X.X.; Resources: X.X.; Data curation: X.X.; Writing—original draft preparation: X.X.; Writing—review and editing: X.X.; Visualization: X.X.; Supervision: X.X.; Project administration: X.X.; Funding acquisition: Y.Y.”

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Data Availability Statement: We encourage all authors of articles published in FAITH journals to share their research data. This section provides details regarding where data supporting reported results can be found, including links to publicly archived datasets analyzed or generated during the study. Where no new data were created or data unavailable due to privacy or ethical restrictions, a statement is still required.

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